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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 13 August 2015

The President (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

The President read the Prayers.

Pursuant to sessional orders Formal Business Notices of Motions proceeded with.

ANZAC LEGACY AND CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

Motion by the Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) that August 2014 marked 100 years since Australia's involvement in the First World War and that from 4 August 2014 to 11 November 2018 Australia will recognise and commemorate the centenary of the First World War and the Anzac legacy;
 - (b) that the Anzac centenary will be one of the most significant commemorations to take place in our lifetime, is a time to honour and reflect upon the service and sacrifice of all those who have worn Australia's uniform; and communities across Australia will gather to remember the sacrifices of those who served and died in war;
 - (c) that this is a once in a generation opportunity to reflect on one of the most significant chapters in Australia's history and will enable all Australians to recognise and pay tribute to 100 years of service for Australia, with the centenary themed as follows:
 - (i) 2014—origins and beginnings of the First World War;
 - (ii) 2015—Turkey and Gallipoli;
 - (iii) 2016—France and the Western Front;
 - (iv) 2017—Belgium and the Western Front; and
 - (v) 2018—conclusion of the First World War.
 - (d) the contribution by the people of New South Wales to Australia's overall war effort, including:
 - (i) providing more than 164,000 enlistees in the Australian Imperial Force and the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, with this figure representing 39.8 per cent of all males in this State between the ages of 18 and 44, the highest percentage of any State in Australia and it is estimated that more than 3,000 New South Welshmen also enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy between 1914 and 1918;
 - (ii) that the majority of troops embarked for overseas service from the port of Sydney;
 - (iii) that units from New South Wales took part in all major conflicts in the First World War including Gallipoli, the Somme, Passchendaele; and Bullecourt;
 - (iv) of the 64 Victoria Cross recipients from the First World War, 17 came from New South Wales;
 - (v) that Australia's most famous war correspondent; and key founder of the Australian War Memorial, Charles W.E. Bean, came from Bathurst, New South Wales;
 - (vi) that New South Wales provided the bulk of metals to the war effort, a significant amount of which came from the then newly built BHP plant at Newcastle;
 - (vii) that the small arms factory at Lithgow, then recently opened by Lord Kitchener, expanded rapidly during the war to provide domestically produced rifles and bayonets for the Australian soldiers; and at its height was producing 80,000 .303 rifles per year during the First World War; and
 - (viii) that New South Wales raised the greatest amount of funds through war pensions and Australian Patriotic Funds.

- (2) That this House acknowledges New South Wales Government Centenary of Anzac initiatives including:
- (a) the Joining Forces initiative, a joint initiative between the New South Wales Government, Sydney Legacy and the Returned and Services League [RSL] NSW Branch which encourages multicultural communities to become involved in this significant commemoration period by participating in activities to honour veterans and embrace the Anzac spirit which encapsulates the ideas of mateship and sacrifice;
 - (b) the United We Stand initiative, to encourage local sports clubs to engage in centenary of Anzac activities and honour the legacy of the Diggers through acknowledgement of their club's service history; and
 - (c) the Wartime Legends initiative, that encourages ex-service groups, government agencies, non-government organisations, businesses, schools and local government to become involved by recognising contributions made by the 400 Aboriginal servicemen and women who fought in Gallipoli and on the Western Front.
- (3) That this House:
- (a) notes the work by Mr David Elliott, MP, Minister for Veterans Affairs, to coordinate the Anzac Youth Ambassadors Essay Competition to encourage young people across western Sydney to embrace the Anzac legend and reflect on the significance of the Centenary of Anzac to modern Australia;
 - (b) notes that the Anzac Youth Ambassadors Essay Competition, sponsored by ClubsNSW, offered six students from Western Sydney the opportunity to visit Gallipoli, France, Ypres and Westminster Abbey for Remembrance Day in 2015, allowing the next generation to engage with Australia's history and ensure that the Anzac legacy lives on; and
 - (c) congratulates the six winners of the Anzac Youth Ambassadors Essay Competition:
 - (i) Dan Nguyen, Hurlstone Agricultural High School;
 - (ii) Lihini De Silva, Baulkham Hills High School;
 - (iii) Samuel Lewis, St Columba's Catholic College;
 - (iv) Emily Frey, Quakers Hill High School;
 - (v) Madison Thompson, St Columba's Catholic College; and
 - (vi) Jack Jeffries, Parramatta Marist High School.
- (4) That this House acknowledges the work of the Anzac Centenary Ambassadors, which include 27 appointed community leaders who all are leaders in their respective fields, including from the Australian Defence Force, the public sector, the arts community and the corporate sector.

WOMEN IN POLICING 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Motion by the Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that this year, the NSW Police Force celebrates 100 years of women in policing with a range of events and activities scheduled over the course of 2015 to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary.
- (2) That this House notes that the journey of women in policing has been long and hard-fought, with many significant milestones, including:
- (a) in 1915, Lillian Armfield and Maude Rhodes became the first women employed for police duties in the Commonwealth, following an advertisement by the New South Wales Police Department for two positions for female police which saw nearly 500 applicants;
 - (b) in 1919, Lillian Armfield was promoted to Special Constable First Class, a decade later in 1929, there were eight women police employed in the NSW Police Force, when Ellen Bennett, Rose Cuneen and Eva Rosser joined Lillian Armfield, Mary Paulett, Nellie Mooney, Nellie Mitchell and Mary Madden;
 - (c) in 1941 due to wartime difficulties in recruiting men, the NSW Police Force again advertised for policewomen, received responses from over 500 women; and the number of women police increased from eight to 14; and included Joan Weaver who would later become Officer in Charge of the Women Police Office;
 - (d) during the 1940s, the number of women in the NSW Police Force had more than doubled, women who had been temporarily employed were made permanent employees; and women were granted membership to the NSW Police Association;
 - (e) Special Sergeant [First Class] Lillian Armfield, one of the first two women to join the NSW Police Force, was awarded the Kings Police and Fire Service Medal for distinguished service in 1947, becoming the first woman in the British Empire to receive this distinction;
 - (f) by the late 1950s, there were fifty women in the NSW Police Force, Janice Mossfield and Noellie Hobart became the first women permitted to participate in the passing out parade with their S3 male counterparts, women police were for the first time permitted to undertake initial, intermediate and secondary training alongside male counterparts; and by 1961, women were able to retain employment by the NSW Police Department after marriage;

- (g) that 1965 marked 50 years of women being employed in the NSW Police Force undertaking policing duties; and in this year, 58 women of various ranks were sworn as regular officers with full police powers, other employment conditions and entitlements;
 - (h) in the early 1970s, Del Fricker and Gwen Martin were accepted into the Detectives Training Course, later to become the first female detectives, a women's branch was established within the NSW Police Association, policewomen became eligible to sit for promotional examinations; and female detectives were issued with firearms for the first time; and
 - (i) in the sixtieth year of women in policing, policewomen were granted maternity leave for the first time and integrated into the promotional system; and by 1978, the 112 women in the NSW Police Force were integrated in the seniority list with their male counterparts for the first time.
- (3) That this House acknowledges and congratulates the women of the NSW Police Force for their outstanding service.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [9.34 a.m.], by leave: I wish to thank and congratulate State Records NSW on doing excellent work researching the early history of policewomen in New South Wales.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 228 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

PARRAMATTA HERITAGE

Motion by the Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY agreed to:

That this House notes that:

- (a) Parramatta is a place of national cultural and historic significance which includes:
 - (i) sites within the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct that are some of the best preserved examples of convict-era life in Australia's history; and
 - (ii) the Female Factory, built in 1818 and designed by famed convict architect Francis Greenway, which is the earliest surviving example of its kind in Australia.
- (b) many of these sites in the Parramatta region are under consideration for World Heritage listing;
- (c) these heritage buildings are integral both to Parramatta's past and its future; and
- (d) a vibrant sustainable Parramatta will be one that leverages these important sites of heritage in anchoring its future.

SHARING ECONOMY

Motion by the Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY agreed to:

That this House notes that:

- (a) New South Wales has much to gain from fostering and supporting the growing enterprises of the "Sharing Economy";
- (b) New South Wales has already proved to be a hotbed of innovation with regard to new emerging technology-based enterprises such as Airbnb and Stayz;
- (c) businesses that make up the "Sharing Economy" present significant potential benefits for the State and the national economy as they seek to make use of under-utilised stock in the economy, and they provide the State with the twin benefits of productivity gains and the fostering of innovation;
- (d) business such as Airbnb and Stayz are already making significant contributions to the State's economy;
- (e) Airbnb has already added an additional 10,000 homes to Sydney's holiday rental market and provides many thousands of New South Welsh people with additional income streams;
- (f) Stayz has excelled in providing cost-effective accommodation solutions to those seeking to enjoy some of the significant tourist attractions of the State;

- (g) businesses within the "Sharing Economy" go a long way to improving the quality of life in New South Wales and do so despite clear regulatory guidelines; and
- (h) it is incumbent on Government to begin a process of providing certainty to such operators to support these growing initiatives.

GUIDE DOG DISCRIMINATION

Motion by the Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) research commissioned by Guide Dogs NSW/ACT found that more than half of their clients had experienced discrimination in the past year;
 - (b) the largest proportion of instances of discrimination experienced by Guide Dog clients occurred in cafes and restaurants; and
 - (c) Guide Dogs NSW/ACT have launched an awareness campaign in partnership with the NSW Police Force to raise awareness of the illegal and finable offence of denying or charging people with a guide dog access to public premises, including restaurants and cafes.
- (2) That this House congratulates Guide Dogs NSW/ACT and the NSW Police Force for this initiative.
- (3) That this House strongly affirms its opposition to discrimination against people with guide dogs.

BLUESTOCKING WEEK

Motion by Dr MEHREEN FARUQI agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Bluestocking Week is an initiative of the National Tertiary Education Union Women's Action Committee that runs from 10 to 14 August and is a campaign about celebrating women's participation in higher education;
 - (b) the term "Bluestocking" was originally a pejorative term used to describe the first generations of female students in higher education that was then reclaimed by women students as a badge of honour;
 - (c) the theme for this year's Bluestocking Week is "Storylines", where women are encouraged to have a "yarn" with each other and focus on women's narratives; and
 - (d) women remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects as well as postgraduate research programs.
- (2) That this House congratulates the organisers of Bluestocking Week.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

Private Members' Business item No. 1 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by Dr Mehreen Faruqi and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 25 August 2015 at 2.30 p.m.

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the public gallery children from Holy Innocents Catholic Primary School, Croydon, who are visiting Parliament House today.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith relating to the conduct of business of the House.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps agreed to:

That the order of Private Members' Business for this day be as follows:

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 9 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Revd Mr Nile relating to the State Senate Bill 2015.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 2 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Buckingham relating to the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 3 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Ms Cotsis for resumption of debate on a motion concerning age discrimination.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 5 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Farlow relating to Lemnos15.

STATE SENATE BILL 2015

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile.

Second Reading

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [9.43 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In short, the State Senate Bill 2015 allows for an interchange between the terms "the Honourable" and "State Senator" and between the terms "Legislative Council" and "State Senate". Often when members of the Legislative Council are introduced outside Parliament people ask what "MLC" or "Legislative Council" mean, especially in the United States of America, where people think members of the Legislative Council are city councillors or town councillors rather than equivalent to their State Senators. Around the globe the term "State Senator" is a more accurate description of what we do and, therefore, represents a more suitable title. A Senator is known to be someone who works in the upper House or Chamber of a bicameral legislature or Parliament.

I support tradition—I have been in the upper House for 34 years—but I believe there should be an opportunity for members to have a choice in how they refer to themselves. Some members in the upper House prefer not to adopt the term "honourable" and this bill will allow them, if they wish, to use the title "State Senator". The bill is very simple; members know it will not and cannot amend the New South Wales Constitution and the wording establishing the original New South Wales Legislative Council. To do so would require a referendum, which we are not proposing. We are merely proposing that members be given the option of using the terms "State Senator" and "State Senate" when referring to their role and to their work. I reiterate: We are not proposing to change the name of the New South Wales Legislative Council to the State Senate, because it is in the Constitution.

I was surprised to see a few years ago a big banner in the entrance to the State Parliament welcoming people to the "State Senate". Obviously the Clerks at the time, with, I assume, the approval of the President, had introduced that term particularly for visitors and for witnesses attending parliamentary inquiries. It is therefore not as radical a change as some members may think. We seek simply to introduce an alternative for ease of identification for those who are not conversant with history and tradition or with Australian terminology and for those who come from other countries that have State Senates.

This bill does not stop members using the title "honourable" if they wish to. What the bill proposes is already the practice in other nations that originally had Legislative Councils, especially in the United States of

America where the upper Houses are now known as State Senates and the members as State Senators. As I said, when I visit the United States of America there is always confusion as to exactly what role I have in the New South Wales Parliament. If this bill is passed, the use of the terms "State Senate" or "State Senator" will be optional for members—it will not be compulsory. Members will also be free to use the title "the honourable" and the term "New South Wales Legislative Council". As I said, the title of the New South Wales Legislative Council cannot be changed unless there is a referendum, which we are not proposing. These terms are part of the State's Constitution Act 1902 under the heading "Referendum for Bills with respect to Legislative Council and certain other matters". This bill is not trying to bypass a referendum. It simply provides an option for members.

The *Encyclopaedia of Parliaments* indicates that the name "Legislative Council" was usually given to the colonial legislatures of the British Commonwealth. The term was adopted in all six Australian colonial legislatures. Members will know that although the Legislative Council of Queensland was abolished in 1922, the Legislative Councils of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia remain. In the case of Victoria, an inquiry into the future of Victoria's electoral administration was conducted by the Electoral Matters Committee and the final report was tabled in March 2014. That recent report recommended introducing a reference to the Legislative Council as the Victorian State Senate and to Legislative Councillors as State Senators. At this stage that proposal has not been processed through the Victorian Parliament. In 1991 the Australian Democrats had an amendment prepared by Parliamentary Counsel to be moved during debate on the Constitution (Legislative Council) Amendment Bill 1991 to provide for the insertion of a new section 18 into the Constitution Act 1902, which stated:

- (1) The Legislative Council may also be called the Senate, and the use of that name has for all purposes the same effect as the use of its other name.
- (2) Accordingly, a Member of the Legislative Council may be called a Senator.

Unfortunately, the amendment was not moved and the work is left to us to do today in the Parliament. The House has previously debated permitting the alternative titles of "State Senate" and "State Senator". We know that this would engender greater recognition and understanding than the current titles "Legislative Council", "member of the Legislative Council" or "Legislative councillor", which, as I said, are the Commonwealth and colonial terms. The use of the term "State Senate" has become a custom. Some members currently opt out of using the official title "the Hon.". We respect their decisions. Many of us have used the term "State Senator" or "State Senate" when we have been speaking to people in other countries. I believe it is now in order for the House to pass this legislation so that a custom that is without any legislative authority is supported by legislation. State Senators, I commend the State Senate Bill 2015 to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr Les Turner, Chief Executive Officer of the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. I welcome him this morning to the Legislative Council.

PETROLEUM (ONSHORE) AMENDMENT (PROHIBIT COAL SEAM GAS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 28 May 2015.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (Parliamentary Secretary) [9.51 a.m.]: The Government strongly opposes the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015 because it will shut down an energy industry in New South Wales. This bill will make it an offence to explore for or produce coal seam gas [CSG] and other unconventional gas in all areas of New South Wales. It is a blanket ban that is excessive and reflects a "no growth, no jobs" approach to policymaking. Mr Jeremy Buckingham claims that his view is based on science and not hysteria. His "scientific" reaction to this issue is to ban an entire industry from operating in New South Wales. To put it simply, the bill does not recognise the many credible scientific investigations that have been undertaken into this industry. In particular, the bill ignores the work undertaken by independent NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, on this important energy resource.

Professor O'Kane and her team undertook a 19-month investigation into CSG and concluded that the risks of the industry could be managed through appropriate regulation. The industry does have risks; any industry does. However, the New South Wales Chief Scientist's independent CSG review found that many of the technical challenges and risks posed by the CSG industry can be managed through ensuring careful designation of areas appropriate for CSG extraction, high standards of engineering and professionalism in CSG companies, comprehensive monitoring of CSG operations through continuous scrutiny of collected data, a well-trained and certified workforce, and applying new technologies as they become available.

The Government has accepted all 16 recommendations made by Professor O'Kane. The Government's NSW gas plan, which was released in November 2014, sets a clear way forward to implement these recommendations. I remind members that this Government has not granted a single new petroleum licence since taking office. Responsibility for the current situation lies with the members opposite. The former Government handed out petroleum exploration licences across more than half the State, with minimal oversight or transparency. It granted licences to operate over vast tracts of land to a number of companies with no operating history and no technical expertise. Some of them were two-dollar shelf companies. Incredibly, many of these companies paid only \$1,000 to apply for titles covering large areas of the State.

Since taking office, the Liberal-Nationals Government has taken decisive action to clean up the previous Government's mess and, with the New South Wales gas plan, we have filled the policy vacuum left by those opposite on this issue. And yet this bill completely ignores the actions this Government has taken. These actions may not be on the front page of the newspapers every day, but that does not mean they should be forgotten. Let me take a moment to remind those present of some of this Government's key achievements. The Government has already taken more than 60 actions that have strengthened the regulatory standards that apply to the gas sector, and it has provided support and advice for communities and landholders. For example, the Government has implemented a freeze on issuing new petroleum exploration licences. Since coming to office this Government has not issued a single new petroleum exploration licence.

The Government has also established exclusion zones to prevent coal seam gas activities in residential areas and industry clusters. These exclusion zones apply to 2.7 million hectares of residential land across New South Wales, and the equine and viticulture critical industry clusters in the Upper Hunter. We have banned the use of harmful BTEX chemical compounds in all drilling and hydraulic fracturing. We now require all CSG operators to hold an environment protection licence. In 2012 we established a new position of Land and Water Commissioner as a source of independent advice to landholders and communities. This Government has recently put in place mandatory codes of practice for well integrity and fracture stimulation, setting out requirements for CSG operators.

We have committed to implementing all the recommendations of the Walker Review into Land Access Arbitration under the Mining Act 1992 and the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. The Government has instituted a process for providing independent expert scrutiny of new proposals affecting prime agricultural land and water to ensure that decisions are based on the latest science. And we have also introduced a broad "fit and proper person" ground for refusing, suspending or cancelling a petroleum title. Critically, the bill also ignores the New South Wales Government's gas plan, released in November 2014. Based on the Chief Scientist's recommendations, the plan is a blueprint for delivering best-practice regulation of the New South Wales gas industry whilst securing vital gas supplies for the State. The gas plan sets out a comprehensive approach for developing a safe and sustainable gas industry. The plan builds on the actions we have already taken.

How does the gas plan do this? It does so by firstly redressing Labor's legacy of a free-rein approach to licensing. The plan has as its key priority "to pause, reset and recommence gas exploration". First, the Government has extended the freeze on new applications, to ensure a comprehensive regulatory framework is in place. In addition, through legislation passed by Parliament late last year, the Government has expunged existing title applications. The Government has also implemented a highly successful buy-back scheme for existing titleholders. This has seen 15 exploration titles across New South Wales successfully bought back and cancelled. Through these actions, the New South Wales Government has reduced the land covered by petroleum titles and applications from 60 per cent to 9 per cent of the State.

The NSW Gas Plan commits the Government to providing strong and certain regulation. This means introducing a comprehensive framework for effectively managing this industry in alignment with the Chief Scientist's recommendation. To this end, from 1 July this year, the Government has established the Environment Protection Authority as the sole compliance and enforcement regulator for gas. In addition, this Government has recently announced a minimum standards and merit assessment procedure that will now apply

to all title holders of petroleum exploration licences. These higher standards will apply greater certainty for the community and industry, and are a strong tool to manage those titleholders who do not meet strict requirements.

Members on this side of the Chamber have always believed that the regulatory framework for coal seam gas should be underpinned by science, not scaremongering. To this end, the Government has accepted the Chief Scientist's recommendation to establish a central repository for all environmental data. This will be a massive undertaking and it will complement the department's "Reaching Common Ground" webpage, which allows communities to search all coal, mineral and gas exploration or production titles in their region. The first stage of the environmental data portal will be up and running in 2016 and will give the community and regulators better access to baseline environmental information.

The Chief Scientist also recommended that government designate those areas of the State in which coal seam gas activity can occur. The Government supports this recommendation, along with all the other Chief Scientist's recommendations. That is why, as announced, in the NSW Gas Plan, the Government will introduce a new strategic release framework for future exploration licences. This plan will give the Government, not industry, control over the areas that are released for petroleum exploration and production. The establishment of the framework is now possible because the New South Wales Government has wiped the slate clean of understanding petroleum title applications—applications that were made under the former Labor Government's watch over almost half the State.

New exploration will be issued only in areas released by the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. The decision to release an area for exploration will be made after a careful assessment of environmental, social and economic factors and whole-of-government oversight. This is a complete contrast to the previous Government's haphazard approach. An important element of the gas plan is the focus of sharing the benefits of a New South Wales gas industry. Landholders who are directly impacted by gas exploration activities always have been entitled to compensation; however, there is little information available about what appropriate levels of compensation might be. The Government has commissioned the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to benchmark compensation rates. This will give landholders more information about the compensation they can expect for gas exploration on their land. IPART also will be holding public hearings in Narrabri and Gloucester on landholder compensation for gas exploration and production on 13 and 20 October respectively. I encourage landholders and the community to participate in the hearings.

The gas plan also commits the Government to establishing a Community Benefits Fund to support local projects in communities where gas exploration and production occur. The Government has consulted broadly on the discussion paper on community benefits and will be using community input to this process to develop a framework for the fund. As I mentioned, we can have confidence in the NSW Gas Plan providing a considered, evidence-based approach for managing coal seam gas [CSG] activities because the plan is informed by the work of the independent New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane. Unlike the bill before the House, the gas plan and the New South Wales Government's approach are based on sound science, not on populist scaremongering and exaggerated facts. The road map that Professor Mary O'Kane's work has given this Government means that New South Wales will have the right regulatory framework in place. Gone are the days of ad hoc, inadequate and inappropriate exploration applications that take the community by surprise.

Despite the assertions of The Greens, the people of New South Wales can and should have confidence in how CSG is managed in this State. Having strong and certain regulation not only secures supply but also enables the benefits of gas resources to be shared with landholders and communities. This is a better approach for the whole community than the proposed bill. Finally, the bill will kill off the gas industry in New South Wales. Not in the least, it will rob New South Wales of the potential for a self-reliant gas supply. The bill will deny the State forecast taxation revenues and new regional jobs. It also will put significant pressure on the viability of the existing production projects. With the Government's decision to pause, reset and recommence CSG, we now have an opportunity from the start to get it right.

New South Wales is establishing the toughest regulation in Australia and setting the highest standards for the industry. This State is establishing the institutions and frameworks for monitoring compliance with those standards and ensuring the public has access to information and involvement in planning processes for those activities. New South Wales will set the standard for regulation of the CSG industry across the world. This will

mean that people and businesses of New South Wales will benefit from secure, affordable, local gas supplies. We will benefit from jobs and economic activity in regional areas. We will benefit from royalties and funding of community projects from this important State-owned resource. For those reasons, the Government does not support the bill.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (Leader of the Opposition) [10.05 a.m.]: I lead for the New South Wales Labor Opposition in debate on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. To be clear, I state at the outset that Labor does not support the bill in its current form. However, we will vote for it at the second reading stage to be able to move a series of amendments that will put public policy on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas on an appropriate and sound footing. That footing is the policy that the Labor Opposition has been campaigning on before, during and since the March State election—an immediate statewide moratorium on coal seam gas and other unconventional gas exploration activity while the environmental, scientific and regulatory design work, recommended by the New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer in her September 2014 report "Final Report of the Independent Review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in NSW", is undertaken. This is to be underpinned by a range of immediate and permanent no-go zones.

Should this bill fail on the second reading, Labor will introduce its own legislation and continue to pursue its stated policy objectives in this area because that is the right and necessary course of action. Those opposite and across the Chamber know that to be true. That is why the Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast, Chris Gulaptis, MP, and the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, both have spoken in Parliament on the need to ban coal seam gas [CSG] on the North Coast of New South Wales. That is why they, and others no doubt, moved on this issue at the recent NSW Nationals Annual General Conference at Pokolbin. On 13 June it looked as though their leader, the Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, was with them; but he was not, and neither was the rest of their party. The Government in this place and in the other place has continued to commit itself to its gas plan, as outlined by Mr Scot MacDonald. Central to that plan is the continued development of the coal seam gas industry in New South Wales without implementation of the Chief Scientist's recommendations. The Government claims to be committed to those recommendations, but its plan is to develop the industry without the recommended work being done and without the recommendations being implemented before continued development of the industry.

In November 2011 the New South Wales Opposition called on the Liberal-Nationals Government to suspend all current CSG exploration licences to protect the State's water resources. Labor's position was that government should suspend all existing CSG exploration licences, cease issuing new CSG exploration licences and new CSG extraction licences, and refuse any applications to expand existing operations. This is Labor's moratorium. That decision was a departure from previous New South Wales Labor policy. It was a decision that was made after hearing the concerns of the people across this great State. CSG has the potential to damage our drinking water and compromise food security. The National Water Commission has said that the CSG industry risks having significant long-term and adverse impacts on adjacent surface and groundwater systems. The CSIRO and the Queensland Water Commission have expressed a similar view.

There are major risks associated with CSG exploration and production extraction, including risks to water quality, the extent of surface impacts associated with drilling and construction of gas-gathering systems, contamination from produced water and flow-back water, its storage and risk of spillage or release into the drinking water supply, and impact on terrestrial, aquatic and subsurface ecosystems from clearing. In July 2013 the New South Wales Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] denied permission for Apex Energy to drill 16 exploration wells within the Illawarra catchment areas. The PAC stated that more conclusive studies of the impact of CSG activities to drinking water were needed. The PAC found that the impacts of CSG activities were being questioned in a range of studies in New South Wales, other parts of Australia and internationally. The commission stated:

It appears that the potential risks of coal seam gas activities are still being established and that there is some uncertainty regarding the potential impacts of the suite of coal seam gas extraction techniques which could be applied within various geological formations.

Ongoing, independent, peer-reviewed scientific research is needed on the impacts of CSG extraction on New South Wales water resources. Evidence from interstate and overseas shows that CSG mining can have devastating and permanent impacts on groundwater resources. Once an aquifer is damaged it can never be repaired. Residents, farmers and communities are deeply concerned about the impact the merging CSG industry will have on their land, the wider environment and their lives. They deserve clear answers to these concerns. It

is clear beyond argument that we do not know enough about the longer-term impacts of extracting gas from coal seams. Until we do, no prudent government or Parliament can permit further development of the industry in advance of the important scientific and regulatory work I outlined earlier.

Labor acknowledges that governments, including Labor governments, have rushed into the CSG space without fully understanding the potential impacts on the environment. When new medicines are introduced they must go through rigorous testing to ensure that they are safe for patients to consume. No medication is allowed onto the market until it is proven to be safe, and the same should apply to new industries such as CSG mining. Until there is scientific consensus that CSG mining will not damage aquifers and groundwater systems, we need to hit the pause button. Any benefits that the CSG industry may potentially offer cannot be delivered at the expense of our age-old aquifers and prime agricultural land.

Until a watertight regulatory framework is in place, based on independent scientific research and conclusive evidence, we should not be allowing CSG mining to proceed. The risks to our most important natural resources are just too high. The Labor Party will not permit any expansion of CSG in New South Wales unless the industry is proven to be safe. The coal seam gas and unconventional gas industry has caused alarm across the Australian community. There is a well-founded sense that the cost and implications for the environment and for communities are not adequately understood and, therefore, the risks of allowing the industry to expand are too high.

The New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer summarised the areas of concern as follows: contamination and depletion of groundwater resources and drinking water catchments; impact of co-produced water from CSG activities on the environment; impacts on the environment of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking; the impacts on human health from air quality, chemicals, noise and so on; rapid expansion of the industry; land access and landholder rights; potential impact on property values; fugitive emissions; uncertainty of the science; lack of data, especially baseline data, and a lack of trust in data sources; the industry moving ahead of scientific understanding and regulation; cumulative impacts of multiple CSG wells and multiple land uses, such as other mining and agricultural activities; inadequate monitoring by government of industry activity and perceived unwillingness by government to enforce the legislation; and complex and changing legislation.

The size and scope of the uncertainty around this industry are unacceptable. Labor members have argued for a moratorium on all CSG and unconventional gas exploration and extraction until we have the scientific data to inform management and regulatory approaches that provide safety for our communities and the environment. The Labor Opposition is committed to the full implementation of the recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer in her final report of 30 September 2014. A Labor government will implement the following recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer before any expansion of CSG in New South Wales is even contemplated. Labor will strengthen protections and benefits for landowners around access, valuation and compensation; recover the full cost to government of regulation and support of the CSG industry, reported through the State budget process; develop and designate areas where CSG activity is permitted and where it is not permitted; introduce a single Act for all onshore subsurface resources, excluding water; and separate the process for allocating rights to exploit subsurface resources from regulation of the activities to give effect to that exploitation, with a single independent regulator.

Labor will introduce a new regulatory system focused on continually updated environmental impact and safety targets; drive the adoption of new technology and innovation by the industry; introduce appropriate penalties and automatic monitoring systems that detect cumulative environmental impacts; develop insurance arrangements to cover short- and long-term environmental damage; develop an open interactive, whole-of-environment data repository for all State environmental data associated with water management, gas extraction, mining, manufacturing and chemical processing activities; provide a centralised risk management and prediction tool for all extractive industries in New South Wales to be used to assess compliance and new proposals; establish a standing body of experts from across relevant disciplines to advise government, including on the overall impact of CSG; require CSG extraction proponents to identify impacts on water resources, pathways, consequences and likelihood baseline conditions and risk triggers prior to the commencement of any activity; and ensure ongoing mandatory training, accreditation and certification for all those working in the CSG industry, including compliance, inspection and audit functions.

This is not a wish list from a fringe environmental outfit; these are the recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, and Labor stands by them. Despite claims by the Government and the industry, the Chief Scientist and Engineer did not say that the industry can be safely operated in New South Wales; she set out a road map, a body of scientific and regulatory design work that, if done properly, would

inform government and the wider community about whether the industry can be safely operated. That is a vital distinction. Under Labor's proposed moratorium, there would be an immediate suspension of existing exploration licences, a cessation of issuing new CSG exploration and extraction licences, and the refusal of any applications to expand existing operations. Labor would only support lifting the moratorium when each of the issues identified by the Chief Scientist and Engineer, and all the risks they would involve, are resolved and we have a world-class legislative and regulatory system in place to ensure that our natural assets and our people are protected.

The onus of proof will be on the industry. Labor will not permit the further development of the unconventional gas industry in New South Wales unless it can be proven to be safe. We have a large task ahead to fully understand the risks and their mitigation in this area. In particular, the structure and relationships of our underground water sources must be mapped and understood. We have nothing like the level of understanding needed to allow intrusion into our groundwater systems with any sense of certainty and reassurance. In order to start building the necessary scientific understanding, New South Wales Labor has adopted the Chief Scientist's recommendation to establish a whole-of-environment data repository that includes all data collected according to the legislative and regulatory requirements associated with water management, gas extraction, mining, manufacturing and chemical processing activities.

Most of the legislation that regulates the unconventional gas industry was written before the unconventional gas industry was conceived. Labor will begin again, armed with the necessary scientific information, to build a regulatory system for unconventional gas that is specific to it. As recommended by the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Labor will move to establish an independent panel that assesses the environmental, social and economic issues associated with exploration licences before they are issued. The legislation will ensure that exploration licences cannot be issued in no-go zones. In line with the recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer, Labor will only allow an unconventional gas industry that performs to the highest levels of safety and on a full cost-recovery basis. Labor believes there must be rigorous enforcement of compliance with legislation which will ensure that transgressions are punished with higher fines and revocations of licences as necessary.

The industry will be expected to carry insurance and bonds high enough to cover any damage for which it is responsible. These are the minimum conditions for the industry as recommended by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer. There is too much uncertainty about the social and environmental impacts of coal seam gas. We cannot put our water quality and food security at risk for an unproven industry. Until we have mapped the aquifers, until we fully understand the impacts highlighted by the Chief Scientist and Engineer in her report, and unless they can be safely managed, CSG will not proceed under a Labor government. In line with recommendation No. 6 of the Chief Scientist and Engineer, Labor believes that there should be immediately identified a number of no-go zones, places where unconventional gas extraction should never occur. These will be the subject of the amendments we will move to this bill.

These are places where large-scale industrialisation and its attendant infrastructure are simply not appropriate. These include core water drinking catchments, a two-kilometre exclusion zone around national parks, a two-kilometre exclusion zone around residences, critical industry clusters and prime agricultural land. CSG and unconventional gas extraction will be banned from core water-drinking water catchment areas. In the Sydney Water Catchment, Labor will legislate to ban unconventional gas in the special areas. On the Central Coast, we will move to protect the mangrove water catchment and other core water-drinking catchments. We will do the same for the core water-drinking catchments in the Hunter and other areas of New South Wales.

Across the rest of the State, Labor will work with local water authorities to ban unconventional gas in lands whose surface area directly feed drinking water storages—this will include the Great Artesian Basin, the lifeblood of outback Australia. Labor will include the banning of unconventional gas in the recharge zone of the Great Artesian Basin within New South Wales, including the Pilliga. Labor will propose a two-kilometre buffer zone around all national parks and a similar exclusion zone around Ramsar-listed wetlands. We will not allow any unconventional gas wells within two kilometres of residential areas.

The northern rivers region is unique. It is one of Australia's most biologically diverse areas supporting a variety of significant habitats. Many parts of the northern rivers have been given World Heritage recognition, and the region is also home to key industries like tourism, manufacturing and agriculture which support thousands of local jobs. It is the job of a responsible government to protect the northern rivers region from activities that threaten its precious environment, local industry, businesses and agricultural land. The environmental values of the region are also internationally significant. The development of a CSG and

unconventional gas industry would fundamentally undermine these environmental assets and the economic drivers that rely on them; it should not be allowed. Labor will move to have a total ban of CSG and unconventional gas extraction in the northern rivers region of New South Wales, encompassing the local government areas of Ballina shire, Byron shire, Kyogle shire, Lismore City, Tweed shire, Richmond Valley and Clarence Valley.

There are other areas that will also be covered and I will address them in more detail when we move amendments, if this bill passes a second reading vote. One area I will cover now is the Blue Mountains because it will be impacted by the amendments. The Blue Mountains area is an important and environmentally sensitive region with pristine natural heritage water catchment and national parklands. It is also home to a sensitive and unique ecology and biodiversity, including the endangered prehistoric dwarf mountain pine. It is inhabited by more than 400 different forms of animals and contains wide representation of eucalypt habitats, including wet and dry sclerophyll, mallee heathlands, as well as localised swamps, wetlands and grasslands. There are also several evolutionary relic species such as the prehistoric Wollemi pine. One of the most exceptional features of the area is the hanging swamps and associated groundwater-dependent ecosystems that rely on the purity and reliability of groundwater aquifers, which would be greatly threatened by any CSG exploration and/or production.

The likely impact on the quality and quantity of water in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area would be highly destructive not only to the World Heritage listing, which is regularly reviewed, but also to the water supplies of Sydney and Lithgow, which are sourced from within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area. In particular, the impact of contaminated coal seam water entering both groundwater and surface water systems and the effect on drinking water quality in these areas are of specific concern. All these areas would be placed at risk by CSG or other unconventional gas exploration. Labor's amendments will protect this unique natural environment as it will act to protect cool water drinking catchments across the State wherever they may be—the Central Coast, the Macarthur region or the North Coast. We will not simply stand by and allow these areas to be placed at risk.

The Government has placed its faith in its petroleum exploration licence [PEL] buyback scheme that was conceived ahead of the State election in panic. All that has happened is that companies holding licences with no commercial value have received public money for returning those licences to the Government. The Liberal Party and The Nationals still have no answer for PEL 445 on the North Coast. It is great that uncertainty in connection with other licences has been resolved—in particular PEL 2 that went from the Hunter to the Southern Highlands through Western Sydney, southern Sydney and the lower Blue Mountains. However, the companies that have received public money for returning licences attached no commercial value to the licences.

Energy companies like AGL are starting to phase out their activity in and exposure to coal seam gas because they know that scientific and wider community concerns have not been addressed. This is an historic moment for the New South Wales Parliament and the people to make a decision about not just an industry but the whole relationship we will have with land and water. It is a fundamental turning point and the Labor Party has planted its flag firmly on the precautionary principle. How can you develop an industry when you do not know the risks? Time and again products have been manufactured and industries have been allowed to develop medicines without work having been done to ensure they are safe for the public and the environment.

Labor will not stand by and let such historical mistakes of the past be repeated. We will propose a range of amendments to implement the policy I have outlined. We urge all members to join us in sending a message to the Government. I commend the work done by all my colleagues in this place, the crossbench parties that have worked with me on this—the Christian Democratic Party, The Greens and the others. This legislation does not belong to any one party; this is a community issue. Let us act together for the community.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind visitors in the public gallery that clapping is disorderly. Unfortunately, I will have to ask visitors who do not observe the conventions of the House to leave.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [10.25 a.m.]: Recently I had the good fortune to be in Ballina at Splendour in the Grass, a fine music festival. I was a guest of *The Guardian* Australia. I send a shout out to Adam Brereton, who kindly invited me to address a forum on coal seam gas—you can guess how that went. That was preceded by the new movie *Frackman*, which features a cameo appearance by our very own Jeremy Buckingham, but more on that movie a little later. What stunned me was the question and answer session that followed the talk on coal seam gas. The level of ignorance and The Greens indoctrination prevalent in the crowd astounded even me.

Concerns were raised about benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes [BTEX] chemicals, despite the fact that BTEX chemicals are banned in New South Wales for hydraulic fracturing operations. There was concern about gas pad mappings and the use of Queensland-style gas pad-mapping arrangements, conveniently ignoring the fact that the Walloon structures in southern Queensland are entirely different from the sorts of coal seam arrangements in New South Wales, where we do not need the chequerboard approach due to the nature of structures in New South Wales allowing for lateral drilling and thus a significant minimisation of gas pads.

There were claims that fracking was taking place at 3,000 metres, which is completely untrue and presupposes that people have seen the movie *Gasland* and assume that hydraulic fracturing of shale and coal are the same thing, which they most certainly are not. There was also an ignorance of the sorts of pressures and techniques used for shale and coal. We know full well how embarrassed the green movement was when it notoriously put in a submission to the first parliamentary committee into coal seam gas, having just replaced the word "shale" with "coal seam" in a United States study. Those responsible then had to make a very embarrassing retraction when the technical data proved to be invalid in relation to coal seam gas drilling in Australia. They had seen *Gasland* and extrapolated data without knowing the difference which resulted in embarrassment, simply because they lacked the tactical capacity or, alternatively, they never cared about the technical issues but were just after political scoring.

People at the forum called for an independent assessment of coal seam gas in New South Wales, apparently ignorant of the fact that the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer had already undertaken an independent assessment of coal seam gas in New South Wales. They complained about the lack of a produced water plan, but they seemed to completely ignore the fact that every coal seam gas operation in New South Wales is required to have a produced water plan. There was a failure to differentiate between water extracted from coal seams and potable water from higher alluvial deposits—as if coal seam gas is stealing water and somehow depriving people or cattle of the use of that water. If they had known anything about coal seam gas operations they would have known that in the majority of cases the water extracted simply is not potable for either humans or cattle. That is why we have produced water plans. They seem to be completely ignorant of the fact that we have baseline bore monitoring for coal seam gas operations across the State.

This is the big lie which every one of them believes and which is propounded by the green movement time and again; that is, that there is aquifer cross-contamination. We have evidence to prove that that is a lie. We have had coal seam gas mining operations in Australia for 20 years and there is not one instance of proven aquifer cross-contamination. After 20 years of mining there is not one piece of evidence to demonstrate aquifer cross-contamination. That is hardly surprising when one looks at the structures used on boring operations. There is a steel pipe covered by concrete and then another steel pipe, which is a sure-fire way of avoiding cross-contamination. It is even safer than what has been done with artesian bores on farming land for the past 175 years.

Bores in the Great Artesian Basin go many hundreds of feet lower than the lowest coal seam gas mining operations in Australia. They also penetrate higher level alluvial sandstone, which forms sweat-water bores for drinking. The Greens ignore the fact that for 170 years cattle have been drinking lower quality artesian bore water than has been produced by coal seam gas operations in Australia. That is the key point and it disproves the big lie environmentalists always spread. They always say that coal seam gas operations will poison artesian bores. Of course, they cannot adduce any evidence to support that. Every time a hydrology expert appeared before the two coal seam gas inquiries I asked whether they could name a single instance where aquifer cross-contamination had occurred in the 20 years that coal seam gas mining has been undertaken in Australia. Not one of those hydrologists could cite an example.

This ignorance has been fostered by misinformation from green extremists. That is the nature of the contemporary green movement in Australia and in many other places in the western world. It is a pyramid structure. At the base is the vast majority of people who would be described as ordinary, concerned citizens. They are sincere but ill-informed people who are pulled along by emotion and who know little about the technical aspects of coal seam gas extraction. They believe what they hear in good faith, but at the same time they must rely upon the often tainted evidence of so-called green experts. That is the broad base of the modern environmental movement. The middle group are fewer in number and I would call them the lunatics or the activists. They are people who would have a tubal ligation rather than bring another filthy human into the world. They see humanity as a scourge and dream of a great plague that will wipe out 90 per cent of humanity. In lieu of this natural population reduction—

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The member is pushing the bounds of acceptable parliamentary language. A lot of latitude is given to members during second reading debates, but the language the member is using is, in my respectful submission, outside what is acceptable in this place.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: To the point of order: The comments I have cited about tubal ligation were made by the head of *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals* [PETA]. The reference to the scourge of humanity is taken from James Delingpole's book *Watermelons*, in which he quotes senior leaders of the British green movement. These are not made-up examples; they are evidenced by the historical record.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Further to the point of order: Yet none of those matters is under discussion here.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The standing orders and the conventions are quite clear. There is no point of order.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Thank you, Mr President. I was referring to the middle group in the pyramid—the extremists, the activists. They support alternative energy not in spite of its inefficiency but precisely because of its inefficiency. They seek a lower standard of living for all humanity; they want humanity to make a smaller footprint on the world; they want to force us back into a neo-primitive state where we are all subsistence producers and consumers. I turn now to the leadership of the green movement. They are the people who see the environmental movement as a means of achieving socialist control, of course with them in charge. They are the broad-brush Marxists who controlled the peace movement in the 1930s, 1950s and 1960s and the anti-nuclear movement in the 1970s and 1980s and who now have a common cause with The Greens to destroy capitalism. What would replace capitalism?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I warn people in the public gallery that if they cannot observe the debate in silence they will be removed.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: That is the motivation. We have a pyramid structure that creates disinformation. We have the Stalinists, the sociopaths, the suckers, the Marxists, the misanthropists and the misguided. Farmers have an absolutely legitimate concern about infringement of their land. But the solution is not banning an entire industry; it is the recognition of property rights. When I suggested that at the Splendour in the Grass forum, Dayne Pratzky—who is commonly known as "Frackman"—said, "No, you can't give farmers property rights to the subsoil because they will sell out to greed. They will allow coal seam gas miners to come onto their land. If you give farmers the right to monetise the resources under their land they will take advantage of that."

So it is not that people are not concerned about property rights for farmers—and I acknowledge that that is a legitimate concern—it is that people want to be able to say to their neighbours, "You are not allowed to do what I don't want you to do". The movie *Frackman*, which was shown at Splendour in the Grass, is seductive propaganda. It was partially paid for by New South Wales taxpayers through the Film Finance Corporation. However, even Mr Brereton from *The Guardian* described it as a "polemic". Mr Pratzky lived on a lifestyle block with his dogs and had no apparent employment. I must say that he did have quite obnoxious dealings with the coal seam gas company. The company's representatives were rude and aggressive. As a result, he became Frackman, complete with his very own superhero outfit. I have no problem with people who enjoy cosplay, although I draw the line at furies. Mr Pratzky had a mission in life, a goal and a *raison d'être* and he wanted respect, acknowledgement and acclaim. He was even the subject of a documentary. In this way, this nice man, who has a legitimate concern about property rights, became obsessed and twisted. Just how twisted is seen in one poignant moment in the film.

At one stage he broke into a coal seam gas site to get some water from a holding tank. It was a *Boy's Own Paper* adventure and great viewing. He sent the sample he gathered for analysis, but unfortunately it was simply water. The footage of him when he saw the test results was telling; he was absolutely crestfallen. It should have been full of toxins and chemicals. After all, that was the reason for his existence. I ask members to ponder what reasonable person would seek a bad outcome. What farmer would say, "I am in tears because my water supply is not poisoned; it is not filled with toxins and chemicals."? Unfortunately that did not fit with the narrative of the anti-scientific hysteria whipped up by opportunistic environmental extremists. The Leader of the Opposition said that Labor will support coal seam gas [CSG] mining if it is proven to be safe. I would like to relate an exchange between the Hon. Greg Donnelly and the Mayor of Lismore. The Hon. Greg Donnelly said:

I am trying to understand whether there are any circumstances in your view whereby your respective councils would accept coal seam gas mining? Can I just give you an example? Some of the submissions talk about the concerns and say maybe, if the mining was proven safe, but other elements of the submission talk about things that have nothing to do with safety but which reflect opposition. So my question is: Really and truly is there any preparedness at all by any of the councils to support coal seam gas mining?

The Mayor of Lismore replied:

Frankly, no ... and because we are looking very much towards renewable energy, now to be mining another finite resource seems to be glancing backwards.

Let me get this absolutely clear. The Hon. Greg Donnelly asked, "If it is proven to be safe, would you support it?" And the answer was, "No." All this talk from environmental extremists about the need for additional investigation and research is a stalling exercise. It is the same sort of tactic that the green movement has used time and again to prevent legitimate activities from taking place. They say they want more research and more surety, when all along they believe, "Even if we could get a 100 per cent guarantee, we are still going to oppose it tooth and nail." That is not science; that is a cult.

Farmers across New South Wales should be very aware of what is at stake. Farmers know better than anyone the truth in the old adage that if you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas. Coal seam gas is undeniably a nuisance, but the green movement represents an existential threat to commercial farming in Australia. Who can forget the time Greenpeace activists broke into the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO] building and proceeded to kill the genetically modified [GM] crops that were being tested in complete safety? Who can forget The Greens opposition to herbicides, pesticides and chemical fertilisers or their vigorous support for the retention and extension of native vegetation laws, the prioritising of environmental flows over water for farming and the expansion of national parks to between 19 per cent and 27 per cent of the land area of this State?

Some CSG companies are arrogant and stupid, Arrow being the perfect example. But some, like Santos and AGL, are exemplary. The simple fact of the matter is that while CSG might be an inconvenience to farmers, the farmers' unholy alliance with the green movement—the extreme environmental movement—in this State represents an existential threat to farming in Australia at anything above purely subsistence levels. This bill is a political scam. The Australian Labor Party should remember what the "M" in the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU] stands for. Once upon a time the Labor Party was the party of workers. Now it appears to be the party of non-workers. I will not go into what Kim Beazley senior said about the Labor Party, but I am sure Labor members opposite are perfectly aware of that.

New South Wales has a gas plan. In New South Wales we have the toughest environmental standards in relation to the CSG industry of any State in Australia. The belief that we do not is simply not borne out by circumstances. The Government commissioned the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer to look at this industry as a whole. She has produced reports and the Government is acting on recommendations from those reports. This is arguably the best regulated CSG industry not only in Australia but in the world. The level of regulation is so great that the CSG industry is not very supportive of it.

The Government has found the Goldilocks level: the environmental movement thinks it is too loose; the industry thinks it is too tight. This is sensible development across New South Wales, and it should be continued. Thanks to this Government we have reached a happy compromise between environmental concerns and the need to provide this State with a reliable source of natural gas into the future. Let us remember this one point: New South Wales at the current time produces only 5 per cent of its own domestic requirement. If we implement a sensible plan for the future, we can produce 50 per cent of our domestic requirement in New South Wales. The gas plan which has been introduced by this Government represents a historic breakthrough in terms of environmental protection and industry development. It should be supported and this bill should be seen for the political stunt that it is.

Ms JAN BARHAM [10.45 a.m.]: I am very proud to speak in support of the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015, which was introduced by my colleague Mr Jeremy Buckingham. I begin by acknowledging the many campaigners in the gallery. They represent the courageous grassroots campaigners from across the State who created a diverse movement to oppose the unwanted, unnecessary and unsafe industry of coal seam and unconventional gas. I congratulate them on their actions and on their hope and belief in democracy through their proud people power campaign.

As a North Coast resident, I thank the Bentley and North Coast people who have made the effort on a number of occasions to come to Parliament to share their fears and hopes with elected representatives. I thank the elected members who showed them the respect they deserve and listened and now give their support to this bill. I thank the Christian Democratic Party, the Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Paul Green, for listening and understanding the importance of protecting the future. I thank the Shooters and Fishers Party and

the Australian Labor Party, who have shown respect to these people. I hope Government members who offered support for the concerns of campaigners will demonstrate it by crossing the floor and voting in support of this bill.

The campaign to rid the State of this unwanted industry owes much to the commitment and relentless campaigning of my colleague Mr Jeremy Buckingham and his staff, Max Philips, Justin Field, Adam Guise, Jack Gough and Louise Calloway. They all deserve congratulations for a very long and committed campaign. I also acknowledge my local member Tamara Smith, who will have carriage of this bill in the other place. She entered Parliament after an election campaign in which she campaigned strongly against coal seam gas and unconventional gas. Today is a very proud and historic day for New South Wales. It demonstrates the power of the people and the commitment to protect the land and water and our future. I commend the bill to the House.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [10.47 a.m.]: I speak in support of the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. Initially I had reservations about the bill, but I believe the amendments proposed by the Hon. Adam Searle, on behalf of the Opposition, improve the legislation. The bill together with the amendments should be adopted by the House. The bill comprises only four pages but the amendments take up seven pages. The amendments are almost twice the size of the bill. The bill deals with the principal objects and the amendments proposed by the Hon. Adam Searle could be seen as the regulations.

I interpret the Opposition amendments as the regulation for the bill. Rather than being drafted later, they are available today. The amendments answer many of the questions that are posed by the bill. They spell out the detail and operation of the bill. They contain a lot of good material and make sense. I want to apologise to the people in the gallery for the statements made by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. They were provocative and unnecessary to this debate. There is strong feeling on this issue and I do not think his comments were very helpful.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Feelings are more important than facts, are they?

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: We must be constructive in what we seek to do, not light a fuse to set off a bomb. I want to speak to some of the amendments. I have had discussions with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. As members know, I strongly support opportunities for economic development. The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council is concerned that this bill may impact on its plans. In a letter to me, dated 13 August, it was stated:

The concerns expressed in the letter and briefing note remain, namely:

- the title and scope of the bill are misleading as to intentions and effect;
- the bill will have significant and unintended practical consequences; and
- the timing of the bill affects more targeted measures currently being considered and developed by the New South Wales Government.

They are the facts. I congratulate the Government on the buyback of licences. Today's debate reflects the progress the Government is making on this issue, but the Government is not moving fast enough and events are overtaking its actions. I give an assurance to the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council that I will endeavour to do all I can to ensure that its economic plans are not sabotaged by the bill. Currently they are only plans; there is no coal seam gas development. However, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council has an opportunity for economic development and we should do all we can to assist it. The Opposition's proposed amendments provide for the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer to express opinions and make decisions. The amendments propose the establishment of a standing expert advisory body. The Opposition amendment in relation to section 7B states:

- (a) prospecting for or mining coal seam or other unconventional gas is prohibited in the area except in accordance with an existing production lease ...

The Opposition amendments contain conditions pertaining to the implementation of the objectives of the bill. The proposed amendment relating to section 7D, Moratorium lifting orders, states:

- (1) The Minister may, by order published in the Gazette (a *moratorium lifting order*), specify a day (being a day that is no earlier than 21 days after the order is published) on which the moratorium period for a specified onshore area is to end.

The proposed amendments act as regulations and provide flexibility, such as establishing a standing expert advisory body to work with the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer. The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council is concerned about the bill but I believe these proposed amendments will provide an assurance about its concerns. I recognise there is significant community concern in New South Wales about coal seam gas and the potential damage it may cause to the environment.

We only have to look at Queensland to understand community concern. People in Queensland thought there would be a well here and a well there, about 100 miles apart. Recent aerial photographs of Queensland show farm areas that have become industrial zones. They show hundreds of wells connected by pipelines and roads. The farming community in New South Wales does not want the same thing to happen on farmland in this State, and the Christian Democratic Party does not want to see such devastation either.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: We don't have balloon fault formations, Fred.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps should visit Queensland to see those farmlands. The Christian Democratic Party has received a lot of feedback from the community. We took a strong and reasonable policy to the 2015 election, calling for a pause on the coal seam gas industry and a five-year moratorium. Some of our State's best farmlands, forests and water catchments are under threat from coal seam gas fracking and coalmining. In recent weeks there has been an outpouring of concern from farmers in the highly fertile Liverpool Plains after the Federal Government approved the Shenhua Watermark coalmine. We cannot let our country be irrevocably damaged by the impact of coal seam gas. A cautious approach through a moratorium is a sensible way to proceed.

The coal industry has given assurances that it seeks to minimise risk when fracking to extract gas, but even low risk procedures can have serious consequences if an incident occurs, such as irreparable damage to an aquifer. The NSW Chief Scientist, Mary O'Kane, has warned of "unintended consequences of coal seam gas extraction". Although the industry is in its infancy in New South Wales, already there have been pollution incidents that are cause for concern. A recent ABC television broadcast reported that farmers in Queensland have been directed not to disturb farmland more than two metres below the surface. It was reported that chemicals and gas were found at the two metre level and there was potential for an explosion. Farmers grow produce on those farmlands. It is hard to believe that just two metres below the surface there is possible danger. I am concerned about farmlands where wells are located and I am also concerned about the impact on farmlands where there are no wells but coal seam gas extraction has commenced under the surface.

I congratulate the Government on its exploration licence buyback program, which has seen companies hand back petroleum exploration licences covering significant areas of New South Wales. This has given affected communities some certainty that they will not have the coal seam gas industry in their area. This bill prohibits any prospecting for or new production of coal seam gas or other unconventional gas in New South Wales. As I said, the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council is concerned about unconventional gas. I am sure that issue will be subject to further examination by the Chief Scientist.

The bill will ensure that the existing coal seam gas production areas of Camden and Narrabri are not expanded and that the existing petroleum licences can be cancelled without compensation. The Opposition's proposed amendments act as regulations until the recommendations of the NSW Chief Scientist have been implemented and a standing expert advisory board has been established to provide advice to the Minister on the extraction of coal seam gas. Further amendments moved by the Opposition in due course will prohibit coal seam gas in sensitive environments such as the Northern Rivers, the recharge zone of the Great Artesian Basin, the Sydney and Central Coast water catchment areas, prime agricultural land zones and residential areas. The Christian Democratic Party supports those amendments.

Many Christian Democratic Party candidates campaigned hard on the issue of coal seam gas in their electorates in the recent election campaign and on our policy of a five-year moratorium. I will give members some examples of the efforts of our candidates. Annie Wright stood as a Christian Democratic Party candidate for the seat of Manly. In 2013, as a direct response to the gross industrialisation of rural, regional and some sectors of urban Australia by coal seam gas, Annie Wright formed Aussies Against Fracking, a platform movement which enables hundreds of members of the entertainment industry to voice their opposition to coal seam gas. She told her electorate:

I am passionate about our environment and feel very blessed to have been born into one of the most beautiful areas of NSW. I feel a responsibility to protect our resources and environment under threat as we really are the custodians of our country. I have seen first-hand affected areas within Australia, rivers are irreparably poisoned, air is toxic and people are sick.

Dr Clarrie Pratt, our Wollongong candidate, together with Steve Ryan, our Kiama candidate, and Joseph Carolan, our Keira candidate, represented concerns of many people living in the Illawarra. They pledged to ensure that the local environmental concerns would be heard in Parliament and that the Christian Democratic Party would bring balance and common sense to the issue. As we have heard already, there have been significant community concerns on the North Coast about coal seam gas. The Christian Democratic Party candidate for Lismore, Mr Gianpiero Battista, told the media:

CSG is not what this region wants and realistically it does not promote the strengths we have for example in farming, arts and culture and tourism. It does also compromise the lifestyle image of the region which is the reason why many people decide to move from the city and in my case from the other side of the world.

Vyvyan Stott, our candidate in the nearby seat of Ballina, also expressed concern about coal seam gas. Richard Stretton, our candidate for Upper Hunter—which includes the beautiful area of Gloucester, where AGL has been fracking for gas—said:

It seems we have forgotten the fact that this nation cannot survive without food, but food does not grow on supermarket shelves, it grows on agricultural land. I fully support CDP's position that mining of minerals and gas must not come at the expense or destruction of agricultural land or excessive impact on the water table.

The Christian Democratic Party, as members know, respects God's earth and believes in God as the Creator. We believe that a precautionary approach should be taken to extractive industries. As custodians of the earth we should ensure that the long-term health of soil and water is protected. We should not rush to extract gas or coal where it threatens the long-term health of the environment. We should respect our farmers and protect the fertility of their fields. Many communities have conducted surveys of local residents to gauge their support or opposition to coal seam gas in their areas. The results of those surveys have been overwhelming, with the majority of residents wishing to declare their area gas-field free. I respect the community feeling on this issue. That is why our party regards a moratorium as a sensible way to proceed and supports it.

I thank Mr Jeremy Buckingham for his persistence and for bringing this bill to the House. I thank the Hon. Adam Searle for his considered amendments. The future lasts a long time. We must do what we can to conserve water and the environment for the generations to come. I will not go through the amendments that Hon. Adam Searle has foreshadowed. As I said, they are excellent. They serve as regulations for the bill and specify many matters which should be further examined. The amendments spell out, for example, the areas where the moratorium will operate. Schedule 3, the no-go zone for coal seam or other unconventional gas extraction, lists each of the following government areas in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales: Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City, Richmond Valley and Tweed Shire.

The Opposition amendments will give teeth to the bill. Schedule 3 also specifies the core drinking water catchment areas including the Avon River, Bordeaux River, Warragamba River and Woronora. I thank the Hon. Adam Searle for those amendments, which we will discuss in the Committee stage. I make those comments because people in the gallery may not realise that the second reading debate takes a general overview of the bill and we deal with amendments in detail during the Committee stage. I foreshadow our support for those amendments.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [11.05 a.m.]: As Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and shadow Minister for the North Coast, I speak on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015 introduced by Greens MP Mr Jeremy Buckingham. As the shadow Minister for Energy, the Hon. Adam Searle, indicated in his speech, Labor will be voting for the bill. In addition, Labor will move seven pages of amendments to protect the North Coast as well as other parts of the State. In doing so, we will strengthen the bill and bring it into line with the community's expectations across the State. The object of the bill is to amend the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991. It will prohibit prospecting for or mining of coal seam gas in New South Wales and will reintroduce the public interest as a ground for certain decisions relating to petroleum titles.

I acknowledge that the reintroduction of public interest is a notion foreign to The Nationals. Indeed, this bill is a direct response to repair the damage done by the Liberal-Nationals Government's removal of the public-interest test that was previously in the legislation. The direct result of that removal is being played out across our communities, who are furious that CSG and unconventional gas licence holders have all the power over local communities and councils in our regions. Let us be clear, these laws did have a public interest test, but that was before the Liberal-Nationals Coalition ripped it away. What can we conclude about a Government that removes a public interest test from its CSG legislation? We can conclude it is intent on destroying the

public interest. I thank Mr Jeremy Buckingham for giving the Chamber an opportunity to revisit this important matter. I thank my colleague the Hon. Adam Searle for his forensic work and the weeks of research behind his amendments.

Furthermore, I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I recognise that he has heard the community. It is timely, in light of recent discussions about the 11 to 13 June Nationals conference at the prestigious Cypress Lakes golf course at Pokolbin in the lower Hunter. At that conference, newly elected Nationals member for Upper Hunter, Michael Johnsen, dismissed Bentley blockade protesters as "cashed-up former sixties protesters". There you have it. That is the real view of The Nationals. That is what they really think. This shows the real contempt that The Nationals and their members show for the community. It is not surprising that the Premier could not visit the Northern Rivers during the 2015 State election campaign. It is no wonder that thousands of former Nationals voters found themselves voting for anyone other than The Nationals in the 2015 election. It is no wonder that protest groups are already planning massive protests at next year's Nationals conference in Tweed Heads. It will be interesting.

On that note, I congratulate the tens of thousands of North Coast residents who spoke out against coal seam gas and unconventional gas exploration on the North Coast and across the State and put it on the national agenda. The list of people to thank is lengthy. It includes the Knitting Nannas against Gas and Greed, Lock the Gate Alliance, Gasfield Free Northern Rivers, thousands of farmers, mums and dads, the clergy, students, nurses, aged pensioners, children and many more who I met at the Bentley blockade on two separate occasions last year. I also congratulate the Federal member for Richmond, Justine Elliot, and the former Federal member for Page, Janelle Saffin, on their efforts to fight coal seam gas and unconventional gas exploration on the North Coast. Ms Elliot and Ms Saffin were instrumental in the 2014 Australian Labor Party State Conference adopting its current CSG and unconventional gas exploration policy.

The Northern Rivers is a unique region that is underpinned by its reputation as a pristine environment and it deserves to be protected. Labor's opposition to coal seam gas exploration is based on that fact. Labor's position is genuine and longstanding, and reflects the community's concerns—unlike the position of the contemptuous North Coast Nationals. In their electorates, The Nationals say they oppose CSG but as soon as they put on the suit and tie and they are in Sydney, they become pro CSG. I emphasise that The Nationals in the country say one thing but when they get to the city and they are wearing their suits and ties, they are pro CSG.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Walt, you would never have told a fib in your life, would you?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Yes, and what is Labor like in the city?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The truth hurts. Mr President, I hope they are not trying to bait me. While The Nationals, like the Hon. Ben Franklin, feign public outrage and give hand-wringing inaugural speeches about their opposition to CSG, at the same time their energy Minister is busy renewing and expanding CSG licences. That is the true Coalition CSG policy. The Nationals claim to represent the concerns of regional communities, but it is their own Premier who announces, "Do we want coal seam gas? Absolutely we do." The Premier said that in November 2014. It is no wonder that the Premier cannot go to the North Coast. In contrast to that, Labor's support for the North Coast and other regional communities on CSG and unconventional gas has been clear and consistent. Labor's leader, Luke Foley, Labor's shadow energy Minister and my colleague, Adam Searle, and Labor's shadow environment Minister, Penny Sharpe, and I as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and the shadow Minister for the North Coast continue to stand on a strong policy position against CSG and unconventional gas. We have done so from the very outset.

During the second reading debate my colleague and shadow energy Minister, the Hon. Adam Searle, extensively detailed Labor's official response, but in summary, it consists of four points: Firstly, Labor supports a permanent ban on the North Coast and the special areas of the Sydney Water and Central Coast water catchment, with further permanent areas to be determined scientifically; secondly, we want a moratorium on all CSG and unconventional gas exploration and extraction until the recommendations of the Chief Scientist's 30 September 2014 final report are fully implemented; thirdly, under that moratorium the Government should immediately suspend existing exploration licences and ensure by law that no compensation is payable to any party as well as cease issuing new CSG and unconventional exploration and extraction licences and refuse any applications to expand existing licences; and, fourthly, the Government should not permit any expansion of CSG and unconventional gas operations in this State unless the implementation of the Chief Scientist's recommendations proves that the industry is safe.

Members will be aware that on 29 October 2014 Labor announced its policy to declare a coal seam gas and unconventional gas exploration-free zone from the Clarence Valley local government area to the Queensland border. That was supported by our candidates Ron Goodman, Isaac Smith, Trent Gilbert and Paul Spooner. For the record, this House should note that the majority of State voters in the Tweed and Lismore electorates did not vote for The Nationals and their pro-CSG position. They voted against the pro-CSG policy stance of The Nationals and the Liberals. The majority of residents across the Tweed, Lismore and Ballina electorates in fact voted for anyone but the pro-CSG Nationals. During the 2015 election campaign, in which The Nationals candidates attempted to divert attention away from their pro-CSG position by issuing newsletters, The Nationals claimed to be against coal seam gas. Who authorised and wrote those pamphlets? The Hon. Ben Franklin, who proudly raises his hand and there he sits in this Chamber.

But The Nationals have an opportunity to repent: They can join Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. The bill today gives The Nationals a public opportunity to finally show their CSG policy in action. I note the presence in the Chamber of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. If The Nationals fail today to cross the Chamber and join the Opposition, The Greens, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the crossbenchers on the vote on this important bill, they will stand condemned. History shows that The Nationals do not like voting on CSG. At the 2015 Nationals Annual General Conference, The Nationals spent almost two hours debating technical constitutional procedures to avoid debating CSG, and then it all collapsed in a heap. Ultimately, no vote was taken on CSG and unconventional gas. The Nationals showed their true colours on CSG. The Nationals will do anything or whatever it takes to keep CSG and unconventional gas exploration occurring in New South Wales, even though residents en masse have rejected that industry.

In their electorates, The Nationals hide on CSG but when it comes to outside the North Coast, The Nationals are 100 per cent for coal seam gas and unconventional gas. As I said earlier, as soon as The Nationals get to Sydney and put on their suits and ties, they are 100 per cent for CSG. It will be interesting to see how the Hon. Ben Franklin and other Nationals members vote when the second reading stage is concluded. It also will be interesting to see the effects of the so-called 1 July deadline for petroleum exploration licences [PELs] having come and gone. That was the date on which The Nationals pledged to buy back all the petroleum exploration leases and all the PELs, but they have not. I point out PEL 445—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Your PELs, Walt.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is the PEL that you and your buddy, Andrew Stoner—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: The Leader of the Government has come into the Chamber and started sledging members. He has interrupted debate, which is disorderly at all times. Mr President, I ask you to call the Leader of the Government to order. Other members have been quite politely listening to one another, but it is not right that the Leader of the Government has come into the Chamber and disrupted the debate.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: To the point of order: The Hon. Walt Secord is directly addressing his remarks to the Leader of the Government instead of addressing his remarks through the Chair by his use of phrases such as "you and your buddy, Andrew Stoner". Mr President, I put it to you that the Hon. Walt Secord is being disorderly. He is provoking and invoking a disorderly type of debate.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is merit to the contributions of both members on the point of order. We have had a relatively orderly debate. I encourage all members to cease interjecting. I also encourage members at the lectern to direct their remarks through the Chair.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you, Mr President. I point out PEL 445, which is the one everyone is watching. The Nationals so-called PEL buyback program is all sizzle and absolutely no sausage. It is now time for The Nationals to put its vote where its mouth is. It is crunch time. The communities of the North Coast demand The Nationals vote to support the bill. Anything else is a vote to support CSG mining companies and their continued invasive industry across the State. The Nationals cannot get away with posturing and pretending. The Nationals need to support the bill. The Nationals should do it for voters like Anne Thompson, who said she had voted for The Nationals for 37 years but now cannot. Do it for Anne Thompson. Do it for Georgina Woods. Do it for Meg Nielsen. Do it for the families of Lismore. Do it for the families of Ballina. Do it for the families of Tweed. Do it for the families of the Clarence. Do it for the farmers, the doctors, the nurses, the dentists, the religious leaders, the teachers, the students, the business people, the tourism sector and the grandparents. Do it for the Knitting Nanans. Do it for regional New South Wales. I thank the House for its consideration. I commend the bill.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [11.18 a.m.]: I support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. When is the risk too high? That it is what today debate is fundamentally is about. What does the science tell us? That is also what today's debate is about. What do our communities tell us? That is another question all members must consider. Finally, as we debate and then vote on this bill, what is the role of government and this Parliament in deciding how to manage the risks associated with coal seam gas? Labor has a clear view in relation to coal seam gas [CSG]. Unless the industry is proven to be safe, we should not be proceeding; the risks are simply too high.

There have been many contributions to the debate, and I do not intend to go through the technical aspects of the bill because they have been well covered. I point members to Labor's amendments, which are well considered. We are fundamentally talking about the Government's choice to proceed with coal seam gas in this State. The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer has rightly done a lot of work, and probably the most comprehensive assessment of the risks of coal seam gas to New South Wales. She listed a range of issues that need to be sorted out. These are clear; they are also serious. The areas of concern are contamination and depletion of groundwater resources and drinking water catchments; impacts on the co-produced water from CSG activities on the environment; impacts on the environment of hydraulic fracturing or fracking; impacts on human health from air quality, chemicals and noise; the rapid expansion of the industry; land access and landholder rights; and the potential impact on property values.

The Chief Scientist and Engineer also referred to fugitive emissions; uncertainty of the science; and a lack of data, especially baseline data, and a lack of trust in the data sources. The industry is moving ahead of scientific understanding and regulation. This is what the Chief Scientist and Engineer said. We are moving ahead too fast. The risks are too high for us to risk the future of this State, our land and our water. I acknowledge the campaigners who continue to say that the risks are too high. It is our job to manage those risks. If we get it wrong, the future is uncertain. The future will see our waters poisoned, our land not viable, and our loss of ability to look after ourselves and our State and to support the health of our communities.

Labor is putting up a sensible set of clear amendments. Key water sources are off limits. There needs to be a buffer around residential areas. Coal seam gas exploration simply cannot proceed in the Northern Rivers region and the Pilliga. National parks and wetlands should not be at risk through coal seam and unconventional gas extraction. Our position is clear. We have a serious decision to make today. When future generations look at the decision we have made, I hope they will see that we looked at the future, we were sensible about how to proceed and we said that at this stage the risks are too high. This is not safe; we cannot proceed. We need to get this right.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [11.22 a.m.]: I will simply say that I support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. I commend Mr Jeremy Buckingham for his work in bringing the bill to the House. I commend those in the gallery who are here to protect our land, our water and our future; and those around the State who are watching to see if this House will take the action they expect of us—that is, to adopt the precautionary principles and protect our farmland and our future. This House has a job to do today. The job is simple: it is to pass this bill.

Dr JOHN KAYE [11.23 a.m.]: I enthusiastically support the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. I associate myself with the remarks of Mr Jeremy Buckingham, and I congratulate him on bringing the bill to the House. If this bill becomes law and coal seam gas becomes nothing but the name of one of the State's most successful ever community and environmental campaigns, two things will not happen and one thing will happen. First, electricity bills will not go up and, secondly, the energy security of the State will not be compromised. However, there will be more opportunities for a high employment, wealth-creating renewable energy industry of the twenty-first century. I strongly support this bill.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [11.24 a.m.]: I will make a short contribution to the debate on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. As The Greens spokesperson for the environment I am proud to strongly support the bill introduced by my colleague Mr Jeremy Buckingham to prohibit coal seam gas in New South Wales. At a time when we urgently need to wean ourselves off fossil fuels, unfortunately our governments are sanctioning the opposite. The coal seam gas industry will not only poison our water and air and wreck good food-producing land, it will also add to greenhouse gases and climate change.

Local farmers, environmentalists and the community are united in their concern about the impact of coal seam gas mining on agricultural land, biodiversity and water. I am privileged to be part of this massive and courageous people's movement to stand up for a vision of a clean, green, renewable future that has no room for

the existence and expansion of destructive coal seam gas mining industries. We must end this coal and gas rush because it is locking us into a fossil fuel future that will destroy our environment, communities and a sustainable future. I commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.25 a.m.]: I speak in opposition to the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. As Mr Scot MacDonald pointed out in his introductory remarks, New South Wales already has a sound framework for managing the coal seam gas [CSG] industry, and that is called the NSW Gas Plan. There is no need for this bill. We must think rationally and make some informed and considered decisions about the existence of the CSG industry in New South Wales. Indeed, I can inform the assembled that the New South Wales Government has already had an authoritative and independent source investigate this issue. That is how the NSW Gas Plan came about.

In February 2013 the Government commissioned the State's top scientist, Professor Mary O'Kane, to conduct a comprehensive review of CSG-related activities. In her capacity as the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor O'Kane was asked to consider the appropriate regulatory standards. Furthermore, the review of coal seam gas activities focused on the human health and environmental impacts of the industry. This was no small task. It took the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer 19 months to complete the study. It involved preparing a series of technical background papers, covering issues such as hydraulic fracturing, groundwater resources, horizontal drilling, insurance, methane origins and behaviour, New South Wales geology, seismicity, subsidence and water issues, to name a few.

These papers engaged a variety of scientific and learned minds to help inform the Chief Scientist and Engineer's deliberations. They were supplemented by site inspections, hearings with concerned communities and consideration of more than 200 submissions. This was a healthy approach using the principles of scientific inquiry. It examined current operations, it interrogated data and it included talking to the people and communities involved. What did this thorough 19 months of work find? Well, the findings were rigorous, detailed and insightful.

The Chief Scientist and Engineer's independent review found that many of the technical challenges and risks posed by the industry can be managed through ensuring careful designation of areas appropriate for CSG extraction; high standards of engineering and professionalism in CSG companies; comprehensive monitoring of CSG operations through continuous scrutiny of collected data; a well-trained and certified workforce; and applying new technologies as they become available. When Labor approved these petroleum exploration licences it did absolutely none of that work. The licences were simply approved one after the other by the Labor Government for a number of years, and now we are trying to clean up that mess. Let me repeat: "... the technical challenges and the risks posed by the CSG industry can be managed". It is possible because we have science and facts to help guide us.

The Hon. Walt Secord: But you're a soils expert.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: I am trying to listen to the contribution—

The Hon. Walt Secord: You didn't show me that courtesy.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: —of my colleague. I am having trouble hearing because of the bleating of the Hon. Walt Secord.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Order! According to the standing orders, all members' contributions should be heard in silence. I ask that those contributing to the debate be listened to in silence.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: As I was saying, it is possible because we have science and facts to help guide us. It is also possible because this Government is willing to make evidence-based policy decisions and to utilise comprehensive scientific data and expertise. Rather than following this bill's intention of shutting down an industry, the New South Wales Government is instead choosing to invest in science to make informed and rational decisions. Further proof is the joint announcement the New South Wales Government made on 11 August 2015. I refer members to the 11 August 2015 announcement by the New South Wales Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, the Hon. Anthony Roberts, and the Federal Minister for Industry and Science, the Hon. Ian Macfarlane. This outlined the joint decision to invest a total of \$3 million

in a strategic research alliance with the CSIRO. A further \$3 million will be invested by industry and the CSIRO itself in the Alliance. The CSIRO is none other than Australia's most reputable and credible scientific entity. It is an organisation that ranks in the top 1 per cent of world scientific institutions in 13 out of 22 research fields.

Importantly, the funding enables CSIRO to expand its Gas Industry Social Environmental Research Alliance, or GISERA, into New South Wales. It means CSIRO-backed independent scientific information will be brought to communities where coals seam gas development could take place. It is an approach that has worked well in Queensland and as a result of this week's announcement New South Wales communities now too will benefit. The \$3 million joint investment will expand the research on social and environmental impacts of the onshore gas industry. Rather than hiding in the dark these communities will be empowered to assess and form their own views on the development of CSG. The New South Wales Government's support of GISERA will mean that, rather than misconceptions and misinformation, communities will have access to independent scientific information about CSG and information that is relevant to them. The establishment of GISERA also implements recommendation 12 of the Chief Scientist and Engineer's final report.

Returning to the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's finding, the work also noted that effective management of the CSG industry needs to take place within a clear, revised legislative framework. Since coming to office after 16 years of inaction by those opposite, the Government has also undertaken a raft of actions to ensure the regulatory standards that apply to the New South Wales gas sector are the most stringent in Australia. Again, the approach taken by this Government has been evidence-based decision-making.

These standards include: firstly, establishing exclusion zones to prevent coal seam gas activities in residential areas and industry clusters—these exclusion zones apply to 2.7 million hectares of residential land across New South Wales, and the equine and viticulture critical industry clusters in the Upper Hunter; secondly, banning the use of harmful benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene [BTEX] chemical compounds in all drilling and hydraulic fracturing; thirdly, requiring all CSG operators in New South Wales to hold an environment protection licence; fourthly, introducing mandatory codes of practice for well integrity and fracture stimulation; fifthly, introducing an aquifer interference policy to protect aquifers and groundwater; and finally, providing independent expert scrutiny of new proposals affecting prime agricultural land and water to ensure that decisions are based on the latest science.

It should be of no surprise then that the NSW Gas Plan builds on the actions we have already taken. The Gas Plan sets out a comprehensive approach for developing an environmentally safe and sustainable gas industry. Incorporating the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer's recommendations, the plan is a blueprint for delivering world best practice regulation of the gas industry whilst securing vital gas supplies for the State. The plan represents a line in the sand for improving the regulatory framework for the onshore gas industry in New South Wales and it underpins the safe delivery of gas for the benefit of New South Wales' citizens and businesses. Above all, the NSW Gas Plan will ensure there is a transparent, informed and strategic approach to allocating our petroleum resources.

The plan does this by setting in train a tranche of legislation relating to CSG, which, I note, will be the second that the Coalition has had to introduce in response to Labor's legacy on this issue. Once again, this Government has had to act to fill in a policy void left by those opposite. As already announced, the NSW Environment Protection Authority will act as the lead compliance and enforcement watchdog for all gas activities. Here again we have proof of the New South Wales Government's willingness to actively invest in and apply science to its decision-making.

When he drafted this bill, Mr Jeremy Buckingham failed to consider that the NSW Gas Plan already establishes these actions. Notably, the measures initiated by the Gas Plan go further. The plan will also see the development of an online portal that will bring together environmental data collected by New South Wales regulators. The portal will be an authoritative source and single point of access for State environmental data. This will include information on water management, gas extraction, mining, manufacturing, and chemical processing activities. Establishing this tool is consistent with this Government's commitment to transparency. This is because the portal's information will be publicly available. The portal will assist local councils and industry bodies with their decision-making. It will help the community to understand the exploration and extraction phases of a particular project, as well how that project is tracking in terms of compliance.

But I have not finished outlining to the Chamber other Gas Plan actions that this Government has in train. The first is the lifting of industry performance through minimum standards for applications and

outcomes-based licence conditions. The second is the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has been commissioned to benchmark compensation rates annually. The third is the establishment of community benefits fund to fund local projects in communities where gas exploration and production occur.

The combined effect of the Gas Plan actions I have listed today is to ensure for the people of New South Wales the right regulatory framework is in place, in conjunction with engineering solutions and constant learning through monitoring and research. In all of these respects, this proposed bill is an unnecessary greenwash of an industry that is integral to the security of supply of energy in New South Wales. CSG may be a complex issue, but it need not be a divisive one. Shutting down a resource industry on the basis of misinformation and doomsday predictions is also not good science or sound public policy-making. Yet if this bill were to be supported, that is what the action would amount to.

New South Wales energy consumers, businesses and households alike deserve reliable and affordable energy options. The New South Wales Government has responded to this need, commissioning an independent scientific and comprehensive review. It has embraced the complexity rather than shirked it. Let me repeat the words of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer: "... the technical challenges and risks posed by the CSG industry can be managed". The New South Wales Government has drawn up a gas plan that frames the way ahead. It capitalises on the Government's investment in science and fact, putting more information in the public domain than those sitting opposite cared to do. The Opposition's amendments—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: They are longer than the bill itself.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: They are longer than the bill itself. They are essentially a new bill.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: That's a smack down of Jeremy.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: They really are a smack down of the mover of the bill, Mr Jeremy Buckingham. Even though the Opposition says it supports the bill, it is changing it into another bill by way of its amendments.

The Hon. Adam Searle: It's part of the process.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: It may well be part of the process, but the Leader of the Opposition delivered in this debate a second reading speech on a new bill. We should have a harder look at the amendments and not just deal quickly with the bill. I might add that, although I do not know how many petroleum exploration licences [PELs] were approved by the Labor Government in a short period, but since the Gas Plan came into existence this Government has bought back 19 PELs. I can read each individual licence onto the record. That activity continues. In the interests of securing an affordable, diverse and secure energy supply for New South Wales, the Government does not support this bill.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN [11.40 a.m.]: I oppose the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You have a lot of explaining to do, Ben. You say one thing in Sydney and another in Ballina.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Point of order—

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Order! The Hon. Walt Secord is close to being called to order.

Mr Scot MacDonald: The Hon. Ben Franklin has only just begun his contribution and the Hon. Walt Secord is interjecting.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Can I contribute to the point of order?

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Order! No, I will rule on it. It is disorderly for members to interject at all times. The member will be heard in silence.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have sat here respectfully for the entire debate. I listened to the Hon. Walt Secord in silence and I find it objectionable that he said that almost before I opened my mouth.

The Hon. Robert Brown: Point of order: Mr Deputy-President, the member is canvassing your ruling.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Order! That is correct. The member is taking liberties. I have made my ruling. While I appreciate the member's sentiments, I will not have my ruling flouted.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I apologise. This bill is a typical stunt from The Greens. It is an all-encompassing catch-all statement that gives no consideration to the complexities, legalities and other flow-on effects for the State. Most members know my position on coal seam gas activities on the North Coast and how vocal I have been. However, this legislation takes a far too simplistic approach to an incredibly complex issue. Introducing a bill to ban coal seam gas activity might get a few headlines, but it is irresponsible and it is not a solution. I say this because we do not know what the consequences will be. We can guess that it will mean paying hundreds of millions, even billions, of dollars in compensation to licence holders across the State. We can also guess that it will expose the State Government to costly litigation, making the Government liable for losses the magnitude of which we do not know. It could expose the State budget—taxpayers' money—to unknown liabilities. These are funds that should be spent on government services—on hospitals, schools, nurses, teachers, and policemen.

Worst of all, we do not know just how bad it could be; we do not have those numbers. We do not know what damage it could do to our reputation, or to economic confidence. We do not know what retribution domestic and foreign companies might take—legal or otherwise. We do not know whether they will throw around terms like "sovereign risk" in their dealings with other potential investors, or whether there will be a withdrawal of foreign direct investment from our neighbours. The blatant breaking of a legal contract never leaves a reputation completely intact. I wish this were not so; I wish there were a magic wand that we could wave and the coal seam gas industry would be gone from the North Coast of New South Wales. Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

When a licence is granted there is an understanding that a private entity will then outlay capital that is borrowed from financial institutions and shareholders. The licence holder has certain rights—rights that must exist for there to be economic confidence in our State. Corporations, small businesses and individuals are expected to honour binding agreements or contracts. If they do not, they are liable for compensation. Government is no different. This is the reality that we face.

More than anyone, I want to see the coal seam gas industry wound back on the North Coast, where the community has not given it a social licence. However, I also recognise the realities we face. The reality is that there must be a proper, open and transparent process where we know the outcome and can protect our public financial resources. The Government's petroleum exploration licence [PEL] buy-back scheme has successfully cancelled fifteen PELs across the State. The coal seam gas exploration footprint has gone from more than 60 per cent to 9 per cent of New South Wales. This is a solid outcome and a great credit to Minister Roberts and the Government's Gas Plan. Is this enough? No, it is not. A number of licences on the North Coast, for example, have been wound back significantly through negotiations with the licence holders, and the community clearly wants this to continue. The people of the Northern Rivers have spoken loudly on this and a broad cross-section of people hold this view—and they are not only the extremists. I have heard their voice.

Eliminating some coal seam gas exploration licences in this State is appropriate. However, these cancellations must be negotiated openly, transparently and responsibly if that outcome is to be achieved. That does not mean it is acceptable to impose a blanket ban across the State that would cost the taxpayers colossally. The people of New South Wales rely on the Government to use their money wisely and to provide the government services they depend upon. To expose them to an unknown liability is completely irresponsible.

Finally, I thank The Greens for the kind invitation that I found in my pigeonhole this morning to join their merry band. I am terribly sorry to disappoint members opposite, but my answer is a definitive no. Our value sets are just too different. They believe in standing outside the tent throwing rocks, pulling stunts and turning public policy into a three-ring circus. I believe in working inside the Government in a respectful and considered way to help in achieving genuine long-term policy outcomes. "No CSG" is a pithy slogan, and it may well be a fine aim to pursue on the North Coast. However, we cannot be lazy about it and we cannot be reckless, especially when there is so much at stake. This bill is nothing more than a stunt. It is a piece of political gamesmanship that will do nothing to solve the issues the honourable member professes, genuinely I believe, to want to address. Do I want coal seam gas exploration and mining on the North Coast? No. Will I support this transparent gimmick of a bill? Absolutely not.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [11.46 a.m.]: I did not intend to speak on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015, but given that someone has told the press that the Shooters and Fishers Party intend to support it without asking us, I thought that perhaps I should. Mr Jeremy Buckingham's bill reminds me of Lee Rhiannon's 2008 anti-mining bill, which proposed a statewide ban on mining. The honourable member cleverly used words such as "permeability" when describing structures on top of which mines should not be built. That means solid rock because it is non-permeable. That was a stunt then and I agree with the Hon. Ben Franklin that this is also a stunt. In both cases The Greens garnered support from affected communities. I share the Hon. Ben Franklin's view that if the people of the Northern Rivers do not want coal seam gas exploration and mining in their backyard, it is probably inappropriate to have it there.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham and I were members of a committee that undertook an inquiry into coal seam gas exploration and mining. In fact, he initiated the inquiry. My colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak also participated in an inquiry into the State's gas supply. Mr Jeremy Buckingham was also interested in that issue. One of the committee's recommendations was that the State Government should establish a gas reservation scheme to guarantee gas supplies in New South Wales. As members are aware, we import all but 5 per cent of our gas. If we had such a policy, New South Wales may never need coal seam gas.

I am a quasi-engineer by training. I took a keen interest in the technical aspects of the first inquiry and I listened to the experts from the Department of Industry Resources and Energy and elsewhere whom we invited to provide advice about the technical aspects of banging a hole down through many different layers, including aquifers and solid rock aquitards above and below aquifers. We also covered a fair bit of ground on the issue of fracking. We talked about how coal seam gas mining is different from shale and gas mining, because the fracking pressures are 12 to 20 times more with shale. Therefore the risk is real. In the United States of America the effect of too-high fracking pressures has caused all sorts of problems. The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer is making an extensive list of what she sees as the hurdles of these sorts of activities. It does not matter whether it is gas mining or farmers drilling for water—the same sorts of controls have to be in place.

This Government ran up a white flag over the issues on the North Coast and has gone a long way towards winding back the statewide coal seam gas environment protection licences [EPLs]. You could not find a spot on the map that did not have an EPL on it. It was way too fast and way too soon. It is an industry that was not properly tested, although the technical aspects of drilling for coal seam gas are no different from those of drilling for petroleum. We have been doing that for 100 years. Our inquiry found the trouble with the industry is that it is run in the same way as the petroleum industry—that is, mature companies that one would argue are forced to be responsible citizens only buy in after the exploration is proven. Who does the drilling? In the United States of America they are called "wildcatters". They are called wildcatters for a reason. Who does the drilling or the initial exploration in New South Wales? With all due respect to the industry, I call them wildcatters. We inspected AGL's plants at Camden. I will not tell the story about the hay bales, Jeremy.

The Hon. Rick Colless: Tell us, tell us.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: No, I will not embarrass him. AGL has been responsibly doing its work there for many years. It may well be a different story in different locations such as Gloucester or the Northern Rivers. As part of the inquiry, in the Northern Rivers we looked at the transportation of that gas for export. They wanted to pipe it to Queensland, but they wanted to pipe it across reactive soils. We saw some examples of what happens when you put any type of pipeline through reactive soils: The reactive soils move, the pipelines move and the pipelines fracture. That was pretty much a no-brainer for the North Coast anyway.

The Shooters and Fishers Party has a policy on coal seam gas. It is on our website. Again, right at the head of that policy is a statement that we want the New South Wales Government to put in place a gas reservation policy and argue the case around the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] table that the Federal Government should support that so we have a gas reservation policy for all States in Australia. That may be against the economic interests of the nation, because it means we cannot sell a tiny 15 per cent of that gas to the huge markets that require it, but what a lot of people do not realise is that natural gas or coal seam gas—which is the same basic product—is required as a raw material in the manufacturing industry. Farmers cannot use fertilisers if they are not manufactured, fertiliser cannot be manufactured without ammonia, and ammonia comes from methane.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: But The Greens hate chemical fertiliser anyway.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I will not respond to any interjections. They are disruptive. Thank you to whomever it was who went to the press and said that the Shooters and Fishers Party was going to support this bill. We will decide what bills we support. We have a policy; the policy is clear. We will vote in accordance with the findings of the inquiries that we have had and with our policy. We will oppose the bill.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON [11.53 a.m.]: The Animal Justice Party supports this responsible and important bill, the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. I bring to the attention of the House the fact that every sitting day one of the first statements made by the President is that we have a positive and complete duty to the welfare of the people and children of this State and of Australia. It is time for us to turn our mind to turning our back on the whole industry of petroleum and fossil fuels, because the evidence is overwhelming that this is a deleterious, dangerous and harmful industry. We must turn away from it and look to alternatives in order to ensure the welfare of our people and our children.

One hastily stitched together report by one scientist is not a robust, rigorous or responsible analysis of an industry's potentially catastrophic pillaging of the land and the water we all share. As Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile indicated, the best measures are not numerous scientific reports—if there were any—but to go and look at where this type of activity has been occurring. With great respect to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, he went and looked at what has been happening in areas in Queensland and elsewhere. What we are witnessing is alarming and frightening.

The Animal Justice Party has analysed all aspects of this industry. The industry demonstrates utter disregard for the health of citizens, including farmers and their children; and the environment, including the health and integrity of our land and water. Looking at the issue from the stance of the Animal Justice Party, there are studies by veterinarians that say very clearly that farm animals that graze on land under which this activity is occurring are already suffering from deleterious respiratory and alimentary problems. There are also impacts on wildlife living in the area.

This sinister and deceptive form of mining noxiously creeps in under the very land that the people of New South Wales legitimately possess, enjoy, flourish on and derive from. It strikes at a fundamental right of all owners of land, be they farmers, wildlife carers, Indigenous people or many others. It strikes at the right to enjoy, be nourished by and be free from harm from our land and water. Moreover it strikes at our overwhelming, positive responsibility to ensure a safe and protected environment, free from noxious, harmful, poisonous substances that would deleteriously affect our children, the wild animals that enjoy these lands, and the animals that we introduce and rear on these lands, now and in the future.

The coal seam gas industry must be brought to an immediate halt in New South Wales. The Animal Justice Party supports this very important bill, which goes directly to ensure—and "ensure" is the correct and important word—the welfare and wellbeing of the people, including our children; the animals; and the environment of this land. The Animal Justice Party commends this bill to the House.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [11.58 a.m.], in reply: I thank all honourable members for their considered, erudite and comprehensive contributions to debate on the Petroleum (Onshore) Amendment (Prohibit Coal Seam Gas) Bill 2015. Some of the issues that have been fleshed out in this debate have been a bone of contention for the people of New South Wales for the past four years. If the bill is passed through this House and the lower House, it will continue to be an issue in New South Wales and act like a conflagration. The community has spoken. The grassroots movement has spoken. They are the overwhelming majority of people in New South Wales. Some members have described this bill as a stunt or a game. Those members will rue those words because hundreds of thousands of people have made the effort to sign tens of thousands of petitions because of the disruptions caused to their lives. But it has had a singular purpose—to stop this industry in its entirety.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It is a cult.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, it is not a cult. The only contribution I set aside from others is that of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, who said that those people who are concerned are socialists, psychopaths or suckers—socialists, psychopaths and the most concerning term is suckers. That is an abominable thing to say to those people who have legitimate concerns about this industry. Those concerns are based on science, research and travel and have been well considered. Some of the most respected scientists in this country are saying there

are enormous risks, as is the farming community. We must make a distinction. Saying that fracking is the same as drilling for bores in the Great Artesian Basin ignores the complexity and detail of the industry and the experience in the United States and Queensland of drilling for unconventional gas.

We must remember that former governments, and this Government just four years ago, were racing ahead like a bull at a gate, damning the consequences. New South Wales would be like Queensland if it were not for the people in the gallery. We would have had thousands of wells—Eastern Star Gas, 1,100 wells, Apex Energy drilling in our water catchments. Drilling at Fullerton Cove, St Peters and Eastern Creek—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: That was Labor's program.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: You can say, "It was them, not us." The reality is that the first licences were granted by the Coalition governments of Greiner and Fahey. Who cares who granted them? No-one asked the community whether or not they wanted them handed out. Ian Causley handed out licences, as did Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald and Steve Whan. Those licences existed and four years ago this Government saw fit to give the green light to thousands and thousands of wells. The community said, "No, we do not need this industry." There are alternatives. We have a conventional gas industry in the Bass Strait and the Cooper Basin. The mining industry was being foisted upon us as part of a massive export industry but no-one had considered its socioeconomic and environmental outcomes. The community said, "No, thank you. We do not want to risk it because we have looked at Queensland." Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile referred to it as the industrialisation of a landscape. The community wanted to pause while they informed themselves. Although they have been primarily ignored by this Government, they are resolute. This industry has no social licence. It will not go ahead. A prohibition is not a stunt; it is the will of the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. Robert Brown: Some of the people.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: We live in a democracy. I am absolutely certain it is the will of the majority of the people in New South Wales. People will understand the industry once they stand near a compressor station situated next to a community, see the kids with the bleeding noses and meet the people who are stressed. Industry figures say, "Of course aquifer interconnectivity will occur. That is what happens when you drill bores." Despite how much concrete and steel is put into an annulus, well casings fail. There is no certainty in this industry. As sure as night follows day, the conflagration will continue. These people will never go away because their community is on the line. They belong to the dairy industry, the equine industry, the tourism industry, the fishing industry; they are croppers and oyster growers. Those people want to live a peaceful life, be it in St Peters, Gloucester, the Northern Rivers or the Liverpool Plains. They do not want an industrialised landscape.

If someone said to them, "We must have this industry; it is in our nation's best interest" and a reasoned, economic argument was put to them that showed compelling scientific evidence that drilling was safe, they would say yes. But we have learnt. That is why the Australian community has said no to a nuclear industry. Despite protestations that the nuclear industry is safe and risks can be managed, we have had disasters at Fukushima, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. What happens with the waste? The Australian community has said no for good reason. History will judge us. Despite people such as the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and Coalition members saying we should have a nuclear industry—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: At no stage in my parliamentary career have I said that Australia should have a nuclear power industry, especially considering that coal and gas are the cheapest forms of electricity generation in Australia at the present time.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Order! The point of order relates to knowledge that I do not have. There is no point of order.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Time and again we are told that the risk can be managed. Do we need to take the risk? The overwhelming response by the community is no. I thank my colleagues in The Greens for their contributions. I thank the Animal Justice Party for bringing its perspective to this debate. I thank the Labor Party for bringing forward a comprehensive range of amendments, even though they were derided by members opposite as being for a different bill. Members may recall the moratorium bill I introduced similar to Labor's bill. It too was shot down by the Government. It proposed many similar things such as a moratorium, protection of water catchments and areas to be ruled out. I thank also Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his contribution and for the Christian Democratic Party's ability to consider this matter with an open mind. It is a

sad day that when people object they are called suckers, hysterical or emotional. That is not true. People have doubts so they inform themselves and come to a point of view. To be called a fool because you have a different view is wrong.

I am disappointed that the Shooters and Fishers Party, for reasons that remain unclear to me, has decided to vote against the bill. I appeal to the Shooters and Fishers Party to at least vote for the bill at the second reading stage so that we can debate Labor's foreshadowed amendments in Committee. If not, we will have to do this again and again. The community, including the farming community from the Liverpool Plains, has said no. Representatives from as far afield as Wee Waa, Lismore and the Southern Highlands have travelled here today to represent their communities. We all would like this matter to be resolved. Ultimately, this industry does not have a social licence. Back in the early 1990s communities were not asked whether they wanted their areas to become gas fields. They were not privy to the discussions of government and industry about the new technology that was to be unleashed on the community, and they remain concerned at the boom-bust disaster that Queensland has become.

I urge those who may be relying on members like the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps or Mr Scot MacDonald for their information to look at the socioeconomic catastrophe that has happened in Chinchilla. The industry came and went, the community collapsed. On a daily basis farmers are reporting depressurisation of water bores and the rates of still births in cattle are through the roof. The industry is not doing what it said it would—fences are being left open and spreading weeds are contaminating the landscape. That is the legacy that is emerging after such a short time. It is even worse in the United States. That is what will be visited upon us. You cannot cherry-pick an area. If I had my way I would say, "Let us make ourselves gas-field free." Some people think that they can defend their little patch. That will not work; someone will always be outside that little patch. This Parliament should be working in the best interests of all people in New South Wales. If this bill again fails I resolve to continue the fight, along with many others, until New South Wales is gas-field free.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 16

Ms Barham	Mr Pearson	Mr Veitch
Mr Buckingham	Mr Primrose	Ms Voltz
Ms Cotsis	Mr Searle	
Dr Faruqi	Mr Secord	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Kaye	Ms Sharpe	Mr Mookhey
Reverend Nile	Mr Shoebridge	Mr Moselmane

Noes, 19

Mr Ajaka	Mr Farlow	Mrs Mitchell
Mr Amato	Mr Gallacher	Mr Pearce
Mr Blair	Mr Gay	Mrs Taylor
Mr Borsak	Mr Khan	
Mr Brown	Mr MacDonald	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Clarke	Mrs Maclaren-Jones	Mr Franklin
Ms Cusack	Mr Mason-Cox	Dr Phelps

Pairs

Mr Donnelly	Mr Colless
Mrs Houssos	Mr Harwin
Mr Wong	Mr Mallard

Question resolved in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Bill not read a second time.

AGE DISCRIMINATION**Debate resumed from 4 June 2015.**

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [12.21 p.m.]: I state for the record that the Christian Democratic Party supports the motion. The Christian Democratic Party is opposed to age discrimination whether it is at the older end of the scale or the younger end of the scale. Everyone should have the same opportunity, irrespective of age. I have referred to one reason I take an interest in this subject: I am over 80 years of age. We should not have age discrimination for members of the House which means that when they reach 65 years of age they must retire from the Legislative Council, and the very same should apply to workers.

Parliament should provide conditions whereby workers who are in good health and who can continue to work may continue to work in their sixties and seventies or even longer, if they wish. Of course, their decision must be voluntary. It is sad when people reach the age of 45 or 55 that companies try to force them from their positions. It is very difficult for people who are in the 50 to 55 year age bracket to obtain another position. As a result, a lot of those people become unemployed and receive unemployment benefits. I commend the Hon. Sophie Cotsis for moving the motion. The Christian Democratic Party gives the motion full support.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [12.23 p.m.], in reply: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his expression of support. In thanking all members who contributed to debate on the motion, I acknowledge the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, Mr John Ajaka. I am a fair person. I know the Minister believes that something needs to be done and that the Government needs to do more. The Minister referred during debate to what the Government is trying to do. The Minister is committed to raising awareness of the need to eliminate discrimination against older workers and I believe he is trying to do good work.

The Hon. John Ajaka: It is good to have some positive feedback.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: Yes, but what I am calling for is information on the Government's discussion of an ageing strategy and elimination of workplace discrimination. My motion calls on the Government to report to the House what it has done. It is plain and simple. I do not understand why the Government is playing politics in relation to this motion.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Ha, ha.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I acknowledge the work that the Government has done. There is nothing in my motion that is political.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Paragraph two?

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: We are the Opposition and we are holding the Government accountable.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: "There is nothing political" and "We are the Opposition"?

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: We are holding the Government accountable for its ageing strategy and how it will eliminate workplace discrimination. It is fair and simple. The Government Whip is arguing against what the Government believes in, but I will nevertheless continue with acknowledging members who contributed to debate on the motion. The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones referred to the Government recently establishing an open forum to develop further options to increase workforce participation. The topics included minimising the economic and social effects of health-related workforce disconnection and developing an effective coordination approach. In due course, I would like to hear more about that from the Minister. All I am calling for is the Government to report back to the House about what it is doing and what it has done. That is all I am asking for—plain and simple.

I acknowledge and thank my colleague the Hon. Lynda Voltz for her excellent speech. Her life's work has been standing up against all forms of discrimination, particularly in relation to women. The Hon. Lynda Voltz called on the Government to provide the House with a specific date when the ageing strategy will be updated and referred to the lack of superannuation entitlement of female members of the workforce. She also referred to the difficulties faced by women who are in and out of the workforce because of their many caring roles involved with bringing up a family, looking after their children who have a disability or looking after their elderly parents.

I also thank Ms Jan Barham for her fantastic speech. She referred to regional and coastal issues and how age discrimination affects regional and coastal areas of the State, in particular. I also thank my colleague the Hon. Courtney Houssos for a very important speech about the importance of increasing awareness in the community about this very important issue. She expressed her passionate advocacy to ensure that society is providing dignity for all workers. I also thank my colleague the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, who also gave a fantastic speech. He referred to his experiences as a community leader with members of the non-English-speaking background community. Although I do not support the amendment moved by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, I acknowledge that he also made very valid comments during debate about workplace discrimination.

I also acknowledge a fantastic contribution to debate on the motion from a very good member of the House, the Hon. Paul Green. I thank him both for his service to this House and to his community of the Shoalhaven. He speaks from the heart, always provides evidence and brings a wealth of experience to this House. I also thank our longest-serving member of the House, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, who already has told us his age.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: He is the grandfather of the House.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: He is the grandfather of the House. I acknowledge his service to the House. He is a very good example of people working in their later years.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): Relying on the good grace of the House, I acknowledge some guests who have joined us in the gallery and welcome them to the best House of the Parliament. The President and members of the Kiama Show Society, which produces a very good show, are guests of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Illawarra and South Coast. I welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. It is great that they got to see the best House. I am sure the member for Kiama will scrape together a visit to the remainder of the Parliament, but obviously our guests are experiencing the best right now. I hope they enjoy their day.

Question—That the amendment of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps be agreed to—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 20

Mr Ajaka	Mr Farlow	Mrs Mitchell
Mr Amato	Mr Gallacher	Reverend Nile
Mr Blair	Mr Khan	Mr Pearce
Mr Borsak	Mr MacDonald	Mrs Taylor
Mr Brown	Mrs Maclaren-Jones	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Clarke	Mr Mallard	Mr Franklin
Ms Cusack	Mr Mason-Cox	Dr Phelps

Noes, 14

Ms Barham	Mr Primrose	Mr Veitch
Mr Buckingham	Mr Searle	Ms Voltz
Ms Cotsis	Mr Secord	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Faruqi	Ms Sharpe	Mr Mookhey
Dr Kaye	Mr Shoebridge	Mr Moselmane

Pairs

Mr Colless	Mr Donnelly
Mr Gay	Mrs Houssos
Mr Harwin	Mr Wong

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

LEMNOS 1915 COMMEMORATION

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW [12.40 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes that:

- (1) 24 April 2015 marked 100 years since Australian troops left Mudros Bay in Lemnos for the Gallipoli landings.
- (2) Lemnos 1915, the Lemnos Association of NSW's commemorative program for the Centenary of Anzac, marked the centenary commemoration at the Australian National Maritime Museum on 24 April 2015.
- (3) During the nine months of the Gallipoli campaign over 50,000 Anzacs passed through Lemnos.
- (4) Lemnos hosted hospitals, convalescent camps and housed the depots that supported the Gallipoli campaign.
- (5) 8,709 Australian lives were lost in the Gallipoli campaign and 148 Australians are buried at Lemnos as a result of that campaign.
- (6) The people of Australia and Greece share a close alliance that was forged since the battle of Crete, strengthened through the assistance of the Greek people in the Gallipoli campaign and survived today by an ever strengthened relationship between the Greek and Australian people, with more than 378,000 Australians of Greek ancestry and a close bond between the two nations.

It was a pleasure to represent the New South Wales Government and the Minister for Veterans Affairs at the Lemnos 1915 Commemoration at the Australian National Maritime Museum on 24 April 2015. I note the wonderful work of the Minister and member for Baulkham Hills, the Hon. David Elliott. This is an important time as we mark the centenary of Anzac and the sacrifice of many people in the fight for our freedom. In reflecting on this commitment, the New South Wales Government and members of the Parliament are doing a remarkable job of commemorating the centenary and there has been a bipartisan approach to the commemoration and the recognition of the service of our veterans.

I acknowledge the attendance at the Lemnos 1915 event of members from this place: the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, who is present in the Chamber, the Hon. David Clarke and the Hon. Courtney Houssos, and from the other place the member for Miranda, who is a descendent of two Lemnian parents, and the member for Rockdale. I note also the attendance by Mr Nick Varvaris, the Federal member for Barton, who is doing a wonderful job in the St George area.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: I have not heard his name mentioned.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I am sure the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane would recognise his hard work and that his name is often mentioned on the streets of Rockdale. I also commend the former member for Strathfield, Major Charles Casuscelli, for his excellent work in being master of ceremonies [MC] at the Lemnos 1915 event and his wonderful work when he served as a member of the New South Wales Parliament. He continues to serve the New South Wales community.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: He did on that day, but not in Parliament.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As the Hon. Sophie Cotsis acknowledges, he did great work on that day. Charles is a wonderful MC as he has a self-deprecating sense of humour, often reflecting on his Italian background. Strathfield and the adjoining electorate of Drummoyne have strong Italian communities and Charles was a wonderful member for Strathfield. Many people when they leave Parliament turn their back on their community. But Charles did not take that approach; he honoured his election campaign commitments. That says a lot about the man, his service to the people of Strathfield and his commitment to his community.

As part of the Lemnos 1915 commemoration, I pay tribute to the work of the Consulate General of Greece, particularly the Consul-General, Dr Stavros Kyrimis, the Lemnos 1915 Committee, the Lemnos Association of New South Wales and, of course, the chairman of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Peter Dexter, and his staff for planning a tremendous event reflecting on the important role of Lemnos in the Gallipoli campaign. The work that they and others in the Greek community have done to raise the profile of a significant part of Australian history is commendable, and I congratulate them on their efforts.

As part of our celebration of the Centenary of Anzac, it is important that we pause to reflect on the place that Lemnos holds in the shared history of Australia and Greece, because there is no Centenary of Anzac without Lemnos. Many Australians of Greek heritage hail from Lemnos. The member for Miranda and my

adviser, Nomiky Panayiotakis, and her family are just some of them. They add to the rich tapestry of Australia's shared heritage with Greece. It should also be remembered that nearly 90 Greek Australians served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front during the Great War.

The Centenary of Anzac is important not just in the history of Australia but in the history of many nations. Recently I had the privilege of visiting Israel to mark the Centenary of Anzac in a moving event at the Jerusalem Memorial. There I reflected on the service of our soldiers in what was known as the Sinai and Palestine campaign during the Great War. Australian soldiers made a great contribution in defence of our freedoms, our country and, at the time, the Empire through their sacrifices in many far-flung places. This in a sense is why Anzac is significant for Australia as this was the time when Australia became a nation on the world stage.

In many battles and campaigns during the Great War Australia forged its identity and other nations came to recognise Australia and New Zealand. The spirit of our troops defined us as a nation and our brethren across the Tasman. No doubt that was evident in Lemnos as well and the Greek people began to recognise the great Australian character and understand that it was different to the British character. We showed we were an independent nation made up of independent people.

Every Australian child is taught in school the importance of the Gallipoli campaign, a battle where 8,709 Australian lives were lost. Every Australian child is taught, rightly, that the foundation of the Australian identity is rooted in the Anzac spirit. Through the endeavours of the Anzacs in Gallipoli, Australia and New Zealand distinguished themselves from their cousins across the Commonwealth and the motherland of England. It was one of the first times Australians saw ourselves as a nation, and this was recognised by other nations. I was moved to see the Consul General for the United Kingdom, Mr Nick McInnes, at the Lemnos 1915 commemoration. I thank him for his commitment to the commemoration of the Centenary of Anzac. He has attended most of the significant Anzac commemoration events that reflected on the service of Australians in the Great War.

While we all know about Gallipoli, many of us do not know about the significance of the Greek island of Lemnos and the role it played in this milestone of our history. It was in April that the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp was first formed from soldiers of the Australian Army Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. The first Anzac mission was to be staged from the island of Lemnos and it is from this island's harbour that Anzacs left for Gallipoli. It was in November in the island's main town of Mudros that British General Kitchener decided to bring the Anzacs back and end the campaign. In between those bloody months, when nearly 188,000 allied lives were lost, Lemnos served as the base from which the campaign was fought. It was during those days that the island played host to some of the most inspiring stories in our military history, a history we of course share with the Greek people.

Some of those stories are well known, like that of Albert Jacka, the first member of the Australian Army Imperial Force to be awarded a Victoria Cross. He began his journey, like so many others, in one of the massive tent cities that housed the Australian troops on the island before they were shipped off to fight. Another well-known story, which featured in the *Anzac Girls* television series, is the journey of Matron Grace Wilson, who ran one of the island's general hospitals and managed a staff of 96 nurses from the Australian Army Nursing Service. She provided care and treatment to hundreds of wounded Anzacs throughout the battle. Matron Wilson continued to carry out her vital work with dedication and conviction despite hearing news of her brother Graeme being killed in the campaign. Our nurses endured extreme hardship in the most horrific conditions in Lemnos—an experience that was shared by the Greek island's inhabitants at that time.

When we think of Australia's war effort it is important that we reflect not just on the men who lost their lives on the stage of battle but also on the women who supported troops either on the home front or as nurses on battlefields in far-flung corners of the world. They made a commitment to this service and they were often in danger when caring for the wounded. No doubt they played just as important a role in our history as those who fought and lost their lives in battle.

We must also reflect on the many stories from Lemnos that have gone unheard. They include tales of the Greek civilians who billeted and fed our troops in the lead-up to the Gallipoli landing. As we know, an army marches on its stomach. The people of Lemnos provided essential supplies throughout the battle and managed to make an impossibly tough environment that little bit more comfortable for the Anzacs. The story of Greek hospitality rings throughout the ages. I salute their willingness to assist, to provide a better environment for our troops, and to support a campaign being fought on their doorstep.

While commemorating the centenary of the battle at Gallipoli, we as Australians should reflect upon that and thank the Greek people. Their story is intertwined with ours. While we recognise the sacrifice made by our diggers, we should also recognise the Greek's selfless contribution to our freedom and to freedom throughout the world. We must recognise the support given to the diggers by people living in the vicinity of the battlefields, and particularly the Greeks of Lemnos.

The stories of Albert Jacka, Matron Wilson and the people of Lemnos are some of the many tales that deserve recognition as part of an important time in our history. It is because of this that I have such high praise for the work of Lemnos 1915. It is important that we not only commemorate these lesser known parts of the Gallipoli story but also work to ensure they receive the recognition they deserve in our national story. Thankfully, that is something we are seeing every day in the commemoration of the Anzac centenary. It is not a one-year commemoration; it did not end on 25 April 2015. Our acknowledgement will continue for the next four years.

I had a great opportunity and the privilege to join the Premier, the Minister for Veterans Affairs and the Leader of the Opposition in commemorating the Battle of Lone Pine at the Hyde Park Memorial. It was a moving remembrance service honouring the diggers who gave their lives so selflessly so that we could enjoy the freedoms we have today. There would be no Gallipoli without Lemnos; there would be no Anzacs without Gallipoli. A greater bond between our two great nations—Australia and Greece—was formed at Lemnos. The bond has existed since 1828, when the first Greeks arrived in Australia, and it is strengthened in our community today because of the more than 378,000 Australians with Greek ancestry.

Australia and Greece are the only two nations to have competed in every modern Olympics. We have even supplied Greece with a finance Minister, who was in office until a couple of weeks ago. In that case, our loss may not have been Greece's gain. Despite that flay, I am sure the bond between Australia and Greece will continue strongly into the future. I thank the Greek Australians for their great contribution to our society and their passion for both their ancestral homeland and Australia. They make it a better place. I am sure that that bond will continue for as long as we occupy this land.

One of the great things about Australia is that it does not matter where people come from, they are part of what it means to be Australian and they are part of our future. We may be Australians with Greek, English or Lebanese ancestry but we are Australians first and foremost. That is true of everybody in our community. Australia is a welcoming and fair place. We are a country with history, but we have an even brighter future. Thanks to the sacrifice and hospitality of the people of Lemnos, Australia has been able to count on the world stage. Ours is a nation that will endure and continue to share stories with people from other parts of the world. People will continue to come here not only from Greece and Europe but also from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America to build a stronger nation.

I had the great honour during the commemoration of the battle at Gallipoli to reflect upon the service of our military personnel. I recently attended an event at the Sydney Jewish Museum honouring the service of our Jewish soldiers, including General Sir John Monash, and their ties to Australia. I cherish our ability to accept and welcome people from throughout the world, regardless of where they come from. I reflected on that when I visited the National Museum of the United States Army, because America's story is similar to ours.

I have always said that we are a lucky nation, but we make our own luck in this life. Because of the service of the Anzacs and those who come to our shores and who want a better life for themselves and their families, we can make Australia a better country which will endure and which will play a stronger role in the world. That began in Lemnos and Gallipoli with the Anzacs. I am sure all members hope that our future is not forged through more war. We do not want to glorify any more wars; we want a peaceful world, and Australia has a role to play in ensuring we achieve that. Unfortunately, sometimes peace cannot be achieved without battles, and sometimes we need to fight for peace. I pay special tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives so we that can live in a peaceful world.

As a young person I always thought that if Australia went to war again I would sign up and be prepared to sacrifice my life for my country. However, I now think of that through the eyes of a parent. I think of the parents who did not know what was happening to their children who were on the other side of the world fighting. We have all heard stories about the young people who thought they were going off on a great adventure. No doubt as young people impervious to the perils of the world and who believe they are bulletproof, they went with a clear head and a wealth of adrenalin.

My thoughts go to those at home who lost sons and daughters in battle. As a parent, I cannot fathom ever hearing such news. I reflect upon those families and their sacrifice for our freedoms, and it is sobering. I thank the people of Greece for their continued bond with the Australian people. I also thank the people of Lemnos for their hospitality, their welcoming nature and their support of and care for our troops. I thank all members of this Parliament for their role in commemorating the centenary of Gallipoli and the Anzacs.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [1.00 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Scott Farlow and congratulate him on his contribution to and support for the Lemnos Association of New South Wales commemoration of the Anzac centenary at the National Maritime Museum on 24 April. I also thank the Greek people for their support of our Anzacs. I am sure that many lives were saved in the hospitals and convalescent facilities of Lemnos. I note that while the people of Lemnos were caring for our soldiers, sadly thousands of Pontic Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians living in northern Turkey were massacred by the Turkish Ottoman Government. I thank the honourable member for moving this motion, which I fully support.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

[Deputy-President (Ms Jan Barham) left the chair at 1.01 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted at 2.30 p.m. for questions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MULTICULTURAL NSW

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. In light of Deputy Police Commissioner Nick Kaldas's comments today that the Baird Government must focus on large regional centres in the next stage in the fight against extremism, will he guarantee that Multicultural NSW's restructure and a reduction in its services will not affect its ability to respond to these concerns?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: First, I assure the honourable member that he is wrong when he says that there is a reduction in services by Multicultural NSW. Having dealt with that and putting that aside, assuring the member that he should first get his facts straight before he asks the question—there is no reduction in services by Multicultural NSW; in fact, the opposite is occurring: there is a substantial increase in services by Multicultural NSW, and those opposite know that—

[Interruption]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I know that members were here until quite late last night and are probably a little excited, but they should show some restraint. I can assure them that they will not be getting an early mark.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The members opposite are also well aware of the extensive work that this Government is doing in relation to this area. They are well aware of it, whether it is in the area of youth radicalisation or in the area of countering violent extremism—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Sophie Cotsis to order for the first time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Those opposite are also well aware, if they have read the budget papers, that this Government not only made a commitment prior to the election but also came through with that commitment by providing the funding that is clearly recorded in the budget papers in relation to the area of youth radicalisation and countering violent extremism.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: They want to ask a question but they do not want to hear a good answer when they are getting one.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: It's a great answer.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Thank you. I acknowledge the Leader of the Government. Those opposite are also well aware that I have been tasked by the Premier to deal with these exact issues and that I am now meeting with all relevant stakeholders. I am meeting with community groups, religious groups, other community members, religious leaders and other community leaders, looking very specifically—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Lynda Voltz to order for the first time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: —at this issue, because this Government takes this issue very seriously. But it is not just an issue that is being dealt with—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Sophie Cotsis to order for the second time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: It is not just Multicultural NSW that takes this issue seriously. It is not just the Minister for Multiculturalism taking this issue seriously. As those opposite know, I am also the Minister for Youth, representing our youth within the State of New South Wales. Not only am I taking it seriously, the entire Cabinet—starting with the Premier and the Deputy Premier—and all members of the Government are taking this issue very seriously. This is why we are all working together, and we are working with Deputy Commissioner Nick Kaldas, with Commissioner Scipione, with Deputy Commissioner Cath Burn, and with all other police officers in this area. I am meeting with them to continue to discuss these areas.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: When?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: When is none of the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane's business. When it is happening is my business. The fact he even asked the question proves he has no idea I am meeting with them.

WESTCONNEX

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will Minister update the House on how WestConnex will alleviate traffic congestion through Newtown?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for his question and acknowledge that it is a great question. It is a long way from Byron and Ballina, but it is an important area of the State.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the first time.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: King Street, Newtown is currently—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call Mr David Shoebridge to order for the first time.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Throw him out! As I was saying, King Street, Newtown is a major four-lane arterial road—part of the Princes Highway, in fact—connecting the city to southern parts of Sydney. It has been a very busy road for decades. If the road network is not enhanced, it is going to get busier. This is the future for Newtown that opponents of WestConnex are effectively campaigning for: an even more heavily congested King Street in Newtown. The completed WestConnex motorway network—where stage 3 connects the M4 East to the new M5 through an underground tunnel from St Peters to Rozelle—will bring enormous relief to King Street and other parts of Newtown. But, for that, we need to build stages 1 and 2 first. We have laid out a plan for WestConnex. Anyone who chooses to look at it clearly sees that it makes good sense.

The biggest threat for the vibrant community of Newtown is, frankly, the inaction that the Labor Party promised at the last election. The legacy of a failure to invest in transport infrastructure by the previous Labor Government is a congested and dysfunctional Sydney and a congested and dysfunctional King Street, Newtown. No-one in their right mind can tell you that that road is actually a nirvana and works well. The Greens have of course leapt at the opportunity to exploit the concerns of the residents with their usual scare campaigns whilst knowing full well that the detailed information will shortly be released in the environmental impact statements that are already being prepared.

Similarly, they ignore the fact that this Government is currently pursuing the most comprehensive public transport investment program seen in the history of this State. We are already out there working with

communities to develop the Sydney Metro network, yet we see this misguided propaganda campaign pretending that the Government has totally ignored public transport. It is disappointing to see residents and business owners with legitimate questions about important projects affecting their communities being side-tracked by a collection of politically motivated agitators like The Greens and the Labor Party pushing their own agendas. Let me be clear. The best thing that could happen to Newtown in decades is a completed WestConnex network. WestConnex is not the problem for Newtown; Labor and The Greens are the problem. WestConnex is not the problem; it is the solution to the traffic problems in King Street now and in the future. Members opposite are quiet now because they know that is a fact.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I understand the community is eager for detailed information and may not understand—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: The Minister knows full well it is disorderly for members to interject. He should not constantly bait the Opposition to interject during his speech.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As I was saying, I understand the community is eager for more detailed information and may not understand why the Government is proceeding as it is on WestConnex. The discussion that needs to happen with the community across Sydney about the details of WestConnex— *[Time expired.]*

CHINESE NEW YEAR TWILIGHT PARADE

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. In light of his answer yesterday about Chinese New Year, is the Minister aware that the Chinese community and the City of Sydney Council have advised that the proposed alternative route that was detailed yesterday is too short for a parade and too narrow for floats?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Yesterday I detailed a consultation with the Chinese community. I indicated that we were going to talk to them to try to come up with a solution that addresses their issues. The worst thing for the Chinese community is to get a political animal like Walt Secord involved. The people of good faith are bypassed when that happens.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You mucked it up, Duncan. It is a shemozzle.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: What was that, Walt?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I was indicating to the House that we are more than happy to work with the Chinese community to come up with the best solution. As I indicated yesterday, we will continue to work with the event organisers. There are changes in the city. I know the Labor Party is against the light rail. It was another change of plan along the way. Its members campaigned and went to an election asking for it and then after the election they waxed and waned. Now they are against light rail, not because they do not believe in it but because they saw a whiff of political opportunity. We see exactly the same behaviour from the Hon. Walt Secord. We will work with the Chinese merchants and the Chinese community to come up with the best solution we possibly can to ensure that the New Year's festivity continues in the best way possible. Everybody is aware that there are changes in the city because of the implementation of the light rail. It is a fact that the Labor Party once supported it. They are now playing politics. It will not help if deceitful people come between the community—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Are you calling the business—

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: No, I am calling you deceitful, not them.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: I ask that the Minister be asked to withdraw his use of the word "deceitful". It is unparliamentary. I am expected to uphold very high standards.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the Government made a reflection on the member and reflections are disorderly. I call the Leader of the Government to order for the first time. I do not require him to withdraw it because it is not an offensive word.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am concerned that the Chinese community's aspirations and concerns may not have been properly represented in this House by the Hon. Walt Secord. To that end, I once again emphasise that we want to work with the Chinese community to ensure that the New Year's Eve procession and rally is the best it can possibly be with the changed circumstances in this city.

LIBERAL PARTY FUNDRAISING

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Premier. In order to ensure requirements under New South Wales electoral law are complied with, what steps will the NSW Liberal Party be taking to ensure that every dollar raised for the inappropriate promotion of the former High Court judge and current trade union royal commissioner Dyson Heydon as the keynote speaker at an upcoming Liberal Party fundraiser is immediately returned so that the NSW Liberal Party is not financially profiting from the services of a current royal commissioner?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question is out of order. The member will resume his seat.

YOUTH FRONTIERS MENTORING PROGRAM

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister outline what the New South Wales Government is doing to help young people participate in their local community?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am pleased to inform the House that this Government is investing \$2.6 million in 2015 in the Youth Frontiers mentoring program. The program will provide for mentoring of 1,200 students from years 8 and 9 across all 93 State electorates. Youth Frontiers is being delivered by YWCA NSW and its partner Max Potential on the Central Coast, northern New South Wales, mid North Coast and Hunter New England; the Raise Foundation in northern Sydney, Sydney and Western Sydney; MTC Australia in south-western Sydney, Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains; Orange Community Training and Education Centre in far west New South Wales; and it is being delivered by the Southern Sydney Business Education Network in south-eastern Sydney, the Illawarra, southern New South Wales and the Murrumbidgee.

The Youth Frontiers program makes it easier for people to be involved in their communities. It aims to enable young people to develop and strengthen team work, communication, leadership and decision-making skills; provide young people with the knowledge and skills to link them with further training and employment opportunities; improve young people's access to community-based activities that promote community involvement, including sport and recreation, cultural and other activities; increase the number of youth-led and youth-driven community activities throughout New South Wales as well as recognise the contribution that young people make to their local communities. Research clearly shows that quality mentoring can inspire young people to be more confident, stay engaged in school, become leaders among their peers and give back to their community. Quality mentoring has the potential to improve understanding and communication across different age groups and strengthen common bonds between generations.

Youth Frontier mentors are volunteers from all walks of life who share their skills, experience and community connection with their mentee. I take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of volunteer mentors across the State who willingly give their time to work with the wonderful young people participating in Youth Frontiers. The young people being mentored are encouraged to consider projects, including celebrating cultural diversity, getting their peers to participate in sport, taking care of the environment, raising awareness of youth mental health issues, empowering young women, or promoting a greater understanding of the Centenary of the First World War. The focus is on improving their local community.

At the end of the program, the contribution that these young people have made will be recognised through local showcases. The most outstanding projects will be recognised at the showcase of projects in Sydney in early 2016. I am proud of this New South Wales Government initiative and I know my good friend in the other place, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, who pioneered this program, remains very proud and very committed. Over the next six months I look forward to meeting many of the students and mentors participating in this great program of Youth Frontiers and hearing their wonderful stories.

[Business interrupted.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I take this opportunity to welcome into the public gallery a delegation from the Republic of Korea accompanied by representatives from the Australian Political Exchange Council. Welcome to Parliament House. I hope you enjoy your visit to the Legislative Council question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

[Business resumed.]

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Ms JAN BARHAM: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Land and Water. Will the Minister advise the House of any progress on the transfer of 287 approved Aboriginal land claims valued at \$719 million that have not been finalised and transferred, as identified by the Auditor-General in 2014? How is he responding to the recommendation to take more effective actions to clear the backlog? Is it true that a lack of surveyors is contributing to the delay?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As the member may already know, there are currently approximately 28,000 Aboriginal land claims awaiting investigation. The provisions of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 allow for the continuing lodgement of new Aboriginal land claims. The New South Wales Government is committed to addressing the backlog of claims and a number of measures have already been implemented to improve processes. The Department of Primary Industries is responsible for investigating Aboriginal land claims and making recommendations to me, as the responsible Minister. The department will continue to pursue and identify opportunities to strategically address and improve processes in the investigation of Aboriginal land claims. For example, the department is continuing an extensive program of engagement with local government and other agencies to provide education around the claim process and improve evidence standards from agencies.

The department is increasing engagement with the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council. Recently, the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Planning and I met with the council to continue discussions. I can advise that a five-yearly review of the Act led to the Aboriginal Land Rights Amendment Act 2014 being passed by both Houses late last year. The Act includes provisions to undertake Aboriginal Land Agreements to improve outcomes for the land claim process. These amendments came into effect on 1 July 2015. The Aboriginal Land Agreement process will be an important mechanism for the Government to address the large number of outstanding land claims and to achieve the best outcomes for all stakeholders.

In her question Ms Jan Barham raised the subject of surveyors. Crown Lands currently employs five surveyors geographically positioned around the State at Grafton, Parramatta, Maitland, Orange and Nowra. All five surveyors, as a priority, work on surveys required due to the determination of Aboriginal land claims. Provisions are in place to allow some survey work regarding the determination of Aboriginal land claims to be contracted out to other surveyors in the private sector. The surveys have varying levels of complexity. The level of complexity determines the amount of time each survey will take and what it will cost. Crown Lands continues to focus appropriate resources towards reducing the number of outstanding surveys.

I can give some confidence to members of this House that the staff of Department of Primary Industries - Lands are doing everything they can to make sure that they work through these backlogs. I met with the staff recently when I was in Dubbo to talk about this issue. I see a number of these determinations coming through my office. As Minister, I sign them off. Obviously there are some that are approved and some that are not approved. I have confidence in the Department of Primary Industries. I also have confidence in the new Act and the ability of the Government to work with New South Wales Aboriginal land councils to get to an agreement to address the large number of claims that are awaiting investigation. I thank the member for her interest in this area. I hope the information provided was valuable.

CHINESE NEW YEAR TWILIGHT PARADE

The Hon. ERNEST WONG: Before I ask my question I address the delegation from Korea by saying; annyeong-haseyo. My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Would he detail the Chinese community representatives and organisations that Transport for NSW is meeting with on the Chinese New Year twilight parade?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I can indicate that we are meeting with the representatives. I do not have the names of the particular people here. It is an important question and I will undertake to get that information by the next sitting day.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting the Murray-Darling Basin irrigators and communities in regional New South Wales?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Tomorrow is an important milestone in the finalisation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. I will be joined by my Commonwealth, State and Territory colleagues in Sydney to discuss a way forward for the plan. Since becoming Minister, I have met with community and business leaders, environmental managers, irrigators and local councillors, who have all felt the impacts of the removal of productive water from regional economies.

It appears the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is not interested in listening to communities or using local knowledge and experience to inform the implementation process. The authority needs to understand that stakeholder consultation is not about reaching a quota for meetings; it is about working hand in hand with people having a real say on the future of their own communities. Instead, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has been determined to be solely informed by flow rates and volumes derived by desktop models. The reality is that any mistakes generated by a computer in Canberra will be felt by families and businesses in regional basin communities. It is important that decisions relating to our natural resources are informed by best science. However, the science informing the Murray-Darling Basin Plan continues to remain unclear and uncertain.

Earlier this year the CSIRO released the results of a meta-analysis which examined 301 ecological data sets from Murray-Darling Basin wetlands and floodplains over a period from 1905 to 2013. The purpose of the study was to test "prevailing assumptions of recent ecological decline in the Murray-Darling Basin". Most of the data series showed no evidence of decline over this period, yet the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is fixated on achieving specific flow rates and volumes rather than achieving environmental outcomes. The plan is a complex intergovernmental water-sharing agreement that is the first of its kind in the world. It is only logical that we take an adaptive and flexible approach to its implementation and be willing to rethink and adjust our strategies moving forward.

I recently sat in a meeting where controlled environmental flow releases were identified as the most significant cause of damage to native fish breeding. This shows that we do not have it all right. Some 1.5 million megalitres of water has been recovered from the States, and hundreds of thousands more committed to, in the programs that have been commenced across the basin. In order to meet these commitments, the New South Wales and Victorian governments have developed a series of projects aimed at delivering sensible environmental outcomes with less water to offset the need to purchase more water out of communities. Their fate is now dependent on the results of complex black-box modelling that only a handful of people understand.

I will face criticism about these projects being delivered late, but I make no apologies for ensuring that they are practical, informed by science and capable of delivering environmental outcomes without affecting regional communities. The submission of these sustainable diversion limit adjustment projects means that there is no reason for the Commonwealth Government to be in the market buying more water. Beyond these projects I will not support any further non-strategic buybacks in New South Wales until the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder demonstrate how they can effectively use the enormous volume of water already in their control.

Agricultural water users in the basin have become the most efficient in the world, after being constantly told that they have to do more with less while those organisations manage large water portfolios with little accountability. I am yet to meet a New South Wales farmer without a passion for the health of the environment in which they live. I am concerned that if we continue to ignore the triple bottom line on which the plan is meant to be based, we may not have any communities around to enjoy the environments for which they have given so much.

HOMELESSNESS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. When will the

Minister release the details to Parliament of the joint protocol that recently was agreed with Clover Moore to help homeless people during severe weather emergencies? What is the current bed capacity of homeless shelters in the City of Sydney? How many additional homeless shelters will be made available by the end of the year? How many physically or intellectually disabled people currently are sleeping rough on the streets of Sydney?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the Hon. Robert Borsak for his question. Clearly, it is seeking specific information. I will refer it to the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, and I will come back to the Hon. Robert Borsak with a detailed answer.

MULTICULTURAL NSW

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Given the Minister's answer yesterday in relation to staffing at Multicultural NSW, what is the total number of public servants who have been made redundant as part of the organisational restructure?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the Hon. Sophie Cotsis for her question. At least she has asked a question seeking appropriate facts without making assertions. Sadly, yesterday a terrible assertion was made in relation to one of the wonderful employees of Multicultural NSW. I am advised that extensive staff consultation was undertaken to develop new roles to support Harmony in Action. Through the consultation, it became apparent that there were genuine cases to support a managed voluntary redundancy program being implemented as a first step to expedite the transition to the new organisational structure. I am further advised that the voluntary redundancy program was launched on 1 July. A broadcast expression of interest was distributed to all eligible staff, with a closing date of 15 July. I am advised that 28 expressions of interest were received. After consideration of the impact on the agency and application of the decision matrix, 19 offers of voluntary redundancy were issued. I am further advised that of those offers, 13 staff accepted an offer of voluntary redundancy. Their last day of service, in accordance with public sector guidelines, will be 20 August 2015.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer in respect of how many new roles there are?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: The first question related to redundancies. This question is clearly an entirely new question that seeks information about the new roles that are being undertaken. They are two separate questions.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: To the point of order: As the Government Whip should know, the member is allowed to ask for elucidation of a Minister's answer. That is exactly what the Hon. Sophie Cotsis has asked.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is in order to ask for the elucidation of an aspect of the answer that was raised, even if the aspect of the answer was not directly within the scope of the original question. I do not specifically recall whether those words were used, but presuming they were, I rule the question in order.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to repeat what I said: Extensive staff consultation was undertaken to develop—I emphasise "to develop"—new roles to support Harmony in Action. Through this consultation it became apparent that there were genuine cases to support a managed voluntary redundancy program, and that is what has occurred.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister inform the House of new measures that have been introduced to improve safety for pedestrians at intersections?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for his question and for his interest in road safety. Last week I had the pleasure of announcing the commencement of work on a new program to better protect pedestrians from turning vehicles at green-on-green intersections. Pedestrians are some of our most vulnerable road users. That is why the Government is investing \$5 million in the improvement of safety at approximately 560 crossings across the State with the rollout of green-on-green signals. These are intersections where street-crossing pedestrians are given a green light at the same time as turning vehicles are given a green

light. The program will roll out a range of works based on the location, including the installation of new traffic lights infrastructure and changing the timing of lights to give pedestrians their own green light, as well as more time to cross before cars are given their opportunity to commence turning.

This is great news. It means that pedestrians are being given a head start over turning vehicles and are better protected when drivers, who currently are meant to stop for pedestrians, are doing the wrong thing. It is not just pedestrians who will benefit. The improvement work also will provide an additional safeguard for motorists by reducing pedestrian blind spots when turning at lights. Sadly, this work responds directly to two coronial inquests that recommended improvements should be investigated when pedestrians and motorists have a green signal at the same time. I could not agree more. I am sure that each member of this House could not agree more and recognises the problem that existed in the past. The program is a first for Australia. New South Wales is leading the country in the installation of these simple but clever improvements across the whole network. The road safety experts have identified 560 intersections across New South Wales that need to be updated to better protect pedestrians and reduce the risk of a crash.

No time will be wasted in rolling out these safety works. The program is getting underway immediately, and is expected to be completed within three years. Sadly, with 34 pedestrians already having been killed on our roads this year, this safety improvement program is more important than ever. Highest-risk locations are being upgraded first, particularly those in busy built-up areas where pedestrian and vehicle crashes are more likely to happen. We cannot fight the laws of physics in this. In crashes involving a pedestrian and a car, the pedestrian comes off second-best in every situation. That is why the Government needs to move quickly to fix the problem, and will do so.

COBBORA COALMINE

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Treasurer. Given that the Government has tried time and again to sell the Cobbora coalmine at Dunedoo without any success, will the Government commit to sell the 46,000 hectares of prime farmland back to farmers if the latest attempt to sell the mine fails so that they can get on with their lives and rebuild their community?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank Mr Jeremy Buckingham for his question, which I think is a pretty valid question. I will pass the question to the Treasurer for her consideration and her answer.

WESTCONNEX PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question without notice is directed to Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister confirm that the WestConnex Delivery Authority is informing rental tenants directly that their homes are being acquired for the WestConnex project, and not just informing the owners of the property?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: These are people who are renting?

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Yes.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am sorry, please tell me the question again. I want to make sure I understand it.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Is the Minister informing rental tenants that their houses will be acquired and whether there is compensation available for them, as renters?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I do not know and, frankly, I should know. I would have thought we should contact both; certainly the owner of the premises. The short answer to the second part of the question is I do not know, and I will try to find out by the end of question time. It is a fair question.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister outline what the New South Wales Government is doing to engage people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: This question is incredibly important, and it touches on both of my ministerial portfolios as Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Multiculturalism. The National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] is a once-in-lifetime reform which offers people with a disability choice and control over the way they live their lives, achieve their goals, and participate fully in social and economic life. We must get this right. New South Wales is a richly diverse State, and we need to lead the way in the transition to the NDIS across Australia. I have long been concerned that people from culturally diverse backgrounds experience a range of additional and unique barriers to accessing the services that others may take for granted. Therefore I have made it a key priority to work to improve participation levels in the NDIS through a number of initiatives.

Last month, on 29 July, I launched the Cultural Competency Project conference, a New South Wales Government initiative which is the foundation for ensuring that people from culturally diverse backgrounds can fully engage with the NDIS. The project was funded by my department through Northcott Disability Services. It builds the capacity of organisations to respond to clients from diverse backgrounds in a market-based environment for disability services. Although one may expect that a person-centred approach would encompass culture, religion and language, experience shows that that is not automatically the case. I know that most disability organisations will welcome guidance and support in achieving this aim.

Service providers need to be culturally competent, not only because it is the right thing to do but because there is a strong business case for engaging appropriately with all potential clients. Astute businesses also understand that they are already sitting on a rich resource—the diversity of their own staff. The Cultural Diversity Competency Framework, launched at the conference, will support disability service organisations to improve service provision to culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities by providing principles for reviewing and improving service provision to CALD communities. The conference also showcased an impressive range of resources which will translate the Cultural Diversity Competency Framework into action. These tools will guide planning for organisational change, workforce development, building leadership, and engaging and partnering with CALD carers and community.

A couple of other initiatives should also be mentioned. Through New South Wales Government funding, the Ethnic Communities Services Co-operative is reaching out to specific new and emerging culturally diverse communities and organisations, building readiness for the NDIS. We have also funded National Disability Services to improve the cultural competency of non-government organisations, through the People, Culture and Communication project. Other major programs include My Choice Matters, Ability Links and Aboriginal Ability Links, which target information and support to people from diverse backgrounds. These initiatives will support engagement of people from diverse backgrounds in the NDIS, and that will be a win for all communities.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Minister for the Environment. In a recent comment about the Royal Botanic Gardens Minister Speakman said:

Australia's oldest scientific institution is set for a bright future.

Will the Minister explain how this bright future will be achieved, given that there will be staff cuts, including botanists, curators, plant conservationists, evolutionary ecologists and horticulturalists, and why these cuts are being made?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I will refer the question to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Mark Speakman, and I will come back with an answer.

NEWCASTLE REDEVELOPMENT

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Given that the Supreme Court found that the Baird Government failed to seek parliamentary approval before removing the Newcastle railway line, why is UrbanGrowth now conducting a survey to build properties on that railway land?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: My understanding is that the court case is not resolved. The situation is that UrbanGrowth can be in that area. As for the detail, I will contact the Minister for Planning and get a proper response.

COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of the commercial fisheries reform program?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As I have said before in this Chamber, we need a vibrant, sustainable and viable commercial fishing sector in New South Wales. For too long this issue has been kicked down the road. As a result, we are now at a point where doing nothing is not an option. We must make changes to provide greater certainty and security to the commercial fishing industry. In turn, this will help secure the supply of sustainable and top-quality, locally caught seafood to families across the State while maintaining the future viability of our precious marine environment.

Over the past month the independent Structural Adjustment Review Committee [SARC] has been consulting with the fishing industry on draft recommendations it has released. The draft recommendations, tailored individually for 104 fisheries share classes, were posted on the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] website on 14 July, with every fisher in New South Wales receiving a package relating to their business. These recommendations outline proposed new linkage arrangements for share-managed fisheries—a crucial element of the commercial fisheries reform.

Since then the SARC has conducted workshops with groups of fishers involved in different share classes and met with representatives of commercial fishers. The SARC will now thoroughly consider all the feedback provided during this latest period of consultation prior to making final recommendations to the Government. All fishers were also encouraged to have individual telephone discussions with DPI fisheries managers. In addition to SARC working group meetings, approximately 115 fishers have participated in these individual discussions since 14 July. I must stress again that no decisions have been made in relation to the final structure of the reform.

I too have been meeting with fishers from along the New South Wales coastline. I have held meetings with the Wildcaught Fishers Coalition, including most recently this morning, as well as meeting with individual fishers and the Hastings and Macleay river district fishermen's cooperatives. Shortly I will be meeting again with the Professional Fishermen's Association. I have also been having ongoing discussions with my colleagues, who have represented the views of their individual fishing communities strongly in this discussion. I thank every fisher who has participated in the most recent period of public consultation; their feedback is crucial.

This has been a genuine period of public consultation; we are not just ticking the box. Every suggestion and piece of feedback that has been provided, either to me personally, to the SARC or to the department, will be carefully and thoroughly considered. Unfortunately there is plenty of misinformation flying about on this issue, including from Clayton Barr, the member for the landlocked seat of Cessnock. His recent private member's statement in the other place was littered with misleading statements and demonstrates the risk of attempting a five-minute hit and run critique of a complex reform—

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The Minister is reflecting on a member of the other place. If he wishes to do so he must do it by way of a substantive motion.

The PRESIDENT: Order! While the Minister was sailing close to the wind, he had not quite crossed the line. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: —with different implications for different fisheries share classes. One of the statements was that fishers will only be allowed to fish for 90 instead of 365 days per year. It was also claimed that the changes are aimed at helping big operators and squeezing out smaller members. This demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of what is actually occurring. This complex reform is aimed at giving meaning to the share management of New South Wales fisheries first introduced in 1994 by the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals, but mismanaged by the subsequent Labor governments. The major challenge of this reform will be to redress the misallocation by previous governments and provide a modern, effective mechanism for fisheries management. It has taken a long road to get to this point and there are no easy solutions. Unhelpful and misleading comments will not add to the process. The Government is resolved to getting this process right.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Premier. Has the Government developed a response to the proposals relating to vocational education and training in the reform of the Federation white paper? If so, will the Government categorically reject any attempt to hand over the entire funding of vocational education and training to the Commonwealth? If not, when will the Government form a response and when will that response be made public.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for his question, which is directed to the Premier. I will pass on the question for the Premier's response.

SYDNEY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PARKING

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. In light of the City of Sydney declaring that there will be a reduction of on-street parking in the central business district [CBD] due to the construction of the light rail, how will the Government ensure that local residents and businesses will not be adversely impacted by this reduction?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for her question. I was hoping someone from my side of the Chamber would ask this question, so the member is an absolute gem for asking about this really important issue. The best thing we can do is to get the Opposition, the Government and the crossbench to try to convince Lord Mayor Clover Moore and the City of Sydney to change their wicked ways. The lord mayor cites the problem of cars parking on streets outside unit blocks in the city. It is a problem I encounter when I am living in Sydney for Parliament and other ministerial duties, as do others who live in inner-city areas.

Quite a few residents of unit blocks park on the streets where there are limited parking places. The key to the problem is that the City of Sydney, under the stewardship of Lord Mayor Clover Moore, has restricted the number of parking spots for unit blocks. Developers of unit blocks wanted to build more car-parking spaces—the Hon. Shayne Mallard, a former councillor on the City of Sydney council, is nodding his head in agreement because he knows this is true. The City of Sydney has caused this problem, supported by Labor members of council, by not letting developers put enough parking spaces in place. For example, opposite my terrace in Redfern is an old chocolate factory that was developed as a block of units.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: I know; I live on that street.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is a great old place although we miss the smell of the chocolate, which has been replaced with the sound of a noisy roller door. Within the block there is a number of one-bedroom units but Lord Mayor Clover Moore said there would be no parking for these units and residents would not have cars so they would ride bikes, use GoGet cars or whatever. But the reality is that for each and every one of those one-bedroom units there are two incomes and two cars parked on the street. That is the problem Clover Moore's attempt to impose her own nirvana has caused for the city. The lord mayor is correct when she says there is a problem, but she caused it. The problem is being perpetrated by Clover Moore and her cronies in the Labor Party. They have caused the problem and they must fix it.

FIXING COUNTRY ROADS PROGRAM

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Can the Minister please update the House on the progress of the New South Wales Government's Fixing Country Roads program?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for her question. Last week I announced that the second round of Fixing Country Roads funding would kick off this September. We are injecting historic amounts of funds into upgrading local roads across this State. Fixing Country Roads is one of our signature programs. The New South Wales Government invested a total of \$42.85 million into round one, making it a great success, with 77 projects now being delivered across the State. What started in 2012 as a series of small pilot projects in Boorowa, Forbes and Narromine now has grown to be a \$100 million statewide program.

The even better news is there is now more to come. With more than 40 per cent of round one projects underway, last week's announcement was timely. This is great news for councils, local businesses, freight operators, truckies and residents that all benefit from upgraded and improved council-owned roads—that is

where we are putting this money. This program is about improving freight movements on our local roads so that operators are more efficient and are meeting delivery and pick-up times, thereby reducing costs for local businesses and residents and making businesses in regional New South Wales viable. When freight costs are cut, it means everyone, from the local grocer to the parents doing their weekly shopping, is benefiting from reduced costs.

This program is also about bringing councils and industry together to tell us what sticking points on local roads they want fixed. We understand we need to help ease financial pressure on councils, and that is why we have developed this program which partners council with industry and government to deliver essential upgrades such as road-sealing works, bridge replacements and road realignments. The Byrnes Road realignment outside Junee is a fantastic example of this. Work was completed earlier this year on shifting a section of road to allow heavy vehicles direct access into and out of the intermodal terminal, thereby significantly reducing travel times and costs and, more importantly, focusing on safety for the community and the local school bus. We are making it easier than ever for councils to apply for and get funding for upgrades that make a difference on local roads. Our guys are out on the ground helping councils prepare applications so no-one misses out.

This program is one where you can say everyone is a winner. Country Liberal Party and Nationals members know this program is well regarded. It is one of the best initiatives because instead of saying there is a problem with council roads and that is councils' problem, this Government has said there is a problem with council roads and we need to work with them to address it. We are determined to address problems by putting in more money. I will be trying to increase the amount spent on council roads in the future.

MILLERS POINT PUBLIC HOUSING

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, and Minister for Social Housing. Is the Minister aware that approximately 100 residents remaining at Millers Point are elderly and dependent on their current community for physical and emotional support, and that they will have difficulty getting that support if they are forced to move to a new outer area? Will the Minister accept my proposal to allow these residents to remain in their homes or to relocate to the excellent Sirius building, which is purpose-built public housing dating from 1979 and home to 79 apartments? Millers Point has been a safe and stable home for many tenants who are aged and frail and who have complex needs. Forced evictions of these tenants are cruel at the best of times. Will the Government give residents of Millers Point a better deal, particularly by using the Sirius building?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for this important question. It is clear that the action this Government is taking in relation to social housing has resulted in a positive outcome for all concerned. It is clear that the social housing portfolio left by members opposite after their 16 years in government was a complete disaster. The waiting list we inherited was outrageous. What made it worse was the fact that the Labor Government tinkered with the waiting list to mislead people about the data. The first thing this Government did on coming to office was to set the record straight. Having done that, it has since been open and transparent about social housing. It has involved the community and made it clear that the situation must be resolved for the benefit of the entire community. Members opposite sat on their hands and more and more families suffered as a result.

The proceeds of the sale of the 293 properties at Millers Point will help to finance a more sustainable public housing system. As of July, 23 properties have been sold, generating more than \$50 million. Once all the properties are sold, an estimated \$500 million will have been raised to provide approximately 1,500 new homes for the homeless and people on the social housing waiting list. That is three for one: three families will have homes instead of one. I am talking about new homes, not the old homes that were in a poor state of repair when the Coalition Government came to office. The Government will continue work in this area.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: If members have any further questions, I suggest they place them on notice.

WESTCONNEX

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.32 p.m.]: Earlier in question time the Hon. Penny Sharpe asked me a question about WestConnex and I now have a response. I am informed that when officers from the WestConnex Delivery Authority [WDA] initially doorknocked properties to provide advice about the preferred design and the need to

acquire their property on Thursday 4 June, a letter was provided to those who identified themselves as being tenants. It encouraged them to contact the Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], which is managing the acquisition process on behalf of the WDA, to discuss their individual circumstances.

Any inquiries about the project made through the project information line have been transferred to the RMS. Email inquiries from tenants have also been forwarded for the RMS to contact the tenant directly. As soon as the RMS becomes aware that a property is rented, the tenants receive a letter inviting them to discuss their interest in the property and the compensation available under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act. The honourable member's question indicated that some people did not have that information. That is concerning and I encourage her and others involved to invite people who do not have information to contact the RMS so that we can find out why and, more importantly, ensure that they get it.

CHINESE NEW YEAR TWILIGHT PARADE

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.34 p.m.]: The Hon. Walt Secord and the Hon. Ernest Wong asked questions about the Chinese New Year Twilight Parade. I have not previously read the information provided to me, but I will bravely read it anyway. However, given that, I might stop half way through it.

I am advised that earlier this year the Government established the CBD Coordination Office, which is under the stewardship of Coordinator General Marg Prendergast from the Centre for Road Safety—whom many members know. Ms Prendergast will help to manage the central business district [CBD] during the construction of the light rail, which will ensure that more focus can be given to major events like the Chinese New Year parade. The City of Sydney is the lead facilitator in discussions with parade organisers. The CBD Coordinator General's office works with Transport for NSW and the City of Sydney to develop solutions for events. As I said yesterday, Transport for NSW has come up with a viable new route that will allow the Chinese New Year event to proceed. The proposed route is two blocks shorter than the previous route, but we are willing to meet with organisers to discuss possible extensions if there is an issue. I have only the information provided by the Hon. Walt Secord to rely upon, and his past performance indicates that sometimes he is not as reliable as he could be. However, this may be one of the occasions on which his information is reliable.

I am advised that the proposed route is wide enough for floats and spectators, even given that Sussex Street is not as wide as George Street. The staff of the CBD Coordination Office are happy to work with the organisers and anyone else with goodwill involved in getting the best outcome for everyone. We know that the light rail project will have an impact, and we have not shied away from that. However, we are working with the community to do whatever we can to minimise that impact. If honourable members are in contact with people who have genuine concerns, they should encourage them to contact us and we will do our damndest to address them.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS COALMINE PROPOSAL

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) [3.37 p.m.]: I wish to provide further information to an answer that I gave yesterday to a question without notice regarding a mining exploration title in the Southern Highlands. As I indicated in my response to the question from Mr Jeremy Buckingham, my principal place of residence is in the Southern Highlands and is within exploration title Authorisation 349, currently held by Hume Coal. I am advised that the exploration title was first granted to Austen and Butta Limited in 1989. In 2000, the title was transferred to Shell Coal (Sutton Forest), which changed its name to Anglo Coal (Sutton Forest) later that year. I am further advised that in 2010 Anglo Coal sold its interest in the company to Hume Coal, resulting in a name change to Hume Coal in February 2011.

I purchased my property in 2006, long before I considered entering the New South Wales Parliament. I understand that while the proponent has had discussions with the Department of Planning and Environment, it is yet to lodge an environmental impact statement. I have and will continue to declare the potential for a conflict of interest, perceived or otherwise, during any Cabinet or committee discussions on this matter and to the Department of Premier and Cabinet as a disclosure under the Code of Conduct for Ministers of the Crown.

I had previously sought advice from the Secretary of the Department of Industry and the Director General of the Department of Primary Industries, and they are assisting me. The Secretary has put in place processes and procedures to ensure any potential conflicts relating to my ministerial functions are avoided while also ensuring that all proper assessment processes and protections are provided. As I indicated yesterday, and

with this additional information provided today, it would be inappropriate for me to comment further in relation to this issue. Any further questions related to this issue should be addressed to Minister Ajaka, representing the Minister for Planning.

Questions without notice concluded.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted to permit a motion to adjourn the House if desired.

The House continued to sit.

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

Government Response to Report

The Hon. Niall Blair tabled the Government's response to report No. 40, entitled "Performance of the NSW Environment Protection Authority", dated 13 February 2015.

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Niall Blair.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.40 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms JAN BARHAM [3.40 p.m.]: There is no clearer demonstration of the problems with politics in this country than the inadequate response and intentionally muddled debate about climate change. The announcement this week of the weak targets Australia intends to take to international negotiations in Paris is evidence of the continued failure to address the most serious threat to our future wellbeing. A quarter of a century ago, politicians and governments heard the clear scientific message that the emission of greenhouse gases from human activity was warming the globe and posed a serious threat to the people and ecosystems of the world, and leaders recognised we had the capacity to act. The responsibility and willingness to address the impact of human activity on climate and environment was made clear by Margaret Thatcher to the United Nations in 1989. She said:

... the evidence is there. The damage is being done. What do we, the International Community, do about it?

... the environmental challenge which confronts the whole world demands an equivalent response from the whole world. Every country will be affected and no one can opt out.

... those countries who are industrialised must contribute more to help those who are not.

In the same year, Australian governments of all persuasions were ready to act. A Senate inquiry warned:

There is a risk that if the response to this problem is delayed until the evidence of significant climatic change becomes irrefutable, it may be too late to avoid some of the more extreme changes that could occur ... Early action is essential to stop or slow some of the more extreme effects ...

We were ready to deliver that early action. Prime Minister Bob Hawke's 1989 statement on the environment said:

There is much that can be done immediately to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels.

There is considerable scope for immediate action to enhance energy efficiency and energy conservation.

In New South Wales, Liberal Premier Nick Greiner worked to develop a climate strategy based on alternative and renewable energy, government leadership on energy efficiency, and restrictions on clearing native vegetation. As the 1990s began, Australia and New South Wales supported the Toronto targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent from 1988 levels by the year 2005. What happened next is documented

in the work recently completed by Maria Taylor for her PhD at the Australian National University [ANU] and now published in a book titled *Global warming and climate change: What Australia knew and buried*. Taylor's analysis shows how scientific consensus and ethical commitment to act on climate change were actively undermined by those with vested interests in stopping changes to our energy use and industry, supported by politicians who worked to serve their needs instead of the public good.

For two decades, the Australian public has been misled to believe that we must maintain the status quo of an economy that relies on fossil fuels for energy and exports and that we cannot take action because it would threaten our economy, when the reality is that our development can and must be sustainable for the health and wellbeing of future generations. The end result is that we have only seen occasional bursts of action on climate change, which have been undone as governments have changed or priorities have shifted. Instead of meeting the Toronto target, our 2005 emissions were essentially the same as in 1988. An entire generation's worth of action has been lost. Tony Abbott's targets see us continue to lag behind the rest of the world and the trajectory supported by our earlier leaders.

The most fundamental thing we must do is look to the wellbeing of future generations. We cannot achieve this by talking ourselves and the public into a belief that action is too hard and too costly, especially when the stakes are as high as the future health of our planet. We can do it by ensuring that our society is empowered and resilient, so that every generation can take advantage of the opportunities that come with change. We must develop the new, sustainable industries and technologies that provide jobs and ensure quality of life and adapt to the challenges and impacts that will inevitably come. Governments at all levels have a duty of care to act on climate change. If we have faith in the capacity of our resilient and resourceful people and if we set our commitments in legislation, we can all deliver on that duty.

FIREARMS OWNERSHIP

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK [3.45 p.m.]: I speak on the issue of gun culture in Australia and the vilification of law-abiding firearms owners. I am deeply concerned by the Prime Minister's recent decision to suspend the importation of the Adler A110 shotgun without any consultation or common-sense reasoning. This decision has further amplified the vilification of law-abiding firearms owners throughout Australia. I suspect that, like his predecessor John Howard, the Prime Minister also has a deep-seated distaste for firearms and is incapable of delivering a relevant and effective gun violence policy. If I am wrong on this point then I stand to be corrected.

Alarming, this decision has damaged any meaningful and sensible discussion surrounding legitimate firearms ownership and cultural perspectives on guns in Australia. The greatest injustice throughout this whole sorry saga is that, once again, policy has been driven by fear and scare tactics, and by politicians and bureaucrats hidden behind closed doors, whilst law-abiding citizens are left to bear the full brunt of ill-conceived and discriminatory decisions. Admittedly, firearms owners have never had the benefit of good publicity. Terror and fearmongering about guns and gun ownership have become a commodity held by some parliamentarians in Australia and the ill-informed and ignorant people who belong to organisations like Gun Control Australia. These same people unashamedly troll out their false rhetoric to any media outlet that will take the bait or to any uninformed individual who can guarantee them the highest return in publicity.

Truth and reason possess little value in this exercise, which is aimed solely at undermining Australia's law-abiding firearms community, as these groups aspire to achieve their utopia of a world without firearms and with progressive restrictions on freedoms and common law rights. It reflects one of the worst elements of our national life, that is, an unholy alliance between the loony left, representing a significant portion of gun control groups, and the hysteria of Australia's right-wing leading parliamentarians, who have repeatedly shown a particular dislike of the possession of guns by law-abiding citizens. The common thread between these two divergent political positions is the control of society by elites and the removal of freedom.

Law-abiding legitimate gun owners throughout this country have been subject to this tyranny for decades. If this sort of harassment were to happen at your workplace, the perpetrator would at the very least lose their job and at the very most be subject to the judgement of the workplace ombudsman. How are the freedoms and privileges to which every citizen in Australia is entitled being upheld for the more than 850,000 licensed firearms owners, when they are being vilified at every given opportunity?

I continue to be amazed by the superhuman capabilities of the combined gun control psyche, the media and government included. It appears that some people have the amazing ability to see into the future and

guarantee that mass shootings will take place if we allow lever-action firearms to continue to be sold in Australia. Such wisdom should not go to waste. Tying this ban to recent incidents of terrorism and violence involving firearms, such as the Lindt cafe siege, shows how misguided their effort is. The Lindt cafe siege was committed by a terrorist who was not a licensed firearms owner, using an illegal sawn-off shotgun that was not gathered up in the confiscation that took place during Howard's time. Trying to link such atrocities serves no purpose other than to victimise and undermine legitimate firearms owners in this nation. Criminals and legitimate gun owners are mutually exclusive.

As members will be aware, licensed firearms holders are subject to rigorous and extensive criminal checks and other checks associated with licensing provisions. In order to hold a firearms licence, the Government must first acknowledge that the owner is a fit and proper person. How many sporting professionals or enthusiasts are subject to such stringent testing of their character? In fact, even the police are not subject to the same stringent requirements. A firearms licence is not a prerequisite for a police officer to carry a firearm. I wonder how many would retain their employment if such a licensing qualification was enforced on them.

In fact, licensed firearms owners are among the few classes of people that are acknowledged and endorsed by government as fit and proper persons. Criminals are not allowed to obtain firearms licences period. Ownership and use of a firearm is a highly held privilege. With that privilege we have the right not to be associated with or disadvantaged by the action of senseless cowards. Independent and statistical research indicates that the regulation, including banning, of firearms, has little to no causal effect on the rate of crime. Some of the most recent research available in this area supports this proposition. The Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research published a working paper on *The Australian Firearms Buyback and Its Effect on Gun Deaths*, which ultimately concluded that the national firearms agreement did not have large or long-term effects on reducing firearms homicide or suicide rates in Australia.

SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR

The Hon. ERNEST WONG [3.50 p.m.]: This year marks the seventieth anniversary of the defeat of German fascism and Japanese militarism. It is important to look back on this event and learn about the bitter experience that mankind faced between 1939 and 1945 during the Second World War. This war involved nearly 60 countries and resulted in the staggering loss of some 70 million lives. It is time to remember those who selflessly gave their lives to defeat the cruellest form of greed.

World War II started much earlier than 1937 for China. In September 1931, Japan had already massively invaded China. Three provinces in north-eastern China—referred to as Manchuria in English—were occupied as Japanese colonies. In the 1930s the Japanese were determined to extend their empire. They ruled in Korea but they also controlled the Manchurian railway. In September 1931 the Japanese claimed that Chinese soldiers had sabotaged the railway and they attacked the Chinese Army. The Chinese Army did not fight back because it knew that the Japanese were looking for an excuse to invade Manchuria. The Japanese Army invaded anyway, even though the civilian government of Japan told it to withdraw. By February 1932 the Japanese had conquered the whole of Manchuria and set up a Japanese-controlled state called Manchukuo.

Thousands of Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed by the modern but ruthless Japanese Army. A Special Assembly of the League of Nations was held 17 months after the Japanese invasion in February 1933. Forty nations voted that Japan was to blame for the war and that it should withdraw. Instead of pulling out of Manchuria, Japan walked out of the league. In 1933, Japan invaded Jehol, the Chinese province next to Manchuria, and the league could do nothing. Before the Western countries were brought into the war in Europe, they were able to look after their interests in China. To this point, the Japanese held its invasion to some extent. When Hitler's troops invaded Poland, the Japanese government believed that it was time for more aggressive actions in China, without thought or concern for Western countries.

Finally, in 1937, Japanese troops crossed the Great Wall and invaded the rest of China. The Japanese started withdrawing troops from China only to fight the United States in the Pacific. Prior to attacking the United States at Pearl Harbor, Japan had raped, plundered and pillaged China. As the war progressed, China joined the Allied powers but was occupied by Japanese forces close to the border. Officials have cited that Chinese military and civilian casualties numbered 35 million, making up one-third of the global population. Many academics and historians have since called for greater recognition of China's contribution and sacrifices throughout this dark period, with a view to bringing about awareness and balance in the pursuit of historical accuracy. Otherwise, decades from now, China could still be suffering the same frustration that the world has a low regard for its contribution.

We owe it not only to our fallen brothers and sisters but also to our future generations. Bitter memories of Japan's past militarism run deep in China and South Korea. In the first step towards healing and acceptance, I want Prime Minister Abe, as a genuine act of acknowledgement and regret, to follow the landmark 1995 heartfelt apology given by then Premier Tomiichi Murayama for the suffering caused by Japan's colonial rule and aggression and thus offer an official apology to the countries Japan sabotaged. I believe this is necessary in order to legitimately embark on the right path to acceptance and peace. There will be many commemorative services being held all over the world, including on our home soil, as we pause to reflect on the senseless loss of life and acknowledge one of the darkest atrocities that is recorded in the history of humankind.

Many of these commemorations will be hosted by our Chinese-Australian community as they pay their respects to the hundreds of thousands of fallen soldiers and civilians who sacrificed their lives in the name of peace. I will attend the majority of these commemorations in the hope that our collective efforts might bring about hope and understanding and provide a balanced view to our younger generations, including those in Japan, of the injustice and inhumane reality of war. We should all look to education as a means of eradicating the hatred and fear that forms the crux of these atrocities and work together to advocate for peace and harmony.

EATING DISORDERS

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Parliamentary Secretary) [3.55 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to update the House on some of the fantastic initiatives and developments in Health that have occurred during the winter break. As Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, I had the pleasure of officially launching a dedicated day program in Newcastle which treats adults with eating disorders and delivers local treatment options in addition to existing outpatient services. A report commissioned by the Butterfly Foundation for Eating Disorders on the prevalence and cost of eating disorders calculates that up to 8,000 people could be living in the Hunter region with some form of eating disorder. The 20-to-24-year-old age group has the biggest incidence of sufferers, which is an estimated 3,900 people. It is even more staggering to learn that the report estimates that 1,000 people aged between 10 and 14 years could be living with a complicated and physically life-threatening mental illness.

The specialist eating disorders day program provides psychological, motivational and dietitian therapy, as well as lifestyle and occupational support. The 12-week program is providing treatment at Fletcher House in Newcastle for up to eight adults at a time. Patients are benefitting from individual case management and are provided with three to four meals a day, which is aimed at normalising their eating habits. The day program is also liaising with general practitioners and providing support for family members and carers. It is a step forward for patients, families and clinicians. The program is also available to adults from across the local health district and has the potential to take referrals from across New South Wales.

Whilst launching the program, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Martin Cohen, Director of Hunter New England Mental Health Services. We discussed how this approach to working with people with eating disorders is an important addition to public mental health services and that the impact of eating disorders on the sufferer and on their support networks can never be overestimated. This program forms part of this Government's service plan for people with eating disorders, which was launched in September 2013, and includes \$15.2 million allocated to fund enhancements to community-based care and inpatient care across New South Wales until 2018. It complements the strong group of clinicians working in outpatient services across the Hunter New England, which is primarily the Centre for Psychotherapy, also based in Newcastle. Many people, including employees, clients and families have played an important part in establishing this service and it is a credit to all involved.

I offer a special thank you to the staff at the centre, who were very welcoming on the day that I visited. They are dedicated and passionate about what they do and they deserve to be acknowledged. I also thank Dr Cohen, Karen Kelly, Professor Anne Duggan, Dr Paul Craven, and Jane Gray from Hunter New England Health, whom I met with on the day to discuss some broader health issues affecting people living in the Hunter New England district. The Government is committing \$30 million to the large-scale redevelopment of Inverell Hospital. The member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, and I had the pleasure of meeting with staff of the hospital and the community to inform them of the time line for this upgrade. With such a significant investment being made by the Government it is essential that the extensive redevelopment meets the health needs of the Inverell community for decades to come.

During 2015, Hunter New England Health will develop a clinical services plan in order to prioritise services required in the upgrade. During the planning process they will consult with staff, other health services,

the shire council and key community groups to confirm health service priorities and the range of services required by the community, both now and into the future. Though some of the service needs of the hospital have already been identified—such as a new and larger renal dialysis unit, enhancement of operating theatres, and maternity and paediatric services—there is still an opportunity to expand this scope through the consultation process. My husband was born at Inverell Hospital and we still have family in Inverell so I know first-hand how much the community has been crying out for this upgrade. This plan is the first step in making that a reality.

Whilst in the Northern Tablelands electorate, the local member and I also visited Moree District Hospital, where we similarly announced that Hunter New England Health would commence the development of a clinical services plan for their hospital. As we discussed on the day, it is important that the hospital staff and those on the ground have their say about what services are needed in the community. I would like to thank the staff for their time and congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on his continuing campaign to ensure that health services in the Northern Tablelands are always at the forefront of the Government's agenda.

I was privileged this week to meet with Angus and Jane Diffey, Jenny Tracy and Kate Shanks of Clare's Angels. Clare's Angels came about after four-year-old Clare Diffey was diagnosed with a rare neurological regressive disorder called Rett Syndrome. In 2012 a group of friends, realising the substantial costs of ongoing therapy, formed Clare's Angels to raise money for not-for-profit organisations benefitting children with special needs and disabilities. Meeting with this incredible group of people was truly inspiring and it was a real honour to have the opportunity to get to know them a bit better this week.

SAME SEX MARRIAGE

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [4.00 p.m.]: The decision by the Federal Coalition two days ago, by a two-thirds majority, to have a party vote and not a conscience vote on same sex marriage—thus honouring its 2013 election pledge to oppose same sex marriage—is a victory for political integrity and honesty. The electorate have become cynical of politicians breaking election promises. No better example is there than Labor's 2010 election commitment not to introduce a carbon tax if elected and then, having been elected, introducing one. Had the Coalition, having won the 2013 election on a policy of opposition to same sex marriage, reversed its stand once in government it would have been labelled guilty of a gross betrayal of the electorate.

By making the decision it did two days ago it has chosen to honour its election commitment and retain credibility. Labor's Deputy Leader Tanya Plibersek and Senate Opposition Leader Penny Wong reek of hypocrisy. For years they purported to hold the high moral ground by supporting a conscience vote for Labor members and taunting the Coalition to allow the same. Now, without blinking an eye, they have reversed themselves and prodded Mr Shorten and Labor into ditching a conscience vote and binding its members to vote for same sex marriage from 2019. They reasoned that by doing this whilst also goading the Coalition to switch to a conscience vote they would cobble the numbers together to legalise same sex marriage. However, two days ago the Coalition derailed Labor's strategy.

Much of the same sex marriage lobby's marketing stresses the inevitability of same sex marriage as evidenced by recent gains overseas. However, it is not inevitable at all. The same sex marriage lobby trumpets the adoption of same sex marriage in parts of Western Europe but glosses over the far greater part of Europe, where it is firmly rejected. All countries of Asia, the Middle East and Africa have rejected it, apart from South Africa. When President Obama, on his recent visit to Kenya, sought to cajole his hosts to allow same sex marriage he was told that they were not having a bar of it, and to butt out.

A referendum supporting same sex marriage in Ireland has been touted in the media as a pivotal turning point, yet a Croatian referendum to legislate a constitutional ban on same sex marriage, which was carried by two to one, hardly rated a mention. Likewise, a recent vote of the Austrian Parliament, of 110 to 26, rejecting same sex marriage, was given the media cold shoulder. The Slovak Parliament voted last year, by a margin of 102 to 18, to ban same sex marriage. That, too, was ignored by the media. Also ignored was the Slovak referendum in February this year which, whilst not reaching the 50 per cent participation level for constitutional validity, rejected same sex marriage by a margin of 95 per cent to 5 per cent. Yet again, there was little media coverage.

I now want to turn to the position in the United States, where recently the Supreme Court, by a narrow five to four decision—based on judicial fiction, contortion and appropriating for itself law-making powers belonging to the legislative arm of government—mandated acceptance of same sex marriage on the American

people, from one end of the country to the other. By blatant politicisation and invention it was able to unearth that since the beginning of recorded history—during which time every culture, civilisation, religious faith, tradition and nation independently came to the conclusion that the institution of marriage was between a man and a woman—there had been a gigantic denial and abuse of human rights.

The Supreme Court, in a five to four decision, had uncovered a new fundamental human right overlooked by all of mankind since the beginning of recorded history—the right to have same sex marriage. Prior to the Supreme Court decision, a Fairfax journalist triumphantly wrote that a majority of America's 50 States supported same sex marriage. Nothing could have been further from the truth. At the time, 35 of America's States—including the biggest of all, trendy, left-liberal California—had voted by referendum to ban same sex marriage. But every one of those referendum results was struck down by judicial intervention—an outrageous negation of democracy. Here in Australia, however, it will be a different story. The future of traditional marriage will not be dictated by judges who think they are legislators but by the Australian people through the exercise of their democratic vote.

WHEELCHAIRS FOR KIDS—CHINA

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE [4.05 p.m.]: It is with pleasure that I report to this House that in the past eight months I have held a couple of very successful Wheelchairs for Kids fundraising events. One, with the Australian Chinese community, was attended by many distinguished guests including the Deputy Consul General of China, Xuejun Tong, and representatives from the Australian Shanghainese Association, the Australian Shanghainese Fellow Association, the Australian Yong Zhou Association, the Australian Jiangsu Community Society Association, and the Australian Culture and Commerce Association. Through these organisations and their leadership we were successful in raising the necessary funds to support the work of the Wheelchairs for Kids foundation at one event. At another charitable event we had the former New South Wales Governor, Professor Marie Bashir, as guest of honour.

A good amount of money was raised for the Wheelchairs for Kids foundation—an organisation I have been proud to support. It is a humanitarian foundation run by volunteers who manufacture puncture-proof, rough-terrain children's wheelchairs. This institution has manufactured more than 31,500 wheelchairs over the past 15 years, and donated them to over 71 countries. So far, I have had the pleasure of being involved with the delivery of around 18 containers of wheelchairs to many countries. Two of those have been delivered to needy children in Shanghai, China, with the third on its way.

I report to the House that during this year's July break I, along with my wife, Mika Moselmane, and my son, Joseph, and the volunteer manager of Wheelchairs for Kids foundation, Mr Gerry Georgatos and his wife, and volunteer communications manager of Wheelchairs for Kids, Mrs Jennifer Kaeshagen, travelled to Shanghai, China to deliver the wheelchairs. One container was presented to the Shanghai Charity Foundation, another to Songjiang Charity Foundation and the third to Children's Home Shanghai. In delivering the wheelchairs we had the honour of meeting many kind-hearted charitable people working for the welfare of orphaned or disabled children. We had the privilege of visiting Shanghai City Children's Home, an orphanage with many disabled children in need of wheelchairs. We also visited the Shanghai Fangtai Medical Instrument Factory. The executive of the company had kindly offered to assemble the wheelchairs and help deliver them to needy children.

Apart from delivering the wheelchairs our main objective is to start the process of encouraging local Chinese wheelchair manufacturers to produce wheelchairs for charitable purposes in China. As time does not permit me to outline the outcomes of the various meetings, engagements, functions and visits, I would simply like to put on the record my gratitude to the Wheelchairs for Kids foundation and the many people who facilitated our visit and delivery of the wheelchairs to Shanghai. I wish to thank the following people who went beyond the call to help us deliver the wheelchairs to those disabled children in need, starting with His Excellency Li Huaxin, Consul General of China, and his deputy. I also thank a number of consular staff and the many friends in the Australian Chinese community, including Councillor Jeanette Wang, John Zhang, Robin Hu, Dennis Yan, Mr Lianshui Ye, Jeffery Sun, Jason Lin and Jolin Yu for their wonderful support.

I also thank Mrs Jie Ju, Chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Songjiang, and chair of the Charity Foundation of Songjiang; Mrs Yunzhu Yang, Deputy Chair of the People's Congress, Songjiang and Director-General of the Songjiang Disabled Person's Foundation; Mr Yong Zhao, Deputy Mayor of Songjiang District; Mr Jian Liu, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Songjiang; Mrs Chunchu Zhu, Director of Foreign Affairs Office, Songjiang; Mrs Jingmin Qiu, Deputy Chair of

Charity Foundation of Songjiang; Mr Yulong Jin, Vice Chairman of Charity Foundation, Songjiang; Qiang Jin, member of CPPCC, Songjiang; Mr Qunce Li, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Songjiang; Mrs Ping Fang, Chief Executive Officer of Shanghai Fangtai Medical Instrument Company; Mrs Xuanxuan Cai, Deputy Director, Shanghai Children's Home; Mrs Lilian Li, Director of Donation Department, Shanghai Charity Foundation; Mrs Mingzhu Jin, Vice Chair, Shanghai Charity Foundation; Mrs Zongqiang Yao, Vice Chair, Shanghai Charity Foundation; Mr Shen Qi, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Charity Foundation; Mrs Jianping Zhang, Director Jiang Su Foundation for Disabled Persons; and Mrs Dongmei Guo, Deputy Director, Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs, Jiangsu.

I am grateful to them all. I hope this is the start of greater cooperation between the Wheelchairs for Kids foundation and charitable institutions in China. I look forward to seeing Wheelchairs for Kids wheelchairs manufactured in China and delivered to needy disabled children in China free of charge.

[Business interrupted.]

WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE BILL 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments.

[Business resumed.]

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.11 p.m. until Tuesday 25 August 2015 at 2.30 p.m.
