



ATTACHMENTS

Ordinary Council Meeting

Tuesday, 20 October 2026

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From: Brooke Aldous **On Behalf Of** OLG Compliance Mailbox

Sent: Monday, 14 September 2026 3:28 PM

Subject: Compliance and Interventions Spotlight Series – Latest Edition – What happens if a written disclosure of interests return is not lodged?

Good afternoon Complaints Coordinators

You may have seen, the latest edition of the **Compliance and Interventions Spotlight Series** featured in OLG's external newsletter last week. As promised, and in case you missed it, I have attached a copy for your information.

We encourage stakeholders to subscribe to the OLG [newsletter](#) to stay informed about updates and information relevant to the local government sector. If you know colleagues who may be interested in the Spotlight Series, please feel free to share this edition and encourage them to subscribe.

While the Spotlight Series is distributed to you directly through our Complaints Coordinator contact list, the topics often have broader relevance across councils and are intended to support and provide education to all stakeholders in addition to those specifically involved in complaint handling, governance, compliance, and related functions.

Thank you again to everyone who completed the survey. The topic covered in this edition was one of the highest-ranked areas of interest. This topic explores issues relating to Code of Conduct obligations in addition to general written disclosures of interest information. We will continue working through the topics identified in the survey, while balancing these with emerging changes, trends and areas of interest across the sector.

Finally, if your Complaints Coordinator contact details have changed, please let us know so we can keep our records up to date and ensure you continue to receive future editions directly. This also enables us to contact the appropriate officer efficiently when council-specific matters arise that require discussion or the exchange of information, supporting timely and effective outcomes for all parties.

Thank you and kind regards

Brooke Aldous
Interventions Officer
Compliance and Interventions Team

Office of Local Government | Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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Office of Local Government

Compliance & Interventions Spotlight Series



What happens if a Written Disclosure of Interest Return is not lodged?

Why This Matters

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has identified that some councils face challenges when Councillors or designated persons fail to lodge Written Disclosure of Interest Returns (Returns) in accordance with legislative requirements.

Failure to lodge a Return undermines transparency and accountability in council decision-making and may constitute misconduct under *the Local Government Act 1993* (the Act). Timely and accurate disclosures are essential to maintain public confidence and ensure compliance with the Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW (The Model Code).

Policy and Legislation

Under clause 4.21(b) of the Model Code, Councillors and designated persons must lodge Written Disclosure of Interest Returns with the General Manager, as required.

Returns must also be:

- ✓ Recorded and maintained appropriately by Council
- ✓ Published in accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 on the council's website

Failure to comply with disclosure requirements may result in misconduct under section [440F of the Act](#), and/or have potential disciplinary consequences.

Action for Councillors and Designation persons

- ✓ Lodge Returns within required timeframes (by 30 September annually), and at any time the author becomes aware of any new interests that need to be disclosed, within three months of becoming aware of the new interests
- ✓ Ensure disclosures are complete and accurate
- ✓ Respond promptly to Council requests or reminders

Action for Councils

- ✓ Issue periodic reminders ahead of lodgement deadlines
- ✓ Maintain clear internal processes for monitoring compliance
- ✓ Table at the first Ordinary Meeting of Council following the three-month reporting deadline and make available on the Councils website
- ✓ Escalate non-compliance in line with Model Code Procedures
- ✓ Promote awareness and training on disclosure obligations

Office of Local Government

Compliance & Interventions Spotlight Series



Where a Return has not been lodged, the OLG recommends the following staged approach:

1. Initial Reminder (Administrative Action)
 - Contact the Councillor or designated person directly
 - Remind them of their obligation to lodge the Return
 - Request submission as soon as practicable
 - Recognise that the omission may be inadvertent.
2. Formal Written Notice (General Manager) if the Return is still outstanding:
 - Issue a formal letter advising the Return has not been received
 - Reference obligations under clause 4.21(b) of the Model Code
 - Request lodgement within a specified timeframe (e.g. 7-14 days)
 - Warn that failure to comply may constitute misconduct (Councillors) and may lead to disciplinary action.
3. Council Reporting Requirements
 - Record the Return as “not lodged” in the first available Ordinary Council Meeting report (after 30 September deadline)
 - Maintain accuracy and transparency in public reporting.
4. If the Return is Subsequently Lodged
 - Table the completed Return at the next Ordinary Council Meeting
 - Publish the Return on Council’s website in accordance with GIPA requirements.
5. Continued non-compliance if the Return remains outstanding:
 - Record the matter in internal compliance records
 - Consider providing a further opportunity to remedy the breach.
6. Escalation if non-compliance persists:
 - Manage the matter under *the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct*
 - Consider whether referral to the Office of Local Government (OLG) is appropriate, particularly where:
 - The failure is ongoing or repeated
 - There are broader governance concerns.

Note: Breaches may result in disciplinary action by the Council, the Office of Local Government or the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

For more information you can contact the Compliance & Interventions team via olg@olg.nsw.gov.au

From: Munro, Samantha
Sent: Friday, 11 September 2026 3:47 PM
To: Terry Dodds <tdodds@balranald.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Yanco Delta Wind Farm - meeting follow up

Hi Terry,

Thank you again for your time this week to meet with Council and provide an introduction to the Yanco Delta Wind Farm project.

We appreciate your frank feedback on the proposed OSOM route and local insights to support the logistics efforts, we will continue to raise as part of ongoing EnergyCo and TfNSW discussions.

I will come back to you on points raised in our meeting, including the indicative traffic movements relevant to Balranald as part of our TTIA. The other item will be a request for Council consent via letter (a DPHI requirement), given the identified pinch points. While the next phase of planning will largely be led by TfNSW, we will continue to advocate to ensure Council matters are raised.

The other timely update following our meeting is the modification response to submissions - this is now live on the Major Projects website. This provides a formal response to matters raised by Council, noting the conversation this week will have provided additional context. We're happy to organise another meeting if you want discuss further.

Always good to connect in person, I'll be your point of contact moving forward and please reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to keeping you informed of project progress as we finalise the planning phase.

Kind regards,
Sam

Samantha Munro
Community Engagement Delivery Lead



Origin acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of the lands.

We acknowledge the continuous connection to land, water, sea and sky and pay our respect to Elders past and present.



ALL COMMUNICATIONS MUST
BE ADDRESSED TO THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL

70 Market Street, Balranald NSW 2715
PO Box 120, Balranald NSW 2715
Tel: 03 5020 1300
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Email: council@balranald.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.balranald.nsw.gov.au

Contact: TD:CH:D26.128111

15 September 2026

The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Cc: The Hon Sam Rae MP, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors
minister.butler@health.gov.au
Sam.Rae.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister Butler

Re: AN-ACC funding – funding below the cost of care is not sustainable aged care policy

I am writing regarding the recently announced residential aged care funding increases.

For a small rural council that operates a residential aged care facility, the difficulty with the announcement is very simple:

The cost of providing the service has risen substantially faster than the funding provided to deliver it.

Ageing Australia advises that provider costs increased by 5.17% in the year to March 2026, compared with a 2.55% increase in residential care funding. It also reports that almost two-thirds of residential aged care providers were already operating at a loss.

A 2.55% increase when costs have risen by 5.17% is an increase on paper. Operationally, it is a reduction in purchasing power. That distinction matters enormously to rural and remote providers. Balranald Shire Council operates Bidgee Haven. Council has commenced an extension incorporating a six-bed memory unit and upgrades to existing kitchen, dining and laundry facilities, while simultaneously working to return the facility to a financially sustainable operating model. Council's current major-project records put the memory-support extension at approximately \$4.596 million.

We are therefore not writing from the sidelines. Our community is putting real money into increasing aged care capacity. What we need from the Commonwealth is a recurrent funding system that does not make operating that capacity progressively more difficult.

The Government has quite properly lifted expectations through 24/7 nursing, mandated care minutes and stronger quality and safety requirements. However, it cannot credibly insist upon higher standards while funding the service below the rate at which the cost of delivering those standards is rising. That is not a sustainable model.

Nor can the capacity problem be dismissed as something the sector should simply manage. Aged care homes are reportedly around 95% occupied. Australia needs approximately 10,000 additional beds each year, yet fewer than 1,000 were delivered last financial year, with approximately 3,000 planned beds already abandoned or at risk.

If providers cannot make existing beds financially sustainable, expecting them to finance thousands of additional beds is plainly unrealistic. The consequences then flow directly into the hospital system. Your own comments this month have acknowledged the serious problem of older Australians remaining in hospitals while awaiting aged care and the need for greater aged care supply.

Minister, we cannot solve an aged care capacity shortage by making the economics of supplying aged care worse.

Balranald Shire Council supports the immediate measures sought by Ageing Australia:

1. Increase AN-ACC by 5%, based on current costs;
2. Increase the hotelling supplement by 3.5%, reflecting inflation in food, cleaning, laundry and everyday living costs; and
3. Bring forward the planned \$5 accommodation supplement increase to 1 October 2026.

I am aware the Commonwealth has referred publicly to its overall aged care expenditure and to increases in average per-resident funding since 2022. With respect, that does not answer the issue being raised.

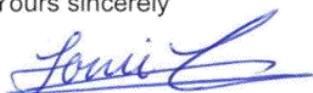
The relevant question is not how much Government is spending compared with four years ago. The relevant question is whether today's funding meets today's reasonable cost of providing the care Government requires. On the figures presently before the sector, it does not.

For rural communities, this cannot become another policy area where services are allowed to deteriorate until the market concludes that operating outside the metropolitan areas is simply too difficult.

I ask that the Government reconsider the funding determination and provide a substantive response to each of the three measures above.

Older Australians deserve better than a system where standards rise, costs rise, demand rises, hospital blockages rise, but the funding needed to provide the beds fails to keep pace.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Louie Zaffina
Mayor



Australian Government
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Ref No: MC26-020550

Councillor Louie Zaffina
Mayor
Balranald Shire Council
council@balranald.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 September 2026 to the Minister for Health and Ageing and the Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Hon Mark Butler MP and the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, the Hon Sam Rae MP, expressing your concerns about the adequacy of residential aged care funding. The Ministers have asked me to reply.

The Australian Government is committed to providing sufficient funding to residential aged care providers. In 2025-26, Government expenditure on residential aged care was \$26.6 billion, and it is expected to exceed \$28 billion in 2026-27. Since 2023, the Government has committed \$17.7 billion of additional funding for the aged care sector to support Fair Work Commission (FWC) decisions under the Aged Care Work Value Case, including adjustments to the AN-ACC price as recommended by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority's (IHACPA).

The 2026-27 AN-ACC price and hotelling supplement rate are based on IHACPA's 2026-27 Residential Aged Care Pricing Advice (Pricing Advice) and reflects the estimated cost of delivering care and everyday living services. In determining the annual Pricing Advice, IHACPA reviews the latest data submitted by aged care providers in the Aged Care Financial Report and Quarterly Financial Report. It also considers time and activity data collected through its own costing studies. This is different to other programs, where prices are usually indexed annually using fixed economic parameters.

The 2026-27 Pricing Advice incorporates the FWC annual wage review decision, the gender undervaluation review applied to allied health workers, and the aged care work value case nurses' wage increase applicable from 1 August 2026, as well as non-labour inflation. The Pricing Advice and IHACPA's technical specifications (including methodology and parameters) are available at www.ihacpa.gov.au/aged-care/residential/pricing-advice.

The Government understands that more work needs to be done in regional, rural and remote areas. It has asked IHACPA to review the cost of delivering everyday living services and whether regionality should be considered in everyday living funding. IHACPA's review is investigating the impact that a range of factors have on the cost of everyday living, such as location, the size of the home, and the complexity of resident's care needs. The Government will continue to review everyday living funding based on IHACPA's advice as it becomes available.

GPO Box 9848 Canberra ACT 2601

The Government has also committed to improving accommodation pricing arrangements for residential aged care. This is in response to the independent Residential Aged Care Accommodation Pricing Review (the Review) which made 18 recommendations to achieve equitable outcomes for supported residents and foster a sustainable sector that can build, upgrade, and maintain high-quality accommodation.

Minister Butler announced the Government's initial response to the Review on 22 April 2026. The full details of the Government's \$1.7 billion initial response were released in the 2026-27 Budget, including:

- \$1.1 billion over four years for changes to the accommodation supplement including:
 - From 20 March 2027, all accommodation supplement payments will increase by up to \$5 per resident per day, and new tiering will be introduced, with a single base accommodation supplement and a new higher accommodation supplement (HAS) tiering system for homes with 0-29%, 30-39%, and 40+% supported resident ratios.
 - From 20 March 2028, a top up payment supplement of \$20 per supported resident per day will be payable for homes that have a supported resident ratio of 60% or higher. These payments will be available until 30 June 2036.
- \$348.4 million over four years for new targeted capital subsidies payable to residential care providers (not already receiving Aged Care Capital Assistance Program (ACCAP) funding for the relevant project) to fund:
 - new homes with an additional \$30 per supported resident per day (for up to 25 years); and,
 - expanding existing homes with an additional \$15 per supported resident per day for homes that increase their bed numbers by at least 40% (for up to 15 years).
 - The payments will be available from 1 January 2027.
- \$33.8 million over four years to fund changes that will allow greater flexibility in setting residential aged care room pricing. These changes will support the sector by reducing uncertainty and increasing confidence for investment.

Minister Rae is currently undertaking consultations with the sector on the more complex capital incentive elements from the Review.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing will continue to monitor sector outcomes to help inform funding advice to Government. Providers are also encouraged to participate in IHACPA's consultations which helps inform the development of their future pricing advice.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Tara Grant
Director, Residential Care and Hotelling Reform Branch
23 September 2026



ALL COMMUNICATIONS MUST
BE ADDRESSED TO THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL

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29 September 2026

The Hon Sam Rae MP

Minister for Aged Care and Seniors

Email: Minister.Rae@health.gov.au

Cc:

The Hon Mark Butler MP; Minister for Health and Ageing

minister.butler@health.gov.au

The Hon Emma McBride MP; Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health

assistant.minister.mcbride@health.gov.au

Ms Tara Grant; Director, Residential Care and Hotelling Reform Branch

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

subsidiesandsupplements@health.gov.au

Dear Minister Rae

RE: RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FUNDING; RESPONSE TO REF MC26-020550

Thank you for the Department's letter of 23 September 2026 responding on behalf of yourself and Minister Butler to Council's concerns regarding residential aged care funding.

Council acknowledges the considerable investment the Australian Government is making in aged care, including funding associated with Fair Work Commission decisions, changes proposed to accommodation funding and the work being undertaken through the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority.

We also welcome the Government's acknowledgement that more work needs to be done in regional, rural and remote Australia. For a small rural facility such as Bidgee Haven in Balranald, that recognition is important.

However, having read the response carefully, Council remains concerned that the three very specific matters we raised have not actually been answered.

Council asked the Government to:

- Increase AN-ACC funding by 5% to better reflect current costs;
- Increase the hotelling supplement by 3.5%; and
- Bring forward the planned \$5 accommodation supplement increase to 1 October 2026.

The Department's response explains how the existing funding system works, outlines the IHACPA methodology and quotes the considerable amount the Commonwealth spends nationally on aged care.

That is useful background, but it does not answer those three questions.

Put simply, quoting the total amount Government spends on aged care does not tell a small rural provider whether the amount it receives is sufficient to meet the actual cost of providing the care Government requires it to deliver.

Council raised the difference between the latest AN-ACC increase of approximately 2.55% and contemporary sector analysis indicating provider costs have increased by approximately 5.17%. If the Government considers the current AN-ACC price adequate, Council would appreciate a direct explanation of how that difference is reconciled.

The same issue applies to everyday living costs.

We welcome the review into regionality, facility size and other cost factors. In fact, the review itself appears to acknowledge the very point Council is making; that the cost of operating a small regional or remote aged care facility cannot necessarily be dealt with through a one-size-fits-all national approach.

However, Bidjee Haven is paying for food, cleaning, laundry, utilities, staffing and compliance today. **A review which may produce a different funding arrangement sometime in the future does not meet an operating shortfall now.**

On the accommodation supplement, the Department has at least confirmed that the Government intends the increase of up to \$5 per supported resident per day to commence from 20 March 2027. Council's question, however, was why that increase cannot be brought forward to 1 October 2026. That question remains unanswered.

Council also noted with considerable interest the Department's advice regarding the new targeted capital subsidy for existing residential aged care homes that increase their bed numbers by at least 40%.

Bidjee Haven is currently being expanded from 15 beds to 21 beds. That is an increase of exactly 40%.

Council is investing heavily in this project because our community needs these additional beds and because rural Australia cannot afford to lose more aged care capacity.

Accordingly, Council seeks confirmation as to whether Bidjee Haven will qualify for the proposed \$15 per supported resident per day payment available to qualifying expanded facilities.

If Bidjee Haven does not qualify, please identify the specific eligibility provision that excludes the facility so Council can properly understand its position.

Council is not suggesting the Commonwealth is doing nothing. Clearly, substantial expenditure and reform are underway, and we acknowledge that.

But large national funding figures, references to future reviews and explanations of methodology can become a little like *smoke and mirrors* when the practical question remains unanswered:

Does the funding provided to a small rural aged care home actually meet the cost of providing the care Government requires that home to deliver?

For Balranald, that is not an academic policy discussion.

Council owns and operates Bidgee Haven because our community needs it. We are investing millions of dollars to expand the facility at the same time as governments acknowledge Australia needs substantially more aged care capacity.

What Council is asking for is therefore quite reasonable.

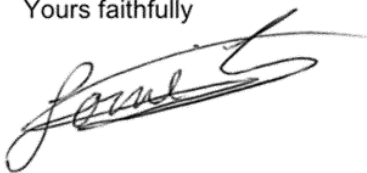
We would appreciate a direct response to the following four questions:

1. Does the Government support or reject Council's request for a 5% increase in AN-ACC funding, and why?
2. Does the Government support or reject Council's request for a 3.5% increase in the hotelling supplement, and why?
3. Why will the planned accommodation supplement increase not be brought forward to 1 October 2026?
4. Will Bidgee Haven's expansion from 15 to 21 beds qualify for the new capital subsidy applying to facilities that expand their bed numbers by at least 40%?

Thank you again for the response already provided and for the work being undertaken across the aged care system.

Council simply asks that the next response answer the questions we have actually put.

Yours faithfully



Louie Zaffina
MAYOR

Hi Andrew,

Thanks for doing this.

I do think the Energy Subcommittee has a worthwhile purpose and, if we set it up properly, probably a much more important one now than when it was originally established. The Regional Energy Strategy gives us a clear base, but there is also a lot happening around network capacity, reliability, batteries, market reform, community energy and funding that warrants a coordinated RAMJO position. The Revolving Energy Fund also gives the committee something practical to work on rather than becoming another committee that simply meets and talks about energy.

I'm comfortable with the TOR overall but there are only a few things I would change.

- I would keep the five-member structure, but I think voting membership should predominantly be drawn from the RAMJO Board and member councils. We should absolutely bring in network businesses, industry people, and technical specialists, but generally as advisers rather than voting members, particularly if the committee is going to be assessing projects or making recommendations about the Revolving Energy Fund.
- I would also add something to the membership criteria requiring the Board to have regard to geographic spread and the very different energy circumstances across the RAMJO region. The issues experienced by Albury or Griffith are not necessarily the same as those experienced in Balranald, Wentworth, or some of the smaller council areas.
- For the Revolving Energy Fund, I would also make it clear that the committee only starts assessing applications once the Board has approved the eligibility criteria, assessment methodology, conflict arrangements and delegations. That protects everyone involved.

The other thing I would like us to do is keep the work plan tight. I would rather have four or five things that we deliver than a very long list of things we monitor.

As a starting point, I would see the priorities as:

- Getting the Revolving Energy Fund pilot established
- Identifying the major network capacity and reliability constraints across the region
- Improving energy resilience for critical council and community infrastructure
- Coordinated advocacy on market, network and regulatory issues
- Turning the Regional Energy Strategy into actual projects and measurable outcomes

Subject to those minor changes, I'm happy with the direction and would support taking the TOR forward.

Happy to chair it and get it moving. Carol could assist with diary alignment.

Cheers

Terry

From: Andrew Fisher <
Sent: Monday, 21 September 2026 4:13 PM
To: Terry Dodds <tdodds@balranald.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Energy Subcommittee

Hi Terry,

I spoke to Brett on a few energy issues particularly the Regional Revolving Energy fund. His recommendation was to bring the energy sub to life. I had a look at the original governance structure and felt that there were changes required to bring its focus to our energy strategy and the evolving nature of energy in our region. I drafted a new terms of reference. As the appointed chair could I please get you to consider if the committee has a worthwhile purpose and if the new TOR are appropriate.

Regards



Andrew Fisher
Project Manager JONZA

Sturt Highway Taskforce – Actions by Responsibility

Active and outstanding actions are shown first. Completed and superseded actions are placed at the end of each organisation or responsible person.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW

General / no named delegate

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/04/24	Accident comparison statistics for the Sturt, Hume and Newell Highways		
04/04/24	Provide details of overtaking lanes		
06/05/25	Analysis of Wagga crash data within 60km zones - was speed greater than 60 km/h		
06/05/25	Anecdotal feedback from Police regarding any decrease in incidents since Highway Patrol at Hay was reinstated?		
06/05/25	Statistics for spend on pavement over the next four years, and if any money is identified in the Culvert and Bridge Programs?		
01/09/26	Provide TfNSW / SW REZ presentation slide deck to Secretariat for distribution with the minutes.	Action recorded in 1 Sep 2026 minutes.	
Completed/superseded			
04/04/24	Report on current, future and proposed works	TfNSW/REZ update presented 1 Sep 2026: six intersection upgrades and the broader corridor enabling/safety-capacity program were outlined. Slide deck to be circulated with minutes.	Complete - 1 Sep 2026
06/05/25	Growth and Improvement Strategy needed	Superseded by the 1 Sep 2026 resolution seeking a comprehensive Sturt Highway Corridor Plan integrating REZ works, resilience, emergency diversion routes and long-term freight needs.	Superseded - 1 Sep 2026

Anna Zycki

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
06/05/25	Traffic counters - follow up also and ask how Taskforce can get access to data in a form that is useful		
04/11/25	Provide copy of Route Options Report to Shane Wilson Narrandera Shire Council		
03/03/26	Data Room - Once information is uploaded, send email to everyone who is registered	Ongoing data-room notification protocol. Preferred-route/design material has progressed and was reported to the Taskforce on 1 Sep 2026.	
Completed / superseded			
05/08/25	Preferred option route report and access to data room where Councils can get information being compiled; please provide links to Secretariat for distribution to Taskforce.	Preferred route and corridor enabling works were presented to the Taskforce on 1 Sep 2026. Data room/design engagement arrangements are now in place.	Complete/ongoing updates

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/25	Preferred Route Assessment and associated reports for next Taskforce Meeting	TfNSW/EnergyCo presented the preferred route and associated corridor works at the 1 Sep 2026 meeting.	Complete - 1 Sep 2026

Anna Zycki / Damien Pfeiffer

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
05/08/25	REZ - Local Government needs to be included directly in the conversations being had. Information may be getting passed on second hand but that is inadequate. Local Government should be at the table. Advocate for being part of the important conversations.	TfNSW REZ/Partnerships team attended 1 Sep 2026 and committed to ongoing Council engagement and consideration of long-term legacy outcomes.	

Cassandra Ffrench

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/25	Research (historical) Sturt Highway data between 2016 and now. Provide to Secretariat to distribute	Still required. On 1 Sep 2026 the Taskforce again requested updated NSW freight/safety data and relevant interstate data to support the tri-state case.	

Denise / Rosemary (as recorded)

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
06/05/25	Traffic counters - access to data being collected by TfNSW on Sturt Highway freight movements utilising machine learning boxes		

Joanne Cheshire

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/02/25	Advise of the NSW Police procedure to alert TfNSW and Local Government in the case of traffic accidents.		
04/02/25	Installation of data collectors on VMS boards to be investigated		
05/08/25	Feedback to TfNSW Team - Stakeholder input essential in relation to safety outcomes for upgrades on Sturt. Concerns previously raised re flexible roadside barriers etc.		
05/08/25	Follow up with SRITP team and advise timeline for Far West SRITP (Balranald and Wentworth)		
04/11/25	Comparative safety statistics on Newell Highway following extensive improvements - provide to next Taskforce meeting	Still outstanding. The 1 Sep 2026 discussion again reinforced the need for comparable before/after safety and investment data.	
03/03/26	Advise daily vehicle numbers for sturt Highway	Still required. Daily traffic and heavy-vehicle data should be included in the corridor evidence/data pack.	
03/03/26	Follow up with team that manage the data collection to see if there is any intention to grow this programme and set up boxes further west.	Still outstanding. On 1 Sep 2026 the Taskforce also requested advice on a traffic monitoring device at the George Chaffey Bridge.	
03/03/26	Run data sets on pre and post investment on Newell Highway – effect on fatalities and accidents etc. and provide to Taskforce.	Still outstanding and should form part of the corridor evidence/data pack.	

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Ask TfNSW how traffic-monitoring locations are determined and whether a monitoring device can be installed on the George Chaffey Bridge.	Action recorded 1 Sep 2026.	
01/09/26	Follow-up maintenance concerns on the Balranald Bridge over the Murrumbidgee River, including vegetation/weeds through the walkway.	Raised by Balranald under General Business 1 Sep 2026.	
Completed/superseded			
05/08/25	TfNSW West Region - re attendance at meetings. Provide contact details to Secretariat so that a meeting invite can be issued	TfNSW West Region is now included in Taskforce meeting distribution; Stuart Cope was listed for the 1 Sep 2026 meeting (apology).	Complete
03/03/26	Copy of presentation to be provided to Secretariat for distribution	Received. Sent out with Minutes	Complete

Rebel Thomson

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
03/03/26	Copy of presentation to be provided to Secretariat for distribution	Received. Sent out with Minutes	Complete

Damien Pfeiffer

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
06/05/25	McCabe/Market Street intersection, Balranald - speak directly with Balranald CEO	Balranald reported on 1 Sep 2026 that TfNSW had redesigned the Market Street treatment to a 90-degree bend and retained all but one tree. Property acquisition for the Balranald intersection was also reported as secured.	Complete; engagement achieved

TASKFORCE SECRETARIAT / CHAIR**Chair / Taskforce Secretariat: Mayor Louie Zaffina/Terry Dodds PSM**

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Arrange follow-up meeting with Hon Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Roads and Minister for Regional Transport.	Balranald Shire Council, as Taskforce Secretariat, completed the draft follow-up correspondence on 21 Sep 2026. Ready for Chair approval/issue; the follow-up meeting remains to be arranged.	Balranald drafting complete; issue/meeting pending
01/09/26	Convene a Teams meeting/roundtable with relevant NSW, Victorian and South Australian transport ministers, Federal and State Members and local councils to gauge support for a tri-state Sturt Highway Taskforce/corridor approach.	Balranald Shire Council, as Taskforce Secretariat, completed draft Victorian and South Australian correspondence on 21 Sep 2026. Hold until the NSW Corridor Plan/evidence pack is sufficiently developed, then issue with a short agenda before convening the roundtable.	Balranald drafting complete; roundtable pending
01/09/26	Write to the Hon Catherine King MP and David Farley MP advocating recognition of the Sturt Highway as critical national infrastructure and seeking access to Commonwealth funding opportunities.	Balranald Shire Council, as Taskforce Secretariat, completed draft correspondence on 21 Sep 2026 to the Hon Catherine King MP and David Farley MP, plus supplementary departmental correspondence. Farley can issue now; Commonwealth Minister/Department letters are best issued with the first Corridor Plan draft/evidence summary.	Balranald drafting complete; issue staged

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
18/09/26	Issue formal transition correspondence to all Taskforce members confirming the new Chair and Secretariat arrangements and thanking the outgoing Chair, Cr Ruth McRae OAM, General Manager John Scarce and Murrumbidgee Council for their leadership and Secretariat work.	Balranald Shire Council, as incoming Taskforce Secretariat, completed the transition letter thanking Cr Ruth McRae OAM, John Scarce and Murrumbidgee Council. Ready for Chair approval/signature and circulation.	Balranald drafting complete; issue pending

Outgoing/incoming Taskforce Secretariats: Terry Dodds PSM

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Complete transfer of Chair and Secretariat functions from Murrumbidgee Council to Balranald Shire Council for the next two-year term.	Mayor Louie Zaffina accepted the Chair role, and Balranald Shire Council accepted responsibility for providing the Taskforce Secretariat for the next two-year term.	Completed

Taskforce Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/25	ABC Landline - report on Sturt Highway		
03/03/26	Meeting with Hon Jenny Aitchison MP, Minister for Roads and Minister for Regional Transport to be arranged in May	Initial meeting with Minister Aitchison held 7 May 2026. No funding commitment was made. The Taskforce resolved on 1 Sep 2026 to seek a follow-up meeting.	Initial meeting complete; follow-up required. Letter sent. Completed. Pending
01/09/26	Distribute calendar invitations for 2027 Taskforce meetings: 2 March 2027 (Balranald) and 7 September 2027 (Narrandera).	Meeting schedule adopted 1 Sep 2026.	Completed
01/09/26	Update stakeholder contact details; issue invitations to each Taskforce meeting and review contact details annually.	Standing action adopted 1 Sep 2026. Add the Regional Renewable Energy Manager / RRERC as a relevant stakeholder for Sturt items involving SWREZ transport, road impacts, NHVR permit conditions, enabling infrastructure and cumulative project impacts.	Completed
18/09/26	Establish a neutral Secretariat operating protocol covering meeting coordination, action tracking, member circulation, records, ministerial correspondence and media approvals.	Balranald Shire Council provides the administrative service on behalf of all member councils. Taskforce advocacy and public positions remain collective.	Commenced and ongoing

Completed/superseded

04/11/25	Correspond with Anna Zycki and Michael Hopperman EnergyCo, emphasising developments outside REZ are also considered, particularly re road network (Sturt Hwy)	TfNSW advised 1 Sep 2026 that proponents outside the preferred REZ corridor must work directly with TfNSW on route suitability and generally fund required upgrades.	Complete: issue addressed; monitor
04/11/25	Media release to cover off on all actions from today's meeting	Taskforce media releases issued 25 May 2026 and 23 June 2026.	Complete
03/03/26	NHVR - invitation to September meeting	NHVR invitation issued; Charles Hussey was listed for the 1 Sep 2026 meeting.	Complete
03/03/26	Write to Farrer by-election candidates to seek advocacy and support for funding and promotion of Sturt Highway	Letters sent to candidates along with Sturt Highway advocacy doc 8 April 2026	Complete

Taskforce Secretariat / Taskforce

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
18/09/26	Review and update the Sturt Highway Taskforce Terms of Reference, including governance, membership, Chair/Secretariat arrangements and meeting frequency.	The 2024 Terms of Reference were due for review in September 2026 and currently require a minimum of four meetings per calendar year. The 1 Sep 2026 minutes schedule two meetings for 2027 (2 March and 7 September). The review should either reconcile the meeting program with the current requirement or amend the Terms of Reference.	Secretariat to report in March.

Taskforce Secretariat / Regional Renewable Energy Manager

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
21/09/26	Establish a working link with the Regional Renewable Energy Manager / RRERC so Sturt Highway Taskforce work uses, rather than duplicates, existing SWREZ transport-and-roads work. Obtain relevant outputs on NHVR permit conditions, road/haulage/OSOM impacts, TfNSW/EnergyCo transport updates and enabling-infrastructure studies for use in the Corridor Plan and evidence pack.	Secretariat coordination action arising from review of the RRERC meeting minutes and RREM presentation dated 20 Aug 2026. Scope is limited to matters relevant to the Sturt Highway corridor.	New; contact/coordination required

Taskforce Secretariat / Wagga Wagga City Council

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/25	Future Action: Media release around the length of time it will take to travel from Wagga Wagga to Narrandera		

JOINT / CORRIDOR-WIDE ACTIONS**Chair / Taskforce Secretariat / Member Councils**

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
08/09/26	Use a consistent Taskforce advocacy principle: assess the Sturt Highway by the transport, freight, safety, resilience and economic job the corridor performs, not by local population alone.	Use this as a corridor-wide principle in briefings, submissions and media, supported by verified evidence from across the route.	Corridor Study will assist; see below.

David Webb (Hay) with TfNSW; all member Councils

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Prepare a draft Sturt Highway Corridor Plan and coordinate member Council input.	In progress. David Webb advised members on 7 Sep 2026 that he had commenced the Corridor Plan and requested a one-page profile from each LGA by 2 Oct 2026. Secretariat to track all member submissions and outstanding inputs. RRERC/RREM transport and roads work, including NHVR permit-condition coordination and EnergyCo/TfNSW transport material, should be treated as an input to the Plan so the Taskforce does not recreate work already underway.	In progress

David Webb / Member Councils / TfNSW

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
08/09/26	Consolidate member Council priorities into common corridor categories: overtaking and road geometry; shoulders/widening; crash and rollover locations; bridges, culverts and resilience; heavy-vehicle rest/fatigue facilities; traffic counting; development impacts; corridor protection/bypass options; and freight-servicing needs.	Use the LGA profiles to identify recurring corridor-wide problems and local exceptions. The Plan should not become a collection of unrelated council wish lists. Include major-project road impacts, OSOM/haulage requirements and consistency of NHVR permit conditions where these are corridor issues, drawing on the RRERC Transport and Roads workstream.	

Member Councils / TfNSW / David Webb

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
08/09/26	Verify each member Council's Corridor Plan profile figures before the final Plan is locked down, including highway length, current traffic counts, classified heavy-vehicle volumes and relevant traffic-counter results.	Several local profiles may rely on older or approximate figures. The final Corridor Plan should distinguish verified current data from indicative or historic figures.	

Taskforce Secretariat / TfNSW

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Formally request Transport for NSW to progress a comprehensive Sturt Highway Corridor Plan using a whole-of-Transport approach and integrating SW REZ works, Connecting Country Rivers, Euroley Road/Bridge, natural-disaster resilience, emergency diversion routes and future heavy-freight requirements.	Balranald Shire Council, as Taskforce Secretariat, completed the draft letter to the Secretary, Transport for NSW on 21 Sep 2026. RRERC material dated 20 Aug 2026 confirms a separate SWREZ Transport and Roads workstream is already operating, including Council/TfNSW work on consistent NHVR permit conditions and infrastructure pressures. The Corridor Plan request should integrate and cross-reference this work rather than duplicate it. Ready for Chair approval/issue.	Balranald drafting complete; issue pending

TfNSW / Taskforce Secretariat

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
01/09/26	Obtain a consolidated evidence pack: significant NSW Sturt Highway freight, traffic, safety/crash and investment data; seek equivalent relevant data from Victorian and South Australian counterparts.	Compile current traffic, classified heavy-vehicle, freight, safety/crash and investment data for the full NSW Sturt corridor, with interstate data where it affects the continuous route. RRERC papers dated 20 Aug 2026 identify additional sources: the EnergyCo/TfNSW transport update from the 14 Jul Balranald roundtable, the SWREZ Transport and Roads workstream, NHVR permit-condition coordination and EnergyCo enabling-infrastructure work. The RRERC presentation reports 31 active State Significant renewable-energy DAs across SWREZ LGAs; use this as regional cumulative-impact context only and obtain project-specific haulage/OSOM/route data before attributing impacts to the Sturt.	In progress; RRERC/EnergyCo sources identified

MEMBER COUNCILS / COUNCIL DELEGATES**All member Councils**

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
07/09/26	Member Councils to provide David Webb with the requested one-page LGA profile for the Sturt Highway Corridor Plan by 2 October 2026.	David Webb advised on 7 Sep that the Corridor Plan had commenced and requested profiles from each LGA by 2 Oct 2026. Secretariat to confirm receipt from every member council.	All member LGAs to confirm

Each of the LGAs

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/04/24	Potential locations for overtaking lanes	This may be part of the Corridor Study or covered by lay-bys currently in plan (SWREZ) through TfNSW.	

Mayor Linklater, Wentworth

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
03/03/26	Approach Mayor Stuart King of Swan Hill Rural City Council re membership of Taskforce	No Swan Hill delegate was recorded at the 1 Sep 2026 meeting. The new tri-state Taskforce/roundtable action provides a broader engagement pathway.	

Member Councils

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/02/25	Advise Secretariat of specific data you wish to have included in TfNSW presentation/s to the Taskforce		
03/03/26	Media Campaign Christmas 2026 - any ideas, let Secretariat know	New Secretariat to prepare a scheduled media program, including a Christmas 2026 road-safety release.	
03/03/26	Please provide engagement statistics on the Christmas Road Safety Campaign to Secretariat	Outstanding - engagement statistics should be collated before the 2026 Christmas road-safety campaign.	
Completed/superseded			
04/02/25	Advise Secretariat of other organisations/associations to be included on the Taskforce invitations list.	Standing stakeholder/invite list agreed 1 Sep 2026. Updated contacts to be maintained; invitations to be issued for every meeting and contacts reviewed annually.	Superseded - 1 Sep 2026
05/08/25	Contact details for any of the organisations you would like Secretariat to issue invitations	Stakeholder invite list confirmed 1 Sep 2026. Standing action created to update contacts annually and invite stakeholders to each meeting.	Superseded - 1 Sep 2026

Hay Shire Council

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/25	Contact details for Livestock, Bulk and Rural Carriers Association	Contact details received and incorporated into stakeholder invitation list.	Complete

Mayor McRae, Murrumbidgee

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
03/03/26	Speak with RAMJO to arrange a Farrer by-election candidates meeting re their election commitment	Farrer by-election has concluded. Direct engagement with Member for Farrer David Farley is now captured in the 1 Sep 2026 federal advocacy resolution.	Superseded - 1 Sep 2026

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS / EXTERNAL**Community Roadsafe Mildura**

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
03/03/26	Victorian statistics for the Sturt Highway by Vic counterparts (Vic Roads etc.) crash/accident statistics, overtaking lanes, etc.	Victorian statistics received and distributed with meeting minutes.	Complete

J Jewell (H Dalton's office)

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
05/08/25	Cross Border Commissioners' (SA and Victoria) contact details to Secretariat	Cross Border Commissioners' contact details received.	Complete

UNALLOCATED / CLARIFICATION REQUIRED**No responsible delegate recorded**

Tasked	Action	Latest action update	Status
04/11/26	Issue invitation to Vic Roads to attend Wentworth meeting 3 March 2026		Superseded



THE COUNTRY MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

"What we want is nothing more than equity"

MINUTES

Friday 27th March 2026

A General Meeting of the Country Mayors Association of NSW Inc was held in the Theatrette, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney from 8:20 am until 1:00pm. The meeting had a Housing theme.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **The meeting commenced with a welcome from CMA Chairman Mayor Rick Firman OAM.**
2. **Chair of the NSW Grants Commission Ms. Linda Scott**

Ms Scott discussed how and why the NSW Grants Commission is currently conducting a review of its' FA Grants distribution methodology. She stressed that the Grants Commission has no say on the size of the pool of funds it has to disperse.

Ms Scott acknowledged how much more important FA Grants are in country NSW than in Sydney LGAs. She discussed Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation.

Ms Scott said that the methodology calculated the need for funding, what Councils choose to spend their money on is a matter for them and is not factored in.

Ms Scott said that her first speech as Chair of the NSW Grant Commission was a CMA meeting.

A thank you gift was presented to Ms Scott by CMA Board Member Mayor John Medcalf OAM (Lachlan Shire)

3. **Presentation: NSW Office of Local Government Deputy Secretary - Mr. Brett Whitworth PSM**

Mr. Whitworth addressed the code of conduct policy paper. He said that removing the GMs from the politics was important. Unsatisfactory behaviour will see a Councillor judged by a panel of their peers. Complaints will be triaged by the OLG. The time-consuming investigatory process has been cut out.

Mr. Whitworth said that the Expert Advisory Panel has produced some discussion papers, including performance ratios.

Mr. Whitworth said that the OLG will ensure Councils are not impacted by the increase of \$240,000 to \$2.7mil. in the Federal Disaster Recovery Framework.

On the housing front, he is keen to have contracts for property management with Councils in the regions.

A thank you gift was presented to Mr Whitworth PSM by CMA Board Member Mayor Josh Black (Dubbo Regional Council)

4. Presentation: Homes NSW CEO - Ms Rebecca Pinkstone

Ms Pinkstone has spent two years as CEO of Home NSW. With 100,000 public housing dwellings, it is the largest public housing provider in the southern hemisphere.

Ms Pinkstone said that the average age of public housing is about 60 years old. A State renewal program is underway.

2,200 new homes is the goal of a current modern home program.

Private developers are needed to upscale.

89% of Aboriginal Housing is in the regions. New homes are being built this year for the AHO (Aboriginal Housing Office).

The Key Worker Housing program was described as more a workforce development program. Local businesses are used as much as possible with the building of affordable home projects.

Presentation supplied.

A thank you gift was presented to Ms. Pinkstone by CMA Board Member Mayor Russell Webb (Tamworth Regional Council)

4. Presentation: IPART Chairman - Mr Anthony Wing

Mr. Wing has been in the role of IPART Chairman for nearly two months. In his introduction, Mayor Firman advised Mr Wing that he has big shoes to fill. Former IPART Chair Carmel Donnelly was a regular at CMA meetings.

The CMA was Mr Wing's first speech as Chairman of IPART. He said he had been advised that the CMA was a valuable meeting for an IPART Chair. He said IPART balances your financial sustainability needs with impact on your communities (of a SRV).

He discussed the pressures on Councils to help with housing. Contribution plans are one option. If above \$20,000 they have to go via IPART to the Minister but the process is not as onerous as it appears. They can be a source of funding for Councils. Essential works should not be subsidised by the community but the developer. No Contribution Plan from a country Council (in excess of the \$20,000 cap) has been reviewed in some time. Members were strongly encouraged to consider submitting higher developer contribution plan to IPART, if appropriate.

Mr. Wing spoke of a focus to speed up IPART's processes.

Byron Shire Mayor Ndiaye described the stressful SRV process and how drainage charges etc should be indexed.

A thank you gift was presented to Mr Wing by CMA Board Member Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

5. NSW Opposition Leader, Ms. Kellie Sloane MP

Ms. Sloane announced that an elected Coalition would have a stand-alone Minister for Local Government. She commended the CMA for its relentless advocacy.

She acknowledged that some LGAs are the size of small European countries, without the resources; infrastructure support is necessary. A commitment to have one-quarter of the NSW Infrastructure spend earmarked for rural, remote and regional NSW was reiterated. Ms. Sloane said that ¼ of the population should equate to ¼ of the infrastructure budget.

Ms. Sloane said that she wants more young city people building a home and a life in the country - 50% want this.

The Inland Rail Project was the cancellation of a nation building project that broke promises.

She gave a payroll tax decrease promise; that her Government would raise the threshold from \$1.2mil to \$1.5mil. Plus, there would be indexation to prevent bracket creep. Policies need to support business growth.

Ms. Sloane also said that reducing red tape and Government interference with businesses would be a priority. Service NSW Next would look at how AI could streamline processes.

The Oppositions plan to have a regional Parliament sitting (if elected) was discussed and the intention that it would be more than a box tick but an effort to listen to the regions.

I don't have the answers but I, we are listening, the Opposition Leader said.

A thank you gift was presented to Ms Sloane by CMA Chairman Mayor Rick Firman OAM (Temora Shire)

Morning Tea took place in the Fountain Court

6. Presentation: NSW Housing Minister - The Hon Rose Jackson MLC

The Minister said that a strong connection between State and Local Government is so important for addressing the housing challenge. Regional NSW is feeling the pinch.

300 homes are to be completed by the end of the year for essential workers.

Homelessness, now evident in regional communities more and in some cases for the first time is visually evident. Local and State collaboration needed.

The Minister said encouraging longer term homelessness is not ideal but amenities that also serve the needs of seasonal workers has merit.

Members asked about energy savings in new housing, with renewables, plus water security and it's connection with housing capacity.

The Federal fund for housing supporting infrastructure was applauded by Minister Jackson.

The Minister was thanked for opposing water buybacks. She said she has expressed her opposition clearly to Minister Murray Watt.

A thank you gift was presented to Minister Jackson by CMA Deputy Chairman Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick (Bega Valley Shire)

7. Presentation: NSW Shadow Housing Minister – The Hon. Chris Rath MLC

Mr. Rath said that population growth is all the more important for regional communities and housing is obviously crucial for that.

Temporary accommodation is also a challenge for industry needs in the regions.

He said housing demand has risen far faster than supply has. Approximately 75,000 new homes are needed in NSW each year and we've been averaging 45,000.

Water, roads and other infrastructure is needed for housing growth and Councils cannot handle that alone. That is why the Coalition has committed at least 25% regional infrastructure guarantee. The cost of enabling infrastructure is insufficient. \$5bil, \$1.5bil for the regions of that infrastructure promised by the Federal Coalition at the Bush Summit.

A thank you gift was presented to Mr Rath by CMA Board Member Mayor Sue Moore (Singleton Council)

8. Presentation: Argyle Housing CEO - Ms. Carolyn Doherty

Argyle Housing provided a ground-level perspective of social and affordable housing provision.

Ms. Doherty said that regional housing is a passion of hers. Without safe secure housing people miss many opportunities.

Many clients needing social housing have not been in that circumstance long-term.

Affordable housing is another area Argyle Housing is involved in, due to the pressures around housing supply and costs.

Ms. Doherty said she sees a willingness in Local Government to innovate and housing solutions can come through partnerships.

Project with Griffith City Council – where that community had less than 1% vacancy rate and hot bedding was occurring.

Exceptional outcomes, like With BBRF funding, the Griffin Green project was a collaboration between Argyle Housing and Griffith City Council and had exceptional outcomes, according to Ms. Doherty. There were 20 rentals built and a community space developed that is valued by the community.

Ms. Doherty said that Argyle and Council stayed in their respective lanes, in terms of how they contributed to the project and both saw value in the partnership and are proud of the result.

Ms. Doherty encouraged other CMA Members to collaborate with their local social housing providers.

A thank you gift was presented to Ms Doherty by CMA Board Member Mayor Sharon Cadwallader (Ballina Shire)

9. Excelling Council Stories – Housing**Byron Shire Council**

Mayor Ndiaye said her Council had spent 20 years working on the AirBNB challenge.

No funding to do this but Byron Shire will soon have the data with which to inform others.

Housing for Council workers, essential workers is unaffordable and unavailable, with Airbnb having been a significantly contributing factor.

Post floods temporary housing has been retained.

Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA), namely AirBnB, became the focus of Byron Shire, with that form of accommodation taking up 17.7% of the housing stock. Byron Shire established a 60-day cap on STRA and detailed how it was achieved and the outcomes.

Presentation supplied.

Forbes Shire Council

Housing shortages were recognised as an inhibitor to Forbes Shire's growth potential.

Gold Ridge was their award-winning initiative.

It consisted of 221 residential blocks. Forbes Shire got \$4mil from TCorp.

Mayor Miller said that Forbes only had mum and dad investing until our project triggered larger scale investments. She said Forbes is now the second highest growth area in the Central West.

Mayor Miller also spoke of a financial gap year campaign – encouraging young people to give a country centre a go.

She said Gold Ridge in Forbes showed that Local Government can take a leadership role in stimulating housing investment.

Presentation supplied.

A thank you gift was presented to Mayors Ndiaye and Miller by CMA Board Member Mayor Sam Coupland (Armidale Regional Council)

GENERAL MEETING

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Attendance

James Roncon	GM	Armidale Regional Council
Cr. Sam Coupland	Mayor	Armidale Regional Council
Cr. Sharon Cadwallader	Mayor	Ballina Shire Council
Cr. Louie Zaffina	Mayor	Balranald Shire Council
Terry Dodds PSM	CEO	Balranald Shire Council
Cr. Robert Taylor	Mayor	Bathurst Regional Council
David Sherley PSM	GM	Bathurst Regional Council
Cr. Russell Fitzpatrick	Mayor	Bega Valley Shire Council
Anthony McMahon	CEO	Bega Valley Shire Council
Mark Griffioen GAICD	GM	Bellingen Shire Council
Cr. Julia Cornwell McKean	Mayor	Berrigan Shire Council
Cameron Boardman	CEO	Berrigan Shire Council
Grant Baker	GM	Bland Shire Council
Cr. Bruce Reynolds	Mayor	Blayney Shire Council
Mark Dicker	GM	Blayney Shire Council
Cr. Lachlan Ford	Mayor	Bourke Shire Council
Leonie Brown	GM	Bourke Shire Council
Cr. Tom Stanton	Mayor	Brewarrina Shire Council
David Kirby	GM	Brewarrina Shire Council
Jay Nankivell	GM	Broken Hill City Council
Cr. Sarah Ndiaye	Mayor	Byron Shire Council
Mark Arnold	GM	Byron Shire Council
Brad Byrnes	GM	Cabonne Council
Cr. Jamie Jones	Deputy Mayor	Cabonne Council
Cr. Bob Stewart	Chairman	Central Darling Shire Council
John Sevil	GM	Central Darling Shire Council
Natasha Walker		Central Darling Shire Council
Meredith Macpherson		Central NSW JO
Kate Barker	EO	Central NSW JO
Gary Fry	Secretariat	CMA
Julie Briggs	Policy Advisor	CMA
Murray Wood	GM	Coffs Harbour City Council
Cr. Dave McCann	Mayor	Coolamon Shire Council
Tony Donoghue	GM	Coolamon Shire Council
Cr. Daniel Keady	Mayor	Coonamble Shire Council
Greg Hill	GM	Coonamble Shire Council
Cr. Abb McCalister	Mayor	Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

Roger Bailey	Interim General Manager	Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
Cr. Paul Smith	Mayor	Cowra Council
Cr. Josh Black	Mayor	Dubbo Regional Council
Andrew Wilsmore	GM	Dubbo Regional Council
Cr. Digby Rayward	Mayor	Dungog Shire Council
Gareth Curtis	GM	Dungog Shire Council
Cr. Ashley Hall	Mayor	Edward River Council
Jack Bond	CEO	Edward River Council
Mark Ferguson	GM	Eurobodalla Shire Council
Cr. Mathew Hatcher	Mayor	Eurobodalla Shire Mayor
Stephen Dunshea	GM	Forbes Shire Council
Cr. Phyllis Miller OAM	Mayor	Forbes Shire Council
Cr. Nick White	Deputy Mayor	Gilgandra Shire Council
Cr. Doug Batten	Mayor	Gilgandra Shire Council
David Neeves	GM	Gilgandra Shire Council
Nick White	Deputy Mayor	Gilgandra Shire Council
Cr. Carol Sparks	Deputy Mayor	Glen Innes Severn Council
Cr. Nina Dillon	Mayor	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Scott Gallacher	GM	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
Dena Vlekkert	GM	Greater Hume Council
Cr. Lea Parker	Mayor	Greater Hume Council
Dena Vlekkert	GM	Greater Hume Council
Cr. Colleen Fuller OAM	Mayor	Gunnedah Shire Council
Eric Groth	GM	Gunnedah Shire Council
Cr. Tiffany Galvin	Mayor	Gwydir Shire Council
Leeah Daley	GM	Gwydir Shire Council
Sarah Karaitiana	Acting General Manager	Hilltops Council
Cr. Brian Ingram	Mayor	Hilltops Council
Cr. Kate Dight	Mayor	Inverell Shire Council
Brett McInnes	GM	Inverell Shire Council
Bronwen Sandland	Principal Analyst	IPART
Joyce Tapper	Senior Analyst	IPART
Peter Chung		IPART
Cr. Bob Callow	Mayor	Junee Shire Council
Michael Jackson	GM	Junee Shire Council
Cr. Kinne Ring	Mayor	Kempsey Shire Council
Andrew Meddle	CEO	Kempsey Shire Council
Jane Frawley	CEO	Kiama Municipal Council
Cr. Melissa Matters	Deputy Mayor	Kiama Municipal Council
Cr. Danielle Mulholland OAM	Mayor	Kyogle Council
Cr. John Medcalf OAM	Mayor	Lachlan Shire Council
Ian Greenham	GM	Lachlan Shire Council
Cr. George Weston	Mayor	Leeton Shire Council
Jackie Kruger	GM	Leeton Shire Council
Cr. Darcy Byrne	President	LGNSW
David Reynolds	CEO	LGNSW
Cr. Darcy Byrne	President	LGNSW

David Reynolds	CEO	LGNSW
Cr. Steve Krieg	Mayor	Lismore City Council
Eber Butron	GM	Lismore City Council
Ross Gurney	GM	Lithgow City Council
Cr. Cassandra Coleman	Mayor	Lithgow City Council
Cr. Gail Driscoll	Deputy Mayor	Lockhart Shire Council
Gavin Rhodes	GM	Lockhart Shire Council
Adrian Panuccio	GM	Midcoast Council
Cr. Susannah Pearse	Mayor	Moree Plains Shire Council
	GM	Moree Plains Shire Council
Cr. John Harvie	Mayor	Murray River Council
Cr. Gary Pappin	Councillor	Murray River Council
Cr. Gary Pappin	Councillor	Murray River Council
Cr. Gary Lee	Mayor	Nambucca Valley Council
David Moloney	Acting GM	Nambucca Valley Council
Cr. Darrell Tiemens	Mayor	Narrabri Shire Council
Eloise Chaplain	GM	Narrabri Shire Council
Cr. Neville Kschenka	Mayor	Narrandera Shire Council
Tim Coote	GM	Narrandera Shire Council
Cr. Ewen Jones	Mayor	Narromine Shire Council
Cr. Phil Johnston	Director Community & Economic Development	Narromine Shire Council
Anthony Dickinson	Senior Advisor, Partnerships, Stakeholder Relations & Disaster response	NRMA
Cr. Andrew McKibbin	Mayor	Oberon Council
Gary Wallace	GM	Oberon Council
Anita Gambhir		OLG
Sharne Colefax		OLG
Claudia Brown		OLG
Cr. Tony Mileto	Mayor	Orange City Council
Scott Maunder	CEO	Orange City Council
Cr. Tony Mileto	Mayor	Orange City Council
Scott Maunder	CEO	Orange City Council
Cr. Neil Westcott	Mayor	Parkes Shire Council
Cr. Marg Applebee	Deputy Mayor	Parkes Shire Council
Kent Boyd	GM	Parkes Shire Council
Cr. Adam Roberts	Mayor	Port Macquarie Hastings Council
Cr. Kenrick Winchester	Mayor	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Rebecca Ryan	GM	Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council
Susan Escott	Acting EO	RAMJO
Emma Avery		RAMJO
Richard Colbran	CEO	RDN
Amy Brown	Chief - Health Enterprises	RDN
Megan Mulrooney	CEO	REROC

Andrew Constance	GM	Shoalhaven City Council
Cr. Peter Wilkins	Acting Mayor	Shoalhaven City Council
Cr. Sue Moore	Mayor	Singleton Council
Cr. Nick Elliott	Councillor	Snowy Monaro Regional Council
Cr. Chris Hanna	Mayor	Snowy Monaro Regional Council
Noreen Vu	GM	Snowy Monaro Regional Council
Cr. Julia Ham	Mayor	Snowy Valleys Council
Jessica Quilty	GM	Snowy Valleys Council
Cr. Russell Webb	Mayor	Tamworth Regional Council
Cr. Rick Firman OAM	Mayor	Temora Shire Council
Kris Dunstan	Director of Environmental Services	Temora Shire Council
Cr. Bronwyn Petrie	Mayor	Tenterfield Shire Council
Cr. Maurice Collison	Mayor	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Greg McDonald	GM	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Cr. Paul Culhane	Mayor	Upper Lachlan Shire Council
Alex Waldron	CEO	Upper Lachlan Shire Council
Cr. Robert Bell	Mayor	Uralla Shire Council
Toni Averay	GM	Uralla Shire Council
Peter Thompson	GM	Wagga Wagga City Council
Cr. Dallas Tout	Mayor	Wagga Wagga City Council
Cr. Eric Noakes	Mayor	Walcha Council
Cr. Sarah Derrett	Deputy Mayor	Warren Shire Council
Gary Woodman	GM	Warren Shire Council
Cr. Kathryn Rindfleish	Mayor	Warrumbungle Shire Council
Cr. Paul Best	Mayor	Weddin Shire Council
Matthew Sykes	GM	Weddin Shire Council
Cr. Daniel Linklater	Mayor	Wentworth Shire Council
Ken Ross	GM	Wentworth Shire Council
Cr. Jesse Fitzpatrick	Mayor	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Lisa Miscamble	GM	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Stephen Gardiner	Advocacy Manager	Wollondilly Shire Council
Cr. Matt Gould	Mayor	Wollondilly Shire Council
Cr. Jasmin Jones	Mayor	Yass Valley Council
Gayleen Burley	CEO	Yass Valley Council

Apologies

Cr. Steve Allan	Mayor	Bellingen Shire Council
Cr. Brian Monaghan	Mayor	Bland Shire Council
Cr. Kevin Beatty	Mayor	Cabonne Council
Carrathool Shire Council	GM	Carrathool Shire Council
Cr. Darryl Jardine	Mayor	Carrathool Shire Council
Cr. Ray Smith	Mayor	Clarence Valley Council
Laura Black	GM	Clarence Valley Council
Cr. Nikki Williams	Mayor	Coffs Harbour City Council
Adrian Butler	GM	Federation Council
Cr. Cheryl Cook	Mayor	Federation Council
Bernard Smith	GM	Glen Innes Severn Council
Cr. Margot Davis	Mayor	Glen Innes Severn Council
Cr. Doug Curran	Mayor	Griffith City Council
Scott Grant	GM	Griffith City Council
Cr. Carol Oataway	Mayor	Hay Shire Council
David Webb	GM	Hay Shire Council
Cr. Cameron McDonald	Mayor	Kiama
Cr. Adam Shultz	Mayor	Lake Macquarie City Council
David Hughes	CEO	Lake Macquarie City Council
Cian Middleton	GM	Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Cr. Ken Cudmore	Mayor	Liverpool Plains Shire Council
Cr. Claire Pontin	Mayor	MidCoast Council
Cr. Ruth McRae OAM	Mayor	Murrumbidgee Council
John Scarce	GM	Murrumbidgee Council
Cr. Patricia White	Mayor	Shoalhaven City Council
Ms Melissa Boxall	GM / Secretary	Temora Shire / CMA
Stephen Parry	GM	Walcha Council
Cr. Greg Whitely	Mayor	Warren Shire Council
Lindsay Mason	GM	Warrumbungle Shire Council

Recommendation: That the apologies be accepted and noted.

Moved by: Mayor Bob Callow (Junee Shire)
 Seconded by: Mayor Sharon Cadwallader (Ballina Shire)
 – Carried unanimously.

2. Adoption of Minutes from the 8 May 2026 meeting

Recommendation: That the 8 Mayor 2026 Minutes be accepted as a true record.
Moved by: Mayor Sharon Cadwallader (Ballina Shire).
Seconded by: Mayor Sarah Ndiaye (Byron Shire)
 – Carried unanimously.

3. Matters arising from 8 August 2025 Minutes

Mayor Ndiaye (Byron Shire) asked for CMA advocacy regarding bird costs, such as PPE.

4. CORRESPONDENCE - Since 8 May 2026

Outward

To	Subject
Newcastle Lord Mayor Gavin Morris	Congratulations re his election
Federal Arts Minister, The Hon. Tony Burke MO	National Cultural Policy
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Western Council rep on Expert Advisory Panel
NSW Reconstruction Authority CEO, Ms Kate Fitzgerald	Invitation to Speak at the 2 July Ballina Meeting
NSW Recover Minister, The Hon. Janelle Saffin MP	Invitation to present to the 2 July Ballina meeting
NSW National Leader, Mr. Gurmesh Singh MP	Invitation to present to the 2 July Ballina meeting
NSW Roads Minister, The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP	Invitation to present to the 2 July Ballina meeting
NSW Shadow Regional Roads Minister The Hon. Paul Toole MP	Invitation to present to the 2 July Ballina meeting
Opposition Leader, The Hon Kellie Sloane MP	Seeking stand-alone local government port-folio after the next election
NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP	Seeking stand-alone local government port-folio after the next election
Federal Local Government Minister, The Hon Catherine King MP	Requesting a meeting regarding the Inland Rail Cessation
Australian Local Government Minister The Hon Kristy McBain MP	Disaster Recovery funding
NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP	CMA support for RFDS funding
NSW Regional Health Minister the Hon. Ryan	CMA support for RFDS funding

Park	
Newcastle Lord Mayor Gavin Morris	Invitation to upcoming CMA meetings
Dominic Kennedy, Connections Experience Specialist – Essential Energy	Invitation to present to the 2 July Ballina meeting
Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional NSW, The Hon. Tara Moriarty MLC	Appreciation for the expansion of The Welcome Experience program to include Local Government
Minister for Lands and Property, The Hon. Stephen Kamper MP	Meeting request re Crown Lands amendments
NSW Environment Minister, The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC	Requesting a deferral of mandatory FOGO until 2035
NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, The Hon. Paul Scully MP	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
NSW Shadow Minister for Housing, Shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces The Hon. Chris Rath MLC	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
Minister for Lands and Property, The Hon. Stephen Kamper MP	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
NSW Minister for Housing The Hon. Rose Jackson MLC	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
CEO - Master Builders Association of NSW Mr. Matthew Pollock	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government The Hon. Catherine King MP	Financial Assistance Grants
NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
Opposition Leader, The Hon Kellie Sloane	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
NSW National Leader, Mr. Gurmesh Singh MP	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
LGNSW President Mayor Darcy Byrne and CEO Mr David Reynolds	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
NSW Grants Commission Chairman Ms Linda	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.

Scott	
NSW Legislative Council President, The Hon Ben Franklin	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
Federal Local Government Minister, The Hon Kristy McBain MP	Invitation to the CMA PM dinner on 27 Aug.
CEO of Homes NSW, Ms Rebecca Pinkstone	Invitation to Present at the 28 August 2026 CMA General Meeting
NSW Finance Minister The Hon Courtney Houssos MLC	Invitation to be a guest speaker - 28 August CMA General Meeting and to attend the 27 Aug PM Dinner
NSW Shadow Local Government Minister Mr Tim James MP	Invitation to the 27 August PM Dinner
IPART Chairman Mr Anthony Wing	Invitation to be a guest speaker - 28 August CMA General Meeting
Mr Brett Whitworth PSM,	Invitation to be a guest speaker - 28 August CMA General Meeting and to attend the 27 Aug PM Dinner
NSW Roads Minister, The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP	Invitation to the 27 August PM Dinner
NSW Roads Minister, The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP	Great Western Highway
CNSWJO	Great Western Highway (GWH) – CMA response to advocacy request
NSW Police Minister The Hon Yasmin Catley MP	Invitation to the 27 August PM Dinner
NSW Treasurer The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC	Invitation to the 27 August PM Dinner
NSW Treasurer The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC	Invitation to be a guest speaker - 28 August CMA General Meeting
Ms. Steph Cooke MP	Invitation to the 27 August PM Dinner
NSW Treasurer The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC	Letter of appreciation for the Red Fleet decision
NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP	Letter of appreciation for the Red Fleet decision
NSW Emergency Services Minister, The Hon Jihad Dib MP	Letter of appreciation for the Red Fleet decision
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Letter of appreciation for the Red Fleet decision
NSW Auditor-General, Mr Bola Oyetunji	Letter of appreciation for the Red Fleet decision

Ms Rebecca Reardon, new President – NSW Farmers	Congratulatory letter
Mr Xavier Martin, outgoing President - NSW Farmers	Commending his service
The Hon Mike Baird AO	Congratulating him as Incoming Group Chief Executive Officer - The NRMA
Forbes Shire Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Hilltops Mayor Brian Ingram	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Walgett Shire Mayor Jasen Ramien	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Lismore City Council Mayor Steve Krieg	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Shoalhaven City Council Mayor Patricia White	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Narrabri Shire Mayor Darrell Tiemens	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Snowy Monaro Regional Council Mayor Chris Hanna	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
Port Macquarie Hastings Council Mayor Adam Roberts	Congratulating and commending NSW Local Government Award recognition
NSW Water Minister The Hon Rose Jackson MLC	Invitation to present at the 13 Nov. CMA meeting
Prime Minister The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	The Federation Compact
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Crown lands Amendment Bill
Shoalhaven City Council Mayor Patricia White	Well-wishes
Gunnedah Shire Mayor Colleen Fuller OAM	In-principle support for a Domestic Violence forum
Cabonne Council Mayor and CNSWJO Chairman Kevin Beatty	Appreciation for his feedback, acknowledging CMA's work and achievements.

Inwards

From	Note / Action
Waverley Council Mayor Will Nemesh	His Council's position re Code of Meeting Practice and A/V attendance in Council meetings
NSW Treasurer, The Hon Daniel Mookhey MLC	Thanking the CMA for support with the State Government's GST Distribution campaign

Federal Arts Minister, The Hon. Tony Burke MO	Response to the CMA letter about rural, remote and regional LG involvement in the National Cultural Policy
Bega Valley Shire Mayor Russell Fitzpatrick	His Council's Crown Lands letter to the Premier
Wingecarribee Council Mayor Jesse Fitzpatrick	Their evidence to the Federal Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Fiscal Sustainability
RFDS CEO Grag Sam	Thanks for CMA Support
Lake Macquarie City Council Mayor Adam Shultz	Advising of appointment of new CEO Mr David Hughes
NSW Energy Minister, The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC	Fuel Crisis
Kris Dunstan, Director of Environmental Services, Temora Shire	Proposed statewide Community Participation Plan
NSW Regional Health Minister the Hon. Ryan Park	PFAS costs
Newcastle Lord Mayor Gavin Morris	Thanks the CMA for electoral congratulations
NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, The Hon. Paul Scully MP	Response to CMA correspondence about Local Planning Panels
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Response to CMA Letter re Local Government Financial Sustainability
NSW Local Government Minister, The Hon Ron Hoenig MP	Response to CMA letter regarding remote western Council representation in his Expert Advisory Panel
NSW Health Minister The Hon Ryan Park MP	Response to CMA letter encouraging funding for the RFDS
Glen Innes Severn Mayor Margot Davis	Community and Employment Benefit Program – Eligibility of Glen Innes Severn Council
Chairman of Rural Councils Victoria Cr Rob Amos	Letter to ALGA for advocacy for a dedication portion of the Fed. \$2Billion Local Infrastructure Fund for rural and remote areas.
June Shire Council Mayor Bob Callow	Seeking CMA support in opposing an amendment that change the need for Councils to endorse a new rail crossing to just be consulted with about it.
Broken Hill City Council Mayor Tom Kennedy	Encouraging CMA support for the Regional Banking Investment Alliance campaign
NSW Roads Minister, The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP	Response to the CMA letter about the Waterfall Way
CNSWJO	Seeking CMA Advocacy Support re the GWH
Electoral Commissioner for NSW, Ms. Rachel McCallum	Seeking CMA consultation re principles to govern future costs arrangements for Local Government elections.
NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns MP	Response to CMA letter re Local Government Financial Sustainability in NSW
NSW Auditor-General, Mr Bola Oyetunji	Response to CMA letter of appreciation re the Red Fleet

NSW Roads Minister, The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP	The Roads Act Review and CMA's request to expedite the legislation
Temora Shire Council	ESL letter to the CMA
NSW Police Minister The Hon Yasmin Catley MP	Response to the CMA letter re Gun Law reforms
IPART Chairman Mr Anthony Wing	Thanking the CMA for congratulations and accepting invitation to address the 28 Aug. meeting.
Local Govt Association of Qld CEO Alison Smith	Congratulating CMA on proposed Federal Disaster Recovery cuts comments. They are interested in further collaboration.
Upper Hunter Shire Mayor Maurice Collison	Local Government (General) Amendment (Meetings) Regulation 2026 and Council Advocacy Response [briefings]
Cabonne Council Mayor and CNSWJO Chairman Kevin Beatty	Feedback, acknowledging CMA's work and achievements.
Dubbo Regional Council Mayor Josh Black	Seeking support for the re-opening of the Wallerawang to Gwabegar Railway line

Recommendation: That the correspondence be received and noted.

Moved by: Mayor John Medcalf OAM (Lachlan Shire)

Seconded by: Mayor Phyllis Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

– Carried unanimously.

5. MEDIA RELEASES

[FEDERATION COMPACT WELCOMED BY NSW COUNTRY MAYORS](#)

[NSW COUNTRY MAYORS SLAM FEDERAL PLANS TO REDUCE DISASTER ASSISTANCE](#)

[NSW COUNTRY MAYORS WELCOME FRESH START EXTENSION](#)

[COUNTRY MAYORS ASK ABOUT THEIR FAIR SHARE OF THE BUDGET](#)

[NSW Country Mayors congratulate new Nationals leadership team](#)

[Country Mayors draw out political big guns](#)

[NSW Country Mayors Welcome Reopening of Inquiry](#)

[Country Mayors renew vows with LGNSW](#)

[Eugowra people, Cabonne Council honoured for Inland Tsunami response](#)

[COUNTRY MAYORS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT NSW – A BIG WEEK OF COLLABORATION](#)

[CMA backs Dr. McGirr's Rural Health Action Plan](#)

[No quick fix for NSW Red Fleet Ownership](#)

[NSW Country Mayors react to Bondi shooting](#)

[Legislation on Guns and Public Assembly too Rushed](#)

[NSW Country Mayors react to new look State Shadow Ministry](#)

[VALE DAME MARIE BASHIR](#)

[CMA discusses GST Review with NSW Premier and Treasurer](#)

[Welcome recognition for country NSW Council luminaries](#)

[CMA and NSW Emergency Services Minister progress Red Fleet issue](#)

[Emergency Services Levy a NSW Government responsibility](#)

[NSW Government drought response a good start](#)

[NSW Country Mayors welcome LG Expert Advisory Panel](#)

[NSW Premier and Country Mayors brainstorm](#)

[NSW COUNTRY MAYORS: TIME FOR NSW TO GET ITS' FAIR SHARE OF THE GST](#)

[NSW Country Mayors mourn Ray Donald OAM](#)

Recommendation: **That the media releases be received and noted.**

Moved by: Mayor Kenrick Winchester (Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council)

Seconded by: Mayor Mathew Hatcher (Eurobodalla Shire Shire).

– Carried unanimously.

6. REPORTS

Report from CMA Chairman Mayor Rick Firman OAM

Recommendation: That the Report be received and noted.

Moved by: Mayor Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

Seconded by: Mayor Cadwallader (Ballina Shire)

– Carried unanimously.

Finance Report – Ms. Melissa Boxall (CMA Secretary)

Recommendation: That the Report be received and noted, as read.

Moved by: Mayor Adam Roberts (Port Macquarie Hastings Council)

Seconded by: Mayor Nina Dillon (Goulburn Mulwaree Council)

– Carried unanimously

Report from the President of ALGA, Mayor Matt Burnett

Recommendation: That the Report be received and noted, as read.

Moved by: Mayor Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

Seconded by: Mayor Ndiaye (Byron Shire)

– Carried unanimously.

Report from President of LGNSW – Mayor Darcy Byrne

Recommendation: That the Report be received and noted.

Moved by: Mayor Winchester (QPRC)

Seconded by: Mayor Lea Parker (Greater Hume Council).

– Carried unanimously.

Policy Advisor's Report – Mrs. Julie Briggs

Recommendation: That the Report be received and noted and that the recommendations therein be endorsed.

Moved by: Mayor Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

Seconded by: Mayor Medcalf OAM (Lachlan Shire).

– Carried unanimously.

Mayor Paul Culhane (Upper Lachlan) raised the policy concern of data centres “being dumped on the regions,”. This was deferred to Urgent Business Without Notice.

Business with Notice

- a) **CMA Board Recommendation:** That the CMA accept NBN's application to become an Associate Member of the CMA.

Moved by: Mayor Callow (Junee Shire).

Seconded by: Mayor Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

– Carried unanimously.

- b) **CMA Board Recommendation:** That the CMA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) voting be modernised, with the use of Vero Voting (digital voting using smart-phones) to conduct any contested elections at the CMA AGM on Friday 13 November 2026.

Further, that Members endorse the proposed nomination timetable, with nominations opening on Thursday 1 October 2026 and closing at 5.00 pm on Friday 16 October 2026.

Moved by: Mayor Roberts (PMHC).

Seconded by: Mayor Parker (Greater Hume)

– Carried unanimously.

Urgent business without notice

1. Mayor Culhane (Upper Lachlan) initially moved That the CMA advocate for data centre renewable energy needs to be dealt with where they are required in the regions.

Wollondilly Mayor Matt Gould said it is subjective.

Mayor Miller suggested a policy paper be prepared by the Policy Advisor.

Final motion: "That the Policy Advisor be requested to prepare a discussion paper on the implications of the rapid expansion of data centres around NSW and specifically address the concern that the power requirements being met by renewable energy could lead to, if not challenged, even more renewable projects being thrust on already saturated areas of regional NSW rather than in proximity to metropolitan areas where the power is required"

Moved by: Mayor Culhane (Upper Lachlan Shire).

Seconded by: Mayor Miller OAM (Forbes Shire)

– Carried unanimously.

2. Mayor Andrew McKibbin (Oberon Council) moved That the CMA raise concerns regarding the Traffic controls changes relating to increased pilot vehicle requirements (now min. two people).

Further, that the cost implications be investigated and conveyed.

Seconded by: Mayor Callow (Junee Shire).

– Carried unanimously.

Without any further business, Chairman, Mayor Firman OAM declared the CMA General Meeting closed at 12:58 pm

The next CMA meeting will be on **Friday 13 November 2026**, in the NSW Parliament House Theatre – 8:20am-1:00pm. There will be four core segments:

- A pre-NSW Election Forum
- Water session
- AGM
- General Business

There will be a FOGO Workshop presented in conjunction with Minister Penny Sharpe's Office and the EPA's FOGO team on the afternoon of Thursday 12 November.

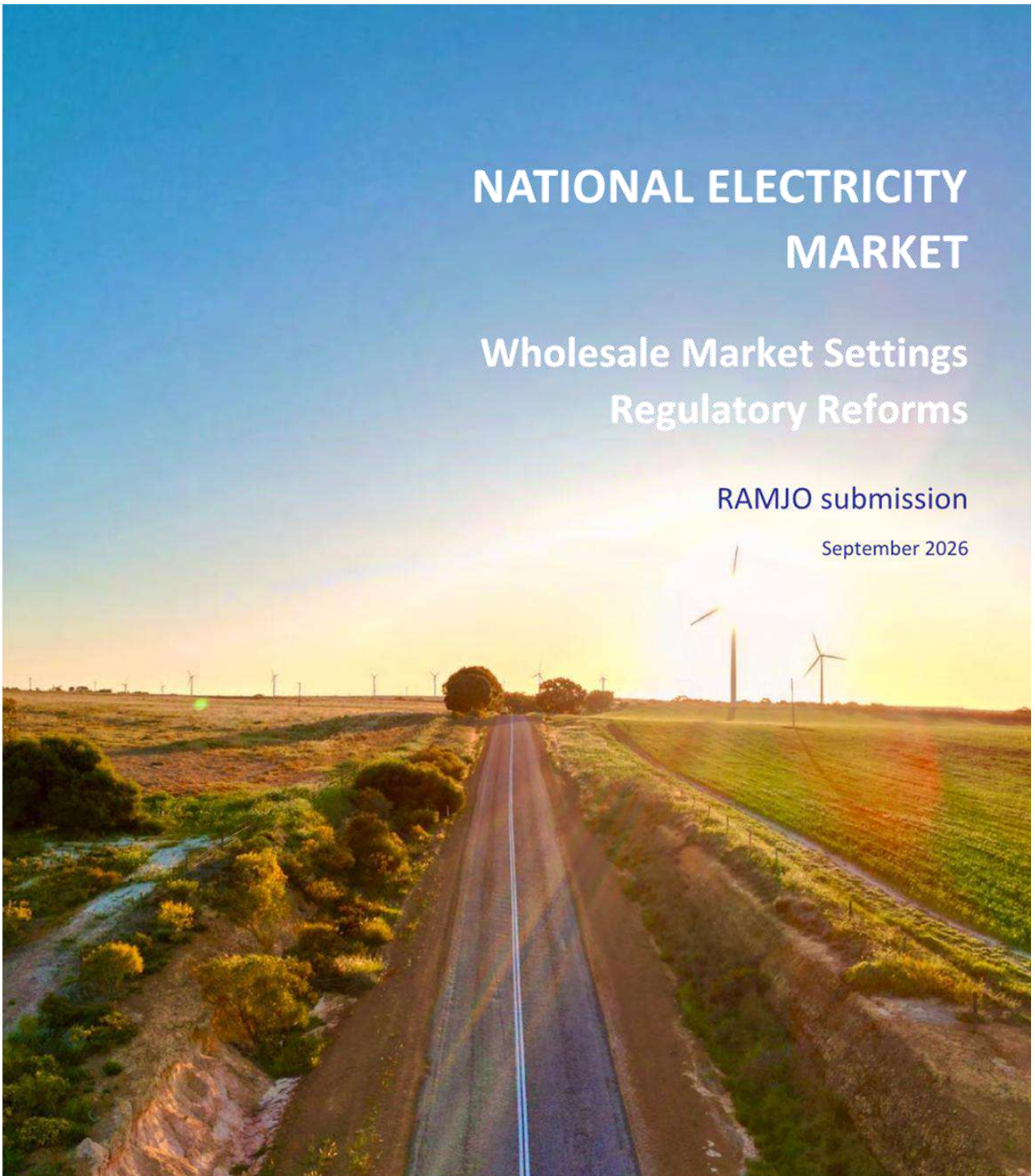
NSW Premier The Hon Chris Minns will be our guest speaker for a three-course dinner and drinks at the Royal Automobile Club of Australia on Macquarie Street.

NATIONAL ELECTRICITY MARKET

Wholesale Market Settings Regulatory Reforms

RAMJO submission

September 2026



RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

National Electricity Market Wholesale Market Settings Regulatory Reforms

Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation submission

RAMJO supports the objectives of securing timely investment, improving wholesale market liquidity and integrating price-responsive resources into the National Electricity Market (NEM), but notes that achieving these objectives must deliver demonstrable improvements in regional access, reliability and affordability.

RAMJO does not consider the energy transition equitable where regional communities host generation and transmission infrastructure for the wider market while local businesses, farms, councils and households remain constrained by inadequate or unaffordable access to electricity capacity.

These reforms should enable practical regional participation and transparent allocation of costs and benefits. Where local network constraints prevent those outcomes, implementation should identify the complementary action required and the bodies responsible.

This submission draws on the RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy 2025–2032, which prioritises equity, access and reliability for councils, communities and businesses. The strategy calls for a parallel process to ensure that investment in the wider electricity transition is accompanied by improvements to regional electricity capacity, reliability and affordability.

The Electricity Services Entry Mechanism (ESEM) addresses the mismatch between the long-term revenue certainty required for investment and electricity buyers' preference for shorter contracts. Its success will also depend on how it interacts with investment outside the mechanism, regional network capability, retail arrangements and emerging participation models.

The responses below summarise RAMJO's position on each consultation question. The sections that follow develop these responses and set out further recommendations. Both parts form RAMJO's submission and should be considered together.

Responses to the consultation questions

The National Electricity Law (NEL) and National Electricity Rules (NER) provide the legislative and operational framework addressed by this consultation.

Question 1

Do the NEL and NER amendments as proposed effectively implement the stated policy intent?

RAMJO supports the proposed direction but notes that the amendments alone will not ensure equitable outcomes for regional consumers. Effective implementation requires practical access for diverse providers, recognition of consumer-owned resources, equitable cost allocation and coordination with regional network investment. This includes enabling new entrant providers established by councils, businesses or community groups, subject to proportionate requirements. *RAMJO's further recommendations on these matters are set out in sections 1–6 of this submission.*

Question 2

Are there any operational or implementation issues that may arise from the proposed approach in the regulatory package?

Yes. RAMJO identifies regional connection constraints, proportionate eligibility and delivery requirements, coordination of market and network obligations, and forecasting of constrained and emerging demand as priority implementation issues. Implementation should provide an identifiable regional local-government voice and published measures of regional outcomes. Clear responsibility is needed for complementary action outside ESEM. RAMJO's further recommendations on these matters are set out in sections 2–4 and 7–9 of this submission.

RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

Question 3

Are there any interactions with existing market arrangements that require further consideration?

Yes. Further consideration is required of distribution planning, retail and aggregation arrangements, investment outside ESEM, existing state schemes and the allocation of costs and benefits to consumers. Improved wholesale conditions must benefit regional consumers and those unable to invest in their own renewable or other assets. *RAMJO's further recommendations on these matters are set out in sections 1 and 3–8 of this submission.*

Question 4

Are there any provisions in the draft Bill that are better placed in the NER (or vice versa)? If yes, identify the relevant provisions and provide reasons.

RAMJO does not propose a specific relocation of provisions. However, flexibility in operational rules and guidelines must be accompanied by clear accountability, meaningful consultation and review of consumer and regional outcomes. *RAMJO's further recommendations on these matters are set out in section 8 of this submission.*

Question 5

In addition to the amendments expressly contemplated in this regulatory package, are there any consequential amendments required elsewhere in the NEL or NER? If yes, identify the affected provisions and explain the basis for each consequential amendment.

RAMJO has not identified specific consequential amendments, but considers that the interactions outlined in this submission require an explicit implementation review to determine whether further amendments are necessary. Responsibility and timing should be assigned, covering distribution arrangements, aggregation, demand response and consumer protections. *RAMJO's further recommendations on these matters are set out in sections 1, 3, 7 and 8 of this submission.*

RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

Further regional recommendations and analysis

1 Enable participation models to evolve

The framework should accommodate a system in which consumers both use electricity and contribute generation, storage and flexible demand.

Virtual power plants, community battery arrangements and coordinated portfolios of business or council assets illustrate potential models. They should not be treated as the final form of participation. Ownership, technology and commercial arrangements will continue to develop.

RAMJO's Regional Energy Strategy supports community and business energy initiatives, local energy hubs, collective procurement and community batteries. Building on that direction, RAMJO recommends practical pathways for councils, businesses and community groups both to choose a qualified provider and to establish their own, individually or collectively. This could include community-owned or council-led arrangements where appropriate. Whether to pursue such an arrangement would remain a separate decision for the participating organisations.

Requirements should be proportionate to the functions performed and risks created. They should address technical capability, financial responsibility, consumer protection, data security, network security and reliable service delivery. Providing a limited aggregation or energy service should not automatically attract every obligation associated with operating a full electricity retail business.

Implementation should identify which participation pathways are already available and which barriers require changes to the proposed arrangements. Where further licensing or retail reforms are needed, these should be referred to the responsible bodies through the appropriate processes. The objective should be effective access, rather than eligibility that exists in principle but is impractical to use.

The design of these wholesale arrangements should anticipate changes in energy retailing as consumer-owned generation, storage and flexible demand reshape the market. Eligibility, contracting and cost-recovery arrangements should accommodate emerging providers and business models, rather than assume that current retail structures will remain the principal means of consumer participation.

2 Make investment support accessible to credible regional projects

RAMJO supports the proposed distinctions between bulk energy, shaping and firming, and recognition of investment outside ESEM, but notes that eligibility, contract design and delivery requirements must allow credible regional projects and aggregated resources to participate in practice.

Eligibility is only one part of effective access. Minimum project sizes, financial capacity requirements, contract structures, bonds and development milestones can determine whether a credible smaller project or aggregated portfolio can participate.

The final arrangements should explain how portfolios qualify, including combinations of new assets and qualifying investment that makes existing capacity dispatchable. They should accommodate staged development where it can deliver the contracted service reliably.

Contract design and eligibility guidance should explain how collective procurement, small-site power purchase agreements and community battery arrangements can participate where they meet the relevant service requirements. RAMJO's Regional Energy Strategy supports investigating collective purchasing arrangements for smaller council sites and expanding community batteries across the region.

RAMJO recognises the need for credible delivery obligations, but these should be proportionate to project risk and should not unnecessarily exclude smaller providers or aggregated portfolios. Bonds and milestones should discourage speculative bids and protect consumers from failed delivery, while recognising differences between project types and transparently addressing connection delays outside a proponent's reasonable control.

The framework should also distinguish between:

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- eligibility for new-investment support;
- participation in operating markets; and
- recognition of an asset's contribution in forecasting and procurement planning.

An existing asset may not qualify for investment support but can still reduce demand or provide valuable services. These contributions should not be overlooked.

3 Connect regional equity to local network capability

Additional wholesale generation does not automatically resolve a constrained local transformer or feeder. Even where sufficient generation exists across the wider system, consumers may lack an affordable connection or sufficient local network capacity to increase electricity use and replace other energy sources.

RAMJO's Regional Energy Strategy identifies insufficient electricity capacity for business and community growth, unreliable supply and barriers to installing new electrical infrastructure across several member council areas. It calls for coordinated identification of network constraints, investment in renewable generation and storage, and review of network responsibilities for capacity, reliability and equitable charging. These established regional priorities underpin RAMJO's request for a coordinated response through the reforms and complementary network planning.

In a discussion about public EV charging in Berrigan, a council project manager advised that the proposed project had not proceeded because network upgrade costs substantially exceeded charger hardware costs. This illustrates how local access to capacity can determine whether an electrification project proceeds.

In regional locations where grid supply is inadequate or connection upgrades are unaffordable, businesses, farms and councils may use generators to meet electricity needs that the network cannot supply. This demand already exists, but the portion supplied by generators is not recorded in grid electricity consumption. Forecasts based on historical grid consumption alone can therefore understate the electricity required if adequate network capacity becomes available. ESEM demand forecasting and procurement planning should account for this existing demand, alongside investment and electrification deferred because of network constraints.

Proximity to a Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) does not guarantee access to affordable additional capacity. Regional communities can host major generation and transmission development while local businesses, farms and councils remain constrained.

REZ employment, community funding and wider wholesale benefits are valuable, but do not necessarily resolve this limitation.

Where regional participation is constrained by local network limitations, implementation should identify the responsible network and government bodies and establish a process for addressing those barriers. Relevant community benefit programs should be coordinated with that process, while preserving responsibility for core network obligations.

Geographic equity does not require identical infrastructure or unlimited subsidised connections. It requires transparent assessment of regional needs, efficient alternatives and explicit decisions about sharing costs and benefits. A constraint outside ESEM's direct responsibilities should still have an identified body responsible for considering it.

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4 Recognise investment and demand outside ESEM

DCCEE's published expectation is that the Cheaper Home Batteries Program will support more than two million Australians to install batteries by 2030, providing around 40 GWh of additional storage nationally. These national figures should not be treated as a measure of capacity available for NEM dispatch.

The home battery rollout is one part of a broader change. Planning must also recognise solar generation, storage and flexible demand owned by businesses, industry, farms and local government. Together, these resources will shape future electricity demand and the services that could be available to support the grid.

RAMJO supports adjusting ESEM procurement for investment outside the mechanism, but considers its effectiveness dependent on timely recognition of distributed investment and realistic assessment of the services those resources can deliver. Its application should be transparent and responsive to material changes.

Planning should distinguish installed capacity from services actually available at particular times. Stored energy, consumer requirements, network constraints and contractual commitments all affect availability. An asset may reduce its owner's demand without being available for external dispatch; both contributions matter, but they serve different purposes.

Forecasting should also capture emerging electrification loads and demand constrained by inadequate connections or currently supplied by generators.

Underestimating these loads risks insufficient investment. Overestimating available flexibility risks unreliable supply. Underestimating the contribution of consumer resources risks unnecessary procurement and costs. These scenarios should inform the investment trajectory, tender plan and subsequent reviews.

5 Demonstrate how costs benefits and risks reach consumers

RAMJO supports regulatory oversight and risk management for ESEM, but these arrangements must demonstrate how financial exposure is managed and how residual costs and benefits are distributed across consumer groups and locations. Residual costs and rebates flow through Market Customers. The final arrangements must demonstrate how these are reflected in consumer prices and contractual arrangements.

The proposed cost-relief mechanism deserves particular attention. It recognises qualifying long-term contracts supporting new services outside ESEM and operates through Market Customers, a wholesale market category that includes retailers. It is not a general exemption for battery ownership.

The final arrangements should explain how eligible regional projects and aggregated investments can access this mechanism, including through an intermediary. They should also make clear how credits, charges and rebates are reflected in arrangements with the consumers or asset owners supporting the investment.

Contracts should clearly disclose the allocation of revenue, costs, performance obligations and financial risk. Consumers should understand what happens when they change provider, withdraw an asset or terminate an arrangement.

Cost allocation should recognise the services consumers rely on and the contribution they make, while protecting those unable to invest in their own resources. Ownership of a battery should not automatically remove responsibility for shared costs. Equally, cost structures should recognise demonstrated reductions in the need for particular services.

The Regional Energy Strategy seeks more equitable allocation of transmission costs and analysis of the costs borne by regional consumers compared with urban consumers. Assessment of ESEM cost recovery should therefore consider its combined effect with network charges and existing scheme costs. Published analysis should show how costs and benefits are distributed between regional and urban consumers and across different classes of electricity users. The reforms should avoid compounding regional disadvantage.

Published analysis should assess effects across consumer groups and locations, including renters, households without suitable premises, small businesses and regional consumers with limited choices.

The Regional Energy Strategy calls for identifying financial, social and employment benefits for local communities and understanding the flow of energy expenditure into and out of the region. Assessment of the reforms should therefore

RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

consider benefits retained in regional economies. Community ownership, local service provision and collective procurement should be considered as potential ways to retain value where they are efficient and viable.

The financial risk framework should also test changes in demand and distributed investment against ESEM's long-term contractual commitments. Contract recycling can manage exposure, but the remaining risks and their consequences for consumers should be transparent.

6 Ensure wholesale competition produces practical benefits

RAMJO supports the Market Making Obligation's objectives of improving access to wholesale hedging contracts, liquidity and price transparency, but improved wholesale liquidity should not be treated as sufficient evidence of improved consumer outcomes.

Implementation must assess whether those improvements produce effective competition, accessible participation and better offers for regional consumers, including through retailers and emerging service providers.

Access conditions, transaction sizes and associated financial requirements should be examined for unnecessary barriers to smaller qualified participants. Competition safeguards should also consider whether aggregating many consumer assets strengthens competition or concentrates control in a small number of providers.

Outcomes should be assessed across consumer groups and locations so that improvements at the wholesale level can be tested against the benefits actually received.

7 Align market obligations with consumer and network requirements

RAMJO supports improved visibility of price-responsive resources, but information and participation requirements must be proportionate, protect consumers' data and essential operating needs, and deliver benefits that justify the compliance costs. Information collection should be directed towards decisions it can improve and coordinated with existing reporting.

The enabling framework should provide clear accountability for information collection, access, use and protection. Detailed requirements developed through the separate Market Visibility Framework process should avoid unnecessary duplication and disproportionate costs for smaller participants.

Market commitments must also respect network limits and essential site requirements. A council water facility, for example, should determine the battery reserve and pumping flexibility available for market use before offering a service.

Arrangements should clearly allocate responsibility among the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), network operators, providers and asset owners. Detailed requirements for resolving conflicting instructions and managing communications failures should be addressed through the Market Visibility Framework and relevant technical processes.

Suitable distributed resources should be considered in the development of strategic reserve and essential system service arrangements. However, support for wider system reliability should not be confused with maintaining supply to a particular community during a local network outage. Local resilience requires its own assessment of location, equipment and operating capability.

The Regional Energy Strategy calls for identifying critical infrastructure affected by supply problems, advocating for network improvements and securing suitable backup capability. RAMJO therefore recommends that complementary network planning and resilience processes explicitly recognise water, sewerage, telecommunications, disaster coordination centres, evacuation facilities and other critical services. Market participation should preserve agreed essential service requirements.

8 Provide effective representation and a clear transition

RAMJO supports the provision for an end-use consumer representative in the proposed contract co-design arrangements, but this provision alone does not demonstrate that regional circumstances and emerging participation models will meaningfully influence contract design.

RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

RAMJO recommends explicit provision for regional local-government representation in relevant contract co-design working groups and an ongoing role in implementation review. Representatives should bring practical knowledge of council infrastructure, regional network constraints and community energy participation. Published consultation outcomes should explain how regional evidence has influenced decisions and how unresolved issues will be addressed.

This representation should complement other consumer and industry perspectives, including those of smaller businesses, agricultural operations and remote communities. It should influence the practical requirements that determine access to the proposed arrangements.

The proposed transition from NSW investment support arrangements to ESEM is particularly relevant to this region. With REZ, access and network arrangements continuing, the transition should preserve clear investment and participation pathways, avoid unintended duplication or gaps in obligations, and transparently explain changes in cost recovery.

Similarly, the transition from the Retailer Reliability Obligation should be clearly sequenced to avoid unintended gaps or duplication, recognising the package's provisions for existing instruments and overlapping obligations.

Significant decisions delegated to guidelines should remain subject to meaningful consultation, published reasoning and review. RAMJO requests a published assessment of remaining interactions, required changes, responsible bodies and implementation timing.

9 Address the consequences of inadequate implementation

Equity and consumer confidence are material to the effectiveness of the reforms.

RAMJO acknowledges the South West Renewable Energy Zone Community and Employment Benefit Program and the announced initial investment of \$60 million to support host communities. Such initiatives provide an important avenue for sharing the benefits of renewable energy development. However, community benefit funding does not by itself ensure affordable connections, sufficient local network capacity or reliable electricity supply. Community confidence depends on progress across these outcomes. Implementation of the wholesale reforms should therefore recognise existing benefit-sharing arrangements and coordinate with complementary network action so that regional communities can both share in the benefits and participate effectively in the changing electricity system.

If participation offers insufficient value or exposes consumers to poorly understood risks, they may remain connected but decline coordinated participation. Capability could then remain unavailable to the wider system.

For some consumers with suitable circumstances and sufficient resources, dissatisfaction could also encourage off-grid alternatives. RAMJO recommends testing reduced participation and grid departure as scenarios, including their implications for costs borne by those who remain. This is a risk assessment recommendation, rather than a prediction of widespread departure.

Other consequences requiring assessment include delayed regional electrification, continued generator use, unnecessary procurement, concentrated provider control and exclusion of otherwise viable projects through disproportionate requirements.

The reforms should make continued connection and participation valuable through understandable obligations, equitable returns, effective protections and dependable service.

RAMJO recommends a published regional outcomes framework, with baseline measures, identified reporting responsibilities and annual reporting. It should measure participation by smaller and aggregated projects, the allocation of ESEM costs and rebates, and the distribution of benefits between regional and metropolitan consumers.

Alongside these reform-specific measures, coordinated reporting should track connection costs and timeframes, available local network capacity, reliability and electricity costs for comparable consumer groups. Reporting should identify unresolved barriers, responsible bodies and proposed corrective action.

Existing reporting should be used where suitable. Assessment should distinguish outcomes attributable to these reforms from changes arising through wider market conditions and complementary network action.

RAMJO | National Electricity Market reform submission

Sources

DCCEEW consultation paper — particularly sections 2 and 3.

Draft National Electricity (South Australia) (Wholesale Market Liquidity and Investment) Amendment Bill 2026

Draft National Electricity Rules amendments — including eligibility, procurement, cost relief and contract co-design provisions.

DCCEEW Cheaper Home Batteries Program

AEMO Market Visibility Framework consultation

RAMJO Regional Energy Strategy 2025–2032 — Improving equity, access and reliability for the RAMJO area.

EnergyCo — SouthWest Renewable Energy Zone Community and Employment Benefit Program

Supplementary response to the Net Zero Commission Round Table

Supplementary Response on Regional FOGO Delivery

JONZA Project Manager | RAMJO council areas | 18 September 2026

This note supplements the Regional Net Zero Opportunities Barriers and Enablers response submitted on 16 September 2026. Subsequent feedback from Balranald Shire Council provides a practical example of why organics policy must allow regional councils to pursue the best net environmental outcome for their circumstances.

Balranald example

Balranald Shire Council's 2025-2035 Waste Management Strategy considered the practical implications of introducing a food organics and garden organics service. Council advised that the available FOGO stream was estimated at less than 400 tonnes a year, while the collection and processing options examined could cost approximately \$250,000 to \$350,000 each year - around \$400 per eligible ratepayer. The nearest identified processing option at Hay is approximately 133 kilometres from Balranald.

This creates a genuine risk of placing a small volume of organics on diesel trucks and transporting it a considerable distance to comply with a standard collection model. Landfill methane must be reduced, but the method used should not impose disproportionate cost or create avoidable transport emissions without demonstrating that it produces the better overall environmental result.

Policy implication

Regional councils should be required to demonstrate an effective organics-management outcome, not simply replicate a metropolitan three-bin collection model. The assessment should consider the quantity and quality of material available, methane avoided, collection and processing distances, vehicle emissions, contamination, the treatment method, local operating capacity and whole-of-system cost.

Where a conventional FOGO service does not produce the best result, councils should be able to use an approved alternative pathway. Depending on local conditions, this could include food-only collection, supported home or community composting, targeted commercial collection, transfer and bulk-haul arrangements, local or modular processing, improved landfill methane management, or a staged combination of measures.

Recommended policy direction

- Set clear organics-diversion and emissions outcomes while allowing councils to demonstrate how they will achieve them.
- Require a proportionate net environmental and whole-of-system cost assessment before prescribing a collection model.
- Recognise distance, low population density and small feedstock volumes in regulatory and funding decisions.
- Support regional trials, shared processing and fit-for-purpose local alternatives where these provide a better result.

The objective remains to reduce methane and divert organics from landfill. The policy framework should, however, optimise the result rather than assume that one delivery model will work across every community.

Source: Balranald Shire Council feedback on its 2025-2035 Waste Management Strategy. The Strategy was considered by Council at its ordinary meeting of 17 February 2026. Cost, tonnage and distance figures above are those provided by Council in its feedback.

JONZA Project Manager | 18 September 2026

From: Andrew Fisher <
Sent: Friday, 18 September 2026 9:16 AM
To: Terry Dodds <tdodds@balranald.nsw.gov.au>
>; Brett Stonestreet < Lisa Miller <
Subject: RE: NEM market settings review

Hi Terry,

Thanks for the feedback. I will work your suggestions into a revision. I will also look at the other two consultation pieces you suggested.

Regards



Andrew Fisher

Project Manager JONZA

Days: Monday - Friday, 8:30am – 4pm

Member Councils: Albury City, Balranald Shire, Berrigan Shire, Edward River, Federation, Griffith City, Hay Shire, Leeton Shire, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera Shire and Wentworth Shire

From: Terry Dodds <
Sent: Friday, 18 September 2026 8:28 AM
To: Andrew Fisher <
Cc: Carolyn Holmes < >; Brett Stonestreet < >; Lisa Miller < >
Subject: RE: NEM market settings review

Hi Andrew

Thanks for putting this together.

I've had a good look through it, and I'm comfortable with the direction and happy to support it progressing as RAMJO's response.

I think you have captured the major regional issues well, particularly network constraints, regional equity, the ability for councils and smaller players to participate, and the disconnect between hosting major energy infrastructure and actually having adequate local network capacity.

I would strengthen three points before it goes.

Firstly, I think we can be a little more direct on regional equity. There is something fundamentally wrong if regional communities host the generation, batteries and

transmission infrastructure that support the wider system, but local businesses, farms, councils and residents still cannot get an affordable connection or sufficient capacity from the network. I think that point should be said plainly.

Secondly, rather than simply asking for regional outcomes to be considered, I would ask that they be measured and reported. Things such as connection costs and timeframes, network capacity, reliability, regional electricity costs, participation by smaller projects and the distribution of costs and benefits between regional and metropolitan consumers would give some substance to the equity argument.

Thirdly, I would make the representation point stronger. Regional local government should have an identifiable voice in the ongoing design and review of these arrangements. A generic consumer representative does not necessarily understand the circumstances of a council water plant, an irrigation business, a remote community, or a town sitting beside major renewable infrastructure but still constrained by its local feeder.

The sentence I would probably try to work into the submission somewhere is:

“RAMJO does not consider the energy transition equitable where regional communities host generation and transmission infrastructure for the wider market while local businesses, farms, councils and households remain constrained by inadequate or unaffordable access to electricity capacity.”

That probably sums up our position fairly neatly.

One other thing worth considering is whether we put short companion responses into the AEMO Market Visibility Framework process and the current ESEM contract co-design consultation. Some of the practical issues we raise in this paper: aggregation, council assets, flexible demand and smaller regional projects are actually being worked through in those processes.

Otherwise, very good piece of work, and I'm happy for it to progress.

Cheers

Terry

From: Andrew Fisher <

Sent: Thursday, 17 September 2026 10:58 AM

To: Terry Dodds <>

Cc: Carolyn Holmes <>; Brett Stonestreet <>; Lisa Miller <>

Subject: NEM market settings review

Hi Terry,

DCCEEW is consulting on proposed reforms to the National Electricity Market's wholesale market settings, with submissions closing on 13 October.

I've prepared the attached draft submission, drawing on RAMJO's Regional Energy Strategy. It focuses on regional equity, network constraints and opportunities for councils, businesses and communities to participate in the evolving electricity system.

As Chair of the Energy Committee, I would welcome your review and any suggested changes or additional perspectives. If you are comfortable with the submission's direction, I would also appreciate your support for progressing it as RAMJO's response.

Regards,



Andrew Fisher

Project Manager JONZA

Days: Monday - Friday, 8:30am – 4pm

Member Councils: Albury City, Balranald Shire, Berrigan Shire, Edward River, Federation, Griffith City, Hay Shire, Leeton Shire, Murray River, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera Shire and Wentworth Shire

OFFICIAL

The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy,
Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage,
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



MD26/4361

Cr Carol Oataway
Mayor
Hay Shire Council

By email: dwebb@hay.nsw.gov.au

Dear Councillor Oataway

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the seven South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) councils regarding the allocation of Community and Employment Benefit Program (the Program) funding.

I extend my sincere thanks to all seven councils in the South West REZ for the time, effort and thoughtful feedback you continue to provide. The advice you have provided is appreciated and will be carefully considered as part of the ongoing development of the Program.

As you know, the Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is currently undertaking consultation to inform the design and delivery of the South West REZ Program. During this period, EnergyCo is seeking feedback from councils, community members, First Nations people and other stakeholders on how funding can be delivered to best support local priorities and maximise long-term legacy outcomes.

I acknowledge that councils invest significant time and resources in engaging with local communities to understand their priorities, needs and aspirations. This work provides an important foundation for the current consultation process. In addition to direct feedback from councils EnergyCo is committed to drawing on relevant council sources, strategic plans and other insights to help inform the design and delivery of the Program.

We encourage you to continue to participate in the consultation process to deliver the best possible outcomes for South West communities.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your communities to ensure the South West REZ Program delivers meaningful and lasting benefits for the region. Should you have any further questions, you can contact Yvette Lloyd, Director Community Benefits, on yvette.lloyd@energyco.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely

Penny Sharpe MLC

Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy,
Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage

22/11/26



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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128557

22 September 2026

Mrs Helen Dalton MP
Member for Murray

Email: murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway Taskforce - Corridor Plan

Dear Helen

I am writing as Chair of the Sturt Highway Taskforce, which brings together the NSW councils along the Sturt Highway.

We have started work on a single Corridor Plan. The idea is to get away from Councils arguing separately for their own stretch of road and instead put the freight task, safety problems, resilience issues and future priorities into one picture.

The timing is useful because Transport for NSW is also finalising its Far West and Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans. The Sturt runs through both planning areas, so our Corridor Plan should give those broader 20-year plans some practical detail and keep the road from being treated as two separate planning problems.

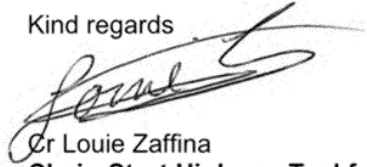
A fair part of the corridor and a number of our member Councils sit in Farrer, so we would like to keep you close to the work from the start.

When the first draft is ready, we would appreciate the chance to brief you. We will also be writing to Catherine King about the Commonwealth side once we have something more useful than a general funding request.

Your help getting the right people around the table in Canberra would be useful. Just as importantly, it would help to have the local Federal Member familiar with the evidence before we get to that point.

I will ask Terry Dodds PSM, who is running the Secretariat for the Taskforce, to keep your office included as the Plan develops.

Kind regards



Cr Louie Zaffina
Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, and CEO, Balranald Shire Council

The Sturt Highway is one of southern Australia's strategically important east–west transport corridors, connecting regional communities, agricultural production and freight networks across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, with connections to major interstate routes, markets, ports and intermodal facilities. The central proposition of the Sturt Highway Corridor Plan is that the highway should be planned, managed and funded as a single strategic interstate corridor, rather than as a series of disconnected road sections, projects, local government areas or State jurisdictions.

The Plan identifies a strong case for coordinated long-term investment in the corridor. Within the NSW section alone, between July 2019 and June 2024 there were 277 crashes resulting in 241 casualties, including 15 fatal and 40 serious-injury crashes. The corridor also faces ageing and constrained infrastructure, limited overtaking opportunities, freight and heavy vehicle pressures, flood and other resilience risks, and limited practical alternative routes when sections of the highway are closed. These existing pressures will increase as the freight task grows and construction of the South West Renewable Energy Zone generates significant additional heavy vehicle, oversized and overmass, construction material and workforce movements across the regional road network.

In response, the Corridor Plan establishes a 20-year investment framework focused on corridor-wide safety improvements, overtaking opportunities, pavement strengthening, bridge and flood-resilience works, intersection upgrades, heavy vehicle facilities, improved freight access and network redundancy, together with infrastructure required to accommodate the emerging renewable energy and major-project freight task. The objective is to establish a coordinated pipeline of investment-ready projects, supported by evidence, cost estimates and business cases, rather than continuing to rely on isolated and reactive funding decisions. The Sturt Highway Taskforce is seeking a long-term partnership between the Australian, New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Governments, together with local government, industry and major project proponents, to progressively deliver the Plan. This interstate approach recognises that the economic, freight and community benefits of the Sturt Highway extend well beyond individual council and State boundaries. Our aim is to ensure the Sturt Highway remains a safe, resilient, efficient and productive interstate transport corridor supporting regional communities, agriculture, freight, tourism, renewable energy and economic growth across the Riverina Murray, Victoria and South Australia, while strengthening connections to the wider national transport network.



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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128426

21 September 2026

The Hon Paul Hamer MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Victorian Government

Paul.Hamer@parliament.vic.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway - Cross-Border discussion

Dear Minister Hamer

The Sturt Highway Taskforce represents the NSW councils along the Sturt and is currently pulling together a single Corridor Plan.

Most of our work is obviously in NSW, but some issues do not stop neatly at the border. The George Chaffey Bridge, Sunraysia freight movements, traffic data and the way the Sturt continues through Victoria are obvious examples.

That is also consistent with the direction of NSW's regional transport planning. Both the Far West and Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP) put weight on seamless border movements, freight, safety and resilient networks.

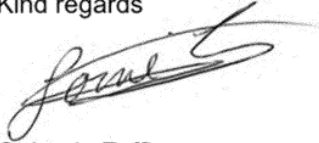
Once our first NSW draft is together, we would like to hold one short Teams meeting with the relevant people from Victoria and South Australia.

This is not about setting up another committee. We simply want to put the same corridor map and the same evidence in front of the three jurisdictions and work out which matters genuinely need Cross-Border coordination.

We expect the discussion to cover freight and heavy vehicle movements, road safety, resilience, key bottlenecks and the information each jurisdiction can share.

If you are happy with that approach, the Taskforce Secretariat will come back to your office with a short agenda and proposed date once our NSW draft is ready.

Kind regards



Cr Louie Zaffina
Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, and CEO, Balranald Shire Council

Cc: The Hon Melissa Horne MP, Minister for Ports and Freight. minister.horne@minstaff.vic.gov.au ;
Fiona Adamson, Secretary, Victorian Department of Transport and Planning

The Sturt Highway is one of southern Australia's strategically important east-west transport corridors, connecting regional communities, agricultural production and freight networks across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, with connections to major interstate routes, markets, ports and intermodal facilities. The central proposition of the Sturt Highway Corridor Plan is that the highway should be planned, managed and funded as a single strategic interstate corridor, rather than as a series of disconnected road sections, projects, local government areas or State jurisdictions.

The Plan identifies a strong case for coordinated long-term investment in the corridor. Within the NSW section alone, between July 2019 and June 2024 there were 277 crashes resulting in 241 casualties, including 15 fatal and 40 serious-injury crashes. The corridor also faces ageing and constrained infrastructure, limited overtaking opportunities, freight and heavy vehicle pressures, flood and other resilience risks, and limited practical alternative routes when sections of the highway are closed. These existing pressures will increase as the freight task grows and construction of the South West Renewable Energy Zone generates significant additional heavy vehicle, oversized and overmass, construction material and workforce movements across the regional road network.

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The Sturt Highway Taskforce is seeking a long-term partnership between the Australian, New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Governments, together with local government, industry and major project proponents, to progressively deliver the Plan. This interstate approach recognises that the economic, freight and community benefits of the Sturt Highway extend well beyond individual council and State boundaries. Our aim is to ensure the Sturt Highway remains a safe, resilient, efficient and productive interstate transport corridor supporting regional communities, agriculture, freight, tourism, renewable energy and economic growth across the Riverina Murray, Victoria and South Australia, while strengthening connections to the wider national transport network.



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Contact: TD:CH:D26.126153

21 September 2026

Mr Josh Murray
Secretary
Transport for NSW

Email: Josh.Murray@transport.nsw.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway Corridor Plan - TfNSW lead and evidence

Dear Josh

The Sturt Highway Taskforce has started work on a single Corridor Plan for the NSW Sturt.

David Webb, General Manager at Hay Shire, is doing the first cut for the Taskforce, and each member Council is feeding its local information into it. Balranald is providing the Secretariat and keeping the process moving.

I have gone back through the Draft Far West and Draft Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP). The last thing we need is a third planning document that sits beside them. The useful role for the Sturt Corridor Plan is to connect the two SRITPs and turn the broad initiatives into a corridor work program.

For each significant issue, we would like the final document to be clear about the problem, the investigation or treatment required, the lead agency, the relevant program or funding pathway and whether the work sits in the short, medium or longer term.

What would help us now is one senior TfNSW person to coordinate your side of the work, rather than us chasing bits of information through different regions and teams.

We also need the current information TfNSW already holds: traffic and heavy-vehicle counts, freight and crash data, current and committed investment, and existing work on overtaking, shoulders, bridges and culverts, rest areas, resilience and future freight/OSOM needs.

Some Councils are working from old traffic figures. If Transport has newer data, we should use it.

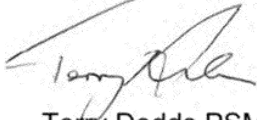
Could you nominate a lead for us and ask the relevant South and West Region staff to work with David and the Secretariat?

I would also like to understand how agreed Sturt actions will be tracked once the two SRITPs are finalised. The Corridor Plan should feed into that implementation work, not disappear into another broad regional heading.

The aim is not eight Council wish lists. We want one corridor document showing what is already committed, what still needs work and who does what next.

If we can get the TfNSW lead and the main data streams identified by early October, that will keep the Plan moving.

Yours faithfully



Terry Dodds PSM

Secretariat, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Chief Executive Officer, Balranald Shire Council

Cc: David Webb, General Manager, Hay Shire Council

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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128424

21 September 2026

Mr David Farley MP
Member for Farrer

Email: david.farley.mp@aph.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway Taskforce - Corridor Plan

Dear David

I am writing as Chair of the Sturt Highway Taskforce, which brings together the NSW councils along the Sturt Highway.

We have started work on a single Corridor Plan. The idea is to get away from Councils arguing separately for their own stretch of road and instead put the freight task, safety problems, resilience issues and future priorities into one picture.

The timing is useful because Transport for NSW is also finalising its Far West and Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans. The Sturt runs through both planning areas, so our Corridor Plan should give those broader 20-year plans some practical detail and keep the road from being treated as two separate planning problems.

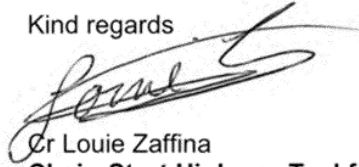
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When the first draft is ready, we would appreciate the chance to brief you. We will also be writing to Catherine King about the Commonwealth side once we have something more useful than a general funding request.

Your help getting the right people around the table in Canberra would be useful. Just as importantly, it would help to have the local Federal Member familiar with the evidence before we get to that point.

I will ask Terry Dodds PSM, who is running the Secretariat for the Taskforce, to keep your office included as the Plan develops.

Kind regards



Cr Louie Zaffina
Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, and CEO, Balranald Shire Council

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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128423

21 September 2026

The Hon Catherine King MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Ministerial email: Minister.King@mo.infrastructure.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway - from advocacy to a corridor program

Dear Minister

Thank you for the response sent to the Sturt Highway Taskforce earlier this year.

We took one part of that response particularly seriously: that NSW has the primary role in identifying and progressing road projects, and that Commonwealth funding becomes relevant once there is something properly developed for the State to take forward.

That is what we are now working on. Transport for NSW is finalising the Far West and Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans. The Sturt Highway runs across both planning areas, so the Taskforce has started a single Corridor Plan to join the corridor up and turn the broader regional initiatives into a staged work program.

Each member Council is contributing local information, David Webb, General Manager of Hay Shire, is pulling the first draft together, and we are asking Transport for NSW to verify the freight, traffic, crash and investment data.

For each priority, we want to be able to show the issue, the proposed response, the responsible agency, the likely program or funding pathway and the delivery horizon. That should give NSW something more useful to work with and, in time, something more useful to put in front of the Commonwealth.

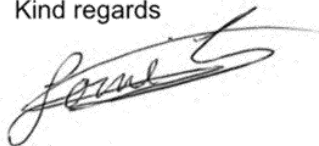
Once the first draft is complete, we would appreciate a short discussion with you or the appropriate senior people in your department about how a staged Sturt corridor program should be positioned for future Commonwealth consideration.

We are not asking the Commonwealth to jump ahead of NSW or commit money now. We are trying to make sure we build the case in a form that can eventually get through the State and Commonwealth systems.

The Sturt performs an interstate freight and transport task well beyond the population living beside it. We think that function should be visible in future investment decisions.

We will send you the first consolidated draft and a short evidence summary when they are ready.

Kind regards



Cr Louie Zaffina
Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, and CEO, Balranald Shire Council

Cc: Jim Betts, Secretary - jim.betts@infrastructure.gov.au ;
David Farley MP - david.farley.mp@aph.gov.au

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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128422

21 September 2026

Mr Jim Betts
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Email: jim.betts@infrastructure.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway Corridor Plan; Commonwealth pathway

Dear Jim

The Sturt Highway Taskforce is pulling together a single Corridor Plan for the NSW Sturt Highway. Transport for NSW is also finalising the Far West and Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans. Because the Sturt crosses both planning areas, we are trying to make the Corridor Plan the practical link between those two regional plans rather than create another document that sits beside them.

The work is still at first-draft stage, but I would rather make contact with the right part of your department early than arrive later with a finished document that has been put together the wrong way.

Could you please point us to the senior officer or area that should deal with a road corridor of this nature?

What we need, when the Plan is ready, is practical advice on the Commonwealth process; what level of evidence and project development would normally be expected, which programs or assessment pathways could be relevant, and where the Commonwealth would expect NSW to be up to before a proposal came forward.

We are not asking for a funding commitment at this stage.

We will send through the first Corridor Plan and evidence summary once they have been agreed by the member Councils and checked against Transport for NSW data.

Kind regards

Terry Dodds PSM
Secretariat, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Chief Executive Officer, Balranald Shire Council

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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128421

21 September 2026

The Hon Joe Szakacs MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Government of South Australia

Ministerial email: Minister.Szakacs@sa.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway; Cross-Border discussion

Dear Minister

The Sturt Highway Taskforce represents the NSW councils along the Sturt and is currently putting together a single Corridor Plan.

The Sturt is obviously bigger than the NSW section. The freight task continues through Victoria and into South Australia, so there is little value in us pretending the network ends at a State border.

The Draft Far West Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (SRITP) also identifies seamless interstate movement, freight and resilient networks as long-term transport objectives for western NSW. Our Corridor Plan is intended to put some practical detail underneath that.

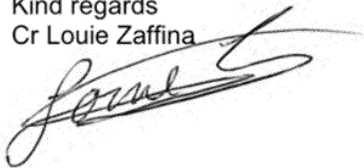
Once our first NSW draft is together, we would like to hold one short Teams meeting with the relevant people from South Australia and Victoria.

We are not proposing another permanent committee. The purpose is simply to compare the evidence, identify the genuinely Cross-Border issues and make sure we have the right agency contacts when something cannot be solved inside NSW alone.

We expect the discussion to cover freight and heavy vehicle movements, road safety, resilience, key bottlenecks and data sharing.

If you are happy with that approach, the Taskforce Secretariat will come back to your office with a short agenda and proposed date.

Kind regards
Cr Louie Zaffina



Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, and CEO, Balranald Shire Council

Cc: Jon Whelan, Chief Executive, Department for Infrastructure and Transport -
Jon.Whelan@sa.gov.au

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Contact: TD:CH:D26.128420

21 September 2026

The Hon Jenny Aitchison MP
Minister for Roads
Minister for Regional Transport

maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Subject: Sturt Highway Taskforce - follow-up meeting

Dear Minister

Thank you again for meeting with the Sturt Highway Taskforce on 7 May.

At our 1 September meeting, the Taskforce agreed that we should come back to you once we had moved the work on a bit further. We have now done that.

David Webb, CEO of Hay Shire, has started pulling together a Sturt Highway Corridor Plan, with each Council along the NSW Sturt contributing its local issues and priorities. We are also asking Transport for NSW to help us get the current traffic, freight, crash and investment data into one place.

Having looked closely at the Draft Far West and Draft Riverina Murray Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plans, I think there is an obvious fit. We do not need another plan sitting beside the two Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan (**SRITP**). We need the Sturt Corridor Plan to join them up and put some practical detail underneath them.

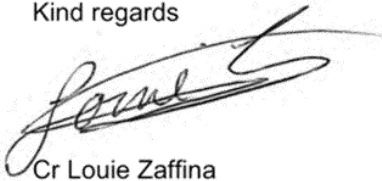
In plain terms, for the Sturt we should be able to see the problem, the proposed response, who owns it, what program or funding pathway it belongs to, and whether it is a short-, medium- or long-term job.

Could we please arrange a short follow-up meeting with you and the relevant Transport for NSW people?

What we need from that meeting is simple: agreement on how the Corridor Plan fits into Transport's existing SRITP and corridor planning, what information TfNSW needs from us, and what the pathway is from an agreed corridor priority to something that can actually be planned and funded.

We are not asking you to fund a wish list. We are trying to get the work into the right order first.
We are happy to fit in with your diary.

Kind regards



Cr Louie Zaffina
Chair, Sturt Highway Taskforce
Mayor, Balranald Shire Council

Secretariat: Terry Dodds PSM, CEO, Balranald Shire Council

Cc: Josh Murray, Secretary, Transport for NSW: Josh.Murray@transport.nsw.gov.au

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Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

Balranald Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed NSW State-led Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA).

Council supports what the DAMA is trying to do. Small inland communities do not operate in the same labour market as Sydney, or even larger inland centres. In places such as Balranald, skilled migration is already part of how some essential services are kept running.

Council's main interest is **Bidgee Haven, our residential aged care facility**. We already have staff who are on temporary visas or are working through visa pathways. For us, this is not a future workforce issue. It is something we are dealing with now.

The proposed DAMA could help, but there are a few areas where the aged care settings do not seem to line up with the way aged care operates, particularly in a small remote community.

1. Interaction with the existing Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement

The first issue is basic. Council needs to know how the NSW DAMA will work alongside the Commonwealth Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement.

Home Affairs already has a separate Industry Labour Agreement for aged care. Its guidance also says a DAMA labour agreement will generally not be endorsed where an industry is already covered by an Industry Labour Agreement.

At the same time, the proposed Tier 1 list includes Aged or Disabled Carer (ANZSCO 423111) and Personal Care Assistant (ANZSCO 423313).

So the practical question for Council is: can Bidgee Haven actually use the NSW DAMA for these jobs, or will we still be pushed back to the Commonwealth aged care agreement?

The consultation material does not make that clear enough.

If aged care providers cannot use the NSW DAMA for jobs already covered by the Commonwealth agreement, government should say so plainly. There is not much value in putting an occupation on the NSW list if the employers that actually need it cannot use it.

Council asks NSW to settle this with Home Affairs before the DAMA is finalised. If the NSW DAMA can offer a better setting for remote areas, particularly around age or permanent residency, aged care providers should not automatically miss out just because another labour agreement exists.

2. Nursing Support Worker should be included in Phase 1

The Commonwealth aged care agreement recognises three direct-care occupations:

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

- Aged or Disabled Carer - ANZSCO 423111
- Nursing Support Worker - ANZSCO 423312
- Personal Care Assistant - ANZSCO 423313

The NSW Tier 1 list includes the first and third of these but not Nursing Support Worker.

Council cannot see a good practical reason for leaving Nursing Support Worker out. These roles are part of the day-to-day direct-care workforce and are important in smaller facilities where there simply is not a large local pool to recruit from.

Council recommends that Nursing Support Worker 423312 be added to Tier 1 from Phase 1 rather than being left for later.

3. Similar care jobs are being treated differently

There is also an inconsistency in the proposed concessions.

Personal Care Assistant 423313 is proposed to receive a salary concession and a pathway to permanent residency. Aged or Disabled Carer 423111 gets a permanent residency pathway but no salary concession.

Both are Skill Level 4 jobs, and both are part of the same direct-care workforce in aged care.

Council is not asking for migrant workers to be paid less than Australian workers. That is not the point. The problem is where the visa salary threshold is higher than the genuine wage for the job. In that situation, the occupation may be on the list, but an employer may still not be able to use it.

The Commonwealth aged care agreement already deals with this by requiring the worker to be paid the proper Australian market and industrial rate, while using a separate migration salary setting for the occupation.

NSW should follow the same logic and treat the three direct-care occupations consistently.

4. Salary settings need to match the aged care labour market

The consultation material says some Tier 1 occupations may get a salary concession of up to 10 per cent below the normal Commonwealth migration income threshold. That may work for some occupations. It will not necessarily work for aged care.

Aged care wages are largely set through industrial instruments and recent work-value decisions. The cleaner approach would be to make sure the employee is paid the proper Australian market salary and lawful industrial rate, but not impose a migration threshold that sits well above what the job normally pays.

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

The existing Commonwealth aged care agreement already provides a practical model. NSW should use that as the starting point rather than trying to squeeze aged care into a generic percentage concession.

5. Registered nurses and enrolled nurses

Council strongly supports keeping Registered Nurse (Aged Care) 254412 and Enrolled Nurse 411411 in Tier 1.

Both are proposed to have an age concession to 55 and a permanent residency pathway. Those settings make sense for remote aged care and should stay.

For Bidgee Haven, being short one or two nurses is not a minor staffing inconvenience. Residential aged care providers have care-minute and registered nurse requirements to meet. A nursing shortage can quickly become a compliance and service issue, not just an HR problem.

That should be recognised not only in the occupation list, but also in how quickly remote aged care applications are dealt with.

6. Age concessions should also cover experienced direct-care staff

The current proposal gives age concessions to Skill Levels 1 to 3, but not Skill Level 4.

That produces a strange result in aged care. An RN or EN may be able to use the age concession to 55, while an experienced personal care worker in the same facility may not.

In a place like Balranald, keeping a good worker is often just as important as finding one in the first place. A worker may spend several years here, know the residents, know the facility and become part of the community, only to hit an age barrier when trying to move to permanent residency.

From a workforce point of view, losing that person and starting again does not make much sense.

Council recommends an age concession to 55 for the relevant Skill Level 4 aged care occupations in Tier 1, particularly where the worker is already living and working in the designated area.

7. Existing workers should not have to start the clock again

Council already has workers on temporary visas or progressing visa applications. The final DAMA arrangements need to deal properly with people who are already here and already working.

Council does not support a system where a worker's employment history is effectively reset just because the available visa pathway changes.

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

Where a person has already been lawfully employed in Australia in the relevant occupation, that employment should count towards any qualifying period for permanent residency. That should not depend on the worker having been on one particular visa subclass the whole time.

That is a much more sensible approach for regional employers and avoids unnecessary turnover.

8. Balranald is not the same labour market as Dubbo or Wagga Wagga

Council also supports the concern raised during consultation about putting all of inland regional NSW into one broad Tier 1 category.

Balranald, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga may all be inland NSW, but they are not the same labour market.

The larger centres have more housing, more jobs for partners, more education and health services and a much bigger local workforce. Small remote towns do not have those advantages.

As a result, the places that are hardest to recruit to can end up with the same concessions as places that are much easier to recruit to.

Council would support either a separate remote or very remote category within Tier 1, or stronger concessions and priority processing for employers that can show an ongoing shortage in a small remote community.

9. The process needs to be practical

Council supports labour market testing, worker safeguards and proper employer accountability. Those things are reasonable.

But the process also needs to be workable for smaller regional employers. Balranald Shire Council does not have a migration team, and neither do most small aged care providers.

If an employer has already demonstrated the same shortage over a period of time, there should be a simpler process for later nominations rather than rebuilding the same case each time.

NSW should also publish clear service standards or at least realistic indicative timeframes for State endorsement.

A visa pathway is not much help if a critical vacancy stays open for months while different parts of government work through the paperwork.

10. Worker safeguards

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

Council supports the focus on local recruitment, fair wages, employer obligations, worker welfare, workplace safety and complaints pathways.

Migrant workers should not be used as a cheaper substitute for Australian workers.

At the same time, worker protection should not turn into a process for the sake of process. The basics are simple: the vacancy should be genuine, the employer should have tried to recruit locally, the worker should receive the proper Australian wage and conditions, and there should be proper protections against exploitation.

Once those things are established, the visa pathway should be as straightforward as it reasonably can be.

11. Phase 2 should look at the wider aged care workforce

Council notes that Skill Level 5 occupations are proposed to be looked at during Phase 2 and that care-sector jobs were raised during the consultation.

Council supports that work but would prefer government to look at the aged care workforce as a whole rather than job title by job title.

Residential aged care also relies on kitchen, cleaning, laundry and other support staff. In a remote town, these jobs can be just as hard to fill as direct-care roles.

Council is not suggesting every support job should automatically qualify for sponsorship. The point is that the framework needs enough flexibility to respond where a remote provider can show a genuine and ongoing shortage that is affecting its ability to operate.

Recommendations

1. Clarify with Home Affairs how the NSW DAMA will interact with the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement, including whether residential aged care providers will actually be able to use DAMA concessions for occupations already covered by that agreement.
2. Make it clear in the final DAMA which aged care employers can use each occupation. Do not leave occupations on the list if the employers that need them cannot access them.
3. Add Nursing Support Worker - ANZSCO 423312 to the Tier 1 occupation list from Phase 1.
4. Apply consistent salary-concession treatment to Aged or Disabled Carer, Nursing Support Worker and Personal Care Assistant, while still requiring payment of the proper Australian market and industrial rate.
5. Use an aged-care-specific salary setting where needed, based on the existing Commonwealth Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement rather than only a generic percentage reduction.

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

6. Retain Registered Nurse (Aged Care) and Enrolled Nurse in Tier 1 with the proposed age concession to 55 and permanent residency pathway.
7. Extend the Tier 1 age concession to 55 for relevant Skill Level 4 aged care occupations, particularly where the worker is already living and working in the designated area.
8. Allow previous lawful Australian employment to count towards any qualifying period for permanent residency, rather than making workers start again when their visa pathway changes.
9. Give stronger recognition to remote and very remote labour markets, either through a further Tier 1 category or extra concessions and priority processing for small remote communities with demonstrated shortages.
10. Provide a simpler process for repeat nominations where an employer has already demonstrated an ongoing shortage, and publish reasonable processing timeframes.
11. Use Phase 2 to look at the wider residential aged care workforce, including support roles where a genuine shortage can be shown.
12. Design the final arrangements around keeping good workers as well as recruiting new ones.

Conclusion

Balranald Shire Council supports the establishment of a NSW State-led DAMA. It could be a very useful workforce tool for communities such as ours.

But the test will be whether a small regional employer can actually use it to fill a genuine vacancy and keep a good worker.

Bidgee Haven is a good example. Council is running an essential aged care service in a small remote community. We already employ people who are dealing with the migration system, while Council still must meet the staffing and regulatory requirements that apply to residential aged care.

The proposal gets some important things right, particularly the inclusion of Registered Nurse (Aged Care) and Enrolled Nurse and the proposed age concessions for those jobs.

There are also some obvious gaps.

- **Nursing Support Worker is missing.**
- **Similar direct-care jobs are treated differently. Skill Level 4 aged care workers do not get an age concession.**
- **Most importantly, it is still not clear how the NSW DAMA will work alongside the existing Commonwealth aged care agreement.**

Balranald Shire Council: DAMA Submission, Terry Dodds PSM CEO 30/9/26

Council's position is simple: if aged care occupations are going to be included in the NSW DAMA, aged care providers need to be able to use them under settings that reflect the real wages, workforce structure and recruitment problems in regional aged care.

Otherwise, the job may be on the list, but the workforce problem remains.

Council would be happy to provide further practical information about Bidgee Haven and our experience with visa workers if that would assist the NSW Government in finalising the agreement.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Dodds', written in a cursive style.

Terry Dodds PSM

CEO



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1 October 2026

The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional NSW
Minister for Western NSW
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

1 October 2026

Via NSW Government Ministerial Contact Form:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers/minister-for-agriculture-regional-nsw-western-nsw>

Dear Minister Moriarty

RE: FUTURE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRIED VINE FRUIT PRODUCERS

Earlier this year, Balranald Shire Council received correspondence from Dried Fruits Australia following extreme rainfall and heat that affected dried vine fruit producers across the region.

At the time, Dried Fruits Australia asked Council to consider measures including rate relief for affected growers.

Council has since considered the matter and, while we understand why the request was made, the Local Government Act does not provide Council with a practical mechanism to grant broad industry-wide rate relief. Council can assist individual ratepayers experiencing genuine hardship, but a blanket concession across one industry is neither financially sustainable nor consistent with the way the local government rating system operates.

The event did, however, highlight a broader issue.

When a major weather event significantly affects an agricultural sector, small rural councils are often one of the first organisations approached for financial relief, despite having limited legislative capacity and very limited financial capacity to provide it.

For Balranald, simply transferring the financial impact from producers to Council does not solve the problem. It moves the cost to another part of the same small community and further reduces Council's ability to maintain roads and infrastructure that those same producers rely upon.

Council is therefore not seeking retrospective assistance in relation to the event earlier this year.

Rather, we ask the NSW Government to consider whether the current arrangements provide a sufficiently clear and timely pathway for agricultural industries affected by future extreme weather events.

clearer triggers for State primary producer assistance following significant climatic events;

a straightforward process for industry bodies and councils to raise emerging agricultural impacts with the Government;

greater clarity around the role of the Rural Assistance Authority and other available programs; and

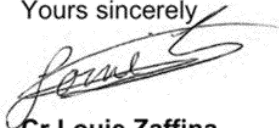
better coordination between State, Commonwealth and local government so that small councils are not expected to act as the de facto financial support mechanism for an affected industry.

Agriculture remains a critical part of the economy of western New South Wales, and climatic events are likely to continue placing pressure on producers and regional communities.

The experience earlier this year demonstrated that a clearer framework would benefit growers, industry bodies, councils and government alike.

Council would appreciate advice on whether the NSW Government is considering any changes to improve the way future industry-wide agricultural impacts are assessed and supported.

Yours sincerely



Cr Louie Zaffina
MAYOR



ALL COMMUNICATIONS MUST
BE ADDRESSED TO THE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL

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1 October 2026

The Hon Julie Collins MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Email: Minister.Collins@aff.gov.au

Dear Minister Collins

RE: FUTURE SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR DRIED VINE FRUIT PRODUCERS

Earlier this year, Balranald Shire Council was approached by Dried Fruits Australia following extreme rainfall and heat that affected dried vine fruit producers across the region.

The organisation sought a range of assistance measures, including rate relief from Council.

Council has since considered the request and concluded that local government is not well placed, either legislatively or financially, to provide broad industry-wide rate relief.

While councils can assist individual ratepayers experiencing genuine hardship, shifting the financial consequences of a major agricultural event onto the rate base of a small rural council does not address the underlying problem.

The experience did, however, highlight what Council considers to be a gap in the way significant agricultural impacts are dealt with.

Council is not seeking retrospective financial assistance in relation to the event earlier this year. Instead, we ask the Commonwealth Government to consider whether there is a sufficiently clear and coordinated framework in place for future events where an entire agricultural sector is materially affected by extreme weather.

For small regional communities, the impact of a significant crop loss extends well beyond individual farms. It flows through local employment, contractors, suppliers, freight operators, retailers and ultimately the wider community.

Council believes there would be merit in clearer arrangements that allow affected industries, councils and State Governments to quickly establish:

Whether an event meets an appropriate threshold for government assistance;

What Commonwealth and State programs are available;

Who should lead the assessment of industry-wide impacts

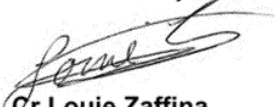
How affected producers can access assistance without relying on ad hoc approaches to local councils

The issue is particularly relevant for smaller councils such as Balranald, where the rate base is limited, but the local economy remains heavily exposed to agriculture and climatic variability.

The event earlier this year provides a useful example of why governments need a clearer pathway ready before the next significant agricultural event occurs.

Council would appreciate advice on whether the Commonwealth is reviewing or considering improvements to the way industry-wide agricultural impacts are assessed and supported in conjunction with State Governments.

Yours sincerely



Cr Louie Zaffina
MAYOR



Steph Cooke

Shadow Minister for Water

Shadow Minister for Crown Lands

MEDIA RELEASE

14 September 2026

SHADOW MINISTER TO ESTABLISH ADVISORY GROUP AFTER DELIVERING MAJOR FUNDING PROPOSAL

After an overwhelmingly positive response from the water sector to the NSW Opposition's record \$5 billion Regional Water Infrastructure Program, Shadow Minister for Water Steph Cooke is calling on key stakeholders to join her *Town Water Advisory Group*.

Our \$5 billion Regional Water Infrastructure Program will support regional water utility providers build and replace essential infrastructure.

The program would be supported by legislation, which, if passed, would ensure future Governments continue to invest in regional water and sewerage infrastructure.

Ms Cooke said extensive consultation with local governments, water utility providers and Joint Organisations was crucial in developing our plan for regional water infrastructure.

"\$5 billion is the same funding amount that Local Government NSW called on the Government to deliver at their recent water management conference, due to the massive infrastructure backlog the state currently faces," Ms Cooke said.

"For the first time in a long time, local councils can see their input directly reflected in this policy's development.

"That is why I'm now seeking to establish my own *Town Water Advisory Group* to ensure local government leaders and engineers continue to play a direct role in shaping the future of water management across regional NSW."

Those interested in joining the *Town Water Advisory Group* are asked to email Ms Cooke's office before the end of September for consideration.

Key advocacy groups, including the Country Mayors Association of NSW, have welcomed our plan, saying the fund "recognises and addresses the desperate need that many remote, rural and regional councils have for long-term, committed investment."

The Minns Labor Government has pledged no new money for capital water infrastructure programs that target regional NSW despite growing calls from across the sector.

Water Minister Rose Jackson says they're looking to introduce a "more sustainable model".

The details of that are unlikely to be revealed in 2026.

MEDIA: Cootamundra Electorate Office | 02 6924 2533

Dear Kim,

Balranald Shire Council would be very interested in participating in the Town Water Advisory Group.

We have been proactively advocating for change in this area for some time and, frankly, are becoming increasingly frustrated with what we see as government stalling while no meaningful funding has been allocated to address the underlying problem.

We are equally perplexed by the planning requirements. Balranald has completed its Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCN) Plan, only to subsequently be advised that this is now not enough. Councils continue to spend considerable time and money meeting requirements, only to find the goalposts have moved again.

I would also strongly suggest David Webb, General Manager of Hay Shire Council, as someone who would add considerable value to the group. David has a very good understanding of the practical water infrastructure issues facing smaller western and rural councils as well.

Please take this email as Balranald Shire Council's expression of interest.

Regards

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." Antoine de Saint Exupery 1900-1944



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@balranaldshirecouncil

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging.

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New South Wales

Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026

Explanatory note

This explanatory note relates to this Bill as introduced into Parliament.

Overview of Bill

The object of this Bill is to amend the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to transfer the ownership of certain vehicles and trailers from local councils to the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Outline of provisions

Clause 1 sets out the name, also called the short title, of the proposed Act.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act.

Schedule 1 Amendment of Rural Fires Act 1997 No 65

Schedule 1[2] gives effect to the object of the proposed Act. The amendment also makes clear that the transfer of the vehicles and trailers includes the transfer of equipment and other things permanently affixed to the vehicles and trailers.

Schedule 1[1] amends a definition to provide that vehicles and trailers, and equipment and other things permanently affixed to vehicles and trailers, that are purchased or constructed using money from the New South Wales Rural Fire Fighting Fund are not vested in the relevant local council.

b2026-116.d16

Tabling copy

First print



New South Wales

Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026

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b2026-116.d16

Tabling copy

This PUBLIC BILL, originated in the LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY and, having this day passed, is now ready for presentation to the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL for its concurrence.

Legislative Assembly

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly



New South Wales

Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026

No , 2026

A Bill for

An Act to amend the *Rural Fires Act 1997* to deal with the ownership and maintenance of certain fire fighting equipment.

The LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL has this day agreed to this Bill with/without amendment.

Legislative Council

Clerk of the Parliaments

Tabling copy

Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026 [NSW]

The Legislature of New South Wales enacts—	1
1 Name of Act	2
This Act is the <i>Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Act 2026</i> .	3
2 Commencement	4
This Act commences on 1 July 2027.	5

Page 2

Tabling copy

Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026 [NSW]
Schedule 1 Amendment of Rural Fires Act 1997 No 65

Schedule 1	Amendment of Rural Fires Act 1997 No 65	1
[1]	Section 119 Maintenance and disposal of fire fighting equipment purchased from Fund	2
		3
	Omit section 119(1), definition of <i>fire fighting equipment</i> .	4
	Insert instead—	5
	<i>fire fighting equipment</i> means the following—	6
	(a) fire fighting apparatus, other than the following—	7
	(i) vehicles and trailers,	8
	(ii) equipment or other things permanently affixed to vehicles or trailers,	9
		10
	(c) buildings,	11
	(c) water storage towers,	12
	(d) lookout towers.	13
[2]	Schedule 3 Savings, transitional and other provisions	14
	Insert at the end of the schedule, with appropriate part numbering—	15
Part	Provision consequent on enactment of Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Act 2026	16
		17
1	Vesting of fire fighting vehicles and trailers	18
(1)	All vehicles and trailers vested by operation of section 119(2) in a council immediately before the commencement of the <i>Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Act 2026</i> are vested in the Commissioner.	19
		20
		21
(2)	To avoid doubt, for subsection (1), the reference to vehicles and trailers includes a reference to equipment and other things permanently affixed to the vehicles and trailers.	22
		23
		24

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**Wednesday 23 September 2026**

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[Notices of motions given.]

*Bills***EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL COMMUNITY SAFETY) BILL 2026****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 18 March 2026.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (10:18): The Opposition supports the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. The bill goes to some fundamental responsibilities of this Parliament—namely, the safety of children, the integrity of our school communities, and the protection of our students and staff from unreasonable behaviour, which causes harm by disrupting learning environments and interfering with each child's right to a quality education. Every morning across New South Wales, hundreds of thousands of parents entrust their children to our schools. They do so with a quiet but profound act of faith that their child is safe, that the adults in that environment are protected and supported, and that the system this Parliament oversees is worthy of their trust. That trust is not abstract. It is not theoretical; it is deeply personal. It is present in every school gate "goodbye". It is present in every classroom and in every expectation that a school is a place of not only learning but also safety.

When that trust is shaken, even in isolated instances, the consequences are real. We have seen situations in recent years where school staff have faced threats, intimidation and unacceptable conduct from adults on school grounds. We have heard accounts of aggressive confrontations at school gates. We have heard of behaviour that disrupts the learning environment, and we have heard—this is deeply concerning—of staff feeling unsupported or uncertain about the powers available to them to act. These are not circumstances any school community should have to endure, and it is those circumstances that this bill appropriately seeks to address.

This legislation recognises a simple truth that, when safety is at risk, school leaders must be able to act and act with confidence—not hesitatingly, not uncertainly, not with one eye on legal ambiguity but decisively, lawfully and with the full backing of a clear statutory framework. That is what this bill aims to provide. It does not create sweeping, unchecked powers. It does not displace principles of fairness or accountability. Instead, the Opposition believes, the bill strengthens an existing framework, clarifies its operation and ensures that those responsible for our schools are not left navigating uncertainty in moments that demand certainty.

It is worth stepping back to understand the policy architecture that underpins this legislation. School community safety orders are not novel in concept. They are built on an existing framework designed to manage risk posed by adults whose behaviour threatens the safety or wellbeing of a school community. The bill refines and strengthens that framework. It recognises that these orders are protective, not punitive. They are not about punishment; they are about prevention. They are designed to restrict behaviour where necessary—for example, limiting access to school grounds or regulating interactions—in circumstances where there is a genuine risk to staff, students or the functioning of the school. That distinction matters because it reinforces that this legislation is grounded in risk management, proportionality and safety.

Several key elements of the bill warrant attention. First, the bill clarifies and expands the grounds upon which a principal may issue a school community safety order, and that is critical. A principal, a school leader, is often required to make rapid decisions in dynamic and sometimes volatile situations. They must balance competing considerations—safety, proportionality and fairness—often in real time. The last thing they need in that moment is ambiguity in the law. The bill provides clearer guidance as to when and how those powers may be exercised. It gives school leaders confidence that when they act to protect their school community, they are acting within a well-defined legal framework. That matters, not only for the principal but for every teacher, every student and every parent who relies on their leadership.

Importantly, the bill reinforces that the powers are to be exercised based on conduct that poses a risk to safety, welfare or good order within a school. That is not a vague or subjective test. It is anchored in identifiable behaviours: threats, harassment, intimidation or actions that disrupt the safe operation of a school. Critically, it ensures that action can be taken before harm escalates, not only after an incident has already occurred. That preventative focus is one of the strongest features of the framework.

Second, the bill offers review mechanisms associated with school safety orders, and the Opposition welcomes that. We are and always will be strong advocates for natural justice. Any individual subject to an order must have access to a fair and transparent process of review. Equally, that process must not undermine the purpose of the order itself. It must not become a tool for delay, it must not re-expose staff to harm or trauma, and it must not erode the authority of school leaders acting in good faith. We believe that this bill strikes that balance by preserving rights but also preserving safety. The framework makes clear that any order must be reasonable, proportionate and appropriate to the circumstances. That is not simply a policy aspiration; it is built into the operation of the scheme. Orders are subject to review, are time limited and must be justified. While safety is paramount, it must be balanced with fairness, and the bill aims to reflect that balance.

Third, the bill improves information sharing between schools, police and relevant agencies. Too often institutions operate in silos. Information that could assist a school to assess risk or respond appropriately is held elsewhere. That is not a criticism of individuals; it is a structural issue that this bill begins to address. By facilitating appropriate, lawful information sharing, it ensures that schools are not left in the dark when it comes to risks that may affect their communities. Better information leads to better decisions, and better decisions lead to safer outcomes. There is a recognition that effective decision-making depends on access to relevant information.

A school leader cannot properly assess risk if critical information sits elsewhere in the system. By improving lawful information sharing between agencies, the bill ensures that decisions are not made in isolation but are informed, evidence based and responsive to real-world circumstances. I take a moment to speak directly about the people who are at the heart of our education system: our teachers and school staff. They are professionals who do extraordinary work. They educate, they guide, they support, they mentor and in many cases they provide stability and care in circumstances where it is needed most. But they should not be asked to do that work in an environment where they feel unsafe. They should not have to tolerate intimidation or harassment. They should not have to question whether the system will support them when things go wrong. Yet we know that some have experienced exactly that.

We know that some educators have faced behaviour that is entirely unacceptable. We know that some have felt unsupported, and we know that in some cases people have left the profession as a result, which is a loss to not just those individuals but also our entire education system. Recent University of Notre Dame research, for example, has shown that school environments with higher staff wellbeing directly correlate with higher teacher quality, increased student engagement and lower teacher turnover. That is particularly important when considering the Black Dog Institute national teacher survey. Almost 60 per cent of teachers reported moderate to severe stress, approximately 70 per cent of teachers reported having unmanageable workloads and half of the workforce was considering leaving the profession in a given year. Therefore, if this legislation helps even a small number of teachers feel safer, more supported and more confident in their workplaces, then it will have achieved something of real value. Because a safe teacher is better able to teach, and a supported school is better able to serve its students.

It is important to recognise the contribution of stakeholders in shaping and scrutinising this legislation. In that context, I acknowledge, among others, the considered input of the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. It has made clear that it will continue to advocate to the Department of Education to ensure that the translation of the bill into practice is consistent and does not disadvantage parents or carers who may not have the expected skills to advocate for their children, and that the overall use of the bill's powers is fair and equitable, particularly in schools with a high Aboriginal student population. That highlights a critical point—that the legislation's success will not be judged solely on drafting but on its implementation. Parents of children with hearing difficulties have advocated for this legislation to ensure that parents still have the ability to raise concerns and advocate respectfully but firmly for their children. I invite the Minister in her reply to address the concerns that parents of children with hearing difficulties have raised and, in particular, the concerns that have been raised by Ms Suzanne Robertson on behalf of Parents of Deaf Children.

The Opposition has supported the bill, but that does not come without scrutiny, which is an opposition's responsibility. I place on record several areas where we have engaged constructively with the Government. First, we have considered the definition of school community and considered whether the powers could be used to silence legitimate engagement. Parents have a right to raise concerns. Community members have a right to engage respectfully with schools. Public discourse conducted lawfully and appropriately must be preserved. This bill appears to target conduct, not communication. It targets threats, intimidation and harmful behaviour, not

disagreement. That is a critical distinction. We will continue to monitor the application of this legislation to ensure that that distinction is upheld in practice. In examining the bill, we were mindful of the need to ensure that the powers are targeted and proportionate. The framework makes clear that orders are directed at individuals whose behaviour poses a risk, not at parents or community members engaging constructively with schools. That is a fundamental distinction. Schools must remain open, engaged communities. This legislation protects that principle by focusing squarely on harmful conduct, not legitimate participation.

Secondly, we have considered the issue of training and guidance. Legislative power is only as effective as its implementation. A school leader given new authority must also be given the tools to exercise that authority appropriately. They include clear guidelines, training and ongoing support. The Government has committed to a professional development framework to accompany this legislation, and we welcome that commitment. Thirdly, we raised the question of resourcing. Laws do not operate in a vacuum. They operate in real schools, with real constraints. If school leaders are to exercise those powers effectively, they must have the time, support and administrative capacity to do so. They must be adequately resourced to engage with new processes. We will watch closely to ensure that this legislation is not only well drafted but also properly funded and supported.

In her second reading speech, the Minister referred to comparable legislative approaches in South Australia and Victoria. That raises an important and legitimate question for the House: To what extent were those interstate models examined, adapted and incorporated into the bill? Have the lessons learnt from those jurisdictions, both their strengths and shortcomings, been fully reflected in the drafting before us? How does this framework compare in practice with those operating elsewhere? I do not ask those questions in opposition to the bill but in support of ensuring that New South Wales benefits from the best available policy design. If other jurisdictions have developed effective mechanisms, we should adopt them. If they have encountered challenges, we should learn from them. Therefore, I invite the Minister in her speech in reply to clarify how those interstate examples have informed this legislation and whether further refinement is envisaged as those models continue to evolve.

The broader picture is that the bill is not just about responding to individual incidents. It is about reinforcing a culture in which schools are places of respect, a culture in which educators are valued and protected, and a culture in which unacceptable behaviour is addressed swiftly and appropriately. Legislation alone cannot create that culture, but it can support it. It can set expectations, provide tools and send a clear message about what is and is not acceptable. There is deep and fundamental disagreement on many issues in this Chamber. That is the nature of our democracy. Debate, scrutiny and contest are not only inevitable; they are essential. But there are also moments when unity is required, when the interests of the people of New South Wales—particularly our children—demand that we come together. This is one of those moments, because the safety of students is not negotiable, the safety of teachers is not optional. We cannot afford to compromise the integrity of our schools.

The bill is not perfect. No legislation is. But it is appropriate and necessary. It is a meaningful step forward. The bill recognises risk, equips leaders and embeds safeguards. It does so with a clear understanding that schools must be both safe and open, protected but not closed off from the communities they serve. It strengthens the authority of school leaders, protects teachers and staff, enhances the safety of students and does so in a way that respects fairness and accountability. For those reasons—and with the scrutiny and commitments I have outlined—the Opposition supports this legislation. We do so in the interests of every child who walks through a school gate, every teacher who stands in front of a classroom, and every family who places their trust in our education system. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:33): I welcome the opportunity to make a brief contribution to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 and acknowledge the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning, who is in the Chamber for this debate. I thank her and her team for their diligence and hard work on what I see is a step forward in the protection of the most important people of our society—our children. Schools need to be safe. They must be structured both from a behavioural perspective and through legislation. It is our role to ensure that we do everything to protect them. That is why I am delighted that the bill is before the House. In a perfect world, the bill would not be necessary, but the reality is that we do not live in a perfect world.

The legislation aims to give New South Wales schools practical tools to prevent and respond to harmful conduct by a very small minority of parents, carers and other adult community members. I reiterate that it is a minority of parents, carers and other adult community members. The majority are good people who love and care for our children. The purpose is prevention—to act early, de-escalate risk and avoid conduct reaching the point where police or the criminal justice system must be engaged. The bill protects students, teachers, principals and frontline staff—including Aboriginal education officers, community liaison officers, anti-racism contact officers and school learning support officers. It protects respectful and legitimate advocacy, or complaints or disagreement.

Parents and carers can continue to raise concerns and advocate for their children, as they currently do. The scheme is graduated and proportionate, starting with immediate orders, then ongoing orders and, only as a last

resort, Local Court protection orders. No teacher or school employee should have to accept threats, harassment or abuse as part of their job, and no child should have to learn in an environment that is disrupted by that behaviour. We must consider why the bill is needed. Most families have constructive relationships with schools. However, a very small number of adults engage in threatening, intimidating and abusive and persistent harmful conduct in person and online. While that is deeply disappointing, it is also against the law, so we find ourselves in a situation where we must respond.

The 2025 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey found that 53.7 per cent of participating school leaders had experienced threats of violence, 47.8 per cent had experienced physical violence, 35.7 per cent had experienced bullying and 35.4 per cent had experienced cyberbullying. Among affected respondents, parents or carers were identified as responsible for 66.1 per cent of threats and 89.8 per cent of cyberbullying incidents. The Australian Teacher Workforce Survey indicates that 43 per cent of New South Wales teachers cite parent behaviour as a reason for leaving the profession. One of the most important reasons for these legislative reforms is to fill current gaps. The Inclosed Lands Protection Act is focused on bounded land and does not adequately deal with conduct outside the school gates, in pick-up areas, at other school-related sites such as camps or sport carnivals, or online.

Criminal laws apply only when criminal thresholds are met and can require individual staff to enter stressful proceedings. Unreasonable behaviour includes behaviour that is disorderly, offensive, intimidating or threatening. Unreasonable communication includes approaching, phoning, emailing, texting or otherwise contacting a person or school; creating audio or visual representations; or publishing or disseminating material in a way that may cause harm. Orders can apply at a school, within 25 metres of a school or school-related place, at camps, excursions, sport and other school events, in school vehicles, at onsite education and care services, at parent association meetings, in online meetings and on school communication platforms. Orders apply to adults aged 18 years or over and may restrict entry, proximity, contact, online attendance or the use of a school communication platform.

An immediate order for an urgent response is a strong area that is focused in this legislation, used only if unreasonable behaviour creates an unacceptable and imminent risk requiring immediate action. It may be issued by an authorised school leader or delegate, including a principal, in the public school system under proposed delegations. It may be given verbally, must be confirmed in writing, and last no longer than 14 days. It must be necessary and the least restrictive means available. An ongoing order for sustained risk will be used if unreasonable behaviour or communication creates an ongoing risk of harm in person or online. It must be in writing and may last up to 12 months, with one extension of up to a further 12 months if the risk continues. Before it is made, the person must receive written notice, details of the proposed order and an opportunity to make a submission. For New South Wales public schools, the intended decision-maker is a director of educational leadership or another appropriately senior delegate, rather than the principal.

A protection order is a last resort. The Minister or delegate may apply to the Local Court only after an ongoing order is breached, repeated attempts to address the conduct have failed or there is no other reasonable step available, and vulnerabilities and support needs have been considered. A breach carries a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units, currently \$5,500. The making of a protection order does not appear on a criminal history or a criminal record check. The police do not issue or monitor school community safety orders or prosecute breaches of protection orders. The police retain their existing role in responding to criminal conduct.

This legislation puts in place procedural fairness measures and safeguards. Many of those were proposed by stakeholders during consultation. It requires, in law, that a person's vulnerabilities must be considered. It mandates that communication and access plans be in place for parents and carers who may be subject to an order. It legally states that children must continue to have full access to their usual schooling and learning opportunities. School leaders, in making an order, must consider whether the order could affect a student's wellbeing, attendance and participation in school. There are rigorous review processes, including internal reviews and cost-free access to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal review.

In conclusion, when it comes to protecting our students and family engagement, a child's must education come first. Before an order is made, the decision-maker must consider its effect on the student's wellbeing, attendance, safety and participation. If a parent or carer is subject to an order, the school must establish a plan so that the student can continue to attend, participate in activities, and safely manage drop-off and pick-up. I end where I began, by saying that the protection of our students and our children must be of the highest priority. That is why I commend this bill to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:43): I contribute to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 as The Greens education spokesperson. I thank the Minister and her staff, particularly Josh, for the way they have worked closely with us around getting some significant amendments to the bill, which the Government will move later. Those include amendments around all schools being required to

keep records about their processes for immediate and ongoing orders, and the terms of the orders; a statutory review of this legislation in three years; and the ministerial guidelines.

We do not oppose the bill. Genuinely our only reservation is around private schools, because we know that there are aspects of the governance of private schools that the Government cannot touch, including discrimination towards LGBTIQ+ teachers and students. The track record of private schools, or a minority of them, is not great. We still have reservations around how private schools will use these orders. But we do not oppose the bill, and we can see a lot of merit in this change.

I give a big shout-out to all of our public school communities, our teachers, our support staff members and our kids. As someone who worked in public education for 21 years and, having had the privilege of working in this place with successive education Ministers, I can say that the current education Minister is by far the best. It has been so wonderful to see a once-in-a-generation pay rise for teachers and the rollout of public preschools. We want community preschools to be part of that, so we will keep talking about that. We hope for and anticipate further reform to the workloads of teachers in New South Wales public schools.

We have already heard details of the bill. We are concerned about whether private schools will be able to discriminate and perhaps silence LGBTIQ+ parents or parents with disabilities. The Minister and the Crown Solicitor have reassured us that all of the laws around discrimination apply and remedies in the law exist. No private or public school leaders would intend to discriminate, but sometimes it happens. Some people raised concerns with me as to why teachers will have the sorts of orders that are in the bill but not nurses or other public sector workers.

Teachers are unique in that they are part of the community and people have access to them. As we have heard, the twenty-first century school setting is no longer just enclosed land and people coming onto the property. My younger sisters, like all parents in Parliament, are in WhatsApp groups and email exchanges with teachers. Teachers are incredibly accessible. For that reason, they need safety and protection from the rare parent who does not think the teacher is amazing or who raises a genuine gripe in a manner that reaches the high threshold for the orders in the bill.

We looked at other jurisdictions, and I was pleased to tell stakeholders—particularly parents of deaf children, whom I thank for their engagement—that the bill will have a higher threshold than any other jurisdiction. To meet the threshold, there must be a behaviour that poses an unacceptable and imminent risk of harm. That is not trivial and does not include spurious things such as saying something the principal finds offensive. The threshold is serious. Immediate orders have lots of checks and balances. We have unfortunately heard stories of young female teachers being harassed following serious incidents, and I have seen that as a practitioner. Some people have said, "Why can't they go to the police?" But why should teachers have to do that? Why should they have to go to police and go through all of that trauma when they experience harassment in their workplace? The legislation addresses that shortfall.

The NSW Teachers Federation sees a shortfall when teachers have to go to police because they are experiencing harm or are at imminent risk of harm by virtue of their workplace. The immediate orders can immediately cease those behaviours. Other checks and balances and requirements for written notice exist in the form of ongoing school community safety orders and protection orders. The bill is about protecting teachers, school leaders and school staff in their workplaces, both physical and online. It is mostly women who work in school communities, particularly front office staff—

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome everybody, including our members and our guests in the Speaker's gallery and the Cooper gallery, to question time today. I particularly acknowledge visitors from the United Kingdom: Andrew Piperides; Nick Bleasdale; councillor Daniel Wright-Mason from North Hertfordshire council; and Christabel Robinson, senior parliamentary researcher to United Kingdom MP Will Stone. They are guests of the member for Macquarie Fields. I welcome them and hope they enjoy viewing question time in the mother Parliament of Australia. I welcome Gurnam Singh and Deepak Khadka, former Consul General of Nepal, guests of the member for Granville. I acknowledge Lachlan Schereck, guest of the member for Wollondilly.

I also acknowledge Suzanne and Bruce Pallett, visitors from Malvern, England, and Tim Pallett, guests of the member for Drummoyne. I welcome members of the Sydney Alliance, guests of the member for Newtown.

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I acknowledge former member for Clarence, Stephen Cansdell, guest of the member for Clarence. I also acknowledge representatives from the Shooting Industry Foundation of Australia: Steve Bowler, Sarah Turner, Amanda Potter and Tony Abela. They are guests of the member for Barwon and the member for Orange. I welcome Lana Namar, and Mia and Isabella Cardarello, guests of our fine Government Whip, the member for Leppington. Surprisingly, the member for Lake Macquarie also has guests in the gallery from Lake Macquarie U3A. I welcome them all.

Announcements

RESERVE SITTING DAY

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that, in accordance with the resolution of the House on 21 October 2025, as no notification of the requirement to sit had been received by 11.00 a.m. this day, the House will not sit on the reserve date of Friday 25 September 2026. The member for Oatley will come to order.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I advise the House that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast.

Question Time

MINISTERIAL DRIVERS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:07): My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Yesterday the Industrial Relations Commission found that the Government's dismissal of former Minister Haylen's driver, Mohammed Nazmul Huda, was harsh, unjust and unreasonable, and ordered that the Government not dismiss him. What was the total cost to New South Wales taxpayers for the unfair dismissal case of Mr Huda?

The SPEAKER: The member for Kellyville will come to order.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:08): This is an employment matter for the Premier's Department.

ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:08): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier detail for the House how the New South Wales Government is delivering more homes for essential workers close to the city so they are no longer priced out of the communities they serve?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:09): That is an important question for New South Wales. It is an issue for the people of this State. I heard the Attorney General say of the previous question that it is too early for this, and I agree. Lucky, it is midday in Geoff's head.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

It's lunchtime, mate. The Government is very pleased to announced the construction of 220 new build-to-rent apartments for Sydney's healthcare workers, teachers, police officers, firefighters and essential workers in the inner west. The homes are being built by the New South Wales Government's public developer, Landcom, on the former WestConnex dive site at Annandale, which has been a construction site for the best part of a decade. It is long overdue and is important for that area. It will revitalise commerce and industry in that part of Sydney. It is also hugely important for essential workers in our economy who have been priced out of that inner area. It is closer to Sydney CBD, but we need them there for our hospitals, police stations and fire stations. It is essential.

I am proud to say there will be a mix of apartment choices, including studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units; communal space, including a rooftop terrace built for connection and community; vibrant ground-floor retail and commercial spaces; car parking spaces for around 140 bicycles, which is important; and electric vehicle charging stations. It is closer to the city. There is access to public transport. That is the kind of development we need in that part of the city. It is important for those we rely on to provide the services that every Australian who lives in our State needs access to.

The Productivity and Equality Commissioner has warned that if we do not act, we will be a city without grandchildren. Worryingly, from 2016 to 2021, Sydney lost twice as many people aged between 30 and 40 as it gained. Some 35,000 came to Sydney, but 70,000 left. That is a net 7,000 people leaving every year. That is a

huge transformation in the labour market for Sydney and adds to the costs that we and industry have to pay to get skilled labour for every profession in the Sydney Basin. That is important for the economy. It is also a question of equity. We cannot effectively be saying to the next generation of young Australians that they do not have a right to write Sydney's next chapter—that they do not get to live near their parents and they do not get to live near their grandparents, or palm off their grandchildren to their grandparents. *[Extension of time]*

That and many other reforms have meant that we have had 52,000 housing approvals over the past 12 months, which is the highest number in four years. Planning approvals are now 15 per cent faster than they previously were. Housing construction is up. Construction is underway on 80,522 new homes, which is the latest data we have. It is the highest of any State in the country and the best our State has had in seven years. Notwithstanding the challenges in the housing market, the rising interest rates and the changes to the tax-preferred treatment from the Commonwealth Government as it relates to investment property, we are still seeing housing approvals and construction up, which is good news.

As we move through this difficult period for New South Wales families and the economy, one would expect the reforms we have made to turbocharge investment in residential housing construction, which is important for the State. We have also pursued changes at Woollahra—not too far from here—which the "Leader of the Opposition" has commented on. I do not have the latest quotes from Mike Newman here, but I know that he has said a fair bit about housing and construction. The other Leader of the Opposition, the member for Vacluse, has said, "Let's face it: Who cares where the homes are, as long as they're built?" We care where the homes are.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: For the past 12 years, the former Government dumped them in Western Sydney without essential infrastructure, without public transport, without schools and without hospitals. It is that kind of nimby approach that says, "We do not want equal distribution in Sydney's eastern suburbs. We are going to put it on Sydney's western fringe." That is a program and a policy that is proven not to work.

MINISTERIAL DRIVERS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:14): My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday the Industrial Relations Commission found that the Government's dismissal of former Minister Haylen's driver, Mohammed Nazmul Huda, was harsh, unjust and unreasonable, and ordered that the Government not dismiss him. As Minister Cotsis has said, it is a matter for the Premier's Department. What was the total cost to New South Wales taxpayers for the unfair dismissal case of Mr Huda?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:14): I do not have that figure on me, but I am happy to report to the Parliament, if the member for North Shore would like. I make the point that at a time of pressure on households, at a time of questions relating to the politics of our State—

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —and, thanks to members opposite, record debt left to us by the previous Government, these trivial, pedantic questions—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier will resume his seat.

Ms Felicity Wilson: If the Premier is unable to provide us with a figure, he can take the question on notice. He is not being relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore can ask the question. She cannot dictate the answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is an example of the myopic nature of the modern Opposition. There is an inability to grapple with or deal with the major issues affecting New South Wales. We never hear members opposite speak about regional employment, roads, budget management or the economic mess they left for the people of New South Wales. We rarely hear them speak about issues like crime. That is the truth. They rarely speak about issues like crime. Instead, it is either things that were in the newspaper six months ago or, alternatively, whatever One Nation is trawling around social media.

Mr Gurmish Singh: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Gurmish Singh: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to make reflections on members, he can do so by way of substantive motion. Our attention is on the integrity of this Government.

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The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. He draws a very long bow. The Premier will be heard in silence. The member for Wollongong will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We would expect that, with less than six months before the election campaign, we would be able to have a battle of ideas for the people of New South Wales about the future direction of the State, our vision for it and what our plans are. For the past two years, I have not heard a single question from the Opposition about cost-of-living relief for New South Wales families. Poll after poll, we ask what people care about and they say they are finding it harder to make ends meet.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will resume her seat. She is offending against the standing orders by interfering. I have ruled on the point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: People say they want help and direction from the government of the day. We are providing that. There is nothing from members opposite. I know the reason why. Half of them are obsessed with One Nation and half of them are ready to go out the door. I am reluctant to go down that road because I promised myself that I would not mention the Liberal Party or the National Party. I said to myself if those guys can get their polling above 20 per cent, we will start insulting them again. Those opposite cannot be led around by the nose by One Nation. At some point, they will have to take a stand on the issues affecting New South Wales. On issue after issue, we are seeing neglect from members opposite, both of their own constituents and of the issues affecting New South Wales. It is about time they came to the dispatch box and asked a question that the people of New South Wales care about.

The SPEAKER: I welcome the member for Myall Lakes back to the Chamber; however, she will behave in an orderly manner.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:18): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is protecting public assets and services from privatisation and why that matters for families across New South Wales?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:18): I thank the member for Granville. That question is relevant in the minds of the people of New South Wales. The truth is that privatisation is not abstract economic management. The people of New South Wales know what it means, because they paid the price of privatisation for years. It is a well-known truth, but it is worth saying again in the House: The previous Liberal-Nationals Government sold \$90 billion worth of our public assets—assets built by generations of people in the State. After the financial geniuses on the other side sold all the public assets, they still left us with the largest debt in New South Wales history and record deficits. They sold off the assets that belonged to the people of New South Wales and they still left us with a dog's breakfast of a budget.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: They sold the electricity system. We know about that. They sold the ports. The member for Granville knows that, which is why she asked the question. They privatised toll road after toll road. Worst of all, they privatised a public hospital with plans—and they forget this; they do not talk about this anymore—to privatise five more. They boasted that privatisation was—we all remember what they called it—the golden key that unlocked the door of opportunity. Yet every time they turned that key, who paid? The families of New South Wales paid every time they turned that golden key. There were more tolls, higher costs and less public control for the people of New South Wales. We take a different approach. The people of New South Wales know now that the Minns Labor Government takes a different approach to public assets. That different approach is to protect what the people of New South Wales own.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: Our approach is to bring public control back wherever we can, even though those opposite said we could not do it. One of our first acts upon winning the election was to protect Sydney Water and Hunter Water from privatisation. [*Extension of time*]

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The people of New South Wales do not need to fear that every time they turn on the tap the water will potentially be sold. It cannot be sold by this Government or by any other government in whatever form it takes because it is enshrined in the Constitution.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: We are very proud that we passed Joe's law in this place to stop another northern beaches style privatisation of an acute private hospital. That should never have happened. We brought the 494-bed Northern Beaches Hospital back into public hands, which the former Government said could not be done. On our roads, we are starting to restore the public control that was sold, with such devastating impacts to the cost of living for Western Sydney families. We established the publicly owned NSW Motorways. We have capped tolls and we have abolished toll notice administration fees. For the first time ever, we negotiated toll deductions on the existing motorway network. We are delivering—

Ms Robyn Preston: No, you're not.

Ms PRUE CAR: The member for Hawkesbury walks right into this every single time. It is like I have asked her to do that, to be honest. We are delivering the biggest infrastructure program seen in the history of New South Wales, including schools that the member for Hawkesbury herself had no explanation for not delivering.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: But the very best thing about this is that we are delivering this information program not on the back of privatising public assets. That makes a difference to the cost of living for the people of New South Wales. That is what families care about.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE STUDENT TRANSPORT

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (11:24): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Government advise the House of the improved school student bus transport routes, services and connections that would provide Wollondilly electorate students and their families with equity in transport access to and from the Targeted Sports Program at Eagle Vale Sports High School commencing term 1 2027?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:24): I thank the member for Wollondilly. She is a tireless advocate for access to public education in her community. It has been a real privilege to be able to work with her on many projects. Of course, every child deserves access to world-class public education. That is a guiding principle of the Government each and every day. Part of that is working closely across agencies to ensure that we can improve student transport planning. A key part of our delivery in public education and rebuilding public education in the State has been delivering the new Talented Sports Program at Eagle Vale Sports High School. We made that commitment in opposition because of the significant growth in the south-western Sydney region and the fact that there was no dedicated sports high school for talented young athletes.

Mrs Sally Quinell: That's right.

Ms PRUE CAR: That meant students from Wollondilly, students from Camden—that was a nicely timed interjection from the member for Camden—and students from Campbelltown were having to travel long hours every week to access a sports high school. The specialised Talented Sports Program is one of the very best programs we offer in public education in New South Wales. The upgrade at Eagle Vale is well underway, providing new and upgraded facilities for the school. While the sports stream has been welcomed and has reduced travel times for families in the region with talented children, it is attracting students from a broad geographic catchment—as these specialist schools do, as opposed to schools that offer spots only within one geographic area—which is creating its own transport challenges.

The department is working closely with Transport for NSW. We have established a joint education and transport forum to strengthen cross-agency accountability and support equitable access to education. The department's school infrastructure team is working directly with Eagle Vale Sports High School through initiatives like the travel mode survey to get the data on how many students may need to come to Eagle Vale or are interested in coming to Eagle Vale from outside the existing transport services. It is not always possible to provide direct school bus services for every journey because students are travelling across large areas of the State. But we need to plan for the future and explore solutions to provide options for families. Mr Craig Butler is an excellent principal who has been arguing for this for a long time. He is quite the sports person himself. He is working with local bus operators as well to explore transport options. *[Extension of time]*

We will keep collecting data to make sure that we monitor enrolments for 2027 as the Talented Sports Program grows. That is important. We want a clear picture of demand from the growing communities that the member represents. I acknowledge that those communities are growing exponentially, including The Oaks, Wollondilly, Camden, Oran Park and others. This is all part of our plan to ensure that students in the south-west

of Sydney and further into the Wollondilly electorate can access the schools they deserve, like we have been doing at Wilton also in the Wollondilly electorate. We are delivering a new public preschool, primary school and high school. The member has been arguing for those for years. She came in after the previous incumbent member in the Liberal-Nationals Government. Unfortunately, she is the member for the electorate where they built a high school without walls at Picton.

We are working to ensure that the member's constituents and their children can access public education, whether it is building new schools at Wilton or working across government with my cross-agency colleagues to ensure that students can access an excellent offering at Eagle Vale—the very first sports high school in south-western Sydney. That school was established to ensure that students in the member's electorate—and those in the electorates of Leppington, Macquarie Fields, Camden and Campbelltown—can access opportunities. The school at Eagle Vale will create future Olympians.

FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:29): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will he update the House on how the Government is strengthening the State's gun laws, given fewer dangerous guns in circulation means a safer New South Wales?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:30): I thank the member for his question. As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted yesterday, it might not be widely known, but one gun is reported stolen to New South Wales police every single day. Between January and August this year the State Crime Command seized 326 firearms. In 2025 there were 25 more registered firearms in Australia than after the gun buyback in 1996, and the number of registered firearms in New South Wales has increased by more than 40 per cent in less than a decade, from 739,000 firearms in 2016 to over 1.13 million in June last year. We have seen a spate of gangland shootings.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oxley will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: It is inarguable that there are too many guns in our society. The Government is strengthening gun laws by ensuring we have the strongest firearms laws in the nation. We have limited the number of firearms, moved some firearms into stricter categories and reduced magazine capacity. We have reduced the term of a firearm licence and required licensees to be members of a shooting club. We have invested \$42.8 million in the Firearms Registry and launched the biggest gun buyback in 30 years, with up to 274,000 guns estimated to be returned, removing them from the street.

Those strong, commonsense laws are all about community safety. The most pleasing part is that they were the result of a political consensus and overwhelmingly passed by the Parliament, with old enemies Labor and Liberal working together for community safety. In this place, 16 Liberal members joined with the Government to protect the community, splitting from their National Party Coalition colleagues. The member for Ryde has over 5,000 registered firearms in his electorate, which is nothing to sneeze at. He had this to say:

I am remaining consistent in my conviction that we can do more on guns in this State, not just because of the events in Bondi. That it took a tragedy to act is, in fact, a tragedy, but I would not be consistent with my own conscience if I did not support the changes.

The member for Oatley—another Liberal lion—made similar comments. The member for Willoughby, a Menzies in the making, had this to say:

The most important response needed is moral clarity, leadership that is crystal clear, born out of conviction and with the courage to address the evil and its effects.

No yearning for the streets of New York there—he was all about the streets of Willoughby.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Willoughby to order for the first time. I call the member for Willoughby to order for the second time.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The latest Resolve Political Monitor shows the laws are well supported. Some 73 per cent support the four-gun cap for individuals—

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: —and 75 per cent of respondents support reducing the licence term, while 53 per cent support the gun buyback, 20 per cent oppose it and 27 per cent are neutral. It is unequivocally popular. *[Extension of time]*

So it was to our collective surprise last week that the combined Coalition voted in favour of a disallowance motion for gun caps and buybacks—with some notable absences, I have to say.

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

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Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The member for Ryde, the member for Dubbo, the member for Badgerys Creek and the member for Holsworthy were all missing. Yesterday the member for Holsworthy gave a personal explanation that she was sick. This morning she told me she is still suffering from it. I apologise for that and hope the member is getting better. But what a contagion it must have been! It was a strike contagion that knocked out the member for Ryde, the member for Dubbo and the member for Badgerys Creek in an instant, yet 10 minutes later they were back on their feet again. It is remarkable. They are all well rested.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Goulburn will come to order. The Attorney General will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Chris Minns: Can we stop the clock?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock, but I warn members that we cannot do this all day.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I note the Attorney General referred to a personal explanation yesterday. I ask him to note that the member for Badgerys Creek is still absent from the Chamber and to please—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume her seat. There is no point of order. That is not a reasonable request. I call the member for Terrigal to order for the second time. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Last night those members had an opportunity to redeem themselves. Only the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cronulla had pairs last night. But the members representing the electorates of Oatley, Ryde, Badgerys Creek, Port Macquarie and Willoughby were nowhere to be seen.

Mr Justin Clancy: Point of order—

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: They are all moderates. Was there a Michael Photios wine tasting or something last night?

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will resume his seat. Order! I direct the member for Oatley to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for 10 minutes. That is a concession to the member; otherwise, he will be out for the day.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oatley left the Chamber at 11:35.]

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order from the member for Albury.

Mr Justin Clancy: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It has already been noted that the member for Badgerys Creek was absent yesterday. I ask the Attorney General to withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: I will consider that point of order later in the day. I note that the Attorney General's time has expired. I warn the member for Terrigal that he will be directed to leave the Chamber if he does not come to order. I will hear the point of order from the Leader of the House.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order: Firstly, the House has been far too disorderly. Mr Speaker, I ask that you bring the House to order. Secondly, a number of points of order taken had no substance at all and were specifically interfering under the standing orders. They occur when the House has controversial matters drawn to its attention, but that is no excuse for members to scream across the Chamber. It is no excuse to manufacture a point of order that has no substance whatsoever. I ask that if those opposite do so again, they be directed to leave the Chamber until after question time.

Ms Felicity Wilson: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: We will not debate the matter. I draw a line under it. However, I remind the Leader of the House that I have refused to hear points of order from Opposition members on the basis of Standing Order 131 (9) along exactly those lines. I warn Opposition members not to continue in that vein, but the behaviour of many Government members is also a problem. We must have consistency. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Ms Felicity Wilson: When the Leader of the House says that these are unnecessary points of order, Standing Order 73 explicitly states that imputations—

The SPEAKER: I dealt with that point of order by saying I will deal with it later. The Manager of Opposition Business will resume her seat.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (11:37): My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. Last night the upper House voted to disallow the Minister's local government meeting regulation for the second time in four months. Will he now undertake genuine consultation with stakeholders and allow briefings for councillors?

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (11:38): Mr Speaker, you would not believe this, would you? The first line of the objects of the Local Government (General) Amendment (Meetings) Regulation 2026 states that it is "a corruption prevention mechanism". The Liberal Party seeks to disallow it. Who would possibly believe that!

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: For the past six, seven or eight weeks, up the road in Elizabeth Street, that party has been exposed as riddled with corruption.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr RON HOENIG: We know about it because the member for Kellyville dictated chapter and verse in this House how corruption fills his party like a virus that impacts upon the selection of Liberal Party councillors in local government. But the Opposition sought to disallow an attempt by the Government to provide a corruption prevention regulation. What is with the Liberal Party that it should seek to disallow a regulation for a corruption prevention mechanism? Is there something it is seeking to hide? Is there some sort of corrupt conduct that it does not want the people of New South Wales to know about?

Mr Ray Williams: Point of order: I note for the House that the person in front of ICAC at the moment is the former Labor councillor for Strathfield.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the member for Kellyville to order for the second time.

Mr RON HOENIG: The member for Kellyville exposed how corrupt the Liberal Party is in local government. It requires this Government to act.

Mr Tim James: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 74, amongst others. The Minister is being quarrelsome. He impugns every single member on this side of the Chamber. It is unparliamentary to accuse all of us of being corrupt.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is not in breach of the standing orders. The member for Swansea will calm down.

Mr RON HOENIG: The member should feel that way because the evidence indicates that corruption enveins the Liberal Party like a fungus all the way to the State executive. It oozes from its members' pores and their DNA.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat or I will direct him to leave the Chamber for breaching Standing Order 131 (9).

Mr RON HOENIG: They corruptly removed the transport Minister from this House. The fact of the matter is their corruption will not go unpunished nor undealt with.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Goulburn to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Goulburn left the Chamber at 11:41.]

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:41): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is supporting public sector workers to deliver essential services and on whether there are any threats to this?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:41): I give huge acknowledgement to the member for The Entrance for his very hard work. When we came to government, essential services across New South Wales were under enormous pressure. There were teacher shortages in our schools, hospitals were struggling to recruit and retain staff, and other frontline services were under enormous pressure. For more than a decade, public sector wages had been capped, making it harder to recruit and retain the people our communities rely on. The Minns Labor Government was elected with

a very clear mandate to rebuild essential services and to support the people who deliver them. We abolished the wages cap. We restored genuine bargaining and we delivered better pay and conditions across the public sector because essential services are only as strong as the people who deliver them.

While we have made progress rebuilding those workforces, we are not going to pretend that everything is where we want it to be. There is much more to do, and that is why what is now being proposed for the New South Wales public sector matters. I do not need to put words into One Nation's mouth; I will use its words. Yesterday One Nation's New South Wales leader Mike Newman wrote, "Having worked across multiple departments inside the New South Wales Government, 10 per cent efficiencies will be a doddle." In the same article, Mr Newman says One Nation wants to "augment frontline services" and "bulk up frontline services".

But public sector workers are entitled to ask how those two things fit together. What do "10 per cent efficiencies" mean for the departments and agencies where they work? Where do those savings come from? Mr Newman has posted modelling showing plans to cut 104,000 public sector jobs. You cannot talk about cuts on that scale without explaining what they mean for the services that people rely on. Which jobs go? Which services are protected? And how do you guarantee that frontline services are not affected? Because rebuilding essential services takes years. Recruiting people, training them and keeping experienced workers in the system takes time. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that Mr Newman says One Nation is living rent free in our heads. But do members know who is not living rent free? Frontline workers. That is why we need to pay them and protect them. That is why the Government has focused on not only wages but also the conditions and protections people need at work. *[Extension of time]*

We have expanded safe staffing levels for nurses and introduced protections from the harms of artificial intelligence and digital work systems. We are bringing in workplace protections for retail workers. What are those opposite going to do? We have introduced outsourcing protections for New South Wales council workers. We are also investing an additional \$10.3 billion in health and recruiting 9,000 more health workers over the next four years. We need more people delivering essential services, not uncertainty about whether their jobs will still exist. Those opposite imposed the wages cap for 12 years. They opposed our move to abolish it. Now Mr Newman's One Nation is proposing major public sector "savings".

If One Nation forms government, it will need the Liberals to help it do so. Workers are entitled to know before the election what that arrangement would mean for them. Would the Liberals bring back a wages cap? Would they support One Nation's proposed public sector cuts? Would they keep the workplace protections we have introduced? The risk is not just to public sector workers; it is to every family that relies on the services they deliver.

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

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Cuts mean fewer people supporting our hospitals, schools and essential services. Holding down wages makes it harder to recruit and retain the workers we need. Weakening workplace protections leaves those workers worse off. After three years spent rebuilding services, the risk is that we start going backwards again. We know there is more work to do. We have made progress, but that progress must not be undone by One Nation and the Liberals. There will be no return to an arbitrary wages cap under this Government. We will continue protecting workers as workplaces change.

REGIONAL ROAD SAFETY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:47): My question is directed to the chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, Staysafe. Last week the committee tabled its report into interventions to reduce road trauma in regional New South Wales caused by speeding, fatigue, and drink and drug driving after a two-year inquiry, and made recommendations concerning awareness and dangers of drink and drug driving. Did the committee's report make any recommendations to support Labor's three-strikes drug driving policy? If not, why not?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House rises on a point of order. Members will come to order.

Mr Stephen Kamper: Ron, he was ready to go.

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown may well have been. The member for Manly, the member for Tamworth, the member for Albury and the member for Terrigal will be removed from the Chamber if they continue to behave in an unparliamentary manner.

Mr Ron Hoenig: If the Opposition wants to ask the chair of the committee a question and refer to legislation that the committee has considered, then it should refer to the legislation by its proper name. Otherwise

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the question is out of order. The question, worded the way it is, misdescribes the legislation and is in breach of Standing Order 128 as it contains argument, inference, imputation and ironical expression. That is the purpose of it being added to the question. If the member asks the question properly then it will be in order.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The member for Oatley will word his question correctly.

Mr MARK COURE: It was a question about the report and the business of the committee. Did the report entitled *Interventions to reduce road trauma in regional NSW caused by speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving* make any recommendations to support Labor's three-strikes drug driving policy? If not, why not?

The SPEAKER: The question is about policy; it does not reference legislation. I call the chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:49): I refer the member for Oatley to the published report. My name is Greg, not Google. I encourage members opposite to have a read and work it out themselves. But the question gives me the opportunity to talk about the important investigation that the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety conducted into the serious issue of rural and regional road safety, ranging from the long distances to the circumstances that confront road users in rural and regional New South Wales, which are very different to those that we experience here in metropolitan Sydney.

With the support and advice of the Minister, I draw the House's attention to the fact that the Government's laws create a more commonsense approach for patients who use lawfully prescribed medicinal cannabis but also need to drive. The Government is treating those patients in the same way as other prescription medication users are treated. It is introducing a measured three-strikes approach for registered medicinal cannabis patients, recognising that some drivers may test positive to THC despite using their medication lawfully and responsibly. Importantly, the threshold at the roadside does not change, as the member may well know. Again, I am happy to send him some bedtime reading.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Oatley.

Mr Mark Coure: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. It is a serious question. We know about the bill that has passed, but the question was did the committee's report make any recommendations to support Labor's three-strikes drug driving policy. If not, why not?

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Campbelltown is being completely relevant.

Mr GREG WARREN: Pursuant to Standing Order 129, I refer the member to the tabled and published report, which I am sure he is capable of reading for himself. The report is very clear. I acknowledge my fellow committee members, including the Hon. Natalie Ward in the other place, who made a valuable contribution. There were sensible members of the Liberal Party who wanted to make a contribution on a very serious issue.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. The Opposition Whip rises on a point of order.

Mr Adam Crouch: The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The member for Campbelltown keeps telling us to read the report. We are asking him to answer regarding his report.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order. The member for Terrigal is in breach of Standing Order 131 (9).

Mr GREG WARREN: I also acknowledge other members of the committee, including the member for Davidson and the member for Barwon, who made important contributions on a serious issue. To conclude, I refer the member for Oatley to the tabled report. I am happy to send it to him so that he has ample time to read it.

Mr Mark Coure: Mr Speaker, I am enjoying this answer. I seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: I will grant an extension. However, I warn Opposition members that if they interfere with the member's answer they will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr GREG WARREN: I sincerely appreciate it, Mr Speaker. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the important measures that the Government has put in place. I could go on and on, and I will. Our reforms strike the right balance, recognising lawful medicinal cannabis treatment and ensuring that anyone who drives while impaired by any drug or alcohol continues to face serious consequences. We need to think about that.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for North Shore that she will be directed to leave the Chamber if she continues to interject.

Mr GREG WARREN: The Government's position and the Government's legislation put the priority of road users first, whilst finding the balance between allowing those patients who rely on the lawful use of medicinal cannabis to continue on with their medication and ensuring that it is not unsafe for other road users. Why would we not do that? It is only fair and just.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oxley is on his final warning.

Mr GREG WARREN: This Government takes road safety seriously. It acknowledges that it is an issue and has introduced legislation in this place to provide for everyone in New South Wales, irrespective of—

Mr James Griffin: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Campbelltown will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Manly.

Mr James Griffin: I am trying to find the relevant standing order. As a parting gift to my dear friend the member for Campbelltown, I make this impassioned plea to the Premier: Look how good this guy is! It is time for a reshuffle.

The SPEAKER: I know the member for Manly is missing his former role, but he will resume his seat.

Mr GREG WARREN: I appreciate the support of the member for Manly. I am very much enjoying my role as chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety. I take this opportunity to thank all my fellow committee members and the staff, who put a lot of work into the report on this important issue.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:55): Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order, including the member for Camden. Order! I am on my feet. I am being criticised by both Government and Opposition members, who are almost equally to blame for the disorder in the House. It is tiresome and it is not a good look. Members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Campbelltown.

Mr GREG WARREN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, representing the Treasurer. Will the Minister update the House on the latest assessment of the State's credit rating and what it says about the Government's management of the economy?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:56): As reluctant as I am to interrupt the member for Campbelltown during his personal question and answer session, I thank him for what is probably the most pertinent question that will be asked in this Chamber not just today but this week. This is where the test comes to the fore on both sides of the Chamber: sound economic management on this side, no idea on the opposite side. Let me outline why. As the Treasurer announced yesterday, three independent ratings agencies have delivered positive assessments of New South Wales' finances.

The work of the Minns Government to deliver the largest budget turnaround in the history of New South Wales is being recognised. Fitch has reaffirmed our triple-A rating, Moody's has reaffirmed our triple-A rating with a stable outlook and S&P has reaffirmed our double-A plus rating and improved its outlook to stable. All members of the House should welcome that news, but I suspect members opposite do not, because it proves exactly what we have been saying for the past 3½ years and will continue to say: Only the Minns Government and NSW Labor are the best economic managers this State has and will ever have.

The conservative Queensland Government is looking to us because that State's rating has been downgraded. Why do the credit assessments matter? It is because delivering more homes and jobs requires confidence, investment and infrastructure. We want businesses to invest, builders to build and families to have greater choice about where they live and where they work. Responsible financial management gives government a stronger foundation to support growth. Moody's specifically acknowledged the Government's work to stabilise debt and reduce our reliance on new borrowing to fund infrastructure. It acknowledged the task of improving the budget while also meeting substantial demands for infrastructure and services. That is directly relevant to planning for the growth of our State.

As the Deputy Premier outlined earlier, we were handed the largest debt ever handed from one government to another in the history of the State. It was set to reach more than \$187 billion. The year before we were elected to office, New South Wales ran a budget deficit of \$15.3 billion—the biggest deficit in the history of the State. Let us just let that sink in for a minute. The biggest budget deficit in New South Wales history was run up by

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those on the other side of the Chamber. That is their story: big debt, big deficit, big excuses but poor economic management. That is the economic record of the Liberals and Nationals. *[Extension of time]*

The Government's latest figures show that debt is \$9.7 billion lower than the former Government had planned. This saves around \$400 million each year in interest expenses alone.

Ms Monica Tudehope: You still increased it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Epping to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Epping left the Chamber at 12:00.]

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The decrease in interest expenses reduce pressure on the budget and strengthen our capacity to invest in services and infrastructure the community needs. It also puts investment in our growing communities on a more sustainable footing. Importantly, I point out to members opposite—who said we could not do it—and to the populous at large that we committed an average of \$81 million a day to infrastructure investment to support growing communities and the future of the State while removing the wages cap and stopping privatisation. Members opposite ramped up massive debts and deficits and made big excuses. They said we could not do it while also removing the wages cap and ending privatisation, but the proof is in the pudding.

The previous budget proves it even further. We have been able to offer cost-of-living relief for today and reform for tomorrow. We have delivered \$100 off everyone's rego for the next 12 months. We have capped tolls at \$50 a week, frozen Opal fares at 2025 levels and continued to provide energy bill relief to take pressure off household budgets. At the same time, we have invested in infrastructure to the tune of \$30 billion a year over the next four years. We are responsibly making sure that we deliver good infrastructure, new homes, new jobs and great amenities for the people of New South Wales in a way that keeps the budget under control and keeps our finances in check. That is responsible management. That is a good government. That is the Government that New South Wales should return.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (12:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. With the bushfire season upon us, category 9 RFS appliances remain restricted because of weight and compliance issues, yet tenders to upgrade those vehicles do not close until 22 October. How many category 9 vehicles are currently restricted or offline, and why has it taken until the start of the bushfire season for the Government to tender for a solution?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:02): I thank the member for Myall Lakes and welcome her back. I am glad that she is feeling better. Members would have picked up that I will introduce the bill for the RFS fleet straight after question time, which comes with a \$470 million investment by our Government to make sure that we get this fleet going. I accept that the member has raised the issue of the category 9s. To be clear, those vehicles were purchased over an extended period, well before the life of this Government—but we will not go down that path.

With the indulgence of the House, the category 9 appliances are LandCruiser-type vehicles. They are support vehicles, not the main vehicle that goes out to a fire or plays the main role. RFS is working with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to inspect the vehicles and determine the modifications they need. I am advised that some modifications have been made to main vehicles, from category 1 through to category 7. In some cases, the difference is because the vehicle was purchased with modifications such as additional tanks or equipment. That is part of our ongoing investment in the RFS fleet.

Mr Michael Kemp: They're not secondary vehicles. They're important.

Mr JIHAD DIB: The member for Oxley is a member of the RFS, and I thank him for that. The category 9 appliances are support vehicles and they are being worked through. They are secondary vehicles, you may say—

Mr Michael Kemp: They're not.

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Oxley on three calls to order.

Mr JIHAD DIB: We just had our Get Ready Weekend, and many members in this place visited their local RFS brigade. The RFS crews have worked exceptionally hard this year, increasing hazard reduction by 20 per cent to over 124,000 hectares. The Government has provided something like 200 new and refurbished trucks in the past year alone. We closed off all recommendations from the bushfire inquiry a couple of years ago and we will continue with our investment. The RFS is working through the issues with category 9 vehicles. I assure

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the House that my advice is that category 9 is the smaller vehicle. Some larger vehicles will need modifications to keep them on the road which may involve moving some of the excess weight around. We are working through those issues with the RFS. The legislation we will introduce today is important because it will enable the RFS to manage its own fleet.

HUNTER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is working to protect jobs in the Hunter and to support the future of manufacturing in our State?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (12:05): I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. He is a tireless advocate for protecting and boosting jobs in his community and across the Hunter. I give a big congratulations to the 2,700 workers who delivered the M1 to Raymond Terrace—70 per cent of those workers were from the Hunter. That \$2.2 billion piece of infrastructure was delivered 18 months ahead of schedule. Members may not know, but Paul Keating and Laurie Brereton started that process with a \$1.5 billion injection back in 1995, partnering with the Labor governments of Bob Carr in New South Wales and Wayne Goss in Queensland to address the issue of safety.

After a 12-years of delay under those opposite, the 14-kilometre missing link at Hexham has been completed, providing such a smooth and rapid run into the Hunter. I am surprised by the number of people who have not been on that road. Yesterday on ABC Newcastle, I heard an interview in which the member for Vacluse was asked whether she had visited Newcastle. This is no secret. She put out a transcript about it.

Mr Justin Clancy: Point of order—

Ms Kate Washington: How can she get in trouble? It's a transcript.

Mr Justin Clancy: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Leader of the Opposition is clearly not in the Chamber.

Ms Kate Washington: We can't talk about her?

Mr Justin Clancy: If the Minister wants to—

The SPEAKER: I understand there could be some sensitivity here. The Minister has not attacked the Leader of the Opposition. She made a reference.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge Mike Newman is not here—neither is the member for Vacluse. But she did put out a transcript. It is not a secret. It might be a secret to the member for Upper Hunter; I do not know whether she has visited him yet. When she was asked about—

Mr David Layzell: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Upper Hunter.

Mr David Layzell: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. The Minister must know that the member for Vacluse is away today. Recently she came to visit me. I thought I would help the Minister out. She has been out helping the member for Cessnock.

The SPEAKER: The member for Upper Hunter will resume his seat or he will be directed to remove himself from the Chamber.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am concerned that the member for Vacluse spoke about Newcastle as, technically, part of Sydney. She rocked up on local radio and told the people of the Hunter that they are basically part of Sydney. What about Maitland? What about Charlestown, Swansea, Cessnock and Port Stephens? What about Myall Lakes and Lake Macquarie? She cannot ignore people who have been working as the powerhouse of this State. When asked if she would stop One Nation taking over the Hunter—given the Opposition had it for 12 years and did nothing—she said:

... realistically, I don't imagine the next election it's a real prospect of winning ...

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: When she was pressed on how she would counter One Nation in the Hunter, she admitted, "I don't have any strategy." That admission matters.

Mr Clayton Barr: There is a little bit more to the quote that I would like to hear. I seek further information.

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The SPEAKER: That is not the reason I will grant the Minister an extension. An additional two minutes is granted.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: That admission about strategy does matter. Those opposite will not rule out deals with One Nation. This is at the same time that Barnaby Joyce has been saying that at the Federal level they are drafting them right now. The Liberals and Nationals might have no plans for Cessnock, but the member for Vacluse actually went on air and effectively endorsed the current member for Cessnock. She said: "Clayton Barr is a great Labor member in that area—"

The SPEAKER: The member for Cessnock will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I want to get this clear for the record. The member for Vacluse said, "Clayton Barr is a great Labor member in that area. I know him well and I have a lot of respect for him." As do we. The member for Cessnock is fantastic. Where are the Liberal candidates? They are waving the white flag of surrender and we are only in September.

Mr Paul Scully: They forgot to do the paperwork.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: That is exactly right. The planning Minister has got it right. Do members remember 2024, when they forgot to lodge their paperwork? They delivered the mayoralty to a lot of One Nation wannabes across the State. That is what is coming. There will be an orange wave, when they are in a Liberal-Nationals coalition with One Nation, with their new leader Mike Newman. This is the problem. The Liberal Party machine has failed. They have admitted it. I implore all members to have a look at that interview. It is a failure. What is going to happen is that we will have One Nation leading the Coalition and we will have another lost decade or more in the Hunter, the powerhouse of this State.

Members on this side of the House are about building trains. We have a \$12 billion investment. We have helped 1,000 workers at Tomago, which Mr Newman said was a waste. Members opposite will never stand up for the Hunter, and now they are walking away from it. Labor is the only party of the Hunter. We are the party of the bush, the party of the workers, the party of small business and the party of the Hunter.

NORTHERN BEACHES ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:11): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads. Given the exceptionally poor and uneven condition of the road surface along Pittwater Road and the broader A8 corridor, when will the Government get started on the work needed to bring this critical northern beaches transport route up to an acceptable standard?

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (12:11): That is a great question from a great local member. I noticed the Liberals were saying, "Great question." It would be great if they actually asked good questions about their communities, but they are too busy digging the dirt. The member for Wakehurst is a strong advocate for his community, particularly when it comes to roads. I recognise that he has also written on behalf of local ambulance and bus drivers regarding ride quality. Earlier this year, I went with him on a drive along Pittwater Road through Dee Why so I could see and feel the quality of the road myself. I thank the member for that really hands-on approach.

The answer to the question is that work has already started. The Minns Labor Government has accelerated \$200 million for road pavement repair and asphalt resurfacing right across Greater Sydney. During the last financial year, the Government resurfaced more than 22,000 square metres of Pittwater Road, including sections at Mona Vale and Collaroy. Corrective maintenance was also completed at Warriewood, Narrabeen and Mona Vale. Can I just say this would not have happened under those opposite. They were not investing in maintenance on our roads.

We have also undertaken significant pavement renewal further north along Barrenjoey Road in the Pittwater electorate, including at North Narrabeen and Bilgola Bends. Between 1 January 2025 and 22 June 2026, ConnectSydney completed 1,118 repair activities on contracted State roads within the northern beaches local government area. But we recognise that there is always more to do. I am pleased to share with the House that further pavement renewal and corrective works are planned in the corridor this financial year, including at North Manly and Warriewood.

Mr James Griffin: Great.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes, it is great, member for Manly. Not that it would have happened under you, but anyway.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: While the pavement renewal and ongoing maintenance works address asphalt pavement and localised maintenance needs along Pittwater Road, older rigid concrete pavements present a more complex challenge. I have spoken about this issue with the member. We know that conventional asphalt resurfacing alone may not provide a lasting solution. The underlying cause of the unevenness needs to be understood before an appropriate and lasting treatment can be selected. This is the same on all concrete roads across the State. Following the advocacy of the member for Wakehurst, I am pleased to share with the House that the Minns Labor Government has commenced investigations and planning into lasting repairs of the concrete pavement on Pittwater Road. I also acknowledge the member for Pittwater for her work on all these issues. *[Extension of time]*

Laser surveys and ground-penetrating radar work has been completed. The next step is to analyse the data and undertake further structural testing. Once we have the structural findings, we can progress the appropriate repairs and treatments. That could include diamond grinding, smoothing, joint repairs, slab stabilisation or jacking, targeted transition treatments, or complete replacement of the slabs with new concrete or asphalt. We are on to it. It will provide a smoother, safer surface for the people of Wakehurst and the northern beaches more generally, including ambulance and emergency drivers and passengers on the B-Line.

But we need to reflect on how we got to this point. In November 2013 the former Liberal-Nationals Government outsourced the maintenance and renewal of State roads to cover all of Sydney. In 2017 the Auditor-General subsequently identified shortcomings under members opposite in the management of outsourced contracts, finding that key elements were missing and the Liberal Government had stopped tracking whether the expected benefits were being delivered. That is a shameful legacy. Following that audit, did the Liberals rethink their approach? No. On the contrary, they went a step further and signed another new nine-year contract in 2021 that privatised even more road maintenance responsibilities, including strategic asset management such as longer term pavement renewal.

The Liberals were obsessed with privatisation. They privatised our electricity assets, our public transport and a hospital, as the constituents of the member for Wakehurst know only too well. They privatised our road maintenance just like that. We cannot risk a Liberal-Nationals-One Nation coalition that will privatise assets, offshore manufacturing and put at risk the essential services of New South Wales that all of our families rely on. We are repairing the mess that those opposite left behind after 12 years, one mess at a time, and literally repairing our road network. There is more to do. We will keep working with good members like the member for Wakehurst to keep our roads safe.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ROUND TABLE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the good Minister please update the House on the outcomes of the sexual assault round table earlier this month?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:17): I thank the member for Gosford. The round table was a really important step in the Government's response to address the concerning rates of sexual violence in this State. Certainly, the alleged rapes by young people of other young people that we heard about in the lead-up to it were really concerning. The round table brought together victim-survivors, school leaders and various experts throughout the community.

The outcomes from the round table talked about increasing respectful relationships education across our schools and supporting parents, carers and other trusted adults to have conversations with young people. These are really difficult conversations. Parents need help, and we must improve responses to misogyny online and advance evidence-based prevention. We have already seen the Federal Government bring in the digital duty of care legislation, which is great. We will continue to do the work to bring down the rates of sexual violence in New South Wales, because our kids really deserve it.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (12:19): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended this day to permit:

- (1) General business order of the day No. 11, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026, standing in the name of the member for Lane Cove to take precedence during time allocated for Government business and proceed through all stages at this sitting.

- (2) Government business to resume after the conclusion of the debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026.

Today's edition of *The Daily Telegraph* reported that the Premier now says a State Heritage listing of Victoria Barracks is imperative to protect the history and heritage of the site. If he means it, there is a bill on the *Business Paper* that does the job, and he should allow the House to debate it and vote on it today. Rarely does this place have the opportunity to rise above partisan politics and make a decision that is so critical to the heritage of this great State, as well as to ongoing defence matters. The motion is very simple. It lets the Premier's words be tested by this vote. It is urgent because yesterday the Federal Labor defence Minister confirmed plans to start moving soldiers out of Paddington from the fourth quarter of 2026, which starts in a week.

Victoria Barracks is one of 67 defence properties in a national sell-off intended to raise \$1.8 billion. Other sites include Lancer Barracks and HMAS *Penguin*, which are also on the list for sale. Members on this side of the House, including myself, the member for Manly and the member for North Shore, have been pushing the Government to do something. But Federal Labor is moving, and it is moving now. It is about time team New South Wales stepped up to the plate. Once the site is emptied and sold, the only thing between the buyer and a windfall is the New South Wales planning system. The bill puts Parliament in that gap. If we wait, the site will be marketed and sold before New South Wales has set the rules.

I acknowledge Labor Parliamentary Secretaries the member for Coogee and the member for Campbelltown, who have been incredibly vocal on this matter. On 12 February this year, when asked in question time whether he opposed the sale, the Premier said that that was a matter for the Federal Government and, "I am not proposing a major campaign." He compared it to his neighbour selling a boat at the time, saying, "I was happy because it would clear up the street." To his credit, he was forced into a backdown within hours, and an apology. Later at a budget estimates hearing he turned around and said, "I am throwing my weight behind the diggers. This is a piece of national heritage." But when asked about the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026, he said he had not seen it.

Today the Premier said a heritage listing is imperative. In seven months, he has gone from "It's like a neighbour's boat" to "It's imperative". Now is the time for him to put his money, and his vote, where his mouth is. Now that there is an eviction timetable and this bill, Labor has no excuse. I commend the veterans Minister for committing to advocating for State Heritage listing. Today he can vote accordingly. The bill requires both Houses to approve any rezoning or material change to planning controls for specified defence sites, whether or not the Commonwealth still holds that land. That is the critical point. A heritage listing and this bill would work together. They are not alternatives.

A heritage listing alone on those sites will not stop them from being sold. Now is the time for this House to take action, on behalf of the people of New South Wales, against a Federal government that is going to impose sales of those defence sites, which will go to the very heart of our military heritage, the operational use of those sites with respect to counterterrorism, as well as ongoing military service. I seek to introduce a private member's bill, not a partisan bill, which it was never meant to be. Today is a day of action, now that the Federal Government is moving on those sites in this State as it seeks to sell them or at least move those soldiers out by the end of the year. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:24): The New South Wales Government supports the retention of Victoria Barracks and HMAS *Penguin* in public hands. As the spiritual home of the Australian Army, Victoria Barracks has been a place of service and sacrifice for generations of men and women who have served our country. I have talked to the member for Lane Cove about the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026. It is genuine, as are the views he expresses in respect of the issue. They are well thought out, and I respect his views as a former planning Minister. However, he would also know that the bill is not necessarily the right strategy in this battle with the Commonwealth. The land itself is currently zoned SP1 "special activities – defence" under the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012, which only permits uses associated with defence activities. Any use outside that zone would not be permissible.

The Heritage Council is currently conducting the heritage reports necessary to consider the listing of Victoria Barracks on the State Heritage Register. That listing is critically imperative to protecting the history and heritage of the site. The Government has said from day one that Victoria Barracks is of such significant heritage value that it is important to make sure it is managed sensitively. That is why veterans and their families who have deep connections with those sites should be at the heart of decision-making about the future of those sites. For many, they hold deep personal meaning and represent an enduring link to Australia's defence history. Sites such as the Victoria Barracks have stood as places of service, sacrifice and shared memory for generations of veterans and their families, and they are still key military command facilities.

The barracks is an original sandstone building in Sydney and one of our oldest defence sites, but it belongs on the State's heritage register because it will tell the story of who we were and who we are. But the Heritage Council has already begun work on the heritage reports that support a nomination for the site, and the final decision will come to the Minister for Heritage after the heritage assessment and following a recommendation by the Heritage Council. The site contains one of the most important groups of Georgian military buildings in Australia. The bore on the site was the second water supply for the Sydney colony, built by convicts in 1827. The original military prison as part of that site was constructed in 1847, and British troops vacated the site in 1870 when they left the colony.

The site also hosted a troop deployment that left to serve in the Boer War and World War I. Currently, that site is listed under the Commonwealth Heritage register, which is for Commonwealth-owned and protected buildings regulated under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. If we list it under State Heritage, the site would still be regulated by Commonwealth law. But if the site is no longer owned by the Federal Government, that heritage protection will fall away. At the point of divestment, if protection from the Federal listing falls away, then the site will be left without that registry. The New South Wales Government needs to pursue its listing and is of the view that that is the appropriate way for the State to use whatever constitutional power it has in respect of that site. If the listing is successful on the State register and the zoning is zoned the way it is—for defence purposes—that is the ultimate protection that can exist.

The bill proposed by the member for Lane Cove does not work, because it is no better than the current particular zoning, for reasons that even he understands and that I do not want to articulate in the House, lest the Commonwealth—which has not thought of a variety of strategies—gets an idea from me. But the reality is that the Government's approach is the best strategic approach to do what it can constitutionally to protect the site, and not the genuine way proposed by the member for Lane Cove. For that reason, the Government does not support the motion.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:29): By leave: I join the Opposition, the Government and members of the crossbench in strongly opposing the sale or divestment of Victoria Barracks and the moves taken by the Federal Government. I pay particular tribute to the strong advocacy of the member for Lane Cove and also that of the member for Manly and the member for Coogee, who have been strong and outspoken advocates for keeping the barracks as it is in its current site. I previously sought a briefing from the Opposition on its proposed legislation—that briefing has not been forthcoming—because I have a series of questions about the bill. My concern is that the bill provides the master-planning powers to the Parliament and that it is entirely possible that a majority of members in this place could have a view that is not supported by the local community. A future Parliament controlled by a majority with no representation of people in the eastern suburbs may want to see the site turned into something that looks like Green Square.

I want to make sure that we have the appropriate planning powers in place to prevent any perverse use of the site but also prevent the sale of the site. I believe that the Government's steps towards a heritage listing go a great deal of the way there, but I think we should have a committee process to look at the best way to prevent the sale of Victoria Barracks and to look at the best planning controls to limit the activities, in the most appropriate way. I fear that by simply providing the planning powers to the Parliament, the Opposition's bill could be providing some false hope to those, like me, who do not want to see the site sold. That may not be the appropriate way forward and may not be able to deliver the best outcomes for the site or its retention. I understand the urgency with which the Opposition is raising this. I would support the motion if it were for a suspension of standing orders to enable debate on a motion that the House support a heritage listing and not support the sale of Victoria Barracks. However, the motion seeks to bring forward debate on a bill whose outcomes and impacts I am not aware of. There could also be some constitutional concerns. On that basis, I cannot support the suspension motion.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:31): By leave: On behalf of The Greens, I echo the contribution made by our crossbench colleague the member for Sydney about the speed with which this bill is being brought to the House and the proposed reordering of business. We have not had the chance to look at the detail of the bill. By not supporting the suspension motion, we are not indicating a position on the bill. Rather, we indicate that we do not support bringing on the bill without adequate time to consult and consider the details.

I recognise the urgency. It is important to note that, in the reports about this matter today, members of the Government and the Opposition have been lamenting the lack of dignity and respect being shown to families who will be displaced as a result of a sale. When it comes to those families and individuals who are contributing to their community, members have a level of urgency, but it is disappointing that, under both the previous Liberal Government and this Labor Government, displacement of public housing tenants has occurred consistently with a cruel and harsh lack of dignity. People have been given letters telling them that they will be evicted and have been removed from communities they have generational connections with. It is happening in Waterloo, in Western Sydney, in Bellambi in the Illawarra and across the State.

If we have empathy in this place for Defence Force communities who have long contributed to the State being displaced by the sale of public assets, then we should have concern, rather than a level of hypocrisy, about the displacement of people living in public housing assets across the State. Shamefully, the public housing waiting list has grown under Labor by 25 per cent. When we feel heartache and pain for communities displaced from public assets owned by our State, we need to have consistency and recognise that the NSW Labor platform included a commitment to bring forward legislation to stop the sell-off of public housing. That legislation could have enabled a genuine conversation about housing currently on Defence Force land. Sadly, the Labor Government never did that. It has continued to privatise public housing. It is understandable that the Liberal Opposition wants to bring on a bill to hold the Government to account. While a Federal Labor left member, the Prime Minister, is pursuing a public assets agenda, NSW Labor apparently has a commitment to not support the privatisation of some things while going on with the wholesale privatisation of public land and housing in our city and across our State.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:35): By leave: I wish to speak to the substance of the suspension motion, which goes to the urgency of bringing on the shadow Minister's bill for considered debate. There is an important distinction to make regarding what the previous speaker raised. The issue has nothing to do with Labor left or Labor right. We agree on the importance of saving Victoria Barracks and we also understand the need for timeliness in bringing forward ways to do that. I speak as the son of Victoria Barracks' first female commander, Major Horne. I recall going on base as a young child while she was doing her job there. I encourage members to put aside the distinction between rushing through the bill and having considered debate about the substance of the bill. We can do it now, before the end of the term and before the Federal Government moves swiftly to get people out of the barracks and put it on the chopping block. I encourage members to support the suspension of standing orders so that we can bring on this bill as a matter of urgency.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (12:37): In reply: I thank the members who have contributed to the debate. It seems to me that some people have already given up and would have no soldiers at Victoria Barracks and Lancer Barracks and no sailors at HMAS *Penguin*. If this is not the most urgent time for this House to reflect upon our heritage and to deal with it in a bipartisan manner, when is? That is why the motion has been brought on today, following announcements from the Federal Government about moving those troops out in the fourth quarter of this year. This has always been an opportunity for all members in this House to stand up not just for our heritage but also for our veterans and their memories, an opportunity to stand up for those defence personnel who live and work in these places and keep them alive.

The bill would not stop us from moving for a heritage listing, but it immediately sends a clear message to potential buyers that, to get a rezoning or planning approval, the planning process will be circumvented to require both Houses of this Parliament to approve the change. There could be no greater protection for these assets. A buyer who wishes to develop these sites, once they are divested by the Federal Government, would think twice about going through both Houses of Parliament, whose members are quite aware of their military, heritage and community significance. In passing the bill, the Parliament would send the Federal Government a bipartisan message on behalf of the people of New South Wales that these sites are effectively sterilised and to go away because they are sacred. We divested both of the sites in Federation to the Federal Government, and if it does not want to use them anymore, it can give them back to the people of New South Wales. Just having heritage orders will not stop the sale. It occurred somewhat successfully with the old education department building, but we will have facades with high-rises placed on top of them.

Ms Anna Watson: You sold it.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: But it was not an operational military barracks utilised by St Vincent's Hospital for helicopters. It was not an operational barracks used as a forward operating base for counterterrorism units. It is still being used, and it should continue to be used. It has a great history and a great future with our military. I get quite emotional about this issue, as do many members of this House. The decision by the Federal Government to sell the sites is ridiculous and short sighted for so many reasons. I was quite happy for the bill to be sent to a committee inquiry. I have been very patient. Heritage has had seven months to look at the sites. In the past 24 hours, we have been told that Heritage will start looking at them and will eventually come back to us. That is going to be too late. The sites will be sold and will be off the books.

Now is the time for members who represent communities and veterans to put partisan politics aside, become team New South Wales, stand up for the people of New South Wales and not accept a short-sighted decision by the Federal Government. Now is the time for us to stand together and work together to defend important sites within Sydney and in outer Sydney. I commend the motion. I ask members to think seriously about the sites because if we do not pass this bill, members will be on the record and will be held accountable in the future. The House can do better to protect what is so important to the people of New South Wales.

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

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The House divided.

Ayes35
 Noes50
 Majority.....15

AYES

Anderson, K	Henskens, A	Singh, G
Ayyad, T	Hodges, M	Sloane, K
Butler, R	James, T	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Kemp, M	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Moylan, B	Toole, P
Cross, M	Preston, R	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Provest, G	Tudehope, M
Dalton, H	Regan, M	Williams, R
Donato, P	Roberts, A	Williamson, R (teller)
Griffin, J	Saunders, D	Wilson, F
Hannan, J	Scruby, J	

NOES

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

PAIRS

Lane, J

Park, R

Motion negatived.*Bills***RURAL FIRES AMENDMENT (FIRE FIGHTING FLEET) BILL 2026****First Reading****Bill introduced on motion by Mr Jihad Dib, read a first time and printed.****Second Reading Speech****Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:49):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026. The bill proposes amendments to the Rural Fires Act 1997 to transfer the ownership of certain vehicles and trailers from local councils to the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service. The bill represents the biggest legislative reform to the Rural Fire Service since the Carr Government passed the Rural Fires Act 30 years ago. The bill will transfer

ownership of the State's red fleet of more than 6,000 firefighting and support vehicles from local government to the RFS. This reform will consolidate operational responsibility for the red fleet under the State Government for the first time since the RFS was established. Ownership and management will be transferred from councils from 1 July 2027.

The changes address recommendations from the Public Accounts Committee report entitled *Assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service*. The changes specifically address recommendations 1 and 3 that the RFS should own, operate and be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the red fleet assets. I will now go through each of the bill's provisions. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Rural Fires Act 1997 to modify the definition of "fire fighting equipment" in section 119. Presently, "fire fighting equipment" is defined to include "fire fighting apparatus, buildings, water storage towers or lookout towers". "Fire fighting apparatus" is in turn defined to include "all vehicles, equipment and other things used for or in connection with the prevention or suppression of fire or the protection of life or property in case of fire". The definition of "fire fighting equipment" will be amended to mean:

- (a) fire fighting apparatus, other than the following—
 - (i) vehicles and trailers,
 - (ii) equipment or other things permanently affixed to vehicles or trailers,
- (c) buildings,
- (c) water storage towers,
- (d) lookout towers.

The consequence of this will be that firefighting vehicles and trailers, and any equipment or things permanently affixed thereto, will no longer be vested in councils by operation of section 119 (2) of the Rural Fires Act 1997. Furthermore, councils will no longer be required to take care of and maintain such vehicles and trailers, including equipment and things permanently affixed to those vehicles and trailers, as stated under section 119 (5). Consequential amendments will also be made, at schedule 3 of the Act, to ensure that vehicles and trailers, including equipment and things permanently affixed to those vehicles and trailers, which were vested in councils by operation of the Rural Fires Act 1997 prior to the change to the definition of "fire fighting equipment", are now vested in the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

Clause 2 of the bill provides that the amending Act will commence on 1 July 2027. This is consistent with the Government's announcement earlier this year. The proposed amendments will consolidate operational responsibility for the State's firefighting fleet under the State Government for the first time since the RFS was established almost 30 years ago. To be clear, by that I mean established in its current form as the Rural Fire Service. The bill's changes will enable a consistent and modern approach to the management of rural firefighting fleet assets across New South Wales. There are a lot of people to acknowledge in getting to this point. I especially acknowledge the work of the Public Accounts Committee for its inquiry into this matter, led by the member for Strathfield. I also thank regional councils across the State, whose efforts more than a century ago laid the foundation for our rural fire brigades.

Local governments will continue to play a critical role in bushfire prevention, and we will work with them over the next 12 months on this transition. I give a special mention to Mr Rick Firman, chairman of the Country Mayors Association, and to Darcy Byrne, president of Local Government NSW, for their advocacy on behalf of their members. Rick is a thoroughly decent man. We may have slightly different political views, but we also have an incredible amount of respect for each other. He has spoken to me about this issue almost from day dot when I became Minister. As a government, we gave our word that there would be work on it and we are delivering on that. Rick was one of the first people I rang when I knew that the bill would progress. As for Darcy and his team at Local Government NSW, I am sure "they're cheering", to use a phrase from my electorate.

I also acknowledge the Rural Fire Service Association for its incredible work and constructive advocacy on this reform. Not only has it worked with us as we developed this, but it also plays an important role in assuring the bill. Association members remain passionate advocates for the interests of the RFS, its staff and its volunteers. I also acknowledge the many members of Parliament across the political spectrum who have raised this as an issue and had involvement in the bill. I could not thank enough the Treasurer and the finance Minister for their support during the budget to ensure this happens. I will speak more about that in my speech in reply.

At the forefront of the debate is safety for the community and safety for frontline responders. The new arrangements will deliver consistent statewide standards and improved reliability across the fleet. While the establishment of RFS regional maintenance hubs will create local job and apprenticeship opportunities, supporting local industry and strengthening the resilience of the RFS into the future are also important factors in this legislation. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that saw the need for reform and took up the challenge

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to undertake it. I am also proud to be the Minister who delivers this reform. I seek the Parliament's support to establish this and get it up and running by 1 July 2027. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL COMMUNITY SAFETY) BILL 2026

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:57): I continue my contribution to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. I have probably said most of what I wanted to say. Apart from thanking the Minister and her office, I also thank a couple of stakeholders. We were given time. We were brought on board and included over the months—which we much appreciate—so that we could do proper stakeholder engagement. I thank Rainbow Families for their insights, which ensured that the lens of LGBTIQ+ parents and teachers were taken into consideration, and also the NSW Teachers Federation. Interestingly, in talking to them I noted that these sorts of orders are rarely used in other jurisdictions. They are underutilised because people are concerned about overuse. That is not surprising.

I may have a bias because I am a former teacher but, from what I see, I know that teachers are unbelievably dedicated. They see teaching as a vocation. Indeed, everyone who works in schools loves young people and education. It really does not get more life affirming than that. Generally, they will put up with a lot because they do not want to make a fuss. That is unacceptable when we hear the stories of what teachers, principals and front office staff are experiencing.

I thank the NSW Teachers Federation and, as I mentioned before, the blind families support group. They were amazing and engaged deeply with jurisdictions in other States and countries. We were pleased to see that the threshold in this State is higher so it cannot be used as a chilling tool to stop parents from engaging with their schools. No-one has those intentions. I look forward to seeing the ministerial guidelines and have no doubt that the Department of Education will come up with policy and directions for teachers and principals. People often think principals look at bills. They do not have the time to do that. They rely heavily on the department and its policies and procedures. I will follow those. We are grateful that the Government will introduce amendments in the consideration in detail stage. The Greens do not oppose the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): It being 1.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the committees take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON NET ZERO FUTURE

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (13:01): I comment on the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Net Zero Future entitled *Emissions from the fossil fuel sector*, tabled on 3 August 2026. As deputy chair of the committee, I acknowledge the work of the chair, the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham; my fellow committee members; the committee secretariat; Hansard staff; and everyone who contributed evidence to the important inquiry. The inquiry received 29 submissions, plus one supplementary submission, and held two public hearings. The report makes six recommendations. Those contributions gave the committee the opportunity to hear from government agencies, industry, environmental organisations, technical experts and other stakeholders about both the scale of emissions from the fossil fuel sector and the practical options available to reduce them.

One of the clearest issues identified through the inquiry was the significance of emissions from coalmining in New South Wales. The Net Zero Commission reported that coalmining generates 96 per cent of emissions from the State's resources sector, while the resources sector accounted for around 12 per cent of the State's emissions in 2022-23. The majority of those resource sector emissions are fugitive emissions from coalmining, predominantly methane. That makes methane abatement an important part of the challenge before us. The committee heard evidence about technologies that can capture, destroy or make productive use of methane that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. Trials of onsite abatement technologies are progressing, and the report recommends that existing coalmines implement onsite abatement in accordance with the greenhouse gas mitigation guidance of the Environment Protection Authority [EPA].

The report also recommends that the Government work with technical experts, safety regulators, technology providers and industry to resolve legitimate safety concerns associated with those technologies. The committee also recommended examining whether existing grant programs are providing the right incentives for operators to introduce abatement technology, as well as considering the regulatory settings needed to encourage waste-gas-to-electricity projects. Another significant issue raised throughout the inquiry was the accuracy and transparency of emissions measurement and reporting. Good policy depends on good information. If we are to understand where emissions are coming from and whether measures to reduce them are working, our data must be robust and publicly accessible. For that reason, the committee recommended the expedited rollout of a regional greenhouse gas monitoring network, informed by independent expertise, coordinated with work occurring at the Commonwealth level, and with the data collected made publicly available.

The report also recommends that planning decisions for new coal projects, extensions and modifications take account of the EPA's greenhouse gas guidance and the advice of the independent Net Zero Commission. Its sixth recommendation asks the Government to consider what limitations may be appropriate for fossil fuel advertising and sponsorship, particularly on public buildings, transport assets and in educational institutions. Importantly, the committee recognised throughout the inquiry that the discussion is also about people and communities. Around 25,000 people are employed across coalmines in New South Wales, and there are communities whose economies have been built around that industry. The report acknowledges the importance of supporting workers and communities through an orderly transition to a lower emissions economy.

The inquiry has provided Parliament with a substantial body of evidence about the challenges ahead, but also about the practical opportunities available to reduce emissions at their source, improve measurement and transparency, and better inform future decisions. I thank everyone who participated in the inquiry and contributed to the report.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:05): I too make a few comments about the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Net Zero Future entitled *Emissions from the fossil fuel sector* and its attempt to focus on emissions from the coalmining sector. I add to the record my dismay that such efforts have been made to reinforce the Net Zero Commission's position that extensions of coalmines should not proceed. It has worked to find ways to shut down coalmines and their extensions through carbon modelling that, at this point in time, is not aligned with the Federal Government's system of carbon modelling. It is not aligned with the State Government's carbon modelling. Indeed, companies have their own carbon modelling for emissions. At a time when there is such discrepancy between different experts on carbon modelling, the committee seems to focus on and back up the Net Zero Commission's position, which is to shut down coalmines.

That does not take into account all the people and communities that rely on coalmining in Australia. There is a total lack of empathy for those communities. I put on record comments made by the Hon. Wes Fang in his dissenting statement. He said that the report:

... lacks the desired diversity in order to rigorously test and examine this matter, as well as the conduct of the NSW Net Zero Commission when it comes to their delivery of work.

He is commenting on the make-up of the committee and the way it has approached coalmining. He refers to the ideology of the members on the committee and that they have not given the issue a fair representation. He goes on further to comment:

Indeed, it was incredible that the NSW Labor members on the committee, voted against the inclusion of a statement made by the Hon. Courtney Houssos, who is the current Minister for Natural Resources in this NSW Labor Government. Minister Houssos recently used the NSW Coal Industry 2026-2050 strategy document to indicate that coal mining in NSW remains secure.

Whilst we have that strategy document in place, we have committees such as this one trying to undermine those coalmine extensions. We have the Net Zero Commission almost laser focused on stopping coalmining in the name of net zero when, in fact, coalmining remains an important part of the New South Wales economy, and it will continue to be for a long time. Our trading partners rely on the export coal that we provide them. The Hunter Valley has the cleanest black coal in the world. The last piece of coal in the world to be burnt for energy production should be Hunter Valley black coal. That is the most environmentally friendly way forward.

Report noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:10): As Chair: I take note of the committee report entitled *Eighteenth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, which was tabled on 6 August 2026. The report

examines the NSW Valuer General's 2024-25 annual report and forms the committee's third review for the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. I am grateful to have been the chair over that time. I particularly thank the Premier because he, in minority government, gave a number of chair positions to the crossbench, which he did not have to do. I stuck my hand up to chair what members have said is the most boring committee, but I found it to be anything but. I have considered it an absolute privilege to chair the committee. I am not contesting the next election, so I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat for their support. I also thank Sally Dale, the Valuer General, who has done an incredible job.

The annual review provides the committee with the opportunity to scrutinise how the Valuer General carries out its land valuation functions. The committee found that the office fulfilled its functions in accordance with the Valuation of Land Act 1916 and the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 during the reporting period. A key focus of this year's review was monitoring the ongoing transition to a hybrid service delivery model by Value NSW. Some \$700 billion worth of assets are valued and there are \$15 billion worth of rates and taxes and \$1 billion in compulsory acquisitions. It is a powerful department, and we were fortunate to visit Parramatta with Minister Kamper recently to see everyone.

I am pleased to say that everyone seemed happy in their jobs. When I read some of the statistics about the people and their efficiency and the culture, I can attest to that. We heard that approximately 90 per cent of Value NSW's valuation work has been brought in-house. As a member of The Greens, I welcome that. Before the change of government it was a very different story, with mostly private valuers and contractors. Bringing that work in-house has not only provided full-time equivalent work for so many people but also generated more than \$6 million in gross savings in 2025. It has improved service delivery time frames and has grown the internal workforce. To support ongoing oversight, the committee recommends that the Valuer General review and report in future annual reports on the proportion of valuations undertaken in-house and associated cost savings achieved.

The committee also examined changes to the general valuation distribution schedule. Previously, land values for most properties were issued to councils once every three years. That was a mammoth task. Value NSW has now begun a phased approach—which we are hearing from local government is very welcome—with approximately one-third of councils receiving updated land values each year. The committee heard that the schedule was restructured to improve customer response times and reduce costs for local councils and the Government. We also had a lesson in Val IQ and some of the new website features, where customers can put in their customer reference number and find out all kinds of things about their land, and track any queries or appeals. That was impressive. We heard from the CEO of Value NSW about the plan for the new technology, but it was impressive to see it in practice and to see it delivered.

Initial feedback from councils has been positive. Given the significance of the change, the committee recommend that the Valuer General regularly review how the new schedule is working to ensure that it delivers timely and quality land values. I thank the Valuer General, Ms Sally Dale, and the Chief Executive Officer of Value NSW, Mr Stewart McLachlan, for their ongoing engagement with the committee. I also thank my fellow committee members for their constructive and bipartisan approach to the committee's work and acknowledge the work of the secretariat. Their work has been absolutely outstanding. In terms of the technological reforms that the Valuer General is overseeing, and the just terms compensation, we were able to give good feedback about cultural loss. We look forward to seeing that feedback taken on board next term. I will be watching.

Report noted.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the House take note of the report entitled *Improving access to early childhood health and development checks*.

Debate called on and adjourned.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (13:16): I am pleased to briefly take note of the important report entitled *Immediate options for enhancing political party governance*. I am not the chair of the committee—the chair is the Hon. Peter Primrose in the other place—but I felt it necessary to make a contribution to debate on the report. The inquiry was referred to the committee way back on 7 August 2026, which meant we did not have much time to deal with the matter. I commend the chair and the secretariat for the incredible amount of work they

did in such a short time to call for submissions, receive those submissions, draft a report and then table the report in September, in a little over six weeks. It was a fantastic job from all involved.

After getting that done in such a short time, there were reports of committee fatigue. A number of inquiries over this term have dealt with similar electoral matters. All political parties managed a quick turnaround except the Liberal Party and some of the minor parties. I think one submission was received from a private citizen. It was good to see that most of the political parties in New South Wales are concerned with this matter and that they made submissions. All the submissions were pretty much on the same page, and they were in line with the recommendations. Recommendation 1 is:

That to improve governance standards for political parties, the NSW Government establish a working group to progress detailed consideration and implementation of recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption's Operation Aero report, particularly those recommendations not addressed in this report, and any related matters.

After Operation Aero there was a series of recommendations. Given the time frame, the committee decided that those that did not fall within the remit of this particular inquiry would be looked after by a working group. Those the committee did examine were specifically in relation to codes of conduct. It recommended:

That the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* be amended to require political parties to adopt a code of conduct as a precondition to receiving entitlements from the Administration Fund. The code of conduct should address party office holders' enforceable obligations to:

- (a) act lawfully or ethically—

it is quite extraordinary that we have to have a law to ensure that political parties do that—

- (b) identify, where possible avoid, and disclose and appropriately manage actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest;
- (c) immediately report any suspected contraventions of electoral laws to the NSW Electoral Commission or the Independent Commission Against Corruption as appropriate; and
- (d) maintain appropriate policies and procedures for:
 - i. promoting ethical standards of conduct within the party and;
 - ii. addressing internal complaints, including protections for whistleblowers.

As I said, it is extraordinary that the place that makes laws in this State and effectively requires corporations, community organisations and not-for-profits to maintain a certain requirement in terms of internal governance would not itself have that same level of internal governance. This is a long overdue and necessary move to ensure that political parties in this State have what are essentially baseline requirements when it comes to modern and effective governance. Anyone who has done the Institute of Company Directors course or been on a board, whether for a corporation that makes billions of dollars in turnover or for the local netball club, knows it is a pretty standard requirement to have things like a code of conduct and a set of policies that govern the organisation. This move is important. The Labor Party has made considerable moves over the past few years to modernise its governance procedures, ensuring that its policies are up to date and that there are things such as whistleblower protections.

Ms Lynda Voltz: We should ask One Nation for theirs.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: It would be good to see all political parties, including emerging parties that are looking to have a significant impact on the forthcoming election—if I understand correctly, given the number of members that have jumped ship from that particular party, it is probably in need of some modern governance. I again commend the committee for turning the report around. The Special Minister of State made a referral on 7 August and we were able to turn it around within four or five weeks. That is effective governance. We need more effective governance, starting with political parties. I will leave it at that.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:22): As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as the chair of the Legislation Review Committee. On 15 September the committee tabled its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 50/58*. The previous speaker stated that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters does a lot of reports, but we are up to our fiftieth. The committee examined six bills in the digest. It also reviewed 26 regulations and statutory instruments, none of which reached the reporting threshold under the Legislation Review Act. I remind members that the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation informs members of both Houses and the community about the potential impact of legislation on personal rights and

liberties, and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power. In effect, the committee is there to ensure that the rights of the people of New South Wales are protected.

I draw the attention of members to some of the key issues raised in the digest. I start with a Government bill. The committee reported on the Crimes and Other Legislation Amendment (Further Organised Crimes Reforms) Bill 2026. The bill proposes to amend five pieces of legislation to provide additional powers to law enforcement officers to investigate and address organised crime. In its report, the committee commented on seven issues, all of which it referred to Parliament. Firstly, the bill would amend the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to establish a new strict liability offence for failing to comply with a direction from, or giving of false information to, police in the execution of a digital access order when obtaining data from a specified computer.

The proposed offence would potentially carry a significant custodial sentence of seven years imprisonment without establishing the mental element of fault. The bill would also provide that it is not a reasonable excuse for a person to fail to comply with the access order or a requirement of the order on the grounds that compliance would tend to incriminate or expose them to a penalty. The bill may therefore abrogate a person's privilege against self-incrimination. That privilege is necessary to preserve the presumption of innocence and ensure that the burden of proof remains on the prosecution.

Additionally, the bill would amend the Criminal Procedure Act 1986 to classify the proposed offence as an indictable offence to be tried summarily, unless the prosecutor elects to have it dealt with on indictment. That may deny a person procedural protections by removing their capacity to elect for a trial by jury. The bill would also substitute provisions in the Crime Commission Act 2012 to allow the commissioner to make a direction without a summons to order the immediate detention of a person in contempt of the commission. The contemner could be taken to a correctional centre or elsewhere until they are brought before the Supreme Court. Together, those amendments may impact on a person's right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention as contained in article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Further, the bill would amend the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Roads Act 1993 to authorise the collection, use and disclosure of certain information, including photographs, to government agencies to support the investigation of organised crime. The committee is concerned that those changes would confer broad powers on government agencies and allow wide discretion that may impact a person's privacy rights. Finally, the bill would defer a range of significant and substantive matters to regulations. That would include allowing the regulations to alter key definitions such as a "serious offence" linked to organised crime, which could materially impact the rights and obligations of individuals. For those reasons, the committee referred all of those matters to Parliament for consideration.

I turn now to private members' bills. The Committee reported on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026. In its report, the committee commented on one issue, which it referred to Parliament. The bill would amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to limit a person's ability to make changes to the use of land listed as a defence site, or carry out development on that land, without approving resolutions by both Houses of Parliament. The bill's restriction may therefore impact the value, use or potential development opportunities of that land.

Additionally, the bill provides that no compensation is payable because of the restrictions or because the value or use potential is affected. The combined effect of the proposed amendments is that a person would be restricted from exercising their property rights and would have no entitlement to compensation for the resulting diminution in the value or development potential of the land. For that reason, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for its consideration. That concludes my remarks on the Legislation Review Committee's fiftieth digest. I encourage all members to read the digest, which is available on the Committee's webpage. I thank the committee secretariat in particular for its hard work. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:28): I also make a contribution regarding the Legislation Review Committee's report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 50/58*. I thank the chair for her great leadership of the committee and the efficient way that she goes about her duties. I also thank the secretariat, who do a wonderful job of supporting the committee and who manage to turn around quite complex—and some would say dry—topics of legislation very quickly and with enthusiasm. It makes it a joy to be on the committee. It considered six bills during this time, three of which were identified with issues that are set out in sections 8A or 9 of the Legislation Review Act.

The first bill was the Crimes and Other Legislation Amendment (Further Organised Crimes Reforms) Bill 2026. It was found to have issues regarding the strict liability offence with custodial penalty, procedural fairness in regard to a right to trial by jury, self-incrimination, freedom from arbitrary detention, wide administrative powers impacting privacy rights, substantial matters deferred to regulations and commencement

by proclamation—all of which were referred to the Parliament for review. The second bill was the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Defence Lands Parliamentary Approval) Bill 2026. It was found to have issues regarding the impact on property rights and the ability to exercise development entitlements, which was referred to the Parliament.

The third bill was the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment (Councillor Conduct Proceedings) Bill 2026. It was found to have issues regarding the lack of notice and hearing requirements impacting the right to procedural fairness, additional punishment for the same conduct, the power of the Minister to transfer existing proceedings, and commencement by proclamation. Some of those issues were referred to the Parliament for review. I will also go into a little more detail regarding the bill's limitation of an employee's right to access workplace protection orders, which was also referred to the Parliament. The digest states:

The Bill would amend the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* to require an employee to seek leave of the Industrial Relations Commission ... before applying for a stop bullying order or a sexual harassment order, if the alleged conduct is by a councillor. The Bill would also require a person or an industrial organisation (on behalf of the aggrieved person) to inform the Commission if a remedy is being sought, or has been obtained, under the Local Government Act for substantially the same conduct.

Proposed subsections ... set out the factors the Commission must consider before deciding whether to grant leave for stop bullying orders and sexual harassment orders respectively. These considerations include whether the application may lead to an abuse of process; the person's interest in obtaining a remedy they are unable to gain under the *Local Government Act 1993*; the potential consequences for the administration of justice; and other matters the Commission considers relevant.

While the committee acknowledged that the provisions are intended to provide safeguards, there are some concerns regarding them. That concludes my remarks on this great report. I recommend that all members have a good read of it.

Report noted.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Bills

EDUCATION AMENDMENT (SCHOOL COMMUNITY SAFETY) BILL 2026

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:31): I speak in support of the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. The bill goes to the very heart of what we value in New South Wales: safe schools, respected teachers and every child's right to a quality education. The bill is about protection—protection of our students, protection of our teachers and school staff, and protection of the integrity of our school system. It recognises a simple but powerful truth: Learning cannot flourish in an environment where fear, intimidation or harassment are allowed to take hold.

For too long, there has been a gap in our laws when it comes to dealing with harmful behaviour by adult members of school communities. While existing legislation such as the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 and the Crimes Act provides some tools, they are outdated, limited in scope or impose an unreasonable burden on individual staff members to seek enforcement. They do not adequately address the realities of modern school environments, particularly the rise of online abuse and the increasingly complex ways in which harmful behaviour can manifest. This bill addresses those shortcomings directly.

For the first time in New South Wales, the bill introduces a clear and enforceable framework to respond to what the legislation defines as "unreasonable behaviour" and "unreasonable communication". That includes conduct that is disorderly, offensive, intimidating or threatening, as well as harmful communication through phone calls, messages, social media or other platforms. This is not about criminal behaviour. Where conduct crosses the criminal threshold, police will continue to play their critical role. Rather, the bill targets the significant volume of harmful behaviour that falls short of criminality but nonetheless has a profound impact on school communities. That impact is real.

We have seen a troubling rise in incidents of abuse, threats and intimidation directed at teachers and school leaders. Data from the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey paints a concerning picture: More than half of school leaders report threats of violence, nearly half have experienced physical violence and over a third have been subjected to cyberbullying—much of it originating from a small minority of parents or community members. When a teacher is threatened or a principal is intimidated, it does not just affect that individual. It disrupts classrooms, it undermines learning, and it deprives students of stability and continuity—things they can never get back. This bill sends a clear message that that behaviour is unacceptable, and this

Parliament will act to stop it. The framework proposed is proportionate and carefully designed. It introduces a three-tiered system of school community safety orders.

Firstly, immediate orders—issued by principals or those in charge of a school—allow for swift action when there is an imminent and unacceptable risk of harm. Those orders can be given verbally and last up to 14 days, ensuring that urgent situations can be addressed without delay. Secondly, ongoing orders—issued at a higher level within the education system—provide longer term protection where there is a sustained risk of harmful behaviour. Those orders can remain in force for up to 12 months and must be issued in writing, with full procedural fairness afforded to the affected individual. Thirdly, protection orders—issued by the Local Court—serve as a final enforcement mechanism where previous efforts have failed. Those orders ensure that persistent breaches are met with appropriate consequences while still recognising that such orders will not appear on a person's criminal record unless breached. Together, these measures form a graduated and balanced system that prioritises prevention, emphasises de-escalation and reserves stronger sanctions for cases where they are truly necessary.

Importantly, the bill extends protections beyond the school gate. It applies to "school-related places", including sports venues, excursion sites, school transport and even online environments. This reflects the modern reality that school communities are not confined to physical campuses. Procedural fairness is a cornerstone of this bill. Individuals subject to ongoing orders will be notified, given an opportunity to respond and provided with clear avenues for review, including an internal review and the right to appeal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The bill also requires decision-makers to consider any known vulnerabilities such as disability, cultural background or language barriers, ensuring that responses are proportionate and sensitive to individual circumstances.

The legislation does not seek to silence parents or carers. On the contrary, respectful engagement between families and schools is essential to student success. Parents have every right to raise concerns, ask questions and advocate for their children. This bill targets only those rare instances where behaviour crosses the line, where it becomes harmful, disruptive and unacceptable by any reasonable standard. Notably, the bill also safeguards the interests of students whose parents or carers may be subject to an order. Schools will be required to ensure that those students can continue to attend, participate and thrive, with appropriate arrangements in place for communication and support. Victoria and South Australia have already introduced similar measures, with positive results. New South Wales now joins them in taking decisive action to protect school communities.

The bill ensures that our teachers can focus on what they do best—teaching—free from fear, intimidation and disruption. It ensures that our schools remain places of respect, safety and opportunity. It also ensures that, as a Parliament, we stand firmly on the side of students, educators and the values that underpin a strong and fair society. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (14:39): I contribute to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. As the husband of an incredibly hardworking primary school teacher, I support the bill, as does the Opposition. The bill seeks to provide schools with additional tools to protect students, teachers and staff from unreasonable behaviour that causes harm, disrupts learning or interferes with the operation of a school. Every child has the right to attend school without fear or intimidation, disruption or abuse. Every teacher has the right to work in a safe environment. Every principal and member of school staff should be able to carry out their duties without being subjected to threatening or inappropriate conduct. Those simple principles enjoy broad support across the community and this Parliament.

As the representative of the third largest electorate in New South Wales, I know our schools are important to our country communities. In many country towns the local school is much more than a place of education. It is a hub of community activity. It is where sporting carnivals are held, community events take place and lifelong connections are formed. I also know that the commitment shown by teachers, principals and school staff in rural and regional New South Wales is extraordinary. Teachers do much more than simply teach the curriculum. They coach sporting teams, supervise excursions—which often require them to be away from their home and family for over a week—assist local families through challenging circumstances, and often become pillars of our communities. They deserve to be treated with respect.

Unfortunately, on occasions members of a school community engage in behaviour that falls well short of what is expected. While such behaviour is carried out by a small minority, its impact can be significant. Abuse, harassment, intimidation and threatening conduct directed towards teachers or school staff affects the wellbeing of those individuals and also impacts the broader learning environment within a school. The bill seeks to address that issue by establishing a framework for school community safety orders and related protections. The proposed measures would apply across public, Catholic and independent schools and will allow action to be taken where adult community members engage in harmful or abusive behaviour towards students, staff or other members of a school community.

Importantly, the bill recognises that disruptive behaviour is not always confined to school grounds and that it extends to misconduct at school activities outside of school and through communication channels, including online platforms, email and telephone communications. Teachers today are increasingly expected to engage with parents and community members across a range of communication platforms. While the vast majority of those interactions are respectful and constructive, in some instances communication can cross the line into harassment or abuse. No worker in any profession should be expected to tolerate that behaviour, and teachers are no exception.

Parents and carers play a critical role in their children's education. Strong partnerships between schools and families are key to educational success. Parents must continue to feel confident when raising concerns, advocating for their children and engaging constructively with schools. The overwhelming majority of parents do exactly that. They support teachers and volunteers, turn up at school events, help with fundraising activities and work with schools to achieve the best outcomes for their children. Nothing in this debate should diminish the important contribution that parents can and should make to their kids' education.

As a representative for regional and rural communities, I have heard firsthand from teachers and principals about the pressures they face. Recruiting and retaining teachers remains a big challenge in many parts of my electorate. If this Parliament wants and expects young people to choose teaching as a profession and to remain teaching in New South Wales, then we must ensure that teachers have a safe and respectful workplace. That is important not only for teachers but also for students and their educational outcomes. Students learn best in environments where educators feel supported, respected and are able to focus on teaching. Reducing incidents of intimidation and abuse ultimately benefits the entire school community.

I understand that the Government consulted with representatives across various education sectors to develop these reforms. The intent of the bill is to ensure that schools have practical tools available when serious issues arise so that they can continue to support student welfare and their learning outcomes and engage with families. There is nothing partisan about the principle that schools should be safe places. There is nothing controversial about expecting adults to behave respectfully towards teachers, students and school staff. These values are shared across New South Wales and, I believe, across this Parliament. Students deserve safe learning environments and our hardworking teachers deserve safe and respectful workplaces. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:44): I speak in support of the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. The bill protects the people who dedicate their lives to educating our children and ensuring that every student can learn in a safe, supportive and respectful environment. Teachers, principals and school staff play an extraordinary role in our communities. They nurture our children, identify when students are struggling, support families and often go well beyond what is expected of them as professional educators to help young people thrive. Yet we know that too many educators face unacceptable behaviour that makes their jobs harder and contributes to workforce shortages that we are working hard to overcome.

Sadly, the Australian Teacher Workforce Survey found that 43 per cent of New South Wales teachers identified parent behaviour as a reason for leaving the profession. The bill is important and I thank the Minister and her responsive team for bringing it to this place. That statistic should concern every one of us. Our Government is working hard to attract and retain great teachers across New South Wales. We cannot afford to lose experienced educators because they are subjected to threats, intimidation, harassment or abuse. No teacher, principal, administrative officer, support staff member or school employee should be expected to accept bad behaviour as part of their job, and no child should have their learning disrupted because of the actions of a small minority of adults. That is exactly what the bill addresses.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers have positive and constructive relationships with their schools, and we are grateful that they volunteer, advocate for their children, support school events and work collaboratively with teachers every day. The bill is not directed at them. Nor is it intended to silence parents who wish to raise concerns, ask questions or advocate for their child's needs. Schools deal with feedback, differing opinions and complaints every day. Respectful disagreement is a healthy and important part of building any school community.

The bill targets a different kind of behaviour. It targets conduct that is threatening, intimidating, abusive, harassing, or so persistent that it causes harm to students, staff and the broader community. The scale of the issue is significant. The 2025 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey found that more than half of participating school leaders had experienced threats of violence. Nearly half reported physical violence. More than one-third reported bullying and cyberbullying. No-one in this place wants to see that happen to our hardworking, dedicated and professional principals who do great jobs leading our local schools and changing students' lives every day. Among those affected, parents or carers were identified as responsible for two-thirds of threats and almost 90 per cent of cyberbullying incidents.

The world has changed significantly. Even in my world as an MP, some material on my Facebook communications is offensive and horrific. It is not fair that teachers who put up their hand to educate our students are exposed to online harassment. Those figures are deeply troubling. They remind us that harmful behaviour does not stop at the school gate. Increasingly, school staff are subjected to abusive emails, hostile social media posts, intimidating online campaigns and relentless communications outside school hours. As a former teacher, part of my work involved regular contact with parents. When following up with parents on Friday afternoons, I would make a sandwich—a good one, a bad one, and a good one—before I left. I know that teachers today have greater and more intense contact with parents. My colleagues get emails during the holidays from students and parents following up with marking and all sorts of things. It is almost an expectation. Realistically, what is the level of interaction that teachers have to put up with?

The legislation before us recognises the realities of modern school life. It replaces outdated provisions that schools have been forced to rely upon under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901, a law drafted in a very different era. Legislation developed more than a century ago is not equipped to deal with the challenges of cyberbullying, social media harassment and online intimidation that schools face today. The bill provides practical and contemporary tools that allow schools to respond appropriately when harmful conduct occurs. The provisions recognise that harmful behaviour can occur wherever school communities gather, whether that is in person or online. Orders may apply not only on school grounds but also at excursions, sporting events, camps, parent association meetings, online meetings and school communication platforms.

The bill carefully balances the rights of parents and caregivers with the wellbeing of students, with a child's education remaining the central consideration. It recognises that while adult behaviour may be unacceptable, children must never bear the consequences. Before any order is made, the impact on the student's wellbeing, attendance and safety participation must be considered. If an order affects a parent or a carer, the school will still be required to establish arrangements that enable the student to attend the school, participate in activities and continue their education without disadvantage. There also must be an agreed communication pathway so parents remain informed and able to participate in important decisions about their child's education. That is an important safeguard.

I congratulate and welcome the extensive consultation that informed this bill. The Government worked closely with our public education partners, the P&C Federation of NSW, the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc., principal associations, support staff representatives, the NSW Teachers Federation and the Public Service Association. Catholic Schools NSW and independent schools in New South Wales have also been closely engaged and support these reforms. The level of collaboration sends a strong message that school safety is not a sector-specific issue; it is a shared responsibility across all education stakeholders.

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn in an environment that is safe, respectful and focused on their success. Every teacher deserves to come to work without fear of abuse, intimidation or harassment. Every school deserves modern laws that allow it to respond effectively when harmful behaviour threatens the wellbeing of students and staff. The bill provides those protections. It responds to the challenges facing today's schools, not those of a century ago. It supports our educators, strengthens our school communities and, ultimately, protects the right of every child to receive a quality education. For those reasons, I commend the Minister and her team, and I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (14:52): I contribute to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 and its potential impact on parents and carers advocating for neurodivergent students and children with a disability. Recently I wrote to the Minister on behalf of those parents and teachers, whom I am working closely with, which I want to put on record. It reads:

I strongly support protecting teachers, staff and students from threatening, abusive and genuinely unreasonable behaviour. Teachers deserve to feel safe at work, and schools need effective powers to respond when conduct threatens that safety or seriously disrupts learning.

However, members of my *Neurodivergent Support in Schools* Working Group, the expert stakeholders and numerous Wakehurst constituents have raised concerns that persistent disability advocacy could be mistaken for aggression, harassment or vexatious conduct.

We know families of neurodivergent students often have greater contact with schools because they are seeking reasonable adjustments, behaviour support, incident information or the implementation of agreed learning plans. I also understand when concerns remain unresolved, parents may repeatedly request meetings, lodge complaints, escalate matters, or engage an advocate, or lawyer. These actions are not inherently unreasonable, and they often reflect a parent doing everything possible to secure their child's access to education.

I strongly believe families should not have to repeatedly escalate concerns or reach crisis points before their child receives needed support. We would like to see a broad implementation of best practice principles where schools clearly explain what support is in place, how its effectiveness is reviewed and how families can raise concerns and receive a timely response.

I share the concern that the proposed definition of unreasonable behaviour allows the frequency of communication to be considered while the Bill also refers to an unreasonable diversion of school resources. Without clear safeguards, persistent advocacy arising from unresolved disability support needs could be mischaracterised as vexation or unreasonable complaining.

I acknowledge the protections already included in the Bill, including requirements that orders be the least restrictive available, that parents retain ways to communicate with schools and participate in decisions, and that the effect on a student's wellbeing and engagement be considered.

However, further consideration is needed to ensure the legislation gets the balance right. Neurodivergent children can depend heavily on their parents as their primary advocates. Restricting that relationship could leave the child more vulnerable while the underlying issue remains unresolved.

I therefore ask the Government to consider:

1. Explicitly confirming that disability advocacy, complaint-making, or seeking compliance with reasonable-adjustment obligations cannot by themselves constitute unreasonable behaviour.
2. Requiring decision-makers to consider the student's disability, the history of the family's concerns and whether agreed supports have been delivered.
3. Ensuring parents subject to an order retain meaningful involvement in their child's education.
4. Providing clear reasons, procedural fairness and accessible review rights.
5. Co-designing any Ministerial guidelines with people with a disability, families, advocates and educators, while monitoring any disproportionate impact on these families.

The Legislation Review Committee noted that the proposed Ministerial guidelines would address substantive matters affecting individual rights, despite there being no apparent requirement for the guidelines to be tabled in Parliament or subjected to parliamentary scrutiny. In light of this concern, I believe the core protections for legitimate disability advocacy should be established in the legislation itself, rather than left solely to Ministerial guidelines.

Whilst I agree with the spirit of the Bill with regards to protecting schools from genuinely threatening or abusive behaviour, I strongly believe that this Bill also needs to recognise that persistence is often necessary when a child's needs remain unmet. My hope is that we get the balance right and ensure that necessary persistence is not confused with harassment.

I thank the Minister for her positive engagement with me and my team, her sincere consideration and her ideas about what can be done in the legislation and for schools in general. Another suggestion, a simple thing that could be done, is to create and formalise a statewide subcommittee for neurodivergence in public schools, just as we have with the State P&C—a body of parents and teachers that could be feeding to the bureaucracy directly about neurodivergence in our public schools. It is an issue that we know is becoming more prevalent and is not going away. There are some good ideas that could be implemented. The teachers like it and the parents like it, so we should be using that experience with the bureaucracy, just as the P&C has successfully done for years. In short, I thank the Minister and her staff for the bill and what they have done by listening and acting. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (14:57): I speak in support of the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. I begin by acknowledging the teachers, principals, support staff and other education workers who go to school every day to do one of the most important jobs in our community. I come from a long line of teachers. My father was a single teacher out at West Wyalong and my sister is an assistant principal in the eastern suburbs. Many of my friends chose education as their profession when they left school. I have seen at close quarters what draws people to teaching. People do not become teachers because it is an easy way to make money. Quite frankly, there are plenty of easier ways to make money.

People become teachers because they are passionate about education. They want to shape young minds, help children discover their potential, and support them to grow into capable, confident, good citizens. It is immensely rewarding work but it is also demanding. Increasingly, the people doing it are being asked to tolerate conduct that no worker should ever have to accept. From the outset, I say that I wish this legislation was not necessary. It is a sad state of affairs and an indictment of where we are as a society that we need to legislate for basic standards of decency and respect in our schools.

I think many members have observed a degradation of common decency and civility over the past few years. We see it in the way people speak to one another in public on our streets and in our shops. We are certainly seeing it in our schools. Most parents and carers have constructive, respectful relationships with their children's schools. They want to work with teachers and principals. They raise concerns appropriately, advocate for their children and participate positively in school life.

That is how it should be, but a small minority of adults engage in threatening, intimidating, abusive or persistently harmful conduct, both in person and online, and that conduct has consequences. It affects teachers, principals and administrative and support staff. It affects students who witness abuse at school gates and hear adults shouting and swearing at people responsible for their education. It can also affect the quality of education

in the classroom, because teachers cannot do their best work when they are anxious about the next confrontation or the next threatening phone call or abusive email.

The evidence is deeply concerning. The 2025 Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey found that 53.7 per cent of participating school leaders had experienced threats of violence, 47.8 per cent had experienced physical violence, 35.7 per cent had experienced bullying and 35.4 per cent had experienced cyberbullying. Among those affected, parents or carers were identified as responsible for 66.1 per cent of the threats and 89 per cent of the cyberbullying incidents. The Australian Teacher Workforce Survey indicates that 43 per cent of New South Wales teachers cite parent behaviour as a reason for leaving the profession. Those figures should terrify every single one of us.

Abuse is never okay. Threatening staff is never okay. Harassing teachers is not okay. Sending repeated abusive communications is not okay. Publishing unsubstantiated allegations about an individual staff member is not okay. It does not matter what the disagreement is about, how strongly someone feels about a decision concerning their child or how frustrated or angry a parent may be. We can disagree respectfully. Parents and carers must be able to raise concerns. They must be able to advocate for their children and complain when they believe something is wrong. The bill does not prevent that legitimate engagement. It is not designed to silence parents. It is not a substitute for complaints processes. It does not say that schools are always right or that teachers cannot be held accountable; it says that advocacy must not become intimidation and that disagreement must not become abuse.

I distinctly remember my school called my parents because of the behaviour of one of my siblings—not me. Members might be surprised, but it was never me. My siblings began complaining about the action the school was taking, but my parents backed the teachers. They understood something that sometimes can be forgotten: Teachers are not the enemy. They are adults we entrust with our children for a significant part of the day. When a school raises a concern about a child's behaviour, the appropriate response is to listen, ask questions and work together—not to launch a campaign against the teacher or the school. The partnership between families and educators is fundamental. When it works, children benefit. When it breaks down, children can be caught in the middle. This legislation is about restoring a clear boundary about that relationship. No teacher or school employee should have to accept threats, harassment or abuse as part of their job, and no child should have to learn in an environment disrupted by that behaviour.

I also acknowledge the increasing pressure being placed on teachers and schools to solve every problem and take responsibility for educating every aspect of a young person's life. Schools are now expected to address issues that arise from homes, from social media, from groups and from broader culture. While I strongly support consent education being taught in our schools, as I have said many times, teaching respect towards women does not start and end at the school gate. We cannot ask teachers to undo the behaviours and norms that are being presented to a young person in every other aspect of their life. We cannot expect teachers to compensate for the failures of parenting and community attitudes or the wider environment and then blame them when those problems reappear in the classroom. If we want schools to teach respect, empathy and responsible behaviour, we must also expect families and the broader community to reinforce those lessons, not undermine them with the very conduct the bill seeks to address.

I acknowledge the organisations and individuals who engaged in the development of this legislation. The bill has been in development with New South Wales public educators partners including the P&C Federation, the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the NSW Primary Principals' Association, support staff representatives, the New South Wales Teachers Federation and the Public Service Association. Catholic Schools and Independent Schools were also closely engaged in support of the bill. The feedback received during consultation strengthened the legislation and improved procedural fairness provisions, protections for vulnerable people, review arrangements, communication, access planning, and oversight and transparency.

I particularly thank our teachers and our unions for engaging constructively with us to secure this legislation and reform. Teachers should not have to choose between protecting their own wellbeing and continuing to serve students. Principals should not be expected to manage threats and harassment without practical support. Frontline staff should not have to open their inboxes each morning wondering whether they will be subjected to another barrage of abuse. Children should not have to witness adults behaving that way at school gates, on the playgrounds or at school events.

I wish this legislation was unnecessary. I wish respect did not need to be defined in law. I wish every adult understood that schools are places of partnership, learning and the healthy development of children—not places where anger is directed at people doing their work. But wishing is not enough. When conduct creates a risk of harm, schools need practical, proportionate and fair tools to respond. The bill provides those tools while preserving legitimate advocacy, protecting children's education and building in procedural safeguards. It says plainly that

teachers deserve respect. It says that children deserve a safe and uninterrupted education, and it says that disagreement, however strong, must never be an excuse for abuse. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:05): I contribute to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. The bill aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of school principals, teachers and other staff, and to reduce school distractions by empowering school principals, senior educator executives and, in more persistent cases, judicial officers to issue orders preventing unreasonable behaviour by parents and carers, particularly directed at principals, teachers and other staff. The frequency and intensity of poor behaviour towards school principals, teachers and other staff is increasing.

In a 2024 survey across Australia and across sectors, 54 per cent of school leaders reported the threat of violence, two-thirds from parents; 48 per cent experienced physical violence; and more than 35 per cent of school leaders reported being subject to cyberbullying, 90 per cent from parents. I applaud the legislation because there is a gap in the law. There are three levels under the proposal: Immediate orders for rapid protection for up to 14 days when the threat is imminent; ongoing orders extending protection when concerning behaviour persists; and protection orders made by a judicial officer, reserved for more persistent cases.

I am a product of the public education system. My father ended up as school principal. I believe he actually taught the shadow education Minister's sister a while ago. I am a bit reticent to say this, but several matters stick out from primary school. My father had a car and the school was about two kilometres from our house. I refused to go to school in the principal's car. I would walk through rain, hail, shine, mud, tempest—whatever. I will probably regret saying this, but my father caned me several times, and in those days it was like a public execution in front of the school assembly. It did not hurt much—no, it did not hurt—and whatever I did, I probably truly deserved it. Hopefully I have turned out a better person.

Our high schools—Tweed River, Banora Point and Kingscliff—and Wollumbin, our special school for children who experience difficulty coping with the normal school environment, do an excellent job. One of the things that concerns me about my schools is the fact that enrolments are dropping. Tweed River High School had 1,200 kids who were born in the area. But enrolments at our private schools—Lindisfarne, St Joseph's and Pacific Coast—are increasing a great deal, which is a bit surprising considering the cost of living. It can be quite expensive sending children to those schools. I think we can do a lot more in that area. I have served in this place for a long time. I have noticed that the number of parents putting up their hands to assist P&C associations, and parents and friends associations, has fallen dramatically. Three years ago the P&C at Banora Point High School was going to fold because there were not enough parents, yet there were 600 kids at the school.

Ms Anna Watson: Parents are working.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I acknowledge that comment from the member for Shellharbour. Parents are time poor. That is also reflected in sports, where mums and dads would volunteer to be coaches. The bill is an important step. I give credit where it is due, to the Government and education Minister. I do not know how to address those things as they come up. I often go to schools to talk to students from years 11 and 12. I say to them that they are under a lot more pressure than I am. I never had Facebook or mobile phones. In fact, when I was a kid in primary school my mum used to put 5¢ in the corner of my hanky so I could ring home if I got stuck. It is a changing environment.

The secret for all our educators, who I think are very good, is to adapt and be quick to move. Who would have thought that artificial intelligence would play such a big role three or four years ago? Who would have thought that about mobile phones and computers and everything else? I applaud the Government and commend the bill to the House. Once again, I am 100 per cent committed to the schools of the Tweed.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:10): I begin my contribution to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 by acknowledging all the amazing public schoolteachers in my electorate at the primary and secondary level, as well as teachers of kids with special needs. They are the backbone of our community. They do such a fantastic job. I thank them for everything they do for our little learners. They are incredible people. I support the bill and acknowledge the Deputy Premier, who is in the Chamber, for her fantastic work since taking on the Ministry of Education. She has brought us so far from where we started. It is all because of her. I thank the Deputy Premier and acknowledge her hard work. At the heart of the bill is something simple but very important: ensuring that our schools are safe, respectful places for teaching and learning.

The bill is about ensuring that our teachers, principals, administrative staff and school support workers can do their jobs without being subjected to threats, harassment, intimidation or abuse. It is about ensuring that every child in New South Wales has an opportunity to learn in an environment that is calm, stable and focused on education. Our local schools are the centres of community life. They are places where children learn, grow and

build their futures. They are also places where teachers and support staff work incredibly hard, often going above and beyond to support young people and their families. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers in my electorate do the right thing. They work respectfully with schools, support teachers and care deeply about their children's education.

This bill is not about them. It is not about silencing parents, shutting down reasonable complaints or preventing passionate advocacy on behalf of a child. In fact, the Minister's second reading speech made very clear that respectful disagreement, constructive feedback and ordinary parent engagement are not the target of the legislation. This bill is about the small minority of adults whose behaviour goes well beyond that line. It addresses behaviour that is unreasonable, threatening, intimidating, abusive or persistently disruptive. It addresses conduct that affects staff wellbeing, pulls school leaders away from their important work leading their schools, and interferes with students' right to a quality education.

The bill defines unreasonable behaviour broadly enough to reflect the reality of modern school life. It includes not only in-person conduct but also unreasonable communication by phone, email, text, online platforms and social media. One of the strengths of the bill is that it recognises that school staff should not have to put up with harassment simply because it happened outside a school gate or through a screen. The bill allows an authorised person to make an immediate order where a relevant adult's unreasonable behaviour creates an unacceptable and imminent risk of harm, significant disruption or adverse effect on student or staff wellbeing. Immediate orders can require a person to leave, stay away from, or not come within 25 metres of, a school or school-related place, or to not contact staff or use a school communication platform.

They take effect immediately and can operate for up to 14 days with one limited extension available. That is a practical measure because a principal or school leader who is dealing with an aggressive or threatening adult should not be left to rely on outdated arrangements or feel powerless while a situation escalates. They should have a clear legal mechanism to act quickly and to protect staff and students. That is what this legislation provides. Importantly, the bill also provides for ongoing orders where there is an ongoing risk. An ongoing order must be made in writing, can last for up to 12 months and may be extended once if necessary. Just as importantly, the bill includes procedural fairness. Before an ongoing order is made, the person must be given written notice and invited to make submissions, and those submissions must be considered.

There is also a right to an internal review and, in certain circumstances, an opportunity to seek administrative review in the tribunal. That matters, because this House should always support powers that are balanced by safeguards. Members on this side of the House certainly support balancing powers with safeguards for everybody, whether in our industrial agreements or in legislation like the bill we are debating. The bill is firm but not reckless. It recognises that these are significant powers. That is why authorised decision-makers must consider a person's vulnerabilities, including issues such as physical health, mental health, disability, language barriers and other special circumstances. It also requires that the response be proportionate and the least restrictive in the circumstances.

I strongly welcome the fact that the bill protects the educational interests of children, even where an order is made against a parent or carer. That is a very important safeguard. The bill requires communication and access arrangements to be put in place so that a parent or carer can still receive information about their child's education, continue necessary communication with the school and participate in discussions affecting their child. It also requires arrangements so that a student can still safely access school and school activities. That is the right approach, because children must not be disadvantaged by the behaviour of adults. This legislation is especially important for regional and suburban communities like Shellharbour, because people know each other, teachers live locally and school staff see families at the shops, sports field, beach or in the wider community.

When unreasonable behaviour spills beyond the school grounds, it can be deeply distressing and very difficult to manage. The bill recognises that by applying not only in schools but also in places related to schools, such as sporting venues, places used for school camps and school events, and even school vehicles. It also recognises the modern reality that harassment can follow staff online and, indeed, after hours. Teachers in the Shellharbour electorate deserve better. They deserve our support. Principals deserve our support. Frontline and support staff and school leaders all deserve our support. They go to work to educate and nurture our children and help them succeed. They should not have to face abuse as part of doing that job, and students' learning should not be disrupted by adults who cannot behave appropriately.

The bill sends a very clear message: Our schools must be places of respect. If we want our children to treat others with courtesy, self-control and decency, then adults must model that behaviour. When we protect our teachers and school staff, we protect learning. When we protect learning, we protect the future of every child in communities like Shellharbour. For those reasons, I support and commend the bill to the House.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (15:18): I contribute to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. My maternal grandparents were both public school teachers. My grandfather was at Pittwater High School in my electorate, and my grandmother was the first female principal at St Ives High School. This bill is about something quite simple. It is about standards. It is about the standard we set for behaviour in our schools and particularly the standard we expect from the parents and other adults who make up our school communities. Unfortunately, from speaking with teachers and those on the front line in my electorate, I feel that there has been an alarming trend of a sharp increase in some of the behaviours that warrant this bill.

Increasing violence directed at teachers and particularly at school leaders is reflected in recent studies. Research from the Australian Catholic University [ACU] confirms a rising trend of parental aggression, forcing principals to spend more time managing the resulting mental health impacts on their staff members. Forty-eight per cent of school principals have reported being physically attacked, which is over 10 times the rate of the general population. I note that the majority of those attacks were from students, but 4 per cent were from parents. Threats of violence increased from 49 per cent in 2022 to 54 per cent recently, with parents as the main source. These threats occur at up to six times the rate of the general population. Harassment from parents and other caregivers remains staggeringly high. The ACU study found that violence against principals has almost doubled in 15 years. According to the same report, in 2022-23, approximately 43 per cent of principals triggered red flag alerts, indicating severe psychosocial risk or potential risk of self-harm. This is incredibly concerning. By 2024, 56 per cent of surveyed school leaders reported they were seriously considering leaving their jobs.

School leaders and teachers are managing a modern problem with outdated tools. This bill helps to modernise the framework that has traditionally sat under the Inclosed Lands Protection Act, providing a contemporary, practical mechanism for dealing with unreasonable behaviour. Most importantly, it expands locations beyond the school gates, to carnivals, P&C meetings, other operational areas, and communication platforms. I believe that this bill also reflects a broader societal shift. From speaking with teachers, I know they feel that 20 years ago, when called up about their children having behavioural issues or having done something, nine out of 10 parents would first respond by asking what the child did and how to fix it and by backing the teacher up. Whether it was nine out of 10 or something close to it, teachers feel that has flipped. Now they feel that the first response is routinely to ask whether the teacher targeted the child and whether there is CCTV proof. They challenge the circumstances. The word "deflecting" was used a lot, and excuses for behaviour were made.

Even in my own household, my daughter came to me and said that one of her friends in year 6 who was being reprimanded answered back to the teacher, saying, "Stop targeting me, or I'll tell my mother." My own child asked me to write an email because a teacher was targeting her, to which I responded, "She probably was targeting you. What were you doing? What was your behaviour? Maybe you need a bit of self-reflection." I hope I am not adding to the problem we are talking about today. I said, "You probably were being targeted." But I think it is a broader shift. I see it in my electorate office, where people come to me. No doubt, there are legitimate reasons why decisions of teachers and principals should be challenged. As other members have said, this legislation does not prevent that. We are talking about a very small minority of parents who escalate their behaviour and tip it into a realm that is completely unacceptable.

I mention the member for Wakehurst and his concerns about the legislation, particularly about regulations or ministerial guidelines for parents advocating for children with disabilities. Parents inherently want to relentlessly advocate for the best outcomes for their children, but there are concerns about that not tipping into appearing like harassment or being unreasonable. I think his suggestion about co-creating ministerial guidelines with advocates from the disability community is a sensible way to manage that and put safeguards into the implementation of this legislation.

As we know, schools should teach children to speak up when something is wrong, as adults too should speak up, but they must teach respect, boundaries and personal responsibility too. Those lessons must be modelled by adults. This is where the practical features of this bill matter. Division 2 provides for an immediate order, operating up to 14 days, if there is an unacceptable and imminent risk, giving principals a practical way to manage volatile situations. If circumstances warrant it, as outlined in the bill, division 3 provides that an ongoing order can be made.

Importantly, it is clear, as others have mentioned, that there are provisions for procedural fairness that protect the rights of those people and allow for decisions and orders placed to be challenged. That includes that the affected person must be given notice and an opportunity to make submissions before an ongoing order is made. There are also review mechanisms, including internal reviews and pathways to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This is not about giving schools arbitrary power; it is a proportionate, enforceable tool to protect staff members while maintaining procedural fairness.

I know from speaking with people on the front line in the profession, including in Pittwater, that these orders work, using the Act's protections that have been used until now. A teacher said to me, "I have used it once."

It absolutely worked. The person backed off straightaway." This is really important legislation because it is practical. It is a mechanism that can put a line in the sand. It can send a clear message to say that the behaviour was inappropriate and to back off by establishing a credible boundary. Another teacher said, "I went to use it but did not need to, but I would say absolutely that parents are becoming the biggest barrier to prevent us from doing our job."

I might add that the person who said that to me is the most amazing teacher. They are really involved with the P&C and the school and so happy and upbeat. So, for me, that is quite concerning. This is not someone who has a chip on their shoulder but someone who is reflecting on their experience. Another person who was privy to the school survey said, "The staff do not feel valued by students or parents. Parents are the ones that take most away from our job. Students and teachers have evaluated our teaching and wellbeing, but we always find that parent perception is lower, particularly for years 3 to 6." We rightly expect teachers to protect and educate our students. But we must also protect our teachers, because protecting them is fundamental to protecting our classrooms.

We have had some antisocial behaviour in our community. People want more police involvement, but there is also a chorus saying that this needs a response from the whole community, which is very true. People often look to a school and a principal to manage children's behaviour outside the classroom, which is not necessarily appropriate. Parents must parent, and sometimes parents do not parent. They set the standard. Therefore, legislation like this, which ensures that parents are acting appropriately, is very welcome. If we expect our children to accept reasonable consequences, adults need to model accepting responsibility. If we expect our children to resolve disagreements respectfully, adults need to demonstrate what that looks like. I think this bill goes a long way to drawing a line in the sand while ensuring that appropriate communication continues to be welcome and that all students and their parents will be able to communicate with the school in a way that benefits students. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (15:27): I commend the member for Pittwater for her contribution. As a former practitioner, I say that she hit the nail on the head. I speak today in strong support of the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. Before I entered this place, my life was anchored in public education. For years, I stood at the front of a classroom, watching a student finally grasp a difficult concept. I stood at the school gate, greeting families in the morning and farewelling them in the afternoon.

I sat in the principal's office—not in trouble but as the principal—late into the evening, listening to the hopes, fears and triumphs of our school community and also counselling teachers and other colleagues after tough days. I know what public education means to our communities. It is the great equaliser of our society, the beating heart of our local neighbourhoods, where all children, regardless of background, are given the tools to shape their destiny. Our public schools are sanctuaries of learning, growth and inclusion. Sometimes they are sanctuaries away from some of the problems that are unfortunately at home.

But over the years, as I watched the landscape change from the front line of school leadership, I saw a troubling shift. We are living in an era when the broader pressures and tensions bearing down on our society are increasingly spilling over onto our school grounds. I recognise that children are parents' most important asset. Parents will often go into bat for their young ones in that case, and that is fully understandable, but in some cases they take it too far. I used to say quite often to parents that sometimes they have to grill their young ones a little bit more thoroughly, because children do not necessarily lie; they just tell stories in the best light. It is not what they say but what they may leave out. Sometimes disputes can be sorted out without people becoming angry and aggressive.

Teachers and school leaders enter the profession driven by a singular noble passion: to teach, nurture and inspire. In all cases other than one, sadly, teachers like kids. They try to do their best to impart knowledge and to make sure that the welfare of the child is paramount. They do not sign up to be targets of abuse, intimidation or harassment. One of the saddest things I ever saw was when a former principal colleague of mine, Keith, was found on the side of the road one afternoon so distressed that he could not remember the way home. I ended up taking over as principal at his school. Keith was an excellent up-and-coming principal, but that incident and the breakdown that followed meant he could not walk back into the school to get his equipment. It deeply affected him and he could not work again. We need to do everything we can to stop those types of incidents. The stark reality confronting many teachers today is that they are threatened, and that is not good enough.

I had several incidents throughout my career. In one, I was trapped in my office and threatened to be hit with a steel chair. That resulted in a four-hour police siege at the parent's home. The parent had thought that when another young person trod on their daughter's thong on the way to swimming, they had done it on purpose, and it escalated very quickly. While I was able to get that parent out of the playground so that the children were safe,

I was very frightened and the police had to be called. That was not the only incident. I know other teachers who have had their cars keyed and objects thrown through their windows at home if they live in the community. That is not on at all.

To truly understand why we need this legislation, we have to look through that lens and understand, as I did as a former teacher and principal, that running a school requires a delicate ecosystem of trust, respect and open communication between parents, carers and staff. Quite frankly, the majority of families are our greatest allies. They partner with us, support us and share our commitment to their children's wellbeing. However, a small minority of cases, some of which I have described, escalate past constructive dialogue into something entirely unacceptable. In my career of 23 years, with 18 of them as a principal, I had to use the Inclosed Lands Protection Act on five occasions and ban parents from the school grounds, which was extreme but necessary.

When unacceptable behaviour occurs—whether it is an aggressive outburst at the front office, verbal abuse hurled at teachers during pick-up times or relentless harassment using digital messages—we have to look at our legal and administrative toolkit and make sure it is armed with the legislation needed to protect staff from those incidents. Thankfully, I did not have to put up with harassment via digital messages, but my wife is still an assistant principal and, while it has not happened to her, it has happened to members of her staff. Harassment like that does not just happen on school days but over weekends as well. In the old days we relied on the Inclosed Lands Protection Act, but that was not always easy to put in place and often had to be delivered by the police because the confrontation with the harassing parents was a little bit—

Mr Geoff Provost: Intense.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: —intense. I thank the member for Tweed—that is a nice way of putting it. Physical property laws were never built to handle the complexities of modern digital harassment, or harassment at offsite school sporting carnivals and, sadly, weekend sports, or the nuanced dynamics of school communities. When a teacher is subjected to targeted abuse, whether face to face or via email or social media, it does not just affect that individual; it ripples through the entire staffroom. It impacts staff retention, heightens burnout and, most importantly, detracts from the safe and focused learning environment that our students deserve. A defensive teacher cannot deliver their best teaching. A teacher who feels unsafe or unsupported cannot give their absolute best for the children in front of them. The bill introduces a measured, robust and necessary framework to address those exact changes. It provides our schools with clear, legally sound mechanisms to draw a firm line between passionate advocacy and harmful conduct. As I said, parents will always protect their most important asset, their children.

I examine the key structural pillars of the legislation that will protect our school communities. Firstly, the bill empowers authorised school leaders such as principals to issue official safety orders against adults aged 18 and over whose behaviour is unreasonable, threatening or harmful. That removes ambiguity and gives leadership teams the legislative backing they need to act swiftly and decisively. Secondly, proportionate and structured responses recognise that situations vary. The bill establishes a tiered approach. The immediate orders are designed for acute disruptions or urgent safety concerns. They can be issued orally or in writing to provide an immediate cooling-off period, remaining in effect for up to 14 days. Ongoing orders are for prolonged or repeated disruptive conduct. They must be made in writing and can last for up to 12 months, with a provision for a single extension if circumstances demand it. *[Extension of time]*

I thank members of the House. Thirdly, the bill introduces clear boundaries and scope. The orders can restrict an individual from coming within 25 metres of school grounds, school-related excursions, sporting events or camps. Crucially, they also cover the digital space, prohibiting harassing phone calls, emails or messages sent via school social media channels. Fourthly, the bill safeguards parental rights, which is equally important. As educators, we know that barring a parent or carer from a school site must be handled with the utmost care to protect the child's rights.

The bill wisely mandates that if an order is placed against a parent, the school must establish structured alternative communication and access arrangements. I recognise the importance of that. It ensures that the child's educational interests and family connection are preserved, even when adult behaviour requires restriction. Fifthly, the bill includes enforcement and review pathways to ensure fairness and accountability. The legislation builds in internal review pathways and administrative oversight. The worst decisions are made when everybody is angry, and so we must ensure there is a fair and reasonable appeal process.

We must champion this bill with every ounce of our energy because the health of our public education system depends entirely on the safety and dignity of its workforce. Right now we face significant workforce pressures across the sector. Teachers are weighing up whether they should sustain a career under mounting stress or find a different job that, quite frankly, might pay more and have less stress. If we want the best and brightest minds stepping into our classrooms, we must guarantee them a safe workplace. We must send a clear, unequivocal

message that we must respect our teachers in order to protect our schools. The bill is not about shutting parents out. It is about establishing healthy boundaries so that genuine, positive partnerships can flourish. It protects the sanctity of the learning environment so that when a child walks into a classroom, they see focus, safety and respect modelled by the adults around them.

When I look back on my years in education, my belief in the power of our public schools has never wavered. I always told teachers that every child could be taught; they just had to find the right way. One part of that process was earning the respect of parents. On some occasions that was difficult and staff were pushed to their limits. However, when the key was found, a child's education improved and their relationship with parents improved as well. I have seen miracles happen in classrooms. I had a young person who was expelled from another school come to my school. With a lot of hard work from teachers—I had the easy part of the equation—that young person went on to be a school captain. These stories matter. Parents might have had a negative relationship with a previous school and there is a lot of mending to do. Despite that, there is no room for abuse in that process and absolutely no room for threats or violence.

The Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 gives our educators a vital shield. It makes some connections that need to be made to achieve good outcomes and not have things descend into anarchy. The bill acknowledges the realities of modern school leadership. It respects the emotional and physical wellbeing of our staff and ultimately safeguards the educational journey of every student across New South Wales. I absolutely commend the bill. I thank the Minister and everyone involved who worked on the bill. I acknowledge the importance of having a framework for respectful, healthy relationships. Unfortunately, that is being challenged more and more on a daily basis.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:41): I acknowledge my good friend the member for Wyong. He was a truly outstanding educator and an excellent principal in the public education system on the Central Coast, where he was highly regarded by all his staff. I have to make a confession. I am the very proud son of an educator and come from a family of educators. My mum is a retired high school teacher. My mum's sister is a retired primary school teacher. My mum's parents were both primary school teachers. My dad's sister was also a primary school teacher. I know that being a teacher is not a job; it is a vocation. Teachers go into schools with a dedication and passion for learning and education that they share with the next generations. It is the most important job in our society. We must always remember their dedication. We have all seen it.

My mum sat up well past midnight—past one in the morning—many a night marking year 12 essays. If she had essays to mark, she made a commitment to get them back to her students within 24 hours. She would do exactly that, no matter how long it took. I do not know how she did it. Members may not be surprised to hear that she looked after the high school debating team. I attended many year 12 debating competitions while still a primary school student. That is probably why I ended up in this place. Every member in the Chamber would remember the name of the teacher that most impacted them. It does not matter how old we are, we always remember that person. I thank Peter Coward very much for being a truly outstanding teacher. He was a great teacher and I had the privilege of learning from him. I thank him and all the teachers who influenced my life. I have seen firsthand the dedication, passion and love that teachers put into their job.

Admittedly, my parents and grandparents did not have to deal with the sorts of issues that our principals and teachers now face on a daily basis with the advent—unfortunately—of technology. I have an incredible 15 public schools in my electorate, which I will come to shortly. I have seen staff at those schools exposed to totally unacceptable behaviour. No-one should think they have the right to bully and intimidate a school principal, teacher, staff or another student. I note that the Minister and the shadow Minister are in the Chamber. I am pleased to support the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. It is disappointing that we have to introduce this legislation protect educators in New South Wales but so be it.

As outlined by many members before me, that is the unfortunate situation we find ourselves in 2026 with the advent of—quite frankly—antisocial media. There is nothing social about it. It is beyond the pale to see education staff subjected to pile-ons. As an MP I will always fiercely defend school principals and their staff. Every single day they are dedicating 110 per cent to educating young people in my community and they do the most outstanding job. I will always have their backs. Our number one priority is to make sure school staff are protected from antisocial and inappropriate behaviour from all people, even parents.

As well articulated by the member for Wyong, we all understand that a person's greatest asset is their child. At the same time, we have seen this obfuscation of parenting responsibilities being put onto our teaching staff, which is totally unreasonable. Time and again I receive complaints. Every story always has two or more sides to it. More often than not, the school complaint emanates from the obfuscation of parenting responsibilities. It does not take much to scratch beneath the surface to find the real cause. Parents will fight tooth and nail to defend their child but, as we know, kids will use their own version of the truth. Our teachers and educators need to know that they are fully protected from vilification.

Nasty things are said on community chat pages on social media, and that is where I have seen some of the worst commentary about public schools. I have read some outlandish statements—with no evidence—about excellent schools in my electorate. They are truly despicable, to be quite frank. I support providing principals and schools with a level of protection from that sort of behaviour. The more we can do to protect them from ridiculous commentary, the better. I am proud of the 15 public schools in my electorate. They do a truly outstanding job every day educating the next generation. I have been a member of Parliament for almost 12 years now. In my electorate I have seen a generation of outstanding young people, educated by outstanding public educators in an outstanding public system.

The frequency and intensity of poor behaviour towards school principals, teachers and other staff are increasing, and it is disappointing. The conclusion to be drawn from a 2024 survey is stark. Across Australia 54 per cent of school leaders reported threats of violence, with two-thirds of those coming—unacceptably—from parents; 48 per cent have experienced physical violence; and more than 35 per cent of school leaders reported being subjected to cyberbullying, with 90 per cent of that coming from parents. It is unacceptable to go online to vilify an educator in New South Wales or anywhere in this country. No-one has the right to behave in that manner.

I am pleased that the bill will move towards protecting them from that gutless and usually uninformed commentary. The member for Wyong outlined that even though the Inclosed Lands Protection Act 1901 can prevent access to a school site, it can be difficult to apply. Assaults are covered by the Crimes Act 1900 but must be proved beyond reasonable doubt, meaning a time-consuming court process. Apprehended personal violence orders also involve time-consuming court proceedings. Every teacher and school principal puts the safety of pupils first. Time and again, when we have seen incidents around violence at schools, it is the teachers and the principals running into danger to protect the kids. In some of the most horrific incidents of school killings, it is the teachers who put their bodies over students to protect and shield them from danger. That is the quality of the staff that take up the mantle of being educators. To think that anyone could comprehend behaving like that is totally unacceptable.

The bill will amend the Education Act 1990 to allow for the making of orders to respond to behaviour from parents, carers or community members that causes harm. The orders would allow school principals and senior education executives—of which we have some of the best anywhere—across the sector to restrict individuals from entering school grounds, including drop-off and pick-up zones, and places used for school-related activities, such as camps or sport, or prevent contact with staff online or by phone. Those are excellent measures. How many times have we seen a conflict at a school drop-off? We then see that spill over into a school sports event. I am not sure where those parents think they are, but they need to uphold the best behaviour for their children to witness, not the worst. Children emulate what they see at home.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: The best models for good behaviour are parents. They should not be the worst. The bill puts a clear message out to parents and carers that bad behaviour will not be tolerated for any reason. That is a good thing. Under the proposed amendments, three types of orders will be available. The first is an immediate order, which is rapid protection for up to 14 days where the threat is imminent. That should be the case. It should be able to be applied instantaneously. The second is an ongoing order to extend protection where concerning behaviour persists. We see that online. There is a continual chipping away at the fabric of what is going on at a school to try to undermine school leaders and teachers. The third is a protection order, made by judicial order and reserved for more persistent cases. As I said earlier, we see that with social media. There is a continual chipping away at the leadership. [*Extension of time*]

I thank members for their indulgence. We see it ongoing all the time. That also has a flow-on effect to other staff. It affects staff morale. It affects school attendance. It cannot continue. I acknowledge the excellent contribution of the shadow Minister for Education. As members of Parliament, we should all take this issue incredibly seriously. It is rare that a week goes by in which I do not mention one of the schools in my electorate. In the time I have left, I acknowledge some incredible school leaders. Lisa Lewis is the phenomenal principal at Pretty Beach Public School. Empire Bay Public School is led by the wonderful Simone Champion. Copacabana Public School is led by the outstanding Naomi White. I could use so many adjectives to describe these people. Lisa Wicks is doing a fantastic job at Kincumber Public School. Avoca Public School is led by Ben Thomas. I wish him a happy fiftieth birthday and hope he is enjoying his break.

Kincumber High School is powering ahead under the stewardship of Brent Walker, who is a machine. Brisbania Public School is led by my good friend Annette Parrey. She is doing an excellent job. Chertsey Primary School has a new principal in Clint Lowe, who was at Terrigal Public School. He has hit the ground running. He is bringing the school community with him in every form possible. Kirsten Blake is the new principal at Woodport Public School. She is also doing a fantastic job leading the staff there. At Erina High School, Paul Broadbent is an absolute machine. I caught up with his mum recently, and she is incredibly proud of what he is doing for that school. They went up 283 spots in the year 12 results last year. At Terrigal Public School, Natalie MacDonald is

a machine and leads one of the biggest primary schools on the Central Coast, with almost 900 students. Matt Riley is the newly appointed principal at Terrigal High School. He is an outstanding leader.

Renee Ross leads Erina Heights Public School. It is a beautiful school led by an outstanding principal. At Wamberal Public School, James Gray is one of the nicest people I have ever met. He is doing a great job there at a beautiful and fantastic school. At Holgate Public School—one of my little ones—Kerri Kerry is the relieving principal at the moment for Vanessa Gordon. All of these principals lead from the front. They back their staff in. Every single one of them is out the front of their school every day greeting parents. They know them by name. At school events, they give a running commentary on every student as they go to collect an award because they know them personally. That is the calibre of incredible school leaders that we have.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge two truly outstanding directors of education, being Jo Wilcher and Megan Avery. Those ladies are two of the best in the business. I have had so much pleasure working alongside both Jo and Meg. They are outstanding. They fully support their principals. That is what we need to keep doing. We need to back in our school leaders and our teachers, from the top to the bottom. Recently I caught up with one of the school captains from Kincumber High School. He is a lovely young man. He has just got early entry into the University of Newcastle campus at Gosford to become a teacher. He will be part of another outstanding generation of educators for the future. Zac will be an absolute champion in the classroom.

It is unfortunate that we have to introduce this legislation, but it is vital that we ensure the safety and protection of our school leaders, principals, teachers and other staff who, every single day, go into classrooms to make sure that the next generation is even better than we were. They do an outstanding job. I am so proud of the public schools in the electorate of Terrigal. They do a truly outstanding job every day. I drive past most of them. I usually speak to one of those principals on a weekly basis about something when I am not attending school performances, which I thoroughly enjoy as well. Our schools are a place of love, learning, compassion and sharing. They are truly outstanding.

It is disappointing in the extreme that some parents think they have the right to behave inappropriately and to use teachers, staff and school principals as verbal—or, worse, physical—punching bags when all they want to do is put children's education first. They do that every single day. The bill is an excellent piece of legislation. It is disappointing that it has to be introduced. But it also sends a clear message to teachers and principals that we have their backs. It puts people on notice that ridiculous behaviour will not be tolerated. I thank both the Minister and the shadow Minister for being in the House. I again acknowledge the great work being done every day by all the principals of the schools in my electorate. They are rockstars. I am so lucky as an MP to have such an outstanding group of public school educators within my electorate who educate thousands of kids every year and do an outstanding job. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:56): I speak in support of the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. I do so as a proud former teacher. I started teaching straight out of university. I was an incredibly passionate teacher right up to the days before I was elected to this place. In fact, the last class I taught just graduated year 12. I am a bit emotional to not be there to see those kids graduate. I cannot speak highly enough of the bill and how incredibly important it is. It is a tragedy that we have to introduce it. It is a disgrace that we need to make it clear to some parents that their behaviour in schools is not appropriate. Teachers spend a lot of time with students—often students with complex and multiple needs who are coming from homes that might not be the most stable or loving. They work with a student for entire days to lift up their self-esteem within the parameters of correct behaviour.

I ended my teaching days in high school, but I have taught at primary school and preschool. In high school in particular, a teacher spends a lot of time developing a relationship with a student so they can then say to them, "Stop. Please do not speak to me like that." Through that time, we remember that they are children and that they are still learning. Teachers coach them on how to behave and what respectful discourse, or even disagreement, looks and sounds like. To leave the classroom and see adults doing that incorrectly or in an aggressive or abusive way completely undermines everything those students have been taught. It teaches those children that it is an acceptable way to discourse. It is not an acceptable way for people to be treated.

When I became a member of this place, I was a little concerned in a very strange way: My eyelashes were twice as long as they were before. I went to the doctor and said, "My eyelashes are completely different. Is something weird going on?" He said, "Yes, being a member of Parliament is not as stressful as being a teacher." I thought that that said something, because I was a music teacher. Day to day teachers go into teaching because they love it; it is a vocation. No matter what type of teacher I speak to, they all speak about the same things, such as that moment when you watch a child understand a concept they have been grappling with. Oprah Winfrey calls it the aha moment. It is the moment when someone goes, "Oh, I get it." That moment can fuel a teacher for weeks. In fact, it is a little bit like a drug. Teachers keep seeking out the next aha moment, because that is what we are there to do.

We know that children are complex. We know that they come with multiple needs. We know that they are difficult sometimes and that they are still trying to manoeuvre their way through their lives. Some of them come to us and we—the teachers, the principals, the support staff, the front office staff—are the safe space. But some members of our community abuse that. As a teacher, I am the first to admit that we do not always get it right. We have bad days too. I have been known to have to publicly apologise to a student because of the way I spoke to them the day before because, for some unknown reason, their behaviour on that day really ticked me off. But we are open to that. We are also human.

I would be happy for any parent to say to me, "My child is upset because of A, B, C, D." One hundred per cent, let's have a conversation. Let's talk about it. Today I speak about the need for this bill in the modern age. When I first started teaching in 2001, if something happened in the school day, the only opportunity parents had report to a teacher that something had happened or that there was a complaint was to either immediately walk into the school or to ring up when the school was open next. If that happened on a Friday, parents would ring up on a Monday and have a conversation with the front office staff to let them know.

The worst abuse I have ever received was at 5.00 p.m. on a Friday afternoon. A student had gone home and reported an incident in the playground. I had seen the incident occur from beginning to end, so I was well aware of what happened. He got in the car and his mum asked how his day was. He said, "It was completely ruined after lunch." For those who have not been in a school for a while, lunch is now before recess as the first break of the day. He said, "My day was completely ruined," and told his mum a story that was, in my view, not accurate. I love that the member for Wyong said that children do not lie because they often just have a different idea, but sometimes they lie. They have to lie after five years old, otherwise they have a development issue. Lying is part of being human, interestingly. Lying to protect yourself is part of being human.

The child and I had a disagreement about the incident. I received an email from the parent that was five pages long when I printed it. It ended up becoming evidence. The police ended up going to their house and warning her not to speak to anyone like that again, and telling her that the language she had used was threatening. That was over a disagreement in a playground. It was nothing physical; it was two kids yelling at each other. I just happened to be on duty. This is the stuff that teachers get. I received that email in my lounge room. I was at home. My day had ended. I had left the school. One of the important parts of the bill is that it covers unreasonable communication, including approaching. Teachers are very nervous about living near their workplace. They do not like it. Parents approach them all the time in the shops, at sporting events and in the general public. Sometimes it is to say hi or to say thanks, but sometimes it is not. Unreasonable communication also includes phoning, emailing, texting or otherwise.

I could speak about the importance of the bill and how sad it makes me that we need it, but I end today on this point. I still regularly talk to my teacher friends, and we talk about why we would leave the system. The workload makes up some of the reason, along with the fact that teaching has become so much more complex now than it ever was before. That is the nature of society. There are kids with a lot more profound needs, and there are a lot more kids. Teachers need to know their stuff. But, without fail, it is never the kids or the workload that is driving our teachers out of teaching; it is the parents. I am not talking about those beautiful parents who we have incredible partnerships with and who, on graduation day, we hug and say, "We did it. They got through. Congratulations." That is the great partnership. This bill is for the other parents. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:06): I support the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 and commend all the contributions to debate that we have heard already, particularly from former teachers like the member for Camden, the member for Wyong and a number of other members. I commend the Minister, and Deputy Premier, who has listened to all contributions throughout the debate. It is great that she has been able to do that. I support the bill and make a couple of remarks. Members have gone through the provisions of the bill, and I emphasise that I strongly agree with the importance of the bill.

There are a number of fantastic schools in the Monaro electorate with wonderful school communities. For the most part, they provide a wonderful atmosphere and support for teachers and students. Like many others, I have a connection to schools. My daughter is a high school teacher at the local school that she and her brother went to, Karabar High School. She is currently on maternity leave, which is great. Many members in this place have links to schools and hear things about the work they are doing. I agree with many members who say that a child's education is more than just the teacher's responsibility; it is about parents taking on the responsibility for ensuring that they are creating young people who interact well with their surrounds, who are able to participate in school, and who even have books in the house for reading, wherever possible. It is not just up to the teachers to make sure that our children have the skills to be successful at school.

In the vast majority of cases, I see engaged school communities. But there are occasions where I see behaviour that is not acceptable. Teachers certainly say that parental abuse and harassment have skyrocketed over

the last decade or so. That is worrying. I absolutely understand that parents and grandparents would see their child as being the most important thing in the world to them and they want to see them getting the best possible education. But that does not mean it is always the fault of the teacher or some other child if something does not go well at school. It is important to be constructive about these things. This legislation does not mean that parents cannot raise issues they see at school. It does not mean they cannot properly have things investigated and cannot properly see bullying addressed. What it does is set some parameters around that and give some desperately needed protection to school communities.

In my first period as member for Monaro, from 2003 to 2011, I did not hear nearly as many stories about this as I hear now. It worries me that society seems to be keener than before to blame and even to resort to violence. In my current period as member for Monaro, I have heard bizarre stories about teachers being followed home by students in a car because some dispute at the school has not been resolved to their satisfaction. I have heard of parents standing outside the gate, threatening to bash someone else's head in because they saw that person as being the bully of their child. A parent has told me their child was justified in punching the other kid in the face. Those things are simply not acceptable in our schools, and nor is the level of social media harassment of teachers outside of school hours.

I am really pleased that the Government has introduced this legislation, which has the support of the Opposition and, indeed, of all members I have heard speak today in this place. It is important that we re-emphasise to our teachers and school communities that, even when there is a problem, behaviour needs to be civilised and calm, and no-one should resort to violence or abuse. The bill shows the value we place on the wonderful work that our teachers do. As with teachers in every other electorate in New South Wales and Australia, our teachers in Monaro do an amazing job. They are incredibly committed to their work, and they get a fabulous reward out of passing on skills to the young people they teach. Their career future should not be jeopardised by people who blame them for every situation or resort to abuse. When I walk into my daughter's house, I see a photo of her year 12 drama class, given to her to say thank you for her work. That is the sort of lovely thing we want to see more of in schools. I commend the Minister, and Deputy Premier, for her fantastic work in this portfolio and for this bill.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:12): I acknowledge the Deputy Premier and fantastic Minister for Education and Early Learning, who is in the Chamber this afternoon, as well as all the contributions made to debate on the Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026. As has been stated from the outset, the bill is supported by the Opposition and other parties. My husband is a teacher and my best friends are teachers, and I see the incredible work that they do. I give a huge acknowledgement to our teachers and thank them for all their hard work.

I grew up in a conservative, religious household. My parents brought me up to believe in a number of things. The first was that you respect your parents and the second was that you respect your teachers—and that was it. Your teacher came second to your parent. My parents did not get a proper education. To them, teachers were everything. They were God. My parents always said to us that if there was any issue at school and our teachers raised a concern about my brother and I—and I am not saying that we were perfect, because we were not—that when they were called up to the school, they would always back in the teachers.

Particularly in the recent period, I have been concerned at the level of hysteria. Members have pointed out the use of social media platforms as a channel to disrespect teachers and, unfortunately, the way that some students speak to teachers. That is absolutely appalling, but it is also a very small proportion of cases. I get told of a whole lot of bad things, but I also hear of a whole lot of amazing things that are happening under the leadership of our Deputy Premier and the secretary. The way that some of these parents behave should not be happening. I think that is really important to note.

It was probably last year, when we were working through the workers compensation legislation, that I held a number of round tables with independent and Catholic schoolteachers. Members know that a number of teachers go on workers compensation. Unfortunately, a big segment of those claims is because of stalking, intimidation and harassment by a very small minority of parents, carers and other adult community members. Particularly in some of the smaller village or town communities in regional and rural areas, but even in our local suburbs, teachers shopping at the shopping centre or picking up children after school are being harassed, yelled at or abused. Unfortunately, that is far too common.

A few years ago, the Government introduced legislation addressing the aggressive, abusive behaviour of customers toward retail workers. Just this morning I was at the United Services Union conference. That union's big ask of the Government is about the abuse and aggressive behaviour toward park rangers, librarians and those in other roles. We have to lower the temperature. People are just trying to work. They are trying to do their job. Yes, I know one hundred per cent that people are stressed. Families have to go and pick up kids. They are caring for people with disability. The sandwich generation is caring for kids and visiting their parents in aged care. We

understand that people are under a whole lot of pressure. But parliamentarians, community leaders and faith leaders need to continue to reach out to people and engage with them to say that this behaviour is not on. No matter what job people do, they do not deserve to be abused and subjected to this violent, aggressive behaviour. I commend the Deputy Premier on this vitally important bill and thank her for bringing it to the House.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:17): In reply: The single biggest indicator of a child's success at school is the teacher in front of their classroom. The Education Amendment (School Community Safety) Bill 2026 is about those people. As Minister for Education and Early Learning, I am proud that the bill looks set to pass this House thanks to the support of the Parliament and the members who made contributions to debate today. I am proud to have brought this bill to the House on behalf of the teachers, the school leaders and the support staff working in our more than 3,000 schools in New South Wales. We are a government that could not be more committed to education via respecting and valuing the teaching profession. The bill before the House is another example of that.

I thank all members who contributed to debate. I thank the shadow Minister for Education and member for Cronulla, and acknowledge the Opposition's support for the bill and the member's constructive engagement with my office. The member raised some valid points that I will address in my speech. The member for Ballina and The Greens spokesperson on education also had significant engagement with us on this piece of legislation, particularly the amendments that I foreshadow we will move. Like many members who have spoken in debate, the member for Ballina is a passionate former educator. She is a very strong advocate for teachers. I have to take this opportunity to say that she will be a significant loss to this Parliament, and I dare say she will be a big loss to The Greens.

I also acknowledge my Parliamentary Secretary and member for Campbelltown, as well as all the other contributors to debate—a wide range of members from across the Chamber who represented their schools and clearly love their school communities, which is excellent. Lots of members are also former teachers, are married to teachers or are the product of teachers. It says a lot about the people who end up as members of Parliament that so many of them either are former teachers, are married to teachers or have parents who are teachers. I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Coogee, the member for Monaro, the member for Wyong—who was a great principal—the member for Camden, the member for Gosford, the member for Canterbury and the member for Tweed. I know from visiting many of the schools in those members' electorates with them that they are great advocates for their local schools.

I will now thematically address the issues raised by members. The first issue relates to ensuring that the orders are not used inappropriately against parents and that we protect the rights of parents to respectfully raise complaints and issues. Many members have raised the rights of parents to raise legitimate complaints and advocate on behalf of their children, particularly those advocating on behalf of students and parents with a disability. Stakeholders have raised it as well. Just to be clear, "unreasonable behaviour" is clearly defined in the bill. We consider that safeguards built into the bill would limit the ability for someone to exercise the powers inappropriately against parents. The relationship between parents and the school is vital, as many members have made clear. I thank the member for Cronulla for also acknowledging that.

Firstly, two thresholds need to be met in new sections 26R and 26U. An immediate order or an ongoing order can be made only if the authorised person is satisfied that the behaviour of the relevant adult is unreasonable, and if that behaviour causes or poses an unacceptable and imminent risk of causing an adverse effect on the wellbeing or safety of students and staff at the protected place. However, even with the high threshold of risk for psychological harm, the behaviour of the adult must also be unreasonable for the order to be made. Secondly, the bill applies the reasonable person test, which is a well-established and well-tested legal principle. Furthermore, new section 26P clearly defines "unreasonable behaviour" and "unreasonable communication".

Considering all those elements together, in order for principals or other system leaders—members will remember that this applies to all schools, not just department schools—to issue an order, it must be reasonably believed that the person has engaged in what the legislation defines as unreasonable behaviour and/or unreasonable communication. By applying the reasonable person test and defining unreasonable behaviour and communication, we ensure that the rights of parents to advocate and complain legitimately and respectfully are protected. It means that the order could not be made in response to behaviour that would ordinarily be considered acceptable.

The ministerial guidelines will provide further detail, such as the steps to be taken before issuing an order, and further real-life scenarios or examples of what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour. That will be helpful for schools because they are dealing in real-life scenarios—almost every real-life scenario members could imagine. I am advised that the statutory review in Victoria did not raise any issues or claims of parents being prevented from raising legitimate and respectful complaints under its legislation. We are also not aware of any similar issues in South Australia.

In addition, the authorised person making an order must consider the person's vulnerabilities and circumstances before any order is made. That includes their age, physical health, mental health or other special circumstances or vulnerabilities. That is outlined in new sections 26S, 26V and 26ZF. Furthermore, the affected person must have access to an advocate, representative, interpreter or other support person. Consideration must also be given to the potential impact of an order on the student's wellbeing and continued engagement in their education, which many members have raised. That is about putting the child's access to the curriculum and to an education at the forefront of everything. That is at the forefront for all of the people working in our education system.

Notwithstanding those safeguards, if someone considers that orders have been used inappropriately, the bill provides the right of review with regard to an ongoing order or a protection order. I note that that was also acknowledged by the shadow Minister. New section 26Z allows a person to apply for an internal review conducted by a person who did not make the original order and who holds an office equal to or more senior than the person who issued the order. New section 26ZD further allows an external review free of cost through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The bill also states that children must continue to have full access to their usual schooling. That is outlined clearly. Schools are required to put in place mandatory communication and access plans for parents and carers who are subject to an order.

Furthermore, an order may be issued only if it both is necessary to address the risk of harm and is the least restrictive means available in the circumstances. That is outlined at new section 26S for immediate orders and new section 26W for ongoing orders. The bill also ensures that parents can maintain ongoing communication with the school even if an ongoing order is issued. It just might change how that communication occurs—for example, by directing communication to another senior staff member or departmental officer. The order will stipulate the way in which the communication is conducted—that is, who receives the complaint, who deals with the complaint and the means by which the complaint is made. To be clear, the bill still provides parents who are subject to an order with the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about their child's education and wellbeing, including raising complaints.

In addition, a person who believes they have been discriminated against may have a claim under Commonwealth anti-discrimination law if an order is used to deny access to or refuse goods or services because of a protected characteristic. Those are existing legal protections. I doubt that they would need to be used, but that point was raised by some members. I also acknowledge the points made by the member for Ballina on behalf of The Greens regarding non-government schools. To be honest, I do understand the concerns of The Greens that a non-government school may seek to issue a school community safety order to prevent a transgender parent or a parent of a particular sexuality coming onsite.

The advice to Government—indeed, the member for Ballina has acknowledged the advice from the Crown Solicitor—is that the orders do not displace existing anti-discrimination protections. A parent who believes an order has been used unlawfully because of a protected characteristic retains the ability to pursue remedies under applicable anti-discrimination law. The relevant exemptions to the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act applying to religious educational institutions concern matters such as employment and student admission. To be clear, they do not provide a general exemption in relation to access to services.

In respect of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, there are three specific exemptions for educational institutions established for religious purposes. Again, they relate only to the employment of staff, the employment of contract workers and the admission of students. In terms of protecting vulnerable teachers and staff, I stress this point: The bill is actually about protecting vulnerable teachers and staff. Many teachers, principals and staff from diverse or minority cohorts, including those from the LGBTIQ+ community, are vulnerable to abuse, harassment or threats. These powers are intended to protect them. I also agree with the point made by the member for Ballina that teaching is a highly feminised workforce. That is an understatement. Many of the people we are talking about are women, and I hope that they are further protected by this bill passing the Parliament.

I turn to what we have learned from other jurisdictions. The member for Cronulla raised questions about drawing from experiences and lessons in other jurisdictions. As mentioned, Victoria and South Australia have already acted on this issue. In Victoria, the independent statutory review released last year found that the scheme was broadly supported and was an important tool for schools. Some principals reported that the orders deterred harmful behaviour in the first place. The review also identified areas for improvement, and we have learnt from those findings. It found that the scheme could be a bit too complex and administratively burdensome. That is the last thing our schools need. This created a risk that orders would be underused.

Victoria also identified limitations with enforcement. The legislation needs to strike the balance of giving school leaders practical and effective powers without unnecessary complexity. That is why in New South Wales we have sought to make the immediate order process workable in genuinely urgent situations. An immediate order can be issued verbally but confirmed in writing, recognising that in some situations principals may need to act

immediately to protect staff and students. I emphasise that an immediate order must be necessary and be the least restrictive means available.

South Australia has had barring notices since 2019 but strengthened its legislation last year. The main point was expanding the application to off-site school activities and online communication. A lot has been said about this. The world has changed completely in this respect. Both jurisdictions have highlighted the need for clear guidance, resources and support to ensure that the scheme is exercised fairly and consistently. The Government will therefore work with all three education sectors and stakeholders to develop the ministerial guidelines and practical supporting resources for schools and the community. I hope this will ensure that our schools, our staff, our parents and our school communities understand how the new scheme will operate and their responsibilities under this new scheme.

Members raised engagement with stakeholders and the advocacy of particular stakeholders. I take a moment to go through some issues raised by those important stakeholders, starting with Parents of Deaf Children. Since the bill was introduced, the Government has received correspondence from Parents of Deaf Children as well as other organisations in the disability and family advocacy sectors. I am well aware that they expressed concerns that the proposed powers could impact legitimate parental advocacy on behalf of students. Until anyone has been in the situation of those parents, we do not know how much we would advocate for our child to have fair access to the curriculum for children with disability. I acknowledge that and put it on the record.

I clarify the intent of the bill and how it will be implemented. We have clarified that this legislation will not in any way prevent parents and carers from respectful advocacy on behalf of their children—which is so important, and we rely on it—or from raising concerns or complaints with their child's school. I assure the House that members of the Disability Strategy Reference Group will be engaged during the drafting of the ministerial guidelines if the legislation passes the House. I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst and his particular work on representing students who are neurodivergent. He is a very strong advocate in that space, and we have had many discussions and meetings about this issue. He wrote to me on behalf of the members of his Neurodivergent Supports in Schools Working Group.

I will be clear: Genuine and legitimate disability advocacy, complaint making or seeking compliance with reasonable adjustment obligations will not by themselves in any way constitute unreasonable behaviour because the bill will require that procedural fairness be afforded before an ongoing order is issued. Consideration must be given to the affected adult's age, physical or mental health or other special circumstances or vulnerabilities. Consideration will be given to the potential impact of an order on the student's wellbeing and continued engagement with their right to an education—which is the right of every child in New South Wales, under law. The affected person must have access to an advocate, representative, interpreter or other support person.

In terms of the ministerial guidelines, on the suggestion of the member for Wakehurst, they will be co-designed with stakeholders, including people with a disability. I am happy to assure the member for Wakehurst and the members of his working group that they will be included in that consultation. Many people raised the impact of Aboriginal education officers, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge the extraordinary relationship that the Department of Education, in particular, has with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group [AECG]. What an incredible group of people. They been consulted closely on the proposed legislation. That consultation has been important because the bill covers frontline school staff. We have talked about teachers a lot—and, yes, I talk about teachers 24 hours a day.

In addition to our teachers, the scheme will also apply to community liaison officers, anti-racism contact officers, school learning support officers and Aboriginal education officers—roles that are constantly in contact with parents and community. Often they are employed to do that outreach work in the community, so it was important that we worked with the AECG. I make the point that this legislation is designed to be preventative. There have been comments about how some of the very worst cases may end up in the criminal justice system. Examples were given—I will not go through all the examples I know of—of teachers and principals being hospitalised and their cases ending up in the criminal justice system. This is about trying to circumvent that and to be preventative. I acknowledge our work with the AECG and the P&C Federation of New South Wales on the bill. They have been supportive of that graduated approach.

I acknowledge everyone's encouragement for the system to support principals with implementation material. That is something that our partners in the public system, the Secondary Principals' Council and the Primary Principals' Association raised during consultation. We will roll out professional development. There is now more time than ever for professional development, thanks to the arrangement that we have agreed with our teachers, and we will make sure that access to professional learning for other sectors is available as well. The effectiveness of this bill will rely on our school leaders, so it is important that they are supported. I urge members to look at the resources in Victoria. We will learn from and model suites of material on those resources.

I foreshadow that the Government will move three amendments to the bill. The first amendment will include in the bill a statutory review after three years. I thank the member for Ballina for working with my office on that amendment and for raising the need for a statutory review. We think it is a sensible amendment, and I thank the member for Ballina for pushing it. We have opted for three years because we need to give schools and communities a reasonable amount of time to understand the new system and work out any initial teething issues before we can learn anything meaningful. Of course, there will be an initial set-up and transition period, so useful insights will be possible after that time has passed.

The second amendment responds to issues outlined by the Legislation Review Committee and proposes that the Minister table the ministerial guidelines in Parliament once they are made. That will hopefully provide an extra layer of transparency and accountability. It was always intended that the guidelines would be published online—and they still will be. By making that a legislative requirement, this amendment puts the question beyond doubt. Consultation on the guidelines will be wideranging with stakeholders, including parents and citizens associations, the AECG, disability advocacy groups, teachers and principals groups. The department will also ensure that members who have requested to be part of that consultation are involved.

The third and final amendment to the bill will explicitly require the keeping of records about orders issued. The amendment states that records must be kept about the making of immediate orders and ongoing orders and the terms of the orders. For public schools that will be done centrally by the Department of Education. We have worked cooperatively with the Independent Schools NSW and Catholic Schools NSW on the amendment. Catholic schools are systemic but independent schools are not, so they have different ways of operating, but we will work with them to make sure they can keep those records.

In conclusion, I thank those in the Department of Education who have literally spent years on this piece of work. It has come about because of teachers and principals on the ground and inside the gates saying that something needed to be done, a line in the sand needed to be drawn and the department responsible needed to back the people who are the backbone of the education system. I thank those people in the department: Derek Schwarz, Simone Nokes, Floryn Hall, Margaret Baker, Hollie Pich, Charity Danquah, Douglas Pagett, Jennifer Buckingham from the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and Jeremy Kurucz. I thank the excellent Josh Jerga in my office, who put his heart and soul into the bill and was determined to fight for it and get it done. The bill is a good example of how politics really can make a difference in people's lives. Principals and teachers in New South Wales will be safer as a result.

Every student deserves to learn safely, and every person working in a school deserves to be safe at work. The bill gives teachers and principals practical tools to keep them safe. It is sensible. I am very proud that all members of Parliament from across the political spectrum realise this work needs to be done. I thank all stakeholders who helped to draft the bill. If the bill passes this House and the other place, I will be very proud to say to principals and teachers, "We have your back." I know I am biased, but a lot of other members in this House have also said that teachers have the most important job in our society because they are creating the next generation. We will support them every step of the way.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Prue Car.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (16:42): By leave: I move Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2026-098A, Government amendment No. 1 on sheet c2026-107B and Government amendment No. 1 sheet c2026-069 in globo:

[c2026-098A]

No. 1 **Tabling of Ministerial guidelines**

Page 16, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 26ZO. Insert after line 26—

- (4) The Minister must table the guidelines in each House of Parliament as soon as practicable after the guidelines are made.

[c2026-107B]

No. 1 **Record of orders made**

Page 17, Schedule 1[2], proposed section 26ZR, lines 2 and 3. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (1) Records must be kept about—
 - (a) the making of immediate orders and ongoing orders, and
 - (b) the terms of the orders.
- (2) The records must be kept in accordance with the regulations.
- (3) The regulations may prescribe other requirements for the keeping of records about orders made under this part.

[c2026-069]

No. 1 Statutory review

Page 17, Schedule 1[2], proposed Part 5B, Division 6. Insert after line 3—

26ZS Review of part

- (1) The Minister must review this part to determine whether—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the part remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the part remain appropriate for achieving the objectives.
- (2) The review must be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of 3 years from the commencement of this part.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 4 years after the commencement of this part.

I already spoke to the amendments during the second reading stage.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (16:43): The Opposition supports the amendments.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (16:43): The Greens support the amendments and thank the Deputy Premier and her office for working with us so generously on these matters. The statutory review is very useful because the issuing of orders is new and we need to make sure the Government can iron out any issues. The Deputy Premier has listened directly to teachers, other school staff and school communities, who will, no doubt, have lots to say in the review. The keeping of records is also important, and it was heartening to hear the Deputy Premier talk about the work she will do with independent schools to keep records and provide extra oversight. We support these amendments wholeheartedly.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that the amendments be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms PRUE CAR: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

RETAIL LEASES AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 14 October 2025.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:45): I make a contribution to debate on the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025 in my capacity as shadow Minister for Small Business. The Opposition supports the bill. Its reforms are sensible and will make a practical difference to retail lessees and lessors across New South Wales. Retail leasing might not generate many headlines, but it underpins the viability of thousands of small businesses—the cafes, boutiques, pharmacies and service providers that give our town centres and shopping strips their character. Getting the regulatory settings right matters to the people who sign the leases, who stake their livelihoods on them and who depend on a framework that is clear, fair and up to date.

By way of background, the Retail Leases Act 1994 has been the foundation of retail leasing in this State for three decades. The former Coalition Government commissioned a statutory review in November 2022, and the NSW Small Business Commission delivered its report in July 2023. The report was thorough and made 32 recommendations in total—23 requiring legislative amendment. The bill implements 13 of those 23 legislative

recommendations. The Government described it as the first tranche of reforms, with the remaining recommendations to be considered following further consultation.

I do not propose to walk through every provision in detail, but I highlight the reforms that will matter most on the ground. The disclosure reforms are welcome. Requiring landlords to have a proposed lease ready before advertising premises, and to provide that lease and key documents as soon as negotiations begin, is common sense. Too many lessees, particularly first-time operators, find themselves deep into negotiations before discovering terms that fundamentally change the commercial picture. A penalty of 50 penalty units for noncompliance sends an appropriate signal. The simplification of disclosure statements is equally important. The requirement for a lessor's disclosure at least seven days before signing—with the option to waive that period where both parties have independent legal advice—strikes a reasonable balance between protection and commercial flexibility. The right for a lessee to terminate within six months if disclosure was not provided, was incomplete or was misleading gives that protection real consequence.

The change to outgoings certification—allowing the engagement of a certified practising accountant rather than a company auditor for non-shopping centre leases—is a sensible reduction in cost and red tape. In regional areas particularly, accessing a company auditor can be difficult and expensive. The change recognises the practical realities of doing business outside the major centres. The exclusion of pharmacy sales from turnover rent calculations aligns the Act with the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. Pharmacists—especially in regional communities, where they are often the last healthcare provider in town—should not be penalised in their lease arrangements for dispensing medicines under a regulated framework they do not control.

The amendments to relocation rent provisions requiring consideration of factors like foot traffic, retail mix, frontage and shop layout bring needed commercial reality to a process that has too often been opaque. Clarifying the end-of-lease notice—between six and 12 months before expiry—gives business owners the certainty they need to plan, whether that plan is to renew, relocate or move on. The repeal of the COVID-19 emergency provisions is straightforward legislative housekeeping. Those provisions have served their purpose. As I said, the Opposition supports these reforms. I place on record some observations about the 10 legislative recommendations from the commission's review that are not included in this bill. The Government has indicated these require further consultation. In some cases, that may well be justified. There are genuinely complex issues among the deferred recommendations. But the commission itself spent a year consulting with lessors, lessees, industry bodies, government agencies and the legal profession before making its recommendations.

The question I put to the Government is: What further consultation is required and on what timeline? Let me highlight several of the deferred recommendations that I think warrant attention. The commission recommended strengthening the compulsory mediation requirement before disputes reach NCAT. The commission's own data indicates that over 85 per cent of disputes resolve through mediation, but some parties are bypassing the process entirely. If mediation works, and the evidence says it does, then ensuring it is utilised properly seems like a straightforward proposition. I would be interested to understand why this was not included.

The commission recommended extending the Act's retail lease protections to the future Western Sydney international airport, an airport that is under construction and will house retail tenants who will need certainty about the regulatory framework governing their leases. This seems like a time-sensitive matter. The commission recommended allowing landlords and tenants to mutually agree on cost-sharing arrangements for capital upgrades, including energy efficiency improvements. This is a practical reform that would benefit both parties and align with broader Government policy on sustainability.

It is worth understanding what obstacle prevented its inclusion. There are other deferred recommendations relating to assignor disclosure statements, the definition of permitted use and the disclosure of valuation information in strip retail. I am not, today, taking a firm position on every one of these matters; some of them involve genuine trade-offs that deserve proper consideration. But I do think the Parliament and the retail leasing sector are entitled to know when the Government intends to bring forward the second tranche, and what form that consultation will take.

Good retail leasing law is not about picking sides between landlords and tenants. It is about ensuring the framework is clear, fair and fit for purpose—that both parties can negotiate from a position of understanding and operate with confidence. This bill moves the framework in the right direction. But with 10 legislative recommendations still outstanding and no clear timeline for the second tranche, there is more work to be done. I encourage the Minister to commit to a timeline for the remaining reforms and to report back to the House on the progress of further consultation. The Opposition supports this bill.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:51): I speak in support of the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025. This bill delivers on our Government's commitment to support small businesses across New South Wales by improving the fairness, clarity and efficiency of retail leasing arrangements. Retail leasing

is a critical issue for thousands of small businesses across our State. Whether it is a cafe in a suburban shopping strip, a boutique in a regional town, or a service provider in a busy city centre, these enterprises rely on fair, transparent and workable leasing arrangements to operate and grow.

The Retail Leases Act 1994 has served us well for three decades, providing a framework that underpins good leasing practices. But our economy and communities have evolved, and so too must our legislation. This bill modernises the Retail Leases Act to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of both lessors and lessees in today's retail environment. It will strengthen transparency, reduce disputes and build confidence in leasing arrangements, all of which are vital to fostering a strong small business sector. The bill gives effect to 13 of the 23 legislative recommendations arising from the statutory review conducted by the NSW Small Business Commission in 2023.

That review, which included extensive consultation with stakeholders across the sector, produced 32 recommendations in total. The Government has taken a sensible, phased approach implementing the more straightforward legislative changes first, while reserving the more complex reforms for further consultation and detailed analysis. One of the most significant reforms is the introduction of an objects provision into the Act. For the first time, the legislation will clearly state its purpose and scope, providing much-needed clarity for all parties. This will guide lessors, lessees, legal practitioners and dispute resolution staff in understanding how the Act is intended to operate.

It promotes consistency in interpretation and reinforces the principle that retail leasing in New South Wales should be conducted fairly, transparently and efficiently. The bill also enhances flexibility in how the Act applies. It moves the list of excluded uses from the legislation into the regulation. This change will allow the framework to remain responsive to evolving market conditions, new tenancy models and emerging retail formats, while still ensuring proper oversight through the regulatory process. Another key focus of the bill is improving the process for entering into retail leases. This begins with better disclosure.

The bill consolidates references to disclosure statements and updates terminology so that the term "disclosure statement" now refers to both lessor and lessee disclosure statements. It also enables the regulation to prescribe tailored disclosure statements for different types of retail leases—for example, shopping centre leases and other retail leases. This ensures that the information provided is relevant to each situation, while reducing unnecessary administrative burden. Currently, a lessor must provide a disclosure statement at least seven days before a lease is entered into. The bill introduces greater flexibility by allowing that period to be reduced or waived, provided both parties have received independent legal advice and given written consent.

This change preserves important safeguards but allows business to proceed more quickly when both sides are ready. Transparency is further strengthened by requiring that prospective lessees be provided with prescribed fact sheets or guides when negotiations begin. These documents will improve understanding of key rights and obligations under the Act, empowering small business owners to make informed decisions before signing a lease. Another area of reform concerns the preparation of outgoing statements for premises located outside shopping centres. Currently, those reports must be prepared by a registered company auditor, a requirement that can impose unnecessary costs on small landlords.

The bill will allow certified practising accountants to certify such statements, while maintaining stricter requirements for shopping centres where the financial arrangements are more complex. This bill also removes any ambiguity around pharmacy-related sales by confirming they are excluded from turnover rent calculations, aligning the Act with the existing sector-specific exemptions. To improve certainty at the end of the lease, the bill clarifies the timing for end-of-lease notifications. Where no further options exist to extend the lease, the lessor must notify the lessee of their intentions between six and 12 months before expiry. That provides clarity for both parties and allows time to plan for future arrangements. In situations where the lessee must relocate, the bill requires rent for the new premises to be determined with reference to key commercial factors, such as foot traffic, surrounding retail mix, frontage and shop configuration.

This ensures fairness and consistency in setting rent. Finally, the bill repeals redundant COVID-19 provisions that were introduced to address pandemic-related disruptions. These emergency powers have served their purpose and are no longer necessary in today's environment. These reforms are practical, balanced and future focused. They improve clarity and efficiency, streamline processes and strengthen the safeguards that underpin fair dealing in retail leasing. A modern, responsive retail leasing framework is essential to fostering confidence, reducing disputes and supporting economic growth. The Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025 achieves those goals. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I want to share a bit of sad news with the House. I have just learned that Angry Anderson, Australian rocker, has passed away. God bless Angry.

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It being 5.00 p.m., in accordance with the routine of business, debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

Public Interest Debate

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Minns Labor Government for completely gutting infrastructure projects in regional communities.
- (2) Condemns the Minns Labor Government for the poor standard of drinking water and roads across regional New South Wales.
- (3) Condemns the Minns Labor Government for suffocating regional industries through poor economic management.
- (4) Notes that regional families are feeling increasingly unsafe at home due to the Minns Labor Government's mismanagement of the justice system.
- (5) Calls on the Minns Labor Government to adopt the Liberal and Nationals' plan to rebuild regional infrastructure, fix regional economies and restore safety across regional New South Wales.

Life under Labor is tough and life under Labor in the regions is particularly tough. There is a huge amount of taxation—some would call it a taxation festival—of regional economies, which is driving our businesses into the dirt. Just this morning I got a phone call from Jason Chesworth of Hunter Belle Cheese who told me about the pressure he is under in his businesses—pressure from workers compensation premiums going up, pressure from irrigation water bills going up, pressure from energy bills going up. All of those have gone up significantly.

Yesterday I got a text and a phone call from my wife about the Crown land rates for paper roads at our place. Those rates have gone up and she was saying, "We shouldn't have to pay them," because they have not gone up by 10 per cent; they have been jacked up by 400 per cent. It is absolutely outrageous. I have heard from our regional community groups, golf clubs and bowling clubs, Crown land lessees. They have had their land rates jacked up as well—not by 10 per cent, not even by 400 per cent. Some of them are up by thousands of percentage points. Some of them are 50 times more than what they paid before.

Nothing shines more light on how Labor manages economy in regional New South Wales than the wine industry. The Government has started applying land tax on those businesses that run a cellar door. That is hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax out of the blue, which is in stark contrast to South Australia where the Government is doing everything it can to save that State's wine industry. It has provided a \$109 million assistance package to help the wine industry.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Minns's mate Malinauskas.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: That is Minns's mate. You could not see a more different way of managing our regional economies. This Labor Government has to be the highest tax collecting State government in history. Yet its investment in regional infrastructure is going down. It is dwindling. We are not getting any returns at all from our economies. The Labor Government has been negligent in its responsibility to assist our local communities, particularly in water and sewage treatment plants. The cost of compliance across the board is out of control. No additional funding—and this is an absolute disgrace—has been allocated to the Safe and Secure Water Program since the Minns Labor Government was elected in March 2023. It is unbelievable.

Housing is probably the greatest challenge of our generation, yet we can take much more housing in the regions. We keep saying that. Help us out and we can take some of the housing. If the State was serious about helping us with local infrastructure, we could develop housing and it could be in the tens of thousands. In Scone alone we could start building an extra 1,000 homes tomorrow if we could just get the backing of the State Government for water infrastructure. In Muswellbrook a water pipeline to develop new housing, funded by the Coalition, has been delayed because the State Government would not assist with the final gap funding. It continues to reject any request for assistance.

That is why The Nationals and the Liberals have come up with a plan known as the Royalties for Regional Water Fund. It is an excellent plan. It is a \$5 billion, 10-year investment plan. It will be a game changer and is built on a key concept: that royalties generated in the regions should go back to the regions. The Coalition developed the Resources for Regions program, which recognised that concept. It was highly popular, so I was disappointed that it was the first funding program that the Labor Government cut. They slashed it, which is an absolute disgrace. That funding went to things like hospitals, sporting fields and community centres, which made a big difference in mining communities.

All we are really after is a fair share for the regions. That is why the Coalition has confirmed a 25 per cent guaranteed spend on regional infrastructure. One would have thought that was the bare minimum, but we are at

only 13 per cent under Labor. It is absolutely disgraceful. We do not believe in some creepy accounting. NSW does not stand for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong, as Labor believes. It applies to the regions. We cannot talk enough about roads—oh my goodness!—and the imbalance caused by Labor's lack of investment in regional infrastructure. Labor Ministers walk around patting themselves on the back for all the projects that were funded in the past by the Coalition. But do you know what? Not one single program in our region has been announced by Labor. It is terrible. The only program it announced was the Regional Roads Fund—80 per cent of it went into Labor electorates. We have not seen any transparency on that at all.

Even worse is regional health. We now have a very serious problem. We have not seen the long-promised maternity action plan, nor any additional investment. In no time whatsoever, babies will not be able to be born in regional New South Wales. It is a problem that we need to fix, and we need to fix now. Regional New South Wales has been gaslit by the Labor Government.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:06): This is probably the first time that I have seen a member introduce a matter of public interest for debate and then spend the next seven minutes not talking about it. That was a unique experience. I recognise that those opposite were in government for 12 years from 2011 until 2023 and now, just 3½ years after they left government, they want to pretend that none of those problems existed during their term. It was an absolute nirvana of a State according to those opposite, despite the fact that in 2026 we are living the consequence of their 12 years. There is an old Irish idiom or proverb that says many a man's nose has been bloodied by his own flapping gums. I think the member's motion is similar to that. It is a bit of an own goal. Let me start talking about investment in regional New South Wales, but with particular focus on what is happening in the Hunter. Members opposite will be big fans of this.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Clerk will stop the clock. I do not wish to direct the member for Upper Hunter to remove himself from the Chamber, given that the House is debating his motion. He must have had a double shot of coffee before coming into this place. The member will relax and listen in silence to the debate.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: We can all get behind \$12 billion of investment in train manufacturing in the Hunter over the next 20 or 30 years. I hope that we can get on board with that. That pretty significant investment is the complete opposite of what members opposite did, which was outsource it by sending it overseas. We are bringing it back and I hope they support that. Also, the New South Wales and Federal governments have invested \$2.5 billion to secure Tomago. Those opposite did not do that during their time in government. We have secured Tomago. Some 1,000 jobs plus an additional 5,000 jobs will flow from that. We are bringing manufacturing back to New South Wales. We are investing in it and supporting it. But we are not stopping there.

There is also massive investment in hospitals and fee-free public preschools across the Hunter. I hope Opposition members are on board with that. We are rebuilding our police by investing in our officers where they start their career, and that is in training. The consequence of that is five record police classes that have graduated from the Goulburn Police Academy. They will refill the positions that slipped away under the former Government, because it put in place a 2.5 per cent wages cap which meant that police were better off crossing a border to get a better wage, whether that be in the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland or Victoria.

But the wages cap did not just apply to police. It applied to nurses and teachers, and the problem was just the same. The Government has gotten rid of the wages cap to make sure that we have the public sector workers we need in this State and to ensure that they do not leak out of the State. Members opposite still believe the wages cap should be in place. They want the leak to continue. In regional New South Wales, the public sector workforce that Opposition members all hate and want to abandon—

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: The member for Cessnock should return to the leave of the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: We need public sector workers in our regions. If we want to invest in the future of those communities and drive prosperity, our public sector workforce is key to achieving that. Tens of thousands of public sector jobs disappeared under the wages cap and the public sector sackings that were implemented by the former Government over 12 years. Now Opposition members are bleating and moaning about those conditions. I go back to the police and the incredible work they do, their increased numbers and the fact that they are out on the streets. Members on this side of the House are well and truly sick of Opposition members continually talking about the problems with crime that exist in New South Wales, as if the police are not out there working their backsides off solving those problems. Opposition members just keep bagging the work of our police, which is outrageous. The motion is an own goal. I refuse to support it.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:12): I support the motion because across regional New South Wales there is a growing sense that we are being asked to carry more, contribute more and accept less. I

have heard that in my electorate, and that theme is heard across New South Wales. After more than three years of the Minns Labor Government, too many of the issues I have raised in this House are not getting better, nor are they being addressed. Our roads remain under pressure, our hospitals are stretched, regional jobs face uncertainty, communities are carrying an enormous share of the State's energy transition, and regional families want confidence that the services they rely on will be there when they need them.

The Barton Highway is a perfect example. It is one of the most important transport corridors in my electorate, carrying almost 13,000 vehicles every day. It connects Yass, Murrumbateman and surrounding communities with Canberra and the Central West of New South Wales. The duplication was announced in 2019, when I was first elected as the member for Goulburn. At that time the former Coalition Government was progressing the Barton Highway duplication from the Australian Capital Territory border towards Murrumbateman. By November 2020 I was present with community representatives to turn the first sod and see construction begin. Stage one was partially delivered, but the tie-in with the Australian Capital Territory was not completed. However, that did not stop Labor Ministers from coming from everywhere to cut the ribbon.

But the job was never meant to stop there. As I stand here today, the next stages have fallen off the Labor Government's priority list, and there is no end in sight. Stage two is more than two years behind schedule. The Murrumbateman bypass now sits at thirty-first for planning and fifty-eighth for delivery among 60 Transport for NSW strategic regional priorities for the south-east and Tablelands. The full duplication does not even rate as a delivery priority in the current regional strategic transport plan. That is simply not good enough. Previously, the community expected stage two construction to commence in 2026, subject to the necessary planning approvals. Transport for NSW has now confirmed further delays, with the environmental assessment pushed to 2027. Every delay pushes completion further away and increases the costs.

Meanwhile, Murrumbateman continues to grow, freight continues to move along the corridor, and thousands of people continue to travel on it every day. The community has waited long enough. At its heart, the duplication of the Barton Highway was always about safety. Every year this project is delayed is another year that motorists are left travelling on sections of highway that the community has fought for decades to make safer. Another example is Goulburn Correctional Centre—what a beautiful present from the Labor Government. At the end of the month, the four Victorian-era wings are scheduled to be removed from operation, affecting around 170 inmate places. I have raised that issue in this House, lodged a notice of motion and repeatedly called for the evidence underpinning that decision to be released.

The Government says staff will not be forced out of a job, but workers and their families want to know what will happen next. What will happen to their shifts and overtime? What happens when people retire or leave? Will those positions in Goulburn be replaced, or will they quietly disappear? That closure will affect regional jobs and whether a major government employer in a regional city is strengthened for the future or progressively wound back. Our region will take a \$30 million hit to our local economy from that decision alone. So much for the party of the workers.

Let us also talk about health. The Labor Government has closed our new urgent care service less than 12 months after it opened. Our community should not be left behind while those services are established elsewhere in New South Wales. Then there is basic water infrastructure, like the Morton Avenue reservoir, which is essential infrastructure for a growing Yass community. Water security must keep pace with growth. Across the Southern Highlands, particularly around the rapidly growing Moss Vale, we need long-term planning to ensure that our water supply, storage and treatment infrastructure has the capacity and resilience to support the communities of the future. We have hope because of the fantastic policy put forward by our shadow Minister.

We need to see better investment across regional areas in New South Wales. The Coalition's plan is exactly that. We are not going to accept 13 per cent. We want more than that, and the regions deserve more than that. If we want our State to succeed and return to being the best State in this nation, we must ensure that regional areas are thriving, that regional areas are supported, and that we listen to communities. Government policies should be driven by our communities.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:17): I move:

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

- (1) Notes 25 per cent of infrastructure funding for roads, transport and schools was allocated to regional New South Wales in the 2026-2027 budget.
- (2) Notes the Minns Labor Government's strong record of economic management, reaffirmed by all major international credit rating agencies.
- (3) Notes the New South Wales Government has strengthened our justice system and made real investments in regional community safety.

- (4) Notes the 2026-2027 budget will deliver an estimated \$2.3 billion toward schools in regional New South Wales over the next four years.
- (5) Notes the Minns Labor Government is delivering \$3 billion over four years for health infrastructure in regional New South Wales.
- (6) Opposes the privatisation of regional State assets including Endeavour Energy.

I represent a growing regional community in my electorate of Shellharbour. When members opposite claim that regional New South Wales is going backwards, it is important to deal in facts, because I can tell the House that our investment looks like what is happening right now in Shellharbour. It looks like a brand-new hospital out of Dunmore. It looks like the first public high school to be built in the Shellharbour electorate in 55 years. It looks like a new primary school for the growing West Dapto community, which I begged the previous Government for its past eight years to buy the land and build, and it never did so. It looks like the investment in roads, transport, skills and services that growing regional communities like mine need.

Those opposite say that this Government has completely gutted regional infrastructure. The facts tell a different story. The Minns Labor Government is investing \$14.2 billion over four years in roads and transport in New South Wales, particularly in the regions, which account for 25 per cent of transport expenditure in the 2026-27 budget, compared with just 16 per cent in the former Government's budget. There is \$3 billion over four years for regional health infrastructure and \$2.3 billion for new and upgraded regional schools. Shellharbour is benefiting directly from that investment. The most visible example is the \$828.9 million New Shellharbour Hospital and Integrated Services project. If members have not been to see it, they should go and have a look.

Mr Kevin Anderson: All right, then.

Ms ANNA WATSON: The member for Tamworth will be welcome. We will have improved public transport connections for the hospital, with around 1,000 free car parking spaces and a rooftop helipad. It will be a significantly larger and more capable hospital, providing more jobs closer to home. That is regional infrastructure. When those opposite were in government, what was their idea of regional infrastructure? They told us that they would privatise five public hospitals for investment so that they could recycle the asset. Remember that term, "asset recycling"? The member for Tamworth would remember that. They also wanted to build a jail in the brand-new housing estate of West Dapto, where first home buyers were spending \$600,000 for a little bit of dirt. Those opposite wanted to put a jail in the middle of that. My community got behind me and stopped that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Compare that with us. The new high school in Flinders will have capacity for 750 students, 33 modern classrooms, woodworking and metalworking facilities and a multipurpose hall. On this side of the House, we believe in public hospitals, schools and amenities, as opposed to those opposite, who just want to privatise everything. Chris Rath from the other place said:

The New South Wales Government should consider leasing its remaining 51% share of the state's electricity network – 100% of Essential Energy and 49.6% of Ausgrid and Endeavour Energy ... The 'recycled' revenue from the new lease would provide an opportunity to invest in even more infrastructure to boost the state's productivity, supporting and expanding ...

He just goes on. Chris Rath in the other place wants to go back to recycling assets. This is all back to the future. It is going back to privatising what they can flog off. We know that it does not work because the Minns Government was elected on an anti-privatisation agenda, and we will win again in 2027.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:22): Regional New South Wales has had enough of being treated as an afterthought by this Government. Roughly one in four people in this State live outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. We expect that a minimum of one in four dollars spent on infrastructure should be for the regions. That is a minimum, because we have larger local government areas and smaller rate bases and lots of unrateable government land, such as national parks. Labor's current allocation of spending in the regions is 13 per cent. That is not a fair share. Our communities keep this State fed, supplied with materials to make towels with—as the member for Shellharbour should know—staffed and moving. We should not have to beg. The lack of regional focus by the Minns Labor Government is evident across every area of policy and decision-making.

Let us talk about roads. The infamous Wrights Road and Lake Road roundabouts in Port Macquarie have 20,000 vehicle movements each day. Some 15,000 new homes are planned for west of there. There will be impacts on emergency services and economic productivity. Ambulances cannot even get to the hospital. There was broad support across all levels of government for an upgrade. What did Labor do? It got into government and ripped \$4 million out of planning. That was its first act. The Nationals had secured that money for the roundabouts, and we desperately need it. The Minister must bring it back. Labor has increased Crown road fees and taxes by 400 per cent. Under this Government, we are going backwards. We have seen another death at the King Creek Road intersection. I took the Minister there in 2023, and we still have not received funding.

The Valla Urban Growth Area is set to deliver about 700 homes alongside a new town centre and a school. It is expected to increase the local economy of a small country town by \$380 million per year while supporting around 2,800 jobs. It is in the very middle of the run from Sydney to Brisbane. There has been years of planning from the council and zero—nothing—from Labor. The 25 per cent of the population is precisely why The Nationals and the Liberals, if elected in 2027, will have a committed regional infrastructure guarantee for a minimum of 25 per cent outside of Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong.

When I talk about water, I am glad to see the shadow Minister in the Chamber. Regional water infrastructure has been neglected for far too long. Councils have been struggling to get support. In my electorate we have Cowarra Water Treatment Plant and Thrumster Wastewater Scheme. Both of those plants will unlock new homes and support future jobs and economic growth. But imagine being in the town of Narrandera. We have seen the colour of the drinking water. Steph Cooke and the Nats have committed to a \$5 billion, 10-year regional water investment plan, backed by legislation and royalties. There are clear policy differences, because we are going backwards under Labor.

The people of regional New South Wales want to work hard, invest their own money and take risks to employ other people. It is harder for small businesses to employ people and invest. They are going backwards under Labor because the payroll tax threshold has remained at \$1.2 million, with increasing costs across wages, energy, insurance and compliance. We have seen a record number of insolvencies. We will raise that threshold to \$1.5 million, reduce the payroll tax rate from 5.45 per cent to 4.75 per cent for businesses with an Australian payroll below \$10 million, and index the threshold to the consumer price index. That will help to remove around 4,000 businesses from payroll tax altogether. We will double the funding for Business Connect, helping regional businesses to take risks and employ people. We will repeal Labor's union spy powers laws, increase the energy supply and develop a comprehensive industry strategy aimed at growing the number of jobs.

Crime is the other issue in the motion. People in regional New South Wales should not feel unsafe in their own homes. We will bring in adult time for adult crime. Serious offenders need serious consequences. We will double the Community Safety Investment Fund to \$10 million and establish a post-detention reintegration and rehabilitation program, as well as more drones to be flown out the door and into our communities. After three years of the Minns Labor Government, regional New South Wales is going backwards. The member for Cessnock was talking about Tomago. Labor ran Tomago into the ground and then patted itself on the back for providing CPR. We deserve respect as the people who grow the food and produce the timber and materials, even for towels. We mine the resources, generate the energy and keep the supply chains moving on which this State and this country depend. We produce the concrete for this concrete jungle. People living in regional communities matter. Labor not only cuts our ribbons but also cuts our funding.

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:27): I oppose the proposition that regional New South Wales is going backwards under the Labor Government. In logic, a single falsifying observation can disprove a universal theory. It is called a logical contradiction. Going backwards is not the lived experience of the people I have represented in the Bega electorate since the Minns Labor Government was elected. When we ask whether regional New South Wales is moving forwards or backwards, we should not judge by political rhetoric but by facts. Those facts are investment, delivery and outcomes. In my electorate, commitments and developments across health, education, transport and housing are making a real difference to our communities.

Let me start with the jewel in the crown: health. Major investments are being made in health infrastructure across the south-east. The South East Regional Hospital is receiving a new CT scanner this year. Bega has a new Safe Haven for those in mental health crisis. The new Eurobodalla Regional Hospital project is progressing and will open next year. Those opposite could not get that right. They did not know whether it would open as level 3 or level 4, or whether it would cost \$150 million, \$200 million or \$260 million. Our Government finally fully funded the project for \$330 million to finish the job. Under the Minns Labor Government, it will have the first intensive care unit in the Eurobodalla, and the first public hospital MRI machine, special care nursery and paediatric ward on the far South Coast.

Next door, the Government has built a \$2.2 million Moruya TAFE nurse training facility to train our own nurses and support them with key health worker accommodation. Up the road, the \$20 million Batemans Bay Community Health facility is expanding local access to care. It is opening this year and providing an entire range of community and allied health, including physiotherapy, women and children's health, speech therapy, mental health, alcohol and other drug services, wound care, diabetes care, and palliative care. Those are not signs of a region going backwards. They are signs of a government investing in the future health needs of regional communities.

On education, the story is similar. Across the south-east, the Government has invested in school infrastructure, maintenance and upgrades. Our Government has funded a \$6 million upgrade to Batemans Bay High School's high performance and gifted education unit. Moruya High School has a brand-new \$7 million

support unit. There have been improvements to Moruya High School's high performance and gifted education unit. Eden Public School will get a new onsite early learning centre as part of the \$59 million New South Wales Government and Commonwealth funding to expand public preschool access. Regional New South Wales moves forward when governments invest in creating those educational opportunities locally.

I turn to transport and infrastructure. Significant investment continues across regional road networks, including major State roads serving the Bega electorate. Communities notice when a dangerous intersection becomes safer, when a road is rebuilt after flooding or when travel times become more reliable. We have benefited from the \$500 million Regional and Local Roads Repair Program. I had five burst tyres in opposition and I have not had one since I have been in government. We are seeing the improvements on the Princes Highway at Batemans Bay and Mogo, and the improved safety of the Hector McWilliam Drive intersection at Tuross, the Malua Bay roundabout project and the Princes Highway-Old Mossy Point Road intersection. The Government has invested over \$10 million to repair nine landslip sites on the Snowy Mountains Highway over Brown Mountain. That is delivery; that is going forward.

Housing is another issue where action matters, and we are going forward. Two weeks ago, Minister Rose Jackson and I visited the former Bega TAFE site, which is being developed into 95 new homes, including 24 social housing dwellings, eight affordable homes and a 20-unit seniors social housing complex. In Moruya, we visited the construction of 18 social homes that will accommodate approximately 37 residents. The Bega electorate is going forward under the Minns Government. The question before us is whether the Minns Labor Government is responding in housing, health, education and transport, and the answer is yes. The results show investments being made, projects progressing and services being strengthened. For the people of the Bega electorate, the evidence is clear: Regional New South Wales is not going backwards. It is moving forward, and it is moving forward because regional communities are finally receiving the attention and the investment they deserve under a Minns Labor Government.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:32): In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate. I start with the member for Cessnock, who completely missed the point of the motion being about regional New South Wales and spoke about projects in Newcastle. That is exactly what the Coalition is saying: The Government cannot put a project in Newcastle and then claim it for regional New South Wales. We will teach them in due course. He was outdone by the member for Goulburn, who really nailed her contribution. She came up with the great line that regional New South Wales is expected to contribute more and generate more but is being asked to accept less. That is not acceptable. I thank the member for Goulburn.

It is always a pleasure to listen to the member for Shellharbour. She reminded us of some great Coalition projects like Shellharbour Hospital. We are proud of the work we did on that project. The member for Oxley came in strong and reminded us of all the money the Government has ripped out of road projects in regional New South Wales. That was horrific. He reminded us about the very serious topic of regional crime and the great Coalition policy of "adult time, adult crime", which is very important and will change attitudes in regional areas.

The other side spoke about Tomago Aluminium. We all know that State and Federal Labor governments drove that company to the wall with their energy prices, and now they are whacking a billion-dollar bandaid on it. They are saying, "Don't worry about taxpayers. We don't care." The Government forgets that Tomago is not the only one paying higher bills; every regional business and family is paying more towards their energy bills. That is why I was shocked to hear the member for Bega saying, "Down in Bega, things are great." He must be living in a different place to me, where all the bills have gone up and there is pressure on the family budget. I want to get a fact check on his burst tyres story. I think we need an inquiry on that, because that is definitely not true. Regional New South Wales is being gaslit by this Labor Government. Regional infrastructure investment has completely deteriorated, and the people of New South Wales want a State government that treats people fairly. Friends, the only way to achieve that is to vote Labor out.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Upper Hunter has moved a motion, to which the member for Shellharbour has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

*Bills***CONTEMPORARY MUSIC BILL 2026****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 16 September 2026.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:38): On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: In reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on the Contemporary Music Bill 2026, including the members representing the electorates of Cronulla, Sydney, Pittwater, Newtown, Tamworth, Granville, Coogee, Camden, Newcastle and Parramatta. The bill is the next phase of the Government's strategy to bring music back to New South Wales. When this Government took office in March 2023, it had a deep appreciation of what had been lost in New South Wales.

We had lost over half our music venues, our hospitality and festival sectors were suffocating under the weight of over-regulation and our touring networks had fractured. We had forgotten what it was like to be a music city and a music State. That same sense of loss has galvanised the industry and government over the past 3½ years. The Minns Labor Government has focused on working with and growing the industry through policy reform, legislation and funding. I recognise all the people in the gallery who are here tonight to celebrate the passing of this amazing legislation. We appointed the world's first music Minister, John Graham.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): That is terrific, but people in the public gallery will remain silent.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. That was my fault; I was building for effect. We set up Sound NSW, the State's first government agency for contemporary music. We released a 10-year contemporary music strategy to guide the work, and we got to work. Our vibrancy reforms, which have included three major rounds of legislation and significant planning reform, have cut the costs and complexity of hosting music and entertainment across our State. We have banned single-neighbour noise complaints, dropped fees for music venues, cut the red tape involved in hosting music outdoors, and stopped councils and government agencies regulating things like what genre gets played, how many people are on stage and whether a disco ball can be hung up.

The number of music venues registered with Liquor and Gaming NSW is now five times higher than March 2023. We have 12 special entertainment precincts—up from one—where venues can trade louder and longer. We have cut the concert caps at Moore Park and Randwick racecourse. We have turned up the volume at the Sydney Opera House forecourt, because the noise levels at our nation's most iconic venue should not be dictated by the bedtimes of residents at "The Toaster". New South Wales is the first jurisdiction in Australia to officially back Michael's Rule, an incentive to encourage international touring acts to include local artists in their concert line-ups. After successes such as Ball Park Music supporting Oasis at Accor Stadium, Queensland has now followed suit. We set up the nation's biggest cash prize through last year's inaugural NSW Music Prize. SPEED, BARKAA and Nina Jirachi took out the Music Prize, First Nations Prize and Breakthrough Artist of the Year respectively.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Ninajirachi.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Ninajirachi—the member for Gosford is a lot hipper than me. Nina, who is from the Central Coast—now I feel really bad—has since played at major festivals like Coachella and will play to sold-out rooms across the United States next month. This year's prize ceremony is locked in for 9 November and should be another great night celebrating the talent in our State. We have invested a landmark \$103 million in contemporary music over four years to provide both the emergency relief the sector needed and to create the foundation for long-term success. That money has gone to vital festivals and local music events. It has gone to venues to deliver critical infrastructure and equipment to help them make live music a key part of their business model. It has also gone to artists and industry groups—including First Nations recipients—to help them do what they do best.

Together, these initiatives have helped rebuild momentum in a sector that employs thousands of people, enriches our communities and shapes the cultural identity of our State—which brings us to this moment. The bill is more than standard legislation. It is a statement of recognition, and one of intent, because the fight is far from over. It recognises that music is a vital part of who we are as a State and that music is not simply entertainment. Music tells our stories, reflects who we are, connects communities, drives significant economic activity and gives people a sense of belonging. That is more important than ever as we become engrossed in what is happening on our screens and as the demands of our busy lives leave us lonelier and more disconnected.

We also face a new set of challenges. Unpredictable weather is increasing insurance costs and risk, and the cost of living is making it harder for punters to go out and see music or spend money at the bar. Algorithmic music discovery is changing how audiences connect with artists, and changing audience consumption is forcing the industry to grapple with new business models. The work we have started must continue. The bill places contemporary music at the heart of Government policy and creates an enduring responsibility for future governments to support, grow and champion the industry. It ensures that the progress we have made is not temporary but lasting. In doing so, it aims to cement New South Wales as the home of contemporary music in Australia and position our State as a global leader in music development, talent creation and cultural innovation. It mirrors how the Federal Whitlam Government delivered comprehensive legislation to support the production industry 50 years ago. That legislation established the Australian Film Commission to support, promote and fund the development and distribution of Australian films.

The key elements of the Contemporary Music Bill 2026 are the principles to be applied by decision-makers in government sector agencies and local councils, including that approvals for live music events should be supported where practical and in a timely manner, fees should be reasonable, risk assessments should be based on current evidence and decisions should not be made on the basis of the genre of music. The Government is saying that live music events should be supported unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so. It is a "yes, unless" approach. This is about supporting all events, from the do-it-yourself park gig to big stadium shows.

The bill will also establish a venue accreditation scheme, allowing the Government to formally recognise the State's existing dedicated and significant live music for their contributions to the New South Wales contemporary music ecosystem. Because each time we lose one element critical to the touring network, the impact is felt beyond the local community. Incentives available under the scheme will include access to early government-funded mediation, increased funding and trading opportunities, as well as other industry development and capability development programs. This supports existing venues and incentivises other music venues to grow and develop their music offering.

The bill will move to standardise noise assessment methodologies for major event sites regulated by the Environment Protection Authority, providing a more consistent approach to sound management and creating certainty for event operators across some of New South Wales' most iconic major event sites. These sites include the Centennial Park, the Royal Botanic Garden, The Domain, Sydney Opera House, Sydney Football Stadium, Sydney Cricket Ground and Western Sydney Stadium. We are also changing the definition of a concert so that big acts like Alison Wonderland are not forced to remove local support acts to avoid dealing with the regulatory hurdles that come with being classified as a festival. Finally, the bill will provide protection for industry artists and representatives by updating the Entertainment Industry Act 2013 and subordinate regulation to increase the fee cap for artist managers from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of amounts payable to performers, reflecting national and international standards.

I will now address some of the specific matters raised during the debate. I thank the member for Cronulla for his comments, particularly his acknowledgement that government support is critical to allow the music sector and artists to thrive. I also acknowledge the efforts of the former Government to boost night-life in the State. I thank the member for Pittwater for her comments and her passion for the live music scene on the northern beaches. We are thrilled to be supporting the Aloha Festival in Collaroy through Sound NSW's Local Audience Development Grants. This is an excellent example of how we can support local all-ages community events to prosper, and we look forward to the festival in 2027.

I also thank the member for Sydney for his comments and for his productive engagement on the bill. He noted the need to balance supporting live music events in our key State-owned sites with residents' right to a good night's sleep. The bill does not propose to standardise the decibel limits for key event sites, because each site is unique in its topography and distance to sensitive receivers. The bill proposes to standardise the assessment methodology for the specific decibel limits that are set for each site. That will reduce cost and complexity for event organisers and create consistency across the sites, while ensuring that decibel limits can be tailored for specific events and sites. The member also spoke about issues such as police raids and affordable housing. I thank him for his continued advocacy. This Government believes in a safe, welcoming night-time economy for all, and work continues across government to tackle a number of structural issues that impact that goal.

I thank the member for Newtown for her comments, particularly around the need to resource not just the established, existing commercial operators but also emerging and grassroots artists. That is exactly what the bill aims to do. The fourth object of the bill is to support equitable participation in and access to opportunities in contemporary music and support programs, including in regional areas. The member also noted recent or upcoming venue closures across New South Wales, including MoshPit in her electorate, and I share her distress. The Government acknowledges that there is more work to do and is focused on providing practical support to venues.

The vibrancy reforms have switched off antiquated conditions of development consent that restrict the type, style or even genre of live music that venues can provide and offer significant liquor licensing fee discounts for eligible registered live music venues. Through Sound NSW's Venue Upgrade Grants, in the inner west of Sydney alone we have provided almost \$2.5 million to 14 venues, including Crowbar; the Enmore Theatre, where I get to quite often; Lazybones; Petersham Bowling Club; the Factory Theatre, which is another great venue; and the Red Rattler. The accreditation scheme in the bill is established so that the New South Wales Government can better tailor its support, particularly for those dedicated and significant venues whose exit from the ecosystem has lasting impacts.

I thank the member for Tamworth, who is a live music artist himself, and agree that we have an important role to play in supporting our regional centres and satellite towns to attract touring artists. He has been a champion of the music industry for a long time. I acknowledge his support. Through the Sound NSW Touring and Travel Fund, we have been able to support 167 tours taking place in regional New South Wales, encompassing nearly 600 shows across our regions. That fund has supported many regional artists, like Wiradjuri artist Nathan Lamont, Ash Grunwald and Holiday Sidewinder, to play to new audiences across the State. I wish the member for Tamworth the best of luck for his upcoming performance at Under the Gums festival in Gilgandra. I also make special mention of the member for Parramatta, whose passion and emotion demonstrate just how important contemporary music is not just to the Sydney CBD or the inner west but right across Sydney, Western Sydney and regional New South Wales.

The bill represents an opportunity to create a strong foundation for the contemporary music industry in New South Wales. Our goal is to support the music scene to flourish while fostering a dynamic environment where venues, artists and communities can thrive. It is fitting, then, that we are joined in the gallery tonight by stakeholders from the State's music industry, including musicians, venues, peak bodies, labels, publishers, distributors and more. It is a group of people who do an amazing job for our State. They are dedicated, passionate and, I am informed on good authority, love an afterparty.

Mr Jihad Dib: Is that in your office after this?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I think Minister Graham has got the disco ball out and ready to go. I thank my Cabinet colleague the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy and his team—who are present tonight—for driving forward this important agenda. I also commend other members for the productive engagement we have had with them on the bill. I thank the Opposition, The Greens and other members—in particular Cate Faehrmann in the other place and the member for Sydney—as well as the City of Sydney, for their engagement to provide feedback and propose amendments.

Again, I extend my thanks to the agencies that have collaborated to make the bill possible. I recognise the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, particularly Sound NSW; the Office of the 24-hour Economy Commissioner; and Liquor and Gaming NSW. I also thank the Environment Protection Authority, the Small Business Commissioner and NSW Fair Trading. I hope to see lots of people at the upcoming Anyma concert in The Domain and at hypersonic. I am disappointed that I have not been able to get tickets to Calvin Harris. If anyone has some spares, please send them my way. I am a bit of an electronic music aficionado, and I love the DJs. With that terrible revelation, I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I mention again the sad passing of Angry Anderson. There is no better example of an Australian live performer than Angry in Rose Tattoo.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr DAVID HARRIS: On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

RETAIL LEASES AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:57): I speak in support of the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025. I am proud to support a bill that commits the New South Wales Government to working both for and with small businesses. Retail leases are critical to the viability of many small businesses. They also provide

stability and a return on investment for lessors. The reforms send a signal that New South Wales is listening and responding to the needs of small businesses. The Government thanks the Small Business Commission for its review of the Retail Leases Act 1994. The Government is addressing the report's recommendations in two tranches, and this bill progresses 13 of the 32 recommendations. That staged approach allows the Government to prioritise more straightforward reforms to strengthen the Act and provide immediate benefits for small businesses in New South Wales.

The Government has already implemented one recommendation, extending the Act to the Western Sydney airport. A key change introduced by the bill improves the process for entering into retail lease arrangements, with a focus on flexibility, efficiency and informed decision-making. Currently, the lessor must provide a disclosure statement at least seven days before a lease is entered into. The bill introduces a new option to allow both parties to lessen or waive that seven-day period, provided they have each received appropriate advice. That sensible reform removes unnecessary delay where both sides are ready to proceed, while preserving protections through the requirement for appropriate legal advice.

The bill also enables the development of tailored disclosure statement formats for different types of retail leases, such as shopping centres versus standalone premises. That reduces administrative burden and ensures that lessees receive only relevant information. The bill also proposes changes that reflect the reality of commercial leasing and supports more flexibility in contractual terms. The bill introduces new requirements for lessors stating that they must provide lessees with a copy of the proposed lease and any prescribed documents as soon as negotiations begin. That ensures that lessees are equipped with essential information before making commitments, while also protecting lessors.

Better information delivered earlier means more informed decisions and fewer disputes later. It allows extensions to the three-month deadline to provide and register signed leases, reducing the risk of technical noncompliance due to factors outside the parties' control. The bill clarifies when a lessor must notify a lessee of their intentions at the end of a lease. It makes clear that notice must be given between six and 12 months before the lease ends, whether that is at the end of the original lease or at the end of a renewed or extended lease. By removing ambiguity about timing, the amendment ensures that both parties have a clear and consistent understanding of their obligations. Most importantly, it gives tenants enough time to plan for the future, make informed business decisions and prepare for what comes next.

The bill strengthens protections for businesses that are required to relocate for reasons outside their control, such as demolition or major renovations. It ensures that rent for the new premises is set taking into account practical factors that matter to small businesses, such as foot traffic, visibility, surrounding shops and the layout of the premises. By recognising those real-world differences in premises, it helps ensure that small businesses are not unfairly disadvantaged by being moved to a location with lower commercial potential. The bill gives greater confidence that rent will reflect the true value of the new premises, supporting business viability and helping small operators continue to trade and grow. Retail leasing is a cornerstone of our small business economy. Whether for a first-time entrepreneur or for an established operator, the process of entering into a lease should be transparent, efficient and fair. The bill delivers on that promise. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:02): I contribute to debate on the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025. The bill amends the Retail Leases Act 1994 to give effect to recommendations arising from the review of the Act in 2023 by the then Small Business Commissioner. I support the bill and its overarching intention to improve the fairness and efficiency of retail leasing arrangements. As other members have mentioned, small businesses are the backbone and lifeline of our high streets, villages and local economies. Right now they need us to use every lever of support we can. The amendments contained within the bill form tranche 1 of the Government's reforms in this area, and they will improve efficiency but also provide small relief. We need to do a lot more to support small businesses. That is evident in the context of recent conversations I have had with businesses.

I note that the Federal Government inquiry into retail lease harmonisation launched on 31 August, aiming to simplify commercial tenancy rules and reduce regulatory burdens for small businesses expanding across State and Territory borders. That is another example of jurisdictional overlap. It is wonderful to see that New South Wales is leading in this area. Tranche 1, contained within the bill, is welcome. I also note that the Minister introduced the bill last October during Small Business Month and we are approaching the next Small Business Month. At that time, she rightly highlighted the vital role those operators play, being the small retail lease businesses as well as all those involved in retail leasing. I am grateful to the Minister, who is in the Chamber now, for coming to my electorate earlier this year and listening firsthand to stories from businesses in my local community—particularly those impacted by the recent shark attacks—about the impacts on the economy. The Minister really gave her time and I thank her for that.

Following that visit, the Minister also helped organise for the NSW Small Business Commissioner, Ms Kalina Kaloff, to come to the electorate and listen to a round table of businesses impacted, and find solutions to support those businesses going forward. I also invited the commissioner to visit for this Small Business Month to listen particularly to retail businesses on high streets about the issues that they are facing, including empty shopfronts. Over the past few months I have been on the high streets talking to businesses. I have been working with the Service NSW Business Bureau and the concierge service to let businesses know the services that are available to them. As I mentioned, the reforms are welcome but businesses need more services—everything from listing on the buy.nsw website to being able to apply for SafeWork \$1,000 rebates.

A huge win is the rebranded Business Connect program, which was successfully launched only last month to provide businesses with a number of hours of free business consultancy support. That is important. These are tough times at the moment, so businesses are looking to restructure. One of the big things that I have heard from retail shops is that they are getting the same number of customers but those customers are spending less. That means that they have had to substantially change their strategy from upselling to existing customers to acquiring more customers. That support has been welcome. Anything that makes retail leasing more efficient is welcome, because it is not core business. Businesses just want to get it done and get their premises.

Because of the state of the economic crisis, small business owners have said that they have had to move retail spaces. The provisions of the bill directly relate to improving the process of moving premises, particularly in shopping centres. The provisions of the bill increase the amount of consideration that needs to be given for rent in a new premises. The introduction of objects of the Act is also welcome, to really set the context for transparency, resolution of disputes in a timely and cost-effective way, and the provision of minimum safeguards, mechanisms and processes for the management of retail shopfronts and leases.

I highlight the reality on the ground. When I originally wrote some of this speech in March, the Small Business Commissioner's survey had confirmed that confidence levels were plummeting after the previous survey, down an extra 9 per cent to 22 per cent. At that time *The Daily Telegraph* reported that 689 New South Wales businesses were forced to close in 60 days as global instability, including the fallout from the Iran War, was exacerbating the local cost-of-living crisis. Another survey has been released since that time, which shows a further 16 per cent decrease in confidence. Concerns are at 89 per cent, with less than half of businesses having plans to expand or hire additional staff. Only 27 per cent of businesses plan expansion and only 9 per cent of businesses expect revenue to increase. Recent market data shows that commercial rents are outpacing revenue growth by 21 per cent for many operators, particularly in the fast food and quick service sectors.

That is severely compounded by labour shortages, supply chain disruptions and the rising costs of ingredients, utilities and logistics. There is a prevalence of empty shopfronts, not just in Pittwater but also in the city and our regions. I welcome the changes in the bill. I also welcome tranche 2 of the reforms. Like other members, I call on the Government to outline the timing for tranche 2, including standardising retail leases. In the sections of the bill that I have not yet mentioned, there are updates to certain retail shops excluded from the bill, and there are also provisions around simplifying the disclosure statements and giving a seven-day waiver if either party has received legal advice. I foreshadow that I will move amendments on that relating to conveyancers. They are all practical attempts to streamline the processes. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:09): I speak in support of the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025 and commend the Minister for working in this space. I echo the words of the member for Pittwater that the business support service of Service NSW and the work the Government is doing to try to help businesses navigate a complex economic environment are critical. I cannot remember the exact statistics, but small businesses employ a significant part of our labour workforce. They enable our families to survive. It is important that we support them to grow and thrive.

The bill seeks to ensure the sustainability of businesses, which is critical given what is going on around the world. Artificial intelligence, technological improvements, trade wars and so many other things out there really disrupt the certainty that enables businesses to forward plan and effectively survive. These retail lease reforms help add to that certainty with respect to the transparency function provided in the bill. Rental costs are a significant function of business expenses. There is a perception that a lot of business owners are rich and doing well. The reality is that a lot of business owners are not doing that well. In fact, they are doing it tough. I have friends I went to high school with who operate businesses. They do not sleep a lot because they struggle to pay wages and to survive in this environment. That uncertainty makes their lives a bit difficult.

The bill goes towards striking a balance between the interests of lessor and lessee. Obviously lessors have invested money to acquire property to then lease it out, and we must ensure that there is feasibility in terms of their investment. At the same time, when the lessees—the retail operations—take that chance on opening a business or continuing their operations, which in effect employ our workforce, we must ensure that their interests are also aligned. That balance must be struck appropriately. The bill will deliver a more reasonable leasing regime.

In terms of background, the bill was born of a review by the Small Business Commission and the recommendations it put forward. The objects of the bill are very sensible with respect to what we are trying to achieve, providing for minimum safeguards, mechanisms and processes to facilitate persons in the negotiation and management of retail shop leases.

Many business owners in my electorate of Fairfield cannot speak English that well and are not financially literate. Lease negotiations involve very complex legal language. A business owner involved in negotiating a lease agreement is dealing with seasoned experts acting on behalf of the lessor. It is important that we support those business owners. The objects of the bill also provide for disclosure requirements with respect to certain information; transparent processes for negotiating and entering retail leases; and resolving disputes quickly and at as little cost as possible. Those objects are pretty important.

In her second reading speech the Minister detailed what is important in this bill. That includes ensuring that ancillary rights are clarified, such as car parking signage, and ensuring that we update terminology and consistency across the Act, particularly as it relates to disclosure statements. Developing regulation to prescribe tailored disclosure statements for different types of retail leases is an important measure. Each lease is nuanced and pertains to the aspect of the business that seeks to use that facility or premises. The bill also ensures the right to terminate a lease within six months if the lessor disclosure statement is not provided, is incomplete or contains materially false or misleading information. That is important. It will ensure that the power imbalance between lessor and lessee is at an appropriate point.

The bill introduces additional grounds to extend the three-month period for providing an executed lease and registering it. Finally, the bill clarifies the timing requirements for end-of-lease notifications. I thank small business owners, particularly in the retail space, for the work they do to support our State. I know it is tough. Both the small business Minister and Minister Dib are pretty attentive to the needs of small business owners and are trying their best to solve every problem they can. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (18:14): In reply: I am pleased to deliver a reply to debate on the Retail Leases Amendment (Review) Bill 2025. I thank the members for the electorates of Coffs Harbour, Mount Druitt, East Hills, Fairfield and Pittwater for their contributions to debate. I make some comments in response to some things members have said. I particularly thank the member for Pittwater for foreshadowing her amendment, which will rectify the unintended omission of licensed conveyancers from the reforms. The Government supports that proposed amendment. I note that lawyers were in the bill, but not conveyancers, who have a long history in this space. I also thank Ms Jenny Tonner and Mr Dale Turner from the Australian Institute of Conveyancers for drawing our attention to that omission. I know the member for Pittwater had engaged extensively with the business community in her electorate. I get feedback from her, but also from the Small Business Commissioner, and that does pay dividends. We cannot fix everything, but doing everything we can certainly provides an extra layer of support to our small business community.

We are all happy—none more so than me—that the business support advisory service is back. I note the member for Fairfield has left the Chamber, but he said that, for some small business owners in his community, English is not their first language and they might struggle with some of these matters. The business advisory service has particular specialties. Multiculturalism is one of them, as well as women and others. That is a bit of a digression, but it is an important one because it relates to small business. The member for Pittwater talked about the business confidence survey. I note that survey was released when we were in this place in March. I put on record that the July-August figures showed that confidence was up 3 per cent, insolvencies were down and the economy was growing. I do not say that to crow about it, but it is good to see.

As members of the Assembly have heard, the bill amends the Retail Leases Act to implement crucial reforms that will improve the operation of the Act for lessors and lessees, including processes for entering into a lease and safeguards under the Act. It will strengthen the Act's primary policy objective of fostering good leasing practices between lessors and lessees. Anything we can do to help that is a plus. Implementing these amendments is crucial to improve outcomes and ensure that the Act remains effective and efficient in fostering good leasing practices between lessors, lessees and their respective advisers.

The reforms also send a signal that the Parliament is listening and responding to the needs of small businesses. They give effect to some of the key recommendations from the Small Business Commission's report entitled *Review of the Retail Leases Act 1994*, published in 2023. A review of the Act was justified because of significant changes that have occurred in the retail property sector, technology and the economy in recent years. The rise and fall of various retail formats, along with new technologies and consumer trends, will continue to influence and modify retail operating models. The bill is a testament to the fact that the New South Wales Government has taken the commission's recommendations seriously.

I will quickly touch on some of the points raised by the shadow Minister for Small Business, the member for Coff's Harbour. I thank the member for his support of the bill and for pointing out its benefits to small businesses, particularly around how it can cut some of the red tape for parties to a retail lease. That is a good thing. We all applaud that. The member raised valid points about the second tranche of the reforms. I acknowledge that some time has passed since the review was undertaken; however, it is important that the more complex recommendations—and there will be more contestation with the remaining recommendations—are considered in more detail and with greater consultation, particularly with some of our regional small businesses. As to how long that will take, I am not sure. But it will happen and it has started to happen. We need to ensure that the interests of both lessors and lessees are balanced, and that is why it is important that that happens.

Prima facie the mediation seems uncontested, but that is not necessarily the case. I will not foreshadow the findings of the consultation, but I look forward to working with interested members and the shadow Minister on furthering the final recommendations. People often ask about recommendation 30, which relates to the new Western Sydney international airport. I put on record that it is done and dusted. Part 9A of the Act provides for minor exemptions to accommodate certain requirements relating to aviation operations for Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. The Act has been amended to include the new Western Sydney airport.

The bill commences the Government's long-term commitment to building a stronger, more reliable and independent retail leases framework. The bill introduces objects into the Retail Leases Act. It is unusual for an Act not to have objects. I thank the team at the Department of Customer Service for its work on the bill, in particular James Bates for leading it, and the team at the Small Business Commission—now under the leadership of Kalina Koloff—for carrying out the review in 2023. I also thank my office, led by my small business adviser, Emily Simpson, who has put her heart and soul into this. To ensure its ongoing effectiveness, it is vital that the retail leasing framework in New South Wales remains fair, transparent and adaptable to the needs of modern businesses. The bill is a significant step. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Ms Jacqui Scruby.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:22): By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2026-031 in globo:

No. 1 Lawyers and licensed conveyancers

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], line 20. Insert "*lawyer*," after "definitions of".

No. 2 Lawyers and licensed conveyancers

Page 3, Schedule 1[2]. Insert after line 25—

lawyer means an Australian legal practitioner.

No. 3 Lawyers and licensed conveyancers

Page 4, Schedule 1[7], proposed section 11(3)(a), line 35. Omit "an Australian legal practitioner". Insert instead "a lawyer or licensed conveyancer".

No. 4 Lawyers and licensed conveyancers

Page 4, Schedule 1[7], proposed section 11(3)(b), line 36. Omit "Australian legal practitioner". Insert instead "lawyer or licensed conveyancer".

I acknowledge the Australian Institute of Conveyancers NSW Division for bringing to my attention that the bill, in its current form, unintentionally omits licensed conveyancers. Amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2026-031 ensure that licensed conveyancers are included in the bill. I understand their omission was a drafting oversight. The strict drafting of the bill restricts the provisions in item [7]—new sections 11 to 11B relating to the giving of disclosure statements—to "an Australian legal practitioner", which excludes licensed conveyancers who, as we know, in reality do much of that type of work.

Funnily enough, my father actually pioneered flat-rate conveyancing many decades ago, so it is fitting that I should move these amendments to ensure that conveyancers are able to undertake that work. He will be very happy. Specifically, amendments Nos 1 and 2 insert a new definition of "lawyer": "an Australian legal

practitioner" replaces "a barrister or solicitor". Amendments Nos 3 and 4 then amend new section 11 (3) to allow the seven-day period to be reduced or waived if each party has engaged a lawyer or licensed conveyancer—expanding the scope to include conveyancers—and has sought the advice of the lawyer or conveyancer about the reduction or waiver.

The amendments are not just practical. They do not just serve conveyancers and their industry. Critically, they also serve small businesses. Conveyancers are often more affordable and will save small businesses time and money. The amendments are for beloved high streets and the businesses on them, both in my electorate and across New South Wales. They will reduce costs for those businesses entering retail leases. I again thank the Australian Institute of Conveyancers NSW Division. I also acknowledge—which I forgot to do in my previous speech—the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, retail lease dispute expert Mr Stephen Spring, and Mr Dale Turner, also formerly of the Australian Institute of Conveyancers.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (18:25): The Government supports the amendments. I thank the member for Pittwater for moving them. They make a seemingly small but hugely significant correction to affirm licensed conveyancers' long-established role in providing advice regarding retail leases, which they currently do under the Act. I thank Ms Jennie Tonner and Mr Dale Turner from the Australian Institute of Conveyancers, who alerted us to this issue in the bill. It was a drafting oversight. The bill is better because of their contribution. It is good the way we are able to work together. That is how we should improve bills in this place. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:26): The Opposition concurs with the amendments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): The question is that amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2026-031 of the member for Pittwater be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 16 September 2026.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:27): On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: In reply: I thank all the contributors to debate on the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2026: the member for Oxley, the member for Lismore, the member for Wagga Wagga, the member for Prospect and the member for Pittwater. I note the comments made by those members about the importance of supporting our emergency services organisations and driving continuous improvement across the sector. As Parliamentary Secretary I am privileged to see firsthand the incredible work that our emergency services personnel do every day. Without fault, each person takes their commitment to community service extremely seriously. Whether it is bushfire, floods, storm or any other emergency, the residents of New South Wales take comfort and confidence in knowing that those amazing people have our backs.

I also appreciate the comments raised about the importance of the non-government organisations that are involved in New South Wales emergency management arrangements, and the impact of those organisations in their local communities. I will provide some examples of the organisations that are regularly involved in New South Wales emergency responses. St John Ambulance provides response capabilities to the Health Services Functional Area within NSW Health in the event of an emergency and supports preparation for emergencies through the education and training of its volunteers, staff and the community. Meanwhile RSPCA and WIRES are both actively involved in New South Wales biosecurity emergency response arrangements. Their workers and volunteers assist with animal treatment and welfare and the capture, transport and housing of wildlife during emergencies, particularly some of our iconic local animals like koalas, wombats, kangaroos and the like.

Finally, the Australian Red Cross is a recognised participating organisation under the New South Wales welfare services supporting plan. The Red Cross volunteers work out of evacuation centres to receive and register

disaster-affected people. The bill makes practical amendments to allow the extension of employment and liability protections to the workers and volunteers with these non-government organisations. These are simple and commonsense changes, essential for maintaining a strong, responsive and resilient emergency management sector that supports and encourages the next generation of dedicated individuals looking to serve their community. It strengthens our system to ensure it is prepared, coordinated and able to respond quickly.

I understand that The Greens will move an amendment in the Legislative Council regarding the appointment of an Aboriginal person to the Bush Fire Coordinating Committee, or the BFCC. The Government is happy to clarify the matter, but I will take this opportunity to make clear that it has always been the Government's desire and intention to see ongoing Aboriginal representation on the BFCC. The intended nomination process for this position would include providing the 10 prescribed body corporates for native title in New South Wales with an opportunity to review shortlisted nominees and provide feedback before the appointment is recommended by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty.

The bill is part of how we can ensure that our emergency management arrangements remain fit to meet current challenges, while also being adaptable to ongoing developments within the emergency services sector. In this bill, the Government is making a range of sensible and practical measures to streamline and improve the management of incidents and emergencies in New South Wales. It reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to good policy, practice and governance through the regular review of legislation and response to identified needs. I thank Minister Dib and Minister Saffin for introducing this important bill. Working with Minister Dib and his team and seeing the work that Minister Saffin does is a great privilege for me.

I thank both Ministers for the commitment and energy that they bring to supporting our emergency services personnel, volunteers and the community. I also thank the department and the many people across the board who have contributed to bringing the bill to the House. I again thank those who work in the Emergency Services portfolio and agencies, whether it is the RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW, the SES, Surf Life Saving NSW, VRA Rescue NSW or Marine Rescue NSW. The work they do is a credit to them and our communities are grateful for it. As Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, it is a privilege to represent emergency services personnel and the incredible work that volunteers do. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

SOUTHERN DISTRICTS RAIDERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:33): What a year it has been for the Southern Districts Raiders men's team. After being knocked out 5-0 by Macarthur FC in last year's Australia Cup, the Raiders returned with something to prove this year—and, boy, did they prove it! They knocked out the two-time Australia Cup winners on penalties in an incredible round of 16 clash in another cup-set. Now in their second appearance on the national stage, the boys earned an Australia Cup quarter-final against Sydney FC in probably what is the biggest game they have ever played in. The turnaround is a credit to the hard work, resilience and belief shown by the entire team and their head coach, Goran Ljuboja. It also reflects the people standing behind those players—the coaches, volunteers, families, supporters and everyone at the club—who puts in the work away from the spotlight. I congratulate the boys and everyone at Southern Districts Raiders on their hard work not just this year but over the decade or so that they have been working up to this point. Whatever comes next, the community is very proud of them, and they have done exceptionally well.

HENTY FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:34): I take this moment to congratulate the Henty Football Netball Club on winning the 2026 Hume League senior football premiership, defeating Osborne by six points and ending a 12-year wait for the flag. For Henty, this premiership belongs to not only the players and coaches but also a whole community that has stood behind its club through good times and difficult ones. I particularly recognise outgoing president Matt Kilo, who steps down after four years with the ultimate reward. Matt has spoken movingly about the volunteers, families and supporters who make the club what it is and of his pride in Henty's commitment

to developing its young local players. This triumph also carries special meaning for the Kilo family. The club has endured profound sadness following the loss of Matt's son, Henry—a loss that Matt says helped galvanise the playing group and the wider community. That makes the sight of Matt holding the premiership cup, surrounded by the red-and-white army, particularly poignant. Congratulations to all. This premiership is a wonderful achievement for the Swampies. Above all, it is a wonderful moment for and a special tribute to Henry.

ST THERESE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:35): Every day begins with a good breakfast, and the Breakfast Club at St Therese Catholic Primary School Saddleir-Miller ensures that students receive exactly that. I was thrilled to see the program in action when I dropped in recently to visit the school. I was particularly excited to see the club's new seating, courtesy of a \$16,500 Community Building Partnership grant that I was pleased to present late last year. The Breakfast Club offers a range of options for children, and students are involved in the set-up and pack down every day. I also recognise principal David Hurley, who is moving on at the end of term 4 after four impactful years at St Therese. Since taking the reins in 2022, David has helped the school go from strength to strength, including earning recognition in *The Sydney Morning Herald* last year for its impressive NAPLAN results. I thank David for everything he has given to students and families across the 2168, and I congratulate incoming principal Susan-Jane Bombardiere. I wish her every success in her new role.

UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE SPRING SHOWS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:36): September in the Upper Hunter is spring show season, and Merriwa has the party started. I congratulate Peter Lymbery and the team on last weekend's 115th Merriwa Springtime Show, held over two days and topped off with Saturday night's fireworks. I give a shout-out to Tivoli Angus of Merriwa for champion pen in the Merriwa Feedlot Competition, with Marlea Angus of Barrington the reserve champion. Singleton is centre of attention this weekend for its 152nd show. Friday is schools day, followed by the rodeo, while Saturday's drawcards are stud beef cattle, the Australian wife carrying competition, tug of war and more fireworks. Murrurundi hosts King of the Ranges, Friday to Sunday. The stock challenge will test horses and riders to find this year's king and queen of the range. Stroud is already tuned up after last weekend's rodeo to keep the party pumping when the Stroud Campdraft hits the arena on 16 and 17 October. I invite everyone to come on up to the Upper Hunter!

RINGROSE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:37): I congratulate Ringrose Public School on a wonderful Public Education Week showcase. Public Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate our public schools and the students, teachers and staff who make their success possible. At Ringrose Public School, that spirit was on full display through the creativity, confidence and enthusiasm of our students. I thank the school choir for sharing their terrific voices, and I offer congratulations to the students who delivered the vibrant Gimbawali dance performance. The showcase also celebrated learning beyond the stage, displaying students' creative portraits and capybara fact cards. It was great to welcome the Holroyd High School dance ensemble, strengthening connections between our local primary and secondary schools and showing younger students where their talents can take them. Congratulations to every student who contributed to the fantastic celebration. Their talent and hard work make their school community proud. Thanks to principal Tony Loughhead and our teachers, staff and families for supporting our students to succeed and excel.

LEIHANI ZORIC

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:38): Today I congratulate an extraordinary young surfer from our community, Leihani Zoric of Broken Head, who this week made history on the world surfing stage. At just 13 years old, Leihani has won gold in the under-18 girls' division at the 2026 ISA World Junior Surfing Championships in El Salvador. It is worth repeating: Leihani is just 13. Competing three age divisions above her own, she became the youngest surfer ever to win the ISA under-18 world title and the first Indigenous Australian to become a world surfing champion at any level. A proud Yued Noongar woman who has grown up on Bundjalung country, Leihani has spoken proudly of representing both her country and her culture. Her world title caps an extraordinary year, and Leihani's victory also helped the Irukandjis—deadly in the water—secure an unprecedented third consecutive world junior team title. Congratulations to Leihani. She has achieved something truly special. Our community is enormously proud of her.

PORT STEPHENS FM

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:39): I congratulate Port Stephens FM on 35 years of broadcasting and still making waves. The Port Stephens FM story began when founding members came together to give the Port Stephens community a voice of its own. After plenty of planning and fundraising, the sounds of Port Stephens FM began

in 1998. Since then, it has turned up the volume on community life, promoting local events, supporting community organisations, creating connections and keeping us entertained. Across its 35 years, it has certainly seen technology change, but a good local yarn never gets old. Port Stephens FM is powered by passionate volunteers who donate their time, talent and enthusiasm, making it much more than a radio station; it is a community service. This Parliament recognises president John Elsworth, past and present board members, and presenters, volunteers, supporters and listeners who have kept Port Stephens FM broadcasting through the decades. I thank Port Stephens FM for the songs, stories and connections that have given our community good vibes for 35 years.

AUSTRALIAN SKIN CLINICS TOP RYDE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:40): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Australian Skin Clinics Top Ryde on winning the beauty services division of the Northern Districts Local Business Awards. Small businesses are the backbone of our local community. They create jobs, support our town centres and provide the personal service and local connection that make Ryde such a great and vibrant place to live. Australian Skin Clinics Top Ryde is a wonderful example of that spirit. The clinic provides professional skin, laser and cosmetic services to local residents, delivered by a passionate and highly capable team. I recently had the opportunity to meet the team and was struck by their professionalism, warmth and genuine commitment to helping clients feel confident and cared for. Winning the award is a well-deserved recognition of the pride they take in their work, the support they provide to their clients and the positive contribution they make to the entire local business community in Ryde. As the member for Ryde, I congratulate the team and wish them every success in the future. It is a well-deserved award.

KERRIE JONES

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:41): I congratulate Kerrie Jones, who this year marks 40 years of service to public education. Kerrie began as a prac teacher at Jannali Boys High School intending to spend no more than 12 months in teaching before returning to law. Instead, she found a career that would define the next four decades. She became a dedicated teacher and year adviser, later head teacher of Human Society and its Environment at Lucas Heights Community School, deputy principal at Engadine High School in 2011 and principal in 2016. Kerrie became an exceptional Society and Culture teacher, and one of the Sutherland shire's most respected educational leaders. Across her career, she has received numerous awards for her public service, educational leadership and contribution to teaching, yet recognition has never been what drives her. Kerrie has consistently championed the power of education to create opportunity and support a fairer society. Her legacy can be seen in the culture she has built at Engadine High School: one grounded in fairness, respect, high expectations and genuine care for young people. After 40 years, Kerrie's influence reaches far beyond any single school and reflects the lasting impact that exceptional public school leadership can have on students, staff and an entire community.

BETH CHAPPELL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:42): I congratulate Mrs Beth Chappell of Narrandera High School on receiving the prestigious Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching, the highest teaching honour in New South Wales. For more than two decades, Beth has dedicated herself to the education and wellbeing of young people in Narrandera. Through innovative teaching, mentoring colleagues, promoting student wellbeing and creating opportunities in sport, she consistently goes above and beyond for her school community. Her achievement is particularly special because Beth is a former student of Narrandera High School who returned to give back to the community that helped shape her. Since joining the school as a casual teacher in 2005 and becoming permanent in 2012, she has built strong connections with students, staff and families. I congratulate Beth on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for the enormous contribution she continues to make to Narrandera and our region.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FIRE SERVICES

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:43): I acknowledge the Blue Mountains fires serving on the front lines to contain the wildfires in the United States. South Katoomba RFS deputy captain Mick Starkey, alongside two Winmalee RFS firefighters, Matt Bradford and Paul Clark, were amongst the 300-plus Australian and New Zealand personnel who travelled to the United States in mid August. That is the largest ever Australian wildfire deployment to the United States of America. Mick has taken his expert knowledge gained from protecting our beautiful Blue Mountains, and stepped into a high-level role of division commander to coordinate American firefighting operations, while Paul and Matt have been stationed at various fires across Washington State, Utah and Nevada. The Blue Mountains community is immensely proud of Mick, Matt and Paul who have shown selfless dedication and sacrifice in their willingness to serve far from home. I thank them for representing the Blue Mountains and our fantastic RFS at the highest possible standard on the world stage by protecting lives and communities abroad.

NORTHERN BEACHES SECONDARY COLLEGE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:44): I congratulate the under-15 boys' basketball team from the Cromer campus of the Northern Beaches Secondary College on their historic achievement at this year's Sydney North regional finals. The boys became the first Cromer under-15 side to reach that stage of the competition, defeating Gorokan High School by 12 points in the semi-final to secure their place in the decider. In a thrilling final, the teams were level at full time, taking the match into overtime. Cromer ultimately fell short by a single basket, but the players have every reason to be proud of their performance. Reaching the final set a new benchmark for the school's under-15 boys basketball program and reflected the team's hard work, determination and growth throughout the season. I also acknowledge coaches Mr "Be Like Mike" Hong, who is also the school principal, and Mr Mak for their guidance and support. I congratulate the entire team on a huge and memorable season. They have done their school and community proud.

RIVERSTONE RAZORBACKS

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:45): I recognise the Riverstone Razorbacks and their outstanding contribution to our local community. In 2026 the Razorbacks fielded an impressive 23 teams, with players ranging from just four years old through to senior and over-35s masters' players. One of the club's great successes has been the growth of girls' rugby league. From just one girls team a few years ago, the Razorbacks now have five, with the under-14 girls reaching the grand final this season. The Razorbacks also enjoyed strong participation across their boys junior teams, with their Sunday senior sides progressing to the semi-finals. Importantly, the club is about much more than results on the field. It provides a safe and supportive environment where people can stay active, build confidence, form friendships and feel connected to their community. None of that would be possible without the dedicated coaches, managers, trainers, committee members, volunteers, sponsors and families who give so much to the club. I congratulate everyone at the Riverstone Razorbacks on a tremendous 2026 season and wish them every success as they continue to grow in 2027.

DANE SUTTON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (18:46): Wanda Surf Life Saving Club's Dane Sutton was named Youth Athlete of the Year at the 2025-26 Surf Life Saving NSW Awards of Excellence. Dane has enjoyed an extraordinary year. At this year's NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, he claimed gold in the U19 Male Iron and U19 Male Board Race. At the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, he won the U19 Ironman and U19 Male Surf Race and was Male Competitor of the carnival. Dane's achievements contributed to a remarkable result for Wanda, which finished equal second overall in the Australian championships point score. Dane finished second in the Open Male Iron at the Australian Ocean and Beach Interstate Championships. He has been selected in the Australian lifesaving youth team for the World Life Saving Championships in South Africa later this year. I wish Dane every success representing Australia on the world stage.

AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:47): I wish the Australian Reptile Park, at its Somersby location, a happy thirtieth anniversary. Every older Coastie remembers when Ploddy the Dinosaur was carried by a crane and trucked through the main street of Gosford to the new site on the hill. People travelling through the Central Coast will likely spot Ploddy on the side of the expressway, repainted approximately 15 times a year to celebrate many important occasions. She marks the gateway to a fantastic facility on the Central Coast. Our much-loved Australian Reptile Park employs 90 amazingly talented staff and is visited by 20,000 students and 208,000 visitors a year, contributing approximately \$10 million to our economy. In addition, it plays a very important role in the conservation of threatened species and saves over 300 lives a year with its snake- and spider-milking venom program. Every time I visit, it brings me so much joy. Holding snakes and patting native species, every visit is an incredible opportunity, learning experience and celebration of the beauty of Australia's natural fauna. Super well done to Tim and the amazing team.

TRIBUTE TO SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES ROBERT HODGES

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:48): I honour retired New South Wales police Chief Superintendent Charles Robert Hodges, who passed away on 16 August 2026, aged 89. Charles joined the NSW Police Force as a cadet in 1953. Over more than 35 years, he served in traffic, general duties and criminal investigations. In 1985 Charles was promoted to chief superintendent. He retired in March 1989, having devoted almost his entire working life to serving the people of New South Wales. His service was recognised with the Police Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, the New South Wales Police Medal with five clasps and the National Police Service Medal. Charles and his wife made their home in Tuncurry. It is a privilege to recognise him in this House, both for his distinguished police career and as a member of our local community. I extend my

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sincere condolences to Charles's wife; his son Mark Hodges, the member for Castle Hill; and all his family, friends and former colleagues. I thank him for his many years of service and honour his memory. May he rest in peace.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Mark Hodges): On behalf of my family, I thank the member for Myall Lakes for recognising my father in this way, in a community recognition statement. It is very much appreciated. I thank you.

MY DAY AT PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:49): I share Hanna Lewis' reflections on spending a day in the House during work experience. She wrote:

Thanks, Donna, for inviting me and giving me an opportunity to experience the work of government from a perspective I would not normally have access to. I participated in meetings, watched question time and saw some of the work that happens behind the scenes in Parliament. Seeing these different aspects helped me understand that government involves much more than what the public sees on television. There is significant discussion, preparation and collaboration that occurs before decisions and debates take place. Being able to listen in on some meetings was particularly interesting because I got to see how MPs represent their views for their electorate and raise issues happening in their communities, but they also showed me the importance of communication, listening and working with others. Overall, my day at Parliament gave me a new perspective on leadership and community involvement. Being able to experience what I did showed me that Parliament is so much more than what we just learn about in the classroom.

Thanks, Hanna, for your contributions and engagement.

KAREN NASH

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:50): I congratulate Karen Nash on her retirement after an extraordinary 46-year career serving the people of the Far West. As my senior electorate officer in Broken Hill since 2019, Karen came for one year and stayed for seven. She has provided outstanding service to Barwon constituents, helping people navigate challenges and delivering positive outcomes across the electorate. Karen began her working life in 1980 as an occupational therapist and went on to serve with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, NSW Community Services and the Benevolent Society, dedicating her career to supporting individuals, families and communities. I first met Karen working together in disability services, or the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, and was pleased when she joined my office following my election in 2019. Her professionalism, compassion and dedication have earned widespread respect. As Karen takes advantage of what she calls her "active window", I wish her every happiness as she enjoys travelling, bike riding with her husband, Peter, and spending time with her five grandchildren. Thank you, Karen, for your remarkable contribution to Barwon and western New South Wales.

MERCIA BUCK, OAM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:51): After a lifetime of contributing to our local community, Mercia Buck has another very special milestone on the agenda this month. That is celebrating her ninetieth birthday. Mercia has been a tireless champion of the performing arts, helping establish Warners Bay Theatre and founding the Lake Macquarie Music Society, Opera Hunter and Lake Macquarie Eisteddfod. She also served as a Lake Macquarie City councillor from 1991 to 2008. I succeeded Mercia as a Labor North Ward councillor and thank her for her advice, guidance and support. A Medal of the Order of Australia recipient and Freeman of the City, Mercia has given so much to Lake Macquarie. I wish her a wonderful ninetieth birthday and thank her for everything she has given our community.

ST LEO'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:52): I recognise St Leo's Catholic College in Wahroonga, which marks 70 years of education, faith and service in 2026. Founded in 1956, thousands of students have been educated across multiple generations under the motto "Lex Dei in Corde", meaning "God's law in the heart", derived from Pope Leo I. As an alumnus myself, I continue to meet former St Leo's students everywhere I go. We all share a common bond. We share a laugh. We reflect on the good times. Mel Gibson is by far our most famous alumnus—or rather infamous—but we are all very memorable in our own way. St Leo's teaches students how to be a kind and proper individual. Its Christianity is centred upon compassion and social justice for those who are less fortunate. St Leo's was founded by the Christian Brothers as a boys' school, transferring to the Catholic Schools Office and becoming co-educational in 1983. I am proud to recognise St Leo's Catholic College in the historic *Hansard* of the Parliament of New South Wales.

BERALA CARRAMAR HARDCOURT TENNIS ASSOCIATION

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:53): I recognise the Berala Carramar Hardcourt Tennis Association, which has run community tennis at Auburn Tennis Centre on Chisholm Road since the 1920s. Last season was the most successful in the association's history. Its juniors entered 11 teams in the New South Wales interdistrict

competition and won four premierships across the 16 and under, 14 and under, and 12 and under boys' divisions. Before that season, the association had only won eight cups in almost a century. Peter Yoon became the first Berala Carramar player to win the Ken Rosewall Medal as the interdistrict's best and fairest. This year the association has entered more teams than at any time in the past 40 years, with 12 junior sides on court as the new season opened on 26 July. Behind them stand the volunteers, led by secretary Steve Le Roy and junior competition secretary Geoff Skippen, who has coached at Auburn for more than 30 years. Well done, Auburn tennis.

JACKI WAUGH

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:54): I recognise Jacki Waugh, president of the Goulburn Show Society and recipient of the Southern Inland Adult Volunteer of the Year. This well-deserved recognition reflects decades of outstanding service and dedication to her community. For the past 26 years, Jacki has been actively involved in the Goulburn Show organisation, including 14 years as president. In that time, she has played a pivotal role in delivering one of the region's most celebrated events, coordinating more than 250 volunteers to ensure its continued success. Jacki's tireless volunteer efforts have strengthened community connections, conserved valued local traditions, enhanced community facilities and contributed to regional economic growth. Her leadership, commitment and enthusiasm have motivated others to become involved in community life and give back to their local area. As the Southern Inland Volunteer of the Year, Jacki will now represent the region at the 2026 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards in December. I congratulate Jacki and offer my sincere thanks for her extraordinary, selfless efforts.

NOWRA.ORG.AU

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:55): I congratulate Nowra.org.au on winning the Outstanding Visitor and 24-Hour Economy Collaboration category at the 2026 Illawarra Business Awards. Nowra.org is doing something incredibly important by bringing businesses, creatives and our community together to breathe new life into the Nowra CBD and make people proud to call Nowra home. This work has been supported through the New South Wales Government's Uptown Program, with \$200,000 provided to help establish the initiative in 2025 and a further \$120,000 awarded to Nowra Uptown this year to continue building on that momentum. Through arts, culture, local business and a growing evening economy, Nowra.org is changing the way people experience our CBD and showcasing everything that makes Nowra special. Congratulations to everyone involved. Their passion, creativity and belief in Nowra are making a real difference. I wish Nowra.org all the best at the NSW State Business Awards in October.

NORTHERN SUBURBS BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:56): I am proud to recognise Norths Basketball as it celebrates 45 years at the heart of our local sporting community. Established in 1981, the Northern Suburbs Basketball Association is based at the North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre in Crows Nest—also known as the Bear Cave. Norths provides opportunities for players across all ages and levels, from miniball and junior competitions to senior basketball. Its representative program includes junior teams as well as Youth League and NBL1 teams for men and women. Norths became the first basketball association in the State to exceed 5,000 members, reflecting the place it has earned within our community. For 45 years, Norths has helped generations of local players stay active, build their skills and form lasting friendships. That contribution has been made possible by its dedicated players, coaches, referees, staff, volunteers and families. I congratulate everyone who has been part of the proud red and black over the past 45 years, and wish Norths Basketball every continued success for the years ahead.

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:57): Congratulations to the University of Technology Sydney architecture students, community participants and industry supporters who helped transform the beloved Fred Hollows Reserve in Randwick from a neglected urban space into a vibrant green community space. Their hard work has paid off, with their work now being recognised nationally. The Fred Hollows Reserve has been named as a national winner of the 2026 Australian Institute of Horticulture Green Space Urban Award. I take this opportunity to offer my deepest and biggest congratulations to all involved on their impact on our community and their well-deserved recognition by the Australian Institute of Horticulture.

ONAM

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:58): I recognise the celebration of Onam, an important festival celebrated by the Malayali community here in New South Wales and around the world. Originating in Kerala, Onam is a harvest festival associated with the return of King Mahabali, a beloved and generous ruler whose reign is remembered as a time of harmony and equality. At its heart, Onam reflects values that resonate strongly across our diverse community: equality, generosity and kindness. It is a time of unity and a time to reflect on the importance of building a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. It was a pleasure to celebrate

Onam this year at St Thomas Indian Orthodox Cathedral. I also recognise the many Malayali associations across south-west Sydney that brought our community together in celebration. I wish everyone a happy and prosperous Onam.

AUSTRALIAN FOUNDATION FOR DISABILITY

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (18:59): I recently had the pleasure of joining the Australian Foundation for Disability, affectionately known as Afford, as it celebrated 75 years of supporting people with disability and their families across Penrith. The "75 Years Together" celebration at Ron Mulock Oval in Thornton brought together people with disability, families, friends, local organisations and the wider community. With live entertainment, a sausage sizzle, community stalls and inclusive football activities supported by the Western Sydney Wanderers, it was a joyful and welcoming day that reflected the spirit of connection that Afford has nurtured over 7½ decades. I warmly congratulate Afford on this remarkable milestone and thank its staff, volunteers, partners and supporters for their continued dedication. Their care and compassion have made a lasting difference to so many local families, and Penrith is stronger because of their work.

CRACKER CARNIVAL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (19:00): I congratulate everyone involved in putting on another outstanding Murray Farm Cracker Carnival. This carnival, famous for its fireworks, is a true community event, run entirely by volunteers. Its reach extends well beyond the families who attend Murray Farm. It brings together local businesses, sporting groups, Scouts, schools and families in a way that has become quite rare. Thousands of children and parents enjoyed the rides, fairy floss, games and, of course, the fireworks. It is rightly considered an institution in the North Rocks and Carlingford communities. This year's carnival was made possible by an extraordinary group of volunteers, led by the indefatigable Helani, who generously gave their time and energy: Alyson O'Donnell, Amy Lin, Janice Wong, Yousuf Mohammed, Mina Loohoo, Iris Yamagishi, Farzi Nemati, Jonathan Noe, Ekta Chauhan, Chris Wu and many more. Like any school-based event on this scale, the organising committee faced a real challenge keeping the event sustainable and making it work for the whole community.

WONNARUA LANGUAGE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:01): Language is so much more than words. It carries culture, identity, history and connection to country. I thank Wonnarua Elder Uncle Richard Edwards and the entire Wonnarua Elders council for their work to produce two children's books, *Speaking Our Language* and *Colour Me*. These books are about reclaiming something that was taken away, ensuring that knowledge is recovered, spoken and passed through to the next generation. The books give children a simple and engaging way to connect with Wonnarua language from an early age. A child learns a Wonnarua word, they take that word home, they share it with their family, and begin asking questions about what it means and where it comes from. This is how language lives. It becomes something that is not only preserved but also spoken, shared and carried forward. Uncle Richard is so humble. He always acknowledges Aunt Sharon Edgar-Jones and others who have done amazing work to reclaim this language. I congratulate all Wonnarua Elders on their survival and resilience.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Hear, hear! I too represent a community of the Wonnarua people, so I thank the member for Maitland for her contribution.

DIGITAL CONFIDENCE FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE SENIORS WORKSHOP

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:02): On 7 July 2026, I had the honour of representing the Hon. Jihad Dib, the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, at the Digital Confidence for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Seniors Workshop, held in Cabramatta. I thank the SHER Foundation, NSW Telco Authority and CASS CARE for organising this valuable workshop. For our diverse multicultural communities, this workshop was particularly important, as seniors face language barriers or have limited digital literacy and can be more vulnerable to scams. Last year almost 85 per cent of people aged 50 and older believed they had come across, or been a victim of, a scam. The workshop went through with our seniors some of the essential digital services, focusing on scam awareness, cyber safety and using government services such as myGov and Service NSW. I thank the organising team for helping my local seniors build confidence and independence when using modern technology.

CITY OF CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:03): I take this opportunity to congratulate the recently re-elected mayor and deputy mayor of City of Canterbury Bankstown, Bilal El-Hayek and

Rachelle Harika. They are two outstanding people who are so invested in the Canterbury-Bankstown community, which is really on the up. Earlier this week, the council and the chamber of commerce held an event called the Multibillion Dollar City. We are really excited and motivated by what is to come. The advocacy of the council, working with the State Government, has seen some enormous things come our way, including a \$2 billion hospital, the Southwest Metro and the TAFE. Everything is happening due to their absolute commitment to the region. Congratulations once again to Bilal and Rachelle on being re-elected. I also thank all the councillors. Good on you for the work you have been doing on the potholes lately.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I thank members for their community recognition statements about the wonderful work their communities are doing.

Private Members' Statements

BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE MULTICULTURALISM

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:04): One of the greatest strengths of the Bankstown electorate—and, indeed, one of the greatest strengths of Australia—is its diversity and uniqueness. Our place in Sydney's south-west is home to people from all parts of the world who have come together to build a shared future. Whilst English is the primary language, it is a place where different languages are spoken around kitchen tables, where different faiths are practised with pride and respect, and where cultural traditions are celebrated not in isolation but together.

I have often spoken about the struggles of being made to feel like you do not belong and how that impacts on individuals. But at events such as the Metro Assist Refugee Week Gala, I was reminded once again that behind every migration is a story of courage, sacrifice, resilience and hope. This year's celebration recognised the contributions of refugee communities and the profound truth that diversity strengthens our society, enriching our national identity. Recognising the journeys and contributions of refugees reflects a reality that I see every day in my community. We are stronger together, and we are a kinder, more compassionate society when we find room in our hearts for one another.

Recent community events have perfectly captured the multiculturalism of my electorate. I have often said in this place that we do not have a multicultural and then another culture. Multiculturalism is just who we are in modern Australia. It is not a competition between the two. There are no silos. Modern Australia is made up of people from all parts of the world, and that is what makes us so special and unique. Modern Australia is about encompassing all. These community events encapsulate cultural traditions, the recognition of achievements, ideas and exchanges. What warms my heart is the diversity of people. Whether they are young or old, activists, advocates, artists, educators, innovators, dancers, singers or businesspeople—the list goes on—my community has everyone. That is why I continue to be so inspired to do what I do.

At Bankstown Girls High School, young women's aspirations are united by a belief in service and leadership. The girls often ask me how to navigate racism, Islamophobia and discrimination. But in the face of those topics, it is evident that the dialogue is always about belonging and having the strength to be who you are and inspiring others to do so too. I hope that those who engage in behaviour that makes people feel like they do not belong consider the impact they have, but also consider the resilience and strength of these fine young Australian women.

From education to innovation, the recent Pitch Night South West event at Bryan Brown Theatre, hosted by the UNSW Founders, showcased entrepreneurs and innovators from across south-west Sydney who presented ideas designed to solve real-world challenges. It was made clear that evening that the representation of different backgrounds also brings a diversity of ideas, creativity and economic growth. When people with different life experiences come together, new ideas emerge and communities prosper. They see things from outside the restraints of a metaphorical box and innovate accordingly.

The tastiest event of the year was the Bankstown Bites food festival, where I managed to cook up a treat. None of the thousands of people who were there ate my food, but I did not take offence. People often try to link culture and food, but that is just one part of it. It is also about love, connection, conversation and learning to understand and appreciate one another for who we are. Multiculturalism is not merely a policy concept. It is a human connection and a shared belief in a common journey. Whilst it is one of our greatest strengths, we must also acknowledge that there are lots of challenges in contemporary Australia, and sometimes multiculturalism can become a scapegoat or a thing to blame. People across Sydney and Australia are struggling with social pressures and cost-of-living pressures, which we are addressing, and housing affordability challenges and growing social divisions can create grounds for misunderstanding and mistrust.

It is up to all of us, particularly those of us who have a voice and a platform, to make sure that voices of division do not become the norm—that we speak up, stand up and speak with confidence about who we are. We are the greatest country in the world, and we are made great because of what we are. We have people from all parts of the world—people of different beliefs and different colours. We do not judge anyone by how much money they have in their pocket; we judge them by the person that they are. The more we talk about that and stop potential division and mistrust of different groups, the better a society we will become. That is who we are in Bankstown. That is what we will always believe in.

EPPING ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUB VOLUNTEERS

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (19:10): I spent the past couple of weekends celebrating the achievements of our sporting clubs as the winter sport season comes to an end. While I have enjoyed hearing about the games won and the skills learned across the season, today I give a shout-out to the volunteers who made the sporting season possible. Volunteering keeps so many of our local clubs and community organisations going. It does not have to mean taking on a huge responsibility. It can be coaching a team, joining a committee, helping at the canteen, setting up on game day or simply putting a hand up when something needs to be done. Every one of those contributions makes a difference.

In community sport particularly, a huge amount of work happens before a game even begins. Someone has organised the teams, someone has marked the field, someone has put out the equipment and someone has answered the emails. Epping's sporting clubs are built on that willingness to pitch in. They give children the opportunity to play, families the chance to connect and communities a place to come together. Over the past couple of weeks, I have had an opportunity to recognise some of the stand-out volunteers in the sporting clubs across my electorate. Today I am very pleased to congratulate seven of Epping's very best volunteers.

Paul Lownds from Beecroft Wombats Football Club was recognised for his wonderful approach to coaching, particularly the under-14s girls team. Paul expertly worked with both beginner and experienced players, ensuring that every girl was given opportunities to develop her skills and confidence. He never pigeonholed players based on their current ability. Instead he encouraged them to try different things, learn new skills and understand the game, while creating an environment where everyone felt like a valued part of the team. Talia Sara-Lafosse from Roselea Football Club coaches an under-6s girls team and has developed a wonderful reputation for running engaging training sessions and creating a positive experience for her young players. On top of that, Talia also helps with match day photography and takes on registration work behind the scenes.

Pat Ainsworth has been part of the Epping Football Club for many years as a coach, committee member and general volunteer, and is simply always there when something needs to be done. Whether it is helping with a barbecue, carrying out repairs, setting up equipment or lending a hand at West Epping Park, Pat can be relied upon to get the job done with a positive attitude. David Maxwell Waterson has been part of the Epping Eastwood Football Club family since 2008. Over that time, David has coached and managed teams, has served on the committee since 2023 and was instrumental in establishing the Super League in 2025. David is at Boronia Park every Saturday preparing the field, as well as supporting the Super League squad with player gear.

Kori Tandy from Carlingford Netball Club volunteers on the committee, coaches and manages three teams, and is always prepared to step in wherever she is needed. Kori's dedication and willingness to pitch in at every opportunity truly reflects the heart and spirit of Carlingford Netball Club. She lifts others, leads by example and brings a positive energy that inspires those around her. Her patience, positivity and kindness have made a real difference to the players she coaches, especially over the finals weekend, when she was there to set up and pack down club banners and cheer on Carlingford teams throughout the day.

Nicola McClure is the retiring president of the Beecroft Netball Club, and has given an enormous amount of time to the organisation. Along with leading the club, she has supported other committee members, managed parent interactions, coached and continued to play herself. That is an extraordinary level of commitment. Finally, Jennie Thompson from the Hills District Netball Association was recognised for the contribution she makes to the club and the time she gives to supporting local netball. Clubs like the Hills District Netball Association rely on people who are prepared to put their hand up. I thank Jennie for her contribution and her commitment, and for being one of those people willing to give their time to the club. Epping's local sporting clubs simply could not operate without volunteers. I offer my congratulations to those seven people and my thanks to all the volunteers for everything they do for our community.

COST-OF-LIVING SUPPORT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:14): Families and households continue to face cost-of-living pressures. That is why I have been meeting with people in my community of Maitland to deliver practical relief to reduce some everyday costs. That includes \$100

off eligible vehicle registration, benefiting owners of more than 4.4 million vehicles across New South Wales, or \$80 off the rego for eligible motorcycles. It includes reducing the weekly toll cap from \$60 to \$50 for 12 months. We have scrapped toll notice administration fees, saving motorists at least \$10 per notice or over \$60 million a year across the network. We have frozen Opal fares at 2025 prices, benefiting passengers across approximately two million trips every day. Those practical, everyday measures are designed to put money back into household budgets.

We are also helping businesses and apartment residents to reduce their energy costs. New battery incentives cut eligible up-front installation costs by around 20 per cent to 40 per cent. Businesses installing batteries between 20 kilowatt hours and 30,000 kilowatt hours can access support, helping small, medium and large businesses invest in battery storage. Batteries help businesses store cheaper solar energy generated during the day and use it when needed, reducing long-term operating costs. Support is also available for eligible apartment buildings, helping owners' corporations to invest in batteries for the shared use of all residents. It means that more businesses and apartment residents can benefit from renewable energy and lower their energy costs.

Households do not miss out either. Our \$557 million Home Energy Saver program will enable eligible households to access zero-interest loans of up to \$15,000 to install energy-saving and cost-cutting upgrades such as rooftop solar, household batteries, insulation, reverse-cycle air conditioning, switchboard upgrades, ceiling fans and draught-proofing. In addition to the loans, the program will provide discounts of up to \$4,000 to eligible families to upgrade with energy-saving measures. Reliable public transport is essential for people in regional, rural and remote areas, particularly for those who have to access health services, education and employment, and stay connected with family and friends.

The former Liberal-Nationals Government gutted transport across the regions, and that is why we are investing in more journeys more often across the NSW TrainLink coach network. We have increased funding for the network by 36 per cent, taking the total funding to \$290 million over nine years. Since 1 July, 14 coach operators have been running 49 routes across the NSW TrainLink coach network, delivering 638 long-distance services each week, up from 592 services across 45 routes. The expanded network adds almost 200,000 kilometres of coverage, taking the total to more than 7.15 million kilometres—that is just the coaches. In addition, we have kept the fares stable. Do not tell the Treasurer, but TrainLink fares have not increased since 2007. The investment improves existing routes and introduces new services, with safety, comfort and accessibility at the centre of the upgraded network—and, of course, we cannot wait for our new trains. On some routes the changes save passengers more than two hours in travel time. Most importantly, those improvements have been shaped by feedback from local communities to help fill gaps in the regional transport network.

When we came to government, we committed to getting a better deal for motorists. We ended the toll mania that saw Sydney become the most tolled city on earth, but it also impacted the regions. We introduced a weekly toll cap to provide immediate relief to people paying the most in tolls. The Liberal Party and The Nationals voted against the cap. It is now permanent; we won that fight. For 12 months the cap will be reduced from \$60 to \$50 a week, which is a huge saving for the Hunter. We also scrapped toll notice administration fees, and it is working. As of June this year, close to 1,000 claims were made through the toll relief program just in Maitland, delivering approximately \$126,000 in savings.

That is real, practical support going directly back into the pockets of people who have to drive to Sydney for work, sport or medical appointments. Reforming the tolling system will take time but, in the meantime, we are the first government to ever deliver a reduction in the cost of tolls. That is a pretty big achievement. This Government is committed to reducing the cost of living in every single area. We know there is more to do, but we are getting on with the job of delivering practical cost-of-living relief for families and households across New South Wales. Whether it is rego, tolls, public transport or energy bills, our focus is on helping reduce everyday costs and putting money back into people's pockets.

THE BUCKETTS WAY

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:19): I update the House on one of the important road arteries of the Upper Hunter electorate, the Bucketts Way. Whilst I acknowledge the recent successful completion of the Pacific Highway M1 "missing link" between Black Hill and Raymond Terrace, there is still a lot of work to do. A priority project is the urgent need to upgrade the intersection of the M1 and the Bucketts Way at Twelve Mile Creek, north of Raymond Terrace. For those who do not know the Bucketts Way, I will give them a quick tour. Travelling north, it is the left turn off the Pacific Highway.

The Bucketts Way will take you up to Clarence Town, Dungog, Stroud, Gloucester and the Barrington Tops and also Taree. At Gloucester, you leave the Bucketts Way for Thunderbolts Way—another important regional road connection to Walcha, Armidale and the Northern Tablelands. Head west and you traverse the Gloucester-Scone road across the Barrington Tops to the Hunter Valley. The Bucketts Way is classified as a

regional road, with MidCoast Council responsible for maintenance of the vast majority of the route whilst Port Stephens Council maintains the southern end near Twelve Mile Creek.

I mention the Bucketts Way tonight for various reasons: the need to prioritise the connection to the east coast's main motorway, and the need for a long-term funding and maintenance plan—especially so after a very serious accident last weekend. Sadly, one motorist lost their life and another was seriously injured in a collision near Booral late Sunday morning. It is a tragedy and my heart goes out to the family and friends of all those involved. I acknowledge the work of the emergency services first responders and the impact of these tragedies on them. In my five years as the member for Upper Hunter, I have long advocated for additional funding through various Government funding packages for increased investment in road improvements.

The Bucketts Way needs to be made safer for motorists, the local communities and the heavy freight that relies on that road, especially to get livestock to farms and market. I note that the New South Wales Parliament's Staysafe committee last week tabled its report entitled *Interventions to reduce road trauma in regional NSW caused by speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving*. Staysafe heard a consistent call for greater enforcement of speed limits and has recommended high-visibility enforcement, including roadside breath testing and mobile drug testing. Any motor vehicle crash, especially like that at Booral last weekend, should highlight the fine line that regional drivers tread. A split-second decision can result in life-changing consequences.

I certainly encourage the New South Wales police Traffic and Highway Patrol Command to consider regular high-visibility tasking of officers from Manning-Great Lakes and Port Stephens-Hunter police districts to the Bucketts Way. Staysafe also called on the New South Wales Government to identify funding shortfalls that are preventing councils in regional New South Wales from maintaining their road networks and to work with the Australian Government to address these shortfalls. I have absolutely no doubt Dungog Shire Council has already marked that section of the report with the brightest highlighter pen it has for its advocacy agenda.

As I mentioned earlier, a pressing challenge now faced by the Bucketts Way road users is getting onto the Pacific Highway at Twelve Mile Creek, especially those who have to access the southbound lanes of the highway. From a personal perspective, at times during the school holidays I have pulled out of that intersection towing a horse float and I can only say that I did so with a clear sense of fear. It is dangerous and it is scary. I have seen way too many accidents there to believe it is not a problem. I know it is absolutely a problem. Recently, I have been working with local Stroud resident Leah Veksins on her petition that will bring renewed focus to the Bucketts Way and Medowie Road intersections.

She has worked really hard to gather signatures and raise the profile of community concern about these roads. She has already achieved considerable success and engaged with many levels of government. We cannot thank her enough for her efforts. This has placed considerable pressure on the Labor State and Federal governments to get going with the design work for overpasses at these locations. Hopefully, we will see the fruits of her efforts by way of a planning proposal that will fix the problem once and for all. The New South Wales and Federal Labor governments have committed a total of \$9 million in funding to investigate improvements and identify a preferred solution for the intersections of Italia Road, Medowie Road and the Bucketts Way, but this will not be the end of the issue. As I mentioned before, there is still a lot of work to do.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:24): After only 3½ years in government, Labor's plans are playing out and already making a real difference to the lives of locals in Port Stephens. Now I know there are many families doing it tough, so in our first term of government we have been working hard to make locals' lives a little easier. We have got a lot more work to do—I still have a long list. But here is what we have delivered so far. Medowie High School is set to open in the new year. It is the first new secondary school in the Hunter in more than two decades. We have opened the M1 to Raymond Terrace well ahead of schedule and it is already loved by locals. We have secured 1,000 jobs at Tomago Aluminium, plus 5,000 indirect jobs reliant on the smelter, by backing local jobs, local manufacturing, workers and their families.

We have opened Port Stephens first refuge for women and children escaping domestic and family violence, which will provide wraparound support to women and children and put them on a much safer path. We have delivered \$12 million to Port Stephens Council to help fix 35 local roads. That is millions of dollars that have made a massive difference right across Port Stephens. We have been rebuilding essential government services that local families rely on, by delivering more police, more paramedics, more teachers and more nurses to make our streets safer, our community healthier and setting kids up for success. Newcastle Airport has taken off, backed by our Government's aviation attraction funding to secure new international routes, delivering more visitors to support our local businesses and giving locals great travel options.

Tomaree Lodge has been kept in public hands, opened up for community use backed by \$4.6 million of preparatory works, with a master plan released, setting out the vision for the iconic site's future. Tomaree Community Hospital has had increased staffing, diagnostics and investment in new clinical spaces. That is being backed by the massive John Hunter Hospital redevelopment, which will soon open too. We have announced a new vision for Nelson Bay Road, ditching the former Government's plans that did not meet the needs of our community now. We are bringing back train manufacturing to the Hunter, by investing \$12 billion in local jobs and skills for generations to come. This is just some of what we have delivered in only 3½ years, laying the foundations for a future with good local jobs, a strong local economy and stronger essential frontline services.

Let us take a look at what we know so far about One Nation's plans for Port Stephens and the Hunter. Before the last election, One Nation made its position very clear on Medowie High School. Just like the Liberals, One Nation said it was not needed saying, and I quote, "The realistic solution is to double the amount of school buses"—because apparently bussing more than 1,000 kids out of town each day just was not enough. With more than 130 kids already enrolled to start in year 7 at Medowie High School next year, I am relieved I had the support of locals and of the Labor Government to deliver our desperately needed local school. One Nation also opposed our funding for local roads. It said, and I quote, "We shouldn't have to be funding a council road with State funds."

Let us be clear: Without our \$12 million injection, the state of our local roads right now would be much worse. Now let us look at One Nation's approach to local jobs and workers. One Nation's new State leader, Mike Newman, has said that securing the future of Tomago Aluminium was a "waste". I would like to see him say that to the workers there. Creating and keeping local jobs is an absolute priority of our Government, backing local workers and their families by backing local manufacturing. Our investment in bringing back train manufacturing to the Hunter is another game changer. It is also opposed by One Nation's new State leader. Apparently he would prefer to see the Korean Government driving our train manufacturing capability. We saw how that worked out before under the Liberals when our local train manufacturing jobs were offshored. We are bringing them back because we know the Hunter's workers have the skills to deliver what our State needs, which is trains that fit the tracks.

Whilst we have been working hard to rebuild essential frontline services by removing the wages cap and valuing our frontline workers, One Nation's Mike Newman, just like the Liberals, wants to cut them back. He is literally talking about cutting a quarter of the frontline workforce in our State—104,000 workers. Which nurses, police, paramedics, teachers and child protection workers does he want to cut? Eleven and a half years ago I was elected to fight for the people of Port Stephens and I have been doing just that ever since. Only 3½ years into our first term in government, we have delivered a lot. There is a lot more to do, but we want to keep delivering.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (19:29): Month after month, year after year, I have talked in this Chamber about the need for more services and infrastructure to support our growing population in Lake Macquarie. Whether I am talking about health services, social housing or roads, the underlying issue is always the same: The Government investment in our region does not match the growth that we are seeing and that we know is coming. Lake Macquarie is one of the fastest growing electorates in the State and it is little wonder why. We are strategically located between Sydney and Newcastle, close to the Blue Mountains. We have access to the M1 and are situated on the train line linking the two cities. We boast land availability as well as beautiful natural surroundings and relaxed lakeside living. The unprecedented growth we are experiencing is transforming collections of villages along the lake into strategic growth corridors. Major growth hotspots bookend my electorate, with Morisset in the south and north-west Lake Macquarie attracting increasing industrial, commercial and residential development. But I return to the train line.

The Government has designated four transport oriented development sites, or TOD precincts, in Lake Macquarie—yet only two of the stations are accessible for people with limited mobility. Morisset station is accessible, and safety and accessibility upgrades are underway at Cockle Creek station. However, Teralba and Booragul stations are not accessible. Booragul station, which is located right next to a residential aged-care facility, requires passengers to use stairs to enter and exit the station. At Teralba, passengers need to use stairs to enter and exit the station, as well as to cross over it. The stations do not meet the needs of my community's many ageing residents, or families moving into the area to take advantage of new housing, including Billy's Lookout at Teralba, which will house around 1,000 residents when finished. We also expect to see more people moving to and travelling throughout Lake Macquarie as development commences in the TOD precincts, and the proposed transformation of the nearby Macquarie Coal complex into a major mixed-use and industrial employment precinct. With additional development, we anticipate an uptick in patronage at those less-accessible stations, making their upgrade an even higher priority.

In southern Lake Macquarie, Morisset station is also failing to meet the needs of Lake Macquarie locals. While it is the most highly utilised station in my electorate, parking near the station is far from what is needed.

Since 2019 I have been talking with the State Government about the need for a multi-level commuter car park at Morisset station, and I went so far as to commission an architect to put together some concept designs. At that time I identified that Fassifern and Cardiff stations also needed more parking. Funding for business cases to support additional parking at those three stations was included in the 2021-2022 budget, but we have seen nothing since. I get regular complaints from people who cannot park near Morisset and Fassifern stations, which is making travel more difficult and reinforcing the lower than average uptake of public transport in the region. In other words, people are choosing to drive rather than deal with finding a car spot at a Lake Macquarie rail station.

If the Government is serious about meeting its objectives in the Hunter Strategic Regional Integrated Transport Plan—including creating access to public transport for all, supporting the delivery of well-located housing, including in Lake Macquarie's TOD precincts, and providing a network that supports a diversifying and growing economy—then it needs to get serious and deliver fit-for-purpose infrastructure. Stations must be safe and accessible to all passengers, including people living with disability or mobility issues, older people and those travelling with prams or luggage. They must have adequate parking and be part of an integrated transport system that allows people to travel between home and their destination with ease. The community is understandably frustrated with growth that is not accompanied by much-needed infrastructure and services. I call on the Government to deliver much-needed local services and infrastructure, which will support its push for more housing in Lake Macquarie.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:34): I acknowledge the horrors our State has seen over the past week as domestic and family violence homicides have impacted communities across New South Wales. For my community it is very close to home. The Blue Mountains is reeling from a shocking and devastating incident involving very young children. Our thoughts are with them and with a family facing an unimaginable situation. I also acknowledge the members of my community who came across the horrific scene, called 000 and immediately tried to help. What they encountered would have been deeply confronting. My Blue Mountains Police Area Command has undertaken an incredibly difficult investigation. I thank them for their work. I also thank our paramedics for their response to the highly distressing and complex emergency. It takes a psychological toll on them.

I spoke in my inaugural speech about domestic violence and my own lived experience as a child victim-survivor. It is an issue I care deeply about and it demands the attention of every one of us, from representatives in this place, to police, to the community services and refuges that we rely on so heavily—and every single person. We must remember that domestic violence is not inevitable; it is preventable. Prevention starts with education, respect and the attitudes we model to young people. I am consistently inspired by the youth leadership in that space. Young leaders in my own Blue Mountains community are at the forefront of change. I acknowledge the work of the EViE advisory group—Ending Violence and Improving Equality. They work out of the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre. They work tirelessly to amplify the voices of young people and advocate for gender equality among their peers.

I also acknowledge Katoomba High School and its student-led Katoomba High says No to Violence campaign. Young people are the future. They are the architects of change and they have the true power. It is in the actions of those young people that genuine change can happen. I share the words of a young man in my electorate:

Domestic violence is a men's issue. It always has been and, as long as we continue on this path, it always will be. It is only when young men recognise their role in this that things can truly change. That is not to say all men are complicit in perpetrating domestic violence. Quite the contrary. But young men have a responsibility: a responsibility to be kind, to recognise their role within relationships and to call out toxic behaviour when they see it.

I have watched the reactions of young men during discussions about domestic violence, sexual assault, consent, respect and breaking down gender stereotypes. I have seen their bodies tense during these hard conversations, conversations that so often end with the comment, "It's not all men."

In year 10, my school, Katoomba High, brought in a group called Tomorrow Man. For the first time, I saw vulnerability expressed. A space was created where the layers of masculinity we put up in everyday life were peeled away. These conversations among young men are so important, because they allow us to realise we are not alone.

It is these early conversations that can help prevent so many harms. Genuine prevention demands a personal approach. It demands more than general education; it demands that we create space for young men to have these conversations with one another.

Young men need mentors, people who have walked the path before them and can show them a different way to be a man.

Those words demonstrate a truth we cannot ignore. If we are serious about ending violence, we must support young men and young women. The young people of the Blue Mountains are already showing us what that future can look like. We owe it to them and to every victim of domestic violence to keep working towards it. The commitment from the Minns Labor Government to address this issue includes a record \$184.1 million increase in

funding for six specialist domestic and family violence services, helping to keep more women and children safe. We have strengthened bail laws, stalking offences and electronic monitoring provisions.

We have delivered a \$230 million emergency and prevention package over four years, including \$38 million for the Pathways to Prevention strategy and \$48 million to expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program. Whilst our reforms are essential and have made a tangible difference, we cannot simply legislate, arrest and fund our way out of the crisis. To circle back to the words of the young man in my electorate, we must listen to the experiences of women—and believe them—and we must empower young men to challenge gender-based stereotypes and foster respectful relationships from an early age. Real change starts early. It starts with them. Let us all work together for the change we desperately need.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (19:39): I speak on behalf of residents of Casula Links, who have lived with relentless transport noise for far too long. Their homes sit in an extraordinary position. On one side is the M5 motorway, carrying heavy traffic and freight around the clock, and on the other side is the rail corridor. Residents are effectively caught between two major pieces of transport infrastructure, with noise coming from both directions and very little protection from that noise. It is not simply a matter of hearing the occasional truck or train. It is the constant background noise of engines, braking and acceleration from heavy vehicles and passing trains. It intrudes into bedrooms and living rooms, and impacts on conversations. It affects the ability of residents to open their windows, sit outside, use their backyards and enjoy their homes. I have visited these residents. I have stood in their backyards and heard it for myself. The noise does not come and go. It is persistent.

At one property, the backyard was only metres away from the motorway corridor. There was no meaningful buffer between that family's home and one of Sydney's major motorways. Motorway noise is not a minor inconvenience. It is a substantial loss of residential amenity. Many of the affected residents are seniors who have lived in the community for decades. Some of them came here when the area looked very different. They bought land, built homes, raised families and invested their working lives in this community. They did not choose to build beside the transport network that exists today. The transport network grew around them. As that network has expanded, the burden placed on those residents has grown.

The M5 westbound upgrade is a \$380 million project that will deliver a new three-lane bridge over the Georges River and significant works between Moorebank Avenue and the Hume Highway. I support investment that improves road safety and reduces congestion, but when government expands major infrastructure immediately beside established residential communities, it also has a responsibility to properly protect those communities from its negative impacts. The issue is that, in this particular residential area, there are no noise walls to provide that protection. Residents are not asking for an extravagant solution. They are asking for a physical barrier between their homes and the motorway. They desperately need noise walls.

That need will only become more pressing as freight and logistics activity continues to grow around Moorebank and across south-western Sydney. That also raises a broader question about the way south-western Sydney is treated. Our region is repeatedly asked to accommodate the infrastructure that keeps Sydney moving. We carry major motorways, freight and rail corridors. We accommodate logistics facilities, growing populations and increasing traffic movements. These projects deliver benefits well beyond our local communities, but too often the negative impacts stay in our community. The traffic, the noise and the pollution stays there.

South-western Sydney cannot continue to be treated merely as a corridor through which the State's transport, freight and logistics infrastructure is accommodated without equal regard for the consequences imposed on established residential communities. Residents in south-western Sydney are entitled to the same standard of residential amenity, environmental protection and quality of life as communities elsewhere across Sydney. Residents should be able to open a window without being overwhelmed by motorway noise. They should be able to hold a conversation in their backyard. They should be able to sleep without the continuing intrusion of heavy vehicles throughout the night. Most importantly, they should not be told that it is simply the price they have to pay for living in south-western Sydney.

A \$380 million motorway upgrade cannot be considered a complete investment if the homes immediately beside that motorway are left exposed. We cannot keep building infrastructure through south-western Sydney while leaving local residents to absorb the negative impacts without support. Those residents have carried that burden for long enough. They deserve proper noise protection. They deserve to use and enjoy their homes, even when major government infrastructure sits on their doorstep.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN RAPER

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:43): I pay tribute to the life and contribution of Christopher John Raper. As many noted at his memorial service, John was a formidable advocate for working people, a respected

leader of the union movement, a dedicated servant of the Labor cause and, above all, a much-loved husband, father, brother and friend. Chris was born at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital on 17 July 1947, the eldest of five children born to Bob and Marion Raper. He grew up in a working-class family with his siblings Mark, Vicky, Laurie and Louise in a housing commission home on what were then the outskirts of Wagga Wagga. His childhood was shaped by family, community and the values that would remain with him throughout his life. Tragically, Chris was only 13 when his mother died at the age of 35. It was a devastating loss for the entire family.

Their father, Bob, kept the family together. He instilled in his children the values that Chris would carry throughout his life: the importance of family, respect for every person, equality, workers' rights and the belief that everyone deserves a fair go. Chris did not simply believe in those principles. He spent his life putting them into practice. His interest in politics began early. There is a wonderful family story that at just six or seven years of age, after being denied an ice cream, Chris stood on the brick fence outside the family home and announced that Mr Menzies had put tacks in the ice creams and that Dr Evatt was going to get a hammer and pull them out. It seemed the political fire was already burning. As a teenager, and encouraged by his father, Chris became involved in the Australian Labor Party, attending branch meetings, letterboxing and handing out how-to-vote cards.

After leaving school, Chris joined the Department of Main Roads and was posted to Holbrook. It was there that he met a young teacher, Jennifer Joan Cooper. Chris and Jen would go on to share 56 years of marriage and raise three sons, David, Gavin and Cameron. In 1970, Chris began the defining professional contribution of his life when he became an organiser with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union in Wagga Wagga. His talent and commitment were quickly recognised. He moved to Sydney and became the assistant secretary. In 1977 he became branch secretary, and the following year he became national president. He held both positions until leaving the union in 1999. Across those three decades, Chris helped to guide the union through enormous industrial and organisational change. He led campaigns for better wages, conditions and job security.

In 1994, when the New South Wales Government moved to contract out school cleaning, Chris led a determined campaign to protect school cleaners and their capacity to organise collectively. We remember that campaign well. That struggle has a long legacy. Decades later, in 2026, the process of bringing school cleaners back in-house has begun. Those who fought alongside Chris could see that battle as part of a much longer struggle for the dignity and security of those workers. Chris was also instrumental in managing major union amalgamations, helping to build a unified organisation through periods of significant change. He drove improvements in administration, membership systems, communications and organising, and helped expand union representation into growing areas such as child care and home care.

Chris understood something fundamental about leadership: strong organisations require not only passion and principle but also discipline, sound administration and the trust of the people they represent. Chris well earned that trust. He was respected by union members, employers and governments. He had a remarkable ability to cut through complexity, identify the heart of a problem and find a practical way forward without losing sight of the people affected. After leaving the union movement in 1999, Chris continued his public service as head of the Public Employment Office and deputy director of the New South Wales Premier's Department until 2007. He was regularly called upon to help resolve difficult industrial disputes and became known for his ability to bring people together and find workable solutions.

No account of Chris Raper's life would be complete if it focused only on his professional achievements. He was a man who loved his family, sport and cooking. He was an avid Sydney Swans supporter. At the family home in Caringbah, the door was always open. Chris did not simply participate in the communities and organisations that were part of his life. He contributed to them again and again. To Jen, who stood beside him throughout 56 years of marriage, and to David, Gavin and Cameron, of whom he was enormously proud, I extend my deepest condolences. Christopher John Raper leaves a substantial legacy. His passing is a great loss to all who knew him. Vale, Chris Raper.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:49): Despite the growing inequity faced by people in regional New South Wales at the hands of Labor governments, it is those same people, including my constituents, who produce nearly as much economic value per hour worked as those in metropolitan New South Wales. That is according to research from the Regional Australia Institute. Despite the distances they travel on deteriorating roads to access essential services such as health care and education, despite declining investment in critical infrastructure and despite housing shortages and workforce challenges, our communities continue to compete with areas with specialist healthcare options, modern transport options, reliable telecommunications, and extensive training and career opportunities, and the list goes on. Imagine what this State's productivity could look like if governments genuinely invested in the regions that help hold this State's economy together. What could regional New South Wales achieve if it were given the same opportunities as metropolitan areas?

Week after week I sit in this Chamber and watch regional and rural MPs—vastly outnumbered regardless of which side of the House they sit on—fighting for services and investment that should already be assured for their communities. We should not have to fight for doctors, reliable transport, community preschools, clean water, fit-for-purpose infrastructure and drought resilience. In 2026 those things should be a given for any community in New South Wales. The evidence tells us plainly that regional communities produce almost as much economic value per hour worked as metropolitan communities, yet they are continually expected to do more with less. That is why so many people and communities across the State are frustrated with governments. Productivity and community wellbeing are interconnected, and stronger regions mean a stronger State.

It is difficult to listen to the ongoing debates about which metropolitan suburbs should accommodate future growth when rural and regional communities are ready and willing to grow. We want more people, more jobs, more housing and more industry so that our young people can build successful careers without moving hours and hours away from home. We are not being given that opportunity, and the long-term impact on the State's economy will be significant if we fail to reverse this trend. The median age across many of my communities has increased dramatically in the last few decades, moving from late twenties to early fifties, and that trajectory is simply not sustainable. Regional productivity is not just a regional issue; it is a State issue and a national issue.

As the Regional Australia Institute says, lifting regional productivity should be not only an economic priority but also a key to reducing spatial inequality and building resilient, inclusive and prosperous communities across this great country. Its research found that constraints on housing limit workforce mobility and divert investment away from more productive uses. That is why I am so passionate about water infrastructure. Responsible governments must also become more passionate about it, because it is essential to housing growth. Anyone who works in housing development will say that the lack of water infrastructure is holding back housing growth. That challenge is particularly acute across regional New South Wales, which is why I have researched it worked with stakeholders and consulted widely over the past several years to produce a reasonable policy proposal that addresses the State's now \$5 billion backlog in regional water infrastructure projects—that is, through investment that matches the scale of the challenge while unlocking housing growth. How we would fund it is in the name: the Royalties for Regional Water Fund.

We believe that the regions which underpin our State's major industries should, at the very least, have certainty of clean water and reliable sanitation. Investing in the regions delivers benefits far beyond regional communities. It strengthens supply chains, supports workforce growth, reduces pressure on metropolitan areas and drives productivity across the entire State. Those opposite have ignored that reality throughout this term of government. If we cannot work together to change course, we risk setting both the regions and the cities that rely on them up for failure.

PARRAMATTA OPEN

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:54): On Saturday 29 August Parramatta Open provided a tour behind the scenes of 16 buildings and spaces across the Parramatta electorate. From 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., visitors oohed and aahed as they explored some of the most spectacular places New South Wales has to offer. Parramatta Open was a fantastic success, with all 2,300 tickets sold. Museums of History NSW achieved an important milestone as they built on an event held in 2022, when Parramatta was initially included on the Sydney Open program. It was so popular that the Minns Labor Government provided the financial support for Museums to curate a Parramatta Open in its own right, of which I am so proud.

The day was a great opportunity to showcase Parramatta's remarkable heritage, architecture, ongoing transformation and soaring city views. Parramatta Open unlocked parts of the city that people do not usually get to see. Locations included the Dairy and Rangers cottages; Harrisford House, where the King's School held its first lessons in the early 1830s; Leigh Memorial Church, home to Parramatta Mission; St John's Anglican Cathedral and Parish Hall, the oldest parish church in Australia; the Brigid Shelly Building at Our Lady of Mercy College; and St Patrick's Cathedral, which is flourishing after the fire of 1996. St Patrick's Cemetery Mortuary Chapel and the Sydney West Trial Courts were a popular choice for visitors, along with Deloitte's and LG Australia's offices at 6 and 8 Parramatta Square.

The City of Parramatta generously provided access to places with a high level of interest, especially the award-winning Parramatta Aquatic Centre. As much of the building is embedded within the natural landscape, with natural sunlight, shade and views across Parramatta Park and the city skyline, its design minimises its impact on the park. I urge those who have not been there to visit. Phive, officially opened in 2022, has fast become the living room of our vibrant city, home to our council chambers, our library, the Burrumattagal Keeping Place, the heritage centre and, most recently, Riverside at Phive, which is an addition to Riverside Theatres' performance spaces. There was Parramatta Town Hall, Hambledon Cottage and the Parramatta Female Factory, where the doors were opened to places, including the penitentiary and the refurbished hospital space, which are seldom open to the public. With 1,264 visitors recorded, it was one of the most visited locations across the open day.

There has been much talk in this place about the divestment of Victoria Barracks from the Defence Estate. However, in Parramatta the Lancer Barracks too is in the sights of the Defence Estate divestment team and Federal Minister Richard Marles. Parramatta Open saw 715 visitors attend the barracks, the oldest continuously operational military facility in Australia since colonial settlement. On the day, the Lancer Association Museum was supported by 203 army cadets. Sadly, the future of the Lancer Barracks is at risk. Currently, cadets attend the barracks at its convenient location next to the train station and near the homes of members. However, the barracks' divestment will see members relocated to an unknown location, with the museum's collection resumed by Defence, packed up and sent to Victoria. My understanding is that the buildings too would be resumed and sold to the highest bidder, raising significant questions about the future of the site, which is priceless on so many levels. I urge people to visit the Lancer museum while they can. It is open most Sundays from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Parramatta Open was presented by Museums of History and would not have been possible without the wonderful partners involved, including the principal partner, NSW Architects Registration Board; the major partner, Government Architect NSW; and the presenting partner, the City of Parramatta. Sydney Open returns on 1 November with the 2026 program set to feature heritage icons, architectural landmarks and exciting new builds across Sydney. It was terrific to see Parramatta Open so warmly embraced. I look forward to the next opportunity to open more of Parramatta for everyone to explore.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (19:59): I thank the member for Parramatta for bringing Sydney Open to the attention of the House. The community do not necessarily get to see some of those places in her electorate. I also thank her for raising the issue of Lancer Barracks. As Minister for Veterans, I have raised the issue of Lancer Barracks with the Commonwealth. Unfortunately, it seems it is continually left out of the conversation when it comes to potential sites to be heritage listed and not divested by the Commonwealth. I ask the Minister and the Assistant Minister involved at the Commonwealth level to ensure that Lancer Barracks is part of the conversation and is preserved for its history, and that its significance to not just New South Wales but also Australia continues to be recognised.

IRELAND PARK MASTER PLAN

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:59): The events of Liverpool City Council's most recent meeting have been well reported. It is disappointing but not surprising that council has once again lived down to the increasingly cynical expectations of a community that desperately wants the personality clashes to end and the important work of local government to begin. However, beyond the reporting on deals being made and then reneged on, and accusations of criminal behaviour being thrown around the chamber, one council decision did not make the headlines. That decision has vast ramifications for grassroots sport in Liverpool.

For 63 years, the Liverpool Rangers have been a mainstay of the local football landscape in Liverpool. One of the oldest clubs in the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association, the Rangers have launched the careers of players who have gone on to representative and professional football. Over those six decades, the Rangers have called Ireland Park home. Ireland Park is much more than a patch of grass. It is where generations of Liverpool kids have pulled on their boots for the first time, where parents have spent weekends on the sidelines and where volunteers have given countless hours to keep grassroots sport going. Part of protecting that legacy is making sure Ireland Park is up to scratch and can meet the demands of a growing community.

Council has been working on a master plan for Ireland Park for several years. Its original 2024 plan proposed upgrades to the sporting fields and amenities, expanded parking, improved pedestrian crossings, spectator areas and new recreational facilities. But the Rangers raised serious concerns about what that plan would mean for their club. The community and local residents also provided feedback on the proposal. Council appeared to listen. After representatives of the Rangers addressed council, the matter was deferred at the March general meeting specifically to allow further consultation.

Three separate engagement sessions were then held with the Rangers in May and June this year. The club explained that it needed to maintain six playing fields, including four junior fields, to maintain its current capacity and continue hosting district-wide match hub days. It raised the importance of its showcase field, seating, storage and emergency vehicle access. Those were practical concerns from the people who use Ireland Park every week. Following that consultation, council developed a revised 2026 master plan. It retained two full-sized fields and four junior fields while also providing for improved parking, spectator facilities and a playground, fitness station, dog park, and training and walking track.

The difference between the two plans is significant. The choice was not between football and the wider community; it was between the original plan and a revised plan specifically designed to accommodate a growing football club while still delivering facilities for the broader Liverpool community. It was not everything to everyone, and council acknowledged that compromises were involved, but consultation is supposed to be about

listening, weighing competing needs and finding a workable way forward. Yet at its most recent meeting, council resolved to proceed with the original 2024 master plan instead, which was supported by Liverpool's Liberal councillors. What was the point of deferring the decision to consult with the Rangers if council was ultimately going to disregard the plan produced through that consultation? What was the point of asking volunteers to give up their time for multiple meetings, explain how their club operates and work through possible solutions, only to return to the plan they had raised concerns about in the first place?

One of the factors raised by Liberal councillors to back the 2024 plan was that it had been through the public exhibition process. Yet councillors on Monday night could have decided to put the 2026 plan out for public exhibition to get a genuine indication of the preference of the community. Council should put both versions of the master plan to the community and let the community decide what it actually wants. Consultation cannot simply be a box-ticking exercise. The elephant in the room not being addressed in good faith seems to be funding. Club officials were informed that \$6.8 million had been allocated to the Ireland Park master plan, and that was confirmed by a council official who was present at both the 2024 and 2026 meetings. However, that has since disappeared, with club representatives now told that there is no further funding allocation for delivery of the Ireland Park master plan.

The consequences are real. The Rangers host district-wide match hub days on two out of every three weekends on average. Council's own report acknowledges that reducing the club's playing capacity would negatively affect its income streams and participation in soccer. The club is growing at a time when we should be encouraging more children to get outside, get active and participate in community sport. Liverpool Rangers deserve certainty about their future, not duplicitous engagement. After 63 years at Ireland Park, the Rangers deserve better, and it is unfortunate that while council preoccupies itself with petty personality disputes, grassroots organisations and aspiring young athletes like the Rangers suffer.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:04): Everybody agrees that Sydney has a housing crisis, and the people in the electorate of Newtown are feeling it. State and Federal Labor governments like to pretend they are taking the crisis seriously and have a plan and strategy to deal with it. So why does it so often feel like nothing has improved since the Liberals were in charge for all those years? Why do rents keep going up? Why is public housing still being demolished? Why is public land still being privatised? And why does it feel like private developers are still ultimately in control of the decisions impacting our communities?

ICAC is now revealing how big developers like Nassif's Toplace bragged about their influence over the previous Liberal Government. The same happened to the previous Labor Government and Obeid. The media is filled with stories of dodgy builds, failed construction companies like Bathla and corrupt developers. We know that behind each of those countless stories are incredibly sad and heartbreaking impacts on communities. The fallout is real. Private developers being in control in this city is how we got into the housing mess in the first place. Private developers pursue their own profit, not the public interest, so why should we be surprised that we get housing that is more and more unaffordable, with poor community outcomes? That is because the Government is prioritising developer greed over community need.

Shamefully, the New South Wales Labor Government's housing strategy is no different, and the electorate of Newtown is feeling the impact. It puts private developers in control to pursue their own profits and hopes that the public interest is served. That is a complete joke. That is playing out in our local community right now. At the site of the Cypress Club on Stanmore Road, the aptly named Conquest is charging ahead with plans to build 30 storeys of luxury apartments, saying it will try to lobby the Federal Government to change the flight path of Sydney Airport to allow for a building to be built that high. The local planning instruments of the Labor-controlled Inner West Council have been totally ignored because the New South Wales Labor Government has allowed them to be overridden with minimal community consultation.

Our community is already feeling so much pressure. The cost of everything, including rent and mortgages, is going up, and the Government is adding to the stress on those people and pressure on our communities by threatening their very neighbourhoods and allowing developers free rein. It is unacceptable that communities are left to piece together information without any plan or strategy. I give a shout-out to REAL Stanmore Enmore Communities, which is a new community group in Stanmore and Enmore that is trying to understand the mess created by the Government's failure during consultations.

The same thing is happening on Parramatta Road where residents are trying to make sense of overlapping and contradictory State and local plans. When I met with those incredible residents at a very well-attended meeting at the Empire Hotel on Parramatta Road earlier this month, which was supported by Neighbours Behind Parramatta Road, the room was full and everyone was wondering what on earth was going on and why it felt like developers had too much access to the Government while the Minister does not respond to their questions or

concerns. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will call those communities nimbys in this House and say they are standing in the way of his plans to solve the housing crisis. At the end of the day, the planning Minister is just rezoning bits of our community, adding to the level of profit and potential money that landowners and investors will make, while failing to deliver any homes. People cannot live in a piece of planning legislation. It seems like the planning Minister is more interested in making announcements and name-calling than he is in delivering for communities.

It is four years into the Minns Labor Government. Is there any evidence that the plan to let private developers pursue their own profits is working, or is it failing again? Let us have a look at the evidence. The social housing waitlist has increased by 15,000 households—that is a 25 per cent increase under Labor. Rents are out of control and growing. In Sydney, a median-income renter would spend 70 per cent of their income on a median-priced unit. House prices in Sydney have now reached 14 times the median household income. Major developers like Bathla are collapsing, leaving thousands of depositors and home owners stranded with dwellings that have serious defects. It is critical that the Government listens to the community and starts delivering the housing that we need, not overdevelopment and plans for the community that will not work.

STATE BUDGET AND WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:10): The 2026-27 New South Wales budget was an opportunity for the Minns Labor Government to turn a corner. It was a chance to show ambition, to respond to the pressures facing families and small businesses, and to set out a credible plan for the future of our State. Instead, the people of Willoughby and New South Wales have been left sorely disappointed. Households are under immense pressure. Groceries, housing, energy and everyday expenses continue to rise. People are working harder than ever but feeling they can never get ahead. They are frustrated because they do not believe this Government is listening.

Small business is feeling suffocated and strained. Confidence is at record lows, insolvencies are surging and our main streets are full of "for lease" signs. These are the businesses that create jobs and keep local centres alive, yet this budget offers no plan to help them hire, invest and grow. Taxes and debt are at record highs, the budget remains in deficit and housing is becoming even less affordable. The infrastructure pipeline built by the former Liberal Government is drying up because Labor has no ideas nor plans of their own. That failure is especially clear in Willoughby. Our already dense community will take even more density and growth. With that comes greater pressure on essential infrastructure and services, yet the level of investment in Willoughby's schools, its roads and its open space is not keeping pace with what is being demanded of us.

There are measures in this budget that are welcome. The Government has adopted several cost-of-living ideas championed by the Liberals. The \$100 car registration rebate, a freeze on Opal fares and the reduction of the weekly toll cap to \$50 will provide some welcome relief. I note the continuation of major projects initiated by the former Liberal Government, including the Warringah Freeway Upgrade, the Western Harbour Tunnel, the North Sydney Ambulance Station and the Cammeray Public School upgrade. The confirmation that planning is progressing for the Sydney Water Willoughby Submain duplication project is welcomed, although no funding has yet been allocated.

However, those measures fall well short of what our community needs. The desperately needed new public school in St Leonards remains on indefinite hold, despite all our local public high schools already being over capacity at a time that thousands of new families are moving into St Leonards, Crows Nest and Chatswood. No major capital investment is provided for Royal North Shore Hospital, despite it being at capacity and it now being three years into the hospital's master plan. Indeed, the Government has confirmed that spending on both health and education capital expenditure across New South Wales is to halve for the rest of the decade. There is no clear pathway for local bus electrification, meaning the cleaner, quieter and more reliable bus fleet our community was promised remains delayed. There is no increase in metro services to meet the significant demand, no funded plan to reduce congestion on our roads and no additional support for local police to respond effectively to youth crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Government has also allocated funding for Landcom to develop the former Chatswood metro dive site for high-rise housing. That decision squanders a once-in-a-generation opportunity to use a major parcel of public land for desperately needed community infrastructure. Once that land is gone, it is gone forever. Labor cannot continue opening projects conceived, funded and commenced by the former Liberal Government and pretend that this amounts to a vision for the future. The Liberal infrastructure pipeline has carried this Government for three years, but that wave is fast receding. This Labor Government must eventually develop its own ideas, make its own decisions and build the projects the next generation will rely upon. We also need a stronger plan for the businesses that create jobs and opportunity.

Payroll tax is a tax on jobs. At a time when businesses are struggling, it makes no sense to punish them for employing more people. That is why I fully support the Liberal plan to create the most competitive payroll tax

regime in Australia for small and medium businesses—raising the threshold from \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million, reducing the rate from 5.45 per cent to 4.75 per cent for businesses with an Australian payroll below \$10 million, and indexing thresholds to consumer price index to prevent bracket creep. That would make it easier to hire, invest and grow, creating opportunities for young people and strengthening local economies such as ours.

Willoughby is doing its part. We are accommodating growth and contributing enormously to the prosperity of the State across our area. We should not be left behind, cast aside or forgotten. My vision is for a Willoughby where families can get ahead, businesses can flourish, services can keep pace with growth and people can have confidence in the future. I will keep fighting for our fair share of the infrastructure, services and facilities that our growing community needs and deserves, today and tomorrow.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:14): In responding to the contribution of the member for Willoughby, I remind him that the previous Government was handed the single largest ever debt from one government to another, all while taking on the biggest privatisation agenda ever seen and dealing with the largest wages cap implemented by any government. What that did to our public service—not just to our teachers, nurses and allied health workers—has been horrific. The Minns Labor Government has been getting on with the job of fixing the budget, all while not selling off services and while fixing up the privatisation mess that we inherited. The member complains about buses, but his Government's privatisation agenda stuffed it all up in the first place. In addition, we have lifted and fixed the wages cap. For the first time nurses, teachers and allied health workers are getting the wages they deserve.

PENRITH ELECTORATE

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (20:15): I will do something unique and speak about positively about the electorate that I represent. Today I speak about my favourite topic: all things good in Penrith. What makes Penrith special is not just our location at the foot of the mountains, our growing city centre, our proximity to the new airport or the beautiful open spaces. What makes Penrith special is its people. Our community shows up for one another. We see it in our volunteers, local charities, schools, sporting clubs, emergency service workers, small businesses and the many community organisations that quietly do the work every day. Across Penrith there is a generosity of spirit that deserves to be celebrated. It is in the people who give their time to support winter appeals, Pink Up Penrith for the McGrath Foundation, food drives and local fundraising efforts. It is in the volunteers who keep community sport running, help seniors stay connected, support families doing it tough and make sure nobody feels forgotten. Those the people make Penrith not only a strong community but a kind one.

Penrith is also full of life. From local markets and community festivals to the Penrith Show, citizenship ceremonies, cultural celebrations and events like Penrith After Dark, our city is alive with energy. I give a little taster of the events to come. On 3 October at the Paceway we have the inaugural Penrith Highland Festival, which is a nine-hour family-friendly event featuring pipe bands, highland dancing, a street parade, combat on horseback, clan displays and a car and motorcycle showcase. From 10.00 a.m. on Sunday 27 September, the Spring Family Day is taking place at the Museum of Fire, where families can enjoy free outdoor firefighting displays and interactive demonstrations. On Saturday 26 September *Bulunggayi: Yarning Circle* is taking place at Penrith Regional Gallery. It is a culturally enriching performance and yarning circle for children and families.

Those events do more than entertain us. They bring people together, celebrate culture and creativity, and give local artists, performers, makers and small businesses a chance to shine. There is something for everyone—from the Elton John Experience at the Joan on Saturday 26 September to An Intimate Night with Elvis at the Henry Sports Club in Werrington County; from the Western Sydney Jazz Workshop at the Penrith conservatorium to hands-on creative sessions at DIY Crafts in South Penrith, including sessions on mosaic candle burners, bird house painting or designing wide-brimmed hats. That mix of music, art, culture, family activities and community celebration says much about Penrith: We are creative, welcoming and full of local talent.

We are also proud of the opportunities being created for the next generation. Our local schools, teachers, early childhood educators, TAFE campuses and training providers help young people gain the skills, confidence and support they need to build their future. Penrith should be a place where young people can learn locally, train locally, work locally and see a future for themselves close to home. That future is being strengthened by investment in the services and infrastructure our growing community needs. The Nepean Hospital redevelopment, upgrades to Mulgoa Road, local road safety improvements, better community facilities and investment in public services all matter because they make everyday life better. They mean stronger health care, safer roads, better connections and more opportunity for local families.

But growth must always be about people. It must be about making sure that, as Penrith changes, it remains welcoming, inclusive and connected. One of our great strengths is our diversity. Penrith is home to people from many backgrounds, cultures and life experiences. It is strengthened by new Australians, First Nations communities, women's organisations, disability advocates, health workers, carers, young leaders and seniors, who

all contribute to the life of our city. There is so much good happening in Penrith. It is in our classrooms, on our sporting fields, in our community halls, along our river and in our local businesses. Penrith has a proud history and a remarkable future. Let us keep celebrating Penrith. Let us celebrate the people who serve, teach, coach, care, create, build and lead. Let us also celebrate our mighty Penrith Panthers, the local businesses that take a chance, the volunteers who give their time, the families who make the community strong and the young people who will carry Penrith forward. Penrith is not just growing; Penrith is thriving, and its best days are still ahead.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (20:20): Recently I visited Goodstart Early Learning in Taree, which cares for and educates more than 100 local children. The educators I met raised a concern about potential funding cuts that extend well beyond their centre. They affect families across the Myall Lakes that rely on long day care for both preschool education and the hours of care they need for work. Across New South Wales, around 63 per cent of children attending preschool receive their education through long day care. Those preschool programs are delivered by qualified early childhood teachers. They help children build the skills and confidence they need before starting school. The operational funding proposed to be removed supports that work. It helps services employ and retain teachers, provide planning time and professional development, buy learning resources, offer additional support to children who need it and prepare children for the transition to school.

Around \$150 million in operational funding currently supports long day care preschool programs across the State. For an individual centre, the proposed change could remove an estimated 3 per cent to 4 per cent of the funding available to support its preschool program. That may sound like a small percentage, but when a centre is trying to retain a qualified teacher, give staff time to plan or meet a child's additional needs, every dollar has a purpose. I am particularly concerned about the children and families who already face the greatest barriers to accessing support. For a child with a disability or developmental delay, preschool can provide consistent support from educators who understand their needs. For families facing financial hardship or other challenges, it can also give their child a safe, familiar place to learn while they work to get the help they need.

Educators are often the first people outside of a family to recognise when a child needs extra help. The funding gives them time to work with parents and plan the support that child needs. Those are the parts of a quality preschool program that could come under pressure if operational funding is removed. In regional communities, that support can be hard to find. Families may face long waits, long drives and few alternatives. We should be strengthening the services already working with those children, not leaving them to do the same work with less. We cannot overlook those children when deciding how preschool education is funded. Fee relief and the Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy help families pay for attendance. They are valuable, but they do a different job. They do not replace the operational funding that helps a centre deliver its preschool program.

In the Myall Lakes, families do not always have a choice of service. A parent may need the longer hours that long day care provides. Another family may find that the nearest alternative has no places or is simply too far away. For a child who has built trust with their teachers or receives extra support at their centre, moving to another service may be especially difficult. We cannot assume families can simply go elsewhere if their local program comes under pressure. Our services also face the costs and staffing difficulties that come with operating in regional communities. Taking away funding for preschool delivery leaves centres to find that money elsewhere. Families could face higher fees, while services may have less to spend on the teachers, resources and support that children need. That is a serious concern for parents already managing the cost of living. It is also a concern for educators who want to give every child the time and attention they deserve.

The Government is introducing new funding arrangements for community preschools, and I fully support investing in quality early education. But the children attending long day care deserve that same commitment. Their need for a qualified teacher and a strong preschool program does not change because of the type of service their family uses. Before this funding ends on 31 December, the Government must listen to long day care services across regional New South Wales—and, in fact, across all of New South Wales—and properly assess what its removal will mean for staffing, fees and the quality of preschool education. It is critical that the Minns Labor Government retains operational funding for long day care preschool programs in 2027 and beyond, alongside fee relief for families. The children who stand to lose the most are often the least able to make their voices heard. Their teachers and their families are speaking up. This Government should listen to them and keep the funding in place.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:25): It was wonderful to be back at the Canterbury-Bankstown Children's Festival at Playford Park in Padstow this year. Growing up in Earlwood with my Aussie, Maltese, Greek and Italian friends, I was fortunate to experience the benefits of living in a diverse community from a young age. Different languages, cultures, food, traditions and experiences were part of

everyday life. It taught me that diversity is not something to be afraid of; it enriches our communities and gives us the opportunity to learn from one another. That is why the festival is so important.

Recently I had the absolute pleasure to be part of this year children's festival event held at Playford Park in my electorate of East Hills. I acknowledge my great respect for founding member Thuat Nguyen, president Tuan Dang and all involved right across the festival family for ensuring the event has continued for over 20 years. The children's festival crosses across all communities, and that was certainly on display this year. Children from the Minghui School performed a beautiful traditional Chinese dance, which was followed by a Korean fan dance from Campsie Public School. We saw a folk dance from Nepal, Vietnamese dancing, traditional Ukrainian performances and a Thai community school sharing its culture through dance. There were martial arts demonstrations; Slovak, Russian and Slavic dances; Bulgarian folklore; Chinese lion dancing; and performances from Vietnamese community groups.

Standing there and watching those performances, I was reminded of just how much our community has gained from generations of people bringing their cultures and traditions with them. That matters, particularly at a time when there is so much talk about division and some people are suggesting that Australia should not be multicultural. I do not want our children to grow up without experiencing other cultures. I want them to grow up knowing their own culture of giving it a go and being curious about the cultures of the people around them. I want them to hear different languages, try different foods, celebrate different traditions and understand that our differences can bring us together. That is the community I grew up in, and it is the community I am proud to represent today.

The children's festival is a wonderful expression of that community. It gives children a stage to celebrate where they come from, while giving all of us the opportunity to learn from each other. I thank the organisers, performers, community schools, volunteers, families and everyone who made the day possible. In particular, I thank Tuan, Thuat, Kim and Trong from the children's festival, who work tirelessly to bring the event to life in my community every year. It was a pleasure to join Premier Chris Minns, Minister Steve Kamper, Federal member for Banks Zhi Soon, Mayor Bilal El-Hayek, Councillor David Walsh and so many families at this year's festival.

I know all my colleagues thoroughly enjoyed the day and loved seeing the smiles on so many faces as we walked around and acknowledged the many people from our community who held stores at the event or were there to support. The SES entertained children with its watercraft that helps rescue people in times of floods. Other groups involved include KU Children's Services, Stepwise Community Services—formerly Metro Assist—CASS Care and the Scouts and Girl Guides. I thank all who helped make the day a great event. Our community was on display—diverse, welcoming and stronger because of the many cultures that call it home.

REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:29): There is an old saying: death by a thousand cuts. No single cut kills you, but add enough of them together, one after another, and eventually you bleed out. That is exactly what is happening to country people right now. It is not one big decision doing the damage; it is hundreds of small ones. Each one chips away a little more at our way of life, our livelihoods and our local economies. On their own, each cut looks manageable. Added together, they are gutting regional New South Wales. Last year this Government agreed to something important. It supported my regional consultation bill. It was a simple idea: If a law or program affects regional people, the Government has to properly consult with them first.

It felt like a fresh start, a promise that country people would finally be heard before decisions were made about their lives. But, since then, this Government has kept cutting us, again and again, without ever picking up the phone. Let us start with firearms. After the tragic Bondi terror attack, the Government rushed through new firearms laws. It did not consult a single firearms group—not one. Those laws punish law-abiding firearms owners in New South Wales while doing nothing to stop criminals or terrorists. It has also stripped away the right to appeal a decision through NCAT—the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal—handing that power to the Supreme Court instead. It has dumped a huge new buyback workload onto a police force that is already thousands of officers short. That is cut number one.

Next are kangaroos. The Government moved kangaroo culling licences away from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and handed them to a new Biodiversity and Heritage Regulator. Farmers now face a slower, stricter process just to protect their own paddocks from damage. There was no consultation. That is cut number two. Then there are national parks. Since June 2024 the Government has bought up 30 properties in the west of the State. Each one contributed around \$500,000 to the local economy and council rates every year. Now that money is gone. Around 10 per cent of the unincorporated area, Central Darling shire and Bourke shire is now locked up in national parks. Those parks do not pay council rates. They are not bound to pay their share of fencing. Weeds and feral pests spread from them onto neighbouring farms and become someone else's problem. Businesses

close, families leave town, schools lose students and nobody in Sydney ever asked the community what they thought. That is cut number three.

I move on to water prices. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has just handed down its final decision on water bills for Broken Hill, Menindee, Silverton and Sunset Strip. Residential bills will rise by around 4.7 per cent a year, plus inflation, for the next five years. That is about \$145 more next year for an average household, during a cost-of-living crisis. Small businesses will be hit even harder, with some facing increases of almost 12 per cent a year. The mines that underpin Broken Hill's economy are facing multimillion-dollar annual increases. They might be able to absorb increased costs in one area, but we can only go so far until we kill the golden goose. That is cut number four.

Then there is Walgett and feral pigs. The Government has announced a pilot program that forces every landholder in the area to take part in pig control, backed by the threat of fines. Farmers already do most of the heavy lifting on pest control there. NSW Farmers has called this a "big stick" approach. Once again, the Government started by announcing fines rather than coordinating with the people doing the work. That is cut number five. Then we have funding for basic water security. The Wilcannia Weir has been talked about for 30 years. In that time, the cost has blown out from \$30 million to \$130 million, partly thanks to biodiversity offsets that nobody can properly explain. The Cobar pipeline, needed to secure water for a mining town worth over \$2 billion in exports every year, remains stuck in the queue while costs keep rising. Regional communities are still waiting for the basics that city people take for granted. That is cut number six.

The New South Wales Parliament has decided to cut two staff from the Barwon electorate. The most remote parts of the State that are already hours away from most services now have less access to the New South Wales Parliament and help. That is cut number seven. None of those decisions on their own would bring a region to its knees. But that is exactly the point of death by a thousand cuts. My regional consultation bill was meant to stop exactly this kind of thing from happening. Instead, regional communities are sometimes being treated like they do not exist.

Country people are not asking for special treatment. We are asking the Government to follow its own rules and consult us before it cuts. Every one of those cuts was avoidable. A genuine conversation with the people affected would have caught the unintended consequences before they happened. Instead, the Government keeps choosing to act first and explain later or mop up. If this keeps going, there will not be much of regional New South Wales left to consult with. I ask the Government to please talk to people, do what was agreed and made law, and at least get an understanding of an issue before making a decision.

WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:34): I was lucky enough to have a beautiful work experience student from St Clare's College come into my office recently. As I do with all the young people who come into my office, I asked her to write about something that she is passionate about. These are Paniya's words:

Hi, my name is Paniya. I'm a year 11 student at St Clare's College, Waverley. I'd like to introduce myself not only as a student but as a young woman who has a great passion and ambition to join the Police Force in the future.

I'd like to share why I'm so passionate about the presence of women in the Police Force, the opportunities they have and the challenges they may experience. My passion for policing is also very personal to me because my aunt and uncle are both police officers. Growing up, I've been able to hear about their experiences and see policing from two different perspectives.

Having both a woman and a man in the family working in the same profession has shown me that policing is not simply about what happens on the job. It's also about the people behind the uniform, the challenges they face and the different experiences they can have within the same workplace. Listening to my aunty has especially made me think about what it would be like for me as a young woman entering the Police Force. She's helped me understand that being a woman in policing can come with experiences and challenges that I may not have considered before. At the same time, hearing my uncle's perspective has shown me that every officer has their own experiences and that working together, regardless of gender, is an important part of being a successful police officer.

Having these conversations has made my interest in policing even stronger. They've also made me realise that having women in the Police Force is important because women bring their own experiences, perspectives, strengths to communities they serve. For me, policing is about more than wearing a uniform. It's about serving the community, helping people during difficult moments, protecting others and making a meaningful difference. These are the reasons I'm drawn to the profession and why I want to see more young women feel confident about pursuing it.

However, as a teenage girl looking towards a future in policing, I also recognise that there are important questions worth asking. Will women be given the same opportunities to succeed where they feel respected and supported in the workplace? Will young women be encouraged to pursue policing based on their abilities and ambitions rather than outdated stereotypes about what women can or cannot do? These are some of the concerns that deserve to be taken seriously.

I think sometimes young people can look at certain careers and immediately decide that they're not for them. For girls, policing may still be seen by some as a traditionally male career. Yet when I look at my aunty, I see someone who has shown me that women absolutely belong in the profession. Women have played an important role in the history of policing in New South Wales. We see this today through the bravery and dedication of women such as New South Wales Police Inspector Amy Scott, who responded to the Bondi Junction attack in 2024.

As a young woman who hopes to become a police officer, seeing a woman step forward and respond in such an incredibly difficult situation was something that really stood out to me. It showed me that women have the strength, courage and ability to take on some of the most challenging responsibilities of policing. For me, seeing a woman like Amy Scott makes the career feel more real and reminds me that I want to have a place in the Police Force too.

While progress has been made, it's important that we continue to consider how women in policing are supported, recognised and given opportunities to develop with their careers. I believe young women should be able to look at a career in policing and feel excited about the possibilities ahead of them. They should have access to positive role models, clear career pathways and workplaces where they feel treated with respect.

I also believe that encouraging women into policing is about recognising the value of having people from different backgrounds and experiences serving our communities. As a young woman who hopes to become a police officer, I want to know that my future will be shaped by my commitment, my skills, my determination rather than assumptions about my gender. I want other girls who share this ambition to feel the same confidence.

I'm proud to be a young woman with ambitions to enter the profession that plays such an important role in our community. I hope that by continuing to recognise the achievements of women in policing, listening to their experiences and addressing the barriers they may encounter, we create a future where more women feel encouraged to follow this path, because the next generation of women in policing should not have to question whether they belong. They should feel empowered to pursue their ambitions, confident in their abilities, and supported in the important work they choose to do.

I say to Paniya that we would be so lucky for someone like her to enter the Police Force. I hear her concerns about policing. Our Government has not shied away from the challenging questions she has posed about some of the systematic issues within our Police Force. I note the Independent Cultural Review into New South Wales Police Force that pointed out systematic cultural issues, like the boys' club. I say to Paniya that the Police Force has said that it will take on board the 29 distinct recommendations from that review. I thank her for considering becoming a police officer.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE BUSHFIRE-PRONE LAND

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:39): I speak about the impact of building, planning and development on bushfire-prone land. Bushfires are a natural part of Australia's landscape. We have seen devastating consequences because of this, most recently the catastrophic 2019-20 fires when 26 lives were tragically lost, 2,448 homes were destroyed and 5.5 million hectares of land was burnt. That is why we must be extremely cautious about building and development on bushfire-prone land. Approving development in high-risk areas places individuals in harm's way, makes evacuations more difficult and exposes firefighters and emergency services personnel to additional danger. It can also increase insurance and infrastructure costs for the wider community.

That is why I supported amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning System Reforms) Bill 2025 that sought to keep section 10.3, "Bush fire prone land", of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which requires councils to map bushfire-prone land in their local government area every five years. That is important, as it is an alert mechanism of the bushfire risk to rezoning proposals and development applications. I note that councils and wider government need to ensure mapping is updated and accurate.

I turn to two developments that impact the Davidson electorate. The first is the State significant development [SSD] at Lourdes Retirement Village for seniors housing on Stanhope Road in Killara, which is currently responding to submissions. I note two points. Firstly, a development application [DA] was originally lodged in 2018 and rejected by the planning department, following the local planning panel decision in 2023. As the plan finalisation report stated, "Primary reasons for the panel's decision to not support the proposal relate to bushfire." Secondly, the current SSD bushfire assessment report states:

Ku-ring-gai Council's Bushfire Prone Land Map identifies the subject property as partially containing Vegetation Category 1 and the Vegetation Buffer, therefore the overall subject site is considered "bushfire prone".

The local community has launched a New South Wales Parliament petition against this SSD, which I will present. The petition states:

Situated adjacent Garigal National Park, Seven Little Australians Park, and surrounded on three sides by steep bushfire-prone land, the site is laden with extreme fire risk (likelihood and consequence), and exacerbated by the proponent's intention to house significant numbers of vulnerable, aged residents in multiple multi-storey residential towers across the site.

I thank local residents for the petition, led by constituent Neil Clarke. The second development I will talk about is the Patyegarang planning proposal, formerly known as Lizard Rock, on Morgan Road in Belrose. The main reason for opposition to this development from both the community and me was, as Northern Beaches Council states:

The proposed development will see the destruction of 45 football fields worth of bushland and the construction of 450 homes in bushfire prone land.

Earlier this month, the planning department confirmed that the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council had withdrawn its development proposal. That is a win for the northern beaches community, given that in 2023 over 12,000 people signed a petition against this proposal, which was debated in the Parliament of New South Wales. I recognise the Northern Beaches Bushland Guardians and Save the Northern Beaches Bushlands for this community-led effort. I look forward to joining the community on Sunday 18 October 2026. Community still does have a say.

I have consistently been against the Lizard Rock proposal on the grounds of bushfire risk. I am proud to have played a small part in ensuring that the local Liberal Party was against this proposal. We made the 2023 election commitment that this proposal would not proceed and not be signed off on by the planning Minister if we were re-elected. The Lourdes site had a DA rejected, but then an SSD application was lodged. I fear the same could happen at Patyegarang. Time will tell. I will finish where I started: Sadly, Australia is impacted by bushfire. We must ensure we do not have any bushfire catastrophes in future.

NEPAL FLOODS

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:44): This evening I acknowledge the devastating floods in Nepal and express my deepest condolences to the families and communities who have lost loved ones in this tragedy. Although Nepal is many thousands of kilometres from New South Wales, an event such as this is felt deeply here. For members of our Nepalese Australian community, this is not a distant event. The people affected are their families, relatives, friends and communities back home. In my community, Hamro Club and members of the Nepalese Australian community in Camden recently came together at Oran Park for a community vigil in remembrance of the flood victims in Nepal. They gathered to light candles, share prayers and stand together with those who are grieving.

This tragedy has touched Hamro Club particularly closely. One female member of the club suffered the heartbreaking loss of four members of her family in this disaster. It is difficult to comprehend the grief of losing four loved ones in such circumstances. To her and her family, I extend my deepest condolences. I also extend my sympathies to every family in Nepal, and here in Australia, mourning the loss of someone they love. I acknowledge Hamro Club and the Nepalese Australian community in Camden for coming together at this painful time. The vigil was a simple but meaningful expression of solidarity with those affected and a reminder to grieving families that their community here in New South Wales stands with them.

For Australians of Nepalese heritage, Australia is home, while their connection to Nepal, its people and their families remains strong. When tragedy strikes Nepal, that grief crosses borders and is shared here in our communities. This evening in this Parliament, I join them in remembering those whose lives have been lost. I also acknowledge those who have been displaced, those who have lost their homes and livelihoods, and those facing the difficult task of rebuilding their lives. I say to the people of Nepal and our Nepalese Australian community that they are in our thoughts. They are in our prayers. To those who have lost loved ones, we share in their sorrow. May those who lost their lives rest in peace, and may their families find strength and comfort in the support of their communities and those of us who surround them with love. I thank the House.

MAGPIE HILL SOLAR FARM PROJECT

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:47): Today I discuss a subject that members of this House are likely becoming very familiar with. Unfortunately, my communities are becoming very familiar with it too. Here I am again, speaking about yet another large-scale renewable energy proposal being imposed on the people of the Goulburn electorate. This time it is the proposed Magpie Hill solar farm and battery energy storage system between Bungendore and Tarago. I wish I could say this project is different. I wish I could say that the lessons from Gundary, Wallaroo, Gunning, Merino, Bendenine, HumeLink and countless other projects across my electorate have finally been learnt. But what I am hearing from residents suggests otherwise.

Over recent weeks the proponent has held drop-in sessions, webinars and meetings with the neighbouring landholders. The company has now released a summary of what it calls "What we heard". What struck me was that every issue identified by the community was also raised by me in this Parliament for years. People are worried about bushfire risk, battery fires, emergency response arrangements, water for firefighting, visual impacts, noise, traffic, site monitoring and what happens when something goes wrong. Most importantly, they are worried that their concerns will be acknowledged—if they are lucky—but not acted upon. Time and again, communities are told to engage with the process, and they do exactly that. They attend the information sessions, ask the questions and submit the feedback. Then they watch as the project moves to the next stage, largely unchanged.

My constituents are not anti-renewables. I have said it before and I will say it again: The Goulburn electorate has been at the forefront of renewable energy development in New South Wales. We host wind farms, solar farms, battery projects and major transmission infrastructure. Our communities understand the role energy

plays in our economy and the future. What they object to is the complete disregard for cumulative impact and the social licence that every one of those multinational multimillion-dollar projects is missing. Every project arrives with its own consultants, its own engagement team and its own glossy brochures. Every project is assessed in isolation. Every project promises community benefits. Yet no-one seems prepared to measure what happens when project after project is concentrated in the same regional communities.

A family living near Magpie Hill does not experience this proposal in isolation. They see the existing infrastructure across the region, additional renewable projects being proposed, transmission infrastructure cutting across farmland and increasing industrialisation of rural landscapes. And they wonder when enough will be enough. That question remains unanswered and it is entirely at the hands of the Government, which refuses to listen. The Magpie Hill project is progressing towards the preparation of an environmental impact statement. I encourage every resident with concerns to remain engaged, to ask questions and, when the opportunity arises, to lodge formal submissions. But I also say this to the Government and planning authorities: Regional communities should not have to fight tooth and nail simply to be heard.

The reality is that communities across my electorate are exhausted. They are suffering and feeling overwhelmed by an endless procession of proposals. They see multinational corporations arrive with teams of lawyers, consultants and planners while local residents attempt to navigate a complex planning system in their spare time after work, after feeding livestock and after putting their children to bed. That is not an equal contest. Until the Government develops a genuine framework to assess cumulative impacts and protect regional communities from carrying a disproportionate share of the State's infrastructure burden, I fear that I will continue to raise exactly the same concerns in this Chamber—yet another project, another community fighting to be heard, and another group of regional residents wondering whether decisions about their future have already been made before the assessment has even begun. The people of my electorate deserve better than that. I will continue to fight to ensure that their voices are heard.

RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (20:52): When I gave my inaugural speech in this Chamber in 2023, I said I had no intention of being here simply to keep the seat warm. I did not come to politics through the traditional pathways. I was a local resident and business owner who became a community advocate because I was frustrated by what was happening to my home, that my community was growing at an extraordinary rate but the infrastructure was not keeping up, and that I could see the problems and raise the problems, but too often it felt like nobody was listening. I felt that politicians in State Parliament were making decisions that ignored the needs of the people they were elected to represent. Eventually I realised that, if I wanted to make a difference, I needed to stop shouting from the outside of this building and get a seat on the inside.

Three and a half years later, it is worth reflecting on what a local member of Parliament should do. For me, it comes down to three things: show up, speak up and deliver. Showing up means being part of your community, not simply representing it from Macquarie Street. It means knocking on doors and listening to residents; being at the local school, the sporting field, the community event and the business breakfast; and showing up when things are difficult, when someone is angry about traffic, when a family needs help navigating government, when a community group is struggling or when residents believe nobody is listening.

I understand the cynicism that exists about politics because I have felt it too. For years my community was promised a future that was never delivered. I get it when some people respond with "I'll believe it when I see it" when I make a new announcement. I waited for Rouse Hill Hospital when it was promised. I waited for something to happen with the Riverstone Town Centre when it was promised. I waited for work to begin on Bandon Road and Garfield Road and a multitude of other roads when they were promised. I sat in the same traffic as everyone else while our population grew and our infrastructure failed to keep pace. I watched as our schools became overcrowded and green spaces identified in precinct plans failed to materialise. I regularly said, "I'll believe it when I see it." That experience has shaped the way I approach this job. I vowed I would not make a promise to my community simply because it was what someone wanted to hear. I do not make promises until I know they have been funded.

But showing up is only the beginning. A local member also has to speak up. At its core, the role of an MP is to be the voice of the people they represent. The conversations I have in Riverstone, Schofields, The Ponds, Tallawong and across my electorate have made their way into this building. Sometimes that means having uncomfortable conversations. Sometimes it means pushing Ministers to act or going against them, or pushing the Treasurer or the Premier to act. Sometimes it means saying that what works elsewhere will not work in one of the fastest growing communities in New South Wales. Often it means continuing to make the argument long after everyone else is tired of hearing it. Because, ultimately, showing up and speaking up must lead to results. They must lead to delivery.

The Government is finally building the Rouse Hill Hospital our community waited so long for, with an emergency department and full maternity services. The Government is delivering new and upgraded schools to cope with the massive increase in students. Major road projects that the previous Government talked about for years are now funded and progressing. After decades of uncertainty, Riverstone finally has a plan for its town centre and a broader vision that connects housing with infrastructure. While I spent years advocating for public infrastructure to support the growing population, those things did not happen because one person had all the answers. They happened because our community spoke up and they have someone who is determined to make sure their voices are heard. Residents completed surveys, wrote emails, and attended meetings and consultations. They stopped me in shopping centres and spoke to me at their front doors.

My job has been to take their voices into the rooms where decisions are made and to make sure their needs are taken into consideration. That is representation. I am enormously proud of what we have achieved together. But I do not pretend the job is finished. It is not. There is traffic congestion that still needs addressing. We need public transport that is connected, more local employment and to continue building the schools, health services, open spaces and community infrastructure that the growing north-west deserves. There is much more work ahead. When I promised that I would not simply keep this seat warm, I was making a commitment to my community. I would use my position to show up, speak up and deliver. To me, being a local member means I will work every day to deliver for the people who gave me the extraordinary privilege of representing them in this place.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:57): I congratulate the member for Riverstone on the incredible work he has achieved since he arrived in Parliament. He came in a flurry of enthusiasm and he has not stopped for a day. It is a credit to him that Rouse Hill Hospital is now being built with an emergency department and maternity services after the previous Government promised it for more than 12 years. The Riverstone Town Centre announcement is fantastic. Roads have received significant major upgrades, and there are new and upgraded schools—too many to name. The member for Riverstone is a man who shows up, speaks up and delivers for the people of Riverstone. They are very lucky to have him as their local member.

RYDE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:57): On 14 August in this very Chamber, students from across the Ryde electorate competed in my Ryde public speaking competition. One aspect of the competition required students to prepare a speech based on the topic "What is a challenge facing young people today, and how can the government solve it?" I congratulate Olivia Li from Eastwood Public School on winning the primary school competition. This is her winning address:

Imagine you're 11 years old. Your alarm goes off on Monday morning, but before you've even climbed out of bed, your device lights up.

98 new messages. Your heart sinks and your thoughts begin to race.

Someone has shared an embarrassing photo of you in the class group chat. The laughing emojis keep coming.

One child forwards it on, a few others add comments. Many more watch without saying a word. You wish you could just leave. But you can't.

Unlike bullying in the playground, cyberbullying doesn't end when the school bell rings. It follows YOU home. Into your bedroom. Into your pocket. Into your mind.

Sadly, this isn't just one child's story. It is a story built from the real experiences of Australian children shared with the eSafety Commissioner. More than one in every two Australian children aged 10 to 17 has experienced cyberbullying, and 39% say their most recent experience happened in a group chat.

Members of Parliament, teachers, parents and fellow students... there are three children in this story. The child being bullied. The child doing the bullying. And the bystander. Every one of them needs our help.

Victims deserve to be protected and supported. Bystanders face a choice: keep watching, join in, or stand up. But what about the bully?

Bullies can act because of peer pressure, a desire for popularity, poor emotional regulation or a lack of empathy. This does not excuse their actions, but simply punishing them doesn't solve the problem either. They need to understand the damage their actions can cause.

Because cyberbullying isn't just creating victims. It is teaching a generation of young Australians that cruelty is normal.

The eSafety Commissioner's research into the effects of cyberbullying reveals some devastating realities. 38% of children had someone say hurtful things to them online, 18% had humiliating or hurtful lies spread about them and 17% had private messages, information or secrets shared with others.

Even more concerning, 81% experienced negative emotions after being cyberbullied. But behind every percentage is a real child. A child who has to face everyone who saw the photo.

A child wondering why their friends stayed silent. A child sitting in class trying to learn, while worrying about what might be posted next.

Cyberbullying isn't just about mean messages on a screen. It affects children's confidence, friendships, education and wellbeing.

So, what can the NSW Government actually do? I believe there are three things we must change. Firstly, digital citizenship must become a clear and compulsory part of the NSW curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 10.

There is already some online safety education in our curriculum, but I don't believe this goes far enough. It should not be an occasional lesson that depends on your subject, teacher or school. It must be a planned program that builds every single year.

If a child is old enough to pick up an iPad, open YouTube, play an online game or send a message, then they are old enough to learn how to use technology safely and respectfully.

We would never give a child a bike and send them onto the road without teaching them the road rules. So why are we sending children into the online world without making sure they know the rules there too?

Secondly, we must educate the adults in our lives. There is an old saying that "it takes a village to raise a child."

Well, in 2026, that village needs to understand the digital world too. Parents, carers and teachers must know how to recognise cyberbullying, respond to it and support children. Great resources already exist, but not every adult can access them. Some don't know where to look, some don't have time to attend workshops and others face language barriers.

The NSW Government must make online safety education easy to access and available in different languages and formats. Keeping children safe online cannot just be the responsibility of teachers or parents. It must be a partnership.

Finally, every NSW public school must have the wellbeing support it needs. Many schools use their own funding to provide extra wellbeing programs, while school counsellors can be expected to work across multiple schools.

That is simply not enough. Every school needs access to a full-time learning and support teacher and a full-time school counsellor who can provide help when children need it, not days or weeks later.

When a child finally finds the courage to say, "I need help," there must be someone trained and available to listen. A child's postcode should never decide how much help they receive. Prevention. Education. Support.

We already have the beginnings of these solutions. Now we need the NSW Government to make them stronger, fairer and available to every child across our state.

Because the best way to stop cyberbullying isn't to punish it after the damage is done. It's to prevent it before someone presses "send".

I extend my congratulations to Olivia. This Parliament should take note of her important message.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:02): I thank the member for Ryde and Olivia for their contribution this evening. Last week I had the privilege of attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Cape Town. We discussed Australia's important role in putting forward the world-first legislation of raising the minimum age for social media accounts to 16—not that everybody sticks to it. We are also currently proposing digital duty of care, featuring "My Feed, My Way". That will bring more protections for young people interacting online. We have also banned the use of mobile phones in schools in New South Wales, and we are also capping screen time in schools. We are at the start of world-leading changes in what needs to go on in this space. As a former teacher, I also recognise that a lot more work needs to be done to support families, adults and young people on social media.

ALBURY ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:03): Recently I was in Khancoban, where I met a group of local women who come together regularly for a balance class. It would be easy to see that simply as an exercise class. But it is much more than that. It is about strength and mobility, preventing falls, social connection and helping people remain active and independent for longer. When we speak about health care, too often the conversation begins and ends with hospitals. Good health care also happens long before somebody reaches the hospital door. It happens when a community nurse checks on somebody at home, when a child sees a speech pathologist early enough to help them communicate and learn, when somebody recovering from a stroke or surgery works with a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist to regain independence, or when somebody struggling with addiction receives support before their life reaches crisis point. Those moments can change the trajectory of somebody's health.

For a child, access to allied health can shape years of development. For somebody leaving hospital after a stroke, surgery or serious illness, rehabilitation can help them regain strength, independence and return safely home. Community health also plays a vital role in mental health and alcohol and other drug treatment—reducing harm, supporting recovery and intervening before crisis. There is a significant economic benefit as well. Victorian community health sector reporting has estimated that chronic disease programs can save between \$8 and \$13 in future health system costs for every dollar invested.

Nationally, potentially preventable hospitalisations cost around \$7.7 billion in 2023-24 and accounted for more than three million hospital bed days. The Productivity Commission has estimated that better integration across the health system could reduce preventable hospitalisations and emergency presentations, delivering savings of around \$600 million each year. Of course not every hospital admission can or should be prevented. But some people arrive at hospital after their health has deteriorated when earlier intervention, better management or

accessible community support may have changed that course. That is why we need to elevate the conversation about community health.

In Albury that conversation must include infrastructure. The current Albury Community Health building in Smollett Street is ageing. If we are serious about community health, we need to be serious about where that care is delivered, and we need to value those who provide it. I acknowledge our community nurses, allied health professionals, child and family health staff, rehabilitation teams, mental health clinicians, drug and alcohol workers and everyone delivering community-based care across our region. Much of their work happens quietly—in homes, consultation rooms, rehabilitation gyms and outreach clinics—but it can profoundly change somebody's life.

That is particularly important in regional communities. For somebody who no longer drives, a parent juggling work and children or somebody living with disability, distance can become the difference between receiving care and putting it off. Local services, outreach and workforce matter. Telehealth has an important place, but it cannot replace every physical assessment, therapy session, home visit or trusted relationship between clinician and patient. All of this sits within the broader health strategy I continue to advocate for across the Albury electorate.

We need to deliver the Albury Wodonga Regional Hospital redevelopment and continue working for the future stages, capacity and services our growing region will require. We need an integrated electronic medical record so clinicians have the right information at the right time. We need to strengthen rural health care, including planning for the future of Corowa hospital and Urana Multipurpose Service. We need strong community health, with the workforce, outreach and infrastructure to match. Those parts of our health system do not operate independently. What happens in primary and community care affects demand on emergency departments and hospitals, while rehabilitation and community support affect how safely and quickly people can return home.

A strong regional health system is our major hospital, our rural hospitals and multipurpose services, our GPs, community nurses, allied health professionals, mental health and drug and alcohol teams and rehabilitation services—all working together around the patient. Sometimes health care is complex surgery. Sometimes it is a child finding their voice with the help of a speech pathologist. Sometimes it is rehabilitation that gets somebody home again. Sometimes it is a community group in Khancoban helping each other stay strong, mobile and part of their community. Community health cannot sit at the edge of the conversation. It must be at the centre of how we think about better health outcomes for our region.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:09 until
Thursday 24 September 2026 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

According to Standing Order 108A, the following written community recognition statements were submitted.

MEETING THE PATRIARCH OF CHALDEAN CHURCH WITH THE NSW PREMIER

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to His Beatitude Mar Paul III Nona and members of the St. Thomas the Apostle Chaldean and Assyrian Catholic Church in Bossley Park, for the warm welcome offered to Premier Chris Minns, and my Parliamentary Colleague Hugh McDermott Member for Prospect, and myself on 24 April 2026. We had a meaningful time listening to the Diocese's projects and matters important to the Church and the community, and we greatly appreciated sharing a gracious lunch, so dedicatedly prepared by the Church members. On that special occasion, I also extended my warmest congratulations to His Beatitude Mar Paul III Nona on his recent election as the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church. I also express my deepest gratitude for the extraordinary contribution he has made to the Chaldean Catholic community in my Cabramatta Electorate and beyond over the many years. I wish him all the very best in this profoundly important new chapter, and hope to see him again in the near future, and to be advised of all his wonderful work especially overseas.

SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 3rd of June 2026, I had the honour of attending the Secondary Student Leadership Program that was held at NSW Parliament, along with many of my parliamentary colleagues from the Legislative Assembly. This program serves as a way for student leaders from NSW secondary schools to visit the NSW Parliament. Through this initiative, it provides students the opportunity to learn about the constitutional and parliamentary processes that elected representatives face in roles of responsibility in NSW Parliament. I would like to thank all the teachers from my Cabramatta Electorate for arranging for the students to travel to NSW Parliament so that the students could learn more about our Parliament. I especially congratulate

and thank the following Student Leaders: from Bossley Park High School: Chris Penos, Luna Baballos; from Bonnyrigg High School: Tijana Kovacevic, Tam Nghi Nguyen; from Canley Vale High School: Selina Ha, Elizabeth Foiakau; from St Johns Park High School: Jade Hoang, Trinity Trinh; and from Cabramatta High School: Amy Chau, Sepelini Teo. I would also like to commend the dedicated staff at NSW Parliament for preparing this initiative every year to provide our future leaders insight into the functions of this institution.

2ND CARINGBAH SCOUT GROUP 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I was pleased to join the 2nd Caringbah Scout Group in celebrating its 75th anniversary on 20 September. Established in 1951 as a Cub Scout pack of 12 members, the group was formed as an offshoot of the 1st Caringbah Scout Group following its rapid growth. Over the past 75 years, 2nd Caringbah has become a valued part of the local community, providing generations of young people with opportunities to gain practical skills, build confidence, strengthen leadership and teamwork capabilities, and form lasting friendships. Members today continue to participate in a range of activities from camps to regional and major activities. This includes the Australian Jamboree, where young people from the group have represented the area as part of the NSW-52 contingent alongside Scouts from across NSW. I congratulate cub leader Christine Edney, together with all current and former members, leaders, volunteers, families and supporters of the 2nd Caringbah Scout Group, on this significant milestone. Their dedication and contribution over many decades have made a lasting impact on our community.

CRAIG JOHNSTON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Gynea Bay's Craig Johnston on completing another remarkable endurance cycling challenge. The 56-year-old former Port Hacking High School student cycled more than 6,200 kilometres from Byron Bay, the easternmost point of mainland Australia, to Steep Point in Western Australia, its westernmost point. Craig completed the journey alone and without a support vehicle in just 44 days and 10 hours, breaking the previous Australian record of 61 days set in 2023. His record is now awaiting ratification. His route took him through some of Australia's most remote and challenging landscapes, including three deserts, the Nullarbor Plain, Lake Eyre and the Lambert Centre, as well as completing a circuit of Uluru. Along the way, Craig endured torrential rain, strong headwinds, road closures, mechanical problems and delays to food supplies. At times, he went days without seeing another person, sleeping in a tent beside the track or in a pub room when one was available. I commend Craig on his determination and resilience and wish him every success as he prepares for his next challenge, the Tour Divide, a mountain bike race following the Rocky Mountains from Canada to the Mexican border.

WOOLLOOWARE HIGH SCHOOL 2027 STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I join Woollooware High School in congratulating the students selected to serve on the school's 2027 leadership team. Following a rigorous selection process, the new leadership team comprises school captains Matilda Bazzano and Miles Robinson, vice captains Abigail Tam and Bethany Armstrong, Student Representative Council presidents Elodie Webb and Laila Southam, Communication and Transition prefect Portia Davies, Sports and Arts prefect Ciaran Barnes, Wellbeing prefect Jude Hodgson and Environment prefect Adam Ravello. Being selected to lead your school community is both a great honour and a valuable opportunity. I encourage these students to make the most of their roles by representing their peers, serving their school and working together to make a positive contribution to the Woollooware High community. I wish the 2027 leadership team every success as they take on their new responsibilities and seek to embody Woollooware High School's motto, "Strive for Excellence," in their leadership and final year of high school.

STAN TULEVU

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to recognise the work of Stan Tulevu, a person who has become one of the Orange district's respected multicultural leaders despite a humble arrival in our city. A former Fijian rugby league international, Stan has risen above disappointment and adversity to become a conduit between his homeland and the Fijian diaspora in our region. Stan was set on this path when injury curtailed a promising NRL career with the Canterbury Bulldogs. A lifeline came from fellow Fijian international Asa Amona who was captaining Orange club Hawks in 1997 and recruited Stan. With little English, Stan took a job blowing leaves to supplement his league career and it's from those humble beginnings 30 years ago, he has carved out a reputation for resilience, reliability and approachability. Using his experience from those early days, Stan encourages others moving from Fiji to our district to take advantage of their new surroundings for their personal growth and the opportunities it offers. Stan also works for the Fiji Rugby League Players Association, pointing young players in the right direction. I congratulate Stan on his wonderful advocacy for Fijians now living in the Central West.

BETTY SOMERS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, today I am proud to recognise the more than 40-year Parkes resident Betty Somers has given in service to her community. For four decades Betty has been delivering nutritious meals as part of the Meals on Wheels volunteer program in her hometown. For aged and frail residents who are unable to prepare their own meals, Betty has been a friendly face at the door, also offering connection and checking on the wellness of clients. Today Meals on Wheels is perhaps even more relevant than when it was established in Parkes in the 1960s. Our population is ageing and loneliness and isolation are becoming more prevalent in our society. With people like Betty volunteering, Meals on Wheels has become a trusted and iconic organisation enhancing the opportunities for the elderly to stay in their homes longer. Through all kinds of weather and often in the challenging conditions experienced on rural roads, Betty has played a crucial role in ensuring elderly residents receive nourishing meals in a timely manner. I congratulate Betty and extend to her the appreciation of her entire community.

SALLY CHRSTIE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to recognise the extraordinary 46-year record of service to her community by Cumnock resident Sally Christie. For more than four decades Sally has provided important connections for Cumnock and district residents, many of whom live on isolated rural properties. Sally's role during that time has been to collect the mail from the local distribution centre and ensure it gets delivered to the right address, despite boggy roads in winter and negotiating heat, dust, wildlife and potholes in dry and drought conditions. When Sally first began her delivery service, there was no internet or mobile phone service to connect rural residents with family and friends. Receiving a letter in the post was often the only form of staying in touch with loved ones. Sally now uses technology to text ahead to residents to ensure their mail or parcels aren't left out in the rain and will be delivered on time. She is renowned for always going the extra mile to ensure residents receive their mail and parcels on time. Sally's contribution to a small rural community cannot be underestimated and I trust she will thoroughly enjoy her well-earned retirement.

UOW CAMPUS SCIENCE SHOW

Ms KATELIN McINERNEY (Kiama)—It was an absolute pleasure to attend the UOW Campus Science Show at UOW Shoalhaven Campus during National Science Week, with my son leading me excitedly from stall to stall. More than 350 community members enjoyed a walk on the wild side of science, from anatomy displays in the simulated hospital ward to getting up close with Australia's largest goanna. The Fire and Ice Spectacular with bubbles, flames and nitrogen fog had kids and adults alike mesmerised, while incredible robots impressed onlookers with their dexterity and abilities. Visitors had the chance to meet the UOW Motorsport's team and sit in last year's Formula-style EV, launch rockets, pat reptiles, battle it out in LEGO Robotics, peer through the observatory telescope, explore recycling adventures, operate lasers, listened to stories about Country, and even watch muscles move via ultrasound. It was great to meet local high school students from the Project Bucephalus community robotics team and take a closer look at their incredible builds. Huge congratulations to the team at UOW Shoalhaven for putting on such a fantastic, welcoming event for families across our community – this is how we inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and curious minds.

SIENNA AND INDII OFF TO WORLD GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS, ITALY

Ms KATELIN McINERNEY (Kiama)—Congratulations to Sienna Petrovski, 16 and Indii-Rose O'Neill, 12, from Oak Flats Albion Park Gymnastics Club, selected to represent Australia at the World Gymnastics Championships in Italy this month. The pair achieved an incredible result at the Australian Gymnastics Championships, winning four gold medals to secure the opportunity to wear the green and gold. What a well-deserved honour, earned through years of dedication and hard work – we are all cheering you on. Our incredible community truly stepped up to help cover the costs of getting the team to Italy. A huge thank you to the Shellharbour Community Lions Club, whose two Bunnings BBQs at Kembla Grange raised \$7,668.90 towards the girls' campaign. Combined with Raffle for a Reason by The Shellharbour Club, pie drive, cake stalls and an ASF fundraiser, the total raised now stands at an outstanding \$14,815.92. Thank you to everyone who bought a sausage sandwich, a raffle ticket or a pie, and to the families and friends who worked so hard to support Sienna and Indii. This is community spirit at its very best. We can't wait to celebrate with you when you're home!

MURWILLUMBAH RURAL FIRE SERVICE BRIGADE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—It was great to see that Murwillumbah Rural Fire Service Brigade has taken delivery of 21 new lockers for their firefighters to store their personal protective clothing, including helmets and boots. I helped secure a \$9,250 grant towards these mobile lockers under the NSW Government's 2025 Community Building Partnership Program. In thanking me, Deputy Captain 1 Don Bentley tells me brigade members were

really impressed with the quality workmanship of Lismore-based welder Trent Simcox. Don also thanked Murwillumbah's Riverview Hotel, which donated a further \$2,550 to this project to ensure all was in readiness for the bushfire season. Murwillumbah RFS already has been deployed to help contain several large fires in the Richmond Valley. A shout out as well to the Condong Bowling Club Poker Club, which has been supporting the brigade with regular donations over the past six months. I thank current active members for their community service. They include Mitchell Paron Captain, Mark Pleszczynski Senior Deputy Captain, Don Bentley Deputy Captain 1, Jake Swift Deputy Captain 2, Lachlan Campbell Deputy Captain 3, Kenny Harrison Deputy Captain 5, Nathan Hewitt, Tom Norris President, Josh Smith, Ben Smith, Chloe Martin, Jodie Campbell and James Kelly.

NEW KERBSIDE COLLECTION FLEET FOR LISMORE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—The first of eight trucks in Lismore City Council's state-of-the-art kerbside collection fleet hit the streets last week and should be fully operational by the end of next month. Funded by a one-off \$5-million NSW Government grant, the new fleet is about finding clever waste solutions and safeguarding local jobs. The roll-out will herald in a more efficient service for ratepayers and residents of Lismore City Local Government Area. I worked closely with my colleague Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig, United Services Union General Secretary Graeme Kelly OAM and Lismore Mayor Cr Steve Krieg to achieve this win-win outcome. Waste collection is one of Council's most important core services, with teams collecting about 45,000 bins across the Local Government Area every fortnight. The trucks will deliver faster and more efficient bin lifts, reduced maintenance costs, lower emissions and enhanced safety through features such as fire suppression systems and work-zone monitoring. The trucks are also fitted with WasteTrack technology, a gamechanger for waste reduction efforts, that provides real-time data on pick-ups, missed services, driver behaviour and optimisation of daily collection runs. They will feature waste education messaging to support Council's focus on waste reduction.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS AT THE ELTHAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I rugged up to catch a wonderful performance last night of NORPA's award-winning play *Love for One Night*, which returned by popular demand under the stars at the Eltham Hotel. Written and devised by Janis Balodis and directed and devised by Julian Louis, I applaud cast and crew on an entertaining, thought-provoking show. Blending dialogue, movement, and song with live camera projections across the backdrop of the pub, and a live band, *Love for One Night* unfolds as a series of love stories. *Love for One Night* was first performed during a sold-out 2022 season. I also congratulate NORPA on securing \$944,724 in Australian Government funding under the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program. I strongly advocated for this terrific investment in Lismore's future. The Joinery is much more than a new home for NORPA; this adaptive project will lead to the establishment of a cultural precinct in the Central Business District with other leading regional arts facilities and organisations. Restoring a former industrial building into a fit-for-purpose flood-resilient cultural hub for the Northern Rivers is setting a benchmark for how the arts in regional areas can assist preparation and recovery from climate disasters.

RAY MOVIE SCREENING

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was delighted to co-host a special screening of "Ray" in NSW Parliament on the 6th of August 2026 with the Hon Janelle Saffin MLC. "Ray" is a powerful Myanmar feature film inspired by true events, exploring the resilience of ordinary people experiencing conflict, displacement and political upheaval. Directed by the acclaimed The Khit Nay and produced by Robert and Sophia Sarkis, the film provides an authentic and deeply moving look at the human cost of conflict and displacement. Set against the backdrop of the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, the film follows the true-life story of Ray, a pageant winner and actress who leaves behind a life of fame and privilege to stand alongside the resistance movement in the fight for freedom, justice and democracy. The film highlights the courage, hope and compassion of individuals and communities whose lives have been transformed by violence and conflict. I acknowledge the filmmakers and producers for bringing this important story to audiences in NSW and helping raise awareness of the experiences of the people of Myanmar. "Ray" is a moving reminder of the power of resilience, compassion and hope.

ONAM FESTIVAL - NAVODAYA SYDNEY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I had the pleasure of joining Granville's Malayalee-Australian community at Navodaya Sydney's Onam celebrations on 2 August 2026. Onam is a time of immense joy, but at its heart, it carries a profound message. It marks the return of the mythical King Mahabali, a golden era in Kerala's history defined by equality, justice, prosperity, and complete unity. It is a beautiful reminder that a society thrives when everyone is lifted up, when honesty prevails, and when community spirit comes first. It was wonderful to see our Malayalee-Australians celebrate with traditional music, Pookalam flower carpets, and the Onam Sadhya feast. The celebrations were a powerful example of Australian multiculturalism, which Navodaya Sydney champions

through its community focused programs. It was a pleasure to meet with Navodaya Sydney's Vice President Divya Prajeev and discuss their presence and ongoing work in the community. Thanks to Divya and the rest of the NSW state team for my invitation to attend, and to the entire Malayalee-Australian community for their welcoming hospitality.

ST MARK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH GRANVILLE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was delighted to join parishioners at St Mark's Anglican Church Granville on 23 August 2026 where we marked the completion of restoration works on the historic church building. Reverend Tallis Tien and Parramatta Bishop Reverend Gary Koo led a joint service for their English, Chinese and Filipino congregations, bringing the St Mark's community together to recognise the incredibly generous donations of its parishioners and the funding assistance it received through the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership program. Through government and community support, the parish was able to repair the church's roof trusses and upgrade the rectory, preserving the beautiful historic building and ensuring it can continue to be used for worship and celebration for decades to come. It was lovely to see such a diverse group of worshippers present at the service, representing the importance of the Anglican Church to the fabric of Western Sydney. The service honoured the generosity of the St Mark's parishioners and was a reminder of the great things that can happen when our Granville community comes together.

REMEMBERING THE APPIN MINE EXPLOSION

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—On July 24 we gathered to remember those who lost their lives in the Appin Mine Explosion in 1979, fourteen men who should have returned home to their families at the end of their shift. The memorial, with its 14 steel arches symbolising each life lost, stands as a powerful reminder of lives cut tragically short and of the resilience of this community. We remember their names, not simply as a list, but as fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, mates and colleagues. They were ordinary people who went to work each day to provide for their families and contribute to their community. Their absence has never diminished with time, and neither has the love of those they left behind. It was especially meaningful to stand alongside the families of those who were lost, as well as many current and retired miners who attended today's service. Your presence is a powerful reminder that mining is more than an industry—it is a community built on mateship, hard work and looking out for one another. The memories of those we lost live on through you, and your commitment to supporting each other ensures their legacy is never forgotten.

IN-MOTION DANCEWORKS USA TOUR

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—In-Motion Danceworks brought their artistry and passion to the international stage. In April 2026, sixteen young dancers aged between 7 and 17 years of age from the Silverdale studio embarked on a USA Tour. The dance group performed at Disneyland California, Universal Studios Hollywood and onboard a Carnival Cruise Line. One of the highlights was participating in the Disneyland Main Street parade with hundreds of other dancers. Dancers performed cheerleading movements and smiled at hundreds of families that lined the Main Street in Disneyland creating an overwhelming sense of joy and stardom that standard dance performances cannot replicate. The Wollondilly-based dancers also participated in dance workshops led by professional performers at Disneyland and onboard the cruise. This tour was more than just performing, the tour was about cultural exchange, pushing their creative boundaries, and sharing the universal language of dance. The 2026 USA Tour culminated about two years of preparation of routines and fundraising. The local junior dancers had rehearsed their routines in their local studio in Silverdale for two years. The dancers' tour was also made possible by the support of the local community supporting their fundraising efforts.

HUME REGION SCOUTS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I rise to recognise the outstanding contribution of Hume Region Scouts, which in 2026 celebrates 80 years of continuous service to young people and communities across south-western Sydney and the Southern Highlands. Since its establishment in 1946, Hume Region has provided generations of young people with opportunities to grow in confidence, develop leadership skills and become active, responsible members of their communities. Scouting has been part of the broader local community for more than 118 years, creating a proud tradition of service, adventure and youth development. Through programs focused on personal development, leadership, outdoor education and practical skills for life, young people have participated in hiking, canoeing, kayaking, abseiling, caving, cycling, camping and other challenging and rewarding activities. Within the Southern Highlands, Scouting continues through the dedicated work of the Bargo, Mittagong and Moss Vale Scout Groups, which provide important opportunities for local young people to connect, learn and belong. I acknowledge the countless volunteer leaders, youth members, families, supporters and community partners whose commitment has made Scouting successful across the Hume Region. Their service, sacrifice and dedication over the past 80 years have created a lasting legacy that deserves our sincere recognition, appreciation and thanks.

LEANE KELLY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to recognise Leane Kelly for her outstanding contribution to the Cowra community and the broader Central West through her work with BaptistCare Home Care. Leane has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to supporting older people and helping them remain independent, connected and engaged within their communities. Through her work, she provides much more than practical assistance but also bringing compassion, dignity, kindness and genuine care to the people and families she supports. I acknowledge Leane for the important role she plays in delivering support throughout Cowra and beyond. Her passion is a wonderful example of the difference one person can make in the lives of others. I thank Leane for her service and commitment to our regional community.

COOLAMON HOSPITAL AUXILIARY HOST NSW FORUM

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It was a pleasure to attend the beautifully renovated Coolamon Hotel and join such an inspiring group at the Riverina Forum of the United Hospital Auxiliaries. Members travelled from across the region, and their dedication supporting local hospitals is truly commendable. This forum was about more than reports, it was about connection, shared purpose, and the impact of community effort. I'd like to acknowledge the guest speaker Mr Craig Patterson. His story, alongside Megan Taylor, Ryan Bartholomew and Mel Bartholomew, reflects vision, determination, and community pride. The transformation of the Coolamon Hotel is a remarkable achievement and a fitting place for us to gather. Hearing reports from across the auxiliaries was inspiring. Contributing more than \$500,000 to hospitals across the Riverina is an outstanding accomplishment. This figure represents far more than money. It reflects care, compassion, and countless hours of volunteering. It shows communities coming together to support others when it matters most. Each of these amazing volunteers play a vital role in strengthening health services and supporting patients and families during challenging times. Thank you, your contribution makes a real and lasting difference.

ISABELLA PIPER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I congratulate Isabella Piper from Boorowa on her outstanding achievement as a member of the victorious New South Wales Country Rugby League women's team. Representing New South Wales Country is a tremendous honour and reflects Isabella's dedication, hard work and commitment to rugby league. Competing at such a high level and contributing to a championship-winning side is a significant accomplishment and a source of pride for the Boorowa community. Isabella's success highlights the talent, resilience and determination of regional athletes and serves as an inspiration to young women across the Hilltops region pursuing their own sporting goals. Her achievement also demonstrates the growing opportunities available for female athletes to excel and represent their communities on larger stages. This is a proud moment for Isabella, her family, teammates and supporters, and one that deserves recognition and celebration. Well done, Isabella, on this wonderful accomplishment. I wish you every success in your future rugby league endeavours.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRINCIPAL DAVID ROBERTS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Marrickville Public School Principal Mr David Roberts on his retirement. Mr Roberts has made an outstanding contribution to public education in our community. He has been a dedicated and much-loved leader, known for his genuine care for students, staff and families alike. His weekly update to parents — famous for always tying in song lyrics that echo the message of the week — will be especially missed! Under his stewardship, Marrickville Public School has continued to grow as a warm, inclusive and high-achieving learning environment, one that reflects the very best values of public education and our Inner West community. Mr Roberts also oversaw a significant maintenance program at the school, delivering much-needed improvements to its facilities, including an upgrade to the beautiful library, making sure students and staff will benefit from a better-equipped learning environment. Mr Roberts' leadership has left a lasting impact on students who have passed through the school's gates, and on the teachers and staff who have worked alongside him. I thank Mr Roberts for his years of service and wish him a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

RED DEVILS 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Marrickville Football Club, The Red Devils, on celebrating 80 years of community football. Founded in 1945 by Bruce Livingston and Arthur Ireland, the club entered its first teams in 1946, and has called Mackey Park home since 1958. Eight decades on, Marrickville FC has grown into one of the largest community sports clubs in NSW, with more than 2,000 members and teams from Under 6s to Over 45s, including boys, girls, women's, men's, mixed and All Abilities teams. Socceroos legend Tim Cahill is the club's most famous alum. But the true measure of this club lies beyond the numbers — in decades of volunteers, coaches and parents building a club founded on inclusion and belonging, with a place for everyone. This year, the club faced heartbreaking loss, and the community rallying together showed this club is about far more than football — it's about care and looking after one another. Congratulations to President Bill Drossos and

Managing Director Georgie Kokokiris for your leadership. Well done to everyone who has worn the red and white, and every volunteer, player, coach and supporter who built this great club. Here's to thriving until your centenary and beyond.

WILKINS PUBLIC SCHOOL FAIR DAY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Wilkins Fair Day is one of the biggest and most loved community events in the Inner West and it was a pleasure to officially open the event on Sunday. Fair Day is about more than just a fun day out. Every dollar raised will help fund improvements for students, including new playground facilities, water bottle bubblers, and classroom enrichment materials that will benefit local kids for years to come. What makes days like these so special is the incredible community behind it. A special thank you to Katrina Byrne, President of the Wilkins P&C, for her leadership, and to Kim Ashton and Liz Pjeic, whose hard work helped bring another successful Fair Day to life. Thankyou also to many volunteers, teachers, staff, parents and carers who gave their time to make the day such a success. Our local public schools are the heart of our community, and it was wonderful to see so many people to come together to support Wilkins. Congratulations to everyone involved on pulling off another fantastic Fair Day!

MASONICARE AND THE NSW MASONIC CLUB DISTRICT 25

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Masonicare and NSW Masonic Club District 25 on their outstanding fundraising efforts, which have delivered \$55,000 to five organisations supporting people throughout Castle Hill and the wider community. Their generosity has provided \$20,000 to Anglicare's Castle Hill site, \$10,000 to OzHarvest Limited, \$10,000 to Meals on Wheels NSW, \$10,000 to Hills Community Aid and \$5,000 to the Stroke Foundation. These organisations perform vital work assisting vulnerable people, families experiencing hardship, older residents, people facing homelessness and Australians affected by stroke. The donations will strengthen the practical assistance, meals, care and community services available to those who need them most. The contribution to Hills Community Aid supported The Hills Winter Sleep Out, and was raised through the Grand Master's Sleepout campaign, which supports organisations assisting people experiencing homelessness across New South Wales. I also acknowledge RW Bro Romy Nieto PJGW PDGIW of District 25 - Region 2 for his leadership in directing support towards deserving community organisations. I commend the members of Masonicare and NSW Masonic Club District 25 for their generosity and thank their members for their continuing service to our community.

JULIE JORDAN - SENIOR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR NOMINEE

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Julie Jordan on her nomination by Alive 90.5 FM for the 2026 Upper North Shore Senior Volunteer of the Year Award. Julie has devoted decades to serving others through community broadcasting, education and Christian ministry. For 34 years, she has taught Special Religious Education in NSW public primary and secondary schools. She has also taught Sunday school for approximately 50 years, encouraging and supporting generations of young people. Her contribution to Alive 90.5 FM, the community radio station serving The Hills, Parramatta and Cumberland, has been equally significant. For nearly 20 years, she has produced and presented The Good Report, a Christian program sharing positive stories and messages of faith with listeners. As Secretary of the Alive 90.5 FM Board, Julie contributes to the station's governance and supports its continued service to the diverse communities of north-western Sydney. Her earlier voluntary service has included assisting with a children's playgroup, organising a children's choir and contributing to community education initiatives. Julie's nomination recognises a remarkable record of sustained and selfless service. I congratulate Julie on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her outstanding contribution to our community.

ARUK PAVALACHANDRAN - PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Aruk Pavalachandran on receiving the 2026 President's Award from the Castle Hill Dolphins Swimming Club. The award recognises Aruk's extraordinary contribution as a coach and the positive difference he has made in the lives of the club's swimmers. Throughout the 2025–26 season, Aruk was a constant source of support, encouragement and guidance. He took the time to understand each swimmer's individual goals, strengths and needs, helping them to build confidence, overcome challenges and achieve more than they thought possible. Aruk's clear communication, fair expectations and commitment to the development of every swimmer have earned him the respect of athletes and parents alike. Many of the achievements celebrated by the Castle Hill Dolphins this season reflect his influence, guidance and countless hours of dedicated coaching. Aruk's contribution extends beyond improving performance in the pool. Through his leadership and encouragement, he helps swimmers become more resilient, confident and determined. I commend Aruk Pavalachandran for his unwavering dedication to the Castle Hill Dolphins and congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition.

NEPEAN BLUE MOUNTAINS PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—I was grateful to recently attend a meeting of the Nepean Blue Mountains Parkinson's Support Group as a guest speaker and to hear firsthand about the important support it provides to people living with Parkinson's, their families and carers. Guided by its vision of a world without Parkinson's, the group plays a vital role in bridging the gap between neurologists, patients and families by offering a safe, positive and judgement-free space to share experiences, ask questions and find support. The group also connects members with local allied health providers, who attend monthly meetings to offer practical advice, deliver presentations, discuss best practice and share updates on scientific research into Parkinson's. This warm and welcoming community is a powerful example of compassion, solidarity and local care in action. I was honoured to be invited to provide an update on all things Penrith, and I sincerely thank Cheryl, Jim and Group Leader Viv for their generosity and for making me feel so welcome.

NEPEAN CANCER CRUSHERS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—I wish to commend the dedicated Nepean Cancer Crushers, who have raised an incredible \$45,000 for the Dry July Foundation. These funds will be used to purchase new furniture for the Nepean Cancer Care Centre waiting area, improving patient comfort, access and experience. Throughout July, the Crushers held several activities to raise funds and promote the excellent work of Nepean Cancer Care, including a Bunnings barbeque, a trivia night at Penrith RSL and breakfast barbeques on campus. I thank everyone who gave their time, donated their money and supported the Nepean Cancer Crushers in 2026. Penrith is a strong community that turns out to support one another in hard times and in pursuit of good causes, and I commend the Cancer Crushers for their outstanding contribution to patient dignity, comfort and care.

NEPEAN FOOD SERVICES - MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—I was delighted to recently attend Nepean Food Services' National Meals on Wheels Day event. It was a particularly special occasion this year, with the warm welcome and inclusion of Hawkesbury Meals on Wheels. It was a wonderful opportunity to personally thank and celebrate the dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time to support people across our local communities, especially residents who may need a little extra care and connection. Meals on Wheels does far more than deliver nutritionally balanced meals. It helps older Australians continue living well in the comfort of their own homes, while also offering friendly check-ins, practical support and a meaningful sense of connection. For many older residents, that knock at the door can mean so much more than a meal. It can be a conversation, a smile, and reassurance that someone in the community cares. This support helps people remain independent, connected and confident in their own homes for longer. I sincerely thank Nepean Food Services and Hawkesbury Meals on Wheels for the kindness, compassion and commitment they show every day, and for inviting me to be part of such a meaningful community celebration.

JAHZARRA KINCAID

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—Jahzarra Kincaid, a dedicated Year 12 student at Narooma High School, exemplifies extraordinary community leadership and service. Selected as one of 25 students across New South Wales to receive the 2026 Youth Community Service Award from the NSW branch of the Order of Australia Association, Jahzarra was honoured at Government House in Sydney by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW. Her recognition reflects years of active commitment to her community. Jahzarra has volunteered for several years in the canteen at Narooma Football Club and consistently assists the Bodalla Local Aboriginal Land Council with community events and supporting local elders. Deeply committed to health advocacy, she serves as an ambassador for *We Breathe*, a Grand Pacific Health initiative dedicated to reducing smoking and vaping among First Nations peoples. Balancing a demanding Year 12 academic workload—including HSC courses in mathematics, English, biology, construction, and community and family studies—Jahzarra has demonstrated exceptional discipline, time management, and maturity. Narooma High School Executive Principal Tracy Scobie praised her for approaching every commitment with distinction. Jahzarra's outstanding contributions serve as an inspiring role model for her peers and a testament to the profound impact of youth leadership.

PETER CHANCE

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—After 43 years of steadfast dedication, Peter Chance is stepping back from his central role at the Candelo Market. Since stepping in following the sudden passing of market visionary Dr. Jake Morgan in 1983, Peter has been a cornerstone of the market's growth, attending virtually every market day to ensure operations ran smoothly and welcoming locals and visitors alike. Peter's impact on Candelo extends far beyond the market stalls. Under his guidance alongside his wife Yvonne and fellow dedicated volunteers, market proceeds were channelled directly back into the community. Most notably, Peter was

instrumental in bringing the Candelo and Kameruka Swimming Pool to life in 1997—personally operating the bulldozer, tiling, managing plumbing, and coordinating with engineers. Proceeds from the market have also funded local park benches, playground equipment, and community gatherings like the Candelo Village Festival. Known for his calm presence and readiness to lend a hand, Peter has left an indelible mark on the town's spirit and infrastructure. As he transitions to focus on his family, the Candelo community extends its deepest gratitude for his decades of tireless volunteer work and extraordinary legacy.

MORUYA PUBLIC SCHOOL - ART IN THE MAKING 2026

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—I was pleased to attend the Moruya Public School Art in the Making fundraising event on Friday 18 September. This year Moruya Public School presented Art in the Making – an exhibition of student produced artwork which is auctioned as a fundraising initiative to support our school and students. Each class has been guided by a local artist to create a collaborative art piece. The theme for the exhibition is Belonging. More than 40 exhibits were displayed. The artwork was of outstanding quality and covered a wide range of media from painting to ceramics to textiles. Complimentary food and refreshments were serviced by the Kitchen Garden Kids Catering Crew, and they were supported by Moruya High School Hospitality students. Before the auction, the audience was entertained by Minor Disruption a band of year 3 to 5 students. They rocked on with covers of Nirvana and The White Stripes. The highlight was Recess their version of Smoko by The Chats. Congratulations to all the students at Moruya Public School. Finally, thanks to the Art in the Making Committee and Moruya Public School P&C Association for making the event such a success.

TRIMBLE'S - SIX DECADES OF BACKING MACKSVILLE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—For nearly 60 years, Trimble's Furniture One has been part of the fabric of Macksville. That era has sadly come to an end as the family-owned business has now closed its doors. Ron and Betty understood that being in business in a regional town is about more than selling furniture and floor coverings. It is about backing the community that backs you. At a warm send-off at Macksville Ex-Services Club, organised by Macksville Rotary Club, the community came together to recognise what Betty, the late Ron Trimble, their children Kylie and David, and long-standing employee Michael Simpson have given to the town over so many years. Over the years, Trimble's supported the Macksville Music Muster, Macksville Show, Pro-Ag and local sporting clubs, while also giving local young people opportunities through after-school and holiday work. That is the sort of contribution that helps a region grow stronger. Our towns are built by people who put their time, money and energy back into the communities they call home. Thank you to the Trimble family for six decades of doing exactly that, and for the lasting legacy you leave in Macksville and the Nambucca Valley.

RIDERS PITCH IN TO KEEP NAMBUCCA TRAILS THRIVING

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—There is something pretty great about seeing people pitch in to look after a place they enjoy. That is exactly what members of the Nambucca Valley Mountain Bike Club are doing at Jacks Ridge Mountain Bike Park, finding ways to give back to the trails and bushland they spend so much time enjoying. The club's Adopt-a-Track initiative gives riders another way to lend a hand when they have the time, alongside the regular working bees and volunteers who help keep the park in good shape. It is a simple idea, but it says a lot about the people who use Jacks Ridge. They know the trails do not just look after themselves, and that keeping them safe, clean and enjoyable takes a bit of effort from everyone. It is also about more than mountain biking. Looking after the trails helps protect the surrounding environment, gives local families and young people a place to get outside and enjoy the bush, and helps make Jacks Ridge a place people want to visit. Well done to the Nambucca Valley Mountain Bike Club who have started this initiative. That sort of community spirit is worth recognising.

A GIVING STALL BUILT ON COMMUNITY GENEROSITY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Sometimes a simple idea can make a real difference in a community. After the 2019 fires, Maureen Courtenay saw how difficult it could be for people to replace the everyday things they had lost. Her response was to start a stall where everything was given away for free. Four years on, that idea has grown into a community effort, with a team of six volunteers helping run the Giving Stall whenever they can, including at markets and events across the Nambucca Valley. The stall is supported by donations from families, friends, community groups and even other market stallholders, who would rather see unwanted items go to someone who needs them than have them end up in the bin. There are no questions asked and no expectation to give anything back. That approach has helped people who might otherwise feel uncomfortable seeking assistance, while also giving members of the community a practical way to help their neighbours. Maureen and her volunteers are a great example of community spirit in action, bringing people together to help one another and making sure useful things find a home where they are needed.

CESSNOCK HIGH SCHOOL

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock)—Congratulations to Cessnock High School for being named a recipient of the 2026 Secretary's Award for Outstanding School Achievement during the 2026 Public Education Awards. The awards presentation took place on 3 August 2026 at Sydney Town Hall and was attended by members of the Cessnock High Executive Team. The organisers of the Awards advised: Cessnock High School has demonstrated outstanding whole-school improvement through a consistent explicit teaching framework with a strong literacy and numeracy focus. Through evidence-informed practice, instructional leadership and collaborative professional learning, the school has embedded high-quality teaching across classrooms to improve engagement, achievement and equity outcomes. The initiative has resulted in exceptional literacy and numeracy growth, improved HSC outcomes, increased attendance and stronger student wellbeing and engagement. Recognised as seventh in NSW for NAPLAN Years 7 to 9 value-added growth and acknowledged by ACARA as a 'School Making a Difference', Cessnock High School exemplifies the transformative impact of education through excellence in teaching and leadership. Congratulations go to the entire school community who have made these incredible results a reality – from Principal Belinda Cooper and her dedicated teaching staff, every student, support staff, administration staff, parents, carers and guardians.

WEST WALLSEND HIGH SCHOOL CANCER SUX WALK

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock)—West Wallsend High School students walk 13 kilometres to Mount Sugarloaf and back to raise funds for a local charity. West Wallsend High have been participating for 17 years. This year the funds raised are for Breast Cancer Trials. The organiser of the event since its inception is PE teacher David Munro. The original motivation was a West Wallsend High School staff member Alicia Breasley who was diagnosed with breast cancer. This year joining staff and students was Renee Chandler who was diagnosed with breast cancer in late 2025. Renee and her daughters Hannah and Olivia joined husband and father Deputy Principal Michael Chandler for the walk. Michael has completed the walk every year since 2011 with the students. Prior to this year, West Wallsend High has raised over \$80,000 for various charities – they are aiming for a target of \$10,000 in 2026. Local businesses donated prizes for students who participate in the walk to win in the fundraiser. The Cancer Sux walk is part of the school's culture and an opportunity for students to demonstrate resilience and the success of conquering the challenge.

AWARD WINNING GOJEE APP

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise brothers Jack, Sam and Tom Ducat on creating the Gojee App, an international award-winning initiative, with the app being named the winner of the Xero Global App Awards 2026. I congratulate the Ducat team on this significant achievement, having the foresight and ability to move from a small business need, to assist with their family owned earth moving business at Armidale, through to a platform suitable for construction, manufacturing, engineering, fabrication and other project-based businesses. This was an eight-year effort, starting with engaging a local business to develop a prototype to improve their business efficiency, investigating whether their internal system could become a commercial platform, before partnering with Xero as an app partner. Such has been the success of this homegrown software, today Gojee is being used in various countries right across the world. I commend Jack, Sam and Tom on their dedication to the development of Gojee and on this outstanding recognition for their excellence. Well done!

INVERELL SINGERS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise an important milestone for one of the Northern Tablelands' most valued community organisations, The Inverell Singers, who are proudly marking their 10-year anniversary. I congratulate the founders Lyn Hill, Clara Porritt and Mark and Gayle Leonard, with the group beginning with just fifteen members and a simple vision to create a welcoming, non-auditioned community choir, where people of all abilities could share a love of music and friendship. Over the past decade, the choir has grown into a vibrant musical institution. The group has built an impressive and diverse repertoire, spanning contemporary favourites spirituals and beloved theatre classics. Under the leadership of dedicated musical directors, including Gayle Leonard, Emma Elsley and Sue Davis, and supported by talented accompanists such as Keiko Robertson, the choir has continued to develop its musical excellence. As such, the choir has performed at the Inverell Eisteddfod the Bushfire Concert for Tingha, the Inverell Rock'n'Roll Festival, Australia Day celebrations, ANZAC Day commemorations and Carols in the Park. I commend the Inverell Singers with a membership of more than 25 singers and a reputation for both musical excellence and warm hospitality, continuing to strengthen community connections and enrich the cultural life of Inverell.

MUNGINDI CENTRAL SCHOOL

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Mungindi Central School, which was founded in 1893 and over time has harnessed and maintained the motto of Motivation, Commitment and Success, which sees staff, students and the community working together to achieve this united goal. I congratulate two celebrated teachers living by the school's motto and for their outstanding excellence. The first is Noah Gafe, who was recently honoured with the Australian Teacher Aide of the Year Award, being recognised for his significant contribution to student learning, wellbeing and engagement at school. The second being Lena Schreiner, a Learning Support Officer, who was highly commended also in this year's awards. Being recognised nationally against worthy opponents from across Australia is indeed an absolutely impressive achievement and I speak for the Northern Tablelands when I say, "Well done!" I commend Principal Paul Laing, along with Noah, Lena, staff, the P and C Association, parents and the whole school community for shaping and enriching generations of children's lives, gifting each and every student with a wonderful education.

WINGS AND WHEELS 2026

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Today I congratulate the Grafton Aero Club, along with the organisers, volunteers, sponsors and supporters, whose efforts made the Wings and Wheels 2026 Fundraiser a great success in the Clarence Valley. This outstanding community event once again showcased the very best of our region, bringing together aviation enthusiasts, classic and modern vehicle owners, local businesses and families in a celebration of community spirit and generosity. Events such as Wings and Wheels demonstrate the strength, kindness and community-minded nature of the Clarence Valley. They provide an opportunity for residents and visitors alike to come together, celebrate shared interests and support worthwhile community causes. I particularly acknowledge the organising committee and the many volunteers whose tireless work behind the scenes ensured the event was delivered so successfully. Their dedication, together with the generous support of sponsors and attendees, made this year's fundraiser another remarkable achievement. I extend my sincere congratulations and thanks to everyone involved in Wings and Wheels 2026. Your commitment to supporting the community is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to seeing this wonderful event continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.

DAY FOR LIV 2026

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate all those who contributed to the success of Day for Liv 2026. What began as a tribute to the life and legacy of Olivia Rogers has grown into a remarkable community event. This year's event showcased the very best of the Clarence Valley, uniting the community to honour Liv's memory, raise awareness of sarcoma and raise vital funds. I acknowledge Peta Rogers, the Day for Liv Committee and volunteers for their dedication in delivering such a successful event. Supported by volunteers and community supporters, they created a welcoming and memorable weekend for everyone. Congratulations also go to the players, teams, sponsors and supporters whose generosity helped raise more than \$6,000, doubling last year's fundraising result. These funds will support the important work of Little Windmills and The Tie Dye Project. Most importantly, Day for Liv ensured Olivia's spirit remained at the heart of the event. Through friendship, laughter and community connection, her legacy continues to inspire and make a lasting difference. To everyone involved, thank you for your contribution. The Clarence Valley is proud of what you have achieved, and I congratulate you on another outstanding Day for Liv.

CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I recognise Clarence Valley Council on its success at the 2026 NSW and ACT Engineering Excellence Awards. Council was recognised in the Design & Construction of a Public Works Project greater than \$5 million category for its work delivering the Clarence Regional Aquatic Centre - a terrific acknowledgement of the planning, collaboration and hard work behind this important community facility. Replacing the 60-year-old Grafton Olympic Pool, the centre has transformed aquatic facilities in the Clarence Valley, with three indoor pools, an outdoor eight-lane 50-metre pool, ramp access, a 600-seat grandstand, an all-ability splash pad, new slides and improved amenities. It has quickly become a hub for our community, hosting swimming lessons, school carnivals, aqua fitness and family celebrations. I also congratulate Council's Manager of Civil Services, Devin Simpson, on receiving a Highly Commended award for Disaster Recovery Portfolio Management. Given the floods and fires our region regularly faces, this recognises the dedication of Council staff supporting our communities before, during and after disaster events. Congratulations to Clarence Valley Council, Devin and the entire team. It is fantastic to see the Clarence Valley recognised for the quality of its projects and the people behind them.

NO MORE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Ending the scourge of domestic and family violence will involve changing the behaviour of men and boys and with that in mind, I congratulate the Wagga Women's Health Centre and Football Wagga for bringing a powerful anti-violence message to our community. In August, the groups hosted "No More Round", a program that harnesses sport to educate men and boys to stand against domestic violence. On the field, players linked arms to say no to family violence, and off the field, club leaders attended workshops to guide the development of domestic violence plans and to learn how sporting clubs can make a difference. Part of the women's centre's Men as Allies program, No More Round is adding to a range of measures that I hope will help to prevent violence in the home before it starts. I would like to express my appreciation to Penny Stanbury and Julie Milsom from the women's health centre, as well as Football Wagga's Liam Dedini and Rob Cross from No More NT for making the round a reality. Congratulations and thank you to all involved - your passion and determination will help make our community fairer and safer for women and children.

ROBINA JALIL

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to pay tribute to the late Mrs Robina Jalil – one of Wagga's most beloved people and the powerhouse behind the iconic Indian Tavern Tandoori restaurant which has delighted countless diners over generations. The face of the restaurant and an unforgettable host, Robina passed away recently, inspiring tributes from her many friends and customers. One of my first memories of Wagga when I arrived as a young doctor 40 years ago was eating at Robina's restaurant and trying her legendary butter chicken for the first time. Four decades later, I was proud to introduce her to the Premier when we visited the restaurant for dinner and as always, Robina was a wonderful host and great advocate for Wagga. She has been a terrific support to my family and me, and I believe her hospitality, warm welcomes and care for our community represents everything that is great about our city. I know that Robina will be greatly missed in Wagga and beyond, and I send my sincere condolences to her family and many friends, with special thoughts for her children. Vale, Robina. Thank you for the wonderful memories.

ROY BERNARD HAMMOND - 100 YEARS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to congratulate Roy Hammond who celebrated his 100th birthday on 19th July 2026. Roy grew up in Blayney, near Orange in NSW, before moving at the age of 13 to Sydney to live with his aunt and uncle. He developed a life-long interest in sporting activities, being well-known in the area for his bike riding prowess, riding all over Sydney on his favourite Malvern Star bike. He also was a very good tennis player. Roy married Beatrice Breakspear, known as Betty, in 1951 and they have a son Geoffrey. As a family they enjoyed playing tennis, and Roy and Betty were a formidable doubles pair. Roy had several careers over the years. His first job was selling and making shoes. He also drove a taxi, and he and Betty owned and ran a newsagency in West Botany for many years. Roy played golf into his nineties and still enjoys a game of Bridge. Roy has lived an incredibly active and fulfilling life surrounded by loving family and friends and I join them in congratulating Roy on reaching this great milestone.

CAMMERAY NEWSAGENCY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—After 29 years of dedicated service to the Cammeray community, Roger and Melinda have closed the doors of Cammeray Newsagency for the final time. For nearly three decades, they were a constant and welcoming presence in the local community. Opening seven days a week from 7 am, they demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to their customers and built connections with generations of Cammeray residents. Their kindness, humility and personal interest in those who visited the newsagency made it much more than simply a local business. Roger and Melinda are two exceptionally hardworking people who have quietly made an enormous contribution to local life. Cammeray Newsagency became a familiar meeting place where residents could always expect friendly service, a warm welcome and a conversation. I personally thank Roger and Melinda for their kindness, their many conversations with members of our community and the warmth they showed every day. Cammeray Newsagency will be greatly missed, but they have certainly earned the opportunity to reclaim some time for themselves and their families. I wish them both a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

WILLOUGHBY BAND

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The 130th NSW State Band Championships marked a historic achievement for Willoughby City Bands. For the first time, both senior bands competed together in A Grade, finishing first and second. This extraordinary result reflects the vision, energy and hard work of musical director Dominic Longhurst, who has developed two ensembles capable of performing at the highest level. There was further success for Willoughby, with the Junior Band winning Junior B Grade under Dale Vail. This was Dale's final performance leading the band, and I thank him for his contribution to Willoughby's young musicians and

wish him well in his next chapter. Congratulations to every musician whose preparation, commitment and teamwork made these outstanding results possible. I also acknowledge the band committee, families and volunteers whose support keeps these ensembles thriving. Three Willoughby bands achieved three remarkable results and made NSW banding history.

CASS GUMNUT EARLY LEARNING CENTRE, ST LEONARDS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—CASS Gumnut Early Learning Centre in St Leonards has been named the winner of the Excellence in Multicultural Program category at the 2026 Excellence in Early Childhood Education Awards. This outstanding achievement recognises the centre's commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment where children and families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds feel welcomed, respected and valued. Early childhood education plays an important role in shaping how young people understand their community and the wider world. By celebrating cultural diversity from the earliest years, CASS Gumnut is helping children develop curiosity, understanding and respect for others. This award reflects the dedication of the centre's educators, leadership team and support staff, as well as the contribution of its children and families. It also continues CASS's longstanding service to multicultural communities across Sydney. Congratulations to everyone at CASS Gumnut Early Learning Centre on this well-deserved recognition and for the positive contribution you continue to make in St Leonards and across our local community.

ALKALIZER 10TH BIRTHDAY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown)—I am proud to congratulate Alkalizer on reaching the significant milestone of 10 years in business in Campbelltown. Over the past decade, Alkalizer has become a valued part of our local community. What began as a small local business has grown into a place that brings people together, supports local employment, and contributes to the vibrant spirit that makes Campbelltown such a great place to live and work. Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and Alkalizer's success is a testament to the hard work, resilience and dedication that local business owners demonstrate every day. Through creating jobs, supporting local connections and fostering a strong sense of community, Alkalizer has made a meaningful contribution to our region. A small business achieving a milestone like this only comes through the hard work and support of so many people, and I would like to recognise all of them for their contribution. Particularly Shefali Pall who has dedicated so much to make Alkalizer the valued local business it is today. On behalf of the Campbelltown community, I congratulate the entire Alkalizer team on this remarkable achievement and thank them for their contribution to our local area.

BRONWYN STARKEY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement is to acknowledge the dedication, passion and commitment Bronwyn Starkey has shown to the Bathurst community through her involvement in the Edgell Jog Organising Committee. Beginning in 1976 as the Jubilee Jog celebrating 50 years of Edgell's factory in Bathurst, the 7.5km Edgell Jog has become an iconic annual event for the Bathurst community and beyond. People travel from miles away to complete the gruelling course that encompasses a 1.2km hill climb universally described as harder than 'heartbreak hill' in the City to Surf. This is a community event that has only been possible through volunteers, sponsors and community spirit that has cheered on joggers each year. There are very few running events left that traverse through the streets of a city and it takes a mighty committee to make this event possible. As a member of the committee for the final year of the Edgell Jog, Bronwyn's efforts over the past 4 or so years have been the underpinning of their success year after year. Her passion for her community is evident in all she contributes and I sincerely thank her for her efforts.

KATE LYNCH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement is to acknowledge the dedication, passion and commitment Kate Lynch has shown to the Bathurst community through her involvement in the Edgell Jog Organising Committee. Beginning in 1976 as the Jubilee Jog celebrating 50 years of Edgell's factory in Bathurst, the 7.5km Edgell Jog has become an iconic annual event for the Bathurst community and beyond. People travel from miles away to complete the gruelling course that encompasses a 1.2km hill climb universally described as harder than 'heartbreak hill' in the City to Surf. This is a community event that has only been possible through volunteers, sponsors and community spirit that has cheered on joggers each year. There are very few running events left that traverse through the streets of a city and it takes a mighty committee to make this event possible. As a member of the committee for the final year of the Edgell Jog, Kate's efforts over the past 10 years have been the underpinning of their success year after year. Her passion for her community is evident in all she contributes and I sincerely thank her for her efforts.

JASMINE NANKERVIS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement is to acknowledge the dedication, passion and commitment Jasmine Nankervis has shown to the Bathurst community through her involvement in the Edgell Jog Organising Committee. Beginning in 1976 as the Jubilee Jog celebrating 50 years of Edgell's factory in Bathurst, the 7.5km Edgell Jog has become an iconic annual event for the Bathurst community and beyond. People travel from miles away to complete the gruelling course that encompasses a 1.2km hill climb universally described as harder than 'heartbreak hill' in the City to Surf. This is a community event that has only been possible through volunteers, sponsors and community spirit that has cheered on joggers each year. There are very few running events left that traverse through the streets of a city and it takes a mighty committee to make this event possible. As a member of the committee for the final year of the Edgell Jog, Jasmine's efforts over the past year have been integral to the promotion of the event's final jog. Her passion for her community is evident in all she contributes and I sincerely thank her for her efforts.

CANTOO FOUNDATION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I am delighted to recognise CanToo Foundation as it celebrates 21 years of bringing people together to challenge themselves, challenge cancer, and make a lasting difference. Based in North Sydney, with CanToo pods across Sydney, the organisation combines fitness, friendship, and fundraising. Since 2005, more than 22,000 participants have taken part in its training programs and challenges, raising more than \$35 million for cancer research. What makes CanToo's contribution especially powerful is its commitment to funding early-career cancer researchers. With many promising researchers struggling to secure funding at this crucial stage, CanToo provides the catalyst and jumpstart they need to pursue important new ideas. To date, it has funded 161 research projects, supporting the next generation of cancer researchers. Founded by Annie Crawford following the loss of her father to lung cancer, CanToo has grown into a remarkable community where participants find motivation, purpose and friendships that can last a lifetime. Even painting a fingernail CanToo orange before competing in a race has become a small but meaningful symbol of that shared commitment. Congratulations to everyone who has made CanToo's 21 years such an extraordinary success.

HUMMINGBIRD MUSIC & VOCAL STUDIO

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate Hummingbird Music & Vocal Studio on being recognised as the 2026 North Shore Local Business Award winner in the Performing Arts category. Hummingbird Music & Vocal Studio provides students with an opportunity to develop their musical abilities while also discovering their own voice, building confidence and expressing themselves creatively. The impact of quality music education extends beyond technical skills. It can foster discipline, self-expression, resilience and a sense of achievement, while creating meaningful connections between students, teachers and families. This award recognises the dedication and passion of the Hummingbird team and the positive contribution the studio makes to the local creative community. I congratulate the founder Julia Michaels and all the teachers at Hummingbird Music & Vocal Studio on this well-deserved recognition and thank them for nurturing the talents and confidence of local students. Their work demonstrates the important contribution that local creative businesses make to the cultural life of our local community and helps ensure that music and the performing arts remain an accessible and valued part of our everyday life.

SHORE ATHLETES WATER POLO SUCCESS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I would like to recognise the outstanding achievements of several Shore students who have recently represented Australia and Singapore on the international water polo stage. Cooper Semmens, Jett Semmens and Alex Woolfe travelled to Portugal to compete at the Water Polo World Championships, proudly representing Australia against some of the best young athletes from around the world. Russell Yuan has also represented Singapore across three major international water polo tournaments, while George Kennedy is currently in Zagreb, Croatia, representing Australia as part of the Australian Under-16s team. These achievements are a wonderful reflection of the dedication, discipline and talent of these young athletes, and it is fantastic to see their hard work rewarded at an international level. I also want to acknowledge Shore Headmaster Dr Peter Miller, along with the school's dedicated water polo coaches, for the important role they play in nurturing these students' talent and developing their skills. Their commitment to supporting young athletes helps provide the foundation for success both in and beyond the pool. I congratulate Cooper, Jett, Alex, Russell and George, and look forward to following their continued achievements.

SALT PROPERTY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Salt Property on winning the Outstanding Real Estate Agency award at the Hunter Local Business Awards. With the promise of delivering a 'six star service'

Salt Property consistently go above and beyond for their clients. This all-female team merges dynamic, modern marketing with genuine community connections—consistently achieving record-breaking sales across Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, and the Hunter region. The Hunter Local Business Awards recognise small, locally owned and operated businesses that deliver high-quality products and services. This year marks Salt Property's second award in this category, having also won in 2024, and crowned a finalist in 2022. Their track record proves that Salt Property continues to set higher standards year after year, and I look forward to watching the team's ongoing success.

NEWY KNIFE WIZARD

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Newy Knife Wizard, on winning the Outstand Sole Operator award at the Hunter Local Business Awards. Newy Knife Wizard specialises in precision knife sharpening, blade restoration, and other sharp tool maintenance, supporting a wide local community from professional chefs to home cooks. The Hunter Local Business Awards recognise small, locally owned and operated businesses that deliver high-quality products and services. Recognised for his craftsmanship, dedication, and exceptional service, Newy Knife Wizard is a well-deserving winner of this prestigious award. Well done and stay sharp!

DARK TOURS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Dark Tours. Dark Tours take visitors and locals alike on historic ghost tours of Newcastle and the Hunter. This unique experience shares forgotten stories of the past and invites tour-goers to undertake their own paranormal investigation. The Hunter Local Business Awards recognise small, locally owned and operated businesses that deliver high-quality products and services. After being named a finalist in this category in 2025 and 2024, I am so pleased to see Dark Tours take home the Tourism Services award in 2026. It is a truly deserving recognition, well done!

WENDY SYMINGTON

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 13th September 2026, it was fantastic to join Prospect local Wendy Symington for Pancakes for Parkinson's, supporting her efforts to raise awareness of Parkinson's Disease. Living with Parkinson's herself, Wendy generously opened her home to neighbours, friends, advocates and our broader community. Over a sausage sizzle and delicious pancakes, people came together to connect, learn more about Parkinson's and raise important funds. Wendy is a member of the Blacktown Parkinson's Support Group, providing important local support and connection for people living with Parkinson's and their families. Operating as a branch of Parkinson's NSW, the Group is also raising awareness, sharing experiences and raising vital funds for services and programs. Parkinson's NSW provides counselling, a statewide network of support groups, specialist Parkinson's nurses, education programs and its dedicated InfoLine, offering vital support to the 70,000 people in NSW living with Parkinson's. Wendy's courage and determination to turn her own experience into meaningful advocacy and support for others is inspiring. Her event was a fantastic example of our community coming together with compassion to care and support one another. Congratulations, Wendy, on this great event. Thank you for continuing to champion people living with Parkinson's.

MARIST180 - DARAMU

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 8 September, I was pleased to Marist180's Daramu in Hebersham and meet the team supporting young people across Western Sydney. Marist180 is a for-purpose organisation committed to improving outcomes for children and young people experiencing disadvantage, alongside their families and communities. Through therapeutic care, family preservation, homelessness support, cultural support, supported living and employment pathways, Marist180 works to ensure young people are safe, supported and empowered. Operating locally since 2010, Daramu provides culturally responsive youth justice case management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 12 to 18 who are at risk of, or in contact with, the justice system. Its early intervention approach works to reduce offending and reoffending while strengthening pathways to education, employment and community connection. During the visit, it was valuable to discuss the importance of early, culturally safe, place-based support to improve outcomes for young people and reduce pressure on our justice and child protection systems. I acknowledge Angela Raguz, CEO; Patrick O'Reilly, Director Mission, Inclusion and Identity; Arthur Frail, Aboriginal Program Manager; Jane Powles, Partnerships and Advocacy Coordinator; and Samira Chemeit, SHS Program Manager, for their advocacy and commitment to improving outcomes for our Western Sydney community.

BEAT THE BLUE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Saturday 22 August 2026, I was delighted to join the Premier, the Hon. Chris Minns MP, at Beat the Blue at Sydney Motorsport Park, Eastern Creek. Beat the Blue brings together car enthusiasts and members of the NSW Police Force Traffic and Highway Patrol Command to promote

road safety, responsible driving and positive engagement between police and the community. The event gives motoring enthusiasts the opportunity to face off against Highway Patrol officers and test their driving skills in a safe and controlled environment. By taking the competition off public roads and onto the track, Beat the Blue delivers an important message about responsible driving while building stronger relationships between police and the community. Beat the Blue also raises funds and awareness for NSW Police Legacy, supporting the families of serving and retired police officers who have suffered the loss of a loved one. Thank you to Sergeant Steven Planinic, Beat the Blue Founder, the entire Beat the Blue team, NSW Police Force officers and volunteers for delivering another successful event. Thank you as well to our brave NSW Police Force Officers for your continued commitment to road safety, community engagement and supporting our police families.

SWEE JOON CHOY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It was an honour to recognise the dedicated service of Swee Joon Choy as part of the NSW Rural Fire Service Central Coast District Medal Presentation. Swee commenced his service with the Rural Fire Service at Warringah in 2007 before joining the Avoca Beach Brigade in 2017. Over 17 years of service, he has attained firefighter qualifications up to Crew Leader and developed specialist skills as an Air Base Operator and Community Safety Assistant. Swee has also contributed greatly to his brigade through leadership roles, previously serving as Training Officer and currently as Deputy Captain. I would like to congratulate Swee Joon Choy on being awarded the 15 Years Diligent Service National Medal. This recognition reflects his many years of commitment, dedication and service to protecting our community. Thank you, Swee, for your continued contribution to the Central Coast community and for your unwavering commitment to helping others whenever called upon.

2026 NATIONAL MEDAL RECIPIENTS - WAMBERAL SLSC

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is a privilege to acknowledge and congratulate the following outstanding volunteers from the Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club, Gregory Diamond, Justine Ella, Martyn Kennedy and Matthew Walter on receiving the National Medal for Surf Life Saving. This prestigious award, one of Australia's highest civilian honours, recognises long and diligent service by individuals who put themselves at risk to protect the community. Gregory, Justine, Martyn and Matthew have each served for 15 years, dedicating their time, skills, and care to keeping our beaches safe. Their commitment reflects the very best of the surf lifesaving spirit, bravery, community service, and unwavering vigilance. Their impact has been felt by countless locals and visitors who have enjoyed our coastline thanks to their efforts. The National Medal honours not just length of service, but the quality of it. We are proud to recognise these individuals for their achievement and deeply grateful for their contribution. Congratulations and thank you for your dedication and for the legacy of safety and community you continue to build.

2026 NATIONAL MEDAL RECIPIENTS - MACMASTERS BEACH SLSC

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is a privilege to acknowledge and congratulate two outstanding volunteers from MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club, James Myers and Anthony Hall, on receiving the 2026 National Medal for Surf Life Saving. This prestigious award, one of Australia's highest civilian honours, recognises long and diligent service by individuals who put themselves at risk to protect others. James Myers was awarded the 2nd Clasp for 35yrs of service and Anthony Hall awarded 1st Clasp for 25 years' service, both recognised for generously giving their time, skills and care to help keep our community safe. Their commitment reflects the very best of the surf lifesaving spirit, bravery, community service and unwavering vigilance. Their efforts have made a meaningful difference to countless locals and visitors who enjoy our coastline. The National Medal recognises not only length of service, but the excellence of that service. The Surf Life Saving movement is built on the passion and dedication of volunteers, and these recipients truly embody that spirit. On behalf of the Terrigal electorate, I congratulate James and Anthony on this well deserved recognition and thank them for their outstanding service and commitment to our community.

SHARE THE DIGNITY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to thank the incredibly generous members of our local community who supported the recent Share the Dignity collection through my electorate office. The response was extraordinary, with the community donating 342 packets of sanitary pads, 93 packets of tampons, three packets of incontinence pads, six pairs of period underwear and an assortment of items for handbags. Share the Dignity performs important work supporting women and girls experiencing homelessness, domestic violence and difficult circumstances by ensuring they can access essential period products. Each item donated provides practical assistance while also sending an important message that those facing hardship are not alone and that their dignity matters. This remarkable result demonstrates the compassion and generosity for which our local community is so well known. I sincerely thank every person who contributed to the collection, along with the dedicated Share the Dignity volunteers who ensure these essential items reach those who need them most.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER PAUL DUNSTAN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Paul Dunstan on his appointment as Assistant Commissioner of the NSW Police Force, leading the State Operations and Emergency Management Command. Assistant Commissioner Dunstan has dedicated 32 years to serving and protecting the people of New South Wales. Beginning his career in General Duties at Liverpool and Macquarie Fields, he went on to serve in criminal investigations and lead complex policing operations across Sydney. Our local community knows him best through his outstanding service as Commander of the St George Police Area Command. Throughout his time in this role, Assistant Commissioner Dunstan demonstrated exceptional leadership, professionalism and a genuine commitment to keeping our community safe. This well-deserved promotion reflects his extensive experience, integrity and distinguished record of service. On behalf of the St George community, I thank Assistant Commissioner Dunstan for his service to our local area, congratulate him on this important appointment and wish him every success in his new role.

BUSINESS CHAMBER SOUTH

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Business Chamber South on being named Outstanding Local Business Chamber at the Business NSW Regional Awards. This prestigious recognition marks a significant achievement for the Chamber and reflects its outstanding service to the business communities of Georges River and Bayside. Under the leadership of President Tony Baddour, Business Chamber South has worked tirelessly to connect local business owners, create valuable networking opportunities and advocate for the issues that matter to businesses across our region. The Chamber brings together businesses of all sizes, helping them build strong partnerships, share ideas and access the support they need to grow and succeed. Local businesses are the backbone of our economy. They create jobs, support families and contribute enormously to the strength and character of our community. This award reflects the dedication of Tony, the Chamber's board, its members and everyone who has contributed to its continued growth and success. I congratulate President Tony Baddour and the entire Business Chamber South team on this outstanding achievement and wish them every success for the future.

NEWTOWN CRICKET CLUB

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Don Skinner, who has dedicated almost four decades of outstanding service to the Newtown Cricket Club. Since first taking the field in the 1987/88 season, Don has been the embodiment of commitment, loyalty and leadership. Joining the committee the following season and serving as Club President in 2000/01, his contribution has been as significant off the field as it has been on it. His achievements are nothing short of impressive. Don holds club records for 11 premierships, 463 games, 588 wickets and an incredible 42 seasons as captain. He was deservedly awarded Life Membership in 2004. As Don steps away from his official role, he leaves behind a legacy built on believing in the club, creating opportunities for young players, and fostering a culture of loyalty and respect. Records can one day be broken, but the influence Don has had on generations of players and the lasting impact he has made on the Newtown Cricket Club will endure for many years to come. Congratulations, Don, on an extraordinary contribution to community sport. I wish you every success as you enjoy the game from a little less competitive perspective.

MARIE CORNISH, OAM

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Marie Cornish OAM of Wellington, who has been awarded the prestigious Distinguished Long Service Award at the 2026 Cricket NSW Community Sports Awards. A former Australian and NSW representative player, Marie has been a backbone of cricket in Western NSW for more than fifty years. Marie has been a driving force behind the growth of women's and girls' cricket across country and regional New South Wales. She has served as Western Region Secretary, Western Zone Female Coordinator, coached representative teams and devoted countless hours to volunteering, mentoring and administration. Well respected throughout both the cricketing and wider Wellington community, Marie's passion, leadership and commitment have helped ensure generations of players have had the opportunity to enjoy and succeed in the sport she loves. Fifty years of service is a remarkable achievement and a testament to Marie's unwavering dedication. Even after five decades, she continues to inspire others and shows no signs of slowing down. Congratulations, Marie, on this thoroughly deserved recognition. You have been an inspiration and role model for generations of girls and women, and a tireless advocate for cricket in regional New South Wales.

MICHAEL LANGLEY AND SARAH HANSEN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Michael Langley and Sarah Hansen on being named joint recipients of the 2026 Achiever of the Year Award at the BusNSW Industry Awards,

presented at the Australasia Bus and Coach Expo Gala Dinner on 15 July. The Achiever of the Year Award recognises individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the bus and coach industry. Michael and Sarah have dedicated countless hours to growing and strengthening their family businesses, Langley's Coaches and Australia Wide Coaches, while continuing a proud legacy of service spanning more than fifty years. As Business Manager, Sarah's leadership in compliance, safety governance, operational excellence, business development and continual learning has strengthened the organisation and positioned it for ongoing success. As Fleet Manager, Michael oversees a fleet of more than 100 vehicles. His hands-on leadership, commitment to preventative maintenance, fleet presentation and regulatory compliance ensures the businesses maintain the highest operational standards. Together, they are passionate about enhancing the passenger experience, supporting their staff and contributing to the wider industry. Congratulations, Sarah and Michael. Your dedication, professionalism and commitment to excellence are an outstanding example of the strength of regional family businesses.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE FC INAUGURAL CALLAGHAN CUP

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Saturday, 1 August, marked the first Callaghan Cup at Ray Watt Oval. This was a proposed annual showcase of community football, bringing together sport, inclusion and community engagement and raising funds in support of Disability Sports Australia (DSA). The Callaghan Cup reflects the University of Newcastle Football Club's (UoNFC) commitment to using grassroots football as a platform to create meaningful social impact and foster greater opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport. The afternoon featured Women's First Grade, Men's First Grade, VIP hospitality, providing opportunities to connect with community leaders, partners and club representatives. Interactive activations were delivered in partnership with DSA. The Q&A panel featured ParaMatildas players Rae Anderson, Laine Harrison, Tahlia Blanshard and Georgia Beikoff, who shared their experiences representing Australia and the role sport has played in their lives. Participants from DSA's Abilities Unleashed program accompanied the University of Newcastle Men's First Grade team onto the field and interactive activities were delivered by DSA at half-time. In attendance were Ayden Shaw, CEO of DSA, UoNFC President Nick Browne, and four kids from the Football4All team. \$9,101 was raised for DSA. Congratulations to everyone who volunteered and contributed.

NEW LAMBTON GOLDEN EAGLES GRAND FINAL WINNERS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Congratulations to the New Lambton First Grade and Reserve Grade Women who both enjoyed their grand final wins against Maitland FC, 2-1 and 1-0 respectively at Darling Street Oval on 12 September. The Golden Eagles combine quality coaching with a strong club culture and a focus on player development, from the youngest ages through to seniors. After a seven-year grand final drought and back-to-back wooden spoons in 2021 and 2022, these players possessed a new level of belief and energy. The attack was led by Newcastle Jets legend, NPLW Golden Boot and two-times capped Matilda, Tara Andrews. Tara won the Joey Peters Medal for the Player of the Grand Final and scored 35 goals over the season. No goal was scored against Maitland in four attempts through the season. The Magpies had only lost one game all season to New Lambton who were 2-1 winners in Round 16, and had defeated the Golden Eagles on three occasions, so this was a sweet victory. It is easy to see why football is one of the fastest growing sports for women with around 32% growth rate for Northern NSW.

NEWCASTLE MEMORIAL PARK 90TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—On Saturday, 18 July, Newcastle Memorial Park celebrated 90 years of service to the Hunter community. The anniversary celebrations acknowledged the generations of families, community members, employees, funeral professionals and local organisations who helped shape the legacy of this special place. Since its opening on 18 July 1936 as the first crematorium outside Sydney, Newcastle Memorial Park has provided a place of care, remembrance, and reflection for local families who have placed their trust in the park to honour and care for their loved ones, contributing to a legacy of more than 150,000 cremations. This occasion recognised the vision of the park's founders, whose foresight established a service that has continued to support the community for generations, as well as the dedication of present team members who uphold the highest standards of compassion and professionalism. Today, Newcastle Memorial Park continues this legacy under the proud ownership and operation of Invocare Australia. The 90th Anniversary Celebration was an opportunity to reflect on the park's rich history and connection with the community, with attendees honouring the lives remembered, celebrating the people who contributed to its success.

MEGAN ELLIOTT - THORNTON BOX DIVVY FOOD HUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Thornton local Megan Elliott has demonstrated exceptional community leadership by founding a thriving Box Divvy food hub to serve households across our region. Launched in 2022 to address a gap in local access, Megan's neighbourhood co-op has grown to support around 45 households weekly across Thornton, Beresfield, Tarro, and

Ashtonfield. Operating on a community-led model, the hub allows local families to order fresh produce, meat, and pantry staples directly from Australian suppliers. This initiative not only provides a fresh, affordable alternative during a time of rising living costs, but directly supports local farmers and reduces packaging waste. Beyond delivering practical food security, Megan has fostered a deep sense of community care through the hub's weekly "kindness box." Through the generosity of hub members, essential food and household items are distributed directly to local families doing it tough, as well as community organisations including the Mindaribba Aboriginal Preschool. Megan's dedication has created a vital resource that blends affordability, sustainability, and grassroots compassion. Congratulations to Megan on the vision she had to support our community and thank you for your selfless contribution to supporting local families across our community.

MAITLAND NETBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—

A massive congratulations to the Maitland Netball Association Open Team on claiming their historic, first-ever NSW Senior State Championship crown over the June long weekend. Coached by former Australian youth representative Kellyann Huggins, the exceptionally talented squad lived up to their billing as a powerhouse contingent, securing the prestigious top-division title with an incredible, undefeated run at Penrith. Across a gruelling three days of competition, the team demonstrated elite endurance and composure, playing 19 matches without dropping a single game. Maitland sealed the historic breakthrough with thrilling, nail-biting wins over heavyweight contenders Manly Warringah and Hills District, before dominating the field to finish four points clear at the top of the ladder. This monumental milestone follows consecutive top five finishes in recent years and fulfills the vision of Maitland tournament convenor Kim Starkey, who heralded this as one of the strongest contingents Maitland has ever produced. The entire Maitland community shares in the immense pride of this achievement. Congratulations to the players, coaching staff, and volunteers of the Maitland Netball Association on bringing home the coveted blue patches and cementing their place as state champions.

SOPHIE SORENSEN - UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE DUAL MEDAL RECIPIENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—

Graduating from university is a highlight in any person's academic life. For Sophie Sorensen of East Maitland, it was a greater achievement as she received not one but two University of Newcastle Medals in her combined Bachelor of Civil Engineering and Bachelor of Environmental Engineering degree. Sophie was drawn to the combined degree thanks to her strong design and math's skills. Engineering has been a traditionally male dominated field, but the University of Newcastle has a record 40 women graduating with engineering degrees at the recent graduation ceremonies. In 2026 the university enrolled its highest-ever number of women in the Bachelor of Chemical Engineering, with women making up 24.3% of the cohort. After completing a Career-Ready Placement at the Bloomfield group, Sophie has accepted a role at the company, contributing to the field that plays to the strengths she identified in high school. Well done, Sophie. We wish you well for a continued stellar career.

GLEBE ROWING CLUB

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—I would like to recognise the outstanding achievements of the local rowers from Glebe Rowing Club who hosted, competed in and excelled at the J.B. Sharp Memorial Regatta Series in Blackwattle Bay last month. Founded in 1924, the historic winter regatta series remains a cornerstone of Sydney's community rowing tradition. I was pleased to attend this year's Regatta and present medals to some very talented rowers. Congratulations to Zahariah Luu, Coco Harley, Jackie West, and Sinclair Black on your individual medals. I would also like to congratulate the Glebe Rowing Club who put in a fabulous showing on the day, receiving the Kevyn Webb Cup, John Sharp Vase, and Balmain RC Bullock Horn Trophy. The Glebe Rowing Club focuses on giving local high school students access to rowing and emphasises the importance of inclusivity and community, with members ranging from 12 to 85 years old. Thank you also to the organisers, volunteers, and boat race officials whose hard work makes this beloved regatta series possible every year.

MOTOWN AND BEYOND

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—I would like to recognise and congratulate 7-piece tribute band Motown and Beyond, who started in Balmain and were the first band to publicly perform at White Bay Power Station's Entertainment Hall in 43 years. The Entertainment Hall was originally built in the 1950s as a social club for workers that hosted concerts, social dances, darts and table tennis. Motown and Beyond's performance marked it's fantastic re-opening to the public. Motown & Beyond spent over a year preparing to re-open the Entertainment Hall with their special show. They performed tributes to music legends across genres, welcoming guests back into a space that will once again serve as a community hub. I had the honour of opening the performance and acknowledging the importance of this historic space. It was great to see a crowd of people enjoying the performance and bringing the hall back to life. I congratulate all members of Motown and Beyond - John

Gilmovich, Jeff Cox, Fiona Loder, Gabi Tarte, Phil Pender, Omar Saf and Ian Howard. Special thanks to John Gilmovich for managing, coordinating and performing during the event.

BALMAIN TIGERS AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—I would like to congratulate the Balmain Tigers Australian Football Club, who were named as the winner of the AFL Sydney Club Championship at the 2026 Phelan and Mostyn Medal night last Monday. It is the first time in the Club's 123-year history that Balmain have been awarded the Club Championship. The Club Championship is awarded to the AFL Sydney club with the best performing 3 teams across all the AFL Sydney Competitions. With 26 clubs, 100 teams and 15 divisions across AFL Sydney, it is a testament to the on and off-field success of the Tigers that they were able to win the Club Championship this year. It caps off a fantastic 2026 for Balmain following their move to the Rozelle Parklands at the start of the season, after several years without a permanent home ground. This move has coincided with the club seeing a 69% increase in participation in 2026 – the most of any senior club in Sydney. Congratulations to John Little, who has been president since 2017, and everyone at Balmain Tigers AFL Club, on this incredible achievement.

MOTHER MARY STATUE AT BIGGE PARK

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I rise to congratulate Liverpool City Council and our local community on the inauguration of the Mother Mary Statue at Bigge Park in Liverpool. It was a pleasure to attend the official dedication and blessing of this important new monument and to join members of the community in marking such a meaningful occasion. The Mother Mary Statue will serve as a lasting symbol of faith, hope, love and comfort, while also providing a place for quiet reflection in the heart of Liverpool. Liverpool is proudly one of the most diverse communities in Australia, and landmarks such as this reflect the many faiths, traditions and cultures that contribute to the character of our city. The inauguration was a wonderful opportunity for people to come together in a spirit of respect, reflection and community connection. Congratulations to Liverpool City Council and all those who supported the establishment of the Mother Mary Statue. May it remain a valued place of peace, faith and hope for residents and visitors for many years to come.

AASHA AUSTRALIAN FOUNDATION 2026 INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I rise to congratulate Aasha Australia Foundation on its Indian Independence Day Celebration. It was a pleasure to attend this special occasion and join members of our local community in celebrating India's rich cultural heritage, history and traditions. The event brought people together through cultural performances, music and dance, while also recognising the important contribution of Indian and culturally and linguistically diverse communities to our multicultural society. Celebrations such as this provide an important opportunity to strengthen community connections, share culture across generations and recognise the diversity that continues to enrich Liverpool and South-West Sydney. I acknowledge Bijinder Dugal OAM and Punkaj Vij, Directors of Aasha Australia Foundation, for their leadership in bringing the community together for this meaningful celebration. I also thank the performers, volunteers, families and community members whose participation made the event such a success. Congratulations to Aasha Australia Foundation and everyone involved in celebrating Indian Independence Day and promoting the values of diversity, inclusion, cultural pride and community connection across our region.

HOUSE OF SADAQA

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I rise to recognise the outstanding work of House of Sadaqa and its dedicated team in supporting vulnerable individuals and families across our community. Founded by Bilal Laidlaw in 2010 from his garage in Castle Hill, House of Sadaqa began after Bilal helped a woman escaping domestic violence rebuild her life with basic furniture and household appliances. That act of kindness became the foundation of its Family Support Program, which continues to assist families experiencing hardship. Since then, House of Sadaqa has expanded its impact. Its International Clothing Aid Program has reached more than one million people overseas, while locally it continues to develop innovative social enterprises. Panda Paper supports homeless shelters and low-income families, and the Goodwill Laundry in Bankstown provides laundry services to those without access to them. This year, House of Sadaqa launched Goodwill Connect, helping provide connectivity to families in need while supporting the organisation's long-term sustainability. I commend Bilal Laidlaw, dedicated volunteer Mohammad Kandil, and the entire House of Sadaqa team, volunteers, partners and supporters for their compassion and commitment to helping those in need.

TEDDY SMITH - FOREST LIONS

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst)—I am delighted to recognise Teddy Smith of the Forest Lions AFL Club for an outstanding season of AFL and her commitment to the sport she loves. Teddy has had an exceptional 2026 campaign with the Forest Lions Under 15 Youth Girls Division 3 team. Her season culminated when Forest defeated Northwest Lightning in the AFL Sydney Juniors Division 3 Blue Grand Final. Teddy was

named Best on Ground, an individual recognition of her performance in the most important match of the season. This achievement was followed by another significant honour. At the 2026 SHJAFL Association Awards, Teddy was recognised and received the 3rd place award, among the many Forest players invited to the Association Awards. Teddy's consistency has also been recognised beyond a single season. In the 2025 AFL Sydney Juniors Presentation Night awards, she finished second in the Under 15 Youth Girls Division 3 Blue Best and Fairest. I congratulate Teddy Smith on her Grand Final Best on Ground honour and recognise the dedication, teamwork and commitment she has demonstrated throughout her footy career.

ZAC PLOWMAN - FOREST LIONS

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst)—I rise today to recognise Zac Plowman of the Forest Lions AFL Club for his contribution to junior Australian rules football across the Northern Beaches. In 2026, Zac represented Forest in the Under 17 Division 4 competition and was one of ten Forest Lions players invited to the SHJAFL Association Awards Night. At those awards, Zac was recognised with third place in the U17 Division 4 Association awards, placing him among the leading players in his division. The Forest Lions describe their club as a pathway for young players from Auskick through to Under 17 football, with an emphasis on participation, development and community. Zac's recognition reflects the commitment required to contribute consistently throughout a full junior football season. The Forest Lions have been part of the Wakehurst community since 1969 and in 2026 the club celebrated its 57th year. Zac's third place Association award adds to that long history of recognising young players who make a strong contribution on the field. I congratulate Zac Plowman on this well deserved award and acknowledge his dedication to his teammates, coaches and the Forest Lions community.

AMELIE HUNZIKER - FOREST LIONS AND CROSS COUNTRY

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst)—I am proud to recognise Amelie Hunziker of the Forest Lions AFL Club, whose achievements in Australian rules football and Cross Country demonstrate her impressive commitment to sport. This year, Amelie represented the Forest Lions in the Under 17 Youth Girls Division 2 competition, and was recognised at the SHJAFL Association Awards, finishing second in her division. She was a part of Forest Lions biggest group ever attending the awards ceremony. Amelie's sporting achievements extend well beyond AFL. In 2022, competing for Killarney Heights High School, she finished third in the Sydney North Cross Country Championship 3000 metre race and was selected in the Sydney North team. Her commitment to running continued in subsequent years. At the 2024 Sydney North Secondary Cross Country Championships, Amelie competed in the 4000 metre event finishing a hard fought 9th. Amelie's ability to compete at a high level across multiple sports is a wonderful example of the immense talent that is coming out of Northern Beaches. I congratulate Amelie on her achievements and recognise the dedication she continues to show to her teammates, coaches, school and community.

MICHAEL AND JAN, DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—I would like to pay tribute to a truly remarkable couple in my electorate, Michael and Jan Galanos of Hunters Hill, who are celebrating their 60th Diamond Wedding Anniversary next week. Michael and Jan were married on 2nd October 1966 at Holy Trinity Church, Bourke St, Sydney and over the last six decades, they have built a life rooted in love, dedication, and deep community spirit. Together, Michael and his brother and father ran a carpentry/joinery business in Gladesville for over 50 years. They are the proud parents of four children and grandparents to eight, and their enduring partnership is an inspiration to everyone who knows them. Sixty years of marriage is a magnificent milestone. It speaks to a lifetime of shared joys, overcoming challenges together, and unwavering commitment. On behalf of our entire community and this Parliament, I want to formally congratulate Michael and Jan on their Diamond Anniversary. I wish them many more years of health, happiness, and love together.

YEAR 12 CLASS OF HUNTERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—I congratulate the graduating Year 12 class of Hunters Hill High School as they mark the completion of their secondary education. Graduation is an important milestone for every student. It is an opportunity to reflect on the friendships formed, the challenges overcome and the many experiences that have shaped their years at school. Hunters Hill High School has a proud commitment to supporting young people to become resilient, responsible and confident members of their community, and I know that this graduating class will take those qualities with them into the next chapter of their lives. I also acknowledge the parents, carers, teachers and staff who have supported these students throughout their education. Their encouragement and dedication have played an important part in bringing Year 12 to this moment. To the graduating class of 2026, congratulations on everything you have achieved. I wish each of you every success for your HSC examinations and for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

RIDE FOR SIGHT

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Two exceptional Tweed Heads octogenarians are raising money for the Macular Disease Foundation by undertaking a 3700 km virtual cycling journey from Coolangatta to Cairns and back. Bolton Clarke Raffles residents Holden, aged 89, and Keith, aged 81, are pedalling stationary bikes to raise money for a special cause with personal importance. Their campaign kicked off on Friday 28 August and the pair, who are members of the residential aged care home's stationary cycling group, have spent the last few weeks virtually travelling from pub to pub along the Queensland coast to Cairns, before making their way back down to Tweed Heads via outback Queensland. Holden lives with macular degeneration and Keith is blind. Holden and Keith are hoping to raise \$10,000 for the Macular Disease Foundation. I applaud Holden and Keith for this incredible fundraising effort. Thank you for making such a wonderful contribution to your community.

NEW PROBATIONARY CONSTABLES FOR TWEED BYRON

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—The Tweed Byron Police District welcomed five new probationary constables to our community last month as part of the Class of 369. On behalf of the Tweed community I am pleased to welcome the new probationary constables to their new command. Police put their own safety on the line every day to protect us and I commend these new officers for their dedication to a career in policing. I wish the probationary constables well as they begin their policing careers and work to keep the Tweed community safe. The new officers will spend the next 12 months undertaking on-the-job training and distance education before graduating with an Associate Degree in Policing Practice and being confirmed as constables.

FESTIVAL OF CHORAL MUSIC

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Musicians from Banora Point High School and Kingscliff High School have helped to shape history as part of the 2026 Festival of Choral Music held at the Sydney Opera House during Public Education Week. The students were part of the newly formed North Coast Festival Orchestra which became the first ensemble based outside metropolitan Sydney to perform a featured item and accompany the combined Festival Choir in the event's almost 80-year history. Students from Bilambil Public School and Uki Public School also represented the Tweed in the Australis Concert. The Festival of Choral Music brought together about 3300 primary choristers from 116 public schools and two regional choirs, with more than 3700 NSW public school students performing across five concerts. Well done to the Tweed students for this incredible accomplishment and for representing the Tweed on such a recognised and magnificent stage.

BRINKLEY MCHUGH - NIKI TAYLOR MEMORIAL AWARD

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise to acknowledge Brinkley McHugh of Port Macquarie, who was recently honoured with the North Coast Academy of Sport 'Niki Taylor Memorial Award'. This special recognition celebrates dedication, resilience, courage and commitment, making it one of the most meaningful honours presented by the Academy. Brinkley's selection reflects his outstanding character and contribution to the sporting community. Awards of this nature recognise far more than athletic achievement alone. They acknowledge those individuals who inspire others through their attitude, determination and willingness to overcome challenges. Brinkley has demonstrated these qualities throughout his involvement with sport and has earned the respect of coaches, teammates and fellow athletes. The values represented by the 'Niki Taylor Memorial Award' are qualities that help build strong sporting cultures and stronger communities. Through his commitment and positive example, Brinkley has embodied these values and shown the important role young athletes can play as leaders and role models. I congratulate Brinkley on receiving this significant honour. His achievement is a testament to his hard work and perseverance, and I wish him every success in his future sporting, academic and personal pursuits.

MADDEN THOMAS - SKATEBOARDING ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise Madden Thomas, recipient of the 'North Coast Academy of Sport Skateboarding Encouragement Award'. Skateboarding is a sport that demands creativity, determination, courage and persistence, and Madden has demonstrated all of these qualities in pursuit of his sporting goals. This award recognises Madden's commitment to developing his skills and his enthusiasm for pursuing excellence within the sport. The 'Encouragement Award' acknowledges athletes who demonstrate significant promise and a strong desire to improve, and Madden has embraced every opportunity to grow as an athlete while displaying dedication and resilience. Participation in skateboarding requires discipline, confidence and a willingness to continually challenge oneself. Madden's achievement reflects the effort he has invested in honing his abilities and striving to reach new levels of performance. His positive attitude and commitment to improvement are qualities that will serve him well in both sport and life. I congratulate Madden on this well-deserved honour. His recognition is a credit to his hard work, his family and those who support his development. I wish him every success as he continues his skateboarding journey and pursues future opportunities.

LOLA WELSH - NETBALL UMPIRES MOST OUTSTANDING AWARD

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise to congratulate Lola Welsh of Port Macquarie, who has received the 'North Coast Academy of Sport Netball Umpires Most Outstanding Award'. This prestigious recognition acknowledges Lola's exceptional performance, professionalism and commitment as a netball umpire. Umpiring is an essential part of any sporting competition and requires confidence, strong communication skills, sound judgement and the ability to make fair decisions under pressure. Lola's achievement reflects the significant effort she has invested in developing these skills and her dedication to performing at a consistently high standard. The 'Umpires Most Outstanding Award' recognises Lola as a leading official within the academy program and highlights the valuable contribution she makes to netball in our region. Through her commitment to excellence, she helps foster a positive and enjoyable environment for players, coaches and spectators alike. Her work demonstrates the important role that officials play in ensuring sport remains fair, inclusive and enjoyable for everyone involved.

CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL 2026

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Sunday, 13 September, the 43rd Children's Festival 2026 went ahead, bringing together children and families from all over the greater community, representing many parts of the world. This annual event is a landmark in the festivities calendar for the wider Canterbury-Bankstown, and I thank all organisations, volunteers, and participants who support the Children's Festival Organisation. Over 24 years, the organisation has created opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people to celebrate culture, friendship and community spirit. The festival's focus on children reflects a simple but powerful belief – when young people play, learn and grow together, they help build a stronger and more harmonious society for everyone. Promoting social cohesion is never an easy feat and doing so in a way that celebrates our rich diversity, encourages curiosity, and promotes friendship shows commitment to a better tomorrow. Importantly, the event also inspires the next generation of community leaders by encouraging young people to give back to others. I commend the Children's Festival Organisation, its volunteers, participants and supporters for bringing communities together and enriching the lives of children across Sydney. Their work continues to make a meaningful and lasting contribution to our multicultural society.

JOUMANA MENZALI

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Joumana Menzalji is an outstanding community leader whose more than 30 years of dedicated volunteer service have made a lasting difference to vulnerable families, newly arrived migrants, refugees, older people and multicultural communities across Sydney. Founder and President of Sydney Community Connect, Joumana has consistently responded to community needs with compassion, dignity and practical support. Her organisation provides food relief to families experiencing financial hardship, including people at risk of homelessness, helping newcomers access essential health, migration and community services whilst rebuilding their lives. Joumana's contribution extends beyond emergency assistance. Through youth soccer and archery programs, cultural and sporting activities, sewing and tailoring workshops, Sydney tours for newcomers, and initiatives supporting women and young people. She creates opportunities to participate, connect and feel valued. Her support for families arriving from Gaza further demonstrates her commitment to helping displaced people find information, connection, stability and hope. In recognition of this remarkable contribution, I would like to congratulate Joumana for being named both the 2026 Inner Western Sydney Adult Volunteer of the Year and the region's overall Volunteer of the Year. These honours celebrate her achievements and enduring commitment to strengthening communities and improving lives across generations.

ROSELANDS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge Roselands Football Club who recently completed its first Multicultural Football Program, providing children and young people from migrant, refugee and multicultural backgrounds with the opportunity to participate in football within the local community. Selected by Football NSW, Roselands FC delivered a free eight-week training program over the winter that aimed at providing young people with an accessible way to get involved in sports and develop their football skills through regular participation. Programs such as this are particularly valuable in communities like Roselands, where cultural diversity is an important part of the local identity. Community sport can create a shared space where young people from different backgrounds can come together and develop a stronger sense of belonging. I commend Roselands FC, its volunteers and everyone involved in delivering the program for their commitment to creating opportunities for young people in our community. Your effort highlights the importance role local sporting clubs play beyond the football field in helping young people feel connected to the communities

in which they live. Congratulations on the success of the newly established program. I look forward to seeing the initiative continue to grow.

2BOB RADIO

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise today to recognise and celebrate 2BOB Radio, a much-loved institution in the Manning Valley, as it marks 40 years of broadcasting to our community. 2BOB's story began with a simple but powerful idea: that local people deserve a local voice. Since its licence commenced in 1986, 2BOB has grown into much more than a radio station. It is a place where volunteers share their time, skills and passion, where local stories are told, local talent is supported, and where our community can come together. For four decades, 2BOB has connected people across the Manning Valley through music, conversation, community information and local programming. Generations of volunteers have walked through its doors, many discovering a love of broadcasting and gaining skills and confidence along the way. What makes 2BOB so special is that it belongs to the community. It has survived and thrived because of the commitment of volunteers, supporters and listeners who believe in the importance of local voices. Forty years is an extraordinary milestone, and I congratulate everyone who has contributed to 2BOB's remarkable history. Happy 40th birthday, 2BOB Radio.

HUDSON KEEGAN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise today to recognise Hudson Keegan, a talented young athlete who recently represented Tuncurry Public School and the Forster-Tuncurry Athletics Club at the NSW Primary Schools State Athletics Championships. The championships brought together some of the best young athletes from across New South Wales, giving school-aged competitors the opportunity to test themselves against strong statewide competition. Across two demanding days, and despite challenging weather on the opening day, Hudson competed in three events and took the experience in his stride. His performance is a wonderful achievement and reflects not only Hudson's natural ability, but also the commitment, discipline and determination required to compete at this level. Behind every young athlete is a dedicated team of people supporting them. I acknowledge Hudson's family, the Forster-Tuncurry Athletics Club and local sprint coach Tarli Black. Through her FastTrack PT program, Tarli is helping young athletes across our region access quality coaching and reach their potential. I congratulate Hudson on representing his school, club and community with distinction, and wish him every success for the upcoming athletics season.

NATALIE CUSACK

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise today to recognise Natalie Cusack of Forster, a proud member of the Forster-Tuncurry Mudcrabs Winter Swimming Club, following her recent success in the water. On Sunday 23 August, Natalie won a race hosted by the Merewether Mackerels Winter Swimming Club. This is a fantastic achievement and a wonderful reflection of her commitment and ability as a swimmer. Natalie is an active member of the Mudcrabs, a local winter swimming club that brings together swimmers of all ages and abilities. The club is a much-loved part of the Forster-Tuncurry community, encouraging friendship, fitness and connection through a shared love of swimming. It is wonderful to see a local swimmer take her talents beyond our region and achieve success alongside competitors from across New South Wales. Natalie's win is not only a personal achievement, but one that reflects proudly on the Mudcrabs and the strong swimming culture we have across the Myall Lakes. Her fellow club members and the broader Forster-Tuncurry community should be very proud. I congratulate Natalie on this terrific result and acknowledge the dedication she continues to show to her sport.

BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA ANNUAL DINNER

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was a privilege to attend the Bangladesh Association of Australia's (BAOA) annual dinner and cultural night in July this year. Established in 1971 during the Bangladesh Liberation War, the Association worked alongside government and prominent Australian figures to improve the welfare and provide humanitarian aid to people in Bangladesh during difficult times. For the past 55 years, the association has grown into a distinguished body that preserves cultural pride and heritage in multicultural Australia. The Association provides a platform for the Bangladeshi Australian diaspora to have a shared sense of belonging and support, as well as contributing to community initiatives in the broader Australian society. Bangladeshi Australian families, community leaders, young people and dignitaries came together in celebration of Bangladesh's history of resilience and continued action to promote unity, preserve cultural identity, empower youth and enhance civic engagement. This is demonstrated through their initiatives including Independence Day, International Mother Language Day, Bengali New Year, networking forums and more. I sincerely thank the Association for having me and congratulate them for their significant achievements.

PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY 2026

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was a privilege to join the Consul General, the Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC, Charishma Kaliyanda MP, Mark Buttigieg, members of the Pakistani-Australian community and dignitaries to celebrate Pakistan's 79th Independence Day at Fairfield Showground. Pakistan Azadi Mela was a great showcase of Pakistani culture, with traditional food, music and performances throughout the day. It was also a chance to meet local businesses and community organisations and hear more about the work they do. Events like this bring people together to celebrate culture and traditions, while sharing them with the wider community. It was a fantastic day and an opportunity to recognise the contribution Pakistani-Australians make to our local communities and across NSW. Thank you to the Federation of Pakistan Australia and everyone involved in organising Pakistan Azadi Mela 2026 and bringing families, friends and the wider community together for the celebration.

MEN'S HEALTH FORUM

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On 31 August, I attended the South-West Sydney Men's Health Forum, hosted by Senator Tony Sheldon at Mounties Club. The forum brought our community together for an important conversation about men's health and wellbeing, with a focus on mental health, chronic disease, social isolation and encouraging men to seek help when they need it. The panel included Assistant Minister Ged Kearney MP and Special Envoy for Men's Health Dan Repacholi MP, alongside health professionals and community leaders who are instrumental in promoting better men's health and wellbeing across our community. For many men, conversations about their physical and mental health can be difficult. Too often, men put off asking for help or simply try to deal with problems on their own. Forums like this are about changing that culture and making it okay to speak openly, ask for help and look out for your mates. The forum also connected local men directly with organisations providing support across mental health, prostate cancer, diabetes, gambling harm, social isolation and other health issues. I thank Senator Sheldon for hosting the forum, along with the panellists, service providers and community organisations who contributed to an important conversation for men across South-West Sydney.

LILLY HOOPER

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—Today I acknowledge the dedication and efforts that Camden's local SES and first responders showed in their search for Lilly Hooper. Our community volunteers, SES, ambulance officers, police men and women, rescue crews and ADF personnel navigated rocky and dense terrain over 8 gruelling days of searching. The result was heartbreaking for our local community and nation, but without their actions, a family would not have answers. Thank you to our brave workers and volunteers. Rest in peace, Lilly.

ELDERSLIE PUBLIC SCHOOL OZTAG TEAMS

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—Elderslie Public School represented our Camden community at the Inaugural Champion of Champions NSW Primary Schools Oztag Tournament in Penrith last month. The Senior Girls, Junior Girls and Junior Boys teams all displayed outstanding skill, teamwork and sportsmanship across the two-day carnival. The Senior Girls Team played fantastically but fell short of the finals in the second day. The Junior Girls progressed to the Grand Final and finished 2nd, and the Junior Boys succeeded as undefeated champions of the whole tournament. Congratulations girls and boys! These sporting achievements are absolutely huge results that deserve to be celebrated. It's amazing to see the wide breadth of sporting talent that we have in our next generation of learners. I know these students will go far! Congratulations, Elderslie Public School!

25 YEARS OF CURRANS HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—Last month, Currans Hill Public School celebrated 25 years of excellence, learning and community – an absolutely huge achievement. Currans Hill commemorated this huge achievement by welcoming back past students, staff and families to share this incredible milestone with the wider school community. Later in the week, students had the opportunity of dressing up as what they hoped to be doing in 25 years time. I know their time at Currans Hill under the wonderful guidance of our best local teachers will foster their dreams of becoming doctors, teachers, artists and authors. I look forward to seeing what these students – and the school – keeps working on in the years to come! Happy birthday, Currans Hill.

NEWCASTLE NORTHSTARS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Newcastle Northstars are back on top of Australian ice hockey, ending a decade-long wait to bring the Goodall Cup home to Newcastle. The Escadia Newcastle Northstars were crowned champions of the 2026 Australian Ice Hockey season after defeating the

Canberra Brave 2–1 in a thrilling Grand Final at Melbourne's O'Brien Icehouse on 30 August. The win marks the Northstars' seventh Goodall Cup and their first in 10 years, adding another chapter to the club's proud history. It was a hard-fought road to the championship, with players battling through the physical demands of back-to-back games and putting their bodies on the line for one another when it mattered most. That determination, teamwork and commitment saw the Northstars once again reach the very top of Australian ice hockey and bring its ultimate prize home to Newcastle. Congratulations to every player, coach, staff member, volunteer and supporter who contributed to this fantastic achievement. After a decade-long wait, I am sure it feels particularly good to have the Goodall Cup back where it belongs.

WARNERS BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL AEROBICS TEAM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Warners Bay Public School students have proudly represented our community on the national stage at the recent School Aerobics National Championships on the Sunshine Coast. The school's aerobics teams and pairs competed against talented students from across Australia, achieving some outstanding results. Maddy and Lena earned an impressive silver medal in the Pairs and Trios category, while the Wildfires came agonisingly close to joining them on the podium, missing out on bronze by just 0.1 points. The Wildcats achieved a fantastic sixth-place finish, as did Annabella and Callie in their highly competitive division. Reaching a national championship is an achievement in itself and reflects the many hours of training, teamwork and commitment these students have put into their sport. I also recognise Miss Em for the passion, knowledge and time she has dedicated to coaching the teams, alongside Miss Morton and Miss Davis for their encouragement and support throughout the year. Congratulations to Maddy, Lena, Annabella, Callie and every member of the Wildfires and Wildcats. Warners Bay Public School should be incredibly proud of what you have achieved.

WILHEMINA UMEH-NICHOLAS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Wilhemina "Billie" Umeh-Nicholas has taken an incredible step onto the professional stage, making her musical theatre debut as Young Nala in Disney's *The Lion King* at Sydney's Capitol Theatre. A student at St Joseph's Primary School, Billie began dancing at just three years old before discovering musical theatre and the joy of bringing dancing, singing and acting together. Her first community production was *Oliver* with Hunter Drama, and now she is performing as one of five young performers alternating in the role of Young Nala. Taking on such an opportunity has required enormous commitment from Billie and her family, including relocating to Sydney for eight months and balancing online schoolwork with performances each week. Recently, Billie had a particularly special audience when around 80 of her St Joseph's schoolmates travelled to Sydney to cheer her on from the crowd. Billie's talent, confidence and dedication at such a young age are wonderful to see. Congratulations, Billie, on an incredible professional debut. I am sure your schoolmates, teachers and our entire community are very proud to see you shine on the Capitol Theatre stage.

CONGRATULATION ISAAC SNOW - CHS STATE ATHLETICS SUCCESS SILVER MEDAL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I congratulate student Isaac Snow, of James Fallon High School, who has won a silver medal in javelin at the Combined High Schools (CHS) State Athletics Championships. Competitors generally have several attempts, with their longest legal throw determining their final placing. The event requires a combination of speed, strength, coordination and technique. This is an outstanding achievement Isaac and a wonderful reflection of your dedication, hard work and sporting talent. Well done, and I wish Isaac every success as he continues to pursue his athletic ambitions and represent our community and James Fallon High School with pride.

CELEBRATING ROBIN PATTERSON'S 50 YEARS AS A LEGACY LEGATEE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I acknowledge the Legacy Club of Albury and Legatee Robin Patterson, whose 50 years of service represents a lifetime devoted to caring for others. When Robin joined Legacy in 1976, he could not have known the impact his commitment would have. Having completed a tour of duty in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971, he felt a strong calling to support the families of fellow veterans. Posted between Sydney and Albury, Mr Patterson cared for as many as 20 widows at a time throughout his 22-year military career. His dedication to service then extended globally through decades of humanitarian aid with CARE Australia, the United Nations, and the International Red Cross. From coordinating food distribution in post-Gulf War Iraq in 1993 to managing a Bosnian refugee camp in 1994 and serving with the UN Protection Force in Croatia in 1995, he worked in some of the world's most harrowing post-conflict zones. Yet no matter where his work took him, Robin's roots remained deeply local, serving twice as President of Albury Legacy. I thank Mr Patterson for his extraordinary commitment, and 50 years of collective Legacy service.

HAYLEY CONDON - BILLABONG HIGH SCHOOL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I congratulate Hayley Condon of Billabong High School on her outstanding performance at the North West Equestrian Expo in Coonabarabran, Australia's largest interschool equestrian event. Bringing together competitors from more than 100 schools across the nation, the Expo is recognised as one of Australia's premier school equestrian competitions. Competing alongside her horse, Boysie, Hayley displayed exceptional horsemanship, determination and composure across a range of challenging events, including the 65cm Cross Country and 80cm Show Jumping. A particular highlight was her outstanding second-place finish in the Pairs event, reflecting the strong partnership she has developed with her horse through dedication and countless hours of training. Hayley's success is a credit to her hard work, perseverance and commitment to excellence. She has represented Billabong High School with distinction and should be immensely proud of her achievements on such a significant national stage. I congratulate Hayley on this remarkable accomplishment and wish her every success in her future equestrian pursuits.

KATRINA SIMON

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding contribution of Katrina Simon, who has dedicated more than 15 years as an Aboriginal Education Worker at Warilla High School. Katrina has been a tireless advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, supporting them to feel connected, confident and proud of their identity. She has a remarkable ability to build trust with students, families and staff, and consistently goes above and beyond to support those in her care. I thank Katrina for her dedication and the profound difference she has made in our community.

ALEX NORRIS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—A huge congratulations to Alex Norris, School Captain from Lake Illawarra High School, who made his debut for Sydney Swans reserve grade on the 13 June, 2026 against South Port Sharks in the VFL. Alex helped the team to victory with a final score of 118-82. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I extend my congratulations to Alex and wish him well in her future sporting endeavours.

MILLIE URQUHART

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I rise today to recognise an outstanding young speaker from our community, Millie Urquhart, a Year 7 Student at Corpus Christi Catholic High School, who recently competed in the South Coast Public Speaking Competition at Holy Spirit College. Millie delivered a thoughtful and confident speech, demonstrating remarkable courage and maturity for a Year 7 student. I am delighted to congratulate Millie on winning 1st place in her division with her compelling speech on "the loudest voice in the room." The adjudicator praised her authenticity and the strength of her beliefs. The Shellharbour electorate is incredibly proud of Millie's achievement, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to her as she continues to represent her school and community with such confidence and talent.

WYONG SPRING FAIR

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—The new event Wyong Spring Fair held at Wyong Race Club was a success with the community coming together to enjoy family entertainment, live music and community fun. The event included petting zoos and rides to show bags, face painting, activities, Tennis Challenge with Wyong Tennis, Fire and Rescue NSW Stations 505 Wyong, Tuggerah Lakes Police District, Community Bank Wyong, Central Coast Town Crier Stephen Clarke, Twin Lakes Classic Auto Club car display, local organisations and more than 50 market stalls showcasing a wide range of local businesses and products. I was excited to be a part of the Talk Like A Pirate Championship with very dressed young mateys and announcing winner Larissa for taking out the championship after impressing the judges with her pirate performance. The free event saw over 4,000 people attending on the day celebrating everything that makes our region unique. The inaugural Wyong Spring Fair has made an impressive start and provides Wyong Race Club with a new community event to build on in the years ahead.

LISA BRENNAN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to Lisa Brennan from Spotted Frog Kindergarten at Lake Haven for being recognised as the 2026 National Winner of the Outstanding Early STEM Champion Award. The Early Childhood Educator and Preschool Room Leader Ms Brennan also received a medallion recognising an incredible 30 years of service in Early Childhood Education. Ms Brennan influences beyond programs and projects, she has helped foster a culture where curiosity is valued, educators feel supported to take risks, and children are seen as capable, competent

learners. For Ms Brennan, nothing is off limits she consistently believes in children's abilities to extend, explore, and lead their own learning. Her inspiration to become an early childhood educator began with her mother being a teacher and ran a Family Day Care from their home. Early Childhood has always been a part of Ms Brennan's world, teaching was a natural path for her to follow. As more exciting year's pass, the more fascinated Ms Brennan is with children in the way they think, question, investigate and make sense of their world. More than three decades later it is that curiosity both the children and Ms Breanna that continues to inspire her.

RABBI AND REBBETZIN WOLFF

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I congratulate Rabbi and Rebbetzin Wolff on the very significant milestone of 25 years at Central Synagogue. For a quarter of a century, Rabbi Wolff has been a source of wisdom, compassion and strength to generations of Central Synagogue families. He has shared in the community's happiest moments and stood alongside families in times of sadness, offering comfort and support when it has been needed most. I also acknowledge the important role Rebbetzin Chanie Wolff has played alongside Rabbi Wolff throughout these years. Together, they have given so much of themselves to the Central Synagogue community, and their contribution extends far beyond the walls of the shule. Through their teaching, leadership and guidance, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Wolff have fostered a strong sense of community, strengthened Jewish identity and helped ensure that Jewish values, traditions and practices continue to be passed from one generation to the next. Rabbi and Rebbetzin thank you for the profound difference you have made to so many lives.

TOM MALCOLM AND THE LATE BOB MONTGOMERY

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I recognise the late Bob Montgomery and his grandson, Tom Malcolm, for their extraordinary 5,290-kilometre cycle from Broome to Bowral to raise funds and awareness for Motor Neurone Disease. At 82, Bob undertook his "One Last Ride" alongside his 18-year-old grandson Tom, completing the journey over 41 days and raising more than \$100,000 for MND support and research. This was a remarkable demonstration of endurance, family and community spirit. Bob's lifelong commitment to helping those affected by MND, and Tom's decision to share this extraordinary challenge with his grandfather, are deeply inspiring. It is a special moment for Tom to forever cherish, having spent time with his grandfather's last few days together making memories that will last a lifetime. I congratulate Tom and honour Bob's remarkable legacy of service and generosity.

JESSICA CHAPNIK KAHN

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to honour Jessica Chapnik Kahn, who was awarded Highly Commended in the Chaya Fedler Award for Poetry at the 2026 Australian Jewish Writer Awards for her poem, *I Never Knew a Song Could Be a Knife*. This recognition is a testament to Jessica's talent and her contribution to Australia's vibrant literary landscape. Through her writing, Jessica brings depth and insight to Jewish Australian life, exploring themes that speak not only to the Jewish community but to the broader human experience. It is important that we continue to celebrate writers who share stories and perspectives that give us a deeper understanding of Australia's diverse cultural landscape. I congratulate Jessica on this well-deserved achievement and commend the Australian Jewish Writer Awards for celebrating excellence in Jewish Australian writing and supporting the voices that enrich our nation's cultural life.

60 YEARS OF CATHERINE MCAULEY WESTMEAD

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Congratulations Catherine McAuley Westmead, on celebrating 60 years of educating young girls, shaping them into young women, guided by the Sisters of Mercy - the founders of the school. In 1966, the first students of Catherine McAuley began classes in demountables surrounded by farmland while the new buildings were being completed. Students from that time have fond memories of recesses and lunches with cows and horses like Denise Cohen, from the class of 1967, who recalls often sharing her lunch with those cows. The facilities and surrounding environment of Catherine McAuley have certainly changed over the years, but the passion and dedication of the teachers and Sisters of Mercy has continued. Over time, leaders such as former principals Sister Barbara McDonough, Sister Mary Anne, Sister Mary Goretti and Ms Mary Refalo have overseen a hardworking culture of learning where girls were encouraged to succeed while following the Mercy traditions. During those 60 years turf has replaced farmland, the school has expanded to be a multi-campus and thousands of incredibly well equipped young women have graduated to make indelible marks on society. Thank you Catherine McAuley for your contributions to education in New South Wales.

CULTURE KARMA AND CURRENCY - GITESH AGARWAL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I take this opportunity to recognize Gitesh Agarwal on his book *Culture Karma and Currency* and its exploration of the impact of the Indian diaspora in Australia. Peter N Varghese AO states that "The real value of this book is that it blends business analysis with cultural explanation". The book allows readers to understand that successful business is not only about making money,

but also about understanding the cultural values, beliefs and behaviors of different societies. Gitesh gives skillful insight into how culture influences the way people communicate, negotiate, and build relationships in business. The author equips the reader with three winning mindsets - perspective, positivity and patience. He goes beyond explaining cultural differences, instead providing readers with practical perspectives that can be applied to real world business situations. Thank you, Gitesh Agarwal, for communicating to us that success doesn't only come from understanding the market, but from understanding the people and cultures within it.

THE SHARED FUTURE - INTERFAITH COLLABORATION FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN NSW

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I had the pleasure of attending "The Shared Future: Interfaith Collaboration for Peace and Prosperity in NSW", a gathering organised by the Indians in Sydney group, here in the NSW Parliament. The gathering brought together parliamentary representatives and faith community leaders including Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, Christian and Muslim representatives, strengthening social cohesion and trust through respectful interfaith dialogue. It is events like this that remind us of the power of connection across cultures and beliefs, fostering understanding and unity within our diverse community. They play a vital role in building a more inclusive, harmonious society where everyone feels valued and connected. I would like to thank the founder of Indians in Sydney, Nadeem Ahmed and his team for organising this event and for his continued support in bringing together inter-faith and multicultural representatives in dialogue from across our diverse city.

SMALLTOWN COFFEE KIOSK

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Smalltown Coffee is an Avalon Beach business that has grown from a passion for great coffee and community connection into a thriving local roastery and coffee destination. Founded by James and Lauren, both former café owners and experienced baristas, Smalltown Coffee was born from their shared love of specialty coffee and a desire to help everyday people make better coffee at home. After years spent serving the local community through their café, they took the next step by creating their own roasting business right here in Avalon. Today, they carefully source specialty-grade green beans from some of the world's leading coffee producers and roast them locally, ensuring every blend and single-origin coffee is consistent, approachable and delicious. What makes Smalltown Coffee special is its commitment to education. James and Lauren have created a welcoming space for home baristas and coffee enthusiasts, offering practical tutorials, brewing tips, equipment advice and coffee-making guides through their blog and online content. Their mission is not simply to sell coffee, but to empower people to enjoy and understand it. Congratulations to the team at Smalltown Coffee and thank you for helping put Avalon Beach on the map for coffee lovers everywhere.

MICHAEL MUIR

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Palm Beach resident and acclaimed artist Michael Muir, has made a remarkable contribution to the Australian arts community and continues to bring recognition to the Northern Beaches. Originally born in Scotland and now living and working on Sydney's Northern Beaches, Michael has built an impressive career as one of Australia's most respected contemporary painters. His vibrant works, inspired by coastal landscapes, memory, and the unique sense of place found in our region, have been exhibited nationally and collected by major institutions including Artbank and the Parliament House Art Collection. He was also the recipient of the prestigious Mosman Art Prize and has been a finalist in both the Wynne and Sulman Prizes. This year, Michael's work is being celebrated in the major exhibition Michael Muir: The Shape of Colour at Manly Art Gallery & Museum. The exhibition showcases key works from the past decade of his practice and highlights the distinctive visual language he has developed through colour, form, and composition. I would highly recommend a visit! Through his creativity and artistic excellence, Michael has not only enriched Australia's cultural landscape but has also helped showcase the beauty, character, and spirit of our Northern Beaches community.

MILLA COCO BROWN

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Milla Coco Brown is a remarkable young surfer from Newport who is making waves on the world stage and inspiring the next generation of female athletes. Born in 2007, Milla began surfing at just two years of age and has since developed into one of Australia's most exciting surfing prospects. Milla has achieved an impressive list of accomplishments, including winning the Australian Junior Surfing Titles Under 16 Championship in 2022, the Skullcandy Pro Junior Under 18 Championship in 2023, and the Australian Junior Surfing Titles Under 18 Championship in 2024. In 2025, she made history as the inaugural winner of the Women's Natural Selection Surf event and was a finalist at Stab High Japan. Now Milla has just won the inaugural Murf Electric Bikes Noosa Pro Junior Presented by Surfboard Empire World Surf League. Through her achievements, dedication, and positive influence, Milla is showcasing the incredible talent that exists in Pittwater and inspiring young people to pursue their passions with confidence and determination. Pittwater congratulates Milla on her outstanding success and wish her every success as her surfing career continues to flourish.

BEAR PIT SPEAKING COMPETITION 2026

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Friday 18 September 2026, I hosted the annual Davidson Electorate Bear Pit Public Speaking Competition at the Parliament of NSW. This competition provides Year 5 students with the opportunity to deliver a two-minute speech in the Legislative Assembly. The 2026 topic was "What does it mean to be a good friend?". I commend the participating students for their great speeches. Congratulations to winner Victoria from Roseville College, first runner up Ashlen from Holy Family Catholic Primary School, second runner up Declan from John Colet School. I recognise all participants: Liam from Beaumont Road Public School, Eden from Belrose Public School, Cassandra from Corpus Christi Catholic School, Salene from Covenant Christian School, Isabelle from Killara Public School, Reuben from Lindfield College, Vincent from Lindfield East Public School, Frankie from Lindfield Public School, James from Masada College, Mia from Mimosa Public School, Lizzy from Roseville Public School, Zoe from St Ives North Public School, Jaslin from St Ives Public School, Cassie from St Martin's Catholic Primary School and Olivia from Wakehurst Public School. I thank judges Hon. Patricia Forsythe AM, Fiona Brown and Rear Admiral Lee Goddard CSC for their time and contribution.

MAGDA'S EURO DELICATESSEN IN ROSEVILLE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise Magda and Jerzy from Magda's Euro Delicatessen in Roseville, as they prepare to close their doors after 21 years of business. Magda's has been far more than a place of European food. It has been a treasured local institution, a place where customers were welcomed as friends and where faces, conversations, stories, smiles and laughter were part of every visit. Through their hard work, warmth and personal service, Magda and Jerzy created the kind of small business that gives a shopping village its character and brings a community together. Their delicatessen became renowned across the North Shore. It's the end of an era, and Magda's will be deeply felt by its many loyal customers. However, after more than two decades of early mornings, long days and dedicated service, Magda and Jerzy have earned the opportunity to enjoy the next chapter of their lives. On behalf of the Davidson electorate, I thank Magda and Jerzy for their enormous contribution to Roseville and our wider community. I wish them every happiness, good health and fulfilment in retirement. They will be greatly missed, but always warmly remembered.

CHRIST CHURCH ST IVES - COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I am proud to recognise Christ Church St Ives for receiving a \$10,000 grant through the NSW Community Building Partnership (CBP) program to support the installation of a 15kW solar system with a 12kW battery. Christ Church is a Christian Anglican church that has been serving the St Ives community for over 100 years. It is a valued part of our local community, providing pastoral care and a wide range of programs and services that bring people together and strengthen our community. This grant will help Christ Church St Ives reduce its energy costs and operate more sustainably, ensuring the church can continue to invest in its community programs well into the future. I think this is a practical and forward-thinking use of the grant and I am delighted to support it. I recognise Senior Minister Nigel Fortescue, Mission Director Elliot Temple, Maturity Director Gerard O'Brien, Membership Director Caroline Litchfield, Ministry Director Tom Pattison, Youth Minister Jesse Baker and Children's Minister Tash McConnell for their outstanding leadership and service. I congratulate Christ Church St Ives on this grant and thank all the clergy, staff and volunteers for everything they do.

WANDA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise the members of Wanda Surf Life Saving Club (Wanda SLSC) for their outstanding service and commitment to keeping our community safe. For 80 years, Wanda SLSC has been much more than a surf club; it has been a pillar of our community, bringing people together through teamwork and a strong sense of local spirit. At its heart, Wanda SLSC exists to protect beachgoers, and this season the club maintained its record of no lives lost, with 505 preventative actions, eight first aids, six rescues and 746 patrol hours, helping protect almost 40,000 beachgoers. With nearly 1,500 members, Wanda SLSC remains a welcoming community where generations connect, learn and grow. At its Annual General Meeting on 12 July 2026, the club reflected on another successful season and welcomed its newly elected leadership team. I recognise the Board of Management, namely Fiona Sutton, Denny Rowlands, Janene Scanlon, Kurt Melville, Glen Sandstrom, Glen Bell, Therese Yim Lo, Jeff Mead, Luke Abbott, Natalie Buckley, Lisa Zammit, Tim Dale and Mark Sargeant for their efforts. I thank every Wanda SLSC volunteer for their dedication to making our beaches safe and saving lives.

MELISSA KALININ

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—For Gympie local Melissa Kalinin, supporting Camp Quality is a cause deeply connected to her own family's journey. When Melissa's daughter Olivia was just four years old, she was diagnosed with a rare cancer at the base of her skull. Over the following 15 months, Olivia underwent

chemotherapy, radiation and proton beam therapy in London. Today, Olivia is in remission, and her journey has inspired Melissa to help other families facing childhood cancer. Each September, Camp Quality's Big Walk raises vital funds to support children and families through camps, retreats and emergency respite, providing moments of joy and connection during incredibly difficult times. This year, Melissa has embraced the challenge, walking more than 64 kilometres and raising over \$3,500 for Camp Quality. Her efforts will help ensure other children and their loved ones can access the care, experiences and precious memories that meant so much to her own family. I commend Melissa for turning an incredibly difficult chapter in her family's life into an opportunity to help others, and for the strength, generosity and compassion she has shown along the way.

LYNDAL HANSEN

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—Illawong local Lyndal Hansen has drawn on her own family's experience to create a heartfelt children's book celebrating neurodiversity and the individual strengths of every child. After 21 years working in finance, Lyndal stepped into an entirely different world to publish her debut book, *Sometimes Superheroes Are Silent*. Inspired by her experience raising a son with autism, she wanted to create a story that would help children understand those who experience and communicate with the world differently. The story follows a younger brother who marvels at the abilities of his older, non-verbal sibling. From riding a bike to mastering puzzles, these talents lead him to an imaginative conclusion: his brother must secretly be training to become a superhero. Through this playful perspective, Lyndal encourages conversations among children, families and educators about neurodiversity, empathy and inclusion. The book is also giving back, with \$1 from every sale donated to Autism Spectrum Australia. I commend Lyndal for sharing a story that celebrates the unique strengths found in every child.

BILL CREWS FOUNDATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—For 40 years, the Rev. Bill Crews Foundation has been there for people when they need it most. What began in Ashfield in 1986 with Rev. Bill Crews serving meals and offering a safe place to sleep has grown into an extraordinary network of wrap-around care and support across Sydney. The Foundation has expanded its work as the need has become apparent, not just to different areas, but to different groups of people. That work now extends into the Liverpool community, supporting people and families at the Liverpool Uniting Church and the Miller Hub. From nutritious meals and crisis assistance to health and dental care, addiction support, children's education programs and pathways towards greater stability, their approach remains simple: support the "person in front of us". That philosophy has changed thousands of lives over four decades. I congratulate Bill Crews and everyone at the Foundation on this incredible 40-year milestone, and thank the staff, volunteers and supporters who continue to show up for people doing it tough. Forty years on, their mission of care, dignity and connection remains as important as ever.

MARGARET TRA

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I wish to recognise Margaret Tra, a talented local artist whose work is currently on display in my Liverpool electorate office as part of the Liverpool Art Society's Artist in the Spotlight program. Margaret's colourful series, *Mi, Myself & I*, draws inspiration from her experience growing up in Cabramatta and her love of mi, or noodles. Through these playful and vibrant works, Margaret explores themes of identity, childhood, culture and belonging, while reflecting on her own personal journey. Her works are relatable to many who pass through my office, as food often serves as an integral medium to communicate, share and shape identity and belonging. Food builds bridges and promotes diversity and inclusion. It has been wonderful to have Margaret's artwork bringing so much colour and character to our office, and to provide a space where our community can discover the creativity of local artists. I thank the Liverpool Art Society for continuing to champion artists across our region and for bringing this initiative to my office. Congratulations to Margaret on this wonderful collection. I look forward to seeing where her creativity takes her next.

MOORE COFFEE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I acknowledge Moore Coffee, one of Liverpool's best cafes, for once again getting behind an incredibly important cause, raising funds for the Little Legs Foundation over the weekend. The Little Legs Foundation was established in honour of Alegra, a beautiful little girl who tragically lost her battle with brain cancer in 2017, just weeks after her sixth birthday. Her family has turned unimaginable loss into a powerful legacy, raising funds for research into childhood brain cancer and working towards better outcomes for children and their families. As September marks Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, it's only fitting that our community gets behind this very important cause. Moore Coffee has proudly supported the Foundation's Coffee 4 a Cure campaign for many years, helping keep Alegra's memory alive while contributing to vital research. I particularly acknowledge Angelo Nasso and the entire Moore Coffee team for their ongoing generosity and commitment. Moore Coffee is not only one of Liverpool's best cafes, but a local business with a big heart. Thank you to Angelo, his team and everyone who supported this year's fundraiser.

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BADGERYS CREEK CLASS OF 2026

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate every Year 12 student across the 15 high schools in the electorate of Badgerys Creek on their graduation. For this year's cohort of school leavers, their high school journey began amid lingering uncertainty after spending Year 6 in-and-out of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am deeply proud of the resilience every student has shown and wish them well as they prepare for the HSC exams. Thank you to the teachers and parents for the investment and support given to their children and students. I particularly want to congratulate this year's recipients of the Badgerys Creek Leadership Award. This award is presented to a student who is committed to achieving their personal best and outstanding leadership and teamwork. Well done Class of 2026.

MULGOA VALLEY ART TRAIL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I commend the Mulgoa Valley Art Trail for its continued support of local artists and its appreciation of the beautiful Mulgoa Valley landscape. For two days between September 19 and 20 this year, eight artists with the Mulgoa Valley Art Trail, including painters, photographers and sculptors, opened their working studios to visitors. Rather than presenting the art within a traditional gallery, the trail invites visitors into the Mulgoa Valley itself, offering them the chance to discover the beauty of the landscape that inspires the artists. Artist Kathleen Dan said the Mulgoa Valley Art Trail lets people see behind the scenes of their creations. The trail not only supports the artists themselves but also supports local businesses by attracting visitors to the region. Well done to all involved.

KLARISSA GOODWIN OF PENRITH ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Congratulations to Klarissa Goodwin of Penrith Anglican College who won three medals at the School Australia Games in Melbourne in August. The Year 11 student claimed silver in both the 800m and 1,500m Freestyle, along with bronze in the 400m Freestyle. The games is the largest single-week School Sport Australia event of the year, bringing together primary and secondary school athletes from across Australia to compete in a range of sports, including swimming. Klarissa's success at the School Sport Australia Games adds to an impressive list of achievements in the sport thus far. Well done, Klarissa.

JUSTICE BREWING CO.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise to welcome Justice Brewing Co., the latest brewery to make its home on the Northern Beaches. Justice Brewing is founded by three Manly locals who have taken the leap of turning an idea into a new business, putting plenty of hard work into getting their brewery ready to open. Starting a business is no small feat, and it is so exciting to see locals investing in our community and creating another space for people to come together. I congratulate David and the team at Justice Brewing and wish them every success as they prepare to open their doors later this month. I encourage anyone in the area to swing by, check the place out and support local.

MANLY BUSINESS CHAMBER, AGM 2026

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise to recognise the Manly Business Chamber ahead of its Annual General Meeting on 30 September. Held at the historic Manly Art Gallery and Museum, the AGM will provide an opportunity for members to reflect on the year that has been and look ahead to the future of Manly's business community. The Manly Business Chamber plays a critical role in supporting local businesses, strengthening our local economy and giving business owners and operators a strong collective voice. I want to thank Chamber President Steve Carrodous, Vice President Kyla Kelleher, Treasurer Cameron Stewart and the entire Executive Committee for their continued hard work and advocacy. Their stewardship over recent years has seen the Chamber go from strength to strength, and I commend them for the work they do behind the scenes to support local businesses and bring the local business community together. I congratulate the Manly Business Chamber and look forward to attending their AGM and hearing more about their plans for the year ahead.

ZACH PAWLEY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Zach Pawley from Balgowlah Boys Campus, who was recently named both the Creative Media Winner and overall Pinnacle Winner of the 2026 Torrens University Bright Awards. This is a fantastic achievement and recognition of Zach's creativity, hard work and talent in multimedia. It is great to see young people excelling in the fields they are passionate about, and Zach clearly has a bright future ahead of him in the creative industries. I congratulate Zach on this well-deserved recognition and wish him all the best for what comes next.

THE ALIBI SPORTS BAR

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Congratulations to The Alibi Sports Bar in Huskisson on winning the New Business category at the 2026 Illawarra and South Coast Local Business Awards. Established in 2024 and opening its doors on 23 December that year, The Alibi has quickly become a popular venue, bringing people together through live sport, great food, cold drinks and a welcoming atmosphere. Locally owned and community focused, The Alibi has created a place where families can enjoy a meal, friends can cheer on their favourite team and visitors can feel at home in Huskisson. Its success reflects the resilience, hard work and passion of everyone involved in building something unique for the local community. This award is a wonderful recognition of the dedication of The Alibi's staff, the loyalty of its customers and the support it has received since opening. Congratulations to the entire team at The Alibi Sports Bar on this outstanding achievement. I wish them continued success as they grow and remain a venue Huskisson can be proud of.

ANN-MARIE MARTIN

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Congratulate Annie-Maree Martin on being named the 2026 NSW School-based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year at the NSW Training Awards. Ann-Marie, a Year 12 student at Ulladulla High School, has already achieved an extraordinary amount through her dedication, hard work and willingness to embrace every opportunity. She completed a Certificate III in Agriculture with Australian Training Company and Tinker Valley Farm, building valuable practical skills and confidence along the way. Her state title follows her earlier success as the Illawarra and South East NSW Regional Training Award winner, and she will now proudly represent New South Wales at the 2026 Australian Training Awards in Sydney. Ann-Marie is also a school captain and has shown strong leadership, ambition and determination. With interests ranging from agriculture and working on cattle stations to helping others and aviation, she has an exciting future ahead. I congratulate Ann-Marie on this outstanding achievement and wish her every success as she continues to pursue her goals with courage, curiosity and a generous spirit.

10TH ANNUAL SASSI 30

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—I recognise and congratulate everyone involved in the 10th annual SASSI 30, a wonderful community event supporting women and children escaping domestic and family violence. More than 350 people took part, filling Huskisson with purple shirts and orange tutus as they walked, rode and scooted from White Sands Park to Hyams Beach and back. Friends, families, children and even four-legged companions joined in, creating a truly uplifting community atmosphere. This year's event raised more than \$31,000, setting a new fundraising record, with every dollar supporting the women's refuge operated by SASSI. I particularly acknowledge organiser Joanne Warren, whose dedication has helped grow the event over the past decade, and local music leader Tina Broad, who helped energise participants before they set off. The SASSI 30 is a wonderful example of our community at its best on the South Coast, coming together with compassion, generosity and determination to support people at their most vulnerable. Congratulations again to everyone who walked, donated, volunteered and helped make the 10th anniversary such a success.

LILY-EVE EVERSON - EASTWOOD HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in recognising Lily-Eve Everson of Eastwood Heights Public School for her participation in the inaugural Ryde Public Speaking Competition. The competition invited students from across Ryde to share their views on a challenge facing young people today and how government can help solve it. Lily-Eve's participation reflects confidence, preparation and the ability to speak with clarity and purpose. Taking part in a public speaking competition at the Parliament of New South Wales is a significant opportunity and a memorable achievement. It requires courage, focus and a willingness to engage with important civic questions. Lily-Eve represented Eastwood Heights Public School with pride. As the Member for Ryde, I congratulate Lily-Eve on her participation and wish her every success in her future studies and leadership endeavours.

ETHAN LANG - DENISTONE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in recognising Ethan Zhang of Denistone East Public School for his participation in the inaugural Ryde Public Speaking Competition. This competition brought together students from across Ryde to speak at NSW Parliament about the challenges facing young people and the role government can play in addressing them. Ethan's participation reflects confidence, preparation and strong communication skills. Speaking on the floor of the Legislative Assembly is a significant achievement for a primary school student. It requires maturity, courage and the ability to present ideas clearly in a formal setting. Ethan represented Denistone East Public School with distinction. As the Member for Ryde, I congratulate Ethan on his participation and wish him every success in his future studies and leadership endeavours.

JESSE PHILLIPS - SMALLS ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in recognising Jesse Phillips of Smalls Road Public School for his participation in the inaugural Ryde Public Speaking Competition. This competition gave students the opportunity to present their ideas at NSW Parliament on the challenges facing young people and how government can help solve them. Jesse's participation reflects confidence, preparation and a willingness to think carefully about important issues. Public speaking helps young people build leadership, resilience and the ability to communicate with purpose. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly is a significant experience and one that Jesse should be proud of. Jesse represented Smalls Road Public School with distinction. As the Member for Ryde, I congratulate Jesse on his participation and wish him every success in the future.

From: Terry Dodds
Sent: Tuesday, 29 September 2026 2:02 PM
To: ElectorateOffice Murray <ElectorateOffice.Murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Edna Mendes <emendes@balranald.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: BALRANALD SHIRE RESPONSE: NSW Parliament: Rural Fires Amendment (Fire Fighting Fleet) Bill 2026
Importance: High

Hi Helen,

Thanks to Melissa for sending this through. I have read both the Bill and the Minister's second reading speech.

From an operational and administrative perspective, the legislation deals with the main problem councils have been grappling with for years: the disconnect between who supposedly owns the red fleet and who actually controls it.

The Bill is clear that from 1 July 2027 the vehicles, trailers and permanently affixed equipment transfer to the RFS Commissioner, with the RFS also assuming responsibility for their maintenance and repair.

For Balranald, my remaining questions are more about how this will work than the transfer itself.

A few matters I think are worth pursuing during the debate and transition are:

1. Maintenance in western NSW. The proposed regional maintenance hubs need to work for genuinely remote areas. We cannot have operational appliances travelling hundreds of kilometres or sitting off the road for extended periods simply to access a maintenance hub. Local workshops and providers should continue to be used where they can do the work safely and economically.
2. Council involvement in future maintenance. The Government has said councils may have opportunities to assist with maintenance. **That needs to be clearly defined.** If a council workshop is doing work for the RFS after 1 July 2027, there should be a proper arrangement covering full cost recovery, responsibility, insurance, liability and service standards. There should be no residual maintenance obligation simply because a council has historically done the work.
3. Asset and accounting transition. There needs to be one **agreed** asset register before transfer, including condition, valuation, outstanding repairs, insurance and any claims - together with clear statewide accounting and audit instructions. The whole purpose of this exercise is to end the accounting argument, not create one final version of it at 30 June 2027.
4. Removable equipment. The Bill specifically refers to vehicles, trailers and equipment permanently affixed to them. It would be useful to have **explicit clarification about removable equipment** and ancillary plant carried on appliances so there is no grey area about what transfers and what remains vested in councils.
5. Fire stations and other RFS assets. This Bill deals with the mobile fleet, but buildings and other RFS infrastructure remain a separate issue. The Public Accounts Committee recognised that the broader Rural Fires Act still needs review. I would be interested in the Government **putting a timeframe** around that work as well.

6. Operational availability. Whatever transition model is adopted, it must not reduce appliance availability or make life harder for local brigades and volunteers. The ownership change should be largely invisible to the people who need to use the truck.
- 7.

I also note that you raised the red fleet audit, transfer, and transition arrangements with the Minister earlier this year. The legislation now answers the ownership question and gives us a commencement date, but most of the detailed transition arrangements still need to be worked through.

Happy to provide anything further from Balranald's perspective as the Bill progresses.

Regards,





2026 NATIONAL CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



WELCOME RECEPTION 24/8/26

The Murray Darling Association welcomed Conference attendees to Shepparton at the Shepparton Brewery.

ucked away off the main shopping area, Shepparton Brewery played host to a relaxed networking evening kicking off the MDA's 2026 National Conference.

During the evening, brief welcomes were offered by Greater Shepparton City Council Mayor, Cr Shane Sali, as well as MDA Vice-President, Mr Geoff Dobson.



ARCADIA NATIVE FISH HATCHERY BREEDING FACILITIES

STUDY TOUR 25/8/26

Departing from the heart of Shepparton, attendees of the Study Tour explored the Greater Shepparton Region, exploring a snapshot of the local industries, innovative farming, irrigation technology, as well as native fish conservation and breeding efforts.

Attendees first met with staff at the Arcadia Fish Farms, operated by Victorian Fisheries Authority, where VFA staff showcased their breeding facilities, community engagement, and water recycling efforts.

Following the VFA Site visit, attendees were invited to tour Rubicon Water's Shepparton Facility, exploring the design, development, and manufacturing lines of Rubicon's flow gate technology. During the tour, executive staff noted that today, Rubicon Water's market consisted of 80% international, and 20% domestic, with manufacturing capability designed to utilise as much local production as possible when production demand outpaced their manufacturing capabilities.

The Study Tour's next port of call was Redland Fruit's Shepparton facility. A highly automated (\$60m) facility integrating French, Italian, and Australian technology. Redland Fruit supplies both domestic and international markets throughout Asia and the Americas, with a significant global business trajectory. Staff noted that 85% of Citrus coming through the facility was sold internationally, with 98% of Apples processed sold domestically.



REDLAND FRUIT FRUIT SORTING FACTORY FLOOR

Following lunch, attendees toured one of Flavorite's 7-hectare glasshouses, housing around 300,000 head of Tomatoes. During the guided tour, attendees were shown the intricate infrastructure used by Flavorite to deliver targeted CO2, water, and heat, to encourage greater crop growth. Staff noted that no water was wasted in their glasshouses, that they cycled through 25 trucks a week, and were in the process of integrating an Australian-made AI-powered imaging sorting machine into their production line.

Finally, attendees were provided access to Eight Mile Ag., Lang Dairies, a 1,050 hectare Dairy farm managing 1,330 head of cattle over two farms, and producing 800,000 milk solids (9-10m litres) per year. An estimate of 3200 megalitres of water were used in 2025.



RUBICON WATER: INSPECTING FLOW GATE TECHNOLOGY



NATIONAL CONFERENCE

DAY 1: 26/08/26

held at the Riverlinks Eastbank, the MDA's Conference proper kicked off on Wednesday, with attendees hearing from, and engaged with, a great selection of guest speakers, including:

Mayor Shane Sali (*Greater Shepparton City Council*)

Tim Goodes (*Executive Director – Basin Plan, Murray-Darling Basin Authority*)

Vanessa O'Keefe (*Deputy Reviewer, Water Act Review*)

Jenny McLeod (*Chair, National Irrigator's Council*)

Dr Simon Banks (*Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder*)

Edwina Johnson (*A/g Division head, Water Policy DCCEEW*)

Perin Davey (*Executive Director, Rice Growers Association*)

Mayor Ruth McRae (*Murrumbidgee Council, Chair – Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation*)

Hon Michael McCormack MP (*Shadow Minister for Water, Federal member for Riverina*)

Dr Madeleine Hartley (*CEO, NSW Irrigator's Council*)

Andrew Reynolds (*GHD, Australian Dams Leader*)

Carl Walters (*CEO, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority*)

Michael Turnell (*Murrumbidgee Irrigation*)

Dr Peter Reeve (*One Basin CRC*)

Dr David Post (*Hydrologist, CSIRO*)

Prof. Neville Crossman (*Innovation Practice Lead, One Basin CRC*)

Guest speakers addressed the overarching theme of Working together for our Basin's Future over **6 panel sessions and workshops** exploring Environmental Water use and misinformation, the Water Act Review, the Basin Plan Review and current progress, Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) Reconciliation, DLAM shortfall and constraints, Water Security (current and future state), as well as agreed future priorities and innovation.



THE MDA OPENED ITS DOORS ON CONFERENCE DAY 1 TO OVER 130 ATTENDEES, FACILITATING NETWORKING WITH SPEAKERS, REPRESENTATIVES AND SPONSORS ALIKE.



MDA GALA DINNER: 26/08/26

The 2026 Gala Dinner was held at the Elswhere at Sam, part of the Shepparton Arts Museum (SAM). Situated in the heart of Shepparton, and showcasing the Degase to Picasso exhibit from a private collection in New Zealand.

Attendees were welcomed with Canapes, a Grazing Table, and drinks to celebrate and network following a successful conclusion of the Conference's first day proper. The Gala Dinner also offered the unique opportunity for attendees to explore the Degase to Picasso exhibit after hours.

At the Gala Dinner, MDA Vice President, Geoff Dobson acknowledged and thanked members and attendees for their hard work and representation of their Basin communities.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE DAY 2: 27/08/26

Returning to Riverlinks for the second Conference day on Thursday, attendees engaged with another significant line up of guest speakers, including:

Dr Ivor Stuart (Assoc. Prof. Charles Sturt University)

Anthony Forster (Victorian Fisheries Authority)

Andrew Pearce (Director, Invasive Species Research and Development, DAFF)

Hilary Johnson (Commonwealth Environmental Water Office)

Phil Coates (Branch Head, Water Policy – DCCEW)

Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister (Balonne Shire Council, Chair Adventure Way & Great Inland Way Tourism Board)

Beth Conner (Paddlesteamer Skipper, River-based Tourism)

Chris Taylor (General manager – Field Operations, Kagome)

Monica Morona (Rice Growers Association)

The Day's presentations and Panel Sessions continued to focus on collaboration and working together for our Basin's future, with speakers addressing Carp management, native fish breeding and stocking, Water quality, as well as Basin Community Security and Industry socio-economics.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO REVISIT PRESENTATIONS OR PRESENTATION SLIDES FROM THE CONFERENCE?

GO TO WWW.MDA.ASN.AU/EVENTS/2026NATCON



2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 27/08/26

6 Motions were raised at the MDA's 2026 AGM.

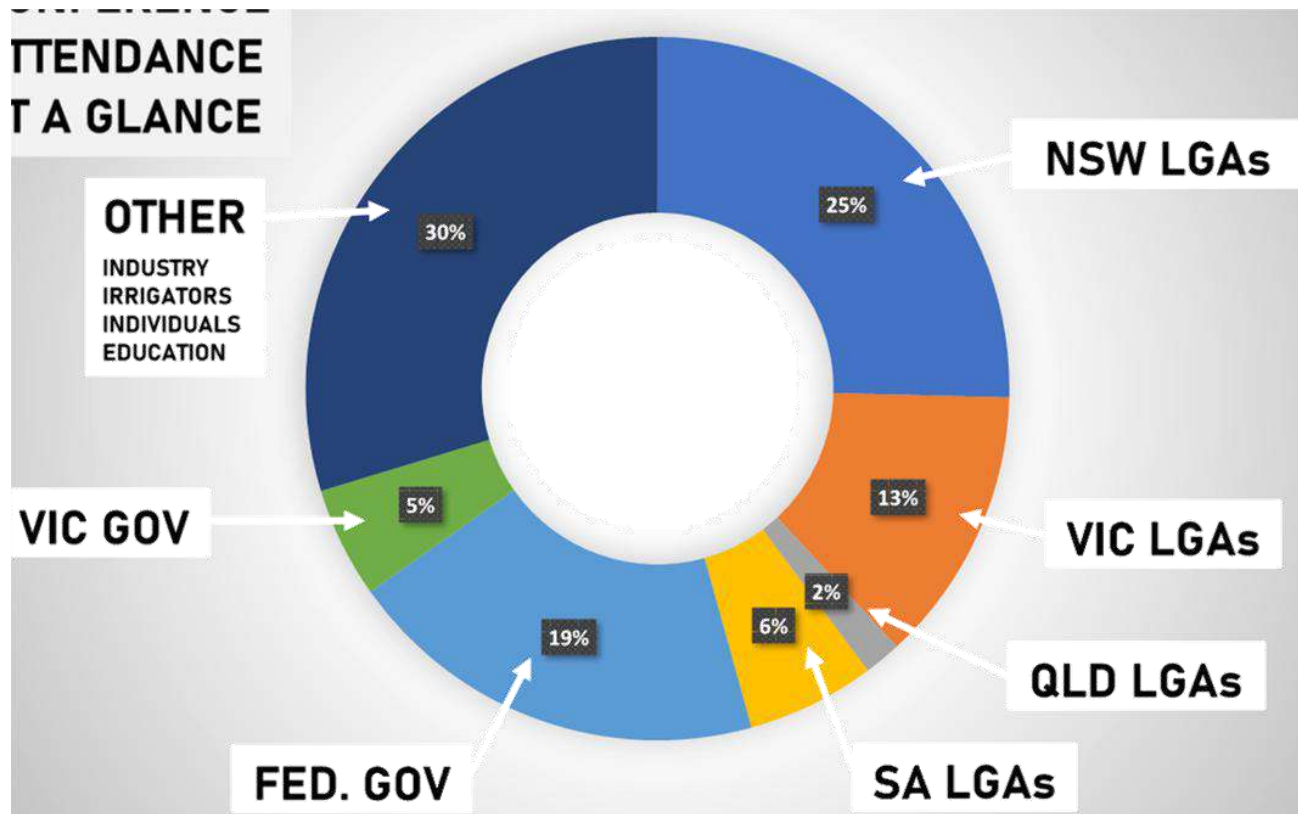
These motions ranged from flood studies and risk management plans, minimisation of the impact of flooding water infrastructure, and the health restoration of Basin waterbodies, as well as the Greater Adelaide Region Plan.

Parting from traditional AGM structure, the MDA also raised draft position statements, developed throughout the 2026 Conference for Membership endorsement.

These position statements addressed:

- The establishment of community-led Basin governance
- Embedding integrated catchment management in Basin reform
- Water security a key objective of the Basin Plan
- Rejecting further water purchasing
- Investing in water quality and invasive species management
- Plan for population growth and future water demand
- Basin community security and industry socio-economics





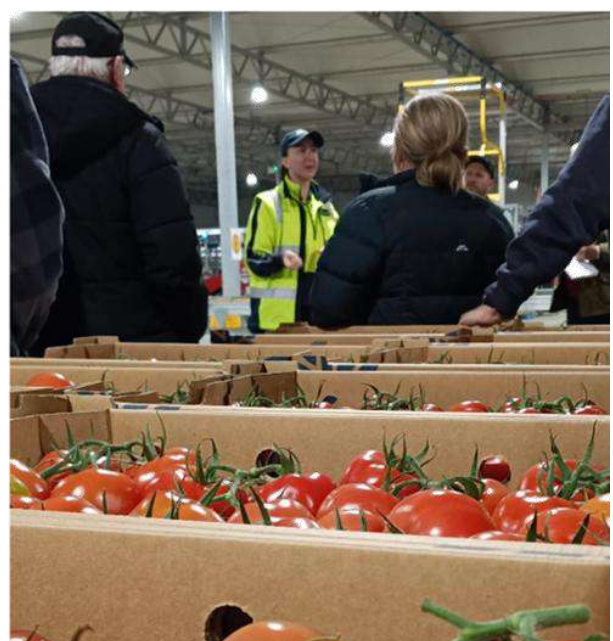
THE MDA IS IDEALLY POSITIONED TO BE THE GO-TO ORGANISATION FOR GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS IN RELATION TO BASIN POLICY.

The MDA is committed to providing high-value, high-quality services to members, and to contributing to the evidence that supports a healthy, vibrant and thriving Basin.

By enabling and providing opportunities for our members and others to learn and share knowledge, the MDA contributes to longer-term positive impacts for our Basin communities.

The MDA is continuing to develop its legitimate, effective and respected leadership, and ensure its leadership reflects the diversity and expertise of our communities.

Our strong and effective leadership on Basin matters enable us to effectively engage with internal and external stakeholders.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



Australian Government

Department of Climate Change, Energy,
the Environment and Water



Australian Government

Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder



**SOUTHERN BASIN
COMMUNITY GROUP**



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