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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday 27 August 2013

The President (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

The President read the Prayers.

The PRESIDENT: I acknowledge the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation and its elders and thank them for their custodianship of this land.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following bills was reported:

Law Enforcement and National Security (Assumed Identities) Amendment Bill 2013
Police Legislation Amendment (Special Constables) Bill 2013
Road Transport Amendment (Licence Disqualification on Conviction) Bill 2013
Road Transport Amendment (Obstruction and Hazard Safety) Bill 2013

TOTALIZATOR AMENDMENT (EXCLUSIVITY) BILL 2013

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Michael Gallacher.

Motion by the Hon. Michael Gallacher agreed to:

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

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

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

ST JOHN (NSW) INVESTITURE 2013

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

- (1) That this House notes that the St John (NSW) Investiture 2013 was held on Saturday 4 May 2013 at Government House with Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, AC, CVO, Governor of New South Wales.
- (2) That this House congratulate the following individuals recognised at the investiture for their dedicated service to the community over many years:
 - (a) promotion to Commander:
 - (i) Anthony Jansson;
 - (ii) Kenneth Kelman;
 - (iii) Janet Powell; and
 - (iv) Geoffrey Ticehurst.
 - (b) promotion to Officer:
 - (i) Jennifer Berghofer;
 - (ii) Laurence Camilleri;
 - (iii) Keith Cavill;
 - (iv) John Comyns;

- (v) Cheryl Cuzner;
 - (vi) Barry Deveney;
 - (vii) Matthew Griffiths;
 - (viii) John Hay;
 - (ix) Barbara Kiehne;
 - (x) Diana-Rose Orr;
 - (xi) Jonathan Phegan; and
 - (xii) Margaret Whittaker.
- (c) admission as member:
- (i) Michael Bagot;
 - (ii) Warren Beeton;
 - (iii) Deborah Bird;
 - (iv) Steven Bone;
 - (v) Sidney Bowers;
 - (vi) Adam Boyce;
 - (vii) Michelle Cooper;
 - (viii) John Crowley;
 - (ix) Ryan Dennis;
 - (x) Janette Ellks;
 - (xi) Richard Forrest;
 - (xii) James Gillespie;
 - (xiii) Kerry Gomes;
 - (xiv) Luke Grainger;
 - (xv) George Keane;
 - (xvi) Denise Lewis;
 - (xvii) John McCulloch;
 - (xviii) Peter Murphy;
 - (xix) Kurt Ravin;
 - (xx) Margaret Sachs;
 - (xxi) Ronald Smith; and
 - (xxii) Joan Webb.
- (3) That this House thanks St John (NSW) and its members for their significant contribution and ongoing commitment to service in our community.

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART COLLEGE KENSINGTON CENTENARY

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) 2013 marks the Centenary of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart establishing College in 1913;

- (b) the Sisters' motto "Domina Nostra a Sacro Corde", "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us", continues to inspire a commitment from students in providing a Community of the Heart and maintaining an excellent standard in education;
 - (c) in January 1885, the first Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart arrived in Sydney from France, while heading for New Guinea, and it was agreed to give the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart a parish in Sydney to serve as an Australian base for their missionary work;
 - (d) by 1894, the Botany Convent was not large enough to house the Novitiate which was commenced when Australian girls began to enter the order;
 - (e) when the first section of the new convent was completed in 1897, a small combined Primary and Secondary College was conducted in the convent premises;
 - (f) a continual growth in the number of students led to the construction of a new college building which was opened in July 1913 and the first Principal of the College was Sister Bernard Haughey who ensured in 1917 that the Department of Education gave the college its official registration;
 - (g) 1927 was the last year for the enrolment of boys at the college and the primary section was discontinued at the end of 1953, and from then on primary aged students attended Our Lady of the Rosary Parish College; and
 - (h) several buildings have been named in honour of the Indigenous and people that have made a significant contribution to the college:
 - (i) the Bernard Wing, named in 1927 after Sister Bernard Haughey who was the first Principal of the college;
 - (ii) the Baz Wing, named in 1967 after Mr Cecil Baz, a parent of students, who continued his association with and work for the college for over 50 years;
 - (iii) the Brendan Wing, named in 1976 after Mother Mary Brendan, Principal during the 1920s when the college expanded to cope with the growing student population;
 - (iv) the Fyfe Wing, named in 1995 after Sister Mary Fyfe, Principal from 1984 until mid1995, for her outstanding service;
 - (v) Wingara building, which has the Indigenous meaning "Place of Learning" and was named in 2002 by the students, and Mrs Frances Warner, the first lay Principal of the College from mid1995 to 2002, ensured the construction of this building with the College Library/Technology centre in the building refurbished in 2004 under the leadership of Mrs Anna Dickinson, Principal from 2003 to 2007; and
 - (vi) Thelma Wheeler Library, reopened after being refurbished.
- (2) That this House congratulates the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Kensington on its centenary and acknowledges current Principal, Libby Denny, and all those who have made a significant contribution to the school to ensure educational excellence and the welfare of children.

SYDNEY INTERCULTURAL FILM FESTIVAL

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
- (a) that the Sydney Intercultural Film Festival will be held in Sydney between 14 and 24 November 2013, launched at Sydney Town Hall, conducted in local government areas across the State and include 150 feature films, short films and documentaries from 33 countries;
 - (b) that the festival aims to:
 - (i) develop a network of multicultural elements within Australia and overseas to launch an international multicultural film festival;
 - (ii) act as a medium to create new markets connecting the Australian film industry with Asia, Europe and Africa, promoting the festival at an level representing Oceania;
 - (iii) source and support film makers of multicultural backgrounds in Australia and encourage sharing and exchange with their native countries thereby expanding markets into new territories;
 - (iv) support films exploring multiculturalism as topics or themes in the film or by involving multicultural cast and crew in production of the film;
 - (v) foster exchange and sharing between communities;

- (vi) breakdown barriers;
 - (vii) uncover, promote and assist debuting ethnic artists and film makers;
 - (viii) create jobs for people working in the culture and film industry; and
 - (ix) raise revenue and contribute to the local New South Wales economy.
- (c) the support of the City of Sydney Council, Auburn City Council, Burwood Council, City of Canada Bay Council, City of Canterbury Council, Hurstville City Council, Parramatta City Council, Strathfield Council and Willoughby City Council; and
- (d) that festival singers on opening night include Delta Goodrem and Steve Clisby and on closing night, Leo Sayer and T-ara.
- (2) That this House acknowledges for their work:
- (a) the Artistic Committee, Chair, John Orcsik;
 - (b) the Intercultural Committee, the Hon Helen Sham-Ho, OAM;
 - (c) Festival Director, Seewoo Kim;
 - (d) Festival Ambassador, Paula Duncan;
 - (e) selectors and programmers: Patrick McCarville, Lanwei Gong, Armin Miladi, Amadeo Marquez, Mike Kang, Aileen Beale, Karen Murphy and Nikki Waterhouse; and
 - (f) members of the Advisory Committee, Artistic Committee and Intercultural Committee and all volunteers assisting with the organisations and running of the event.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING IN NSW

Establishment and Membership

Motion by Dr JOHN KAYE agreed to:

- (1) That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report on greyhound racing in New South Wales, and in particular:
- (a) the economic viability of the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales;
 - (b) the financial performance and conduct of the industry and of Greyhound Racing NSW including a comparison to other States of Australia;
 - (c) government initiatives and assistance measures to support the industry and comparison of assistance to other racing codes;
 - (d) the effectiveness of current industry regulation, including the level of autonomy of Greyhound Racing NSW;
 - (e) the selection process for the board of Greyhound Racing NSW;
 - (f) the effectiveness and accountability of the board and management of Greyhound Racing NSW;
 - (g) the effectiveness of the current arrangements for, and role of, the Integrity Auditor of Greyhound Racing NSW;
 - (h) the capability and performance of Greyhound Racing NSW and governance of the industry;
 - (i) the incidence of drug administration and doping in the industry and the efficacy of Greyhound Racing NSW's control and testing processes;
 - (j) sale and breeding of greyhounds including the market conditions and welfare of animals;
 - (k) the welfare of animals in the industry and the role of Greyhound Racing NSW in establishing and enforcing standards of treatment of animals;
 - (l) financial incentives for reducing euthanasia and prosecutions for animal mistreatment;
 - (m) the adequacy and integrity of data collection in the industry, including the number of pups born, the number of dogs euthanased and injury rates; and
 - (n) any other related matter.

- (2) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, the Committee consist of seven members comprising:
 - (a) three Government members;
 - (b) two Opposition members; and
 - (c) Mr Borsak and Dr Kaye.
- (3) That the Chair of the Committee be Mr Borsak, and the Deputy Chair be Dr Kaye.
- (4) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, at any meeting of the committee, any four members of the Committee will constitute a quorum.
- (5) That a committee member who is unable to attend a deliberative meeting in person may participate by electronic communication and may move any motion and be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division, provided that:
 - (a) the Chair is present in the meeting room;
 - (b) all members are able to speak and hear each other at all times; and
 - (c) a member may not participate by electronic communication in a meeting to consider a draft report.
- (6) That the committee report within six months of the date of passing of this resolution.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps tabled the report entitled, "Legislation Review Digest No. 42/55", dated 27 August 2013.

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps.

PETITIONS

Electricity Privatisation

A petition requesting that the House stop the sell-off of the State's power stations, calling on the New South Wales Government to rule out the privatisation of the poles and wires after the 2015 election and to facilitate investment in low-carbon and jobs-rich renewable energy technologies, received from **Dr John Kaye**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Routine of Business

[During the giving of notices of motions]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind all members that the standing orders specify the order in which I give the call to a member when notices of motions are given. Ministers and the Leader of the Opposition always will have priority, then the order is one each on rotation, beginning with the Opposition.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Withdrawal of Business

Private Members' Business item No. 1417 outside the Order of Precedence withdrawn by Dr John Kaye.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SENTENCING OF CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT OFFENDERS

Membership

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that the Clerk has received the following nominations for membership of the Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders:

Government member:	Mrs Pavey
Opposition member:	Ms Westwood
Crossbench member:	Reverend Mr Nile

Message forwarded to the Legislative Assembly advising it of the nominations.

MARINE PARKS AMENDMENT (MORATORIUM) BILL 2013**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 21 August 2013.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [2.52 p.m.]: I seek leave to speak a second time to the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013.

Leave not granted.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [2.53 p.m.]: I speak on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. The Christian Democratic Party strongly believes that people are meant to be good stewards of the environment. There is always a balance between good sustainable use of the environment and placing the environment on a pedestal simply for its own sake. As I recall, in 2008 a previous Labor Minister acknowledged that approximately one million people engaged in recreational fishing in New South Wales every year.

Back in 2008 recreational fishermen contributed approximately half a billion dollars every year to the New South Wales economy. The principle behind this bill is very simple: If there are enough fish, there is no reason why large bodies of water should be locked up; if there are not enough fish, then by all means let us protect the little we have. It comes down to facts, figures and an unbiased science. I acknowledge comments by Professor Bob Beeton from the University of Queensland, who chaired an independent scientific audit of marine parks in New South Wales, who said:

Stakeholder engagement and public participation is said to be a central concern in the NSW marine park management planning process. However, there is a view that the way this has been done has been inadequate and often undertaken with predetermined outcomes in mind ...

This alienation has been due to problems with the processes: over-consulting without clear outcomes; public participation processes being used as a proxy for social research; lack of quality input from the science to enable educated and informed engagement; and a lack of transparency around why and how decisions have been made by not closing the feedback loop.

Unfortunately, in the past, marine parks have been established in New South Wales without adequate consultation or evidence. This bill represents a way of moving forward. It makes amendments that allow for the marine park zoning rules to be reviewed so that marine parks are managed effectively and efficiently. The Christian Democratic Party commends the Government's new integrated, adaptive and evidence-based approach to managing resources in New South Wales waters. At this point I will mention some of the work by Walter Starck, who is one of the pioneers in the scientific investigation of coral reefs. In 1964 he received a PhD in Marine Science from the University of Miami. He has more than 40 years' experience in reef studies and his work has encompassed the discovery of much of the basic nature of reef biology. In a recent publication, he said:

No marine species in Australia has ever been lost due to human causes nor are any now threatened with such extinction.

He went on to say:

On a per capita basis we have by far the largest fishery area of any nation. We also have the lowest overall fishery harvest rate at just over 3 per cent of the global average.

Currently we import about 70 per cent of the seafood we consume, and both the volume and unit cost of seafood imports are increasing. All of these imports come from much more heavily fished resources elsewhere. This is unconscionable. Seafood imports currently add some \$1.8 billion to our annual trade deficit. We are selling off non-renewable mineral resources to buy a renewable one we have in abundance and calling this sustainable management. This is beyond moronic.

Fisheries have by far the lowest impact of any form of food production. To replace global fisheries production with beef would require conversion to grazing of an area about 15 times larger than that of the whole of Australia. Failing to properly utilise our extensive resources is not genuine conservation but simply poor management. We can't go on imposing more and more costly and restrictive measures to prevent problems that don't even exist, nor can we ourselves exist without detectable effect on the natural world. Ecology is above all holistic. Every organism must have impacts in order to exist. Australia's are no exception.

The Hon. Luke Foley: What about the parable of the loaves and the fishes? The Christian Democratic Party should have a view on that.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The fish that keeps giving. Walter Starck concluded by saying:

Our economy and quality of life are being increasingly burdened by a proliferation of poorly conceived regulations which provide little or no benefit. Environmental regulation in particular has come to be dominated by a narrow ill-informed environmentalist ideology and political pandering for green votes. All Australians are paying the price of gross resource mismanagement in our cost of living, our health, our freedom and in the broader well-being of the nation.

This bill is a move in the right direction. I was part of the South Coast marine parks review undertaken on behalf of the Local Government Association or the Minister for Primary Industries and thought discussions around the table were good. Stakeholders from recreational fishing and the fishing industry, which relies on this resource particularly in Ulladulla, were fair. Ulladulla's massive Italian community has provided this resource for many years and, as far as I know, that heavy investment has kept that town going forever. At Easter we have the Blessing of the Fleet Festival when we acknowledge the fishermen who put their lives at risk to provide a service to the local community and to gather seafood for consumption and their families.

The festival acknowledges that Ulladulla virtually has been built on that industry and we take time to pray for the safety of those fishers and their families. The marine parks review taskforce spent much time around Jervis Bay and in similar areas. I thought the feedback was balanced, but I cannot say the outcomes across New South Wales were as good as the process we enjoyed. We appreciate that the pendulum is swinging back in favour of recreational fishing so that mums, dads and kids will be able to throw in a line and contribute to their local economy by buying bait and fish and chips, including the odd fish I have to buy because I cannot catch them. The bag limit is in no danger from my fishing.

The Hon. Rick Colless: They always bite on silver bait.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: These days people eat silver bait in restaurants; sorry, that is whitebait. The Christian Democratic Party commends this bill to the House.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [3.02 p.m.]: The Hon. Luke Foley spoke on behalf of the Opposition outlining a number of reasons that we opposed the original Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013 and now this further amendment bill. The Government clearly forgot when it pushed through the initial bill that future changes would need to be made. As a result, it has had to introduce an amendment bill to try to fix up its own mess. The Opposition's view remains that a legislated moratorium is not the right way to address this issue, especially since an agreement was reached before the Coalition came to office that no further marine parks would be announced. We hear nothing but rank hypocrisy from this Government, and often from the Minister for Roads and Ports when he lectures us all about scientifically based decisions on marine parks. Listening to Government members in this debate spout about scientifically based decisions is a little like listening those who say they are not racist and then proceed to be exactly that. This Government does exactly the opposite. When members opposite talk about scientifically based decisions—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: It was probably accidental, but the member implied that my comments were racist. I take offence to that, but I believe it was accidental.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: To the point of order: It certainly was not intended to imply that the Minister's comments were racist in any way. It was simply an analogy about people making comments one way and meaning the opposite.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): Order! Does the Minister take offence?

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: If the Minister takes offence, I withdraw any unintended offence. The point I am trying to make is that when this Government talks about scientifically based decision-making in fisheries, it actually means politically advantageous decisions. That has been consistent in this Government's administration of marine parks legislation. That was the Coalition's approach, particularly in its campaigns against parks such as the Batemans Marine Park, when it was in opposition. Government members made ludicrous claims and ran scare campaigns about what would happen to recreational fishing if the Batemans Marine Park were established. Obviously, living in Queanbeyan I spend a bit of time on the South Coast and I talk to many recreational fishers.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: There are two great local members down there.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: And Mike Kelly is one. I appreciate the ringing endorsement from the Government Whip of Mike Kelly, the local Federal member who represents Batemans Bay.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: You mean Andrew Constance.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: I know Mike will very much appreciate that endorsement because he covers that whole area from Batemans Bay to the Victorian border. He can be the only member the Government Whip is referring to when he speaks about great local members. I would not agree with him about the other one.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Shelley and Andrew are great local members.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: He doth protest too much. It was an appalling scare campaign. Regular recreational fishers on the South Coast tell me that since the implementation of the Batemans Marine Park their catches have been better and the fishing is terrific, particularly because of the exclusion of commercial fishing and the banning of hauling in a number of areas where fishing is not allowed and where fish are breeding. Substantial anecdotal evidence suggests that fish are breeding up because of the marine park reserved areas. Members opposite may not believe this, but fish actually swim in and out of those areas. That means fish can be caught because their numbers are improving. I listened carefully to the contribution of the Hon. Paul Green when he talked about mums, dads and their kids going fishing. Marine parks are all about the kids of our kids being able to catch something in the long term. We should preserve areas to ensure there are good breeding sanctuaries. I noticed recently that the Government has not abolished marine parks, but it has adjusted some boundaries. In the lead-up to the last election Coalition members—including Andrew Constance who was one of the two good local members mentioned by the Government Whip—exploited any available fear campaign.

Other examples of the direction of this Government's so-called scientific-based decision-making are Green Island and Fish Rock on the mid North Coast. After considerable negotiation with former Minister for the Environment Frank Sartor and before the election I, as Minister for Fisheries, introduced further sensible restrictions after taking into account comments from the local recreational fishing industry. This Government was elected with the help of the promises made by Minister Gay when he was the shadow Minister, but immediately reversed those decisions and began what it described as scientific consultation. Surprise, surprise! Much of the scientific information the Government received confirmed the huge amount of scientific research undertaken before the election suggesting that further restrictions were necessary at Fish Rock and Green Island. Surprise, surprise!

The Government reintroduced a number of restrictions in that area, but they were not quite the same; it would have been deeply embarrassing to put in place the exact same restrictions. I acknowledge that that is probably the reason the initial restrictions were not reapplied. The Government reintroduced a substantial number of restrictions that were implemented when I was the Minister responsible for this area. Those restrictions were based on the scientific evidence available at the time. We hear constant cries from the Government that, unlike the Labor Government, it is using scientific evidence. An examination of the documentation reveals that extensive scientific work was undertaken before these marine parks were declared.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: That is rubbish and you know it.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The Minister should read the scientific evidence on which the establishment of Batemans Marine Park was based. A substantial amount of work was done and hundreds of pages of information were provided explaining the reasons for the restrictions. Unlike me, the Minister has not been through a marine park review process. Scientific research is undertaken to discover what is working and what is not. As a result of the process that I went through with then Minister Sartor, a number of Solitary Islands Marine Park areas—

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Did he let you get a word in edgewise?

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: I acknowledge that interjection—sometimes, with difficulty. The then Minister for the Environment was pushing for an environmental outcome and that undoubtedly led to some heated discussions. That process involved significant scientific assessment and examination of practical information from fishers. For instance, it was established that boundaries for the no-take areas should be sighted from a visible landmark and rather than a line out and the appropriate changes were made. It was a practical and extensive process that took account of comprehensive scientific information and practical information provided by the people who use and implement the system. This Government has gone through a political process. Since the election the Minister has been all at sea on many of these fishing issues.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Stop using my jokes.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Did I beat the Hon. Peter Phelps to that one?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: No, I used it last Thursday.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: I missed that. I am sorry that I do not listen with great care to all of his contributions.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You took the bait, though.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: There are a lot of puns we could use, Minister. The Minister's approach to this issue has been: if at first you do not succeed, try again. She keeps getting contributions from people until she gets the ones she likes. Some interesting decisions have been made and in recent months the Minister has had to reverse some of them. For example, a reduction in bag limits for recreational fishers has been proposed. That is not consistent with the approach taken in commercial fishing and with the approach this Government says it is taking in support of recreational fishing in New South Wales. One decision regarding bag limits was reversed very quickly when recreational fishers pointed out that the Minister was significantly reducing their ability to take a particular fish. That was an embarrassing moment. The Minister has adopted the Labor Government's program of introducing fish aggregation devices throughout New South Wales, but her press releases suggest that she thinks she invented them. That is inevitable with new governments.

The Hon. Paul Green: What about artificial reefs?

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Yes. The Former Labor Government introduced some great initiatives that were funded through recreational fishing licences.

The Hon. Robert Brown: What about recreational fishing havens?

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The licence fees also paid for recreational fishing havens. There were some fantastic initiatives that I am pleased to see this Government continuing, even if the Minister does not like to acknowledge they were implemented by the former Government. The Nationals strenuously opposed the introduction of recreational fishing licence fees and went to at least one election promising to abolish them. Despite that, the Government has quietly increased fees by 40 per cent in the past few weeks. I am interested to know what requests the recreational fishing industry made for more money. More importantly, I want to know that that money is not being used to pay for the inspectors who are investigating where Crown roads should be closed and whether they impact on fishing areas.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Oh, come on!

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: They can do. It was revealed during the estimates hearings that recreational fishery staff are being used to confirm whether Crown road closures impact on recreational fishing areas. I want an assurance that fishing licence fees are not being used to pay for work that the Government should be paying for out of consolidated revenue. I have seen no justification for increasing licence fees. The Minister seems to have ticked off on that one without much consultation. It is an interesting role reversal on the part of a party that at one stage said it strenuously opposed them.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: So what was the policy we took to the election?

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The Government was quiet about recreational fishing licence fees at the last election.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: No we were not; we supported them.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: That is correct, the Government did support them. However, it has made a 180-degree change from its original position when the Labor Government introduced them. The Coalition strenuously opposed them for political reasons. The acknowledgement that licence fees play a positive part in recreational fishing is welcomed. The installation of angel rings on the coast for the protection of rock fishermen is an important initiative. The provision of information about rock fishing in different languages, particularly targeting Asian languages, is funded through those programs. The Labor Government was very proud of those excellent initiatives. Recreational fishing is an important activity for the people of New South Wales. It is a fabulous way to get people out into the fresh air and catching something they can consume—unless they fish west of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

[Interruption]

The Hon. Robert Brown can come up with the technicalities in a minute. Fishing is a terrific pastime for many people, and particularly families, and it is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people. The Labor Party has been a strong supporter of the recreational fishing industry, and marine parks are an integral part of

that industry. Marine parks provide sanctuary and allow stock to reproduce. I constantly receive feedback from fishermen that fishing in Batemans Marine Park is excellent because of the initiatives taken by the former Government, including the establishment of the marine park. It is well worth throwing a line out because stocks are in a healthy condition.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN [3.17 p.m.]: I support the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. A moratorium on the creation of new marine parks and the alteration or creation of sanctuary zones within existing marine parks has been imposed under the Marine Parks Act 1997. The moratorium was imposed for a period of five years commencing on the commencement of the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Act 2011 or any shorter period specified by order under section 48B of the Act. During the moratorium period, the Marine Parks Authority must not conduct a review of a zoning plan for a marine park under section 17D of the Act, and no other action is to be taken under that section in relation to such a plan. The objects of this bill are as follows: firstly, to allow regulations to be made under the Act within the moratorium period to alter the areas of existing sanctuary zones, or to classify areas as new sanctuary zones, within marine parks; secondly, to provide for reviews of zoning plans for marine parks at the direction of the relevant Ministers; and, finally, to allow the authority to conduct reviews of, or take other action in relation to, zoning plans for marine parks during the moratorium period.

Two important recommendations of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks were that the current system of marine parks as established in New South Wales be maintained, but also that a series of improvements be made to marine park management. Sensibly, the New South Wales Government's response includes a series of management reforms for marine parks. This bill allows the Government to begin implementing these reforms. Importantly, it allows it to commence the review of management arrangements for marine parks. The Government is analysing up-front the types of zones used in marine parks and how they are to be used. It will also be improving community engagement in marine park management, including by Aboriginal people. The reviews will involve the community in determining how the social, economic and ecological values of marine parks are maintained. The Government will revamp the approach taken to the many facets of marine park management.

The amendments in this bill will allow the Government to start the review process to move towards a single, simpler management plan for each park. The Government intends these new management plans to spell out park management objectives and strategies, including zoning, compliance, and education and communications intended to deliver on the objectives. The Government will also include monitoring and reporting provisions. This will be an improvement on the Labor Government's approach of obscuring information in separate zoning plans and operational plans for each park. Of course, the Government will ensure that the community has time to help develop these new management plans. A stronger emphasis on performance monitoring and assessment of management activities will also be a key feature of the new approach provided by this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [3.20 p.m.]: I make this contribution, which I know Dr Faruqi would like to have made herself had she not been refused leave simply because she had given her inaugural speech by accident on the same bill. I therefore speak on behalf of the Greens on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013.

The Hon. Helen Westwood: We don't expect anything else from this mean-spirited Government.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I note the interjection from the Hon. Helen Westwood. This bill seeks to allow regulations to be made under the Marine Parks Act 1997 to enable the Minister to increase or decrease the size of sanctuary zones within marine parks. There has been a shameful moratorium on the creation of more vitally important protected marine spaces since this Government came to power. In fact, when we look at the environmental credentials of this Government, we see very clearly that its actions are based on special deals. I remind the House of what the Premier said on 13 April 2011:

We have no intention of doing deals with the minor parties.

Perhaps it does them and then history follows that. Since then our native vegetation regulations have faced being watered down, our national parks have been opened up to amateur hunters—although I am glad to see that, after a strong community campaign, that has been somewhat limited—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: No, it has not.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —and our environmental planning regulations are being dictated by mining companies. I note the Minister's interjection. The Bulga case is a good example of what has happened and this legislation continues that trend. It is to the credit of the former Labor Government and The Greens that marine parks were established. We have a strong terrestrial national park system that is widely adored by the community. The creation of the marine park system addressed an anomaly in our conservation measures that meant the marine environment was ignored. The 2010 International Census of Marine Life showed that our oceans contained almost 33,000 plant and animal species. These identified species are just the tip of the iceberg; there is still so much we do not know about the amazing life that exists in our oceans and seas. Indeed, there is more biodiversity in the waters of Sydney Harbour and its immediate surrounds than is found in all of the waters surrounding Western Europe. We live in a remarkable place.

Sanctuary zones form the most important parts of marine parks. It is from these areas that the marine environment is able to restock. These areas must be protected both for future generations and their intrinsic value. This is especially important for our most endangered species, such as the grey nurse shark. Sanctuary zones allow the community to enjoy the environment in a sustainable way—including swimming, diving, snorkelling and other leisure activities that do not disrupt or harm these crucial and precious natural environments. Until recently these sanctuary zones were the only areas in New South Wales where fishing was prohibited, and they make up only a tiny 6.7 per cent of the coastline. Marine parks and sanctuary zones are also vital for a viable and sustainable fishing industry. David Booth, Professor of Marine Ecology at the University of Technology Sydney, has said of sanctuary zones:

Overwhelming scientific evidence indicates that sanctuary zones protect fish from fishing pressure, and may even provide a benefit to adjacent fisheries through adult or larval spillover.

The "Report of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in New South Wales" last year recommended maintenance and increased protection of marine life—not decreasing protection for already vulnerable areas of our coastal environment. This bill proposes to give the Minister the discretion to increase or decrease the size of sanctuary zones. Call me cynical, or call Dr Faruqi cynical, but I think only one of these powers will be exercised—that is, the discretion to decrease the size of sanctuary zones. I base my scepticism on the record of the Coalition Government just this year. In March this year, the Government compromised sanctuary zones by introducing an amnesty on illegal fishing. There now appears to be no part of our coastline where fish and marine animals are fully and genuinely protected. These short-sighted policies are based on wheeling and dealing, as well as what seems to be an anti-environment wing—or indeed an anti-environment body—in the Coalition.

Just last month, a critically endangered grey nurse shark off the coast of Byron Bay was found to have a hook and trace lodged in its jaw. This shark is so endangered—it was one individual from a population of just 1,500 on the east coast—that a team from Sea World came down to rehabilitate it. I am glad to say it was successful. The shark was found just off Julian's Rocks, which lies within the Cape Byron Marine Park sanctuary area. Critically endangered sharks are still being caught up in fishing gear even within sanctuary zones. It is very clear to me that more needs to be done and that there should be more sanctuary zones, not fewer. The Greens policy on marine parks and sanctuary zones is clear. We have a target of 30 per cent of each representative marine ecosystem being fully protected in no-take sanctuary zones. That target is endorsed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The views of our party are clearly on the record and have been since the first Greens member took his seat in this Chamber. They are soundly based on world's best practice and the most accepted science in the area. The Greens would be delighted to overturn the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. We would be delighted to expand the marine park system and the sanctuary zones within those parks. However, until we have a government that is committed to the conservation of our natural marine environment—and not one relying on backroom deals or a moment's convenience—a freeze is all we can hope for. We cannot support this bill and risk a shrinking of protected marine space. I know that my colleague Dr Faruqi will speak further on this bill during the Committee stage. She will move an amendment that will smoke out the Government's intentions with regard to increasing or decreasing marine zones. The Greens will not be supporting the bill in its present form.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [3.27 p.m.]: I am very pleased to support the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. Heading to the coast to try to land the catch of the day is a popular pastime that is often handed down from one generation to the next. During the recent winter break, my wife, her grandson and I accompanied the Hon. Niall Blair and his son Lachlan on a fishing trip to Jervis Bay.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: So there were three generations there.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: There were three generations there that day. We went out at about 7.00 a.m. and got home at about 4.00 p.m., and the two kids on the boat had the best day they had ever experienced. We caught a few fish. We had a lot of fun and a lot of laughs.

The Hon. Charlie Lynn: You had fun; The Greens would not like that.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The Greens would not like anyone having fun at the expense of a couple of nice snapper—that is the whole point. Last Saturday I again had the opportunity go fishing on Jervis Bay. I took my 87-year-old father, my 32-year-old son and my four-year-old granddaughter fishing. There were four generations of the Colless family there. Again we went early in the morning and spent about five or six hours out there on the water having a wonderful time. We did not catch any fish on Saturday but, as every fisherman knows, the greatest thing about a day's fishing with generations of family and friends is that the worst day out fishing is better than the best day at work. I re-rigged a couple of my rods as we were sitting around the dinner table on Friday night planning the next day's activities. My 87-year-old dad said to me, "This is almost as much fun as the fishing trip." We all enjoyed sitting down, talking, rigging our lines and preparing for our adventure the next day. That is the importance of recreational fishing in the Australian psyche.

Recreational fishing injects something like \$550 million into our economy. Where does that money come from? If I were to think about it, before our trip I bought \$20 or \$30 worth of fishing gear such as hooks and sinkers, put about \$50 worth of fuel in the boat and paid about \$20 or \$30 for bait. I spent about \$100 for that simple little fishing trip. Even though we did not catch any fish, it was still money well spent because we enjoyed a traditional family outing that has been handed down from generation to generation. About one million recreational fishers in New South Wales enjoy that type of activity regularly, which, obviously, creates a few cumulative threats and risks that need to be managed properly.

It is important that we get the balance right so that people are still able to enjoy a fabulous day on the water or at the beach with different generations of their family. As a grandfather, I can tell members that there is nothing more satisfying than teaching a four-year-old how to pull the trigger on a reel and drop it into the water. Her little eyes lit up when she got a bite on the line; she was so excited. Seeing that little girl get such a thrill out of spending a day on the water gave her father, my father and me a great sense of satisfaction. Returning to the bill, the marine parks audit found that information was lacking with respect to some of those marine park no-take zones, in particular ocean beaches.

As a priority, the new Marine Park Expert Knowledge Panel is assessing recreational fishing access on ocean beaches and headlands in mainland marine park zones. Sanctuary zones currently include approximately 4 per cent of the mainland coastline in the New South Wales marine estate. The New South Wales Government has put in place an immediate amnesty that allows recreational line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands in the sanctuary zones of mainland marine parks. That will make an extra 80 kilometres of coastline available where people can enjoy recreational fishing. That is an extra 80 kilometres where fathers and grandfathers can take their sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and not be harassed because they are doing something as simple and enjoyable as going out to wet a line.

It has been made abundantly clear that the amnesty does not apply to Burrewarra Point in Batemans Marine Park, which is an important site for threatened species. In addition, the existing rules will continue to apply for critical habitat sites and specified aggregation sites for critically endangered grey nurse sharks. The Liberal-Nationals Government is making good on its commitment to the comprehensive protection of that iconic threatened species. We are conducting a threat and risk assessment, which demonstrates that activities in the marine park estate will be managed according to the threats and related risks they pose to marine biodiversity. That clearly signals that our approach is firmly based on evidence. I commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD [3.34 p.m.]: I do not support the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. Six marine parks were established for good reason by the previous Labor Government. They were established to protect our marine environments against the many pressures they face. The six parks were Cape Byron in the north of the State, Solitary Islands on the Coffs Coast, Port Stephens and Great Lakes, Jervis Bay, Batemans Bay, and Lord Howe Island. I am proud of the Labor Government's record on marine conservation. Our aim in establishing the marine parks is best reflected on the NSW Marine Parks Authority website, which provides that the objectives were to conserve marine biodiversity and maintain ecological processes and provide for ecologically sustainable use, public appreciation, education, understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment. The website goes on to provide:

The primary criteria identified throughout much of the world for establishing marine parks are that they contain a comprehensive, adequate and representative sample of marine biological diversity.

...

An underlying principle of multiple-use marine parks is that there is continued access and opportunities for users of marine resources, provided biodiversity and cultural values are conserved.

Marine parks complement a range of specific fisheries management tools (e.g. seasonal and area closures, bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions), and assist in ensuring that harvested species, by-catch and habitats are protected in specific areas. They also complement coastal management tools that address land-based impacts on the marine environment, such as pollution, sedimentation and coastal development. Marine parks can also assist in the conservation of marine mammals and reptiles, and seabirds.

...

Marine environments in most coastal regions of the world have been impacted by a wide range of human uses for many decades. Activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, coastal development, catchment activities, pollution and introduced marine pests contribute to the incremental loss of habitats such as seagrasses, mangroves, macro-algal reefs, and a reduction in the numbers of some species to such an extent that they become threatened or endangered. The extent and persistence of impacts from these activities on marine biodiversity (usually considered as genetic, species and ecosystem diversity) have considerably decreased the overall ecological condition or "health" of many coastal regions.

It is clear to me and to any person who values marine parks and wants to see our marine environment protected that the Liberal-Nationals Government has no regard for the health of our marine parks as it continues to systematically remove marine park protections by amendment. This is a further step in the frontal assault on the future of the State's marine environment. The Coalition Government has previously abolished measures introduced to give the Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks better protection. It also revoked recreational fishing closures introduced to protect grey nurse sharks at Fish Rock and Green Island, which are areas considered critical habitat for this threatened species. That is further to the five-year moratorium introduced on new marine parks and the winding back of protection zones or sanctuary zones within the existing six marine parks in New South Wales.

There is no policy rationale or scientific evidence to justify the Government's continual attack on marine conservation. It already has the power to decide if and when it will declare a new marine park or alter marine park boundaries or zonings. The Government commissioned an independent report by the NSW Marine Parks Independent Scientific Audit Panel. Quite frankly, the report essentially came up with the Labor position for the protection of our fragile marine environment. Recommendation 2 of the report stated:

The Audit Panel is of the further opinion that the current system of marine parks established in NSW be maintained and mechanisms be found for enhancing the protection of biodiversity in the identified gaps, namely within the Hawkesbury and Twofold Shelf marine bioregions.

The Government is proposing unjustified amendments that the review has not called for, which suggests that the Government is trying to make a political point. It seems ideologically driven rather than scientifically driven. The Government's claim that it is taking the politics out of marine parks is hollow. The clear intention of this bill is to allow the Government to permanently de-zone beaches and headlands from sanctuaries. One has only to do a simple search on the web and up pops a plethora of The Nationals sites dedicated to the abolition of marine parks. This ideologically driven bill will diminish the quality of marine environments throughout the State. The Government and others need to acknowledge that our marine environments are under great pressure. As well as pressure from climate change are pressures from human activity, which I have outlined. We all have an obligation to protect marine environments and to ensure that they remain available for future generations. It is for us to take action now to ensure their conservation. I urge members to rethink this bill. I and the Opposition will not support the bill.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [3.42 p.m.]: The Shooters and Fishers Party supports the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013. We are the party that introduced the moratorium in the first place. We attempted to do it under the previous Labor Government but were unable. This Government took the logical step and agreed to let the original bill go through both Houses. The moratorium was put in place for a specific reason. At the time there was already an independent scientific review being undertaken of marine parks in this State—a review commissioned by the previous Labor Government. That review found that the science used in establishing the marine parks and the continued scientific effort to prove the concept of zonings in marine parks were lacking.

Specifically, that totally independent scientific audit found that the Marine Parks Authority relied far too much, particularly during the establishment phase, on the environmental science. Even in that regard, the audit was critical. One of the most critical points related to sanctuary zones. The audit criticised the creation of the sanctuary zones on the basis that the scientists who had made the recommendations had used habitat as a surrogate for biodiversity. The scientific panel roundly dismissed that as a valid scientific method. That first

independent scientific audit also roundly criticised the process by which the marine parks were formed because virtually no account was taken of their social or economic impacts on coastal communities in New South Wales. We need to be aware of a couple of points; not all members may be aware of them. Even most of the scientists to whom Mr David Shoebridge referred will say that New South Wales has one of the best-managed fisheries in the world—although it is actually a very poor fishery.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I think he was reading someone else's speech.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: He may well have been. Dr Mehreen Faruqi did not have a chance to put her viewpoint. Mr Shoebridge spoke, so I will quote him. Let us look at that generally held view in light of the fact that New South Wales is actually a very poor fishery from a production point of view. We have a narrow continental shelf. We do not have the current flows that are around, say, New Zealand, nor do we have massive offshore structures like the Great Barrier Reef. Yet New South Wales is one of the best-managed fisheries in the world.

One of the mistakes made by the previous Government and the scientists who put together these marine parks was their reliance on overseas evidence, primarily from the Northern Hemisphere, where fisheries have been devastated. A lot of people call the Mediterranean the undersea desert of the Northern Hemisphere. In New South Wales, for over 70 years governments from both sides of politics have done a pretty good job of maintaining a viable fishery, both commercially and recreationally. Until about 20 years ago many recreational fishermen were saying that the catches were dropping off and it was not worth fishing. The previous Labor Government actually did something about that and created recreational fishing havens. The creation of the recreational fishing fee was a brilliant start. Well done to the previous Labor Government. But then it screwed it up with these marine parks. It screwed it up because of the pressure placed on it by its coalition partners, The Greens.

Communities up and down the coast of New South Wales vary in their level of acceptance of their local marine parks and the way in which they were established. The way in which they were established has a lot to do with the success or otherwise of those marine parks. Jervis Bay, which has been cited, was done properly. The consultation period took over two years. The locals will say that they really do not want us messing with their marine park—except, unfortunately, because of a little hiccup in trying to use habitat as a surrogate for biodiversity one part of the park is 180 degrees out. The zone should have been placed on the southern side rather than the northern side of the southern area of the bay. That has now been remedied. Jervis Bay was a reasonably pristine area to start with.

When we compare it with the processes that took place to create the Solitary Islands Marine Park, the marine park off Port Stephens, and particularly Batemans Marine Park, we see a huge discrepancy in the value of the work that was done and the level of acceptance by local communities. During the recreational fishing inquiry that was held under the last Government, which I chaired, we heard anecdote after anecdote from local community groups, predominantly fishermen, who felt that they had been done over in the marine parks consultation process. We heard stories of marine park managers in the north of the State lying, creating evidence, disregarding submissions from fishing groups and falsifying the number of submissions. Nobody can say it was not a political process. The previous scientific inquiry found that the reputed scientific evidence did not exist.

The current independent scientific audit panel that was established and chaired by an eminent scientist from Queensland, Professor Bob Beeton, recommended that we look after this State's marine environment. Why would it not do so? The essence of the panel's finding was that the entire marine estate should be restructured and rethought to avoid the creation of silos—the Marine Park Authority and Fisheries NSW were under different parts of government—and the impingement of catchment management authorities' responsibilities upon marine parks and our marine environment. A previous speaker in this debate stated that the Marine Parks Authority takes into account all the factors that affect marine biodiversity and the health of the marine environment, such as coastal development and agricultural run-off, et cetera. Clearly, they do not. That was one of the gaps in the structure of putting together a nil tenure marine estate.

We need to get rid of the barriers of catchment management authorities' responsibilities ending at the mean high tide mark and the idea that to manage a marine environment only the recreational and/or commercial impacts need to be examined. Everything needs to be examined. The moratorium provided the opportunity to create the independent scientific audit panel, which has made recommendations to the Government regarding what should be done—no doubt as a result of input from recreational fishermen throughout the State during that

inquiry. It is nice when a plan comes together. We should give the Government the benefit of the doubt and allow it to proceed with its plan, part of which is the lifting of the moratorium. Mr David Shoebridge made much of the fact that an amnesty was created to allow beach fishing. That was one of the first things the Government did. Even a layman knows that beaches are not the best places for sanctuaries.

A beach will have a particular structure this morning, the structure will be different this afternoon and it will be different again tomorrow. Beaches do not have resident populations of fish; fish move about and come and go. The previous Government's attempts to create sanctuary zones based on structural habitat as a surrogate for biodiversity failed in relation to beaches. Another important point is that beach fishing is a very safe way of catching fish—not so in relation to rock fishing. Beach fishing does not require a person to own a vessel worth up to \$50,000 to be able to fish. Jetties, estuaries, land-based fishing and beach fishing are the purview of the ordinary man and the ordinary woman. Grandfathers can take their grandchildren down to the beach to fish off a beach virtually with absolute safety. Rock fishing is completely different.

It was perfectly logical for the Government to take that step. To have done so before the independent scientific audit panel had been created under the new structure does not mean much either way. It was a good move because it showed that some aspects of the scientific arguments that were used to establish marine parks were based on thin evidence. Mr David Shoebridge mentioned that a grey nurse shark had been caught with a hook in its mouth, but he failed to mention that it was a commercial longline hook and that therefore the shark was probably caught in waters somewhere between 300 and 500 metres deep. We know that grey nurse shark aggregation sites exist 1,100 metres out, although we cannot see them. But to make the assertion that a grey nurse shark, which might travel 50 or 100 kilometres over a couple of weeks, was caught in a sanctuary zone or in a marine park with a longline hook in its mouth is simply fallacious. It is really a silly argument.

The Hon. Rick Colless: How far had it swum after it was caught?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: It could have been up to 100 kilometres away. Let us not obscure the debate with emotional rhetoric.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Why not? This is really boring.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I acknowledge the interjection made by the Hon. Amanda Fazio. It does make it more interesting. I admit that I was suspicious when I first read about the change to the moratorium because governments can never be trusted.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Funny that you do not trust the Government.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Sometimes governments and sometimes people in government can be just plain untrustworthy.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Tell us more. To whom are you referring?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: No, the debate is about marine parks.

The Hon. Michael Gallacher: And nothing to do with the Federal Government at all.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: No, nor the State Liberal Government. This is a very simple and straightforward bill. It will allow the Government to override the five-year moratorium that the Shooters and Fishers Party fought to have applied to the process, and it will allow the scientific approach to get underway. If the Government did not do so, it would bind the independent scientific audit panel to try to do the science without having the scope for further experimentation and to take different approaches. Sanctuary zones can be a good thing, but they are not sacrosanct. The sanctuary zones created in New South Wales were established on the basis of the Southern Hemisphere's continental shelf and bear no relationship to Northern Hemisphere sanctuary zones. All the suggestions that fishing will benefit from overspill are exaggerated. Some of the best increases in biodiversity in the State have not been in sanctuary zones but rather in recreational fishing havens.

Mr David Shoebridge referred to Sydney Harbour, which has huge biodiversity. The only thing that has changed in Sydney Harbour is the removal of commercial activities. Recreational fishing in Sydney Harbour is better than it has ever been previously. My suggestion to the Government would be to change Sydney Harbour into a fishing haven. The moratorium that the Shooters and Fishers Party tried to put in place under the previous

Government was in direct response to the torn blue fringe of the Nature Conservation Council or the Marine Park Authority [MPA]. They wanted to create marine parks in the Sydney and Hawkesbury bioshelves and the bioshelf on the Victorian border.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: The Twofold bioshelf.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That was the one. The moratorium bill sunk that proposal without a trace—torpedoed it right in the boiler room, and down she went. I am very proud of that bill. I trust the Government to do the right thing in relation to this bill. Some may call me a fool for trusting this Government but we are prepared to give it a go. This bill is necessary to allow the work to continue and to create a whole-of-State marine estate. The Shooters and Fishers Party supports the bill.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR [3.58 p.m.]: I support the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2013 because I believe it will assist people who are involved in recreational fishing. Recently my family was reintroduced to recreational fishing. I commend the Fisheries NSW staff for reintroducing my family to fishing. My son had an interaction with officers of Fisheries NSW, who handed out catch-and-release packs. He had his little glove, pliers, a sticker showing different types of fish, and his measuring chart, so he pestered me constantly to go fishing. I am glad he did. When I was a kid, I did a lot of trout fishing in the Peejar Dam and in rivers around Goulburn. My brother is a very keen fly fisherman, but until recently it was not something that I had enjoyed with my son. I also thank the Hon. Rick Colless for assisting me to encourage my son to enjoy fishing. The Hon. Rick Colless took me out on his vessel, which, when I first saw it, I did not think would fit into Jervis Bay. We headed straight out past Point Perpendicular and through the heads.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Who was Gilligan?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The sea was rough that day, my friend, so we decided to turn around and head back into the bay.

Pursuant to sessional orders business interrupted at 4.00 p.m. for questions.

Item of business set down as an order of the day for a future day.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BOARDING HOUSES REGULATION

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. The peak body People with Disability Australia has written to the Minister on behalf of more than 25 disability advocacy and support organisations raising their concerns about the weakening of standards in the Government's new Boarding Houses Regulation 2013. Will the Minister review that regulation?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question. I indicate at the outset that in 2012-13 more than \$77 million was spent on community-based accommodation support services to former assisted boarding house residents with high needs. Since 1998 more than 700 community-based accommodation support places have been provided and funded in the relocation program for people whose boarding house has closed or for those who can no longer live in a boarding house. Support services—such as case management, advocacy, primary and secondary health care, recreation and leisure services, personal care and community transport—in current assisted boarding houses have been taken into account with a budget of \$4.2 million. Additional funding of up to \$2 million has been made available to the boarding house support budget for boarding house reform projects to implement the Boarding Houses Act 2012.

As members are aware, in October 2012 the New South Wales Government introduced major reforms to the boarding house industry with the passage of the Boarding Houses Act 2012. The reforms are as a result of a series of reports by the New South Wales Ombudsman and the State Coroner, who have been highly critical of boarding house standards and the pace of reform. The central purpose of the Act is to protect the rights of boarding house residents and to promote the sustainability of the boarding house industry. The provisions of the Act relating to the Register of Boarding Houses and initial compliance investigations commenced on 1 January 2013. The main focus of the regulations, which were imposed to come into effect on 1 July 2013, will be setting

contemporary standards of accommodation and service provision for assisted boarding houses. Until then, licensed residential centres will continue to be regulated under the Youth and Community Services Act 1973. There are currently 23 such centres in New South Wales providing 526 beds.

When commenced in its entirety, proprietors and residents of general and assisted boarding houses will have to comply with the occupancy principles scheme. Assisted boarding houses will have to be authorised and comply with specific requirements and standards that will be monitored by Ageing, Disability and Home Care. A high level boarding houses implementation committee is currently overseeing the implementation of the Act and is monitoring the impacts of the new requirements. In the meantime, Ageing, Disability and Home Care is continuing to provide assistance to boarding house residents.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer with particular reference to the concerns raised with him in writing by People with Disability Australia?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: That is essentially a restatement of the original question and as such it should be ruled out of order.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: To the point of order: It is not a restatement of the original question; it is a request for elucidation on a particular part of the question I originally asked the Minister with respect to concerns raised with him by stakeholders.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Minister had not addressed that particular part of the original question in his answer the member would not be seeking an elucidation. I am not sure whether I heard the Minister address it or not, but in the circumstances I will give the member the benefit of the doubt. The Minister may respond if he wishes.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I assure the honourable member that I will be responding to any representations received by me or my office.

POLICE ATTESTATION CEREMONY

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister inform the House about the newest recruits to the New South Wales Police Force?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I thank the honourable member for her question. Last Friday, 23 August 2013, it was my great pleasure to attend the attestation ceremony for class 319 at the Goulburn Police Academy. I assure members that the calibre of probationary constables coming through the doors of the academy to pursue challenging and rewarding careers as police officers in this State remains very high indeed. They passed the stringent physical and academic tests, and have demonstrated the commitment and character befitting their new role. These qualities were no more visible than when the commissioner's valour award was presented to Senior Constable Justin Knight on the parade ground last Friday. The award was conferred for conspicuous merit and exceptional bravery when an offender armed with a sawn-off rifle fired at Senior Constable Knight with intent to murder on 20 January 2007 at Eveleigh Street, Redfern—the Block.

In the course of pursuing a suspect, Constable Knight alighted from his vehicle and pursued an offender on foot, calling for him to stop. The offender produced a sawn-off rifle and, despite the risk, Constable Knight continued to follow him. The offender fired a number of shots at Constable Knight, narrowly missing him. The constable felt one of the projectiles go past his arm and thought that he had been shot. Being aware of the sensitivity of the local community towards police and despite the escalated danger, Constable Knight did not respond by firing his service firearm. The offender fled the scene, but was later identified and charged with attempted murder of a police officer. The offender was subsequently convicted.

I ask members to reflect on those circumstances and whether we would have acted with the same level of commitment, bravery and judgement as Constable Knight on that occasion. Too often the community reacts to instances where police officers have been accused of wrongdoing, but the events of that night in 2007 remind us of the challenges and risks faced by officers of the NSW Police Force, in this case potentially quite deadly. I am confident that Senior Constable Knight's example will flow through to the 161 probationary constables who attested and have joined a force with record authorised strength in this State.

A number of the new police officers deserve special mention. The winner of the Robert Brotherson award for the highest level of academic achievement was Probationary Constable Natalie Martin. The winners

of the Steven Roser memorial award for the highest male and female achievers in physical training were Probationary Constable Mitchell Thompson and Probationary Constable Guilhermina El-Mir. The Juan Carlos Hernandez award, given to the student with the highest marksmanship score, went to probationary constables David Edwards, Anton Sahyoun and Shanahan Toering—all three tied for that award. Probationary Constable Toering also received the award for the highest achiever in the Simulated Policing Acquiring Competence program.

One of the many proud parents at the attestation was Detective Superintendent Arthur Katsogiannis, whose son Daniel is now a probationary constable and commences his career at City Central Local Area Command. It was terrific to see 23 members of the attestation of class 319 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, of which 16 were graduates of the Indigenous Police Recruiting Our Way [IPROWD] program that I have spoken about in this forum. Congratulations to them. I had the pleasure of witnessing the graduation of 13 dog teams from the State Protection Group Dog Unit. Some were general purpose dogs and others, obviously, were sniffer dogs. That is good news for Byron Bay and its former mayor, the Hon. Jan Barham. The attestation parades provide an opportunity— *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I pay respect to the following five officers who retired from the NSW Police Force, taking with them collectively 190-plus years: Superintendent Ben Feszczuk, Detective Superintendent Col Dyson, APM, Superintendent Ray Filewood, Detective Inspector Dennis Clarke, APM, and Inspector Leslie Dickens. All five officers led the parade on Friday. It was an incredibly proud moment for them, their families and the communities they have represented in just short of 200 years of policing. As I said to the graduating class, "If you want to look for role models, look at these five as a classic example of what you can give back to a community that will give you so much more."

BOARDING HOUSES REGULATION

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. In a media release issued last week the Minister said:

The NSW Government is committed to shifting structural and attitudinal barriers which have impacted on the lives of people with disability.

Why is the Minister weakening minimum standards for boarding house residents regarding internal recreation space, on-site laundry facilities and personal storage space?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I indicated earlier, the new Boarding Houses Act and regulation came into full effect on 1 July 2013 after the New South Wales Government recognised the need for sector-wide reform. The previous legislation had been virtually unchanged for nearly 40 years, despite many shocking reports from the NSW Ombudsman. Some reports expressed concern for the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable boarding house residents. The new legislation is very much a tribute to the commitment shown by my predecessor and colleague the Hon. Andrew Constance.

The new legislation is intended to raise standards for boarding house residents without jeopardising the availability of low-cost affordable housing in a challenging private rental market. Many standards in the new regulations existed in the previous Youth and Community Services Act 1973 and the 2010 regulations. The additional standards incorporated in the 2013 regulation include enhancements to certain service and facility standards, including the requirement for call bells; the keeping of a number of additional records; minimum staffing levels and a process to assess sufficient levels; required qualifications and skills of staff; requirements for staff to undergo criminal record checks—

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox and the Hon. Lynda Voltz wish to have a private conversation they should do so outside the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The 2013 regulation additional standards also include the requirement to have procedures for dealing with complaints; an increase in the range of notifiable incidents; the introduction of new accommodation standards; assistant boarding house compliance officers to continue to monitor assisted boarding houses for compliance with the legislation at a minimum of every six weeks; the introduction of new accommodation standards, in particular standards six and seven, requiring premises to provide for single

occupancy rooms; and the establishment of a limit of 30 residents applying to assisted boarding houses. Existing assisted boarding houses previously licensed under the Youth and Community Services Act 1973 are exempt from having to comply with the new accommodation standards for a period of five years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Duncan Gay and the Hon. Mick Veitch wish to have a private conversation they should do so outside the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: However, the remainder of standard seven dealing with matters such as clean and comfortable mattresses and bed linen, which is climate appropriate and in good repair, continue to apply to pre-existing authorised assisted boarding houses during the five-year period. These provisions were in clause 5 of the former Youth and Community Services Regulation 2010 and were enforced immediately before being repealed by the Act. Therefore, they continue to apply. The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care will provide a template for pre-existing assisted boarding houses to plan and report annually on actions to meet the two new standards.

COALDUST AND AIR QUALITY

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports, who I am advised has responsibility for freight rail. Recommendation 6 of the Federal Senate inquiry into impacts on health of air quality in Australia states:

The Committee recommends that states and territories require industry to implement covers on all coal wagon fleets.

The data from recent monitoring undertaken by the Dust and Health Committee of the Coal Terminal Action Group concludes:

While coal trains pass, particle pollution concentrations increase up to 13 times pre-coal train levels.

When will the Government commit to protecting the health of communities, such as in the Hunter and the Illawarra, by requiring coal trains to be covered and empty trains to be washed down?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for her important question. Certainly, the community is concerned, as am I. The expansion of the coal industry in the Hunter and Gunnedah basins means significant increases in the number of trains passing urban areas and expanded ship loading facilities at the port of Newcastle. I understand, as the member said, there is community concern in the Hunter about coaldust emanating from the top of coal wagons. The Government is aware of community issues and concerns regarding coal transport and potential health impacts. The regulation of dust emissions from mines, trains and terminals is the responsibility of the Environment Protection Authority. The authority has directed the Australian Rail Track Corporation to investigate the contribution of coaldust from trains to the overall level of particulate pollution in the Newcastle area as part of its environmental licence.

Both the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the community Coal Terminal Action Group recently released studies into coaldust, but the results are not agreed. An independent review is working with the Environment Protection Authority and the Australian Rail Track Corporation to resolve the outstanding issues. I have asked Transport for NSW to monitor progress on this matter. Certainly Transport for NSW will support the Environment Protection Authority's efforts to resolve coaldust issues by working with freight operators to ensure that all practical steps are taken to manage the issue. I share the member's concerns. We need to make sure we get it right.

ROAD TOLL

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Could the Minister update the House on the Government's concerns about yesterday's horrific day on the State's roads?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am sure all members would agree that yesterday was a tragic day on our roads, with seven people killed in separate accidents. Those seven people thought yesterday morning that they would be home for dinner. The families of those seven people thought they would be home that night as well. Their lives have changed forever. As the Minister for Roads and Ports, and like many members in this House, as a husband, a father and a grandfather, I was gutted yesterday when I was travelling and received message, after message, after message about the carnage that had occurred on our roads.

These events cannot be sugar-coated. It was one of the worst days on the State's roads for almost a year. There were five unrelated incidents in different locations across the State: a man and a woman were killed instantly when their motor scooter crashed into a car and then went under a truck and trailer at Haberfield; another man and woman died when their car crashed into a tree near Lake Innes; a man died when his car hit a tree at Arakoon; a young woman was killed on the northern beaches; and an 84-year-old man died after being hit by a car at Banora Point. Sadly, in one case it appears that a young lady may have been using her mobile phone when the accident occurred.

Police crash investigators are examining each crash, but early indications reveal that speed, fatigue and distraction were factors in yesterday's crashes. The devastation to the families of those killed is incalculable. The cost to the community is enormous. Each year it is estimated that crashes cost the community \$5.37 billion. Currently the road toll in New South Wales stands at 223 for the year, which is 21 fewer than for this time last year. Yesterday's fatalities would certainly affect that figure. Whilst the road toll is trending downwards and in the past two years we have seen the lowest death tolls on our roads for more than 60 years, people still need to realise that they must drive carefully and according to road conditions.

A government can do only so much to ensure that motorists remain safe. Road safety is a partnership between a government and motorists. The people who use our roads need to meet us halfway. The Government has spent record amounts of money on upgrading roads to make them safer. Speeds have been reduced on some roads and education campaigns have been introduced so people think about road safety. If that is not enough, a large number of deterrents have been rolled out in the form of speed cameras across the State. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: We need to work together so that people are spared the heart-wrenching news that their loved ones have perished. On behalf of the House, I extend our heartfelt deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those lost yesterday.

GARDEN ISLAND NAVAL BASE

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, representing the Premier. Given that there are many businesses throughout the State that rely on servicing the defence industry in New South Wales, will the Minister comment on what impact today's announcement by the Prime Minister to move the naval base from Garden Island will have on the defence industry and its related small and medium business enterprises throughout New South Wales? Will the Premier commit to turning back the boats to New South Wales?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: We have a Premier in New South Wales who is prepared to confront those who are going to do their absolute worst for this State's economy.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I cannot hear the Minister because of the audible conversations coming from Government members. The Minister will be heard in silence.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: He went to Garden Island this morning in preparation to confront the Prime Minister head-on. Quite simply, he wanted to hear the Prime Minister's words. He wanted to hear about the financial impact that this decision would have on this State's economy, which will be played out as a result of this thought bubble to move personnel.

[*Interruption*]

The KPMG report has looked at the employment numbers in relation to Garden Island and what that naval base means to the State's economy.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Do you not care about the strategic interests of Australia?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Here we go. We are hearing from members opposite about strategic needs. The only strategic needs they should be interested in is how to save their proverbial backsides when they are told by the Australian community that they have had an absolute gutful. To come up with a decision such as this—

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: I have two points of order. First, the Minister should address his questions through the President and not respond to people on this side of the Chamber. Second, my point of order is relevance. The original question was not about the Federal election; it was about Garden Island.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are no points of order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Despite the Commonwealth white paper concerning the future needs of the defence force, all of a sudden there is a thought bubble from the Prime Minister that, somehow, taking the concept to North Queensland may well be good for his electoral chances and, somehow, the people of New South Wales will be happy about it. This is despite the fact that there will be significant economic costs and despite the fact it will cost billions of dollars to move it. Imagine what we could do with the billions of dollars that will be spent as a result of this thought bubble. We could make an investment in defence, in health or any area of this State or country. But, no, this is simply an electoral thought bubble from a Prime Minister who is writing his policies on the back of beer coasters that he picks up in chairmen's lounges as he moves from State to State.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: On the Bavarian beer cafe coaster.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: On the Bavarian beer café coaster. When we heard this announcement, the people of this State were shocked.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Shocked.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: We were shocked. When the Prime Minister made these comments, the New South Wales Premier said, "Damn whatever I am doing this morning. I am going down to confront this guy head-on and let him understand the financial impact it will have."

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: And Andrew Stoner went as well.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: The Deputy Premier was with him. We work as a team for the people of New South Wales.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Government members will contain their enthusiasm.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: The Prime Minister's only response was to refer to the Premier as grumpy because he said he wants to protect this State's economic growth. He understands the value that Woolloomooloo and Garden Island bring not just to Sydney but also to the State's economy and the national economy. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer, particularly in respect of how the defence families across New South Wales will be affected by this decision?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: There is no doubt there will be a significant economic—

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Point of order: My point of order is that the supplementary question is out of order because the Hon. Paul Green was seeking the Minister to elucidate his answer in relation to the impact on defence families in New South Wales and the Minister did not mention that in his answer.

The Hon. Paul Green: To the point of order: My question was about the small to medium business enterprises that are made up of families.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I thank both honourable members for their contributions, but the rulings of past Presidents are quite clear: Once the Minister has commenced his answer, no further point of order can be taken on the question.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I will not labour the point; I will not labour the fact that the Labor Party wants to rip millions of dollars out of our State's economy. I will not labour the point that all of those small businesses in this State and in this city that rely on Garden Island, and all of the civilians who go there every day to work are gone if the base is closed down. There is only one way that we are going to protect

those jobs and protect Garden Island and its strategic involvement in the city, and that is to get rid of the Federal Labor Government. In only a very short time the pain will be over and we will no longer have to suffer Kevin Rudd.

ASSISTED BOARDING HOUSES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing and Minister for Disability Services. Why has the Government removed the ban on children living in boarding houses, given the fact that such a ban has been in place for more than 20 years?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for the question and for giving me a further opportunity to talk about boarding houses. As I was saying earlier, there are currently 23 assisted boarding houses providing 526 beds across New South Wales. The 2013 regulations require the authorised operator of an assisted boarding house to notify the director general if a person under 18 years of age is residing in an assisted boarding house. In addition to the requirement under section 122 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to notify Ageing, Disability and Home Care [ADHC] of the presence of a young person, residential accommodation providers are required to inform the Family and Community Services immediately if they believe a resident is a child aged under 17 years who is living away from home.

The screening tool for entry into licenced residential centres, now known as authorised assisted boarding houses, is used to determine a person's eligibility to live in an assisted boarding house. Since the introduction of the screening tool in 2010, no persons under the age of 18 years have been assessed for entry into an assisted boarding house. There are no young people under the age of 18 years residing in assisted boarding houses in New South Wales. The Boarding Houses Act 2012 introduced many long overdue measures to improve the quality of boarding house accommodation, including mandatory registration of boarding houses with NSW Fair Trading, mandatory building inspections by local councils, stronger powers for entry and inspections with tougher penalties for non-compliance, occupancy agreements for residents, and standards covering issues such as staffing, safety and single-occupation rooms.

Since the commencement of the legislation, NSW Fair Trading has advised that 521 boarding houses have been registered across the State. These include the 16 boarding houses licensed by Ageing, Disability and Home Care to accommodate people with disability. Ageing, Disability and Home Care has established a centralised team of experienced compliance officers who will be responsible for monitoring boarding houses. Particular attention will be paid by Ageing, Disability and Home Care to those boarding houses that accommodate people with a disability.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Point of order: The question was very specifically about children being allowed into boarding houses under the new regulations. I question the relevance of the Minister's answer and ask that you draw him back to the specific question that was asked.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has been generally relevant in his response to the question asked. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I was saying, Ageing, Disability and Home Care has established a centralised team of experienced compliance officers who will be responsible for monitoring boarding houses. Particular attention will be paid by Ageing, Disability and Home Care to those boarding houses that accommodate people with a disability. The new compliance officers have received comprehensive and thorough training, including from the NSW Ombudsman, to ensure that they provide a high-quality and consistent response to any issues identified within the State's boarding houses. Ageing, Disability and Home Care has been holding forums with the operators of boarding houses licensed to accommodate people with a disability about the new service requirements. Operators have not only supported these forums but they have requested ongoing meetings.

ARTS AND DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on activities being undertaken to support access and inclusion in the areas of the arts, and sport and recreation for people with a disability?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question. The Government is committed to breaking down barriers to inclusion, making it easier for people to be involved in communities, and

enhancing cultural, creative, sporting and recreational opportunities. Artists with disability have a valuable and important contribution to make to the State's artistic and cultural life. Ageing, Disability and Home Care provided \$1.5 million in 2011-12 and 2012-13 under Stronger Together 2 to boost inclusion in the arts and culture activities for people with disability in New South Wales. The NSW Arts and Disability Partnership 2012-14 between Arts NSW and Family and Community Services is in its second year. This partnership aims to boost inclusion for people with disability as audience members, participants and creators in artistic and cultural life.

Results from this partnership include 27 local art projects delivering opportunities for people with disability to get involved in a range of arts and cultural activities including dance, theatre, writing, multimedia, music, ceramics, sculpture and visual arts. Many of the projects will involve public presentations or performances, as well as displays and exhibitions. Displays and performances celebrating the creative lives and achievements of artists with a disability are an effective way to raise awareness about disability in the community and to break down attitudinal barriers. As part of the partnership, a professional development grant program for New South Wales artists with disability resulted in 12 artists receiving individual grants of up to \$10,000 to develop skills in their chosen art form in 2012-13. The second round of grants supports professional development of individual artists with disability, and will open later in 2013.

All Australians are aware that sport has a unique ability to transcend barriers and plays a vital role in enhancing the lives of those with disability, such as developing self-esteem and promoting healthy and active lifestyles. People with disability should have an equal opportunity to contribute and showcase sporting achievements, and to access quality sporting activities. Ageing, Disability and Home Care provided \$250,000 in funding to Sport and Recreation in 2012-13 under Stronger Together 2 to boost inclusion in sport and recreation pursuits for people with disability in New South Wales. The funds will support nine State sporting organisations to increase the participation in mainstream sports of people with disability in both playing and non-playing capacities.

Organisations will also introduce a range of volunteering and officiating roles for people with disability, which will provide meaningful involvement in the community and employment-related skills training. Funding support has been provided to develop online resources, including expanding the Gateway to Sport website, and developing inclusive local sports directories and local event calendars. These resources will provide the necessary information and support that will assist people with disabilities to participate in local sporting activities.

In 2013 Newcastle will play host to the inaugural Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games. Led by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics organisation was established in the 1960s to expand the sports and recreational activities available to people with an intellectual disability. The Newcastle event will provide more than 1,700 Special Olympic athletes from more than 30 countries with an opportunity to showcase their sporting talents and achievements. Ageing, Disability and Home Care, together with— [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I ask a supplementary question.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Point of order: Under Standing Order 56 (1), I ask that the Minister table the document from which he has been reading.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will read the standing order for the benefit of members and the Minister:

A document relating to public affairs quoted by a Minister may be ordered to be laid on the table, unless the Minister states that the document is of a confidential nature or should more properly be obtained by order.

It is the Minister's call whether he wishes to table it or not.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy to table the document when I have completed reading it if a supplementary question is asked.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Does the Hon. Amanda Fazio therefore wish to move the motion foreshadowed under Standing Order 56 (2)?

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Yes, Mr President. I move:

That the document be tabled.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Did the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox seek the call to ask a supplementary question?

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Yes, I did.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox has the call.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Will the Minister elucidate his answer?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for showing an interest in this important issue. As I was saying, Ageing, Disability and Home Care, NSW Sport and Recreation and the Department of Education and Communities jointly provided \$1.15 million in 2012 to support the Special Olympics Asia Pacific Games. More than 4,000 volunteers, 600 coaches and an estimated 200,000 spectators will attend. Ageing, Disability and Home Care has provided a further one-off grant of \$200,000 in 2012-13 to support Special Olympics infrastructure.

Through the Special Olympics people with intellectual disabilities can discover skills that allow them to improve their health, develop their self-confidence and bring joy to themselves, their families and communities. The Special Olympics relies almost entirely on volunteers to deliver sporting programs across New South Wales in a range of sports. It provides a continuum of opportunities from amateur to professional, and takes a targeted approach for younger athletes. The Special Olympics can also provide pathways to mainstream sports, thereby supporting goals of inclusion. As resolved by the House, I table the document entitled, "Access and Participation in Arts and Sports for People with a Disability: Budget Estimates 2013".

Document tabled.

POLITICAL LOBBYING

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, representing the Premier. Will the Premier follow the example of the Minister for Finance and Services and implement a total government-wide ban on Ministers meeting with professional lobbyists?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: As the honourable member has requested, I will refer the question to the Premier.

ASSISTED BOARDING HOUSES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister advise the House of what child protection risk assessment he has received in relation to the Government's decision to lift the ban on children in boarding houses?

The PRESIDENT: Order! There was lot of noise coming from Government members that made it difficult for the Minister to hear the question. The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane will ask his question again.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Will the Minister advise the House of what child protection risk assessment he has received in relation to the Government's decision to lift the ban on children in boarding houses?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I indicated earlier, all boarding house operators are required to comply with section 122 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, which requires persons who provides residential accommodation to a person who they reasonably believe to be a child under the age of 16 years living away from home without parental permission to immediately inform community services. Family and Community Services [FACS], which is responsible for the authorisation and operation of assisted boarding houses, regularly monitors the boarding houses register for the presence of children and young people in boarding houses. When Family and Community Services staff become aware of a child or young person living in either a general or assisted boarding house the staff visit that person to assess any action that needs to be taken. The risk of homelessness is addressed in any action considered.

Clause 13 of the Boarding Houses Regulation also requires proprietors of assisted boarding houses to report the presence of children and young people to the Director General of Family and Community Services. Section 85 of the Act also provides that where a person under the age of 18 with additional needs is residing in an unauthorised assisted boarding house, that person's parents or guardians will be asked to remove that person

from the premises. If this cannot or does not occur the young person is taken to be a child or young person in need of care and protection for the purposes of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and may be subject to action by the director general for his or her protection.

BUSHFIRE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the results of the 2012-13 Prepare Act Survive bushfire awareness campaign?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. Around this time last year I spoke about the need for the community to be better prepared for the bushfire season. Research conducted by the Rural Fire Service [RFS] found that the majority of people did not have a plan for what to do during a fire, despite most people knowing that they should have a plan. The level of complacency in the community needed to be addressed. That is why the Rural Fire Service launched the Prepare Act Survive public awareness campaign in 2012-13 to build on the success of previous campaigns. The campaign had a very simple message, namely, planning to make a plan is not a plan.

The Government committed \$2.3 million in the 2012-13 budget to the first year of this new three-year campaign to ensure that we continue to raise community awareness about the potential dangers posed by bushfires. The advertisements, which aired on television across the State, showed how people were risking their lives and their homes by not making a plan. These advertisements were backed up by a comprehensive radio, outdoor, online and print advertising campaign across New South Wales and were complemented by extensive work by Rural Fire Service volunteers.

During the last bushfire season we saw how devastating bushfires can be. Areas such as Coonabarabran, the Shoalhaven, Cooma, the Bega Valley and Yass were amongst the hardest hit. A total of 57 homes were destroyed across the season. Time and time again throughout the season we saw how important it is for people to have a plan. I am pleased to inform the House that last season the campaign had strong success in getting this message across. During the period of the campaign more than 68,000 bushfire survival plans were downloaded from the Rural Fire Service website. That does not include the thousands that were handed out by brigades across the State. In addition, 71 per cent of people who had a bushfire survival plan completed it. That is up from 50 per cent at the end of the 2011-12 bushfire season.

The research shows that the level of preparedness and confidence was at its highest. Fifty per cent of people stated that they were confident or very confident, and 46 per cent stated that they were prepared or very prepared. The campaign sent very strong messages. Sixty per cent of people recalled the campaign unprompted, and 69 per cent recalled the tagline "Prepare Act Survive". Those are very positive outcomes. I congratulate the NSW Rural Fire Service on its efforts in facilitating community preparedness through this outstanding campaign and other community awareness initiatives. I look forward to updating the House as we approach the 2013-14 fire season on the need to have a plan.

BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT SITE

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: My question is directed to the Hon. John Ajaka, representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. What are the estimated New South Wales Government costs of infrastructure required for the Badgerys Creek airport, such as roads, rail, sewerage and water?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his very detailed question for which I will seek a response from the Minister.

DOG CONTROL

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing and Minister for Disability Services, representing the Minister for Local Government. Given that this past weekend a mother was injured rescuing her two-year-old child from a dangerous dog attack in which two police officers also suffered serious injuries, will the Minister advise the House when legislation will finally be introduced to better protect the community against dangerous dogs?

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I acknowledge the question asked by the honourable member. I will refer it to the Minister for Local Government for a response.

CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Will the Minister update the House on action the Government is taking to accommodate the cruise industry in Sydney Harbour?

[Interruption]

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I love that interjection, cruising for a bruising. The Government is a strong supporter of the cruise industry in New South Wales and particularly in Sydney Harbour. To support the cruise industry the Government is committing more than \$100 million to cruise infrastructure in Sydney Harbour. Of this total, \$57 million is for the construction of the domestic passenger terminal at White Bay, which was opened earlier this year and is doing a terrific job. In addition, an estimated \$50 million is for the future redevelopment of the overseas passenger terminal to improve operating efficiency, to enable the terminal to accommodate larger cruise ships and turn them round more quickly, and to have something that reflects the grandeur of our harbour.

That is in stark contrast to what we heard today from the Prime Minister, who is just interested in political stunts. We are a bit greedy in New South Wales: We want a cruise industry and the Navy. The Labor Party only offer us one choice. It hates the Navy. It does not like naval personnel. The cruise industry is of the utmost importance to the Government and we would certainly like to expand to Garden Island. But we do not want to lose the 4,000 jobs that are associated with the naval establishment in New South Wales. Jobs in Western Sydney—the Labor Party does not care. I knew yesterday morning—

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I knew yesterday morning that the Labor Party was in decline and that its internal polling must have shown that it had real trouble, because it let out Anthony Albanese—a bloke who has had a shocker of an election campaign. He was let out on the fast rail—a different fast rail to the one he announced at the last election. This thought bubble—

The Hon. Steve Whan: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The Minister was asked a question about the cruise ship industry and what the State Government is doing. He has strayed a long way from that to talk about fast rail proposals.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has, for most of his answer, been generally relevant to the question asked. There is no point of order.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am coming very rapidly to the point. It was another thought bubble—a \$52 billion down payment from the taxpayers of Australia with a \$114 billion cost at the end. That was the thought bubble of Anthony Albanese. The thought bubble of Kevin Rudd today would cost New South Wales big time.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: The question was specifically about the cruise ship industry. We have now been talking at some length about the very fast trains, which have nothing to do with the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister was clearly linking his remarks.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Labor Party will do anything— *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. MARIE FICARRA: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his response on the cruise industry?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for her question. This is an important issue for New South Wales and the cruise industry. We need both in New South Wales. We need a cruise industry that is viable coming into the best harbour in the world—

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: In the Navy—

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Sophie Cotsis wants to sing Village People songs she should leave the Chamber.

The Hon. Michael Gallacher: If she starts singing *If I Could Turn Back Time*, I'll follow her on the *Missouri*.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council is channelling his inner Cher. We want both industries in New South Wales and we are unapologetic about it. We need the industries for jobs. In relation to the thought bubble, Neil James, the head of the Australian Defence Association, said that Kevin Rudd wants to move jobs to Queensland to save his job. That is what it is about: It is about the Labor Party looking after itself. Kevin Rudd looks like losing his seat. He wants to sacrifice your jobs and other jobs in New South Wales so that he can keep his job.

The Opposition does not care about New South Wales. Who tweeted that he was in favour of the idea? It was the former member for Monaro. He wants jobs to leave New South Wales and go to Queensland. He was one of the first supporters of this idea. Labor does not care about New South Wales. The sooner the Federal election comes, the sooner we will have a good Government in Canberra. The sooner we have a Government that cares about New South Wales and about jobs in Western Sydney, the better off we will be— [*Time expired.*]

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY NSW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Hon. JAN BARHAM: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services. On International Day of People with Disability last December, the then Minister for Disability Services, Andrew Constance, released the National Disability Strategy NSW Implementation Plan 2012-14. A progress report is due to be released this year, listing outcomes against the key performance indicators. Will the Minister provide an update on the progress of this report, who is being consulted, and when this report will be released?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the Hon. Jan Barham for her question. My understanding is that the report is being prepared. If I am correct, it will be released later this year or early next year. I will take the question on notice because I want to be sure that the dates are correct. I recollect that all agencies are required to provide appropriate details by filing a report. I will take the question on notice so that I can obtain the exact details for the member.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: The time for questions has expired. Members who wish to ask further questions should place them on notice and they will be answered in the normal course.

Questions without notice concluded.

CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY

Personal Explanation

The Hon. STEVE WHAN, by leave: Earlier during question time, Minister Gay referred to comments I made on Twitter today, which actually stated:

Hawke review said Navy & cruise ships incompatible at Garden Island for anything but occasional use, we need cruise facility east of bridge

Big cruise ships need specialised facilities, O'Farrell should work with Feds to get room at Garden Island not play politics

That was not what the Minister suggested I said. He misrepresented my statements.

The Hon. Melinda Pavey: How did you get that in?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leave was granted for a personal explanation and leave was not withdrawn.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON SENTENCING OF CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT OFFENDERS**Membership**

The PRESIDENT: I report the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly:

MR PRESIDENT

The Legislative Assembly desires to inform the Legislative Council that the following members of the Legislative Assembly have been nominated to serve as members on the Joint Select Committee on Sentencing of Child Sexual Assault Offenders:

Mr Charles Casuscelli
Mr Troy Grant
Mr Paul Lynch
Ms Gabrielle Upton

Legislative Assembly
27 August 2013

THOMAS GEORGE
Deputy-Speaker

MINISTRY

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I inform the House that on 5 August 2013 the following Ministers were designated as Senior Ministers:

The Hon. Jillian Gel Skinner, MP
The Hon. Adrian Piccoli, MP
The Hon. Bradley Ronald Hazzard, MP
The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP
The Hon. Michael Bruce Baird, MP
The Hon. Andrew James Constance, MP
The Hon. Gregory Eugene Smith, MP
The Hon. Pru Jane Goward, MP

Pursuant to sessional orders debate on committee reports proceeded with.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**Report: Review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981**

Debate resumed from 9 May 2013.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK [5.03 p.m.]: I am pleased to speak to the third report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters of the Fifty-fifth Parliament, which reviews the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. This comprehensive review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 is the result of significant changes to the political and electoral landscape since the Acts were originally enacted. On 23 June 2011, the Premier indicated that he would undertake a review of both Acts. Following a referral from the Premier, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters resolved on 3 April 2012 to undertake a comprehensive review of both Acts under the terms of reference included in the report, and to give consideration to whether the Acts should be amended or rewritten to promote free, open and honest elections in New South Wales.

The committee received 19 submissions from stakeholders, which included individuals, advocacy groups and political parties. It also held three public hearings on 15 June, 29 June and 24 August 2012. Evidence was taken from 28 witnesses, the list of whom can be found in appendix two to this report. Before I briefly touch on some of the issues canvassed by the committee and the recommendations in the report, I firstly commend the NSW Electoral Commissioner, Mr Colin Barry, and all the staff of the NSW Electoral Commission for their input to the inquiry and for their ongoing contribution to the work of the committee. I thank all the witnesses who appeared at the hearings for their evidence and for the contributions they made to this inquiry. I take this opportunity to thank the committee's members for their cooperation and thorough approach in the conduct of the hearings: the previous chair, Jai Rowell; other members of the Legislative Assembly—Andrew Fraser, Paul Lynch, Darryl Maguire and Gareth Ward; and members of this House—

Amanda Fazio, Trevor Khan, Peter Phelps and Peter Primrose. I also thank Hansard and the committee secretariat: Rachel Simpson, Meike Bowyer, Jonathan Elliot and Rohan Tyler for their valued assistance in preparing the report.

The report comprises nine chapters. Chapter one provides the background to the inquiry and its terms of reference. Chapters two and three look at terms and structure of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the role and functions of the NSW Electoral Commission with a recommendation by the committee that the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 be amalgamated into one new Act for New South Wales, which would provide for both the conduct of State elections and the regulation of campaign finance and expenditure. This Act should be administered by a single statutory authority. Chapter four examines local government elections and the entitlement to enrol and vote, particularly the options of automatic enrolment, the forms available to electors, and whether appropriate voting options are provided for electors with a disability and to rural and remote electors. In that chapter, the committee recommends that in drafting legislation for a new electoral Act, a lack of mental capacity that is certified by a medical practitioner would be sufficient reason for the failure of an elector to vote at an election.

Chapter five examines offences and penalties under the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. The committee makes a number of recommendations in this chapter—notably, that in drafting legislation for a new electoral Act, the Government undertake a comprehensive review of the penalties that currently apply for breaches of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912. The objects of that review should be to ensure that penalties under the new Act provide sufficient deterrence to non-compliance, and are consistent with those currently applicable under the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. Chapters six, seven and eight examine the terms and structure of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981, the role and function of the Election Funding Authority, and the operation and effectiveness of recent campaign finance reforms.

As members would be aware, significant legislative changes to the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912 and the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 were put in place prior to the 2011 election. Since the last election, many of the more significant changes have been well canvassed in this place through amending legislation to the principal Acts and, to a degree, have rectified some of the unintended and more onerous impacts that those changes had on all political parties. The committee makes a number of recommendations stemming from these three chapters. It recommends that in drafting legislation for a new electoral Act, the New South Wales Government incorporate a part in which all offences, including campaign finance related offences, are listed along with their penalty following each offence. That would enhance stakeholders' understanding of their responsibilities under the campaign finance regime.

The committee also recommends that, in drafting legislation for a new electoral Act, the New South Wales Government segregate provisions relating to political donations and electoral expenditure into separate sections. One section should cover State elections and elected members of Parliament, and the other section should cover local government elections and elected members of council, thereby mitigating the confusion and administrative difficulties created by the current provisions of part 6 of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. In addition, provisions that relate to third-party campaigners should be confined to a specific part of the Act.

The committee also heard of the need to harmonise and streamline the administration of the electoral process and the regulation of campaign finance and expenditure. For this reason, it recommends that, in drafting legislation for a new Electoral Act, the New South Wales Government address the need for a more streamlined administrative process for administering campaign finance and expenditure. The committee recommends that division 4 of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981, which relates to prohibited donors, be repealed given that the donation caps of \$2,000 and \$5,000 and the restriction on the making of political donations to individuals on the electoral roll are, in themselves, sufficient measures for achieving the objectives of the Act.

The committee also heard concerns about the current scope of electoral expenditure that qualifies for public funding and the apparent disparity between levels of public funding under the separate candidate and party claims. For this reason, the committee recommends a review of the types of electoral expenditure that qualify for public funding, and that in drafting legislation for a new electoral Act the New South Wales Government harmonise the levels of public funding that may be claimed under separate candidate and party categories. In summary, the report makes 26 recommendations. Whilst the essential principles of our

representative democracy remain valid, the committee believes that the legislative framework through which they are given effect requires modernisation. All recommendations in the report are indicative of the evidence received across a broad range of issues.

As legislators, we have a duty to facilitate this and, where the need arises, to try to improve the good health of our democratic processes through sensible and practical legislation. I urge the Government to act on these recommendations as a matter of urgency. For those members who have not read the report, I urge them to do so, and I am sure that every member will concur with all of the recommendations stemming from this inquiry. Once again, I thank the previous chair, my parliamentary colleagues, the committee secretariat for their assistance and professionalism during the inquiry, the New South Wales Electoral Commissioner, Mr Colin Barry, and all the staff of the New South Wales Electoral Commission, and everyone else who was involved in the inquiry. I commend the report 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.

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

Report: Management of Public Land in New South Wales

Debate resumed from 20 August 2013.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [5.13 p.m.], in reply: I thank all the members who contributed to the debate. I hope that this inquiry, like the inquiry into recreational fishing, will have consequences. I hope that the Government will take cognisance of the recommendations in the report. It was a tripartite report and it contains dissenting views. Nevertheless, as I have said before, where you get a bit of dissention, you know you have done your job as chair.

I thank all the members of the committee who made themselves available. It was a long and tiring inquiry over six months or more, all over the State. I also put on the record my thanks and the thanks of the committee to all those citizens who put themselves out to get to the public hearings. Some people came a very long way to have their say, which is what public inquiries are all about; that is, allowing people to put their views. In the case of public land, their views were primarily split down the middle. There were advocates for the retention of the status quo with public land and there were community people and groups who sought some change in the way that the Government managed the different tenures of public land in the State.

The key recommendations of the inquiry are designed to allow the Government to do what it did following the recreational fishing inquiry; that is, to take time to look at the recommendations, come to a view as to what it will do and, if there is to be change, to ensure the change is made in a transparent manner. The marine estate was reorganised in a very transparent way. Expert advice was taken from all over Australia and the same thing can be done if the Government wishes to adopt all or some of these recommendations.

Again I place on the record my admiration for Hansard and the way that they stick with these things. For us, it is a lot of travelling. For Hansard, they have the travelling, and they also have to handle boxes of gear and heavy suitcases full of notes and documents. I also thank the secretariat. One thing this House can take pride in is the professionalism of the committee system and the committee secretariat, which provides us with so much support. I commend the recommendations of the inquiry to the House and thank all members for their contributions.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

Report: The Use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes

Debate resumed from 20 August 2013.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [5.18 p.m.]: I speak in support of the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 report on the use of cannabis for medical purposes. I say at the outset that I am a strong supporter of the use of cannabis for medical purposes and of the reform of outdated drug laws in New South Wales. I believe that the Government should take notice of the fact that this report was unanimously adopted by

the committee, which has a fairly broad makeup of people and all the different groups of thought that one could possibly think of in this Chamber. This report was very carefully considered. We stayed within the terms of reference, which were very narrow. I believe our recommendations build on the work of the former Labor Government when the Hon. Bob Carr was Premier in looking at what we can do to provide further options for people who are suffering terribly from pain.

Of course, that was the New South Wales Working Party on the Use of Cannabis for Medical Purposes. The late 1990s saw considerable groundswell of public support for a scheme to permit the medical use of cannabis. In October 1999, then Premier the Hon. Bob Carr established a working party to investigate and report on the feasibility of using cannabis for medical purposes. Premier Carr referred to the report released by the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology as well as calls from the Australian Medical Association that cannabis may have some therapeutic value for treating a certain range of medical conditions. Professor Wayne Hall, the then executive director of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, was appointed to lead the investigation.

In August 2000 the working party delivered its report, which found that some cannabinoids may have value in treating HIV-related wasting, chemotherapy-induced nausea, muscle spasm in some neurological disorders, and pain that was unrelieved by conventional treatments. The report recognised the need for more scientific research in this area and expressed the view that crude cannabis could not and was unlikely to ever be prescribed in Australia. In 2000 the working party also acknowledged some commercial and regulatory obstacles to medical prescription of synthetic cannabinoid substances in Australia.

That report made 24 recommendations, including that the New South Wales Government conduct more scientific research to evaluate the medical benefit of cannabis; identify more effective and safer ways to administer cannabis, that is, other than smoking or consuming the plant directly; and also to develop a compassionate scheme in the interim to provide access to cannabis to provide relief for patients with serious medical conditions. Unfortunately, that program stalled and even though in May 2003 Premier Carr announced his intention to launch a four-year trial of the medical use of cannabis, it did not proceed. It is worth noting that in 2003 the then Opposition supported the proposal on the condition that the cultivation and distribution of cannabis and the eligibility criteria for participants were kept under tight control. However, the proposed trial of the medical use of cannabis did not proceed.

The recommendations of this recent inquiry certainly keep the eligibility criteria for participants under tight control and look carefully at the cultivation and distribution of cannabis. The current Government has not yet responded to the report. It would be worthwhile for all of us to look at the benefits that can be gained by the community if this report's recommendations were adopted. I am sure all members are aware—if not, they should be—that in many states in the United States medical cannabis regimes have been introduced successfully to provide alternatives for people for whom existing pain medication programs do not work. Members probably are aware also that a number of European countries have decriminalised all drugs on the basis that the so-called war on drugs launched by President Richard Nixon all those years ago was nothing but a waste of time and money. In fact, it criminalised individual drug users and allowed massive markets of illicit drugs to flourish.

Taking that into account, we need to ask: What is a compassionate answer to deal with people who have chronic pain that cannot be addressed by any other method? This report is realistic; it does not say that the use of medicinal cannabis will be the answer for all people. It says that medicinal cannabis ought to be proposed as an option to allow those suffering chronic pain and/or terminal illnesses a little more comfort and dignity in their last few days, weeks and months of life. We are not suggesting that someone could rock up to their local doctor and say, "I've got chronic back pain and I'm only 25 and I'm likely to live till I'm 85. Therefore I need to be prescribed medical cannabis for the next 60 years."

The recommendations in this report do not propose that. However, if a 25-year-old person were referred by their medical specialist to have medicinal cannabis as they were suffering a painful terminal illness that was not responding to conventional pain relief programs, this scheme would cover them. That is what we should focus on, not the scare campaigns that, undoubtedly, will come from some quarters about the dangers of cannabis. The committee was careful to note that it did not promote that people smoke anything, let alone cannabis for medicinal purposes, and referred to cannabis that could be taken in other ways. The committee referred to cannabis products rather than people smoking crude cannabis and made a number of recommendations. Recommendation 1 states:

That the Minister for Health write to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing, expressing in principal support for:

- ☐ the timely, evidence based expansion of access to approved cannabis pharmacotherapies by additional patient groups, including those suffering from chronic pain for whom existing pain management is not effective;
- ☐ further clinical trials of pharmaceutical cannabis products to continue to build this evidence base; and
- ☐ approved pharmaceutical cannabis products to be affordable to patients.

Some pharmaceutical products are available overseas and here, but they are expensive. We know also that some cancer drugs are so expensive that only rich cancer patients can afford to get relief and poorer people cannot—those who rely on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. We want patients to be able to afford these medications. Recommendation 2 states:

That the NSW Government introduce an amendment to the *Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985* to add a complete defence to the use and possession of cannabis, so as to cover the authorised medical use of cannabis by patients with terminal illness and those who have moved from HIV infection to AIDS.

The report then sets out the details of how that system would work. Recommendation 3 states:

That, consistent with Recommendation 2, the NSW Ministry of Health establish and administer a register of "authorised cannabis patients and carers" certified by the patient's treating specialist medical practitioner and issue patients and carers on this register with a photo identity card verifying that they qualify for exemption from arrest and prosecution.

Recommendation 4 states:

That the NSW Ministry of Health and Department of Attorney General and Justice give further and detailed consideration to the issues surrounding lawful supply of crude cannabis products for medical purposes.

Recommendation 5 states:

That the NSW Ministry of Health implement an education strategy to accompany the legislative amendment set out in Recommendation 2 to inform the medical profession, community and relevant patient groups about the intentions and provisions made under the amendment. This should include information for patients about the harms that accompany smoking cannabis, and alternative forms of administration.

Cannabis can be ingested in a variety of ways, but the popular method used in the United States by those who do not want to smoke it is to vaporise it. They receive a controlled dose without any problems associated with smoking crude cannabis. At the press conference held to release the report the press raised the issue that those deemed authorised cannabis patients—which means not that they are prescribed cannabis but they are deemed to be someone captured by the scheme—would be buying cannabis illegally. I agreed that did happen, but I drew an analogy to the sale of X-rated DVDs in New South Wales. I recommend the report to the House.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [5.28 p.m.]: I commend the report of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 regarding the use of cannabis for medical purposes. I acknowledge the excellent contribution of the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, our committee chair, the committee staff and members who helped us achieve a unified outcome on this complex issue. Unfortunately, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell could not be in the Chamber today as she is on leave to look after her newborn daughter. I congratulate her and her husband, Ant, on the recent arrival of their daughter and wish them every happiness as they embark on their parenthood journey. As Dr John Kaye stated, the committee's members came from a diverse background and had different perspectives but, in the end, produced a unanimous report.

I am a very proud conservative, so any discussion about relaxing attitudes towards drugs was always going to be a big call. Therefore, I congratulate those who appeared before the committee because many had strong and informed views about the pros and cons of the use of cannabis for medical purposes. My own experience in trying various natural remedies to keep my body in shape has influenced me not to close my mind to alternatives. Recommendation 1 in the report states that the Minister for Health write to the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing suggesting that a timely and evidence-based approach be implemented to expand access to approved cannabis pharmacotherapies for additional patient groups. This is supported by evidence from overseas that there are cannabis-based products that provide both palliative and therapeutic benefits for certain classes of patients.

Committee members took evidence from a variety of individuals, none of whom were in opposition to that recommendation. The contentious issue for the committee related to patients with terminal illness or those whose condition had deteriorated from the human immunodeficiency virus [HIV] to the fully blown acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS]. For these classes of patients, who, in the last few years of their lives were suffering substantial pain and discomfort and for whom other classes of drugs were shown not to work, we recommended the provision of a complete defence from arrest and prosecution for the use and possession of up to 15 grams of dried cannabis. Likewise for the carers of such people, the committee recommended the provision of a card. However, the committee acknowledged during its deliberations that this was a difficult issue for police and some members of society.

Members were moved by the evidence of a particular individual who had been through what could only be described as a near-death experience during cancer treatment and for whom the illegal consumption of

cannabis provided substantial relief. The graphic description of the pain and relief, together with the scientific evidence of the virtues of allowing raw cannabis to a small class of patients, were enough to move committee members to make this recommendation. The recommendation recognises the profound pain and suffering of those who are at the end of their lives, the large amount of cannabis that is already available in our society and that some people in those situations are self-medicating with cannabis. To continue to expose some of the most vulnerable people in our State to criminal prosecution at the most desperate point in their lives would be inhumane. The committee did not address the difficult issue of supply. However, the committee acknowledged the reality that a large amount of cannabis is being traded in Australia and New South Wales and that in many cases such patients are already self-medicating.

Recommendation 3 stated that the New South Wales Ministry of Health establish and administer a registry of authorised cannabis patients and carers and issue them with identification that verifies they are exempt from arrest and prosecution. This is a substantial step forward for a small number of individuals in New South Wales who are suffering an enormously debilitating and painful condition. As Dr John Kaye stated, this report is not about legalising cannabis and creating a new class of drug users. It is simply about recognising the individuals who are suffering appallingly and creating an opportunity for them. I thank the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the chair of the committee, and the committee secretariat, who worked long and hard on this inquiry. It was a complex issue that required sound advice and guidance, and the committee members were well supported. I commend the report to the House and encourage the Government to adopt all of the recommendations in the report.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [5.31 p.m.]: I raise further issues that come out of this report. If we accept the principle that it is acceptable for people to use marijuana for medicinal purposes, why should it not be expanded to include all people? After all, if the basic premise is that marijuana does not pose a significant health risk either to the physical or mental health of a person—

The Hon. Adam Searle: They are dying, Peter.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Is your view that we should expedite their death by using marijuana? That is an interesting point of view. The point is: If marijuana is not as severe as we believe, then perhaps it should be more widely available. This is a debate that should be had. I quote none other than David Cameron, the then—

The Hon. Trevor Khan: As a libertarian I thought he would stand up and say we did not go far enough.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Just wait, just wait. I quote none other than David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, who, in 2002 while sitting on the Home Affairs Select Committee, said:

If we get this right we will have the chance to cut crime, save money, improve the health of the country and even save lives.

I think he is probably right. Prohibition leads to crime. During alcohol prohibition in the 1920s, bootleggers created and controlled the black market. The same is true today with the drugs market. From creation and transportation through to the sale and then use, we criminalise each step. Drug users will always exist and in the eyes of the law they are all criminals. In 2001 in Portugal drugs were decriminalised, and the rates for drug-related crime have dropped from 44 per cent to 21 per cent in 10 years. I am a big supporter of zero tolerance policing. Zero tolerance and tougher policing is good, but only if we approach drugs differently.

Are we really prepared to criminalise a substantial portion of the population whose only "crime" is to engage in recreational drug use? At present, we spend millions of dollars a year on the war on drugs. If Australia follows Britain and America's lead in terms of policing, then the cost of zero tolerance will dramatically escalate. A regulated market would bring considerable tax revenue into the State and the country. It is not just crime and cost that would drop if we had a bolder approach to drugs. We would, as David Cameron said, "improve the health of the country and even save lives". Using Portugal as a model, we know that decriminalisation leads to better health. A study from the Cato Institute, which is hardly the most left-wing think-tank on the earth—

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: For once the Whip is making sense and it should not be tolerated.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Jan Barham): Order! There is no point of order.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Between 1999 and 2003 in Portugal, a study by the Cato Institute found that drug rehabilitation rose from 6,040 to 14,877, and fewer drug-addicted users reduce the number of those who steal to feed their habits: drug-related HIV cases dropped from 1,400 in 2000 to just 400 in 2006. A study published by the *American Journal of Public Health* found that decriminalisation of softer drugs, as has occurred in the Netherlands, reduces the chance that users will progress to harder substances. In all instances of health, the decriminalisation model proved to be far superior to our own model. A regulated market could solve many of the issues with drugs such as ecstasy because adulterated tablets would not be produced or used. Regulation could ensure that a product such as heroin was always at the same strength, therefore reducing many accidental overdose deaths and allowing for the closure of facilities such as the drug-injecting rooms in Kings Cross. While drug dealers control the market, teenagers who cannot legally purchase alcohol can purchase drugs with ease. This is immoral and dangerous.

I will address a few of the concerns often raised about either decriminalisation or a legalised market. Firstly, that drug use would dramatically rise. I address this from a theoretical perspective. Why would it necessarily rise given that, on any day, anyone who seriously wants drugs can find them? If the market is already being catered for, why would there be a necessary rise occasioned by decriminalisation? We should consider Portugal as the practical example. While it is true that the number of those who tried drugs increased by around 5 per cent, in the six years between 2001 and 2007 the number of people who took drugs at least once a year rose by only 0.3 per cent. This is a minor increase and, I argue, well within the bounds of surveying, which would often be the result in relation to false answers regarding drug use under a criminalised regime. There are fears that countries would become drug hotspots for tourists. The same fears were expressed in Portugal prior to decriminalisation and yet less than 5 per cent of drug misdemeanours after decriminalisation were committed by non-Portuguese.

The final concern is that drugs are dangerous and should be illegal. I make no bones about this. It is absolutely clear from the literature that marijuana is a trigger for those who potentially have a mental illness, schizophrenia in particular. It is undeniable that that is the case. This leads into my final argument. Alcohol and tobacco are commonly recognised as more dangerous than many illegal drugs and almost all recreational drugs, yet they are both legal. Essentially, it comes down to a question of liberty. We should be free to choose what we do with our bodies and any restriction to the contrary is a nanny approach that we Liberals should oppose.

We need to reform the drugs policy in this country; our laws are outdated, based upon fear and routinely ignore science and criminology. The war on drugs, and their prohibition, has resolutely failed. It is high time that we as Liberals recognise this and start a debate on drug reform. What would this new system look like? Let us take a look into the future. Prisons would empty. Bkie and other ethnic gangs would be immediately deprived of their illicit power, and some may even go legit. We need only look at the United States experience with prohibition where a famous bootlegger, Mr Kennedy, eventually ended up a highly respected member of Massachusetts society and was eventually made Ambassador to the Court of St James.

As I said earlier, there would be no net change in drug use because, at the current time, anyone who wants to get hold of illegal drugs can get them. Legalisation would do nothing more than force manufacturers to identify themselves and leave themselves open to tortious legal action if they produced a bad batch. I am sure there would be plenty of tort lawyers out there who would be happy to take on the case if someone found a decomposing snail in their ecstasy tablet. There is also an imperative of health costs, which steer people away from drugs. One matter we have to address is whether we are going to continue to pay for people to misuse their bodies. There should be consequences for them by way of the payment of additional costs through the health system. We cannot have freeloaders under this system. If those on the Left are not prepared to accept this, then they should not be calling for drug law reform. Deprived of a core source of miscreants, the prisons would slowly empty, and police would have more time to crack down on offences against property and persons, the real violations of civil liberties, rather than busting dealers and junkies.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN [5.42 p.m.]: I will briefly speak to the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 report on the use of cannabis for medical purposes. I was a member of this committee. In a sense, I was a reluctant participant. It is a fraught subject and, quite frankly, I thought that little good would come from the inquiry. I was wrong. Unbeknownst to me, all the committee members approached the subject in a moderate and thoughtful way and the issue did not become politicised, as I had expected. I think the reason was that the terms of reference for the inquiry were limited. Notwithstanding the contribution made by the Hon. Peter Phelps, this inquiry was not about drug law reform; it was about providing assistance to those who

are dying. It was about making sensible decisions for those at the end stages of their life. It was not about setting records or trying to reform the world. It was not about whether cannabis is good or bad for us. Like so many drugs in our society, if abused it is bad for us.

If we smoke tobacco, it will eventually kill us. If we drink alcohol, it will affect our liver; and if we abuse it, it will kill us. Alcohol is the cause of violence in so many households, so many public places and so many pubs. In this inquiry the committee was considering people in the end stages of their life. The question we were all confronted with was: What would we want for our family members and our friends? What would we want for ourselves?

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Palliative care.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I will respond to that interjection about palliative care. Palliative care is spoken of as the panacea for all. It is not. Palliative care has made rapid improvements over the past decade or so but it does not provide all the answers. I do not want to go through the still raw subject of the death of my father. He was not assisted by palliative care and he died a miserable death lying in his own faeces. I hear references to palliative care, yet I saw a man die a miserable death over three years. It offends my sensibility to be told that palliative care would have made his life better.

I think of people like Paul O'Grady, who gave evidence before our committee. He was suffering badly from the effects of AIDS, and he shared with us the intimate and terrible details. During his time in St Vincent's Hospital he was unable to take any food because of the combination of drugs and the disease that wracked his body. He told us that the only way he could get some relief was from the use of cannabis oil. He did not come before the committee to give us a lecture on the decriminalisation of drugs. He talked about gaining at least a little dignity in the end stages of his life. He talked about living minute by minute and hour by hour. He told us about the pain that was so great and the lack of appetite that was so debilitating. When people are in this miserable state, they do not talk about a miracle cure from palliative care. There is nothing left; there are no alternatives available.

The clear evidence from professors of medicine, not from quacks, was that there are discrete groups of people who will be assisted—not might but will be assisted—by access to cannabis. That evidence is irrefutable. It is not a question of the long-term use of cannabis and its debilitating effects, such as lung cancer. We are talking about people at the end stages of their life who need a little bit of help. We must consider a basic principle that underpins our society: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Surely we all would extend a hand of charity to a relative, a friend or even a stranger who has no alternative available. One might say, "Yes, I am uncomfortable about this but, like the good Samaritan and the injured man upon the road, I have to bend down and give that person a hand." That is our obligation, and the committee considered that in our recommendations. Having heard the evidence, we knew that we would be able to reach out our hand and give someone an opportunity to at least have a little dignity in the end stages of life. That is why the committee came to a consensus view that we can and should take action.

Debate adjourned on motion by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLOSURE OR DOWNSIZING OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW FACILITIES

Report: The Closure or Downsizing of Corrective Services NSW Facilities

Debate resumed from 20 August 2013.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [5.49 p.m.]: Despite the generic name of the report by the Select Committee on the Closure or Downsizing of Corrective Services NSW Facilities, the committee focused upon the thinking that went into the closure of the facility at Grafton and its impacts. I will not cover all of the aspects of the report or all of the impacts of the closure. I note at the outset that The Greens wholeheartedly welcome circumstances in which there is a good case to reduce the number of prisons because the prisoner population in the State has fallen. It is a good thing if we have a more law-abiding community and a more rational approach to the criminal justice system which means we can close aging and antiquated facilities. The Greens do not believe in keeping jails or other correctional facilities open simply to provide jobs in communities or simply because

they have always been there. That being said, when looking at the closure of a jail in a regional community, particular care and attention must be paid to the impact on the community. That did not happen in the case of the closure of the Grafton facility.

I have many criticisms of the report. It is a particularly soft report and its range of recommendations will have little, if any, ongoing impact on this kind of decision-making by governments. The report is far too kind towards the Government's lack of consultation with the local community, the families of inmates, unions and workers before it made the announcement to close the facility. Indeed, the report glosses over fundamental failings in the way Corrective Services and the Minister decided to shut down the Grafton facility and then implemented the closure of a large part of the facility. The very real concerns that councillors, community members, union representatives and employees put on record during the inquiry have not been given a fair shake in the committee's recommendations.

I will focus in particular on the impact that the closure of the Grafton facility has had on the Aboriginal community of the North Coast. I will highlight the absence of consultation before the Government made its decision and its failure to properly grapple with the issues faced by that community. The community is substantially economically disadvantaged and has strong connections to land and place on the North Coast. It was in large part ignored when the Government went about making its decision at Grafton.

I note that recommendation 3 of the report contains a generalised statement about providing support to Indigenous inmates and their families when they have been relocated. But, rather remarkably, the body of the report does not mention the fact that recommendations dating back to the 1988 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have spoken about locating facilities close to Aboriginal people's traditional lands and homes. Previous recommendations have highlighted the need to consider the placement and retention of facilities in country rather than transporting people from out of country to a distant jail. It is most disappointing to find that no recommendation has been sent to the Government and Corrective Services to look at providing facilities in country.

Such a recommendation would have included providing non-custodial solutions such as community programs as a serious option for Aboriginal offenders who will otherwise be held as inmates 500 or 600 kilometres from their home. In that regard I note the submission of Mr Heffernan, the former governor of the Grafton Correctional Centre. He is no lily-livered, Left softie. In commenting on the downsizing of the centre, he said that it would have a hugely detrimental impact on Indigenous inmates and their families. The quote from Mr Heffernan's submission is the only reference I can see in the report to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Mr Heffernan said:

In recognising the close family relationships of aborigines, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1988) recommended that indigenous offenders be held as near to their families as possible ... The decision to downsize Grafton appears in complete contradiction to this recommendation ... I know from my experience that the support and regular contact of family members greatly assists in the management of aboriginal inmates. [Many] indigenous families in the Grafton area ... lack the resource and finances required to travel extended distances. To now expect these families to travel to centres such as Kempsey or Cessnock is unreasonable and will have a detrimental effect on the overall management of local aboriginal inmates.

The report also contains an extract of a submission that is not referenced, which provides:

There is a high level of indigenous youth in the Clarence Valley and it was difficult enough for those youth to compete for jobs prior to the downsizing, it will now become even harder for them due to the larger numbers of people vying for the smaller number of job vacancies.

The impact on Indigenous inmates was referred to by the Community Legal Centres NSW. Its submission should have formed the basis of a committee recommendation, but it did not. The Community Legal Centres submitted:

Moving offenders who pose little or no risk to public safety into non-custodial sentencing arrangements can be a cheaper method to manage offenders ... if combined with the expansion of community offender services ... the closure or downsizing of prisons can have positive effects on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates, and their families ... For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders that pose a significant risk to public safety, it is desirable that they are engaged in culturally appropriate and evidence based rehabilitation programs within prison, and that their place of incarceration is as close to their home as possible.

The Community Legal Centres submission goes on to talk about the kinship bonds of Aboriginal people and the need to ensure appropriate strategies are put in place to maintain those bonds when Aboriginal inmates are in jail. It submitted:

Kinship is a defining feature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Generally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have strong networks, which means that they support each other, including those who may have been convicted of crimes ... Where appropriate, contact with their families and their community is important to the wellbeing of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. The Social Health Reference Group for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Council and National Mental Health Working Group (2004) ... describes the differences between the concepts of "social and emotional wellbeing" used in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings, and the term "mental health" used in non-Aboriginal settings. The concept of *mental health* comes more from a clinical perspective and is focused more on the individual, whereas generally within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings, [there is an] importance of connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family and community, and how these affect the individual.

The chief legal officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service, Mr John McKenzie, also made a submission. He is a man who makes many well-reasoned and careful submissions. I do not have time to read it in detail, but he essentially said that there was some divergence of opinion in the Aboriginal Legal Service. Some people thought that getting improved facilities was good for the mental health of inmates, but others were concerned about the loss of connection with country. In her submission, Ms Carol Ordish noted concerns about moving Aboriginal people hundreds of miles from place and the ongoing impact of that.

Those submissions were given scant regard by the committee. The recommendation that Corrective Services look at ways of transporting family members to visit Aboriginal inmates fails to understand their comprehensive connection with place and the limited capacity of many extended Aboriginal families to travel long distances due to their economic disadvantage. The committee also failed to look at the recommendations in the Aboriginal deaths in custody report which talked about prioritising non-custodial options. The jail was closed and the Aboriginal inmates were moved hundreds of kilometres from the place. Surely the committee should have looked at—but did not—expanding the non-custodial options for that particularly disadvantaged community on the North Coast.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [5.59 p.m.]: I support the recommendations and the report of the Select Committee on the Closure or Downsizing of Corrective Services NSW Facilities. In response to the ill-informed comments of Mr David Shoebridge, who was not a member of the committee, I assure honourable members that all of the committee members were well aware of the impact on the Indigenous communities of the North Coast of the closure of the Grafton facility and of the impact that the closure also had on inmates at Kirkconnell—the Bathurst area has a large Aboriginal community and those people were in general sent to Kirkconnell. We raised those issues. On pages 42 to 45 of the report we considered in detail the impact on Aboriginal inmates and their families. We had a number of submissions not just from community legal centres but also from the Chief Legal Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service in relation to the impact on Indigenous families of the closure of the centre. The report states:

The Committee acknowledges the submissions of those Inquiry participants who referred to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

According to Mr Shoebridge, we did not even take that into account. I think members can see the value of his comments on this report. The report also states:

Notwithstanding the comments of the Commissioner, the Committee is concerned that, as a result of the downsizing of the Grafton Correctional Centre, some Aboriginal inmates will be further away from family, friends and Country.

The Committee is concerned about the ability of the families and friends of indigenous inmates to travel to Kempsey or other correctional centres so that they can visit their loved ones, and notes the comments of Mr McKenzie [of the Aboriginal Legal Service] in particular, about the challenges that they will face.

The Committee agrees with the comments of the Aboriginal Legal Service that additional support be provided to assist family members of inmates to visit them and to facilitate other contact with them, for example, via increased allowance for telephone calls to family members be considered. Hence we recommend that Corrective Services NSW develop a strategy to provide support to indigenous inmates and their families who have been relocated to a facility that is further away from their families and/or Country as a result of the closing or downsizing of a correctional centre—

that is any of the correctional centres we were looking at but in particular Grafton and Kirkconnell—

The strategy should include mechanisms by which families can be provided support to increase their ability to visit inmates, as well as additional alternate methods to facilitate increased contact between inmates and their families.

It is a fallacy that we should have been looking at non-custodial alternatives for Indigenous prisoners. That was outside the terms of reference of the committee. Once again, a learned barrister has misled the House deliberately; he has not even referred to the terms of reference we were dealing with. We framed our recommendations knowing that, although it should not have been closed, Grafton would not be reopened in the short term by the Government. We were trying to be realistic. We looked, particularly in recommendation 3, at what could be done to support Indigenous inmates and their families. We looked at that from a realistic perspective. Grafton was not going to reopen tomorrow, so we asked what we could do to try to ensure that the

inmates could keep a connection to their family, even though they often had to travel further. We should be aware that it is a long way for somebody to go—particularly from, say, Bundjalung country down to Kempsey, which is now the nearest correctional centre for people in the northern coastal part of New South Wales. I think that the recommendations we made are reasonable.

The one question we could not get an answer to is why Grafton was closed differently from the other correctional centres. With the others, such as Berrima, Kirkconnell and Parramatta, advance notice was given so that people knew they would be closing. But what happened to the poor people at Grafton—the local industries and small businesses that depended on the jail, the people who worked at the jail, and the families and friends of the inmates who were incarcerated at Grafton—was a fait accompli. It was announced with no justification or consultation, which is why we had the unprecedented scenes of the local community picketing Grafton jail to demand that it be kept open and trying to stop the transfer of prisoners out of the jail.

Mr David Shoebridge said he was more worried about the inmates than the staff of correctional centres. But some of the staff at Grafton had relocated from the other centres that had just been closed. They were from Berrima, Kirkconnell or Parramatta and had been relocated to Grafton when those centres closed. They had been there less than six months when all of a sudden Grafton was being closed—or "downsized", as the Government likes to put it. It was downsized from 114 staff to 38. Those people had just uprooted their family, taken their children out of school, sold their houses, moved to Grafton and bought a house in an area that is fairly economically depressed. Often the spouses, if they did not also work in Corrective Services, gave up their employment to move there. And what happened? After a short time, that jail was closed and those people were left with a double whammy: losing their job twice in about six months.

Those are not the only people we need to consider in looking at the workforce at Grafton. The committee heard from a nurse who was employed at Justice Health in Grafton. Because of the massive decline in prisoner numbers there were job cuts at Justice Health, so that very experienced nurse was going to have to relocate. The problem was that his wife, one of the senior emergency nurses at Grafton Base Hospital, was going to have to leave the area as well. There was not only a drain of experienced staff from Corrective Services but also the flow-on effect of a drain of experienced staff from other services and facilities in the community who would also leave the Grafton area.

Another issue of major concern was the Government's commitment to transfer jobs to Grafton. Some of those jobs were transferred from other rural and regional areas. It was not a decentralisation of jobs from Sydney, Newcastle or Wollongong to Grafton; it was just, "We'll try to pluck a few jobs from here. Have you got staff? We need about 40 jobs up there. How many have you got in your department in one little cluster that we could move to Grafton?" It was willy-nilly; there is no long-term commitment. Frankly, I doubt that some of the jobs exist. The committee came up with nine recommendations. The first, which I think is one of the most important for all rural communities in New South Wales, is:

That Corrective Services NSW undertake comprehensive rural communities impact statements as part of proposals to close or downsize correctional centres located in rural and regional NSW. These rural communities impact statements should:

- (a) include information about the projected social and economic impacts of the decision on local communities, including short, mid and long term impacts; and
- (b) be submitted to Cabinet to assist in their consideration of proposals to downsize or close correctional facilities.

That is really the most important issue. We know there was no consultation. The local member found out about Grafton closing when he got a phone call from the Minister's office saying, "We're closing Grafton", not "We're thinking of closing Grafton." Everyone was left in the dark until the very last minute: the workforce, the local community, the local businesses and the local member of Parliament. That says something about the way this Government operates. It did not even consider that the member who was elected in a by-election after March 2011 was worthy of a heads-up before it decided to close one of the biggest employers and biggest sources of economic stimulus in town.

We already know that the Government's promises of openness and accountability are not worth the paper they were printed on, but it is another matter when the Government does not even consult with its own backbench members on issues that seriously impact the electorates of those members and their local communities. That goes some of the way towards showing the arrogance of this Government and its disregard for backbenchers, particularly rural backbenchers. I urge members to support this report and its

recommendations, and to reject wholeheartedly the misinformation, the mistruth and the lies in Mr David Shoebridge's contribution to debate on this report, particularly in relation to Indigenous inmates. That was untrue and unworthy of a member of this House.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH [6.10 p.m.]: At the outset of my participation in this take-note debate on the closure and downsizing of Corrective Services NSW facilities, I extend the normal courtesies and thanks to the committee's secretariat for their assistance in what was, from time to time, a rather difficult inquiry. Committee members had differing views on the terms of reference and where the inquiry was headed. I also acknowledge Hansard. A member who preceded me in this debate said that when members undertake country hearings, we all pile off the plane, all cheerful—back-slapping and tormenting each other—but then we see Hansard reporters struggling with big metal cases going ahead of us to the hearing room to set up. Usually the rooms are not acoustically satisfactory for Hansard and all the members talk over the top of each other.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: You do.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I have to acknowledge I probably am the one who is talking over the top of everyone else, but it must be very difficult for Hansard. I extend my appreciation to Hansard. I also note that this was the Hon. Paul Green's first committee as a chairperson. I acknowledge his chairmanship. I daresay he has learned a bit about select committees and committee work through this exercise. It was probably a difficult committee to take on, but in my view he has done rather well to handle matters that were rather difficult at times. The terms of reference clearly highlighted a number of issues that people had been raising about the decision to close these facilities, but in particular the one at Grafton. It is fair to say that concerns had been raised about Berrima and Kirkconnell, and I suggest that some issues relating to Berrima still exist, but the main issue was what happened at Grafton.

As someone who lives in country New South Wales, it is quite clear to me that the process to develop and open a new corrections facility in regional New South Wales takes a bit of time and effort. The chair of the committee, who regularly reminds us he comes from the Shoalhaven, is fully aware of the process that was followed in opening a new facility in that part of the State. What is clear is that the process of consultation to open a facility is not, and was not in relation to the Grafton exercise of closing and downsizing the facility, followed. It appears that governments put a lot of time and effort into consulting communities prior to opening a facility and probably not so much into consulting with communities when it comes to closing and downsizing facilities. In relation to Grafton, that was clearly the view of the Grafton participants at the hearing. To my mind the real issue was a lot of the commentary around the need for community or rural impact statements and the fact that it appears none was conducted in relation to the Grafton exercise.

It was also clear that the exercise in downsizing Grafton was completely different to the process followed in relation to Berrima and Kirkconnell that occurred only some months earlier. Why there was a difference in process, only the government of the day and the Minister will know, but the people of Grafton felt seriously slighted by not having been consulted adequately. They had a new member of Parliament who did not know about it. He gave undertakings during the by-election that the facility would not be closed or downsized, but some months later he had to defend the Government's decision. I attended the public meeting where the member who represents Grafton began to defend the Government's decision. By the time the meeting closed, which was approximately an hour later, he expressed the view—I do not wish to misquote him so I will use his words—"I've been sold a pup." I think the member for Clarence, who represents Grafton, was right: He was sold a pup. He was given a message that he just could not sustain in his community.

What was even more alarming is that the Deputy Premier, who was the Acting Premier after he again returned from overseas, said he did not know until he got back to Australia that the decision had been made to downsize Grafton's correctional facility. We have to wonder about the process followed within government to make the decision to downsize that facility. I will refer to some of the testimony the committee received in relation to the culture that existed at the Grafton correctional facility. I urge people to read the report, particularly at page 24 where it refers to the culture of the Grafton Correctional Centre. There was serious concern about workforce issues within the Grafton facility and how they were managed by senior management. The view remains that that culture was the primary reason for the downsizing of the facility.

The commissioner went to great lengths to reassure the committee that that was not the case, but if members speak to the people of Grafton, especially people who worked at that facility, they will know that those people maintain their view that there was an issue with the workplace culture at Grafton. Furthermore they will say it is their belief that that is the reason the facility was downsized in such a dramatic manner. Those

workforce issues must be taken into consideration when anyone thinks about what happened at Grafton. In general terms, there is a need for community and rural impact statements in relation to any governmental decisions. There was a knee-jerk response by the Government about relocating other government jobs to Grafton. The Hon. Paul Green will confirm that the Government took jobs from the Shoalhaven and transferred them to Grafton, which amounts to taking from one region to give to another region.

The Hon. Steve Whan: Recentralisation.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I heard the Hon. Steve Whan say, "recentralisation", but the real issue is that no impact statement on the effect of that decision on the Shoalhaven, particularly the loss of jobs, was prepared. We have since discovered that the jobs that were transferred to Grafton were at a lower classification than jobs that were at the Shoalhaven, and the people at the Grafton facility who may have wanted to take up those positions were not eligible. They did not meet the criteria. They had skill sets that they could not transfer to the jobs that had been transferred to Grafton. The Government's action just does not make sense. It was a knee-jerk response. I question how long those jobs will last.

We have heard that they are there for the expedited Crown land sell-off, but that is only a short-term response. There is no long-term strategy around the jobs that have been lost at Grafton. The manner in which the Grafton decision was handled is an indictment on this Government. I also mention that the Hon. Amanda Fazio and I have lodged a dissenting statement to the report on the relocated jobs and whether the jobs actually exist. The jobs that have been relocated, the skill sets that are required and the level of those jobs as well as the remuneration levels are a matter of concern to us. We suspect this exercise may be an example of smoke and mirrors, and our dissenting statements relate to those matters.

In conclusion I report to the House the testimony we heard from people who had taken up a transfer to Grafton from other closed facilities, such as Berrima, on the assurance that the Grafton facility would not be downsized and they would have their job. We heard people talk about having bought a house in Grafton on the back of those assurances, only to find some months later that those assurances were worth zip. It was quite harrowing to hear about the impact that had on their families. They were unable to sell their houses for their original purchase price or value. I believe the Government owes those people a serious apology. They left one facility to accept a transfer to another facility on the assurance that they would have a job, only to have that arrangement disappear. That is not the way governments should behave and treat public servants.

We could have covered a lot of other territory in this report, but were not able to. I commend all of the people who made written submissions, and in particular those who turned up to provide testimony. The open microphone session at Grafton was quite moving, as is always the case with these sorts of committees. We heard stories of the impact of the decision, and the way it was made, on the lives of some people and their families, including children. At times it was quite difficult not to have a tear in your eye. The Government should take heed of a number of recommendations in the report. It behoves all governments to take heed of what happened at Grafton to ensure that mistakes are not made again. This was an exercise in how not to downsize a facility.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [6.20 p.m.], in reply: As committee chair, I am pleased to speak in reply to the report on the downsizing of Corrective Services NSW facilities. First and foremost, I thank the members of the committee: the Hon. Robert Borsak, the Hon. David Clarke, the Hon. Amanda Fazio, Mr Scot MacDonald, the Hon. Melinda Pavey, the Hon. Mick Veitch and all other members who participated in the hearings. Special thanks go to the parliamentary committee staff for their hard work, dedication and patience, in particular Stewart Smith, Vanessa Viaggio and Miriam Cullen. I also praise the many contributors to our inquiry, especially those who made submissions and those who were witnesses at the hearings. We received a vast variety of feedback, which helped the committee immensely.

This committee was established on 6 September 2012 following the closure or downsizing of a number of correctional centres in New South Wales. The key impetus was significant community unrest and anger in response to the decision to downsize the Grafton Correctional Centre. The committee held hearings on 23 November and 10 December 2012, and on 1 March 2013. A total of 16 representatives of seven organisations and agencies, as well as one academic, shared their views on the process of closing and downsizing correctional centres, with most focusing on the experience in Grafton. A total of 17 witnesses appeared over the three days of hearings. In addition, a public forum was held in Grafton on 10 December 2012 at which 12 individuals told their stories about the downsizing of the Grafton Correctional Centre and its impact on them and on the town.

The committee had the benefit of receiving written answers to questions taken on notice during the hearing and answers to a number of supplementary questions that were asked of some witnesses who gave

evidence. The vast majority of the evidence received by the committee related to the decision to downsize the Grafton Correctional Centre. Other evidence was received in respect of the impact of the closure of Berrima and Kirkconnell correctional centres. I note that the concerns of the stakeholders commenting in respect of those centres largely mirrored those in respect of the Grafton facility. As stated in my foreword to the report:

The decision to downsize the Grafton Correctional Centre cut the number of staff at the gaol from 114 to 38. Thirty-four staff relocated and 42 staff accepted voluntary redundancy. The impact of this downsize was immense on both staff and the Grafton community. Many community members told the Committee how their employment and businesses relied on the viability of the local economy to which the prison significantly contributed. The closures of Berrima, Kirkconnell and Parramatta gaols resulted in a "perfect storm" for some staff, particularly those who, having accepted a transfer to Grafton Correctional Centre, sold their homes and moved their families to the Grafton area only to be told months later that their jobs no longer existed. The Committee is concerned at the treatment of these affected staff.

As I said in the foreword, the committee understood and accepted the rationale to downsize Grafton Correctional Centre. It was clear that the antiquated facilities were not "best practice" and it made sense to close the older correctional facilities in a climate of falling inmate numbers. However, Corrective Services should have been aware of the impact that this downsizing would have on the town of Grafton, and the Government should have had a proactive jobs growth strategy in place in response to the closure, not a reactive one. The committee considered that substantial improvements could be made to the process of downsizing or closing correctional facilities. For example, rural impact statements should be done and presented to Cabinet prior to decisions to close or downsize facilities.

The committee further recommended that the Government coordinate and facilitate the development of the economic growth strategies in regional areas where a correctional centre is to be closed or downsized. Many people probably do not realise what happens in regional Australia, but certainly it was my experience on the South Coast that our council had different economic growth lines across various projects that were being run, especially those that were reliant on government funding, and when one big job finished you needed another big job to continue the employment line and ensure that the dollar was moving around the town. I could see why Grafton was somewhat surprised by the downsizing because in many cases it comes back to millions of dollars missing from the economy. In essence, the committee made nine recommendations. I will not go through all of those because I want to speak to issues raised by other members.

However, the main one is probably recommendation No. 9, which states that should there be a need to build a new correctional centre in the north of the State to accommodate the inmate population, Corrective Services NSW give consideration to planning a new facility in the Clarence Valley region. The new facility should complement the existing minimum security section of the Grafton facility. Once again, that is to reflect the great history that Grafton has with that prison, which goes back to the nineteenth century, and to continue that heritage. It should also complement the minimum security facility that already exists. It was empty on our visit, given the fact that under this Government we have seen fewer prisoner numbers, which is a good thing and we should not be hard on that. We should applaud the Government when we see a reduced number of inmates. I will take a couple of moments to correct errors in Mr Shoebridge's contribution. It was unfortunate that he berated our approach to the needs of Indigenous people. Page 42 of the report refers to the impact of the closure on Aboriginal inmates and their families. We took that very seriously and gave it a lot of time, so much so that a part of a submission appears at paragraph 4.27, which states:

Mr McKenzie went on to explain that, in the view of the ALS, there were tangible benefits from moving inmates to more modern facilities, but that these needed to be balanced with the need to ensure that Aboriginal inmates were close to family and friend support structures:

We went on to investigate that recommendation and found that there were actually grants and other ways that families could access finance to assist them to see those people. We did hear about being "in country", which obviously is significant, and we took on board that different Aboriginal people have issues about crossing into different country. That can be an issue, which we noted. It was something that I thought highlighted the positive way in which we tried to listen to the evidence. Mr McKenzie went on to say:

We are of the view that overall it was a positive move to move the inmates to the better physical amenity where they have gone, but we would certainly like to see some very strong consideration and possibly special assistance provided to the families ...

I have referred to funds or grants that families can access if they are unable to get travel to these centres due to the cost of fuel and the like. Community Legal Centres NSW made a submission, which is referred to in paragraph 4.29, and noted:

Moving offenders who pose little or no risk to public safety into non-custodial sentencing arrangements can be a cheaper method to manage offenders ... if combined with the expansion of community offender services ... the closure or downsizing of prisons can have positive effects on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates, and their families ...

Comments were made at page 45, paragraph 4.34, about the Wood Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. This select committee was the first for me as a chairperson and, once again, I thank everyone who mentored me through it. They were gracious when perhaps I made bad calls but, at the end of the day, the major thing we need, as one recommendations states, is to have a process. We have a process covering nought to five years in which to open a prison; why do we not have a process on how to close one? We need to ensure that we take into consideration all stakeholders when we close or downsize a New South Wales prison. We look forward to such a process being established by the New South Wales Government.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

ROAD TRANSPORT AMENDMENT (ELECTRONIC TRAFFIC INFRINGEMENT NOTICES TRIAL) BILL 2013

Bill received, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Michael Gallacher.

Motion by the Hon. Michael Gallacher agreed to:

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

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

Pursuant to sessional orders debate on budget estimates proceeded with.

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS

Financial Year 2013-14

Debate resumed from 20 August 2013.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD [6.30 p.m.]: The 2013-14 budget handed down by the New South Wales Treasurer in June continues the financial discipline of the Coalition Government in stark contrast to the 16 years of recklessness of the Labor Government. Members on the other side of the Chamber delude themselves and try to deceive the public. They left us with an unsustainable budget position. The State was on track to lose its triple-A credit rating; expense growth was running at nearly double the rate of inflation; net lending results for the last term of the Labor Government averaged \$2.5 billion each year; and, as the Treasurer points out, New South Wales would be better off by \$20 billion if the previous Government had exercised financial discipline and kept to its budget. If we needed any further proof of that recklessness, it was there in neon lights last week when Labor moved its disallowance motions to add the superannuation increases on top of the public sector wages cap.

Treasury calculates the impact on the State Budget will be \$800 million per annum if this policy is fully implemented to the Federal goal of 12 per cent. Opposition members have disqualified themselves from the pretence of being an alternative government for a long, long time. These motions defied their own policy in government in 2007; the original architect of superannuation, Paul Keating; the Accord mission and the Federal Minister for Industrial relations Bill Shorten's statements on Labor's superannuation policy. But enough of the economic luddites of this place; we need to take note of the successes of this 2013-14 budget, which confirms the Coalition Government is living within its means. After a surplus of \$660 million in 2011-12 and a small deficit of \$374 million in 2012-13, this budget forecasts a deficit of \$329 million. Changes to accounting standards mean the budget is negatively impacted by around \$1.3 billion a year going forward.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Because now we've got honest books, Scotty.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: That is right. These changes do not change the cash position. In spite of these accounting changes, the budget returns to surplus in the forward estimates with a projected surplus of \$157 million in 2015-16 and \$535 million the following year. One feature of the 2013-14 budget was the focus on assisting business. The Premier and Treasurer announced that on 1 July the payroll tax threshold would be raised from \$689,000 to \$750,000 saving 1,300 businesses from paying this tax. The Treasurer announced also

that the Jobs Action Plan would be extended by two years to July 2015. The payroll tax rebate for businesses that employ an additional worker in a new job will increase by 25 per cent from \$4,000 to \$5,000. These business-friendly measures will be important as New South Wales reasserts itself as the nation's economic engine room. The economy remains subdued and is forecast to grow by 2.75 per cent for the next two financial years. But as the Treasurer and commentators such as the ANZ economist Warren Hogan note, New South Wales is in a strong position because of its economic diversity, lower reliance on the mining sector, stronger housing demand and the growing financial services sector.

With effective expense control, proceeds from asset transactions and modest revenue measures, the Government's net debt is stabilising and will peak at 3.6 per cent of gross State product in 2015-16. With this financial discipline, the Liberal-Nationals Government is able to continue investing in infrastructure. The budget includes \$15.5 billion for infrastructure this financial year, \$15 billion in 2014-15, \$14 billion in 2015-16 and \$15 billion in 2016-17. The budget provides an additional \$884 million to support higher levels of patient delivery, including an anticipated 34,000 extra patient admissions for acute care in hospitals, 3,000 more elective surgery patients, and 69,000 emergency department attendances. The budget locks in our State's commitments under Gonski and its successor, the National Education Reform, which delivers an additional \$5 billion to schools over the next six years from 2014 to 2019, of which \$3.3 billion comes from the Commonwealth. The National Education Reform supports Local Schools, Local Decisions. Great Teaching, Inspired Learning is fully funded and will help lift the quality of teachers over time.

The Coalition continues its historical support of police and emergency services with a commitment to increase the number of authorised police officers to 16,665 by August 2015, which includes the additional officers of the Police Transport Command. Members on this side of the House are proud of the 2013-14 budget. The Premier, the Treasurer and Cabinet have exercised the discipline necessary to fulfil our election promise to make New South Wales number one. It is not an easy task and it requires difficult choices, but I believe we are demonstrating the competency and vision to govern for all of New South Wales now and for future generations. I commend the budget.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR [6.38 p.m.]: I, too, speak on the 2013-14 budget and will particularly highlight some of its benefits to regional New South Wales. I am proud to be a member of a party that has regional New South Wales as its focus. Unfortunately, those opposite failed to see that focus for far too many years. I also know that my Federal colleagues are proud to be members of The Nationals, particularly those who are contesting the Federal election. I recently read some campaign material produced by the local member for Throsby, and I had to search through it to find out what party he represents. There was not one mention of the Labor Party until the publication authorisation at the end.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: He is ashamed of it.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: That is exactly right. He is ashamed to be a member of the Labor Party. Candidates from across regional New South Wales are nominating to represent their communities but they are embarrassed use their party's logo on their campaign material. That is in contrast to the proud members of The Nationals, which is focused on regional New South Wales, and of which I am a proud member. The commitments made in the budget by The Nationals make us proud to be members and help us to understand why Labor members are skulking away from their constituents. This Government has committed to deliver an extra \$983 million or 30 per cent of the funding from Restart NSW for infrastructure projects in regional communities, including nearly \$1 billion to continue the duplication of the Pacific Highway.

I was proud recently to see the Hon. Duncan Gay on the North Coast, standing alongside Kevin Hogan, the candidate for Page, reaffirming that commitment. We do not hear the same commitment from members opposite. The Hon. Duncan Gay has regularly told the House about the dodgy dealings of the Labor Government, which took money from that fund to match a commitment made in a predetermined deal and then reneged on that commitment. The people of Page and the people of Richmond—in fact, people throughout the North Coast—know that a Liberal-Nationals Government will provide nearly \$1 billion to finalise duplication of the Pacific Highway.

The budget also allocates \$178 million for the upgrade of the Princes Highway and \$165 million over four years for the Bridges for the Bush program. The Hon. Duncan Gay has spoken about the pinch points in regional communities, where bridge upgrades will be a welcome relief. The budget also contains an allocation of \$43 million for the Bells Line of Road improvement program. We also look forward to the development of the expressway that links western New South Wales with Sydney. The Government is working hard to deliver

links between the north and the south and over the Great Dividing Range into our western communities. This is not only about linking Sydney to the bush; it is also about linking the bush to Sydney. That is particularly important to our regional food and fibre producers because they must get their produce to market, and particularly to Western Sydney. The \$43 million allocated to the Bells Line of Road improvement program will benefit the people of this State.

The budget also commits large amounts to health projects in regional areas. It provides \$32.8 million to commence construction of the \$170.1-million South East Regional Hospital at Bega; \$77.5 million for the continued development of stage two of the Tamworth Hospital redevelopment, at an estimated total cost of \$220 million; \$59.5 million to continue the Port Macquarie Base Hospital expansion project, at an estimated total cost of \$110 million; \$42.1 million to continue the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital redevelopment, at an estimated cost of \$270.1 million; and \$35.8 million to continue the construction of stages one and two of the acute services redevelopment at Dubbo Base Hospital, at an estimated total cost of \$79.8 million. The Hon. Mick Veitch understands the importance of these regional base hospitals. It is unfortunate that they have been neglected for far too long. The Coalition made an election commitment to get these important projects up and running and this budget will deliver them.

The budget also boosts regional police infrastructure by allocating \$22 million for the commencement and continuation of construction on new police stations at Parkes, Moree, Walgett, Coffs Harbour and Tweed/Byron. In addition, \$192 million will be spent employing additional police officers. Having grown up in Goulburn, I know the significance of the NSW Police Academy to the city and the contribution it makes to the local community. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services spoke today about the latest graduates. We are all proud of the academy, and the people of Goulburn appreciate being able to attend graduation parades. The academy also generates a great deal of money for the local area. My parents rented a room in their house on a short-term basis to police cadets until they could find proper accommodation. Goulburn is proud of the academy and appreciates the additional funds that this Government has committed to providing more police officers. That extra funding will boost communities like Goulburn.

Regional communities are also looking forward to significant reform of Local Land Services. For far too long our primary producers have had to deal with a number of siloed bureaucracies that were not focused on their customers. The amalgamation of catchment management authorities, livestock health and pest authorities, some staff of the Department of Primary Industries, and some outreach staff into Local Land Services will provide additional on-farm benefits for those who utilise its services. It will take a collective approach to problem solving. As a member of the Western Riverina Advisory Council I dealt with noxious weed issues. We adopted a collaborative approach to the management of weeds in conjunction with the Rural Lands Protection Board, as it then was—it is now the Livestock Health and Pest Authority—local councils, local landholders, and those responsible for crown lands.

The Local Land Services model provides a perfect opportunity for different agencies to work in collaboration to tackle problems. They should not work in silos in isolation from each other. I am sure the extra funding that the Government has committed to the rollout of that program will be welcomed. The Hon. Mick Veitch has taken a particular interest in my local area. This budget has delivered for Goulburn. One of the line items is the \$1.7 million for the Goulburn water supply program to the Goulburn Mulwaree Council for the continuation of the funding.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: That should be "Mulwaree".

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I went to Mulwaree High School, so I know how to pronounce Mulwaree. There was \$428,000 for the Taralga water supply program, which is going to the Upper Lachlan Shire Council. That is another continuation of funding. Those two small projects alone have been welcomed by the local community. Another fantastic tourist destination, which is not far from where I live, is the Bradman Foundation's International Cricket Hall of Fame, and \$250,000 has gone towards that facility. I would encourage all members to go and have a look at the museum at the International Cricket Hall of Fame; they should take some time out to do that. Take along your children as well because there are lots of interactive activities for the kids. One activity my son wanted to have a go at—and he had to push me out of the way to get the chance—was hitting a golf ball off the water tank with a cricket stump, in the style of Don Bradman. There is a little concrete strip where you can hit the ball up against a tank, just like Sir Don did back in his day.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Is this a speech on the budget or an adjournment speech?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: If the Hon. Walt Secord cannot understand the significance of Don Bradman not only to—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: Let the record show that I know the significance of Sir Donald Bradman.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The significance to our community of Donald Bradman—or "the Don" as those of us who have grown up hearing about him, and who worship him, would call him—and the International Cricket Hall of Fame, run by the Bradman Foundation, cannot be overstated. Bradman Oval also attracts a lot of international events. The last Ashes test held in Australia between the Australian and English women's teams was played at Bradman Oval. I went along and had a look. The way that our women cricketers are going, we should hold more tests there, and at the Sydney Cricket Ground and everywhere else, because they are certainly showing everyone how it should be done. The way that they play the game should be commended by all. I am probably getting a little off topic.

I am very proud to be a member of a party that stands up for regional communities. I have highlighted regional communities such as Goulburn and spoken about how they have benefited from the latest budget. This Government not only understands regional communities but is willing to put its money where its mouth is—unlike those opposite and their Federal counterparts. They are obviously ashamed to put their party's name and logo on their campaign material in regional communities. Those communities have been let down, at both the Federal and the State level, by previous Labor governments for far too long. I will take every opportunity I can to praise this Government for its commitment to regional communities.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. Niall Blair and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [6.53 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

COMPUTER GAMES CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY [6.53 p.m.]: Members of the House would be aware that before 1 January 2013 there was no R18+ classification for computer games sold in shops across New South Wales and, indeed, Australia. Prior to that, the highest classification available for computer games for sale in shops was MA15+. Computer games that received the "refused classification" [RC] rating were not permitted to be sold in retail outlets, and that remains the case today. Over the course of 2011 and 2012 as the States and Territories engaged with the Commonwealth over the matter of introducing an R18+ classification for computer games, it became apparent to those involved in negotiations, including those providing expert advice, that a number of the computer games that would correctly fit under a new higher classification had in fact been shoehorned into the MA15+ classification. While some minor editing had been done to squeeze them into the MA15+ classification and thus avoid being treated as "refused classification", nonetheless they contained in some instances extreme violence, sexual imagery, coarse language and drug use.

As negotiations over the classification arrangements drew to a conclusion, the parties agreed that it would be appropriate to re-examine a number of the computer games that had been classified as MA15+ in light of the introduction of the new R18+ classification. Indeed, at a media conference convened on 22 July 2011 to announce the agreement in principle over the introduction of the R18+ classification, the Federal Minister for Home Affairs and Justice and the attorneys general from New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory fielded specific questions from journalists about the reclassification issue. Over the course of 2011 and 2012 the Commonwealth, States and Territories proceeded to introduce and pass legislation that facilitated the introduction of the new national scheme, commencing on 1 January 2013. In doing so, it was expected by those involved in the negotiations that formal steps would be taken to proceed with a review of the 50 most popular MA15+ computer games played by young people to ensure that they met the new guidelines that had been agreed to.

It was widely accepted that at least some of the 50 computer games would need to be reclassified as R18+, given their content. It is my understanding that, with almost eight months having passed since the

introduction of the R18+ computer game classification, no work has commenced to examine those games that now may be inappropriately classified. I do not intend to list all the computer games that should be scrutinised but I would specifically nominate the following: *Call of Duty*, *Condemned*, *Dead Rising*, *Dead Space*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Left 4 Dead*, *Resident Evil* and *Splatterhouse*. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Without putting too fine a point on it, many people and organisations are bitterly disappointed that the review that everybody understood would take place has not been conducted. By now it should have been conducted and concluded—and, if appropriate, any reclassifications implemented. I appreciate that with the Federal election being only a fortnight away and the Commonwealth Government operating under caretaker conventions, this matter will not be addressed and resolved before the end of September.

However, after the Federal election, the Commonwealth Government and the State and Territory attorneys general must take immediate steps to proceed with initiating the review of MA15+ computer games as previously agreed and oversee its completion as soon as possible. In conclusion, I once again acknowledge Professor Elizabeth Handsley and Barbara Biggins, respectively the president and the honorary chief executive officer of the Australian Council on Children and the Media, for their ongoing efforts to bring this matter to its proper conclusion. The Commonwealth, States and Territories all have an obligation to work together to complete this important unfinished business.

GREAT IRISH FAMINE COMMEMORATION

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR [6.58 p.m.]: As the secretary of the Parliamentary Friends of Ireland it was with great pleasure that I attended, along with other members of the friendship group, a number of events that were held over 23, 24 and 25 August to commemorate the Irish famine. These events were organised by the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee, led by Dr Perry McIntyre. On the Friday evening a dinner was held at the Strangers Dining Room in Parliament House. Special guests at the event included the Governor of New South Wales, Professor Marie Bashir, and her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, and the Ambassador of Ireland to Australia, Mr Noel White, and his wife, Nessa Delaney. Other special guests were the Hon. Greg Smith, who attended on behalf of Premier Barry O'Farrell; the Hon. Luke Foley; the member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams; and the Consul General of Ireland in Sydney, Ms Caitriona Ingoldsby. We were also joined by Mr Jimmy Deenihan, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, which is the Irish-speaking parts of Ireland, who travelled from Ireland as the official representative.

For the past five years an international city has been selected to host the commemoration. Sydney was selected this year. Following the dinner on Friday night a seminar was held on Saturday in the Parliamentary Theatre, which showcased authors and their contribution to recording the history of the Great Irish Famine. On Sunday a memorial service and the laying of flowers and wreaths were conducted at the memorial at Hyde Park Barracks. This annual event is held to remember the 4,114 famine orphans who arrived in Australia aboard 20 ships under the Earl Grey scheme between 1848 and 1850. The young women who arrived were predominantly between the ages of 14 and 18 and were selected from workhouses throughout Ireland.

As members know, the potato famine was caused by the potato blight, which affected a lot of the harvest. Other food was not made freely available by some of the squires in charge of the land. The famine took a strong hold in Ireland and many young girls were orphaned and sent off to the workhouses. The girls selected from the workhouses to emigrate to Australia were the stronger ones and, as the Irish Minister indicated, they were also usually the prettier ones. It is suggested that many of the 4,000 girls who arrived married into Protestant families in Australia. The tens of thousands of descendants of those girls can be traced back throughout the history of New South Wales. I note that in a newspaper article last week Treasurer Mike Baird laid claim to being a descendent of one of those girls.

The famine took an enormous toll on the population of Ireland. As the Irish Minister outlined, the population of Ireland dropped from eight million to five million in a five-year period due to the large number of deaths and the high rate of emigration. I pass on my thanks to Dr Perry McIntyre and her committee, who worked hard to get the event off the ground. It was a fantastic exercise not only for those directly associated with the descendants but also for everyone associated with Irish history in general. I encourage members to visit the Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine at Hyde Park Barracks and read the names of the girls who came to Australia and the history behind their journey. It forms a significant part of the history of New South Wales. We should never forget the Great Irish Famine.

BROADER WESTERN SYDNEY EMPLOYMENT AREA

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [7.03 p.m.]: Last week I had the pleasure of visiting a not-for-profit volunteer group called the Western Sydney Conservation Alliance, which seeks to protect Western Sydney's dwindling natural heritage. The focus of the visit was to examine the potential implications of the Broader Western Sydney Employment Area draft plan, which is now on display. The plan seems to rezone approximately 108 square kilometres of Western Sydney for industrial use. The area is currently mostly agricultural and grazing land, with large pockets of biodiverse woodlands, and is mostly private land. We travelled through Kemps Creek, Bringelly, Badgerys Creek and Greendale, talking to local residents and conservationists.

Communities are concerned that the process of rezoning is being forced through with minimal information to justify it. They do not believe that the Government has enough appreciation of the ecological implications of the plan. Take the ecology report, for example. The front cover of the report shows a photo of Marsden Park. That does not even fall into the proposed area. Some people are questioning whether the consultants made it out to the area to conduct ecological surveys at all or whether this is just a desktop survey report. There is concern that the ecology report is missing whole colonies of threatened species. I saw examples of many threatened species, including *Marsdenia viridiflora* subspecies *viridiflora*. This plant has been listed as an endangered species under the Threatened Species Conservation Act but is not even mentioned in the ecology report. We also saw the diversity of birdlife, including the beautiful Jacky Winter, which once used to be plentiful but is now restricted to the outer areas of Western Sydney.

The Government's plan is to offset the loss of biodiversity. There are problems with the concept of offsetting, as it is. Most ecologically sensitive areas are simply irreplaceable. On top of this, the O'Farrell Government's new biodiversity fund "makes it easier for the construction industry to get on with the job" by "cutting red tape". There is a gap between the expectations set by offset policies and the practice of offsetting. The reality is that there are almost no sites available in Western Sydney anymore. Most appropriate sites we saw are already offsets for other projects. How will this secure the future of our threatened species? Once the 20 square kilometres or so of critically endangered ecosystem is gone there is absolutely no way of replacing it. The Greens are strong supporters of appropriate development and a green economy, but the environment and people must coexist and thrive together. The Government's proposed new planning laws reject the concept of ecologically sustainable development, which includes the principles of intergenerational and intra-generational equity, the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity, the precautionary principle and public participation in decision-making.

A strong and healthy environment underpins our way of life, our health and our economy. The Government wants to turn these agrarian areas that have highly fertile soil into, essentially, warehouses for logistics companies which yield very few jobs for Western Sydney. If the Government is serious about jobs in Western Sydney, it should be supporting what is already there. Greater Western Sydney is one of the most productive agricultural areas. There is huge potential for Western Sydney to continue growing food for Sydney. The flow-on effects on local food production, food security and human health and nutrition are immense. There are many opportunities to increase animal husbandry, market gardens, niche products, organic farms and nurseries, amongst other endeavours. The community members of Western Sydney whom I was with do not want a concrete jungle of warehouses to replace their precious green spaces that protect our flora and fauna. Western Sydney needs jobs, but there are better ways to go about it. We want jobs that are there for the long term and also guarantee ecological sustainability.

WORLD MILITARY HISTORY

The Hon. WALT SECORD [7.08 p.m.]: I have spoken many times in this House about Australia's war veterans and their legacies. As a migrant who was born in Canada, I have often said that I come to this from a unique perspective. As mature and independent societies, both Canada and Australia owe a debt to those who paid the price in our journey to modern nationhood. Both nations had their identity forged, to a large extent, in war. Like many members in this Chamber, my family tree includes service personnel. My maternal great-grandfather and my fraternal great-uncle served in World War I. The latter was one of the first Indigenous Canadians to enlist. Further, both my maternal grandparents served in World War II.

Since migrating to Australia in 1988, I have had the privilege to attend numerous Anzac Day, Vietnam and Korean War and Remembrance Day services. I have also visited war memorials in Sydney, Canberra and

Darwin. In mid-January this year I had the privilege of making a personal trip to Gallipoli and Anzac Cove in north-western Turkey. Like tens of thousands of my fellow Australians before me, I can now reflect on a pilgrimage to a place that is seared into our collective identity.

Standing on Anzac Cove beach is a privilege and an education. Further, I had the privilege of joining other Australians who had successfully sought out the graves of their family members. Several weeks earlier, in Israel, I was honoured to witness my colleague the Hon. Rick Colless locate the war grave of his paternal great-uncle—at Beersheba. I am still continuing my personal education on World War I and World War II. During the winter recess, I made a visit to the memorial and site of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii—which brought the United States into World War II. I visited the War Memorial of the Pacific—fashioned out of the USS *Arizona*. I was struck to see dozens of Americans looking at the lists of the dead and trying to locate distant relatives, just like Australians do at Gallipoli.

Just as every Australian student knows about Gallipoli, every North American school student knows about Pearl Harbour. While it is seared on the minds of all North Americans, it also had a great psychological impact on Australians during World War II. Some two months later, in Darwin, on the morning of 19 February 1942, Australia experienced its first major military attack on home soil. The bombing of Darwin has been dubbed "Australia's Pearl Harbour". This was by virtue of it being a surprise aerial attack on naval targets by the Japanese. The attack was the largest by the Japanese after Pearl Harbour, with 188 planes launched against the northern town. About 900 souls were lost and Darwin was thrown into chaos, with half of the remaining civilian population fleeing out of fear.

It must also be seen in the context of a series of subsequent attacks on New South Wales by the Japanese Navy in late May and early June 1942. While the attacks on Sydney and Newcastle were on a much smaller scale than the bombing of Darwin, they were no less psychologically jarring and devastating to all Australians. On 31 May 1942, three midget submarines of the same type that were first used in Pearl Harbour were launched just outside the heads of Sydney. Their principal targets were any Allied vessels. In total, 21 lives were lost. While there was some damage, as I mentioned earlier, the impact of these attacks played a significant role on the Australian psyche. It is easy to see the parallels between the attack on Pearl Harbour and the bombing of Darwin.

While the bombing of Darwin was not the impetus for Australia entering World War II, it was the catalyst for the development of our alliance with the United States. To paraphrase the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce, at the seventieth anniversary of the bombing of Darwin: Australia was forced to grow up; it was no longer dependent on protection from Britain. The attack on Pearl Harbour followed by the attacks on Darwin, Sydney and Newcastle showed graphically to Australian families the reach and ambition of the Japanese Imperial Navy. It instantly propelled World War II into a new and more threatening space.

On the morning of 7 December 1941, more than 2,400 American soldiers and civilians were killed at Pearl Harbour. In a mere 90 minutes, the Japanese conducted a covert aerial attack on Pearl Harbour. A total of 18 ships were targeted and sunk or run aground. Almost half of the total fatalities at Pearl Harbour were the result of the sinking of battleship USS *Arizona*. The USS *Arizona* is still on the bottom of the harbour—with those killed permanently entombed. It was a moving experience to walk among the memorials, commemorations and museums. I recommend to all who go to Hawaii to take the time to visit the Pacific War Memorial when they are in Honolulu.

In conclusion, it was truly moving to visit Pearl Harbour—and one day I next hope to visit the battlefields and Commonwealth, Canadian and Australian war graves in France, including Villers-Brettonneux and Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge and Fromelles. I hope that this will be the next stage in my personal exploration of Australian, American, European and Canadian military histories. I thank the House for its consideration.

FARMING FUTURES PROJECT

Mr SCOT MacDONALD [7.13 p.m.]: I would like to bring to the attention of the House a very successful event at Armidale on 2 August 2013: the Farming Futures Careers Fair and Dinner. Under chair Jo Newton and her committee, the University of New England has been running Farming Futures for two or three years. The event brings together a range of industry bodies, with an expo set up at Lazenby Hall. I attended the expo. Cotton growers and companies like Elders and Rabobank sell their wares to the students who are studying agriculture, rural science and so on. The University of New England is pre-eminent in New South Wales and Australia as the university delivering agricultural tertiary courses. Many such courses have suffered

decline across New South Wales and Australia, but the University of New England is prospering and the number of agricultural courses is increasing. But it needs every encouragement; and people such as Jo Newton are to be commended for bringing industry and the college students together.

I went to the fantastic dinner held at the ex-services club and attended by 350 to 400 people. The chancellor and vice-chancellor attended, indicating the level of support for this event from the university administration. This was a terrific night because it brought back past students of the University of New England to talk to students who are currently attending the university. Their contributions were very positive. One of the alumni was from South Australia, and western New South Wales was also represented. Often we hear of the difficulties and challenges that face agriculture, and, of course, terms of trade are incredibly difficult for farming given the high value of the Australian dollar, which has only softened lately.

All of the alumni—who were out of university for say three to five years and had taken over or were in the process of taking over family farms—were not backward in their outlook for agriculture; they were adapting very quickly to new technology. One of the students from the university did a small presentation on tracking stock. There has been a bit of media about that lately: how the university in the future may have technology to have stock eartagged or collared to enable them to be monitored in paddocks to see whether they are calving or using some pastures too much. The themes of these young farmers were very encouraging for anybody contemplating an agricultural career. I suggest the University of New England is the university to pursue those themes. This event is supported from the chancellor and vice-chancellor down. The university is very much outwardly looking, and offers a range of courses from a degree in agriculture to a four-year degree in rural science as well as a range of courses including economics.

Many of the people at the dinner were in their mid-twenties. They were very excited and motivated about the potential for farming and their future in the industry. We all too often get caught up in the environmental and economic challenges in rural and regional New South Wales, but we can take heart that these people coming through the university are not fawning to government for support. Agriculture in this country is the least supported in the world, I think with less than 1 per cent of government support. These people are not looking for a hand up; they are looking to make their way in this globalised world. They are the sort of people we should be encouraging. I commend Jo Newton and her committee on the Farming Futures Careers Fair and Dinner. I hope to be there again next year.

WAR MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIVE FLAGS

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [7.18 p.m.]: One of the most important responsibilities of our Parliament is the protection of our military heritage. In Sydney we have two significant monuments which commemorate the service and sacrifice of our veterans in all wars. The Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park was built with public funds and opened on the eighteenth anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles on 19 July 1934. The Cenotaph in Martin Place is an empty tomb where veterans of all wars gather to commemorate significant anniversaries. Up until the Vietnam War our service men and women who died on active service were buried in foreign lands. Their graves are now maintained by the Australian Office of War Graves with the generous agreement of foreign governments, some of whom were our former enemies. Their respect for our diggers is encapsulated in the words of the President of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who wrote a tribute to the Anzacs killed at Gallipoli in 1934:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours ... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

The symbol of these graves is the Cenotaph. It is a sacred place. Last week we commemorated the forty-seventh anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, which is now the day that Vietnam veterans around Australia gather to commemorate their mates. This week, around the city of Sydney, Legacy has mounted flags to create public awareness of Legacy week. This is the focus of their annual fundraising drive to support the wives, husbands and children who have lost their husbands, wives, mothers or fathers in military service. The reverence of these places is respected by all Australians—except The Greens.

I have been advised that an election poster supporting a Greens candidate for the senate, Cate Faehrmann, has been erected beneath two Legacy flags at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. But I should not be surprised because the extreme Left of our society has form in their disrespect for our service men and women and our veterans. Our Kokoda veterans have never forgotten the betrayal of left-wing waterfront unions who not

only refused to load ships with vital supplies while they fought an overwhelming enemy force on our doorstep in the remote jungles of New Guinea but deliberately sabotaged the weapons and ammunition the soldiers needed to be able to fight. Nor have our Vietnam veterans forgotten the same left-wing unions who refused to load our ships with the supplies we needed to support our commitment to the war against communism.

The postal unions took that a step further when they refused to deliver mail to our troops—personal letters written by parents, wives, children and mates. Those were the days before the instant communications we enjoy today. There were no telephones, no email, no iPads. All we had to communicate with each other was a pen and notepaper, and there were a couple of weeks between dispatch and receipt. It was a fragile but essential link between our troops and their loved ones in Australia. The treachery of the left-wing postal unions had a significant impact on the morale of our troops at the time. I speak from firsthand experience. When the troops responded with their own campaign—to punch a postie on their return—the sanctimonious Left took time out from their organisation of moratorium marches to be outraged.

We certainly had no objection to the moratorium marches because we believed that we were fighting for the freedom of people to protest. I should point out that it was not a freedom that existed under communist rule. Our duty was to serve the government of the day and, in a democracy, those who object to government policy have the right to express their objections through thought, speech and action. However, the left-wing organisers of those unions crossed the line when they encouraged their followers to attack our troops and mock our veterans. The attacks had a devastating impact on many of our returning veterans. They were not allowed to return home in the uniform they wore with such pride. They were snuck out of hidden entrances at airports and told to go home and wait for their discharge papers. The betrayal, the first in our history, left deep psychological scars that have never healed. Many dropped out of society and went bush. Some took their own lives. It is a shameful chapter of our history.

The welcome home parade in 1987 ameliorated some of the pain. However, it will not be fully salved until they receive an apology from the left-wing representatives in our parliaments today. I am pleased to see the increase in the attendance at significant commemorative anniversaries in recent years. I am also pleased to see that our sons and daughters are now saying, "I'm proud that my dad", or mum, "was a Vietnam veteran". I should mention that I have never heard anyone say, "I'm proud that my mum", or dad, "was a moratorium marcher", but then I do not spend much time in inner-city wine bars. The aim of an Opposition spokesperson for Veterans Affairs, the Hon. Lynda Voltz, to block our attempt to express support for three commandos who had been shamelessly charged for doing their job in Afghanistan and her objection to my attempt last week to acknowledge Vietnam Veterans Day indicates that Labor's left wing still has no respect for our serving troops or our veterans. This will be the case until they can bring themselves to say sorry for their actions in attacking our troops on their return from Vietnam and until they stop desecrating our Cenotaph. I call on The Greens to take down that poster.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.23 p.m. until Wednesday 28 August 2013 at 11.00 a.m.
