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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 11 November 2015

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**The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock)** took the chair at 2.15 p.m.

**The Speaker** read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

## WORLD DIABETES DAY

**The SPEAKER:** Today I acknowledge the lead-up to World Diabetes Day on 14 November. Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia and will be the lead chronic disease in a few short years. This year's theme is "Act to change your life today", focusing on the importance of healthy eating. With that in mind, I extend a warm welcome to the former member for Blue Mountains, Dr Roza Sage, Manager, Government and Health System Development, Diabetes NSW. Dr Sage is the guest of the member for Oatley and chair of the Parliamentary Diabetes Support Group, Mr Mark Coure.

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to Legislative Assembly Clerk Emeritus, Russell Grove, who has just returned from a jaunt to the United States. Russell is heavily involved in Rotary and progress associations and keeps himself very busy. It was wonderful to have a chat with him earlier today.

I extend a warm welcome to 85 student leaders and their teachers and parents from St Kevin's Catholic Primary School, Ryde East Public School, St Therese Catholic Primary School, Melrose Park Public School and Ryde Public School and leaders from the Ryde school community, who are guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, and, of course, the member for Ryde. I hope everyone enjoys question time. I also extend a warm welcome to Mr Paul Weber from Dulwich Hill.

## ROBERT STEFANIC, EXECUTIVE MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

**The SPEAKER:** It is with great sadness that I announce to the House that Mr Rob Stefanic, Executive Manager, Department of Parliamentary Services, who is present with us in the gallery today, has resigned his position effective from 2 December 2015. Following a recent recruitment process, Rob has been appointed to the position of Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services at the Australian Parliament commencing on 14 December 2015. Today marks the day that Rob will have served the New South Wales Parliament for 19 years. In that time, he has proudly worked in a variety of roles in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly and for the past seven years with the Department of Parliamentary Services—4½ of those years as executive manager.

Rob has worked together with the Clerks of both Houses to develop a strong and collegiate relationship between the three parliamentary departments, and this connection will serve us well for years to come. Under his stewardship, the Department of Parliamentary Services has grown into a professional and innovative service department that continues to provide high standards of service to members and staff across key areas such as facilities, information services, human resources, finance, education and, of course, catering.

Rob's new role will offer many challenges which include continuing to improve the performance and processes of the Department of Parliamentary Services at the Australian Parliament—good luck with that. On behalf of the Parliament of New South Wales, I congratulate Rob on his appointment and wish him well in this exciting new chapter of his career. I also thank him for the assistance he has given to members and others who work in this place. I am sure many members have had a great deal to do with him, particularly in the past few years. On their behalf, I thank him very much and wish him all the best. We will miss him; I will miss him. I thank him very much for the good relationships that he has created within this institution and I wish him good luck.

## ASSENT TO BILLS

### Assent to the following bills reported:

Bail Amendment Bill 2015  
Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment Bill 2015  
Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot) Bill 2015  
Home Building and Duties Amendment (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Affected Premises) Bill 2015  
Regulatory Reform and Other Legislative Repeals Bill 2015  
Occupational Licensing National Law Repeal Bill 2015  
Strata Schemes Management Bill 2015  
Strata Schemes Development Bill 2015  
Treasury Corporation Amendment Bill 2015  
Superannuation Administration Amendment (Investment Management and Other Matters) Bill 2015  
State Insurance and Care Governance Amendment (Investment Management) Bill 2015

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wollongong will remain silent.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr MIKE BAIRD** (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.23 p.m.]: Today is Remembrance Day, the day we remember those who went before and honour our veterans. Today we acknowledge their history and their sacrifice and we fall silent to remember. Last night I was joined by the Leader of the Opposition to pay tribute to the many veterans in this State. I said to them that the centenary is a wonderful opportunity for us to rediscover and remember our history. I reflected on the story of a plaque in Soldiers Avenue, a road in my electorate that I have been down many times. I had passed that small plaque without acknowledging it until one day I heard the story behind it.

That small plaque is in honour of Sapper Fred Reynolds, who was born in 1894. He was a Freshie boy who loved the beach. He was like any other 20-year-old; he had the world at his feet. The difference is that Fred was one of the first ashore at Anzac Cove over a century ago. As the bullets came down, he saw one of his mates go down. Fred went to get his mate and bring him back to safety. He saw another mate go down and he grabbed him and brought him back to safety. When a third mate went down and he went to save him, he himself lost his life. Many believe he was the first to lose his life at Gallipoli. Whether it is Fred Reynolds or any of those who have gone in the years since, we acknowledge and thank all of them for their sacrifice for us and our nation.

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting Corporal Mark Donaldson, the first Australian to receive the Victoria Cross [VC] since the Vietnam War. In many respects his story is similar to that of Sapper Fred Reynolds. He was in Afghanistan with his troops when he and his mates came under fire. He diverted that fire to save his mates. As we reflect on him and every one of our veterans, it is hard to put into words how we feel as a State and as a nation. Each of us is filled with a deep sense of gratitude and thankfulness for these men and women who were prepared to pay the ultimate price for their country.

At a recent Remembrance Day I saw a young man in a bright suit, no more than 30 years of age, sobbing almost inconsolably. It was clear to me that he had just lost a mate. I approached him and found out that he had lost a mate in Afghanistan. I said to him, "We want you to know that we are proud of him. We also want you to know that we are proud of you." As I moved away, my words seeming inadequate, I saw a most beautiful scene. An old Digger with his medals on shuffled towards the young man and put his arms around him. He knew what it was like to lose a mate; he knew what it was like to face enemy fire. Today we say to those who have gone before and paid the ultimate price, to those who have been injured and to our existing veterans, thank you. We put our arms around you, as a State and as a nation. That is the meaning of Remembrance Day: to remember those who have gone before and paid the ultimate price for this country. We are proud of you, we are indebted to you and we are thankful. Lest we forget.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY** (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [2.28 p.m.]: I join the Premier on this solemn day to associate Labor members with the tribute he has paid to all veterans, to all service men and women who have served our country in both theatres of war and peacekeeping operations, and to those who continue to serve today. We remember that at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the guns fell silent on the Western Front. An infant nation on the other side of the world had sent 324,000 of its people to fight in that war. The total population of this nation at that time was five million. It was a most extraordinary contribution.

On this day we should also reflect on the contribution made by members of this Parliament. On the southern wall of the Legislative Assembly we honour two members who fell in the Great War. The Treasurer, the member for Willoughby, and I had the pleasure earlier this year of attending a commemoration hosted by the National Rugby League where the Director of the Australian War Memorial, Brendan Nelson, delivered the most spellbinding oration in which he touched on the contribution of Ted Larkin. Ted Larkin was a Wallaby fullback and one of the founders of the infant sport of rugby league in New South Wales. He spread rugby league into Catholic schools and through the bush. He is honoured by the code today for his pioneering efforts. Surprisingly to many, he won the seat of Willoughby for Labor. As a serving member of Parliament he enlisted and he perished at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915. His brother died there as well.

The member for Northern Tablelands would know the story of Lieutenant Colonel George Braund who served his area as a representative of the other side of politics in this Parliament. He also fell in World War I. The Minister for Public Instruction, which we now call the Minister for Education, in the first Labor Government, Ambrose Carmichael, quit the ministry to go to war. He was injured and returned and was discharged medically unfit and then served as an aide-de-camp to the Governor of New South Wales. He toured the bush, raising 1,000 men to enlist in the war. Today in Sydney we welcomed the Cooee re-enactment marchers from across the State. Yesterday I welcomed them to Auburn.

Ambrose Carmichael personally toured country New South Wales to raise 1,000 members through his recruiting drive. He spoke of the war bringing in new equality. He said that unionists and capitalists had shared the horrors of the frontline and peace would bring a democracy based on the brotherhood of man. On his death in 1953, a condolence motion was moved in this place. I am sure all members would appreciate the remarks of Fred Cahill, the member for Young, who spoke movingly in that debate of Ambrose Carmichael's leadership, personality and character. Towards the end of the speech Fred Cahill said, "I should know. I was No. 733 of Ambrose Carmichael's Thousand." We commend the members of this Parliament who enlisted in the Great War. We of course salute all veterans, all service men and women who have served our country at war and in peace and who continue to do so today.

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Notices of Motions**

**Government Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.**

**Private Members' Business Notices of Motions (for Bills) given.**

*[During the giving of notices of motions to be accorded priority.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order or they will face an early exit. I remind the member for Prospect that he was on three calls to order yesterday and was lucky not to leave the Chamber. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

## **QUESTION TIME**

*[Question time commenced at 2.36 p.m.]*

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. On what date did she give notice to the Premier, in writing, signed by her, as required by clause 11 of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct, specifying that she owns 400,000 shares in gas company Real Energy?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** All of my interests are disclosed in my pecuniary interest disclosure to this Parliament and to the Premier in the proper way. In relation to procedures as to how Cabinet operates, I have followed them and I always will.

### **BOXING DAY RETAIL TRADING**

**Ms MELANIE GIBBONS:** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. How is the Government making it fairer for Western Sydney and regional residents and businesses by allowing Boxing Day retail trade across the State?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Bankstown will come to order. Members will not argue across the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Holsworthy for the question. I appreciate what she does for her community and I know what this upper House legislation means for her community and many other communities across New South Wales. I am pleased to inform the House that the other place passed historic legislation which will allow retail trading on Boxing Day throughout New South Wales. I acknowledge the role played by a number of stakeholders in strengthening the legislation put forward by the Government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber, including from crossbench members.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I acknowledge the Christian Democratic Party, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green, whose amendments have strengthened the bill and will achieve a better outcome. I also acknowledge the patience of very respected members of the community in their consideration of the bill, including the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney; the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, the Catholic Archbishop of Sydney; the Reverend Dr Ross Clifford, representing the Baptist Union; and Reverend Dr Keith Garner from the Wesley Mission. They raised concerns, and those concerns were considered through amendments in the upper House, which the Government supported. I place on the record how much I appreciate their input into this process. I believe their input has made the legislation much stronger in its protection of workers and in relation to the outcomes for the State. I also acknowledge the two unions that came to see me about this issue. They put forward the case on behalf of their members, and I appreciated listening to those issues. A number of issues were raised.

**Mr John Robertson:** And you ignored them.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I acknowledge representatives of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association and the Finance Sector Union, who came to talk to me about their concerns. I believe that the amendments go some way to addressing some of the issues they raised, although I accept and acknowledge that the unions do not support the amendments or the legislation. There is no doubt that the existing laws were inconsistent. They meant, for example, that the member for Shellharbour could shop in Shellharbour but the member for Wollongong could not shop in Wollongong on Boxing Day. It meant that the member for Wyong could shop in his community but the member for Newcastle could not shop in his community. We have now ensured that no matter where you live in this State you can support your local community and choose to shop where you like, if you choose to shop on Boxing Day.

**Mr John Robertson:** If you choose not to work you have no choice.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** It also provides greater choice for retailers.

**Mr John Robertson:** You have no choice if you are a worker in retail.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** As acknowledged by the member for Wyong's question—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Blacktown to order for the first time.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I note the interjection from the member for Blacktown. I ask whether he and other Opposition members support what David Borger from the Sydney Business Chamber said.

**Mr John Robertson:** No.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! That was a rhetorical question. The member for Blacktown does not need to scream the answer.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Mr Borger from the Sydney Business Chamber said in relation to Boxing Day:

... being allowed to trade is essentially promising jobs and business opportunities to Western Sydney.

I appreciate that he and all people in Western Sydney understand what this means. This side of the House believes in choice. The Government believes in a level playing field.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** You do not when it comes to workers compensation.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Swansea will come to order.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thought that those opposite would be interested in hearing about protection for workers. The amendments made last night also ensure that there are greater assurances and options for workers. Nobody—I stress "nobody"—will be forced to work on Boxing Day. It is true.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Blacktown and the member for Shellharbour will come to order. I call the member for Shellharbour to order for the first time. Members will cease arguing across the Chamber.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** When those opposite presided over this legislation why was it okay to allow some people to work in some areas, and not others? This bill strengthens the rights of workers. It ensures that people have choice and it ensures that New South Wales is moving with the times.

### ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Did she disclose to the Premier a conflict of interest in relation to retail gas price deregulation as required by clause 10 of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct, given her ownership of 400,000 shares in gas company Real Energy?

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Four hundred thousand! Four hundred thousand!

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wollongong has made her point; she need not repeat it. The member for Wollongong has done well in following instructions; she will now come to order. The member for Rockdale will come to order.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I refer to my previous answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If members do not come to order they will be asked to leave the Chamber. Members will come to order. I call the member for Kogarah to order for a first time. Members are reminded that they do not have to be called to order three times to be asked to leave the Chamber under the standing orders. The member for Hornsby will be heard in silence. The member for Rockdale will remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Rockdale left the Chamber at 2.44 p.m.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. Every member has the right to be heard in silence. The member for Prospect will remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of question time. I abhor personal comments on people's appearance.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Prospect left the Chamber at 2.45 p.m.]*

### CHINA TRADE RELATIONSHIP

**Mr MATT KEAN:** My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government generating economic, commercial and cultural opportunities through its trade relationships?

**Mr MIKE BAIRD:** The member for Hornsby is a great friend of the Chinese community and a great worker in his electorate. He absolutely understands the importance of trade in growing this great New South Wales economy. We had an opportunity last week to undertake a very good mission. We do not want to leave anything to chance in relation to the incredible opportunities that come with the China relationship here in New South Wales. That relationship has a long history, and it is one that we are very proud of. President Xi Jinping's father signed the first sister-state relationship with New South Wales with the former Premier Neville Wran. That was a very important moment, because it is still recognised, and it provides many opportunities. As the trade Minister and I travelled across China we realised that it was well understood. I should acknowledge that incredibly important initiative that was undertaken.

I also acknowledge the importance of the renminbi [RMB] trading hub. As we undertook the visit, it was clear that there were many opportunities for financial services. This State could sit back and wait for the opportunities or it can proactively get ahead and provide opportunities for our businesses, which will provide opportunities for the next generation. There is no doubt that the trading hub is one of the most exciting opportunities that we have seen in terms of financial services and the growth of China. Indeed, members of the emerging middle class, who have historically just kept their money in bank deposits, are now looking for additional products. Australia is world renowned for the management and development of those products, but New South Wales is the leader. We are the leader in financial products—funds under management and wealth management in particular. We want to export the expertise we have here to China because the opportunities are very significant.

We also want to take advantage of the RMB trading hub, which was established here. It was the nineteenth across the world. It is underway and it is developing very significantly. There were joint discussions about how we can expand that hub. At the moment only one per cent of our trade is settled in renminbi. We set a target, during our mission, to move that to 20 per cent. Why is that good? It is great for our businesses—small, medium and large—because it is easier and cheaper if we make transactions directly in RMB. We are certainly keen to do that. We have also focused on Panda bonds. I see that those opposite are very keen to understand the development of the Panda bond market.

The development of that market is certainly a great thing for businesses here, as we develop additional distribution of our debt products—not just for us but for our financial services institutions. They are bonds that go into the Chinese market, supported by Chinese investors. We also announced significant FinTech collaboration. Financial services are a critical part of this economy as is the emergence of technology, and bringing those two together. With respect to FinTech, payment systems and a whole range of initiatives—we want New South Wales to be at the centre. We have offered as part of the collaboration with China to have five full seats at FinTech for our Chinese entrepreneurs. That is a very important announcement made as part of the Sydney-Shanghai financial symposium.

The Government also did significant work in relation to tourism and education. An incredible New South Wales company is taking reading across the world from one school to another, from schools in New South Wales to schools in China. Year 3 students in China are reading to year 3 students in New South Wales and vice versa, which represents incredible opportunities. Moreover a new tourism initiative was announced that focuses not solely on Sydney but on regional New South Wales. I have to tell the House that there was so much excitement when regional New South Wales was mentioned, it lit up the room. That was particularly so when I spoke about the Dubbo zoo. They could not control themselves. They wanted to come to the Dubbo zoo: in fact, they are probably already there! They probably just got onto a plane and went there.

They heard all about places such as Lord Howe Island, the Hunter Valley, the North Coast, the South Coast and Western New South Wales, and they were excited. The Government is very pleased to be able to cause such excitement among our Chinese friends about the great opportunities for visiting New South Wales, particularly regional areas of New South Wales. It was a significant trip. Importantly, the Government will continue to build on the relationships. In April next year the Prime Minister intends to take a significant delegation to BusinessWeek in China to create opportunities for Australia in the fields of financial services, tourism, agriculture and others. I assure the House that the New South Wales Government will do everything possible to further our relationship with China and, most importantly, create opportunities for New South Wales businesses.

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery Jennifer Baldwin, who is a guest of the Minister for Health. The Minister is mentoring Jennifer through the University of Sydney's faculty of health sciences mentor program. Jennifer is a physiotherapy PhD student.

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given that she owns \$50,000 worth of shares in the gas company Real Energy, did she abstain from participating in Cabinet consideration of the New South Wales gas plan and gas price deregulation, as clause 12 of the schedule to the New South Wales Ministerial Code of Conduct obliges her to do?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I refer to my previous answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Canterbury will cease shouting. Members will come to order.



**NEWCASTLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Mr GREG APLIN:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will he outline to the House the plan for transport for Newcastle? Is he aware of any other support for the plan?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am sure some members will be interested in the Minister's answer.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Particularly the member for Newcastle.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will cease interjecting or they will be removed, without warning and without calls to order, from the Chamber. I said at the commencement of question time that the level of interjection is unacceptable. The Minister has the call.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I thank the member for Albury for his question. Newcastle will be a topic for discussion in the House this afternoon. I note that the member for Newcastle gave notice of his intention to move a motion in relation to transport in Newcastle. I acknowledge the member for Newcastle has moved that motion. There is no doubt that the commitment given by this Government to the Hunter has been truly remarkable. I am talking about a billion dollars being committed to infrastructure in the Hunter since the Government was elected—I repeat: a billion dollars—and that includes \$650 million from Restart NSW for projects that include the Newcastle light rail, urban renewal and the Newcastle inner city bypass, and \$350 million has been committed to the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund in relation to a range of projects across the Hunter region.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** Just say thank you.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There does not seem to be much thanks coming from the member for Newcastle.

**Mr Anthony Roberts:** None.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** No thanks at all. Last week as the Government commenced the removal of heavy rail infrastructure, which will be replaced by light rail infrastructure, I took the opportunity to closely examine the calls by members of the local community, which is represented by the Newcastle City Council, in relation to the Government's move towards an integrated transport approach. In an Australian first, I was a very pleased to announce for Newcastle that we would have Transport for Newcastle, which is about engaging the world's best transport operators in a market sounding to deliver a system that will benefit the people of Newcastle.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newcastle will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** For the past four years bus patronage in Newcastle has declined by 14 per cent. Over the past 10 years, there has been a major decrease in the number of people who catch the Stockton ferry.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newcastle will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** We have seen elsewhere throughout the world, such as in Europe, the best operators come to the table to discuss how a multimodal network can be designed to deliver the best outcome.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Newcastle to order for the first time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the first time.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Government wants to address the mismatched timetables and the decline in patronage.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The Government is spending \$460 million on a light rail project. I am particularly pleased by the endorsements of that approach from organisations that include the Tourism and

Transport Forum, Infrastructure Partnerships, the Australasian Railway Association and the Hunter Business Chamber. The Hunter Valley has some tremendous operators, which Labor signed up to. They include the Hunter Valley Buses and Port Stephens Coaches.

**Ms Kate Washington:** Did you speak to them about your new plan?

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Hello?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the second time. I call the member for Port Stephens to order for the third time.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** What most inspired me to closely examine an integrated approach was the council.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have asked members repeatedly to refrain from interjecting. I direct the member for Port Stephens to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Port Stephens left the Chamber at 2.56 p.m.]*

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** Every member will want to listen to what I am about to say, including the shadow Minister and the Leader of the Opposition: The council moved a motion for an integrated transport plan. The motion states that the council wants:

... a geographically focused Hunter Transport Authority to provide a governance structure that:

- (a) allows the region to determine public transport outcomes and
- (b) investigates opportunities for further transport reform to support a focus on door-to-door customer journeys ...

What is telling about that motion is that all councillors, including Councillor Crakanthorp, voted in favour of the motion. Hang on—it gets better. The second paragraph of the motion states:

Advocate for the NSW Government to utilise public and private sector expertise to develop and deliver Hunter transport services ...

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am unable to hear the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. The member for Kiama will cease interjecting. The member for Maitland will come to order. I call the member for Maitland to order for the first time. The member for Maitland will cease interjecting.

**Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.**

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** The member for Newcastle voted against light rail in this House, but goes to council and votes for it. Moreover, he has given notice of a motion he intends to move against an integrated transport authority, but he voted in favour of the private sector to deliver an integrated transport authority in Newcastle when he attended the council meeting. Talk about being "Jatz crackers"! I have to say that I am well and truly confused. What embarrassment has the member for Newcastle caused for the member for Charlestown, who said on television last week, "This is terrible", when a month ago the member for Newcastle sat in the Newcastle City Council and voted in favour of the private sector to deliver transport services. What is also telling about this is that the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow transport Minister have said absolutely nothing in relation to the Transport for Newcastle proposal.

**Mr Luke Foley:** Unlike you, we have seven members in the Hunter, mate. You have zero.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** There have been no statements, so I can only say that the great ideologue who runs the Labor Party is obviously backing this in given that—

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: My point of order relates to casting aspersions on members. The transport Minister is saying the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow transport Minister are not representing the interests of the Hunter community, but he is failing to recognise that his side of the House has no-one to represent the Hunter because they failed.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Maitland will resume her seat.

**Mr ANDREW CONSTANCE:** I say to the member for Maitland: Turn that frown upside-down.

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL AND REAL ENERGY SHAREHOLDING**

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given that the Attorney owns 400,000 shares in gas company Real Energy, how can she maintain that she need only file a member's pecuniary interest return and that the conflict of interest provisions of the Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown do not apply to her when the Cabinet considers gas policy?

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question—tedious repetition. I refer to my previous answers.

**Mr LUKE FOLEY:** I have a supplementary question. I refer to the Minister's answer and her earlier answer to which she referred the House. Given that Real Energy's March 2015 quarterly report states:

... we believe there is significant demand for our gas. We certainly believe there is enough gas in the Cooper Basin to supply the domestic east coast market for many decades into the future.

—why did the Attorney fail to fulfil her obligations under the code of conduct to declare her interest in this gas company?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is too much information in that question. The member for Strathfield will come to order. I direct the member for Strathfield to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of two hours. Those sorts of interjections are ridiculous and unnecessary. They reflect on the person whose behaviour is on show.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Strathfield left the Chamber at 3.02 p.m.]*

**Mr John Barilaro:** Rubbish!

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Those comments are also unwarranted. The House will come to order.

**Ms GABRIELLE UPTON:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for another question. I refer to my previous answers.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS:** I approach to assist the Opposition. The Attorney General has answered that question before and that accounts for a question and an answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I think they were different enough to warrant five questions, but I do see the point being made.

#### **MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN AND JOBS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. How is the Government creating jobs in communities affected by the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan?

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** I thank the member for Northern Tablelands, who is a strong advocate for regional communities impacted by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. It is an important plan dealing with the future of water in this State and in this nation. Communities of the basin produce about 40 per cent of the food and produce for the nation and for export. The basin plays an important role in agriculture yet a Federal Labor government plan impacted adversely on many communities as a result of politics designed to gain preferences at elections. From that plan this Government has worked with the Federal Government to make sure the affected communities are supported to look at diversification in their local economies.

That is how the Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Program came about. This program is a partnership with the Federal Government for which we have secured funding of more than \$32 million for those communities. In round one, late last year, \$18 million was secured for communities across

the basin, investing in businesses looking for diversification and growing the economy and jobs. For example, there is the hazelnut cracking plant in Narrandera, in the electorate of Cootamundra. At the time the member for Cootamundra was the Minister for Primary Industries and she played an important role in protecting affected communities in New South Wales to get the best outcomes for them. This business, which has created 27 jobs, now supplies hazelnuts to some global brands like Ferrero Rocher and Nutella.

There is also a Murray cod producer in the electorate of Murray, which is held by the Minister for Education, the excellent Deputy Leader of The Nationals. The investment in this business will assist broadacre farming to increase production from 18 tonnes to 72 tonnes a year. Infrastructure in regional areas is just as important as it is in cities. In Carrathool funding has been awarded for a power infrastructure upgrade that will create 23 new jobs; that is part of the diversification program. Today, along with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. Warren Truss, I announced the next round under the diversification program, which will see an additional \$14 million made available to support those communities, industries and businesses to make sure we minimise the impact of the plan.

Part of the \$14 million will be allocated for the first time to businesses, councils and not-for-profit organisations in this State to access up to \$25,000 in grants and, if matched, up to \$40,000 in grants to support and encourage businesses to grow small-scale economic development through a \$4.1 million enterprise program to drive investment in the small business community. We on this side of the House know how important small business is to regional and rural communities. Collectively, small businesses are a large employer and they are important to the local, State and national economies.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members can leave the Chamber if they are not interested in the subject matter.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The track record of those opposite clearly shows what they think of regional New South Wales—zippo, niente. Today's announcement also includes \$10 million to be allocated to tracking further industry investment, again supporting jobs and diversification, which is similar to the examples I gave earlier. This is not all the Baird-Grant Government is doing. We have put regional New South Wales front and centre in decision-making. As the Deputy Premier has said, we have woken up the sleeping giant known as regional New South Wales. We have the Jobs Action Plan to assist business to get payroll tax rebates and the small business employment initiative as well as Jobs for NSW, a new vehicle with an ambitious target of 150,000 new jobs to be created over the next four years. We have brought connectivity.

**Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.**

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** The Government is bringing connectivity to regional and rural communities through the mobile phone black spot program, which is a \$25 million State investment leveraging both Federal Government and the private sector. Across regional New South Wales \$92 million has been invested in mobile phone towers, reducing black spots by 40 per cent and bringing technology to rural and regional communities. Thirty per cent of Restart NSW funds are for programs in regional New South Wales such as resources and water security for regions.

A large component of the regional tourism infrastructure fund is used to upgrade regional airports. It is about connectivity. In order to grow regional tourism, airport connectivity from Sydney to regional New South Wales is important. Through the leasing of the poles and wires there is an additional \$6 billion to fund roads, infrastructure, schools and growing the economy and creating jobs in regional New South Wales. The announcement today in relation to the Murray-Darling is about building on what has already been done by this Government. When the Leader of the Opposition was shadow Minister for one year, six months and seven days what was his contribution to the Murray-Darling plan? Zero, niente. Again, those opposite showed—

**Mr Guy Zangari:** Point of order: Does the member understand that in this Chamber we should be using English and not a foreign language?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr JOHN BARILARO:** That from the member Berlusconi opposite. What did the member and the Leader of the Opposition do to attract Greens preferences? They shut down the red gum industry before the 2011 election, destroying 450 jobs, \$80 million in economic activity— [*Time expired.*]

## WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. What diverse approaches is the Government taking to assist medium and large employers with the workers compensation system?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** There is nothing that emphasises more the difference between the two parties than the management of the Workers Compensation Scheme. The Baird-Grant Government has fixed Labor's bankrupt scheme and returned it to solvency. It is providing generous support to the most seriously injured workers. It has improved the return-to-work rate, reduced business premiums by 17 per cent and its reforms have delivered benefits for business, community and workers across the State. That is just one of the reasons that the Baird-Grant Government is becoming known in New South Wales and across the nation as the Government of the worker.

This side of the House will always look for opportunities to do things better. I inform the House that 80 per cent of the scheme costs are generated by just 25 per cent of businesses with poor safety records. It is not fair that those with good safety records are paying the same premiums as those with poor safety records. The Baird-Grant Government is coming to the rescue again. It announced today that it is rewarding businesses that keep their workers safe and help them return to work with further premium discounts and incentives. This means that businesses across New South Wales will save up to \$200 million in the next year alone.

Yesterday, together with the great member for East Hills—the best member that East Hills has ever had—I visited the high-grade laser-profiling factory at East Hills. I was told that changes the Government is making will slash its premiums by nearly 18 per cent, which is thousands of dollars off its overhead costs. That is real money for safe businesses to invest, to grow and to employ people. It is boosting jobs and boosting the economy. The Government is driving down the cost of doing business, improving safety performance and increasing productivity. In a nutshell, the Government is now delivering the most generous benefits to the most seriously injured workers funded by lower premiums.

The Government can do that because it knows how to manage money. That is the difference between a scheme that is run by wealth makers, to one run by wealth takers. It is the difference between a scheme run by the party of the worker and a scheme run by the party of the shirker. This Government is successful due to its diversity of members. There are former bankers, business owners, principals, police officers, nurses, news readers, sales managers, solicitors, physios and farmers on this side of the House. There are dozens of diverse backgrounds and experiences to draw on.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** And on the other side?

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I acknowledge the interjection by the member for Lakemba. I acknowledge that those opposite also support diversity: they are former Electrical Trades Union, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, Australian Council of Trade Unions and Australian Manufacturing Workers Union representatives. That is diversity Labor style. Government members have been involved in a diverse range of businesses while those opposite come from one business, the union business. Those opposite preach about diversity but do not practise it. The Opposition represents 15 per cent of workers who are still members of unions, while Government members represent 100 per cent of the workers in New South Wales. While those opposite are wasting union funds at Tiffany & Co, on tattoos and on Tinder, the Government is returning money to the hands of small business and the wealth creators in New South Wales. That is where it belongs. The Baird-Grant Government has delivered the best Workers Compensation Scheme this State has ever seen.

## SAFER PATHWAY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REFORMS

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** I direct my question to the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Given the success of the Government's Safer Pathway Domestic Violence reforms through the Tweed-Byron local coordination point, will the Minister support an additional local coordination point for the North Coast Richmond Local Area Command given it has the ninth highest number of incidents of domestic violence in the State?

**Ms PRU GOWARD:** I thank the member for Ballina for her question and her concern about the local community. It is wonderful to see the member embracing the It Stops Here domestic violence reforms and

recognising that our response to domestic violence is having real outcomes and making real changes to how victims are supported. It is very pleasing to see the members for Ballina and Newtown join the Parliamentary Friends for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault. I am pleased the member is calling for this reform to be extended.

Safer Pathway is a key part of It Stops Here, an innovative approach to victim safety assessment, referral and service coordination. A safer pathway means no longer will victims have to re-tell their story to a multitude of government agencies, one after another, and no longer will individual agencies be offering support in isolation. A key feature of the Safer Pathway reforms is safety action meetings, known as SAMs. Following a domestic violence incident, a victim whom police assess as being at high risk is referred to a SAM for comprehensive wraparound support.

Victims are proactively offered support at a time when they are most vulnerable, in the immediate aftermath of an incident, when they often have trouble reaching out. They are also given much-needed assistance in the critical period before they first go to court and are being prepared for what they will experience in a sometimes daunting and traumatic legal system. Each fortnightly meeting brings together representatives from the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, Corrective Services NSW, Family and Community Services, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice.

Also present are local specialist non-government services that work directly with victims or their families. The support that is offered to victims is varied; it is individually tailored to meet the needs of each individual case based on the particular circumstances. It can be immediate support such as providing somewhere safe to live; changing locks; ensuring that children are safe; and determining the status of the offender. The support may also be focused on longer-term goals, such as addressing mental health or drug and alcohol concerns. It may also involve referring the victims to specialised trauma counselling, or achieving long-term secure housing.

The first Safer Pathway sites were launched in Orange and Waverley in September 2014. I visited both sites and was impressed by the collaborative work being done by the agencies around the table. I recently revisited the Waverley SAM with The Greens' Dr Mehreen Faruqi and the Labor Party shadow Minister the member for Charlestown, who saw firsthand how these reforms are providing rapid wraparound support. As of 1 July this year, four new Safer Pathway sites have been established at, as the member said, Tweed Heads, Parramatta, Bankstown, and Broken Hill.

However, as we roll out Safer Pathway across the State we will continue to test and refine the model to suit the needs of each community, including Ballina. Safer Pathway is only one component of the New South Wales Government's reforms designed to address domestic and family violence, which must be done in every region. As the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Family and Community Services and I announced last month, the Government is responding in an unprecedented manner. Its \$60 million package puts the perpetrator clearly in the centre of the frame, while also continuing to support women, men and children who have experienced domestic and family violence.

The package includes: police domestic violence high-risk offender teams to target perpetrators and to reduce the rate of re-offending; domestic and family violence suspect target management plans that will put offenders on notice; and mandated behaviour change programs to make perpetrators address their behaviour. The Government has also increased crisis accommodation support. This State also has Australia's first domestic violence disclosure scheme, which discloses information about a perpetrator's violent history, and additional sexual assault nurse examiners have been provided to increase access to forensic sexual assault services.

I repeat: domestic and family violence is a crime; it is about power and control. It occurs in every community and in every electorate, and it can reach any household, any street and any suburb. People are suffering at the hands of perpetrators, and many keep suffering at the hands of repeat offenders. More than one in five domestic violence offenders will end up in court convicted of another domestic violence offence within two years. That must change. We can and we must make this change happen. The Government is serious about targeting perpetrators to change their behaviour. This State is leading the nation with initiatives such as Safer Pathway.

**Question time concluded at 3.21 p.m.**

## PETITIONS

**The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:**

### **Powerhouse Museum Ultimo**

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Inner-city Social Housing**

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Mental Health Services**

Petition requesting increased mental health support for people with a mental illness who are tenants of Housing NSW and community housing, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Pet Shops**

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

### **Pig-dog Hunting Ban**

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

**The Clerk announced that the following Minister had lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:**

The Hon. Adrian Piccoli—Pymont-Ultimo Primary School—lodged 15 October 2015 (Mr Jamie Parker)

## **RETAIL TRADING AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

**Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.**

**Second reading set down as an order of the day for a later hour.**

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

### **Precedence of Business**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS** (Castle Hill—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.24 p.m.]: I move:

That General Business Notices of Motion (General Notice) No. 604 have precedence on Thursday 12 November 2015.

As members would remember, just over a week and a half ago I gave notice of a motion dealing with the Government's investment of an additional \$60 million to support victims of domestic violence. I do not believe there is any more important issue that this Chamber should be debating. I appreciate the bipartisan support that my proposed motion has attracted. However, due to the heavy burden of legislation before the House, unfortunately it slipped off the agenda. I am now requesting that the House give precedence to debate on the motion. It has been broadly reported that more than 70 women have died in the past year at the hands of their partners. It is abhorrent and unacceptable that any woman should live in fear in her own home. I therefore believe it is important that all members of the House be afforded the opportunity to debate my motion. To do anything less would be a betrayal of our obligation to society. I commend this motion to the House.

**Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**CONSIDERATION OF MOTION TO BE ACCORDED PRIORITY****Workers Compensation Scheme**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS** (Ku-ring-gai) [3.26 p.m.]: I had the pleasure last night to hear the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Robert Stokes, speak about the nature of government. The Minister made the point—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There will be fewer members on the Opposition benches shortly if they continue to interject.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** —that there are two types of government: transaction government and transformative government. During the 16 years that the Labor Party was in office from 1995 to 2011 it delivered transaction government. It plodded along simply conducting the transactions of government—and in the case of Eddie Obeid, some very large transactions from government. During those 16 years members opposite did not transform the areas of government that needed to be transformed. This Liberal-Nationals Government is a transformative government, not a group of plodders. Service NSW is one example of transformative government, and the subject of my motion, which should be accorded priority, is another. While the Labor Party was in government the Workers Compensation Scheme was in crisis.

In 2012 there was a \$13.1 billion deficit, businesses were facing premium rises of up to 28 per cent, and 12,000 jobs were at risk. The tale of how this Government cleaned up that mess is an important lesson in transformative government. That tale should be told, developed and articulated in this House today. As a Newcastle boy, I know that the member for Newcastle's motion does not deserve to be accorded priority. The reason it does not deserve priority is that Newcastle city has been a basket case since the earthquake in 1989. Under the sordid transaction government of Labor, nothing has happened to revitalise Newcastle. And we do not need to hear about that because our Government—a reformative, transformative government—is already doing something about it.

**Newcastle Public Transport**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP** (Newcastle) [3.29 p.m.]: My motion on public transport in Newcastle should be accorded priority because this deceitful Government has started ripping up the main transport line into Newcastle. It is so illogical, given there is a 5,000-student university being put in straight across the road, with our magnificent law courts that the member for Strathfield initiated now directly opposite an abandoned railway station. And this Government said they would never, ever develop on the rail line. The highly esteemed Minister Hazzard said:

I can make it very clear, 100 per cent, that our intent is it stays in public ownership—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind members, as I did yesterday, that they should not take any points of order when a member is seeking to establish priority for his or her motion.

**Mr Andrew Constance:** Point of order: Madam Speaker, I draw your attention to a decision made by former Speaker Ellis in 1967 in relation to misleading the Parliament. What we have here is an example of a member deliberately misleading the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP:** Minister Hazzard said:

I can make it very clear, 100 per cent, that our intent is it stays in public ownership ... no intent ... to go handing it over to developers.

We then get Minister Goward, his replacement, and it all goes out the window: "Welcome, developers! Come and build on the only strip in the CBD that is not subsidised by mines." And that is what this Government is all about—private interests presiding over public ownership. This deceitful Government sold off Newcastle port, sold off the poles and wires, is selling off our disability services and now it wants to flog off our buses, ferries, interchange and light rail. This Premier has boasted about the courage and the honesty that he had to take the privatisation of power to the polls, but in privatising our transport network there has been no consultation and no



poll. The only poll I have seen is the one in the *Newcastle Herald* that says 70 per cent of people do not want it, mate. The only consultation I have seen is Minister Berejiklian saying, "No privatisation of transport," before the election, then after the election taking the "public" out of public transport.

Under this Government's scheme people will be forced onto a private operator where the bottom line is king. Unprofitable routes will be cut. Will the frequency of services linking Newcastle to Swansea be cut? Yes. And when were we first told about it? Were the employees told? No. The Minister swanned into Newcastle, talked to the pack of media and three hours later went and talked to the employees. Shame, Minister; shame! And I ask you, Premier, when you come to Newcastle on 1 December for the \$175-a-head UrbanGrowth sponsored Property Council lunch will you meet with workers affected by this privatisation? Will you? It is a disgrace. This Government needs to stop walking away from the Hunter and stop treating the second-largest city with contempt. You are a disgrace. [*Time expired.*]

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Newcastle is a disgrace. He did not direct any of his comments through the Chair. It is no wonder he was interjected upon.

**Question—That the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be accorded priority—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 49**

Mr Aplin	Ms Goward	Mr Provest
Mr Ayres	Mr Grant	Mr Rowell
Mr Baird	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hazzard	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Henskens	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Humphries	Mr Taylor
Mr Constance	Mr Johnsen	Mr Toole
Mr Coure	Mr Kean	Mr Tudehope
Mr Crouch	Dr Lee	Ms Upton
Mrs Davies	Mr Maguire	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mr O'Dea	
Mr Fraser	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gee	Ms Petinos	Mr Bromhead
Ms Gibbons	Mr Piccoli	Mr Patterson

**Noes, 30**

Ms Aitchison	Ms Harrison	Mr Piper
Mr Barr	Ms Hay	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Ms K. Smith
Ms Catley	Ms Hornery	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Kamper	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Dib	Dr McDermott	
Ms Doyle	Ms Mihailuk	
Ms Finn	Mr Minns	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Greenwich	Mr Park	Mr Lalich
Mr Harris	Mr Parker	Mr Warren

**Pairs**

Mr Anderson	Mr Atalla
Mrs Pavey	Mr Daley
Mr Roberts	Mr Foley

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME****Motion Accorded Priority**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS** (Ku-ring-gai) [3.44 p.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the former Government for leaving the Workers Compensation Scheme in deficit of more than \$4.1 billion, threatening jobs and businesses.
- (2) Notes that the current Government has returned the scheme to surplus, delivered more benefits to seriously injured workers and reduced the cost of premiums for New South Wales businesses.
- (3) Welcomes the Government's superior financial management, which has delivered a scheme that is fair, sustainable and centred on the injured worker.

As I said previously, there are two types of governments: transactional governments and transformative governments. What has occurred with the Workers Compensation Scheme is a metaphor for the difference between a Coalition Government and a Labor Government. Labor governments are largely populated by union officials and party apparatchik. They are unable to administer government because they have never held a job in the real world.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 76, relevance. I point out that the member for Ku-ring-gai is still not—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Noreen Hay:** First, he is standing at the podium. That is one.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** I will uphold that point of order. What is the member's next point of order?

**Ms Noreen Hay:** The references he is making to Labor governments are not in any way—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat. The member for Ku-ring-gai is still in the preamble. Paragraph (1) of the motion commences with "Condemns the former Government". Debate on motions accorded priority is wideranging.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The problem with Labor governments is that they are not populated by people who have ever held a job in the real world. To exemplify that point, I read the biography of the Leader of the Opposition on the parliamentary website. The biography shows that his total work life experience consists of the following: In 1991, the Leader of the Opposition was president of the National Union of Students; from 1992 to 1996, the Leader of the Opposition was the electorate officer to Senator Bruce Childs.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The Parliamentary Secretary will refrain from making comments across the table. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** From 1996 to 2000, the Leader of the Opposition was an organiser with the Australian Services Union NSW; from 2000 to 2003, he was secretary of the Australian Services Union NSW; from 2003 to 2010—

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order—

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Another union official is taking a point of order.

**Mr John Robertson:** The member for Ku-ring-gai is now making personal reflections on the Leader of the Opposition. The member can make those reflections by way of substantive motion. Whilst I acknowledge that debate on this motion is wideranging, the comments being made are well removed from the substantive nature of the motion. I ask that the member be brought back to the leave of the motion.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. Enough time has been wasted.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am surprised that the former Leader of the Opposition is somehow ashamed of the work history of the current Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Ku-ring-gai be told to direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr Troy Grant:** How is Chelsea going?

**Ms Noreen Hay:** Leave Chelsea out of this. I ask that the member for Ku-ring-gai be told to direct his comments through the Chair and not across the Chamber.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. I remind the member for Wollongong that she is on two calls to order.

**Ms Noreen Hay:** No, I am not.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I call the member for Wollongong to order for the third time.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** From 2000 to 2003, the Leader of the Opposition was secretary of the Australian Services Union NSW; from 2003 to 2010 he was assistant general secretary to the NSW Labor Party—

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I ask that the member for Ku-ring-gai be asked to withdraw his statements—

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! There is no point of order. The member's time has expired.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR** (Cessnock) [3.49 p.m.]: I appreciate the opportunity to correct some of the mistakes made by the member for Ku-ring-gai in his contribution. The reality is that the member for Ku-ring-gai was not in this place during the previous term of government when the draconian laws were introduced. He probably missed out on a fair bit of the history, so I will correct some inaccuracies. There is no doubt that the Workers Compensation Scheme is fluid. There are ebbs and flows, depending on the nature of the work, depending on the investment profiles of what is happening in that space, and depending on the premiums. Of course there were times throughout the former Labor Government when, collectively, the premium reduction was somewhere around 33 per cent. There are times when there are surpluses and premium reductions can be afforded. There are also times—such as the time when the legislation was introduced—when there are deficits.

The deficit identified in the actuarial report by PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC] was \$4.1 billion. It was determined that the investment profile of the scheme at the time was affected significantly by the global financial crisis. Indeed, the actuarial report also indicated that without doing anything—with no change—there would be a significant return to surplus in approximately 10 years. We are talking about this figure of 28 per cent being returned to surplus as a result of this Government determining that it wanted to return it to surplus within five years. Given the investment profile of the scheme, it was not going to return to surplus in five years because some of the longer-term investments were going to take longer than five years to recover from the global financial crisis. That is the history—where we have been.

**Mr Dominic Perrottet:** That is where you have been.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I acknowledge the interjection by the Minister. I have been talking about the history of PricewaterhouseCoopers, which is the Labor Party's history and interpretation. It is the history and interpretation that everyone in this State can acknowledge except this Government. The Government accepted for its own ideological excitement that it should implement a 28 per cent change if it did anything, so it made draconian cuts and changes. There would not be one member in this Chamber who did not have people knocking on their office door regularly and asking for something to be done about the changes to workers compensation, and the terrible state in which they find themselves. Families have fallen apart. They may have lost their houses. Those types of things have happened.

Recently in this Chamber we debated amendments to workers compensation to undo some of the Government's terrible, criminal changes. The Government crows loudly about those changes, but a significant

number of them have not been proclaimed. Are they minor, insignificant, unimportant changes that have not been proclaimed? Let us consider them. The bulk of the changes that have not been proclaimed are contained in schedule 2 and deal with weekly compensation payments. The Government has not got around to that yet. The parts of schedule 3 that have not been proclaimed, deal with medical and related expenses. Government members gave themselves nice fat pats on the back when they introduced these amendments, but they have not proclaimed them. Nor has the Government proclaimed the return to work assistance.

I refer to one more proclamation, and it relates to the terrible death of Mr Cheng at Parramatta police headquarters. Mr Cheng's family will receive the revised amount of the death lump sum, which is \$750,000. The Opposition supported the Government in that respect. But the legislation was not proclaimed until 16 October, and Mr Cheng was shot and died on 2 October. If that proclamation were tested in court there is every chance that Mr Cheng's family would miss out. This Government has been lazy—tardy—in realising its proclamation schedule and implementing the changes, but they must be implemented as soon as possible. There is no rationale for the delay. The Government should bring the legislation into this Chamber to implement the improvements it claims to have made.

**Mr MATT KEAN** (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [3.54 p.m.]: Mr Temporary Speaker—I am sorry, I see that the Deputy-Speaker is in the chair.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George)**: With a moustache like that I would not expect anything different!

**Mr MATT KEAN**: The only thing more ridiculous than this thing on my face at the moment are the fictitious claims made by the member for Cessnock.

**Mr John Robertson**: That is a big call.

**Mr MATT KEAN**: It is a big call. The member for Blacktown is jealous that I can grow more on my face than he can on his head—and I am nearly in his category. These fictitious and selective claims used to support the Opposition's nebulous arguments are disgraceful. All members in this Chamber know that people in our workplaces, through no fault of their own, are required to fall back on the workers compensation scheme. The scheme was put in place to protect those who most need it—those who fall through the cracks and would otherwise be in a very difficult position. For the scheme to work effectively it needs the support of employers, employees, insurance companies and the Government. The scheme also needs to be able to provide for the most vulnerable. That has been the objective of this Government through the reforms that were implemented. The Government inherited a scheme that was \$4.1 billion in deficit. When such a scheme is in deficit it means that those most in need may not be able to access resources when they are injured.

The Government wants a scheme that will provide for those in need when they need it most; a scheme that people can rely on. That is what these reforms have achieved. The Government has turned around the \$4.1 billion deficit and put downward pressure on insurance premiums. Under the Labor Government premiums were rising at a rate of 28 per cent per annum, which put 1,200 jobs at risk. The return to work rate under the previous scheme was below the national average. To understand where we have come from we must look at where we are. The return to work rate is now in line with the national average. The scheme is now in surplus, and premiums have come down 17 per cent. The Government has been able to return some of these funds to support injured workers and get them back to work, and reward good performing employers with lower premiums. Those are the objectives of the Government reforms. The Government will support initiatives that protect injured workers rather than play politics and take cheap shots when dealing with those who are most in need.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George)**: Order! Before I call the next member to make a contribution to this debate, I apologise to the member for Hornsby about my remark in relation to his moustache. It is great to see him growing it as part of Movember. I pay tribute to him.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON** (Blacktown) [3.57 p.m.]: I have sat in this Chamber for almost five years now, and I cannot believe the number of motions accorded priority that this Government has moved congratulating itself. As I have said and continue to say: Self-congratulations is no congratulations. Government members come into this Chamber to move motions to congratulate themselves. Probably the most telling thing

about the contribution from the member for Ku-ring-gai was that he did not address the motion accorded priority, which leads me to one conclusion: He does not believe in the motion accorded priority. He spent his five minutes talking about everything except the motion that was accorded priority. I have previously offered him advice, which he has ignored to date. I will offer him a little bit more advice. When you speak on the motion accorded priority, as the Deputy-Speaker would well know, the idea is to speak for five minutes on that motion; you do not talk about everything else, despite how wideranging the debate might be.

This afternoon there has been, yet again, an attempt to rewrite history. When the Liberal-Nationals landed on the government side of the Chamber, its members wrote the history of deficits. Anyone who knows anything about the workers compensation scheme—clearly that knowledge is lacking in those on the other side of the Chamber—knows that it operates on the basis of returns on investments in the stock market. If the stock market returns are down, unsurprisingly the scheme moves into deficit. The second part of the scheme is that, on a regular basis, actuarial assessments are carried out using assumptions that if everybody makes a claim on the scheme the scheme will be in deficit. The problem is that because of the way the assessments are made the scheme never operates with everybody who has an outstanding claim making that claim and therefore putting the scheme in deficit.

The third part of the problem with the argument advanced by those opposite is that when the actuaries appear at WorkCover—or whatever it is called now—they acknowledge that the error could be plus or minus 50 per cent. When this Government starts talking about a deficit, the actuaries say, "But there is potential for error of plus or minus 50 per cent." This Government attacked the rights of injured workers—workers who are missing out on benefits, workers with whom I have met over the past five years and who talk about having contemplated suicide because of the changes made by this Government, and workers who are missing out because the scheme is not delivering for injured workers in this State.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS** (Ku-ring-gai) [4.00 p.m.], in reply: I thank members who contributed to this debate. Few topics expose the real ideological difference between a Labor government and a Coalition government than an issue such as a workers compensation scheme. Thanks to reforms implemented by this Government in June 2012 assets now exceed the target funding ratio in the nominal insurer of the workers compensation scheme. The return to work rate is now equal to the national average, whereas it was languishing well behind under the Labor-administered scheme, and the cost of premiums has been substantially reduced. It is important to reflect on the effect of the reduction in the cost of premiums.

Mr Deputy-Speaker, in your great electorate of Lismore the cost of premiums will decrease by 19.2 per cent this year. In the Dubbo electorate, which is the Deputy Premier's electorate, the cost of premiums will decrease by 28.6 per cent. In the Barwon electorate the cost of premiums will decrease by 17.5 per cent and in Wollondilly the decrease will be 26.3 per cent. In regional New South Wales, electorates that are in need of assistance will benefit from a decrease in the cost of premiums. In city electorates such as Holsworthy the cost of premiums decreased by 24 per cent and in Heathcote the cost of premiums decreased by 17.6 per cent. In the electorate of Orange the cost of premiums decreased by 21.6 per cent. Across the State the cost of premiums has decreased on average by 17 per cent.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Blacktown has made his contribution to the debate.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** This debate illustrates the real problem with the Labor Party, which is that it does not understand business. Members of the Labor Party have never had to run a business. They have been union officials, like the member for Blacktown. Labor members are shaking their heads, but all they are good for is manning picket lines—not running a business. Labor members have never had their house on the line, never had an overdraft and never had to employ people.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member for Ku-ring-gai will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr Chris Minns:** What a load of garbage. Take that back, you buffoon, you moron!

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am not talking about your residential mortgage.

**Mr John Robertson:** Point of order—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Did you grow up in a log cabin? You are a moron.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! I direct the member for Kogarah to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of 15 minutes.

*[Pursuant to sessional order the member for Kogarah left the Chamber at 4.03 p.m.]*

**Mr John Robertson:** Mr Deputy-Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for Ku-ring-gai to address his comments through the Chair.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! The member's time has expired. I remind the member for Blacktown that he also is on three calls to order.

**Question—That the motion of the member for Ku-ring-gai be agreed to—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 49**

Mr Aplin	Ms Goward	Mr Provest
Mr Ayres	Mr Grant	Mr Rowell
Mr Baird	Mr Gulaptis	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Hazzard	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejiklian	Mr Henskens	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Humphries	Mr Taylor
Mr Constance	Mr Johnsen	Mr Toole
Mr Coure	Mr Kean	Mr Tudehope
Mr Crouch	Dr Lee	Ms Upton
Mrs Davies	Mr Maguire	Mr Ward
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Mr Williams
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mrs Williams
Mr Evans	Mr O'Dea	
Mr Fraser	Mr Perrottet	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Gee	Ms Petinos	Mr Bromhead
Ms Gibbons	Mr Piccoli	Mr Patterson

**Noes, 28**

Ms Aitchison	Mr Harris	Mr Piper
Mr Barr	Ms Hay	Mr Robertson
Ms Burney	Mr Hoenig	Ms K. Smith
Ms Catley	Ms Hornery	Ms T. F. Smith
Mr Chanthivong	Mr Kamper	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Dib	Dr McDermott	
Ms Doyle	Ms Mihailuk	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Finn	Mr Park	Mr Lalich
Mr Greenwich	Mr Parker	Mr Warren

**Pairs**

Mr Anderson	Mr Atalla
Mrs Pavey	Mr Daley
Mr Roberts	Mr Foley

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**BETTING TAX LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Troy Grant, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading**

**Mr TROY GRANT** (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) [4.11 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Betting Tax Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The New South Wales racing industry provides enormous benefits to business and communities throughout this State. It contributes more than \$3.3 billion a year to the State economy. It sustains more than 27,000 full-time equivalent jobs, many of which are located in regional areas of the State. More than 90,000 people directly participate in the racing industry, as an employee, a participant or a volunteer. Around 780 community organisations receive financial assistance from the racing industry across the three codes and 550 community organisations share racing club facilities.

The Government is determined to see these benefits continue for the people of New South Wales. It is vital that the industry is able to compete fairly with racing conducted interstate. This bill proposes key reforms that will allow the industry to do just that. The bill's object is to progressively reduce the rates of wagering tax payable by totalizator licensees in respect of totalizator and approved betting activities, other than a computer-simulated racing event betting activity. A "computer-simulated racing event betting activity" is defined as an approved betting activity conducted on a computer-simulated horse racing, harness racing or greyhound racing event and applies to the computer-simulated game referred to as *Trackside*—with which, I am sure, many members would be familiar. This will ensure that additional funds are made available to support the New South Wales racing industry.

The bill achieves this by amending the Betting Tax Act 2001 to provide for a graduated step-down in the tax rates applicable to totalizator and fixed odds wagering over a five-year period commencing on 1 July 2015. Associated amendments to the Totalizator Act 1997 will ensure that the additional funds created by the tax reductions will be passed on by TAB Limited to the racing industry in full. At present the New South Wales Government's take from each bet exceeds that of Victoria and Queensland. At the conclusion of the five-year step-down period on 1 July 2020, the tax rates will be on par with those applicable in Victoria. This honours a commitment made by the Government in June 2015 to facilitate tax parity with Victoria. It will enable the New South Wales racing industry to more effectively compete with other jurisdictions in terms of retaining jobs and encouraging investment.

The Government estimates that over the five-year wagering taxation step-down arrangements an extra \$260 million will flow to industry. Thereafter, the industry will benefit from at least \$90 million per year in additional funding. The funds resulting from the taxation reforms in this bill will play an important role in helping to secure the industry's ongoing sustainability. These additional funds will support industry development initiatives and strategic priorities. Those priorities include developing premier racing events, strengthening regional race clubs, and providing opportunities for apprenticeships particularly in regional areas with high youth unemployment. Importantly, the Government is delivering the taxation reforms in this bill in an economically responsible way through a progressive step-down in taxation rates which takes account of overall budget needs and priorities.

I turn now to the main details of the bill. Schedule 1 of the bill amends the Betting Tax Act 2001 to provide for the staged reduction of the betting tax rates payable by a totalizator licensee under that Act in connection with totalizator and approved betting activities, other than a computer-simulated racing event. In particular, schedule 1 reduces the taxes payable on totalizator betting and the taxes payable on roundings arising in respect of a totalizator. It also reduces the taxes payable by the licensee in connection with other approved betting activities, such as fixed odds betting. Each staged reduction will occur at the start of the financial year on 1 July. The first reduction will operate retrospectively, commencing on 1 July 2015. The effect of this is that by 1 July 2020 tax parity with Victoria will be achieved. The additional funds freed up by the tax reductions in schedule 1 of the bill will not be retained by TAB Limited. Those additional funds will be passed on in full to the racing industry.

To achieve this outcome schedule 2 of the bill inserts new section 70 into the Totalizator Act 1997. Section 70 requires that within seven days of the end of each quarter TAB Limited must pay each controlling body a percentage share of the "tax reduction amount". The tax reduction amount is defined in subsection 2 as the difference between the total amount of tax payable under the Betting Tax Act 2001 and the total amount that would have been payable prior to the amendments in this bill, that is, the tax reduction amount represents the proceeds of tax parity. The percentage of the tax reduction amount that each controlling body will receive will be prescribed in the Totalizator Regulation 2012, as outlined in schedule 3 to the bill.

The relevant percentages are based on each code's proportion of the total value added to the New South Wales economy as estimated in the 2014 report by IER Consultants entitled *Size and Scope of the New South Wales Racing Industry*. The Government commissioned this report with the primary purpose of determining the economic contribution made to the New South Wales economy by the three codes of racing. The study took into account a number of the traditional measures adopted by the racing industry, such as foal production, attendances, horse training activities and wagering. The methodology used in the report was consistent with that used in recent studies of the Victorian and Tasmanian racing industries. As such it was considered an appropriate and consistent basis from which to determine industry apportionment rates.

The remaining flow of funds from the TAB to the racing industry will continue to be governed by existing commercial arrangements between the parties. Importantly, new section 70 (3) requires TAB Limited to make tax reduction amount payments in respect of Racing New South Wales and Harness Racing New South Wales directly to those controlling bodies. However, the percentage of the tax reduction amount payable to Greyhound Racing New South Wales is to be paid into a special fund to be known as the "Tax Reduction Trust Fund" and managed by the Secretary of the Department of Justice. This will be the case until the current Special Commission of Inquiry into Greyhound Racing in New South Wales is complete and the New South Wales Government's response to that inquiry is finalised.

The bill provides that the Secretary of the Department of Justice will have certain functions and responsibilities in relation to the administration of the fund. These provisions reflect common arrangements that apply to the administration by government of this type of fund. Payment of any monies from the fund will be made at the direction of the responsible Minister. At this time there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the status of the greyhound racing industry and a significant level of public concern regarding illegal practices by some participants in that industry. It is therefore appropriate that the proceeds of tax parity due to Greyhound Racing New South Wales are quarantined in the fund until the outcomes of the Special Commission of Inquiry are known. This bill illustrates the Government's continued commitment to a sustainable racing industry that contributes to regional economies and to the New South Wales economy as a whole.

The Government has responded to the industry's calls for greater funding and financial certainty for forward planning and investment purposes. This bill delivers that certainty through legislated tax reductions which can be utilised by industry to drive its strategic growth. By legislating the proposed tax reductions the industry will have greater control over the expenditure of the additional funds. That will assist the industry to make long-term financial commitments on strategic initiatives. Currently, each racing controlling body is subject to legal requirements to prepare a strategic plan relating to the promotion, strategic development and welfare of the respective racing sector. Controlling bodies are also required by law to report on the implementation of their strategic plan in the annual report tabled in Parliament.

The investment of revenue into strategic initiatives forms part of the reporting requirements. It will provide the Government with a mechanism to monitor how funds are being used. The apportionment rates will be reviewed every five years through the subordinate legislation statutory review process, thereby providing the Government an opportunity to consider the appropriateness of the portion of the proceeds of tax parity received by each code. The wagering tax reforms outlined in this bill will help to increase the employment and economic benefits the racing industry provides to this State. The additional funds will enable the industry to implement important development initiatives, from sustaining major metropolitan racing events, such as The Championships, to supporting rural and regional racing events across New South Wales. By enabling the New South Wales racing industry to progress strategic development initiatives, the reforms in this bill will aid in securing the industry's long-term sustainability and help it to flourish. As the Minister for Racing, I am very proud to commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Ryan Park and set down as an order of the day for a future day.**



**RETAIL TRADING AMENDMENT BILL 2015****Second reading**

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN** (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations)  
[4.23 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As many in this place know, the Government went to the electorate committing to reform retail trading laws to provide more certainty and choice for consumers, retailers and employees. I am pleased to note that the upper House has supported this bill with amendments. The Government has accepted all the amendments moved. I acknowledge the role of the Christian Democratic Party, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green. The amendments they put forward substantially enhance and strengthen the bill and not only ensure consistency on Boxing Day for retailers and consumers but also give workers comfort that they will not be forced to work. Strict penalties will apply for employers who force or coerce employees to work and for big businesses that force smaller businesses to open their doors. The amendments ensure these provisions in the legislation.

This bill is a necessary piece of legislation. The current retail laws are outdated and increasingly out of step with contemporary patterns of work, leisure and shopping. New South Wales has been the last State to reform retail trading on Boxing Day. This anomaly will now be rectified with the passage of this bill in this place. The Government is pleased that the amendments include a voluntary provision which will ensure the rights of workers and retailers. The State can only regulate business trading hours, and that is what the Retail Trading Act does. It requires shops and banks to close on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Anzac Day until 1.00 p.m., Christmas Day and Boxing Day and banks are also closed on weekends and all public holidays. The last major reform of trading laws was in 2008. Disputed exemption determinations and amendments to the Retail Trading Act in subsequent years suggest that a consistent scheme that balanced the needs of consumers, retailers and employees was lacking in this State. The Government is pleased that the passage of this bill will ensure consistency.

Currently, the retail trading regime, especially as it relates to Boxing Day, is complex, inconsistent and administratively burdensome. It is unfair and inconsistent that currently retailers in the Sydney central business district [CBD], Bondi Junction, Moore Park and Broadway can open their doors on Boxing Day and are exempt from the requirements to close their doors but retailers in suburban Sydney cannot. On Boxing Day people can shop in the Sydney CBD or the eastern suburbs but not in Parramatta, Campbelltown or Penrith. One-third of regional New South Wales is in so-called exempt zones, which means they are able to trade on Boxing Day. In Wollongong mall the shops are closed on Boxing Day but 20 minutes away in Shellharbour they are open. Shops in Wyong can trade but not those in Newcastle. This not only stifles growth in the State and denies opportunities for consumers, retailers and staff, it skews the marketplace and creates inconsistency.

Prior to the passage of this bill, the people of Western Sydney have converged on the Sydney CBD to shop on Boxing Day. People in regional New South Wales have had to travel long distances if they choose to shop on Boxing Day. The bill is about choice. It ensures that people have the choice not to work on Boxing Day, retailers have the choice to open their doors and the community has the choice to shop in their local communities. To small business owners and local communities the reform means local dollars in local shops. It provides an opportunity for local businesses to open their doors on a major day of trading. Until now, arbitrary lines drawn on maps determined what was regarded as a tourism precinct and this led to inconsistencies. Small business is the backbone of many local communities and a major provider of local jobs, and it should be up to them whether they open their doors.

Small business knows full well that they are obligated to ensure that the workers who are employed on their premises on Boxing Day do so voluntarily. With the advent of online shopping 24 hours a day, seven days a week, retail outlets in Western Sydney or in other parts of the State are disadvantaged by not being able to open their doors on Boxing Day. It makes sense for consumers who want to shop on Boxing Day to do so at their local shopping centre or regional place of business rather than going elsewhere. I turn now to the provisions in the bill and the amendments moved in the other place. The Government's bill allows trading across New South Wales on Boxing Day. It allows shops such as supermarkets, department stores, small retail businesses and banks throughout New South Wales to open on Boxing Day on the condition that staff have freely elected to work without coercion or threats made by or on behalf of the retailer. It means that trading on Boxing Day can occur across the State, not only in certain designated areas, as is the case now. This will ensure that the law is fair and consistent for everyone.

This legislation protects workers' rights by enshrining in the legislation that it will be an offence, punishable by up to \$8,000 per employee who is forced to work, to trade on Boxing Day or other restricted trading days if a store's employees have not freely elected to work. I stress this point because the Government amended the legislation to stipulate that the fine will be applied in respect of each employee forced to work on Boxing Day or other restricted trading days. A clear definition in the bill sets out that staff have not freely elected to work if they work because they have been coerced, harassed, threatened or intimidated, or have been rostered or are required by the terms of an industrial instrument to work on that day. This is to ensure there is no ambiguity.

The bill also gives existing workers rights on Boxing Day that they currently do not have. At the moment, the freely elect to work law does not apply to shops that are exempt and which can currently trade on Boxing Day in the designated Sydney central business district [CBD] and eastern suburbs areas. Many people work in the CBD and in the eastern suburbs of Sydney on Boxing Day and they do not now have the right not to work. This legislation gives them that right. It means that shops in this designated part of Sydney will be subject to the same conditional exemption—that is, their employees have freely elected to work—that applies to all other shops wishing to open on Boxing Day. The bill offers extra protection for staff who would prefer to spend time with their family or to do something else on Boxing Day. Again, that is an important improvement in the bill.

The Government has also committed to prioritise significant resources to ensure compliance. I thank all the stakeholders, including many church leaders and others, who gave the Government their feedback. The Government will allocate resources to boost business education activities ahead of Boxing Day to ensure that people are aware of their obligations and to boost compliance and investigation resources in regard to Boxing Day trading specifically. We will ensure that everyone is doing the right thing. I take this opportunity to acknowledge representatives from the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association and the Financial Sector Union, whom I met with and who raised concerns about this bill. I appreciate the concerns they raised, and the amendments go some way to addressing them. However, I also acknowledge that they oppose the bill in principle.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the resources are available within the NSW Industrial Relations to ensure that any complaint made in regard to an employee being forced to work or a shop being forced to open this Boxing Day is investigated. The NSW Industrial Relations will allocate five full-time staff to compliance activities around Boxing Day this year. They will be 100 per cent devoted to ensuring that any complaints are investigated. Additional resources will also be identified over coming weeks so that they can be allocated, if required, to ensure that any complaints receive the attention they deserve. That is extremely important. It is not only about having the law; there must also be compliance.

The Government is not expecting to be overwhelmed by complaints. However, it does expect everyone to obey the intent of the law and to treat workers and small businesses fairly on Boxing Day. This legislation will deliver the resources to ensure that that occurs. As I said, the NSW Industrial Relations will significantly increase education activities in the lead-up to Boxing Day so that employers and employees know their rights and responsibilities. We will ensure that we provide as much information as possible, given that Boxing Day is not far away. The amendments to the legislation made in the other place provide that small businesses cannot be forced to open their doors.

No shop will be required to open for trade on Boxing Day or other restricted trading days as a result of this legislation, even if they have a lease that requires them to open on other days. The bill maintains the requirement that any provision of a lease is void to the extent that it requires a shop to be open on an otherwise restricted trading day. In addition, a fine of up to \$22,000 will apply to any lessor who forces a business to open. If a small business operator in a mall or a franchisee feels that they are being forced to trade, the person or organisation forcing them will incur a hefty fine of \$22,000. I appreciate that a number of members know that their communities will enjoy benefits as a result of the passage of this legislation.

I acknowledge the member for Orange, who is at the table. I know that he appreciates what this legislation will mean for his community. I also acknowledge the members for Davidson, Ku-ring-gai and Cootamundra and members opposite who have come to the Chamber to hear this debate. They are here because they appreciate the significance of this legislation. I give those members and those elsewhere an ironclad commitment that no further expansion of retail trading hours will occur. A commitment was given to the Christian Democratic Party and to the broader community that nothing in this bill changes the status of Boxing Day as a public holiday. Therefore, employees retain their rights under the Commonwealth Fair Work Act and relevant awards and agreements that apply to them. That is an important point.

Boxing Day remains a restricted trading day. Shopkeepers cannot be compelled by their landlord to open their doors. If they do not have staff members who freely elect to work or if they simply do not think it is appropriate or even worthwhile to open on Boxing Day, any lease arrangement or agreement that compels them to do so is void. I also make it clear that the Government will not remove restrictions on retail trading around other public holidays, such as Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, Good Friday or Anzac Day morning. This is an ironclad, unequivocal guarantee. I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green for their considered and conscientious approach to this bill. At every step they had the interests of their constituency at heart. I acknowledge the amendments they made, which the Government has accepted because of their strong advocacy and feedback and because the amendments strengthen the bill and improve it. I place on the record my appreciation for their efforts, particularly given the terrible taunting they endured.

The legislation has been amended to prohibit the unpacking of goods or the preparation of goods for sale on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Anzac Day morning or Christmas Day. That is an important amendment. The Government believes that key benefits for communities, businesses and workers will flow from the opportunity for shops in all areas to trade on Boxing Day. It therefore is prepared to accept these amendments. They strengthen the intent of the legislation and support people who do not want to be forced to work on Boxing Day. The amendments also clarify that fines for businesses that force employees to work are imposed per employee. There was some ambiguity in that regard, but the legislation now makes it clear that if an employee is forced to work, the person offending will incur a fine of \$11,000 per employee. If the breach involves a large employer, that employer will be required to pay the fine for each worker whose rights were abused. The legislation also introduces a fine of up to \$22,000 if a business is forced to open.

The Government trusts that the majority of employers and lessors will do the right thing. However, it also understands the importance of having a strong deterrent. People must be assured that the Government is doing everything in its power to secure the rights of workers and small businesses. It will also publicly name businesses prosecuted for opening on Boxing Day with staff who have not freely elected to work. There will be a naming and shaming process. The Christian Democratic Party amendments also provide that a review will be undertaken of the changes to the Act that occur as a result of this bill. After two Boxing Days have passed a sunset clause will be triggered placing the onus on the Government to extend the policy following the review.

The Government has accepted an amendment requiring the Minister for Industrial Relations to appoint an independent reviewer to examine activities on two Boxing Day holidays and report back. The onus will be on the Government to continue the Boxing Day trading arrangements. The Government has made strong commitments around protecting the rights of workers and shop owners, and it intends to work hard to ensure that those commitments are upheld every step of the way. It is sensible that the changes that occur as a result of this bill are reviewed after some time. Therefore, the Government is happy to accept that amendment.

In summary, this bill amends the Retail Trading Act to provide for fair and consistent rules around retail trading on Boxing Day; greater choice and convenience for shoppers; protection for all workers and greater protections for those who currently work on Boxing Day than they have had up to this point; and protections for shopkeepers so they have a choice whether to trade, levelling the playing field between bricks and mortar retailers and online retailers. I again thank the Christian Democratic Party in the other place. I also thank all the stakeholders and church leaders who took the time to explain to me their legitimate concerns. The Government was very pleased to listen to those legitimate concerns and to act upon them by supporting the amendments moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green in the other place. On that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RYAN PARK** (Keira) [4.39 p.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in this place in debate on the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. The debate was led by my colleague the Hon. Adam Searle in the other place yesterday. We oppose this bill.

**Ms Katrina Hodgkinson:** Really?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We have been very clear on that. Let me go through a number of reasons.

**Ms Katrina Hodgkinson:** Are you crazy?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I know one thing: There will not be a member opposite who will have to worry about working on Boxing Day. That is the first thing: It will not be any of the Government members. Let us get

a few things right. While they are enjoying their family time, as they have every right to do, while they are enjoying holidays, barbecues, a break from this place, as they have every right to do, there will be men and women who, as a result of this legislation, will be forced—

**Ms Katrina Hodgkinson:** The Minister just said they won't be.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** —and I will explain why they will be forced—to work on Boxing Day. The Government says it will not happen. Let us walk in the shoes of a 16, 17 or 18-year-old who perhaps has their first job. Perhaps they contribute to their family's income. Perhaps they are a carer or they support the overall budget their family lives on. Despite all this great legislation and all this monitoring, who protects that person when the boss says, "I need you to work," and that person says, "No, I cannot work." What does that person do? Do they get on the phone to the Treasurer's office? Do they get on the phone to Fair Trading and start having a dialogue? Let us be fair dinkum about this. Let us operate in the real world—a low-wage retail world in which many of these people who will be required to work on Boxing Day exist.

They do not exist in our world. Here we are making assumptions about people being able to do certain things, but we are not walking in their shoes and we know too damn well that they will not be able to do it. Let us also for a minute address the issue of increasing economic activity. The basic economic premise is this: When I last looked, a consumer had only a certain amount of money to spend. Whether a consumer spends that over 360 days a year or 361, 362, 363, 364 or 365 days a year is irrelevant. The consumer still has only a particular quantum to spend. Adding an extra day does not increase the overall profit of a business. It is basic economics. I am worried that the Government is running a line that does not make sense. A consumer has only a certain amount of disposable income from which to spend money. Let us be clear about the second point: It is not going to create some economic boom.

Let us look at something else that continues to be raised: that is the idea that this is somehow an easy thing to do, everyone will want it, there will be minimal impact, and if you do not want to do it you do not have to do it. We are just making it easier. Okay, what about the men and women—and the National Party members would know this probably better than most people in this place—who are required to travel around Christmas to families, to relatives, perhaps to step-families? What about sons and daughters who have to go and see each of their parents in two different parts of New South Wales because of family arrangements? For some of those people this is the only period of the year with a consolidated block of days in which to do that. How do we think those people are going to feel now with this type of legislation in place?

I do not for one second think that there is going to be some huge economic bonanza as a result of what we are doing here today. I do not see it and it does not wash with me. I am concerned that there will be plenty of people in our communities, particularly young people and people who need additional income, who will be leaned on and pressured at this time of year and who will not say anything because they are worried about the retribution that that will bring. They will be forced to work as a result of these changes and therefore will miss out on time with their family. That is what I am concerned about and will remain concerned about. It is a couple of days in our entire shopping year on which we say to those people, "Have a break; have a rest." Unlike us they have to be at work. We are not required to be at work at that time; we will be spending time with family and friends. Let them have a break; let them spend some time with family and friends. Let us think of those people before we pass this legislation.

**Mr JONATHAN O'DEA** (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.46 p.m.]: It is a pity that the Opposition is opposing the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 and it is a pity that the Opposition has not moved with the times and the needs and expectations of the community. Members of the Opposition continue to reflect an archaic, union-orientated view which pitches the union movement as all-powerful and looks at workers as victims that have to be protected in a paternalistic way by unions rather than empowering those workers to make choices themselves. Indeed, this bill respects the rights of workers but also respects their dignity and the individual choice that workers can and should make in the context of particularly Boxing Day, which will continue to be a public holiday, and will continue to be subject to Commonwealth industrial relations rules and to attract overtime rates.

This legislation is not about bashing unions. The Treasurer has demonstrated that she has gone out of her way to respect all stakeholders and the views of all relevant parties. She has listened to the viewpoints. This legislation is about sensibly balancing a range of competing needs and expectations, but mostly it is about creating an enhanced situation for all relevant stakeholders. I will talk about some of those important stakeholders and some of the independent, objective studies that have been undertaken—not with the subjective

and emotive language relied on by the member opposite. I will reiterate some of the important protections that the Treasurer highlighted that need to be emphasised in the context of what is a very sensible and balanced outcome and one which I think is in the interests of the community. This legislation promotes consistency, choice and convenience in a sensible way.

I will touch on a couple of the comments made by the member for Keira, because I cannot allow them to go unaddressed in a specific sense. He suggested that workers will be "forced" to work. I reject that. In fact, this legislation specifically ensures that if somebody is forced to work, the employer will be subject to hefty penalties in the tens of thousands of dollars. We will look at that in greater detail later. I will reflect on two personal situations. When I was a young school student and a university student, I worked in various capacities. I always looked for an opportunity to work on public holidays, because we got paid more.

The member for Keira, who comes from a public service background, worked as a teacher, which is a valued profession with lots of holidays. Teachers never have to work on public holidays, including Boxing Day. I did, because I wanted to earn the money. I was happy to work. The member for Keira has also worked for the Department of Transport. He has probably never worked on Christmas Day or Boxing Day in his life. That is his choice. But many members on this side of the Chamber have worked on public holidays and weekends because we are prepared to work to get ahead in life for our benefit and the benefit of our families and communities.

Therefore, I reject the accusation that we do not understand what it means to work on a public holiday or a weekend or at inconvenient times. Members on both sides of this Chamber know what it is like to work out of hours, on the weekends and late at night. The very nature of our job, dare I suggest, means that we work at times that are inconvenient and not family friendly. I reject the rationale of the member for Keira. For those who may be apprehensive that they will be forced to work, I can say that there are real protections in this legislation. In fact, they go beyond the protections we have at the moment for those who are working legitimately on Boxing Day. It introduces new choices for those who are working in the Sydney CBD, for example, where they will not have to work.

I wish to touch on the fallacious argument that consumer spend is limited to what is in one's wallet and that it does not matter how many days a week or a year retailers are open. I do not know what economic qualifications the member for Keira has but I suggest they are fairly scant. In 2008 Labor supported a change of legislation whereby they relaxed retail trading on Sundays. I am not arguing for or against that, but if they are going to be consistent, why did they support trading on Sundays? We are talking about a marginal increase—Boxing Day—but if being open on Boxing Day resulted in no extra spend, why would retailers want to open? Common sense suggests that if there is demand there will be supply to meet that demand. There may well be circumstances where some retailers choose not to open on Boxing Day. That is fine. They may not think paying penalty rates or that the competitive environment warrants it. That is their choice, but the nature of economics in our society will dictate and reflect whether retailers open.

We like to take a break and spend time with family at Christmas. Indeed, people will still have the opportunity to do so. As we all know, from Christmas Day to Australia Day is the time when many people take holidays and the bill does not deny people the opportunity to take time off to go away. Indeed, I hope everybody in this place has that opportunity as we approach Christmas. Some stores are currently able to open on Boxing Day because of their location in the Sydney CBD trading precinct, which is an exempt tourist area, or because of the type of goods they sell, such as restaurants or service stations. Some very good examples have been given in that regard. A more consistent and sensible situation will prevail as a result of this bill.

I touch now on some of the independent objective reports that have been undertaken. The Productivity Commission in 2011 and 2015 and the 2015 Commonwealth Competition Policy Review from Ian Harper recommended the deregulation of Boxing Day as we are now doing. Indeed, it is far from being an ideological or secret initiative. This Government went to the last election saying this is what it would do. It took it to an election because it reflected, as we read it, public sentiment. It is what the public wanted, what the community wanted; that is consumers, workers and retailers. They are the three main stakeholder groups who are going to benefit from this initiative. Indeed, the whole of New South Wales will also benefit.

This reform will provide greater choice and convenience for shoppers. Consumers will be able to shop as families on Boxing Day when people do not have to work, and they can shop at their leisure. We are going to have increased competition; reduced distortions between retailers—there will be more of a level playing field—and the removal of discrimination between retailers, depending on whether they are in one geographic location or are a particular size. Businesses will have reduced administrative costs, there will be opportunities for those who want to work and earn an income, and we will see greater efficiency. [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

This reform will mean small business owners and retailers in local communities will have more opportunity to generate dollars and put money in their tills. The opportunity for local businesses to open their doors on a day that is undeniably a major opportunity for shopping in the annual calendar cannot be underestimated. I think members on this side recognise that small businesses are the backbone of our local communities and our economy. There are compelling arguments for the bill. There are real protections, which I will not repeat because the Minister has well outlined the penalties and amendments that were passed in the other place. I sum up by saying that the Treasurer has done a wonderful job on the legislation, which has been tried before, but where others have not been successful, she has delivered legislation that is thoroughly in the interests of this State. I commend her and the Government for doing so.

**Mr GREG WARREN** (Campbelltown) [4.57 p.m.]: As the member for Keira said, the Opposition does not support the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 for a number of reasons. The member for Davidson referred to the three stakeholder groups that agree with it. Of course they agree with it; they are beneficiaries of the bill and the outcomes it provides for them. Labor supports the families and the people who will be forced to work on Boxing Day. I know we talk about it a lot in this place, but I have always believed that we should never ask anyone to do something that we cannot or would not do ourselves.

Members in this House will not be working on Boxing Day. This is merely a move to provide benefits to the stakeholders and interest groups without consideration for those who will be affected. That is the fundamental reason that Labor does not support the bill; there are many other reasons. The objectives of the bill are: to allow shops and banks to open on Boxing Day; to allow a shop to receive, unpack and prepare goods for sale on any restricted trading day; and to allow banks to be open on all public holidays.

To put it simply, the outcomes this bill aims to achieve are unwarranted, and will provide so little economic benefit that they are economically unnecessary. There is no evidence of any beneficial outcomes that this legislation will bring, other than the evidence that the stakeholders who have an interest in this have outlined to the Government. But other interest groups such as church groups and youth groups have spoken at length about their concerns with the legislation. I acknowledge that the Treasurer has met with some of those people, and I commend her for taking note of their concerns. However, she needs to do more than take note; she needs to deliver some actions. This bill does not deliver the required actions and outcomes discussed at those meetings.

In particular, proposed section 8A allows shops to open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Anzac Day to receive, unpack and/or prepare goods to be sold. While the bill states that this can only occur if the staff have "freely elected to work on that day", it fails to recognise the reality of a highly casualised industry with very low job security. High school or university students working part-time while studying may not know how to say no. A single mum would be worried about her next shift, and the older worker would feel the pressure of keeping up with younger colleagues. All of these vulnerable workers will feel compelled to work on public holidays when "asked" to do so by their employer.

I have been a manager of a very large private organisation. I was very proud to work for that organisation, which supported me whilst I completed my Master of Business Administration [MBA] and delivered outcomes for that organisation. I know the pressures that can confront a workplace but I also know the ramifications or consequences of the pressures in the workplace. Because these vulnerable employees will feel compelled to work on restricted trading days, they may end up sacrificing the very little family time they have on these important public holidays. That was the point that youth organisations and some church groups made when expressing their concerns.

If the Government gets its way—it certainly looks as if it will—and Boxing Day trading is opened up, it will have disastrous consequences for families across New South Wales, particularly in my electorate of Campbelltown, where there are a large number of casual employees working in retail and similar industries. The part-time student working as a casual retail employee at Campbelltown Mall will be required to work until late on Christmas Eve, and then early on Boxing Day morning, and will not have time to travel to spend Christmas with their family. Perhaps the single parent working a second job as a casual to put food on the table will have to miss out on spending time with the kids on Boxing Day. And the teenager with separated parents, who would normally spend Christmas Day with one parent and Boxing Day with the other, will now have to choose which parent they spend Christmas with.

It is simply not fair for the Government to take this crucial family time away from workers across the State. As members of Parliament we will not be in this place on Boxing Day. Nor will we be here on Christmas

Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday or Anzac Day. Why? Because these are days when we value the time with our family and friends above all else. As the member for Davidson said, everyone in this place works extraordinary hours. They do it with good intentions, but this is the career path we have chosen. We have chosen to represent our communities. The thousands of casual retail workers across New South Wales are just as deserving of quality time with their friends and family as any of us in this place.

We talk about choice. It is a bit rich for members of a conservative Government to talk about choice when they are imposing on workers in this State. This Government calls itself a friend of the workers but we have never seen the persecution of workers increase as it has increased under this conservative Government. It is clear that the Government does not care about these impacts on working families. It is clear that the Government does not care that people working casual jobs in the retail sector will be forced to spend their Christmas holidays at work. It is clear that no day is too sacred for this Liberal-Nationals Government when it is chasing an extra couple of dollars for interest groups. We hear a lot about unions and other interest groups from those on the opposite side of the Chamber but we never hear them talk about their lovely, cuddly relationship with the large corporate organisations. They turn up to those organisations and ask, "What do you want, guys?" They say, "Here we are; this is where we find ourselves," but they should go out and talk to people in the community and the young people who will be affected by this legislation. That is my advice.

This bill will take away valuable family time, and will deliver negligible benefits to the State economy. The Government has no evidence that this legislation will deliver any additional economic benefits. Mike Baird and his Government colleagues seem to be under the illusion that by opening all the shops on Boxing Day, consumers around the State will magically have more money to spend on the extra trading day. That is simply not true. In reality, if we open up trading on Boxing Day, any money spent in stores on Boxing Day is money that would have otherwise been spent on a different day. Allowing stores to trade on Boxing Day does not create additional revenue, it simply shifts revenue from one day to the next.

There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that extending retail trading hours to Boxing Day will increase overall retail turnover. This point has been confirmed in Deloitte reports in recent years. Furthermore, the Government claims that opening up trading on Boxing Day will be beneficial to employment levels in New South Wales. This is yet another myth that the Government is peddling in order to serve its big corporate mates down the money end of town. I say to Government members the young people and vulnerable workers in our electorates will be taking note. How do I know that? I know that because members on this side of the Chamber will be making sure that they do. Make no mistake about that.

In the retail industry, wage budgets are almost invariably set as a percentage of overall sales. Opening on one extra day will not lead to increased overall sales; it will just change the day on which the sale is made. This means that the wage budget will not increase, and that the shift worked by a casual employee on Boxing Day will mean 1½ lost shifts by another casual over the next week or two. Thus, overall wages for the affected employees will not increase, but their valuable family time will be lost forever. That idea is lost on Government members on the opposite side of the Chamber. It was not duly considered when this bill was created. It was debated very strongly in the other place, but not by the Government.

It is clear that the Government simply does not have any justification for this drastic measure. It is motivated by a desire to fill the pockets of its corporate mates, who simply walk in and get their way. I could make comparisons but I will not; that would be unparliamentary. The people of New South Wales are not asking for Boxing Day trading. It will provide negligible monetary benefits to businesses or employees, and it will further reduce the already short amount of time casual employees in the retail sector have available to spend with their friends and families. I urge everyone in this place to vote against this bill. Join Labor, and in doing so stand up for local communities, for workers and for young people. They are the people we represent—  
[Time expired.]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! The member's time has expired.

**Mr Greg Warren:** I seek an extension.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** The time had expired before the member for Campbelltown asked for an extension.

[Interruption]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! The member for Wallsend cannot canvass the ruling of the Chair. If she wishes to move a motion of dissent she is able to do so, as is any member of this House. I have ruled that the member for Campbelltown's time had expired before he sought to have that time extended. Therefore, in according with the standing orders, I cannot put a motion to the House to extend his speaking time.

**Mr GARETH WARD** (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.08 p.m.]: I will start by acknowledging, in the gallery, one of the senior directors of Shellharbour City Council, Lee Furness. As somebody who comes from Shellharbour, she knows the difference that exists between the trading hours in Shellharbour and the trading hours in Wollongong. That is something that this bill will address. My friend on the opposite side of the Chamber, the member for Campbelltown, said that there is no evidence that this legislation would work. The evidence is called "the market". Labor members should note the shops that are full of happy faces on Boxing Day in areas that are allowed to trade on Boxing Day. During Labor's 16 years of government, did the Labor Party seek to change the trading? No, it did not. This is just socialist lofty rhetoric.

**Ms Sonia Horner:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. When does a 15-year-old control the market?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! Standing Order 129 relates specifically to question time. The member for Wallsend probably meant to refer to Standing Order 76.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Even if she uses that, she would be wrong.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! The remarks of the member for Kiama are irrelevant to the bill.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The comrades opposite think the Berlin Wall fell only because of the weight of people escaping the market, but the people were going in the other direction. The position adopted by Labor members in relation to this bill is an example of not only their anti-business attitude but also their inconsistent anti-business attitude. Labor is content to allow extended trading hours to operate in Sydney. Apparently, the freedom of workers in Sydney is different from the freedom of workers in a regional area of New South Wales. By Labor members' own actions in government, they are demonstrably inconsistent, which is why the Baird Government went to the election with a promise to local communities—a promise that has been kept—to amend retail trading laws.

The Baird Government is committed to levelling the playing field for businesses. At the election we committed a re-elected Baird Government to amending the Retail Trading Act 2008—a matter with which I will deal in greater detail shortly—to allow all shops in New South Wales to trade on Boxing Day; ensuring that, if there are shops and banks that want to open on Boxing Day, they are staffed only by people who freely elected to work on that day; and maintaining Boxing Day as a public holiday, as set out in the Public Holidays Act 2010. Existing restrictions on retail trading days are complex, inconsistent and impose unnecessary costs on businesses and consumers. Under the current Retail Trading Act, retailers in New South Wales are arbitrarily restricted from trading on Boxing Day, with exceptions for small shops, scheduled shops such as pharmacies, and all shops that are located in the Sydney trading precinct, which includes the Sydney central business district [CBD], Broadway, Moore Park and Bondi Junction as well as some designated areas in regional New South Wales.

Online retailers do not face any trading day restrictions. Existing restrictions mean that New South Wales retail outlets outside central Sydney and designated regional areas are prevented from doing business, which sends local dollars and jobs of local communities elsewhere. It is an unfair playing field that favours online retailers and shops in central Sydney. Removing those restrictions will significantly boost business activity and employment in local communities across New South Wales and give consumers the option to shop on Boxing Day if and where they choose to do so. Retailing is the second-largest sector in the State and accounts for more than 10 per cent of total New South Wales employment. Moreover, retailing is a major employer of young people entering the workforce for the first time. The multiplier effect of this reform on such a large employment base would be substantial.

For major retailers, the reform will provide a level playing field by ensuring that businesses in New South Wales are competitive with online retailers and retailers in other States. For small business owners and local communities, the reform means local dollars stay in local shops. The opportunity for local businesses



to open their doors for such a major day of trading cannot be underestimated. Small businesses are the backbone of local communities and are a major provider of local jobs across New South Wales. The Government will ensure that current provisions in the Act, which provide that no employee will be required to work on Boxing Day unless they freely choose to do so, are maintained. This bill is about allowing consumers, retail businesses and workers to make choices. Boxing Day is an iconic shopping day, but access to hardware and department stores as well as supermarkets is limited to the Sydney CBD and a number of—largely coastal—local government areas.

Employees in suburban shopping centres are denied the opportunity to choose to supplement their incomes by working on Boxing Day. The Labor Opposition effectively is saying to a whole bunch of younger and older consumers, who may wish to have the opportunity to shop, that they should not be able to choose that option. In contrast to that, the Government is offering those consumers a choice. Suburban and regional retailers are denied the ability to capitalise on one of the most important and valuable trading days of the calendar year. Recent, independent reviews by the Productivity Commission and Professor Ian Harper each recommended the liberalisation of trading hours to improve the productivity and international competitiveness of our retailers. The bill reduces red tape and the administrative overburden for banks and retailers. Shopkeeper and bank responsibilities are specified in the bill.

To lawfully open on Boxing Day, a shop must use only staff who freely elect to work on that day without coercion, threat or intimidation by or on behalf of the shopkeeper. To lawfully open on non-excluded public holidays, including Boxing Day, banks must also use staff who freely elect to work on that day without coercion, threat or intimidation. Employee rights are protected by the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act and awards because Boxing Day and all other restricted days remain public holidays for purposes of the National Employment Standards under the Fair Work Act. I acknowledge Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, who is responsible for significant amendments being made to the bill that make it illegal to work or employ workers to be involved in unpacking et cetera, on restricted trading days.

For the benefit of the House and members who, unlike me, were not watching Legislative Council proceedings until 2.00 a.m., the amendments formulated and moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile resulted in the removal of clauses in the current bill that would have allowed unpacking and loading, et cetera, on restricted trading days—Good Friday, Easter Sunday, the morning of Anzac Day and Christmas Day. The amendment will make it illegal to engage any employees for work on restricted trading days. The maximum \$11,000 fine applying to each employee was also one of the amendments.

The amendments make clear that the fine for breach of the Act with respect to employing staff against their will on Boxing Day is to be applied in relation to each employee. There is a \$22,000 maximum fine for shopping malls and other lessors that force businesses to open. The amendments include a fine, which is a punitive measure, for lessors who force retail businesses to open on Boxing Day against their will. The legislation deals with both the employer and the shopping centre—a matter of concern that was raised by some members during debate. The amendments moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile provide for a ministerial appointment of an independent person to review the bill and report to the Parliament by 1 September 2017.

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the amendments have been functioning as intended. If the review finds that is not the case, a sunset clause automatically kicks in on 1 December 2017 and reverts trading to the status quo. In the case of a positive review, the onus will be on the Government to extend the bill so that it operates permanently. The bill provides a safeguard, contrary to comments that suggested otherwise. I commend the amendments moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile to the House. I mentioned earlier that I would deal with the 2008 Shop Trading Bill and what the Labor Party did when it was in government. During debate on that bill, the Hon. Penny Sharpe—or the Hon. Penny "Not-so" Sharpe—stated:

We live in a "twenty four—seven" economy. People are juggling busy family and work lives. They need the flexibility to shop at times that are convenient to them.

The public need and expect to be able to shop on a Sunday given modern lifestyles ...

Retailers will have the flexibility to open their doors on Sunday whenever their customers want them to and whenever they consider it is economically viable for them to do so.

The Greens and Labor supported the bill. I am very pleased that the Illawarra Business Chamber [IBC] issued a press release. Deb Murphy has been on the front foot, as she always is, in relation to the amendments moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I was very disappointed that the shadow Minister in this House, the member for Keira, Ryan Park, opposed the liberalisation of trading laws. I would have thought that someone who generally

is a more centre-right thinking member of the Labor Party would be backing small businesses, but no. That reminds me of the 2015 election when Labor backed in \$5.1 billion worth of increased taxes that would be borne by small businesses to pay for Sydney infrastructure. Once again, Labor members have shown whose side they are on. The Illawarra Business Chamber's press release states:

... this is a great win not only for business, but also a win for common sense. Lining up Boxing Day trading so that the same rules apply whether your business is in Shellharbour or Wollongong simply makes common sense.

Wollongong retailers can now take advantage of this key trading day and enjoy a much needed financial windfall before the New Year.

This change to trading laws is a cause the IBC has championed for many years, as it means small businesses and local communities will see local dollars spent in local shops.

Previously, Wollongong retailers were unable to trade on Boxing Day, unlike their Shellharbour, Kiama and Wingecarribee counterparts. That meant the previous legislation saw an unlevel playing field.

The opportunity for local shops to open their doors on a major trading day cannot be underestimated.

We commend the government for delivering on their election promise. Retailers and shoppers in Wollongong can rejoice this Christmas knowing Boxing Day trading starts this year.

The Illawarra Business Chamber champions business. The statements beg the question: Why do we not have the same rules in Shellharbour as apply in Wollongong? Those statements are asking for harmonisation—something that already exists in parts of the State. Clearly, Labor Party members have taken instructions from the union movement, but not from New South Wales communities that want the choice and opportunity to work. I thank the Treasurer for introducing the bill and delivering on an election commitment. I thank Government members who support and stand up for small business. I conclude my remarks by highlighting what was said by a member who preceded me in this debate, the member for Campbelltown. He claimed that religious leaders are not onside with the Government in relation to this legislation. Every single religious leader to whom I have spoken endorsed the amendments that are part of this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms SONIA HORNERY** (Wallsend) [5.18 p.m.]: I think the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 needs to be retitled in two ways. The first name of the bill ought to be the "Fred Nile Let's Trade on Christmas Day without any Protection of Workers Bill" and the second is—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: My point of order is under Standing Order 76, relevance. It is clearly not relevant because it is clearly not the title of the bill. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile moved amendments, as he is entitled to do. It does not matter whether the member for Wallsend agrees with them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! That was not a point of order.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I know that.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. If the member wants to take further points of order he must ensure that he quotes the standing orders.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I did.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Adam Marshall):** Order! It was not the correct standing order.

**Ms SONIA HORNERY:** Mr Temporary Speaker, thank you for keeping order in the House. The member for Keira made a very good point, as have other Labor Opposition members, that this bill does not make economic common sense. Fundamentally, this bill should make economic common sense, but it should also protect the rights of workers, especially those who are young and vulnerable. The member for Keira is right to say things have changed. I got my first job at a West Wallsend store the minute I turned 15 and things have changed since then. I worked on checkout every Thursday night and every Saturday morning plus every day there was a stocktake and every school holidays. I knew I had my checkout job every Thursday night and every Saturday morning provided that I followed the rules to turn up early and do the right thing, which I did.

These days there is no permanency in any part-time job. No longer are 15-year-olds guaranteed regular part-time shifts at Target, Coles, Woolworths or Aldi. They are allocated shifts when they occur and the worker

is available and willing to take them. My problem with the bill is that these jobs often mean everything to vulnerable young workers from working class families in terms of income. If they have made plans to spend time with their family, are they going to say no to a boss who says, "I want you to work on Boxing Day"? No, they are not going to say no because they do not want to lose a shift or not be given an opportunity to work in the following year. They want that work in the future, but there are no guarantees in the casualised workforce employed by Target, Coles, Woolworths, Aldi or other big employers.

Interestingly, the member for Kiama said that the business chamber supported this bill. I have had conversations with the Wallsend Town Business Association and the Northlakes business association of Cardiff, and they have a different view of this bill because they are concerned about its effect on small businesses. We on this side of the House support small businesses, many of which are concerned about opening on days like Boxing Day because they want to take a break over Christmas, not because they do not have customers. The coffee shop at Wallsend that I go to all the time is closing for two weeks. They told me, "We just want to have a break and we are pleased to have the opportunity to do that." Their workers get a break as well. But people working at businesses at, say, Stockland at Jesmond, Glendale or Wallsend are in a different situation because the businesses are in a shopping centre that may force their stores to open, which means these workers are in a position where they will have to work.

The Government talks about choice, but really there is no choice and this is what really worries me. There is a lack of choice particularly for young people who will not be able to say, "No, I do not want to work on Boxing Day because I want to spend the day with my family." This legislation boils down to the fact that things have changed. Young people deserve to have a job, but they do not deserve to be exploited. I refer to a poultry processing firm called Baiada Group in my electorate. In the past few years this organisation has been given permission to employ overseas people on working visas.

The independent umpire has ruled that these people have been grossly underpaid. Community members in the Beresfield area have told me that many of the overseas workers employed by a contract labour hire mob, mainly those from China and Taiwan, live in overcrowded conditions, some with 30 or 40 people living in a three-bedroom house. These workers are exploited and vulnerable because they are on working visas and they want to work. The Opposition forced the Government to have the Ombudsman investigate the position of these vulnerable workers, as it is our job to make sure that the vulnerable, the poor and the young have a say. This bill takes away that right from vulnerable groups and that is why I oppose it.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON** (Port Stephens) [5.25 p.m.]: I oppose the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. Once again the Government is focused on the profits of the few rather than the wellbeing of the many. New South Wales has only a handful of public holidays each year. These days are spread out across the calendar and allow time for celebration, reflection and renewal, and provide an opportunity to spend quality time with family. Other members will no doubt experience the same pressures on their time with family as that of working parents across this State. As more and more families have both parents working, the opportunity for quality family time is put under pressure. Today the New South Wales Government has decided to add a bit more pressure by removing one of the few days of the year on which non-essential retail trading is restricted, a day that allows retail workers and other families to spend time with each other as they recover from the pre-Christmas trade rush.

Additional stress and pressure is not something many families can cope with. We already have frightening levels of domestic violence and skyrocketing mental health issues, yet this Government would put more pressure on workers and families. This time off work is not just for the workers; it is for their families. I am sure I am not the only one who knows of families who spend Christmas Day with one side of their family and Boxing Day with the other. As family life becomes more complex, with an increasing number of step-parents and blended families, the celebration of family life also becomes more complex. Until today, families knew they had two days over which to coordinate their families' end-of-year celebrations. For many families that time will now be halved.

Let us be in no doubt about who benefits from this change and who does not. It is not the retail worker who is called away from their family. It is not the family that has to restructure their end-of-year holiday because mum, dad or one of the kids has to spend an extra day at work. It is not the retail and transport workers who will have to work on Christmas day to ensure that shops are open and have products to sell. This change will only benefit the handful of shareholders of major retailers. The Government has tried to stress the protections it will put in place to protect workers and businesses. The best protection would be achieved by not supporting this legislation, by not exposing workers and small business to pressures to open on Boxing Day,

pressures to work on Boxing Day. To ensure workers and small businesses are treated fairly, which appears to be a goal of the Treasurer, there is an easy solution: Do not expose them to exploitation by passing this bill—do not open on Boxing Day for retail trade across New South Wales.

Anyone who has worked in retail knows that there is a significant imbalance in power between the bosses and their staff, particularly young staff and casual workers—vulnerable workers. They know that if they choose not to undertake a shift that is offered, they may not be offered another one. The employer is unlikely to do it under threat of coercion or pressure, which this bill tries to address; everyone knows that there will be payback in the form of no work down the track. The Government is removed from reality if it thinks its so-called protections will protect workers who do not want to work on Boxing Day. The impacts on workers will not necessarily be borne out on the day, or in the lead-up to Boxing Day; they will be borne out in the weeks and months that follow.

My electorate of Port Stephens is proud of its strong tourism economy, which is accustomed to operating on Boxing Day. However, there are areas within Port Stephens that cannot be described as tourist areas. Raymond Terrace is one such town. Nevertheless, the large shopping centre in Raymond Terrace chooses to open because it can, and with it the small retailers. Those small business owners have described to me the impact on their lives and business of opening on Boxing Day. Not only do they lose the chance of spending time with their families, they also lose money. They open for the whole day, but hardly make a sale. Under the guise of fairness and choice that is what this Government is proposing for New South Wales.

It must also be noted that retail workers are not the only employees who will be forced back to work by this bill. Banks will trade on Boxing Day thereby pressuring financial sector workers to return to the workplace. The argument that banks need to open on Boxing Day to remain competitive is absurd when those same banks are on course to generate \$30 billion in profit this year. The arguments that apply to retail workers also apply to financial sector workers. Any member of the Government who believes that an employee, whether in retail or the financial services industry, can turn down a request to work at a certain time and face no backlash in the workplace is naïve at best. Workers may be left off the roster for the next week or thought of as being not a team player if they turn down a shift on a public holiday; and they need genuine protections, not those offered by this bill.

The New South Wales Government is so focused on pandering to big business that it has forgotten that it is there to serve the people of this State. This Government does not seem to realise—or perhaps it just does not care—that the workers it attacks through changes to workers compensation or changes to working conditions are also the consumers who drive the economy. These changes are not necessary, despite what the Treasurer says. They are not wanted by anyone other than big business. They are not fair and the proposed protections are divorced from reality. That is why I oppose this bill. For centuries Boxing Day has provided a day of relief for workers in service-based industries. As of today, as a result of this heartless Government, the traditional day of peace will be gone.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH** (Ballina) [5.31 p.m.]: The Greens do not support the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. It is lamentable that we have to polarise the debate into pro-economic development or pro small business and anti-Labor, or the reverse. It is ridiculous. Members should be able to have a frank and fearless conversation about what it is that families and communities want. In regional New South Wales and in my electorate I have heard repeatedly from retail workers that they greatly value their holidays. They are mostly women with families who are not on a high income. It is a sacrosanct time of the year when they can plan to go to the in-laws or catch up with other family members without worrying that they may be asked to work. The bill states that workers will "freely elect" to work, but most of us know that concept translates into something quite different in reality.

The bill seeks to amend the Retail Trading Act to allow shops to trade on Boxing Day and to be staffed for preparation of goods on any restricted trading day, and for banks to be open on weekends. The Government claims that a person will be required to work only if they have freely elected to do so, but the bill does not provide any new protection for voluntary workers. This definition fails to recognise that many workers will feel pressured and compelled to work. If you are taking on some of the duopolies in the twenty-first century with WorkChoices and enterprise bargaining there really is no bargaining power. I see examples of this in my community with teenagers who work for Woolworths and Coles. I defy any member of this House to try to argue the opposite.

We know that essentially the bill proposes to degrade the status of Boxing Day as a public holiday. Presently there are 4½ days out of 365 days in the calendar when retail traders are guaranteed the opportunity to

have time with their family and friends. In a sense it is anti-business because a small business will feel the pressure to keep up with the big stores. If a business is in a plaza and the business is shut but the bigger ones are open, there will be an expectation and pressure to open. Those 4½ days—Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and half of Anzac Day—are the days that all retail workers are guaranteed to have off. The Government presents a false economic case. The idea that one extra day of consumption in the year will somehow expand economic activity is a false economic case.

We know from the modelling done by the Australia Institute, and considered by the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, that there will not be additional economic growth or wages for low income workers. The existing consumption and work available to the low wage casual female workforce in the retail industry will simply be spread over an additional day. There will not be a single additional dollar in anyone's pocket, yet retail workers will lose that crucial day with their family. How does one quantify the pressure on so many mothers, in particular, to work that day? The bill states that a person will be required to work only if they have "freely elected to work." The reality of "freely elected to work" remains to be seen. The idea that a casual low wage retail worker will have an honest, free, genuine engagement with a large retail store is unrealistic.

The definition proposed in new section 3A fails to recognise just how many workers will feel pressured and compelled to work, and that work will not be voluntary. New section 8B will remove the trading exemption for shops on Boxing Day, which means that thousands of workers across the State will be forced to give up a much-needed public holiday and time with their families. That is something that the council and local chambers in Ballina are talking about; rather than being something that is anti-small business, it is something that small businesses are really worried about. It is not just The Greens, the unions and the Labor Opposition that are pointing out the social damage this bill could cause; people and organisations from across society have made multiple representations about it. I will read into *Hansard* a joint representation headed, "Take the time for a better work/life balance". It is addressed to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. It is relevant to all of us. It states:

We write to you as representatives of a range of religious institutions to inform you of our strong opposition to the proposed changes to restricting retail trading days in New South Wales.

The proposal to permit trading in all shops on Boxing Day, and work behind closed doors on every day of the year would have a severe adverse impact on the families and community of this State and as such, we call on you to reject any move in the New South Wales Parliament to legislate those changes to trading laws.

We believe that allowing retailers to open on culturally significant days such as Boxing Day, or to have to work behind closed doors on Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Day and before 1 p.m. on Anzac Day, is out of step with the needs and views of the community at large.

All families and communities should be able to come together and celebrate culturally significant days regardless of their religious beliefs and backgrounds. With just four and half days exempt from trading throughout the year, we feel any further increase in retail trading days is unnecessary and would have negative ramifications for our social fabric.

The Greens do not support this bill and strongly oppose what appears to be a deterioration of work-life balance in the retail industry.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON** (Maitland) [5.38 p.m.]: I speak against the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. What is it that this Government has against the word "public"? First, it privatised our ports and our poles and wires, and now it wants to get rid of our last few remaining public holidays. Having spent more than 20 years in the retail and hospitality sector as a worker, manager and then business owner, I will provide some context to this debate. Yesterday in the upper House Mr Scot MacDonald spoke vaguely about his visit to the Hunter and the idea that people in shops wanted to open on Boxing Day. I will tell the House the reality for workers, managers and owners in this industry. In 1987 I got my first job at a jewellery shop as a casual retail sales assistant. In this role I enjoyed working long hours in the weeks leading up to Christmas helping people choose Christmas presents for their loved ones.

Around that time I lived in Canberra, which had extended trading hours. In the week before Christmas I was rostered to work every day from 9.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. with two half-hour meal breaks. I worked every day and even though I loved my job it involved helping stressed customers in regard to orders that might not have arrived on time or items that were not in stock. Providing constant customer service with a smile and having unlimited patience was not always easy. I took pride in my work but I still looked forward to those two days off to spend with my family on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. They were the days when I could relax, rest and recover in preparation for the onslaught of the sales, changing window displays and signage, dealing with customer returns, and all the other activity that started again on 27 December.

Later, as a 19-year-old with no family responsibilities and on holiday from university, I loved working those hours. It gave me the chance to save money. My university studies reduced the time I had available to work and work was not obtainable at other times. I also knew that as a casual worker who would soon turn 20—and would be the oldest staff member—I would soon lose most of my regular hours. Despite being the highest sales achiever in my store, my local manager was governed by head office wages budgets that had no relation to sales achieved. Simply put, I cost the company more to employ, so my hours would be cut. I worked the extra hours before Christmas to balance my budget.

I use this example of my younger days as a retail assistant to demonstrate the tenuous nature of casual retail employment. For Government members to talk about "voluntary" work on these public holidays is to negate the reality of life for people working in the retail sector. The Government has guaranteed that anyone who works on Boxing Day will do so voluntarily. How can it guarantee that? The retail sales managers I had in some of my jobs would have found it extremely difficult to explain to their managers from national and multinational companies that they could not get any workers for that day. The Treasurer referred to amendments designed to stop landlords being able to include compulsory trading on these dates in leases. How can that be properly policed?

Will business operators who refuse to trade during these periods have their rents increased at a higher than normal rate over a number of years? We already know that small family businesses pay higher rates per metre than large national and multinational companies in shopping centres. What will stop that happening if there is an informal, unstated rate for those who continually fail to trade on a public holiday? Again, as other members have said, this will have a significant impact on small businesses—which this Government clearly does not support. I will tell the House of my experience as a managing director of a hospitality business. When my family had a motel in Walcha in the New England it made sense to offer a Christmas tour.

Like everyone involved in the motel industry, we worked on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, and every other day of the year. People want to visit destinations and families and friends at any time of the year. That is accepted by everyone who owns or works in a hospitality business. However, as owner-managers, my husband and his parents decided that they would offer a Christmas tour to share the Christmas spirit with those who did not have family or friends and also to better manage their workload in the motel. Rather than attending to guests every half hour, they could organise the impact of their business life on their family life and provide opportunities to engage only with people who wanted to share the Christmas spirit.

The people who came on these tours were lovely. They were often single, did not have children, or their relatives and friends were away. They were parents of adult children stressed from trying to manage a multitude of Christmas obligations of family visits in far-flung destinations. They could say to them, "No worries. We are going away this year. Go and stay with your in-laws. All is well." My family and our staff always felt that we were doing people a service by having Christmas tours. Over the years some people spent many Christmases with our family. Later, as our business focused on coaches, we continued the tradition of Christmas tours. However, as we started to employ staff, it was always difficult to ensure that we gave them a genuine choice. We tried everything we could to make it fair.

We alternated the Christmas rosters so they never had to work two years in a row. We let staff choose their destinations and we encouraged them to take their partners and children on tours. As owners, we tried to do most of the touring so that our staff would not be required to do it, even though it impacted on our extended family Christmases. Some years we stepped in if personal matters meant a staff member could not work over Christmas. It was something we accepted because we supported our staff and worked with them in a cooperative way. Our relationships with our staff were strong and personal and they had been built up over many years. It is not always like that in the retail sector.

My own children went on tours. In fact, my son Joshua was just four days old when he did his first Christmas job—having morning tea with a tour group. He was due on the night of the new millennium, but we always joked that he came early to slip in an extra Christmas. Despite the joke, it was a challenge for everyone, including the staff who worked over Christmas. We also had to reorganise family celebrations and felt the enormous guilt of not being able to spend time with all of our family. We had to organise a tree and the giving of Christmas presents to fit in with our work arrangements. I would not wish it on anyone if they did not have to do it.

The Baird-Grant Government is not thinking of the many families who will suffer as a result of the passage of this legislation. Christmas is already a stressful time for many families, and having to work over this

period could push people to the brink in their family relationships. We all need time off, and it is important that it aligns with our cultural and religious festivals. I wonder how hospitality business owners and other business owners will feel about people saving their holiday money to spend at the sales. Will people spend even more money in shops and then have nothing to spend on tourism attractions during the holiday period, the peak visitation times? Having spent many Christmases in tiny towns, I know how often holiday travellers provide a much-needed injection of cash into the tourism and visitor economy.

It is almost as though the Government is pitting retailers against the hospitality businesses with this bill. This legislation makes no social sense and it is not economically necessary. We do not need fewer than 4½ days of restricted trading in New South Wales. The insidious aspect of this bill is that it will allow retailers to require tens of thousands of retail workers to work on Christmas Day, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and before 1.00 p.m. on Anzac Day rather than spend time with their families or at community gatherings. What does the Baird Government have against the word "public"? It has attacked our public assets and now it is taking our public holidays.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS** (Wyang) [5.46 p.m.]: I oppose the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. Retail workers and their families are guaranteed family time on only 4½ days a year. I draw the attention of the House to a submission to the Harper competition review lodged by the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Reverend Dr Glenn Davies, who clearly put the case for opposing further deregulation of trading hours. He stated:

Removing Boxing Day from the public holiday calendar will change the nature of the "Christmas break" for many. For example, under Recommendation 51, a retail employee could end up working late on Christmas Eve, and then starting early on Boxing Day. At a time when families are often geographically separated from each other, the ability to organise family social activities is already challenging. Removing these last few public holidays will damage social capital by making it impossible for large sections of the retail industry to have time off to rest and enjoy recreational time with friends and family ...

We contend that there are real concerns about loss of social cohesion even in the proposed incremental change. We are in danger of losing the art of living well—living wisely, as we step by step become *homo economicus*, (economic people) and move away from our identity as *homo sapiens* (wise people).

I live in a tourist region and our shops trade over Christmas. I am a surf lifesaver and our two busiest days of the year are Christmas Day and Boxing Day. That is because people travel from Sydney to stay at the local caravan park at Norah Head to spend quality family time together and to enjoy that short break. My local area has flirted with all sorts of ideas—for example, opening shops until midnight on Christmas Eve to give people the opportunity to shop. I took the time to visit the shopping area at about 11.30 p.m. to see how well it was going and I saw a ghost town; there was no-one around. We seem to have a terrible passion to chase the dollar instead of caring about our lifestyle, our family and taking a little time to celebrate and spend time together. The problem with this bill is that it is all about spending money. I know that many people get into financial difficulties over the Christmas season and for months after they struggle to pay their credit card bills.

We seem to want shops to be open more and more and to give people the opportunity to spend more money that they do not necessarily have instead of focusing on the important things in life, such as building quality relationships. It needs to be noted that one of the sad parts of the Christmas break is that our suicide rates are often at their highest. The reason is that people are put under so much pressure—to spend, to be apart from family—that it creates terrible problems in our community. Here again the Government, in its endless pursuit of business 24/7, 365 days a year, open all times of the day and night, never shut down, forgets that the fabric of our society is family, relationships and spending time together.

The Government states that this bill will protect people by providing that they do not have to work if they do not want to. Employers may not directly penalise employees who say they do not want to work but they will not ring them anymore. I had this experience myself when working in the fast food industry. Slowly they cut back the hours and then they do not ring the employee at all. If the employee says, "What's going on?" they will say, "Oh, we just have too many people," or, "You do not have the skills anymore". There are various ways of putting pressure on people to turn up to work on these days. It is outrageous that we would ask people to work on Christmas Day stacking shelves or work on Boxing Day if they do not have to. As I have said, our society is suffering as people become overworked and overstretched and, most of all, as they overspend. This bill is all about spend, spend, spend and not about relationships.

One aspect of this legislation that amazes me is that it provides for bank employees to work an extra day. In a time of ATMs, online banking and every sort of access to money that anyone could ever think of, why on earth would bank employees stand in a branch on a day when they are unlikely to see any customers? There

are around 170,000-plus bank employees across the State. People have never had so much access to their money as they do now, yet this bill talks about bank employees working on these days. It beggars belief and I cannot understand the reason for it. I am a board member of a community bank. We are looking at cutting back the number of hours that the bank is open because people do not go into banks anymore. They do their banking online or at ATMs. Yet this legislation will mean that bank employees will have to go to work, stand behind a counter and do nothing. I just cannot understand it. When banks are making \$3 billion in profit, one wonders why they would have to open two extra days a year. This bill is about ruining families and relationships and making people run up more debt. It is not about caring for the community or acknowledging that people need quality time together.

Tourist areas, such as my electorate, rely on extra trade from people visiting their area. If people have to work and are not able to get away and visit for those two days as they do now, that will cause a loss of income for areas like mine. On the surface, the Government thinks it is doing a good thing by giving people choice and having 24/7, 365 days a year trade. But people have only a certain amount of money, or they use credit. When they run out of money they will use the credit card and put themselves further into debt. Yet the Government keeps pushing them by saying, "You need to go to the store every day of the week and spend, spend, spend, instead of getting away and enjoying life for a bit."

Around my area people go to the beach and the lakes, they go out on their boats and enjoy those sorts of activities. They do not want to go back to Westfield for another day and spend more money. They actually want some time out. I oppose this bill because of its social ramifications. It is an anti-relationship bill. This bill is a regressive step in a society that is already under so much stress. It is forcing people to spend more money, to work more and to have less time off. The Government tells people that they have free choice, but they do not. I again state that I cannot understand the banking aspect of the bill. As I said, our community bank stopped Saturday trading because people did not come into the branch. Why does the Government want people to go to the bank on Boxing Day? Why does the Government want bank staff to miss out on their one day a year bank holiday? It just beggars belief. I absolutely oppose this bill. Out of the 365 days in a year, people should have 4½ days' time off to enjoy life. We should not be forcing people into shops every day of the year.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY** (Swansea) [5.55 p.m.]: I make a contribution to the debate on the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 on behalf of the thousands of retail workers in the Swansea electorate who will see their Christmas time stripped away by this legislation. I join with the thousands of people who will be forced to work on Boxing Day in labelling this legislation as a disgraceful attack on the State's workers and families. That is why I oppose this bill. The Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 essentially calls for retail trading hours to be extended to include some of the last few remaining trading free days, including Boxing Day. While it sounds like a simple change, the Minister assures the hundreds of thousands of retail workers who will be affected by this bill that they will be able to elect whether or not they work. Those of us in the real world know that the idea of electing not to work over the holiday period is not a reality. The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association [SDA] NSW Secretary, Bernie Smith, said that the Government's claims that no worker would be forced to work on these important days are completely incorrect and offensive to workers. He said:

Of course the reality is that workers will be forced to work on those days. A line in the legislation that says that workers have the right to refuse to work is all well and good, but that completely ignores the reality of the situation. No amendments can save retail workers, only keeping the shops closed can.

The reality is that when you're a retail worker or fast food worker and your boss tells you that you're rostered on to work, you have to work.

Anyone who has ever worked in an industry like retail knows that you don't have the luxury of forcing your manager to change the roster because you want to spend Christmas Day or Boxing Day with your family.

I have to agree with this assessment. Currently, our shops are open 360½ days a year. By year's end, the Legislative Assembly will have sat for 48 days. It is a slap in the face to our retail workers to tell them that they now may be forced by legislators in this Parliament to work additional days. I recently heard a story of a young retail employee's experience of working over the Christmas period in a supermarket in a tourist section of Newcastle which was deemed exempt from holiday trading restrictions. This worker, a 23-year-old single dad, advised me that for four years in a row he worked a 10-hour shift up until midnight on Christmas Eve. He then returned to his workplace at 3.00 a.m. on Boxing Day to make sure that the supermarket was up and running to open at 7.00 a.m.

He spoke to me of the implications that this had for him and his family during a time when most people are able to relax and enjoy the festive season with their loved ones, as they should. He was forced to alter the



time that he was able to have with his young son over the Christmas period. He was tired all day on Christmas Day, having put in long hours the day before, and then he was run off his feet on Boxing Day as the retailer would endeavour to keep costs down by putting on only a skeleton crew for the day. He could not have a social drink with his family and friends, as many of us do over this period. He told me that he felt like he had let his son down by not being able to spend much of that precious time with him.

The saddest part of this story is that while this young man was not technically forced to work extremely tough hours over the Christmas period for four straight years, the pressure applied to him to do so was enormous. As a casual worker he filled the gaps when the permanent part-time staff elected not to work. Obviously, and quite rightly, many permanent workers elect not to work over the Christmas period. It is a busy and stressful time and all people want is to spend time with their families. Pressure is also applied to permanent staff who make their living in the retail trade. Recently I heard from some more retail workers who outlined the pressure they feel to work over the festive season. Mandy, a young woman, said:

I feel really worried about this Bill being passed. I have worked in retail for all my life. I feel that the pressure that management put on staff around Christmas Day and Boxing Day is immense. I know that I'm strong enough to stand up to this, but I still feel quite guilty because they often pressure us by saying, "management still have to work". I know there are a lot of employees who will cave into this pressure. I think Christmas and Boxing Day are times to be spent with our friends and family and not being at work ...

She was most upset. Another young woman—and members will note that these are young woman—named Alison said:

... I work in retail. Retail businesses are open enough days of the year without having to be open on Boxing Day. We all need to spend time with our families, just like everybody else.

I think that tells the tale. Members in this House do not work on Boxing Day and we do not work the day before Christmas Day. Quite frankly, imposing this position on these young people is just not right. I heard from an older female retail worker who had worked in retail for 25 years. She told me that in those 25 years she had worked 17 Boxing Days. She told me:

There's a lot of pressure on retail workers to work on this day to accommodate today's society. We deserve to be able to spend this special time with our loved ones, just as much as anybody else and to have a bit of a break for 2 days.

The store she works in closes for only 2½ days out of the 365 days a year. She said:

Please consider that everyone who works on these public holidays don't actually volunteer to do so because of the immense pressure applied to them to work.

Feelings of guilt, feeling left out, being upset, and feeling immense pressure are some of the emotions that retail workers expressed to me when they have been forced to work on Boxing Day. The Government, as expected, has attempted to justify the attack on workers by suggesting that this will be good for the economy. That is just not true. The benefits to the economy of any further retail trading deregulation are negligible at best, and there is no economic benefit from opening on Boxing Day. There is no evidence to suggest that further liberalisation of trading hours would increase State income or employment levels.

The loss of shared family time carries a significant social cost. The market cannot accurately assess these costs, so individual workers and their families will bear them. The *Daily Telegraph* quoted an Ernst and Young report, which claims that a 3 per cent increase in trading hours would add \$200 million to the New South Wales economy. But a 3 per cent increase in trading hours amounts to almost 11 extra days. Last time I checked there were not 376 days in a calendar year. Recently, my friend Barbara Nebart, Secretary of the Newcastle and Northern Branch of the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, wrote in an article in the *Newcastle Herald*:

There is no evidence to suggest that opening stores on Boxing Day will have any economic benefit at all. Shoppers don't magically get more money to spend just because it is Boxing Day. Money spent in stores on the 26th is money that is not spent on another day.

She finished with an astute observation:

Even if there is some benefit, is it really more important that a handful of retail business owners get a few extra dollars in their pocket than for thousands of Australian workers to get the opportunity to spend Christmas with their families?

The attempts to have these changes put through this Parliament have been numerous. This Government attempted to pass this legislation three years and one day ago but it withdrew the bill, realising it was a bridge too far. I ask the Government: What has changed between then and now? I think I know the answer. A dirty deal has been done to pass this legislation in Parliament. As a result, we will be hurting families. I will finish by quoting a good friend of mine, the member for Wallsend, Sonia Hornery, who said this morning:

Workers deserve the right to have the Christmas break with their family and friends. Christmas just isn't Christmas without Boxing Day for retail workers.

I do not support the bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Anna Watson):** I congratulate the member for Swansea on bringing her poignant speech to the attention of the House.

**Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [6.05 p.m.]:** I oppose the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015. The bill grants the wishes of retailers, which they have been after for many years. This bill should be called the Scrooge bill because, if passed, it will steal Christmas from so many families. The bill is based on two misnomers. The first is that our economy will grow because having our shops open longer will mean that people will spend more money. In fact, your budget is your budget; your income is your income. Families will not have more money to spend just because retailers across the State open their doors on Boxing Day. They will simply be spending money that they would have spent on another day.

The second misnomer is that retail workers have a bargaining capacity equal to that of their employers. I started work at 15, packing bags behind a cash register at Woolworths. I know, as does everyone, that casual workers have no bargaining power. They are the most vulnerable employees in this State. To suggest for one minute that a casual employee has equal bargaining power with a manager at Woolworths, Coles, Big W or any other major retail chain is absurd. For this Government to say that shows how out of touch it is with reality. I look forward to the day when the sons or daughters of members on the other side are forced to work on Christmas night stacking shelves so that the retailer can open on Boxing Day. That is when the reality of the bill will hit home to them.

This bill will mean that families will be unable to spend Christmas together. When I was Minister for Commerce in the former Government, retailers were banging on my door wanting Labor to change the retail trading hours because they thought it was important to have the shops open across the State. None of them could demonstrate why it was necessary. We hear the furphy from members opposite that in some areas shops are open and in others they are not. The areas where shops are open are designated tourist destinations, and they are open for a specific purpose. Our traditions will be trashed as a result of these laws. These laws will not allow families to spend Christmas together because families who would have travelled to rural and regional New South Wales—and we have members in coalition with the Liberals who claim to represent the interests of people in regional New South Wales—will be unable to do so because they will be forced to work on Boxing Day. That is the reality of this legislation.

Members on the other side regularly drone on that they represent the interests of small business and that their party is interested in business. I have met with representatives from plenty of small retail businesses—businesses like small shoe stores, tobacconists and other small retail operations that are run by families—that operate in the major shopping centres. Those small businesses will be forced to open on Boxing Day, regardless of how profitable it will be and regardless of whether they want to work or not. Because of the nature of the leases they have signed, when a major retail shopping centre opens, these small businesses are compelled to open. If they do not open, their leases will, in some cases, mean that they are fined.

They are charged for outgoings such as electricity, air-conditioning, water and sewerage on the days that the shopping centre is open. This legislation will force those small retailers to open so they will not get a break. They will suffer as a result of these changes. It is as if we are travelling back in time. We are going from being able to spend time with our families, back to a time when we had to work every single day of the year. Currently, retail trading takes place on 360½ days a year. If this bill passes, trading will take place on 361½ days a year. How long before those opposite have a crack at Good Friday or Easter Sunday? How long will it be before they have a crack at Christmas Day or decide shops should stay open on Anzac Day?

It was a tragedy when this Government agreed to allow trading for half a day on Anzac Day. It is significant that today is 11 November, Remembrance Day. The Premier spoke in this Chamber today about remembering and honouring those who served. But this Government will not even honour Anzac Day as a full

day of rest, when we can spend time thinking about family members who went to war and paid the ultimate sacrifice. This Government is not interested in families. The Government is not fair dinkum about these issues. This Government just wants more and more opportunities for people to exploit. It wants retailers to be open more and more.

This legislation represents a step back in time. Those workers who work in retail outlets—particularly young university students or school children who are working as casuals—do not have equal bargaining power, nor do they have the capacity to say no. Madam Temporary Speaker, you know only too well what would happen to any casual who says, "I am not available." That person will not be sacked; the phone will just not ring any more. The person will no longer be on the roster and will no longer be earning an income. That is how vulnerable casual employees are.

This legislation represents a continuation of a slippery slope. I note that the Treasurer is entering the Chamber, and I make the point that this legislation should not be passed by Parliament because it will place young people, particularly casuals in the retail sector, in a position where they cannot say no. People in that situation do not have a genuine choice, despite the rhetoric and despite what is contained in the bill. The written law will not reflect the reality for casual employees. Sadly, the number of casual employees in the workforce continues to grow. Sadly, those employees have very limited rights and capacity to bargain with their employers. So I oppose this bill because 360½ days a year should be more than enough for people to go shopping. Some countries around the world do not have Sunday trading.

There are plenty of countries in Europe—well-developed, modern economies—that do not allow shopping on Sundays. So 360½ days a year is enough. When we debated the lockout laws it was argued that Sydney could not be an international city if you could not get a drink 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That was an absolute furphy, as is the argument used with respect to this legislation. It is argued that Sydney cannot claim to be an international city if people cannot shop on Boxing Day and that the State will not attract tourists. That rhetoric is rubbish. None of the arguments being advanced by the proponents is backed up with substantial evidence.

This is simply an opportunity for the retailers to try to squeeze money out of people who do not have any more money. To suggest that people will spend more because they can shop on Boxing Day is absurd. As I said at the start, people have only so much in their budgets. They cannot spend more than they earn, and if they do—that is what this legislation will lead to—it will result in this Government forcing more families to spend more on their credit cards, as the member for Wyong said. That will put more financial stress on families, which will not help anyone in this State in the longer term. That is why I oppose this bill.

**Ms JENNY LEONG** (Newtown) [6.14 p.m.]: I contribute to debate on the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015 and support the member for Ballina, Tamara Smith, who spoke on behalf of The Greens to say that we oppose this bill. We have serious concerns about the impact that this bill will have on work-life balance for many people. I will speak briefly on behalf of the more than 3,000 residents in the electorate of Newtown who work in the retail industry. I will also speak on behalf of the thousands of others who have family members who work in retail, because they will be impacted by these changes.

Many of those people who work in retail in the electorate of Newtown are young people and the real concern is that they will not be able to freely elect whether or not they want to work. I remember very clearly being in the casual workforce and I know that when a casual is told to work on a Sunday, if they have other commitments, sure, they can choose to say, "No, I am not going to come in on that day." A casual worker can freely elect to do that but it will mean that the worker is not rostered on the next week, and will probably not have a job as a result of not turning up.

We know that at this time of year people in many families will be negotiating the logistics of the Christmas-Boxing Day period. In my case I have some family in Adelaide, some family in Hobart and some family in Sydney. That leads to the challenge of negotiating which part of the family I will spend that time with. Someone that I know has some family in Picton, some family in Ballina and some family on the Central Coast. Negotiating how you manage to spend this time with family over one day—because you are required to be back at work on the second day—would be of huge concern.

The Parliament and this Government should be approaching the laws that we make in ways that seek to protect people's ability to work but also connect with their families. Laws should be made with an understanding of people's wellbeing. Everyone should have the right to enjoy the luxury of public holidays. The right to those holidays has been hard won. The right of workers not to have to put work before their family lives and before

their wellbeing should be protected. That is why The Greens strongly oppose this bill. We strongly urge the Government not to go ahead with this legislation because it will have a huge impact on young, casual workers. It will have a huge impact on people who want to spend time with their families. That is not what we should be doing in the lead-up to Christmas. We should be encouraging people to spend more time with their families, not preventing them from being able to do that by eating into public holidays.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN** (Willoughby—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) [6.17 p.m.], in reply: I thank everybody who made a contribution to this debate. I thank the members representing the electorates of Keira, Davidson, Campbelltown, Kiama, Wallsend, Port Stephens, Ballina, Maitland, Wyong, Swansea, Blacktown and Newtown for their contributions. I have been listening intently to the issues and concerns raised by members opposite and members of the crossbenches. I assure those members that the Government has considered their concerns. The Government has considered what this means for families and for workers, and what this legislation means for communities.

On balance, having considered all those concerns and also having considered the opportunities that will arise from this legislation, we believe that it is far and away in the State's best interests and the community's interests to support consistency in retail trade on Boxing Day. As I mentioned in the second reading speech a short time ago, the Government has spent a lot of time talking to key stakeholders. In the other place, the Government supported amendments put forward by the Christian Democrats which we believe strengthen the bill. Those amendments address a number of issues, and I will briefly summarise those concerns. Currently, thousands of workers who are employed in retail establishments in the Sydney central business district [CBD] and the eastern suburbs, which are designated as the Sydney trading precinct, do not have the right to refuse to work.

If workers are employed in a designated area in Sydney, they do not have the right to refuse to work, but this bill will give them that right. A retail worker who traditionally has worked on Boxing Day will have the right to refuse to comply with an employer's request to work on Boxing Day. Those workers and new workers, in communities that will have the opportunity to trade on Boxing Day, will have a right to refuse to work. If an employer abuses that right, the employer will be named and shamed and will be subject to a fine of \$11,000 for each breach of the legislation. Those provisions will not apply as a whole. A major employer who forces employees to work on Boxing Day against their will will be subject to a fine for each employee. That right is part of the package of amendments that were moved in the Legislative Council.

The other issue addressed by the Government relates to small businesses. If a small business operator whose premises is in a mall or a larger retail complex is pressured to open on Boxing Day by either larger businesses or someone issuing a franchise, that person or organisation will be subject to a fine of up to \$22,000 and also will be named and shamed. Many will say, "How do we know that the system of fairness is working? How do we know that workers in small businesses are protected?" The Government has committed to dedicating specific staff to monitor compliance. In relation to amendments moved by the Christian Democrats in the Legislative Council, the Government also has committed to reviewing the process after two Boxing Days have passed. I have spoken to all the stakeholders, church leaders and unions and said that if they have examples showing that anyone in their communities has suffered adversely as a result of this bill, they must be sure to speak up and have the individuals involved raise their concerns.

The Government expects that every business will respect what the Government has passed as law, but the Government also anticipates that most individuals and businesses wholeheartedly will respect the intent of the law. After all, the legislation is designed to provide equity and fairness across New South Wales, which seems very logical. As the Temporary Speaker and member for Shellharbour would know, in her community retailers can open on Boxing Day but retailers in Wollongong cannot. Retailers in Wyong can open on Boxing Day, but retailers in Newcastle cannot. Retailers in the Sydney CBD, the eastern suburbs of Sydney and Moore Park can open on Boxing Day, but retailers in Parramatta, Penrith and Liverpool cannot.

It does not make sense that, for historical reasons and whatever deal was struck by the Labor Government in 2008, some areas were designated to be suitable for extended hours of retail trading, some areas were designated as tourism areas, and other areas were left out. That simply did not make sense. Finally, this bill represents an opportunity for New South Wales to make its retail trading rules consistent with retail trading law reforms that operate in all the other mainland States, specifically Queensland and Victoria. It is important for New South Wales to move with the times.

Interestingly, I took the time to read the 2008 debate in *Hansard* when the original Act was introduced by the Labor Party. Labor members referred to flexibility for workers, 24/7 opportunities to shop, and retail

trading on Sundays. Essentially, the Labor Party was content to expose workers to 50-odd extra Sundays of work, so I find some of the comments made during this debate slightly hypocritical, especially against the background of the comments made in 2008 in *Hansard*. While I acknowledge the passion and strength of feeling expressed by Labor members and The Greens, which reflect the views of some parts of the community in relation to this issue, the overwhelming feedback I have received throughout the entire consultation process is that consumers want to have the choice to shop in their communities on Boxing Day and retailers want the option to open their doors and trade.

Furthermore, as a State, generally speaking it is in our interest to support choice, flexibility and consistency in all our laws, but especially in relation to retail trade. I reiterate my thanks to members who contributed to debate on the bill. I also thank the many organisations that engaged with the Government during the formulation of this legislation. The final version of the bill that has been presented to this House, which incorporates amendments, is better for the amendments having been moved. The amendments have provided an additional layer of security for the community as well as for workers and families. What people do—how they spend their time—on Boxing Day is their choice. This bill protects that choice. Similarly, retailers have the option to open their doors, but should not feel compelled to do so. There are punitive measures that will apply to larger businesses or companies that force smaller retailers to open.

This bill will bring New South Wales legislation into line with legislation applying in other States. The bill supports consistency throughout the State and ensures that a community is not advantaged or disadvantaged vis-à-vis another community that has been designated as an area in which retailers will have the opportunity to trade on Boxing Day. I reiterate that the Government appreciates the concerns raised about the impacts this legislation will have on family time and the impact it will have on workers. It is precisely for those reasons that the Government agreed to support the amendments and agreed to appoint an independent reviewer to examine the legislation after two Boxing Days have passed.

Interestingly, the Government is confident of the legislation's success to the extent that a sunset clause is part of the bill. In 2017 the onus will be on the Government to demonstrate that this legislation is worthy of continuation. If the Government sits back and does nothing, the legislation will automatically extinguish in 2017. The onus is on the Government to demonstrate that trading on two Boxing Days, subject to review, has been successful, that the overwhelming majority of people have complied with the law in its intent and objectives, and that workers' rights have been protected. The independent review will include a report to the Government, which the Government believes will indicate the success of changes to retail trading laws.

But obviously, if the report finds that the Government's objectives have been achieved, the onus will be on the Government to move an amendment to extinguish the sunset clause. That protection is included in the legislation to ensure that the Government's intent is respected and the Government's objectives are met. The Government wants to ensure that all the consequences, both intended and unintended, have been considered. That is why the Government supported the amendments and the extra provisions are included in the bill. I reiterate my thanks to members who contributed to the debate, especially while the member for Blacktown is present in the Chamber, given his passionate contribution.

**Mr John Robertson:** You are still my favourite Treasurer. I just wanted to let you know.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I thank the member for Blacktown.

**The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George):** Order! Did the Treasurer say "passionate"?

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** Yes, passionate.

**Mr John Robertson:** No, all round.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** The member for Blacktown was not present when I mentioned that the bill gives workers rights.

**Mr John Robertson:** I was listening in my office.

**Ms GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN:** I will repeat the point I made, which is that currently workers employed in the CBD, the eastern suburbs of Sydney and in Moore Park—the designated Sydney trading precinct—do not have the right to refuse to work on Boxing Day. Currently, that right does not exist for them but this bill will give all workers a right to refuse to work on Boxing Day. The Government has improved the

rights of workers who currently work on Boxing Day by ensuring that equity and fairness apply throughout the entire State to give communities an opportunity to participate locally and invest in the local economies of Blacktown, Shellharbour, Newtown or Strathfield as opposed to shopping in the CBD out of necessity. Workers will be free to maintain their family life, if that is what they choose to do. This legislation is about choice as well as equity, consistency and fairness. It also is about making sure that New South Wales no longer drags the chain in relation to reform vis-à-vis other States, which previously had been the case. For all the reasons I have stated, I commend the bill to the House. I thank all members who participated in the debate.

**Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.**

**The House divided.**

**Ayes, 47**

Mr Aplin	Mr Hazzard	Mr Sidoti
Mr Barilaro	Mr Henskens	Mrs Skinner
Ms Berejiklian	Ms Hodgkinson	Mr Speakman
Mr Brookes	Mr Humphries	Mr Stokes
Mr Conolly	Mr Johnsen	Mr Taylor
Mr Coure	Mr Kean	Mr Toole
Mr Crouch	Dr Lee	Mr Tudehope
Mrs Davies	Mr Maguire	Ms Upton
Mr Dominello	Mr Marshall	Mr Ward
Mr Elliott	Mr Notley-Smith	Mr Williams
Mr Evans	Mr O'Dea	Mrs Williams
Mr Fraser	Mrs Pavey	
Mr Gee	Mr Perrottet	
Ms Gibbons	Ms Petinos	
Ms Goward	Mr Piccoli	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Greenwich	Mr Provest	Mr Bromhead
Mr Gulaptis	Mr Rowell	Mr Patterson

**Noes, 32**

Ms Aitchison	Ms Hay	Mr Robertson
Mr Barr	Mr Hoenig	Ms K. Smith
Ms Burney	Ms Hornery	Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Catley	Mr Kamper	Ms Washington
Mr Chanthivong	Ms Leong	Ms Watson
Mr Crakanthorp	Mr Lynch	Mr Zangari
Mr Dib	Dr McDermott	
Ms Doyle	Ms McKay	
Ms Finn	Ms Mihailuk	
Mr Foley	Mr Park	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Harris	Mr Parker	Mr Minns
Ms Harrison	Mr Piper	Mr Warren

**Pairs**

Mr Anderson	Mr Atalla
Mr Baird	Ms Car
Mr Constance	Ms Haylen
Mr Grant	Mr Lalich

**Question resolved in the affirmative.**

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill read a second time.**

### Third Reading

**Motion by the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Council without amendment.**

### GAMING AND LIQUOR ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

**Message received from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.**

**Pursuant to resolution private members' statements proceeded with.**

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

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#### NEWCASTLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY** (Swansea) [6.36 p.m.]: I raise concerns about the Government's plans to privatise public transport in Newcastle and the Hunter with the establishment of Transport for Newcastle and, in particular, about what this will mean for the people living in my electorate of Swansea. This plan to privatise Newcastle light rail, bus and ferry services is nothing more than an ambush and will have terrible consequences for Newcastle, the Hunter and the electorate of Swansea, including the loss of bus routes to the outer suburbs and almost certainly the loss of hundreds of transport jobs in our area.

Last Thursday the Minister for Transport turned up in Newcastle to advise the people of our community that the Baird Liberal Government is walking away from a State-owned and managed transport system in New South Wales' second largest city. There was no consultation; not a peep. Not once did this Government tell the people of Newcastle that it had plans to privatise their public transport system. The Government had plenty of opportunity to consult. For instance, in March we had a little thing called an election, an opportunity for both sides to put their cards on the table and tell the community what they are going to deliver. But no, that is not what happened. In fact, in stark contrast to that, on 5 March 2015 the then transport Minister was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* saying:

We have no plans for further transport privatisation.

Let us fast forward to 5 November 2015, when the first paragraph of a story in the *Newcastle Herald* under the headline "Taking the public out of the city's transport service" stated:

Newcastle's light rail, government buses and Stockton ferry will be run by a single operator under a shock privatisation plan unveiled on Thursday by the Baird government.

This has been quite an about-face for the Baird Government, which has had plenty of opportunities to reveal its plan. For instance, the Premier was in Newcastle on 27 July to talk about the "people's project". But instead of being honest with the people that the Government planned to take the public out of the city's transport system, it decided not to tell the truth. As the diligent member that I am, I am very familiar with the Government's Hunter regional transport plan, in which the Government acknowledges that the Hunter region has higher levels of social disadvantage than the New South Wales and regional New South Wales medians, and that transport services that provide access to education and employment opportunities, health facilities and services can address social disadvantage.

I agree with the Government: Public transport is a great equaliser, the values of which underpin many of the reasons why I stand in this place today. Quality public transport means that disadvantaged and more remote communities can have better access to the services they need, such as good jobs, health services and high-quality education. It is my fear that a private company will stop delivering services that are not profitable and my community will bear the brunt. I was interested to read the transport Minister's comments in the 2014 transport plan:

The Hunter region will also benefit from increased public transport services around new residential areas including ... Catherine Hill Bay ...

That is in the Swansea electorate. I look forward to that. When describing the Hunter region the report gloats:

In *NSW 2021*, the NSW Government has set a target to increase the share of commuter trips made by public transport to and from the Newcastle CBD to 20 percent by 2016.

I will make sure that is in any private contract. It continues:

To increase the proportion of commuter trips on public transport to Newcastle centre, we will progressively implement Strategic Bus Corridors to provide high quality bus services that reflect demand and land use change.

Yet another thing that I will keep an eye on. What has changed? Why the sudden change? We need some answers. With the Government's plan to privatise the Hunter's transport network Premier Mike Baird has lost any trust or goodwill that he has worked to restore since the election.

### ROTARY CLUB OF WINDSOR SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET** (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [6.41 p.m.]: I have a positive and constructive private member's statement. Last Friday I had the great pleasure of attending the Rotary Club of Windsor's sixtieth anniversary celebrations. It was a wonderful evening. The master of ceremonies, Tony Miller, did a fantastic job. It was an honour to join Hawkesbury Mayor Kim Ford; councillor Christine Paine; Rotary district governor Gina Gowden; Windsor Rotary Club's president, Terry Munsey; and some 120 Rotarians and supporters, to toast the Windsor Rotary Club and the work that Rotary does across our State, nation and around the world. Rotary declares itself to be an organisation of business, professional and community leaders, united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

These are high-minded goals that only become concrete when they are brought to life by the actions of the members of local Rotary clubs such as the Windsor club. In 1955 the Windsor Rotary Club began with just 24 members. The inaugural meeting took place at Georges Cafe in Windsor. In the 60 years since then, members of the Windsor Rotary Club have served their local community with constant distinction. Last Friday at the celebratory dinner it was wonderful to hear from Rotarians who have served during each of the club's six decades of service. Former club president Norm Gale spoke on the night about the difference the club's Youth Foundation Trust has made to the local community. Only recently I experienced firsthand what a difference the trust can make to the lives of young people in the local community.

About a month ago I attended an open day for Nova Employment where I met a young woman named Sandy Freeman. Sandy has a mild intellectual disability. She had recently returned from competing in the Los Angeles Special Olympics World Games, where she won four medals: two gold, a silver and a bronze. This young woman was clearly very proud of her achievements and as she held up her medals she had a smile from ear to ear. She took me through each of the events she competed in and told me how happy she was with her accomplishments. She later took to the microphone and spoke with such confidence about her journey and experiences, and how fortunate she felt at having been given this opportunity. What I did not know at the time was the role that the Windsor Rotary Club had played in helping her achieve her goals. Sandy was the recipient of a Windsor Rotary Club Youth Foundation Trust grant in 2014. On the night of the dinner I spoke with Sandy's mother and asked her about the impact that Windsor Rotary Club has had on Sandy's life. She said:

Sandy would not have had the opportunity to go to [the World Games] without Windsor Rotary. We had thought about sending her to nationals in Melbourne but didn't have the funds.

Then Rotary came in and provided the support, and she attended, won four gold medals and qualified for Los Angeles.

But it's not about the medals. The confidence that Sandy derived from that experience, from fulfilling her dreams has given her the self-esteem and confidence to succeed in life. That would not have happened without Windsor Rotary.

This story is just one example of the importance of the work that Rotarians do day in day out for the community. Often the Rotarians who serve their local community do not realise that impact of their good work, but the work of Rotary is the stuff that communities are made of—friends working together, bonded by common values and aims, to make our communities, our State and our nation a better place. I have had the privilege of representing Hawkesbury only for a short time, but already I have noticed that Hawkesbury is a unique place in New South Wales. In Hawkesbury you get a real sense of community, and that does not just happen. It is built on the many different local organisations that day in and day out do their bit to serve and strengthen the fabric of this community.



Rotary has been at the forefront of these efforts for a long time. Sixty years of service is an absolutely amazing achievement. In 1927 the former president of Rotary International, Harry Rogers, said, "The Rotary ideal makes us know that when we are serving others, we are really building ourselves." I extend my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to the members and leaders, past and present, of the Rotary Club of Windsor for their service and their love of the local community, for putting the Rotary ideal into action, and for making 60 years of real difference to the people of Windsor and the Hawkesbury.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.46 p.m.]: I commend Minister Perrottet for the outstanding job he does as a Minister and as a member of this House. Rotary clubs play a significant role across New South Wales. I am privileged to have great Rotarians in my electorate, with clubs at Breakfast Point, Drummoyne and Five Dock. They do an outstanding job. I congratulate Windsor Rotary Club on its sixtieth anniversary and I wish it success in the future.

## **REMEMBRANCE DAY**

### **COLIN AND BRENDA HOPE SIXTY-SIXTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

#### **BATHURST ELECTORATE SCHOOL FUNDING**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE** (Bathurst—Minister for Local Government) [6.47 p.m.]: I will speak about two important matters in my area. The first is Remembrance Day. It is fitting to acknowledge all the men and women who have fought in wars to provide us with the freedom we all enjoy today. November is a very special time when we remember and recognise those individuals and families that made the ultimate sacrifice through fighting on the battlefields of war. Last Friday I joined the Mayor of Lithgow City, Maree Statham, as a special guest at the Lithgow Returned Services League Sub-Branch Remembrance Day dinner. This is an annual event. I was joined by members of the sub-branch committee, Legacy and friends. The evening honoured soldiers and their families who fought for the lifestyle we enjoy today. It was also a special celebration for Colin and Brenda Hope, who this month celebrated 66 years of marriage.

This is always a special time to remember those who gave their lives to make the lives of future generations better. Families lost husbands, fathers and sons. It is a time of the year when we remember and respect all of those who have fallen in war and acknowledge those that continue to fight today. It was a special part of Friday's proceedings to have Colin and Brenda Hope join us for the wonderful evening. The sub-branch committee members raise funds each year towards assisting current and former serving members of the Australian allied defence forces and their dependants who are in need. This is done through fundraisers such as the poppy appeal, which runs from the end of October through to early November each year. I thank the RSL sub-branches across my electorate for their enormous contribution, whether it is visiting schools or organising the services held each year.

I will also detail some of the incredible funding that has been provided to my electorate. Through the Gonski agreement and the Resource Allocation Model the New South Wales Government has made a significant commitment to increasing funding in public schools across New South Wales. As a former school teacher it is important to me to know that that money will be spent on employing speech pathologists and specialist teachers. Teachers, parents and students acknowledge that need. I will list the schools in my electorate that have had their funding increased: Bathurst Public School received an additional \$56,323; Bathurst South Public School, \$32,456; Bathurst West Public School, \$46,153; Black Springs Public School, \$11,003; and Blayney High School, \$27,751.

Blayney Public School received an additional \$29,371; Burraga Public School, \$10,097; Capertee Public School, \$5,709; Carcoar Public School, \$13,302; Carenne School, \$99,034; Coerwull Public School, \$50,974; Cullen Bullen Public School, \$12,819; Denison College of Secondary Education, Bathurst High Campus, \$114,719; Denison College of Secondary Education, Kelso High Campus, \$85,338; Eglinton Public School, \$55,982; Glen Alice Public School, \$358; Hampton Public School, \$8,410; Hill End Public School, \$3,364; Ilford Public School, \$7,049; Kandos High School, \$40,042; Kandos Public School, \$11,022; Kelso Public School, \$113,304; Lithgow High School, \$148,714; and Lithgow Public School, \$35,941.

Lyndhurst Public School received an additional \$20,969; Mandurama Public School, \$2,283; Meadow Flat Public School, \$10,177; Millthorpe Public School, \$14,180; Neville Public School, \$3,037; Oberon High School, \$27,622; Oberon Public School, \$36,055; O'Connell Public School, \$9,480; Perthville Public School, \$11,851; Portland Central School, \$11,344; Raglan Public School, \$30,036; Rockley Public School, \$3,538;

Rylstone Public School, \$4,544; Trunkey Public School, \$4,098; Wallerawang Public School, \$17,941; and Wattle Flat Public School, \$15,193. This Government acknowledges the importance of schools across this State, and it is ensuring that they get significant funding. The Minister is doing a great job— *[Time expired.]*

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.52 p.m.]: I compliment the Minister for Local Government on his outstanding contribution to this place. He draws extremely important issues to the attention of the House regarding funding for our public schools, which we all adore. Schools in Drummoyne electorate are benefiting enormously from increased education funding. I had the pleasure of attending the outstanding annual Remembrance Day service at St Luke's Anglican Church. These services are extremely important in the inner west, which is the epicentre of veteran activities. They are also particularly important to our youth. I again compliment the Minister on his outstanding work.

### **APPIN MEN'S SHED**

**Mr JAI ROWELL** (Wollondilly) [6.53 p.m.]: On 4 November I was privileged to visit Appin Men's Shed to attend its annual general meeting. I have met some members of the Appin Men's Shed and I am amazed at their commitment and dedication to their association. Men's sheds are fantastic. They are an important part of communities across Australia because of their work in addressing men's mental health issues. The organisation fosters community spirit and allows men to share their experiences and knowledge with others to build new friendships. I was honoured to present the clubman of the year award to Gordon Usher for his commitment and devotion to the Appin Men's Shed. His care and expertise have been invaluable in guiding his men's shed, teaching new skills to other members, and providing care for and sharing his life experience with other participants.

I thank the Appin Men's Shed for extending the invitation to the annual general meeting. I particularly thank the chairmen: Ron Brown, Ray Slee and Gordon Usher. I publicly acknowledge the efforts of Ron Brown, who over the past 2½ years has served the association in his capacity as president of the shed. I extend my best wishes to the new executive and hope they have a successful year. The executive members include: new president Gordon Usher; vice-president Peter Chakovski; treasurer and public officer John Wisby; secretary Ray Slee; safety officer and site supervisor John Davis; and ordinary committee members Graham Turner, Guy Knowles and David Brown. The meeting was extremely informative about the running of men's sheds. I strongly urge members to attend their local men's shed annual general meetings to gain a greater understanding of the organisation. From humble beginnings it has grown enormously in recent years.

I am happy to announce that over the past year Appin Men's Shed has secured a site for a permanent shed. Submissions for the construction of a shed on the site have been lodged, and I am pleased to announce the donation of \$68,000 from Illawarra Coal for the shed's construction. I hope to be able to convey some good news before Christmas. We will have to see how good they have been and what Santa has on his list. Men's sheds were established to enable men to express their feelings and emotions openly which, as the Men's Shed Association often says, does not happen regularly. The association sought to establish itself as a mediator and a friend to people who were unlikely to talk about their health problems and the underlying causes.

Men's sheds therefore provide an important preventative measure for mental health issues, providing men across Australia with an outlet as well as a network through which they can reach out to like-minded individuals. They provide an integral service to our community as they draw together people of all ages, occupations and beliefs. The idea behind men's sheds first emerged in 2005. Since then the Australian Men's Shed Association has served approximately 175,000 people, which is a massive testament to the dedication of the staff and the association's mission, which is to provide a safe, friendly and welcoming place for men to work on meaningful projects and to contribute to the wider community. It is a truly noble cause. Over time, men's sheds have grown and spread across the world, with centres in England, New Zealand and Ireland, and prospective sheds in North America and Japan.

My electorate of Wollondilly has sheds in Tahmoor, Oakdale, Appin, Colo Vale and Warragamba. While acting independently, the sheds have the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise among the members to assist with mental health and skills development. I thank those who have dedicated their time to make the sheds a massive success and who have dedicated time to teach other people invaluable life lessons. The sheds have provided an amazing outlet for men across Wollondilly to engage in a community activity. They provide an outlet for them to express themselves and assist in preventing mental health issues. They also provide fellowship. I thank and acknowledge local members Alan Wearn, Ray Slee, Frank Bashford and Greg Power for

their dedication to the cause and for providing an invaluable point of contact for new members who want to be more involved in the program. I also acknowledge Michael Elsworth and Ian Tooke, the local zone representatives, for their oversight and representation of the local sheds.

Since 2013, men's sheds have been at the forefront of the invaluable initiative "Spanner in the works", which is the Australian Men's Shed Association's initiative to assist Indigenous Australians with mental health issues, and to provide them with advice about healthy living. The association, under the guidance of the Babana Aboriginal Men's Group, has produced a booklet as a guide to healthy living for Indigenous Australians. The booklet includes advice on healthy eating, vaccinations, hearing, mental health, lung and heart disease, diabetes, cancer, Indigenous veterans' affairs, kidney disease, and coping mechanisms for stress and anxiety. I strongly encourage all members to read the "Spanner in the works" booklet published on the men's shed website to update their knowledge on medical issues that impact First Australians. Men's sheds have made great advances in educating participants about Indigenous culture, and have promoted positive communication between the members.

Men's sheds also provide support to men who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide and self-harm. The association has published steps on how to cope with stress. In fact, men's sheds do many other fantastic things. I strongly encourage all members to contact their local men's sheds to gain knowledge of the important work that they do in preventing men's mental health issues, and learn firsthand of the health issues impacting on the local community. I have had the opportunity to visit many of them in my capacity as Minister for Mental Health, and they should all be congratulated.

**Mr JOHN SIDOTI** (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.58 p.m.]: The member for Wollondilly has drawn an important issue to the attention of the House, and I commend him for doing so. Harry's Shed at Concord Community Centre in my electorate is named in honour of the husband of former Deputy Mayor Jeanette O'Hara. Breakfast Point Men's Shed, which is also in my electorate, does a remarkable job. Apart from the therapeutic and health benefits that men's sheds deliver, they are a great social environment in which men can gather and share common interests. I am proud that the two men's sheds in my electorate have received a number of Community Building Partnership grants. The Strathfield Men's Shed also received a Community Building Partnership grant when it was in my electorate. However, it is now in the electorate of the new member for Strathfield. I hope that she continues to fund it as well as I did.

#### **CANTERBURY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL PREFECT INVESTITURE**

**Ms LINDA BURNEY** (Canterbury) [6.59 p.m.]: I speak tonight, as I have done most years since becoming a member of Parliament, about the Canterbury Boys High School Investiture of School Prefects 2016. It is an event that I go to almost every year because I find it so inspiring and so representative of the electorate of Canterbury. Every year I am more impressed not just with the young men at the school but with the staff, the parents and the community around them. The investiture of prefects is, as I said, one of the highlights of my year. Many members of this House will have attended similar events in their electorates. They are always inspiring.

Canterbury Boys High School is an important school in our electorate and I try to visit it as often as I can. These young men, soon to be 2016 prefects, captains and sports captains, are a great source of pride for our community in Canterbury but also for the public school system in New South Wales. There was a wonderful acknowledgement of country to start the event from a young man called Abdul-Rahman El Ali. To have a young man from his culture recognise country was extremely touching. Following the acknowledgement of country, Principal David Hill reiterated the school's commitment to fostering great leadership.

Former captains Phillip Bui and Raymond Le took responsibility for the investiture of the school captains and senior prefects. I congratulate these two young men on their outstanding work. I also congratulate the two new captains, John Nguyen and Finnian Jenkins, and the sports captain, Helu Tupe. The young men awarded the role of senior prefect were Kris Liras and Sabaiyal Khan, and the prefects were Dante Williams-Tupou and Tyson McLeod. I have every confidence that these young men will serve our community and their school with the same commitment and honour that the 2015 prefects displayed. All the young men receiving honours recite the prefects' pledge, and I had the great honour of badging them. The pledge says:

I promise:

That I shall do my best to prove myself worthy of the honour that has been granted to me.

That I shall carry out my duties conscientiously, fairly, without favour or discrimination and that I shall never misuse my office.

That by my conduct and example, I shall try to preserve always the traditions of, and add lustre to, the name of Canterbury Boys' High School.

I congratulate the outgoing captains and prefects. I welcome the incoming year's captains and prefects; I have enormous faith in them. After the ceremony we joined many of the parents and the teachers, brimming with pride for the young men of that school. I also recognise Ms Belinda Conway, the Relieving Deputy Principal; Mr Martin Lauricella, the head teacher for year 11; and Mr Tim Reynolds, year 11 adviser. I mention the person who officiated at the signing of the prefects register, Mr Rod Leonarder, the Executive Director, Public Schools. The Student Representative Council representatives were Tavin Munetsi and Walled Sahak.

I am just so proud of the young men at Canterbury Boys High School. The first time I visited the school I was struck by the fact that, whilst the school name is Canterbury Boys High School, the students are referred to as young men; that is a really important acknowledgement. The school also invests those students with what is so important at the school, and that is the recognition and celebration of its many cultures and a commitment to excellence as well as to each other. There is a fantastic buddying system between the senior boys and the year 7 boys. One of the big issues the school deals with is bullying. The school is so reflective of the Canterbury electorate. Once again I give my best wishes to Mr David Hill, the prefects and the school body.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [7.04 p.m.]: I thank the member for Canterbury for her erudite contribution about Canterbury Boys High School. It is a high school in which I have some family interest because my father was a student at the school in the 1940s. It is also a school with an incredibly broad alumni that includes former Prime Minister John Howard, Tony Mundine, Grahame Bond, Bill Collins and Ted Glossop, a former coach of the Cronulla Sharks. But importantly, these days it is a great exemplar of the strength of our public education system with its pursuit of excellence, its celebration of diversity and its strong pastoral care. I thank the member for Canterbury for her contribution.

### **CABONNE DAROO BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr ANDREW GEE** (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.05 p.m.]: Small business is the engine room of the New South Wales economy and indeed the national economy. Last Friday some of our very best small businesses were recognised at the Cabonne Daroo Business Awards held at Cudal. Cudal is the home of the famed Merle Parrish, who famously cooked the peach blossom cake on the television show *MasterChef* and then went on to author two bestselling cookbooks—a wonderful supporter of the Country Women's Association [CWA]. Cudal, of course, is also widely recognised as the centre of the universe and indeed it says so on the sign as one drives into Cudal.

The Cabonne Daroo Business Awards were established 16 years ago. They differ from other awards in that the categories reflect the products and services offered in towns and villages. They were the first awards to acknowledge farming and farm gate as an enterprise. The awards are split into two sections—a people's choice award and a judged section. This enables the community to nominate and vote for their favourite Cabonne businesses. A highlight of last Friday evening was keynote speaker Neil Druce from the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory speaking about starting up and running a food manufacturing business in a rural community.

The BEC Best New Business Award went to Megan Claire Floral Design. Congratulations, Megan Foster. Highly commended was K and H Interiors and Design. Congratulations to Kim Lowe, Herb Beer, Rebecca Dunkley and Stephanie Hunter—they are a great team. The BEC Best Ongoing Business Award went to the Molong Pharmacy. Congratulations to Sue and Cameron Wilde, and their team at the pharmacy. Highly commended was M & A Bray Transport. Congratulations Mark and Anne Bray. The Yates Baker McLean Best Home Based Business Award went to Megan Foster Photographer. Congratulations, Megan—she does wonderful work. Highly commended was Scrap Box Patchwork Designs. Congratulations, Fiona Ferguson and Wendy Morrow, who are the owners.

The WIN Television Excellence in Hospitality Award went to the Cargo Store—Cath and Ben Brand. I encourage members to stop there for a coffee on their way through Cargo. Highly commended was the Freemasons Hotel. Congratulations to David Stojanov, the licensee. The First Choice Credit Union Excellence in Accommodation Award went to Grantham House B&B. Congratulations to Susan Crosbie. The WIN Television Excellence in Marketing, Advertising and Communications Award went to Adloyalty. Congratulations, Caddie Marshall, the director of Adloyalty and to her team, Dannielle Jenkins; Robyn Schmuch, the digital marketer; Jessica Jenkins, the marketing assistant; and Elizabeth Robinson, the graphic designer.

The Excellence in Environmental Enhancement Award went to the Canowindra Community Garden. Congratulations, Margie Crowther, who runs, operates and has taken the lead in that garden. The Adloyalty

Excellence in Tourism Award went to Banjo Paterson More than a Poet Museum. Congratulations to our old friends Alf and Sharon Cantrell. I encourage all members who are going through Yeoval to stop in at the museum, where there are some extraordinary items on display. Highly commended was the Age of Fishes Museum. Congratulations to Warren Keedle, the manager, and volunteers Kim McClintock, Vicki Williams, Greg Morton, Michael Grimshaw, Colin Prior, Renata Prior, Gwyneth McCarron, Blythe Englund, David Stack, John Spear and Susan Shorten.

The Cabonne Council Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture Award went to Twisted River Wines. Congratulations to my friends Helen Armstrong and Michelle Davies. Highly commended went to Rosnay Organic Farm. Congratulations, Sam and Simone Statham. The Excellence in Service Operations (Large Entity) Award went to Yates Baker McLean. Congratulations to Steve Stone, Phil Hodges, Sharon Lord, Mark Giurnelli, Patrick Williams, Christine Whybrow, Brad Evans and Cally Woodhouse. Highly commended was Bonny Glenn Fruits. Congratulations to Tim, Bernard and Fiona Hall. The MSM Milling Excellence in Service Operations (Small Entity) Award went to Roo Racing. Congratulations, Brent Twaddle. Highly commended went to SuperFit Gym. Congratulations to Lachlan Paix, who used to be one of the Orange electorate staff officers.

The Newcrest Contribution to Cabonne (Business) award went to MSM Milling. Peter and Bob MacSmith and their team do a wonderful job. Molong Express was highly commended. Congratulations to Rozzi Smith and Paul Mullins. The Newcrest Contribution to Cabonne (Community Organisation) award went to the Cargo Men's Shed. Congratulations to Dudley Frecklington and his team. The Cudal Community Children's Centre was highly commended. Congratulations to Stacey Roweth. I congratulate Laura Parmeter from the Molong Early Learning Centre who received the Employee of the Year award. Trainee of the Year went to my old friend Liam Bridge from Cabonne Council. Well done, Liam. The Cabonne Council Best Business in Cabonne award went to M and A Bray Transport. Congratulations to Mark and Anne Bray. Canowindra Phoenix was highly commended. I congratulate my friend Cheryl Newsom and all nominees and award winners. I thank them for their contribution to the economy of the Orange electorate.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms ELENI PETINOS** (Miranda) [7.10 p.m.]: Today is Remembrance Day, the day on which Australians around the country gather to honour the memory of those who have died or suffered in wars and armed conflicts. Have we stopped to think about why we observe one minute's silence at 11.00 a.m.? At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918 the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare. The German invaders had been driven back by the Allied armies and accepted terms in a peace settlement that amounted to unconditional surrender. The eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month has attained special significance in the post-war years. The moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front has become universally associated with the remembrance of those who have died in war. The first modern world conflict brought about the mobilisation of more than 70 million people and left between nine million and 13 million dead, perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave. The Allied nations have chosen this day and time to commemorate their war dead.

This morning I was pleased to attend the annual Remembrance Day memorial service at the Miranda RSL Sub-branch with my colleague and friend the member for Cronulla, the Hon. Mark Speakman. I was grateful for the invitation to speak on the topic of remembering those on the home front. With the indulgence of members, I will share some of my remarks from this morning. Whilst men and women have fought for Australia in lands far away, those on the home front also experienced their own challenges and risks. There is no greater example of this than the women who were left behind, particularly during World War I and World War II. At the outbreak of war, far fewer women than men participated in work and those who did tended to be in lower-paid occupations. The main role of women was to be in the home.

The withdrawal of approximately half a million men from the workforce did not, however, result in their direct replacement by women. The contribution of women to the workforce increased from 24 per cent in 1914 to 37 per cent in 1918, but the increase tended to be in what were already traditional areas of women's work, such as clothing and footwear, food and printing. Those back home quickly stepped forward to meet the surging demand for workers in a greatly expanding Australian wartime economy. Institutions for women played their part, contributing handmade quilts, bandages and clothing for the men overseas. They also sent books, newspapers and special treats to military hospitals overseas.

While husbands, sons and hired labourers were off at war, the women back home felt the pressure to maintain the family farm as well as raise the children. We must not forget or undervalue the contribution of many thousands of farming women for whom sharing farm work was a normal and vital part of the pre-war

economy that kept our nation moving. Without the efforts of those back home, Australia would have been in a very different condition. Notwithstanding the role of women back at home, local nurses from our shire who worked overseas have some remarkable stories that I wish to share. Ellen Gould was a committed contributor to the development of professional nursing and a founding member of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, a matron of the Rydalmere Hospital for the Insane, and oversaw the formation of an Army Nursing Service Reserve that was attached to the New South Wales Army Medical Corps. Ellen also served as a council member of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association. She later instigated the publication of the association's journal and served on the association's editorial committee. Gould wrote of her service in Gallipoli:

The idea of staff nurses was entirely new to Australians in the Army Nursing Service and it is due to the innate good breeding of the individual members of our service that we came through what was really an ordeal for so many equally qualified nurses to settle down to work in the various ranks ... The spirit of service overcame the spirit of rank and throughout the campaign continued to do so. But it was later when the troops returned wounded from Gallipoli that the strain came. Staff was depleted as batches of ten and twenty sisters were detailed for duty to help ... later some were engaged on the troopships leaving for the Mediterranean and two were needed for the train. The workload ... became very heavy.

Penelope Frater, who was also among the first women in military service, was one of the first 60 nurses from the New South Wales contingent to work overseas. Between the wars Penelope worked in South Africa. When she returned to New South Wales she managed the nursing component of the theatrical company J. C. Williamson Limited as the nurse in charge of the junior performers. The stories of these women in particular are highlighted at the Miranda War Memorial at Seymour Shaw Park, which I had the privilege of seeing this morning. On Remembrance Day we remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in protecting and serving our country. Let's not forget.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN** (Cronulla—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, and Assistant Minister for Planning) [7.15 p.m.]: This morning I accompanied the member for Miranda to the Miranda RSL Sub-branch to attend the Remembrance Day service. It was a poignant service to remember all those who have paid the ultimate price or who have suffered an injury or sickness whilst serving our country. At the time of World War I Australia had a population of just under five million people. The 420,000 men who enlisted for service represented 39 per cent of the male population between the ages of 18 and 44. The role of honour records more than 61,000 casualties, which was an enormous carnage for a population as small as Australia's. The service gave us the opportunity to also remember those who did not see battle but who helped the war effort on the home front. I thank the member for Miranda for her contribution and for bringing this important matter to the attention of the House.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr JIHAD DIB** (Lakemba) [7.16 p.m.]: This morning, like many of my colleagues, I attended a Remembrance Day service. I attended the Remembrance Day service at the Riverwood Sub-branch of the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women. As I looked down during the last post, I noticed something that made me proud. In the shadows I could see the Australian flag flying proudly, and next to it was the New Zealand flag. While listening to the service, which was conducted by Dick Matthews, Ken Douglas and Alex Watling, I could not help but feel an enormous sense of pride and nationalism and an enormous sense of respect and gratefulness. The wonderful service I attended was a reflection of our community, which is multicultural, multi-faith and multi-generational. Those who attended the ceremony included students from local schools, relatives of service men and women, passers-by and those who wanted to show gratitude and respect for the sacrifices that have been made.

As always, my good friends at the Riverwood Squadron of the Australian Air League, under the masterful leadership of Commanding Officer Chris Bailey, stood tall. The group attends school fetes, festivals and commemorative services. It teaches kids respect by showing them support and building in them a sense of pride and dignity. It was touching to see the older years 11 and 12 students looking after the younger kids. In our effort to build better communities, we need only look to this group. As we sampled the classic, old-time sweet and savoury delights of the ladies auxiliary, President Dick Matthews and I spoke about Wilfred Owen's war poem, *Dulce et Decorum est*. I wish to read the ending of that poem. As a teacher I found it was the most powerful thing I had ever read:

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old lie; dulce et decorum est  
pro patria mori.

Dick and I had a conversation about the importance of peace and how we want the world to be. He said, "Ask a veteran. A veteran will always tell you what war is really about." We have to be careful about glorifying war. In times of conflict small things are important. As it happens, the issue of peace could not have been more poignant. Recently I visited the electorate of the Parliamentary Secretary for Southern New South Wales and member for Cootamundra, and last night we attended the Sydney Peace Prize dinner. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "It is not enough to talk about peace; one must believe in it. And it is not enough to believe in it; one must work on it." The Sydney Peace Prize is Australia's only annual international prize for peace. For the past 17 years the Sydney Peace Foundation at the University of Sydney has awarded the prize to an inspiring person for their achievements in peace with justice at a local, a national or an international level.

The chair, David Hirsch, and his team do whatever they can to put on this annual event because it is so important. Joining an illustrious group of inspiring recipients, this year the prize went to George Gittoes, AM. I am not sure whether members know of George Gittoes. I had heard a bit about him and the things he had done through the media. George Gittoes received his award for exposing injustice over 45 years through his work as a humanist, artist, activist and filmmaker. His speech was inspiring, moving and touching. His was a story that was filled with hope. I would encourage people to research the work done by him and his partner, Hellen. George is an artist who thinks outside the box. He has worked in countries ravaged by war, in Bosnia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Pakistan, and Iraq. Currently he is in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

George and his partner, Hellen Rose, mesmerised us with their stories and with her haunting song, which brought about its own form of peace. In Jalalabad they run the Yellow House, which is a space that has been created for people to express their artistic thoughts and to temporarily escape from the awful situation of their current existence. Through the training of future artists, the smiles, the art and the clash of cultures, the Yellow House exists not just in Afghanistan but across the world. Hopefully we will see one in New South Wales very soon. George Gittoes told many stories, including the story of an amputee who was happy because he was alive. There was such joy in everything he said that I could not help but feel touched. Everything he does is about people, bringing them together and treating them with dignity. I will conclude by quoting George Gittoes. He said:

I have lived a life of helping people and living my creative dreams.

**Private members' statements concluded.**

**Pursuant to resolution matter of public importance proceeded with.**

## **DEEPAVALI FESTIVAL**

### **Matter of Public Importance**

**Ms JODI McKAY** (Strathfield) [7.22 p.m.]: I will start by saying "Namaste". I am pleased to bring this matter of public importance to the House to recognise a festival that is important to the subcontinent community across Australia and my community of Strathfield. Deepavali, also known as Diwali, is held at this time each year and represents the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. The festival is symbolised by light, a powerful symbol of hope. In New South Wales there have been and will be celebrations held in towns and suburbs, the most significant of which have been organised by the Hindu Council of Australia. The council describes Deepavali as "a reaffirmation of hope, a renewed commitment to friendship, religious tolerance, spreading the word of peace and harmony, and, above all, a celebration of the simple joys of life".

In Sydney, the council has held two events, in Martin Place and in Parramatta. On each occasion there was a sense of community and of coming together as one in hope and happiness. I recognise the leadership of Professor Nihal Agar. In this place I have previously recognised the work of the council and I do so again today. I am sure the members representing the electorates of Parramatta and Granville, who are in the Chamber, will tell us more about the Parramatta festival. While the Hindu Council of Australia's celebrations have been significant, Deepavali has also been celebrated in temples across Sydney and New South Wales. On Sunday I attended the Sri Venkateswara Temple at Helensburgh, one of the most significant Hindu temples in the Southern Hemisphere. I acknowledge Dr Baska, Nat'aranjan Iyer, Sunhil Kabra, Seetha Raman, Rao Abbineni, Praveen Challa, Nama Namashivayam and Sangarapillai Subramaniam for their work in organising the festival, which included dance, song, friendship and extraordinary food. The celebration ended with fireworks that lit up the night sky, an inspiring symbol for the Deepavali celebration.

At the Shirdi Sai temple in Strathfield South in my electorate there were prayers this morning and tonight. As I speak in this House, there are three aarti that will be illuminated only by candles. As I have done previously, I recognise the wonderful leadership of Jack Tollani and Dr Rao. At Strathfield Town Hall on Saturday night I joined my community in yet another celebration of Deepavali, which was supported by Strathfield Council. It was a wonderful night, with plenty of Bollywood dancing—and, yes, I danced. I love these celebrations. I acknowledge Amrit Hingorani, Bharathi Reddy, Devendra Kumar, Shailendra, Jhingran, Vasantha Puvanandera Nathan, Ajay Kumar, Dinesh Garg and Ushe Krishnan. This coming Saturday I will also attend a Diwali celebration in Strathfield Town Square.

In Parliament we have also celebrated Deepavali with the support of the Community Relations Commission. Those of us who were present saw the Premier assisting in the lighting of the lamp. Dr Hari Harinath, Chair of the Community Relations Commission, congratulated six seniors this year for their work in fields as diverse as literature, community service, mental health, senior care and yoga. There are different interpretations of Deepavali, and also different pronunciations. I hope I do it justice when I say that the festival commemorates the return of Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, from his 14-year exile with Sita and Lakshman after killing the demon king Ravan. The welcome home included lamps and fireworks; it was a victory over evil, of light over darkness.

I follow Narendra Modi on Twitter, and his delight was obvious today when the President of the United States of America called him to wish him happy Diwali and to let him know that they were celebrating Diwali at the White House. In Sydney, the Opera House will be lit up tomorrow night, and I encourage Sydneysiders to consider the meaning of Diwali or Deepavali when they look at those famous sails turn orange. This is a significant celebration that is increasingly being acknowledged around the world. It is my hope that this continues to happen. There is much to admire about the festival and the people who celebrate it.

**Dr GEOFF LEE** (Parramatta—Parliamentary Secretary) [7.27 p.m.]: I thank the member for Strathfield for bringing this matter of public importance relating to Deepavali celebrations to the attention of the Parliament. I, too, would like to say Namaste to all the Australian Indians and *kem chhe* to Australian Indians of Gujarati heritage. Many people in Parramatta are originally from Gujarat and now call Australia home. Deepavali is one of the most widely celebrated festivals amongst Hindus around the world. Billions of people celebrate this festival, which is the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Deepavali is now a regular feature on the Australian calendar of important festivals. In the New South Wales Parliament we celebrate it every year, and it was fantastic to celebrate it again this year.

Tomorrow the New South Wales Government will pay tribute to our Hindu friends and community by lighting the Opera House sails to celebrate Deepavali. I pay tribute to the Premier and to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism for their support in the lighting of the Opera House sails and the ability to beam the images around the world. As the member for Strathfield said, around Australia, but especially in Sydney and New South Wales, Deepavali is celebrated with many festivals. I have attended many of them. One such festival which is quite outstanding is to be held on Saturday night and is run by the Hindu Council of Australia. I pay tribute to Professor Nihal Agar, the chair of the Hindu Council for his leadership over many years. Last weekend in Parramatta Park some 25,000 people came to celebrate Deepavali. It was a spectacular sight, with dancing, traditional music, food and fireworks. At the end there was a burning of an effigy of Rama to show the triumph of good over evil. It was a wonderful installation.

We all know that no other place celebrates Deepavali like Parramatta does, which really is an exemplar. It shows how people who were born in India and who later came to Australia have made a wonderful contribution to our society. Tomorrow, with great pleasure I will attend the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha [BAPS] Shri Swaminarayan Mandir to celebrate the annual festival. The festival celebrates not only Deepavali but also the Festival of Annakutotsav in which annakut—a traditionally arranged tiering of vegetarian food—is offered to the deities. The display of many hundreds, if not thousands of savoury and sweet vegetarian dishes made by members of the community is truly spectacular. A smaller version of the display was brought to Parliament House this year and last year. It is one of the most photographed features of Deepavali and symbolises all good things about the festival.

I commend the BAPS leaders—Yogi Savania, Darshan Desai, Jay Pandya, Kumud Merani and Jayendra Patel who is the pujari at Rosehill—for their incredible dedication. Over the years I have attended the Mandir, or temple, which is a fantastic place. I also attended the opening of the temple and its consecration a few years ago and in February the Premier, Mike Baird, visited the temple. The BAPS community is very strong and provides strong leadership which is characterised by the teaching of family values and the importance of



education, working hard and personal achievement. Mr Assistant-Speaker (Mr Andrew Fraser), I am sure that you and all other members of the House join with me in wishing the BAPS community a happy Deepavali and in commending the BAPS community for its fantastic work.

**Ms JULIA FINN** (Granville) [7.32 p.m.]: Diwali, or Deepavali, is an important occasion for the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh communities and the large population from the Indian subcontinent in my electorate. The Festival of Lights is the largest festival in India, which of course is famous for its many large and colourful festivals. Diwali is an ancient festival that is held to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. Diwali, which derives from the Sanskrit word "deepawali" marks the return of Lord Ram after vanquishing Ravana, the demon king. Diwali is also the Hindu new year, and therefore is a major holiday in India, as well as the start of the new financial year. It is celebrated by millions of people across the world—from India, Nepal, Fiji, Singapore and Malaysia to the diaspora communities in the United Kingdom, United States and here in Australia—with wonderful celebrations which many of us have been enjoying recently.

India has been the largest single source of migrants to Australia in recent years and Patel is now the most common surname in Parramatta. Migrants from India, Sri Lanka and Nepal and their children make up around 18 per cent of the population of the Granville electorate. These highly educated and hardworking people have made a great contribution to the local community in the professions, in our hospitals, in running small businesses, as councillors, in sporting clubs, as school leaders and through the local parents and citizens associations. I had the great pleasure of celebrating Diwali in Parramatta Park last Sunday with the Hindu Council alongside many other members of Parliament from both sides of politics, including the member for Parramatta, Dr Geoff Lee. I joined my Federal colleagues Julie Owens and Michelle Rowland in dressing in our salwar kameez and had a fantastic day with thousands of people who attended. It was a great celebration for the whole community. With the growth of the population from the subcontinent, it has become a major local event.

The main festival night of Diwali takes place on the darkest new moon night of the Hindu lunisolar month, Kartika, which makes it all the better to see the fireworks and to enjoy the symbolic burning of lamps and candles. That will take place tonight. As well as the large, public celebrations and gatherings, homes are decorated with small clay oil lamps, called diyas, which are lit in honour of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Rangoli patterns are created to encourage and welcome Lakshmi by the use of rice, paint, coloured sand or flower petals to make colourful geometric designs for entrance ways, living rooms or courtyards. I am planning to visit my good friends and neighbours at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Rosehill tonight to welcome in the new year. They did a wonderful job of preparing the Diwali offerings for the Premier's Diwali reception last week. Their Mandir is looking beautiful with its colourful lights. It has been a hive of activity this past week.

Tonight and tomorrow Hindus from across Sydney will visit the Mandir to pay their respects and celebrate Diwali. But it is not just the Mandir that has been decorated. Recently, many local homes were decorated with lights for Diwali. Some Christian families have taken that as a sign to put up their Christmas lights. It is one of the great pleasures of living in such a vibrant multicultural community when groups within our community celebrate something of importance to them and share it with the wider Australian community. I wish everyone a happy Deepavali and a successful and prosperous year ahead.

**Ms JODI McKAY** (Strathfield) [7.35 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Parramatta and the member for Granville for their contributions to this matter of public importance. I acknowledge that they are great supporters of their communities. Whenever I attend a subcontinent event, I usually see the member for Parramatta and the member for Granville who, like me, enjoys wearing the sari and celebrating. As I mentioned, Bollywood dancing is something that I do enjoy. I was unable to attend the Parramatta festival because I attended other Deepavali events at the Strathfield Town Hall and at the Helensburgh temple, but I heard that the Parramatta festival was a great success. Unfortunately, as I am not cloned, I was able to attend only one event. As members know, each year the Hindu Council of Australia does a lot of work associated with Deepavali. I know the council has been a strong champion of ensuring that the Sydney Opera House is lit at this time of the year.

With the lighting of the Opera House, I hope that the messages of hope and peace as well as the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance are spread more generally throughout the community. The Festival of Lights has meaning outside the subcontinent community. It is a festival that we can all learn from. As we have heard, there are many different interpretations of Deepavali. I hope I do it justice by saying that it is about the return of Ram following his exile, with Sita and Lakshman, for having killed Ravan.

As we have also heard from both the member for Parramatta and the member for Granville, the festival includes the use of lamps and fireworks as well as gifts. Tonight throughout Sydney families are lighting the lamps, friends are gathering, food is being consumed and there will be songs and dances. In short, it is a great celebration.

As I have said, it is a festival that we should borrow from. More generally, I hope that more people will participate in the future. I certainly look forward to my Deepavali celebrations. I am pleased to raise this important matter for discussion in the House. I reiterate my thanks to the member for Parramatta and the member for Granville for their contributions to the discussion. I wish my community and theirs a happy, prosperous and joyous Deepavali. May Goddess Lakshmi bless them with an abundance of health, wealth and happiness.

**Discussion concluded.**

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 7.38 p.m. until  
Thursday 12 November 2015 at 10.00 a.m.**

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