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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 29 May 2014

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

The President read the Prayers.

ELECTION FUNDING, EXPENDITURE AND DISCLOSURES CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT BILL 2014

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

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay 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.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION FUNDING

Motion by Dr JOHN KAYE agreed to:

That this House:

- (a) supports the adequate funding of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC], and
- (b) calls on the Treasurer to ensure funding for the ICAC is maintained and that any additional funding needed is provided to support its ongoing investigations.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 1856 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

SIR JACK BRABHAM, AO, OBE

Motion by the Hon. RICK COLLESS agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) the passing of Australia's most pre-eminent motor racing legend, Sir Jack Brabham, AO, OBE, on Monday 19 May 2014, at the age of 88;
 - (b) that Sir Jack "Black Jack" Brabham contested 126 Grand Prix from 1955 to 1970, for 13 pole positions, 14 wins, 10 second placings and seven third placings, including the Australian Grand Prix and the New Zealand Grand Prix on three occasions each;
 - (c) that Jack Brabham won the Formula 1 World Championship in 1959, 1960 and 1966 and the Constructors Championship in 1966 and 1967;
 - (d) that he was awarded Australian of the Year in 1966, an Order of the British Empire in 1967 and was the first motorsport driver to be knighted, in 1979, for services to motorsport and was regarded as one of the most accomplished drivers and team owners in the history of the sport;
 - (e) that his first two titles were achieved in a Cooper Climax, marking the end for front-engined Formula 1 cars;

- (f) that his third win in 1966 made him the only driver in history to win a World Championship in a car of his own manufacture, the rear-engined Brabham BT19—a feat unlikely to ever be repeated;
 - (g) that Sir Jack Brabham was acclaimed as a brilliant engineer with technological innovations introduced by the Brabham team helping to shape the sport today; and
 - (h) that in partnership with Ron Tauranac, over 500 Brabham race cars were built from the team's British Surrey base in the 1960s alone and the Brabham name continued in Formula 1 for 30 years.
- (2) That this House extends to his wife, Lady Margaret, sons Geoff, Gary and David and their families its sincerest condolences on the passing of Sir Jack Brabham, AO, OBE.

BALKAN FLOODS

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) recent floods affecting Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia are the worst experienced by these nations for over a century;
 - (b) as a result, at least 40 lives have been lost with dozens of others still missing and overall more than 1.6 million people being adversely affected;
 - (c) on Tuesday 20 May 2014, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared a Day of Mourning; and
 - (d) Serbia began three days of mourning starting on Wednesday 21 May 2014.
- (2) That this House extends its heartfelt sympathy to the people of Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as members of the Serbian, Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Croatian Australian communities at this time of great tragedy, suffering and sorrow.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 1863 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK 2014

Motion by the Hon. GREG DONNELLY agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) 25 to 31 May 2014 is National Palliative Care Week; and
 - (b) the theme for National Palliative Care Week 2014 is "Palliative care is everyone's business: Let's work together".
- (2) That this House further notes that:
- (a) the week will be marked with a series of events around Australia to raise awareness in the community about palliative care; and
 - (b) in this State Palliative Care New South Wales is sponsoring and coordinating a number of functions and events to draw to the attention of the community the importance of end-of-life care.
- (3) That this House acknowledges and congratulates Carolyn Walsh, President, Linda Hansen, Executive Officer and the management committee of Palliative Care New South Wales for the outstanding work that they are doing supporting and promoting palliative care.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 1866 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

VISION AUSTRALIA

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Vision Australia is a leading national provider of blindness and low-vision services in Australia and works in partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help them achieve the possibilities they choose in life;
 - (b) Vision Australia is a not-for-profit organisation with client numbers of 33,000 and is also a major participant and partner in the international blindness community;
 - (c) Vision Australia provides services and support for clients through 28 Vision Australia centres in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland and Victoria and clinics are also held in 29 other locations and there are outreach services to the Northern Territory and Tasmania;
 - (d) Vision Australia Enfield recently hosted a celebration for 745 volunteers that help support the charity in delivering services; and
 - (e) at the Vision Australia's Enfield celebration, Phil Gilbert, who has dedicated 45 years of his life to Vision Australia, was recognised for his outstanding service.
- (2) That this House congratulates and commends:
 - (a) Vision Australia for its continued dedication to the needs and interests of those with blindness and low vision; and
 - (b) Mr Phil Gilbert for his outstanding service to Vision Australia over the last 45 years.

AUSTRALIA PAKISTAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Motion by Dr MEHREEN FARUQI agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Australia-Pakistan Medical Association is a group of doctors of Pakistani origin who guide and assist health professionals from Pakistan to start their career in Australia and serve their communities throughout regional and metropolitan New South Wales;
 - (b) the Australia-Pakistan Medical Association is an independent not-for-profit organisation that is non-political and non-religious; and
 - (c) on 18 May 2014 the Australia Pakistan Medical Association hosted their annual event to acknowledge and recognise many dedicated Pakistani-Australian medical professionals who have been serving their communities for many years.
- (2) That this House congratulates the Australia-Pakistani Medical Association and their members on their important work.

WORLD MS DAY

Motion by the Hon. SARAH MITCHELL agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) 28 May 2014 marks World MS Day;
 - (b) the theme for 2014 is "Access" and to recognise both the services and the barriers that affect people with multiple sclerosis [MS];
 - (c) since its inception in 2009, World MS Day is now observed in over 67 countries worldwide; and
 - (d) World MS Day aims to provide the public with information about MS and to raise awareness on how it affects the lives of over two million people across the world.
- (2) That this House congratulates the organisers of World MS Day, and in particular MS Australia for their dedication and commitment to helping those who are impacted by MS.

NATIONAL NETBALL DAY

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 31 May 2014 the inaugural National Netball Day will be held in New South Wales and across the country to celebrate the great game for all Aussies who live and breathe netball;

- (b) netball is one of Australia's largest team participatory sports and Netball NSW with 110,000 registered players is the largest netball association in Australia; and
- (c) Netball NSW this year, under the exemplary leadership of President Wendy Archer, AM, and Chief Executive Officer Carolyn Campbell has celebrated many successes, including:
 - (i) construction of the new Netball Central, located in the heart of Sydney Olympic Park is well underway; this world-class facility which will include an elite show court, five international standard courts, multi-purpose function rooms, a recovery centre, a Netball Hall of Fame and the Headquarters of Netball NSW will host the World Netball Championships in 2015;
 - (ii) for the first time since 2011, the NSW Swifts have secured a spot in the ANZ Championship Finals, the team consisting of: Carla Dziwoki, Kimberlee Green, Paige Hadley, Madeline Hay, Sharni Layton, April Letton, Abbey McCulloch, Brooke Miller, Sonia Mkoloma, Susan Pratley, Caitlin Thwaites, Gretel Tippett, Sarah Wall, Head Coach, Rob Wright Assistant Coach: Megan Anderson, Technical Assistant Coach: Anita Keelan, Contracted Defensive Specialist Coach: Mo'onia Gerrard, Contracted Midcourt Specialist Coach: Megan Simpson, Apprentice Coaches: Briony Akle, Moira Gaha, Team Manager: Toni Kidwell, Performance Analyst: Bjorn Maddern, Physiotherapists: Paula Peralta, Brett Doring and Daniel Vukovic, Netball NSW Strength & Conditioning Coach: Jason Howell;
 - (iii) Miss Mo'onia Gerrard, former Captain of the NSW Swifts and Vice-Captain of the Australian Diamonds was selected as a finalist for New South Wales Woman of the Year;
 - (iv) nine Netball NSW Coaches have been awarded the Netball Australia Advanced Coaching Accreditation recently: Megan Anderson, Adele Caesar, Rosemary Clarke, Amber Cross, Gima Crowdy, Therri Ellison, Mo'onia Gerrard, Sonia Mkoloma and Marj Parr;
 - (v) Netball NSW volunteers were nominated and recognised at the New South Wales Sports Federation's Community Sports Volunteer Awards including, Thomas Turner of Parramatta Auburn Netball Association, a young up-and-coming umpire, mentored by New South Wales Umpires' Coordinator, Jan Simpson and his grandmother, AA umpire, Ronda Kimble, OAM, was awarded New South Wales Young Official of the Year after rising quickly through the umpiring ranks, achieving his National C and B Badges within 12 months of each other, officiating at Dooleys State League, State and State Age Championships, the Oceania Netball Cup and the Marie Little Shield and other Netball NSW members were finalists for awards including Eugene Afa, Marion van Munster and Robin Butler;
 - (vi) international and New South Wales umpire, Sharon Kelly celebrated officiating her 100th ANZ Netball Game;
 - (vii) seven New South Wales players were named in the Australian 17U Development Squad, including Keira Austin (Eastwood Ryde), Prudence Ellis (Ku-ring-gai), Kristen Kessler (Wyong), Lauren Moore (Wyong), Claire O'Brien (St George), Amy Parmenter (Randwick) and Cassandra Radford (Sutherland Shire);
 - (viii) six New South Wales players were named in the Australian 19U Squad, including Toni Anderson (Sutherland Shire), Madeline Hay (NSW Swifts/Sutherland Shire), Georgia Marshall (City of Sydney/Sydney University), Tanisha Stanton (Eastwood Ryde), Lauren Yager (Sutherland Shire) and Billie Gurr (City of Sydney/Sydney University); and
 - (ix) five New South Wales players were named in the Australian 21U Squad, Kristina Brice (Baulkham Hills), Taylah Davies (Sutherland Shire), Kristiana Manu'a (Liverpool City), Kimberley Ravaillion (QLD Firebirds/Eastwood Ryde) and Gretel Tippett (NSW Swifts).
- (2) That this House congratulates Netball NSW on its achievements and wishes all members a successful National Netball Day.

RED SHIELD APPEAL

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Red Shield Appeal is the Salvation Army's primary annual fundraising drive and doorknocking took place on the weekend of 24 to 25 May 2014;
 - (b) the Red Shield Appeal offers Australians from all walks of life a chance to not only get behind the Salvos but to be part of transforming the lives of people right around the country;
 - (c) approximately \$4.9 million was raised during the Red Shield Appeal;
 - (d) this fundraiser helps over a million Australians in need of social services and works with people facing hardship and helps individuals with drug-related matters, alcohol and gambling addictions; and
 - (e) the Salvation Army also supports members of the community with skills development and job placement programs, as well as food assistance.

- (2) That this House:
- (a) acknowledges the Salvation Army's work with people facing hardship, helping individuals with drug related matters, alcohol and gambling addictions and supporting members of the community with skills development and job placement programs, as well as food assistance; and
 - (b) acknowledges all those who participated and donated to the Red Shield Appeal.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item Nos 1877 and 1878 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

Private Members' Business item No. 7 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by the Hon. Lynda Voltz, on behalf of the Hon. Mick Veitch, and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Private Members' Business item No. 11 in the Order of Precedence postponed on motion by the Hon. Lynda Voltz, on behalf of the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 17 June 2014 at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Robert Brown agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 1752 outside the Order of Precedence, relating to the Native Vegetation Amendment Bill, be called on forthwith.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Robert Brown agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 1752 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

NATIVE VEGETATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Robert Brown.

Second Reading

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [9.54 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Native Vegetation Amendment Bill 2014. I thank the NSW Farmers Association for providing the narrative that enabled the Parliamentary Counsel to draw up this bill. Farmers in New South Wales have had nothing more than calls for reviews, reviews and more reviews in relation to the Native Vegetation Act. After all these reviews, nothing substantial in the form of legislative change has occurred,

and the people on the farm and in the bush are ready for legislation that will give them some relief from an onerous Native Vegetation Act. I trust that my colleagues in The Nationals, as an influential partner in the Coalition, will find a way to ensure that this important piece of legislation is brought into law as soon as possible.

It is clear that farmers who own and work their land in a sustainable manner for future generations are being robbed—and that is not too strong a word—by restrictive and ridiculous native vegetation laws, all because of some green ideology that says farmers do not know what is best for their land. That is a load of heifers' dust, to be polite. What is worse is that the current laws are leading to perverse environmental outcomes as well. The concept that farmers are environmental vandals is beyond insulting—they are not. Farmers are, in fact, the greatest and most dedicated environmental custodians we have. Their ability to farm their land sustainably and profitably is on display every single day. Farmers have been pushing for changes to the native vegetation laws in this State for decades. The latest version of the laws that they ended up with back in 2003, the same one we have today, is nothing but shambolic, in the view of farmers.

It must be noted that I am not pushing for broadscale destruction of the landscape, and this bill does not go anywhere near that. Farmers highly value biodiversity on their farms. The benefits from economic incentives to maintain environmental integrity are vast. However, there are significant and unmistakable flaws in current native vegetation laws in New South Wales that are costing farmers, rural communities, and the health and viability of the farming sector every day that the system remains unchanged—hence this bill. Last June, the New South Wales Deputy Premier and The Nationals Leader, Andrew Stoner, acknowledged the issue and announced at the National Party conference that there would be:

A comprehensive overhaul of the Native Vegetation Act, the Threatened Species Conservation Act and related biodiversity legislation.

That announcement was close to a year ago and none of this has been delivered. In fact, the real legislative process has not even started. No matter, the Shooters and Fishers Party is happy to step in and get the ball rolling and help in any way. The Government has proceeded with changes to the regulations, before the reform of the Act. There has been a good start, but it has been somewhat underwhelming. In fact, the self-assessable codes have been described by NSW Farmers and others as unworkable, impractical and difficult to interpret. I know that the Government has also been approached and asked to consider targeted amendments to the Native Vegetation Act whilst this lengthy review, which has not even started, is undertaken.

This bill is being introduced to try to give the farmers of our State some room to move when it comes to native vegetation laws, and I hope government will support us in this endeavour. We consider that the current Native Vegetation Act was flawed from its inception and is in urgent need of a complete overhaul. In the meantime, the changes being proposed in this bill are sensible in nature and will go some way to addressing the multitude of problems with the current Act.

These changes will: change the objects of the Act in order that assessments can be made on a triple bottom line basis, taking into account social, economic and environmental issues; remove all references to groundcover within the Act; change the meaning of "broadscale" as it relates to clearing so that it genuinely means broadscale and not just the removal of a single tree; allow landholders to undertake clearing if there are work health and safety risks associated with the vegetation—and bushfire is a perfect example of this; allow landholders to undertake clearing if it is a drought preparation necessity; harmonise the dates of regrowth between different areas of the State; and reduce the penalties in line with the gravity of the offence.

Farmers and people in the bush deserve to have politicians deliver what they promise. The time for empty words and rhetoric has passed. If those on the Government benches are genuine in what they have said in recent years, and I believe they are—I have every faith in The Nationals to prosecute these changes—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Along with the Liberal Party.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: And the Liberal Party, yes. If they are genuine about wanting to help farmers and people affected by native vegetation laws in this State they will support this bill. I commend the bill 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.

TRANSFORMING NSW ENERGY SECTOR (TOWARDS 100 PERCENT RENEWABLES) BILL 2014

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by Dr John Kaye.

Second Reading

Dr JOHN KAYE [10.01 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is time we had a conversation and confronted the consequences of an energy economy dominated by coal and gas. It is time for a vision that goes beyond the pollution-intensive, business-as-usual model and reaches out to a jobs rich, sustainable future based on 100 per cent renewables. It is time for that conversation to begin with the reality that fossil fuels dominate electricity generation in New South Wales and in the national electricity market. It is time we faced up to the 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide that gas- and coal-fired power stations in New South Wales emit each year. It is time we recognised that, on quite conservative estimates, that 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is inflicting \$12 billion worth of damage globally on health, infrastructure, food production and coastal populations, and is having other human costs.

That conversation must recognise the \$800 million in coal-fired power station related health costs in New South Wales. It must recognise the governance integrity impacts of coalmining and gas extraction industries. It must recognise the local social environmental damage that is inflicted on communities across New South Wales by coalmines and coal seam gas wells, and the growing community outrage, which is on clear public view in places such as Bentley and Leard State Forest. That conversation must focus on jobs and on the economy as much as on the environmental imperatives. It must recognise that coal and gas are dead-end technologies. It must recognise that, while coal and gas are dead-end technologies with declining levels of employment, with the appropriate intelligent policy settings, wind, solar, sustainable biomass and energy efficiency will generate tens of thousands of new jobs and new investment in our economy—in research, development, design, manufacturing, marketing, installation, operations, maintenance and management. And it will do so in numbers that far outstrip employment in the coal industry, the coal seam gas industry and the coal-fired electricity industry.

That conversation must go beyond just seeing renewable energy as a boutique source of power; it must see renewable energy as a source of power that is at the heart of the future of New South Wales. I note that this morning the New South Wales Government released its response to the expert panel's call for submissions into the Federal Government's Review of the Renewable Energy Target. I welcome the opening statement of that review, which says:

The NSW Government is committed to a secure, affordable and renewable energy future for NSW.

For the first time, the New South Wales Government has acknowledged that the future of this State is based on renewable energy.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Shame!

Dr JOHN KAYE: I acknowledge the interjection by the Government Whip.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I'm no lackey of the executive. I've got my own mind, thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the first time.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I note that it is not just The Greens and the community that are calling for a renewable energy future; it is now also the Baird Government, and I welcome its commitment. While the Government's response document is flawed in some aspects, it is a huge step forward compared with the former Government's attempts to stymie the development of wind power. If the conversation we have about renewable energy is to be honest, it must be based on the facts that lead us to the inevitable conclusion that this State has to have 100 per cent renewable electricity generation and that that objective is possible, it is affordable and it is essential. This bill will bring that conversation into this Parliament by laying out a policy and governance road map to achieve 100 per cent renewables by 2030. However, it is part of a much bigger conversation that is engaging the community, experts, the renewable energy industry, the public sector and the workforce throughout New South Wales.

The bill proposes to reach its goal of 100 per cent renewables by 2030 by: first, creating an expert panel to develop a plan for the best mix of renewable technologies and energy efficiency by 2030; secondly, by requiring the expansion of renewable technologies and starting to close down coal-fired power stations by 2017; thirdly, by banning the development of new coal-fired power stations and new fossil gas-fired power stations over a certain size; and, fourthly by requiring the Government to table a timetable to close down all coal-fired and gas-fired power stations by 2030. The bill develops employment guarantees for all employees and it creates a sustainable and fair feed-in tariff for rooftop solar and other distributive energy sources. The bill repeals the draft planning guidelines that are holding the wind industry to ransom and encourages the growth of those industries.

Our approach uses regulation to drive public and private sector investment in the renewable energy industry based on a clear timetable to exit from fossil fuels. Our approach is based on the objective of building a robust and resilient economy for New South Wales in the new, clean technologies. There is no doubt that some members in this Chamber will say that this goal is impossible. They will be wrong. Professor Mark Diesendorf from the University of New South Wales in referee publications in the journal *Energy Policy* has published his studies based on an hour-by-hour simulation over two years of historic data on wind and sunshine, and energy demand records. Using a hypothetical mix of currently available off-the-shelf renewable energy technologies, he showed that the lights would stay on without gas and without burning coal. He showed that industry would continue to operate and that, indeed, 100 per cent renewable energy technology is available right now.

Based on wind power, rooftop solar, concentrated solar thermal power and on burning sustainable crop waste, the University of New South Wales has shown that the economy can continue to operate without gas and without coal. A University of Melbourne study commissioned by Beyond Zero Emissions reached a similar conclusion. Some people may dispute what happens at the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney. However, they will have a much harder time disputing the April 2013 report of the Australian Energy Market Operator, which looked at low projections for 2030 and 2050 and found that with a mix of sustainable energy technologies it was possible to meet the reliability standard of electricity generation remaining available 99.998 per cent of the time. These hard-nosed engineers, whose sole objective is maintaining the reliability of the electricity industry, concluded that it is entirely possible to create a 100 per cent renewable future for the electricity networks on the national electricity grid, including New South Wales.

All three of the studies show that the diverse location of renewable energy sources will smooth out the impacts of variabilities in sunshine and wind, especially in the presence of concentrated solar thermal storage and the combustion of sustainable crop waste. All the studies were based on existing technologies. There is no question that massive technology development will make the task easier as it progresses. In the time I have been drafting this bill and working on bringing it to Parliament the cost of rooftop solar power stations has fallen by about 15 per cent; and a conservative estimate is that it will continue to fall in real terms by 5 per cent every year. The next complaint brought against the bill will be that it is simply unaffordable. It is time to dispel the myth that renewable energy is expensive. In a study released on 7 February 2013 Bloomberg New Energy Finance concluded:

... electricity can be supplied from a new wind farm at a cost of AUD 80/MWh (USD 83), compared to AUD 143/KWh from a new coal plant or AUD 116 /MWh from a new baseload power plant, including the cost of emissions under the Gillard government's carbon pricing scheme. However, even without a carbon price ... wind energy is 14% cheaper than new coal and 18% cheaper than new gas.

Mr Michael Liebreich, the Chief Executive of Bloomberg New Energy Finance, observed:

The perception that fossil fuels are cheap and renewables are expensive is now out of date.

Not only is that perception out of date; it will be increasingly out of date as time goes on. Bloomberg further stated:

Bloomberg New Energy Finance's research on Australia shows that since 2011, the cost of wind generation has fallen by 10% and the cost of solar photovoltaics by 29%. In contrast, the cost of energy from new fossil-fuelled plants is high and rising.

Bloomberg came to the definite conclusion that renewable energy is currently cheaper and will get much cheaper in the future. UBS, the American merchant bank, released data this month showing that by 2018, based on a 5 per cent annual capital cost reduction in rooftop solar, off-grid roof-top solar will be cost compatible for the average household and beyond 2018 it will be cheaper. And it is likely to get cheaper at an accelerating rate. The 5 per cent assumption made by UBS is quite conservative.

It is clear that the day of cheap fossil fuels is over and the day of expensive renewable energy has long since passed. Cost estimates based on Beyond Zero Emissions work is that our plan would cost about \$10 billion a year over 15 years. That is based on current technology costs; it will probably cost a lot less as some technologies continue to become cheaper. Some will say that \$10 billion a year in capital investment is a lot. However, when we compare it with the cost of doing nothing we can see that it is a relatively small amount. At \$200 a tonne, which is a conservative estimate of what each tonne of carbon dioxide costs the planet when it is released, the cost of operating the New South Wales electricity industry is about \$12 billion a year. The carbon dioxide that comes from the New South Wales electricity industry inflicts \$12 billion of damage on the future of food production, agriculture and infrastructure that is impacted by droughts and sea level rise.

When that is added to the public health costs of coal-fired power stations, the subsidies for cheap fuel and the subsidies that go to coal-fired power stations and the coalmines that support them, the annual cost of business as usual, the do-nothing cost, is probably about \$14 billion a year or more. That begins to make the cost of making transitions look highly affordable. But the real question that people ask is: What will be the impact on power bills by 2030 under the scheme outlined in this bill? It is straightforward. The real question is: If the State does nothing, if we stay on the same path of increasing the domination of coal and gas, what will happen to power bills compared with the transformation to 100 per cent renewables? Both Bloomberg and UBS suggest that the falling costs of clean technology will result in lower power bills by 2030. Further, any attempt to internalise the real costs of fossil fuel combustion to bring into power bills any reflection of the real costs imposed by releasing 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year will make wind and solar much cheaper than fossil fuels.

Further, the benefits of distributed generation will put more downward pressure on power bills. Avoiding the cost of building new powerlines, transformers, and distribution and transmission infrastructure is one of the most effective ways of reducing power bills. Despite the propaganda coming from the former O'Farrell Government—and indeed, sadly, from the Baird Government—it is not the carbon price that has resulted in the 50 per cent increase in power bills over the past six years. It is overwhelmingly ridiculous decisions about supplier reliability made by the former Labor Government and the then energy Minister, Frank Sartor, that drove up investment in wires and poles, which punished consumers and households across the State.

Some members will say that such a transformation is not essential. I will leave aside the moral imperative of contributing to the global effort to live sustainably. That should be sufficient, but clearly for some it will not be sufficient. But I say to those people that there is an economic imperative to make the transition. Jobs in the fossil fuel industry are doomed, and not simply because of the automation of mines and power stations and the increasing replacement of workers in those industries by automation and robots. It is more about what will happen globally as consensus builds that the planet is in trouble and pressure comes on the New South Wales coal industry. New South Wales has two choices. First, we can go ahead with business as usual and face the certainty of the day when the world turns to Australia and says, "Not only do we no longer want your fossil fuels but you cannot continue to emit 50 tonnes per person per year in greenhouse gases."

As the rest of the world makes the transition to renewable energy, Australia risks being left behind and becoming a global pariah that will increasingly attract international attention and pressure to make a transition to our own carbon intensive industries. Business as usual is the carbon dead end. It must be avoided because it is extremely expensive. When we reach that carbon dead end we will not have control over the timetable, jobs and technologies. We will be forced into rushed and panicked decisions to make the transition that the rest of the world will have made ahead of us. We will be importing technologies and losing opportunities for jobs. The alternative is that we make our own determination on a timetable. If we do that we can generate jobs—73,800 direct and indirect jobs, as estimated by the University of Newcastle, and possibly more if we become world leaders and get involved in the business of exporting technology and services.

But we can do this only if we make our own choices. We can do this only if we drive a timetable that puts us ahead of the rest of the world, not behind it. New South Wales needs to be a world leader in sustainable renewable energy. New South Wales needs to get the jobs and the leadership that will enable us to get them. This bill lays out a plan that is possible. That possibility derives from studies by the Australian Energy Market Operator that demonstrate that it is affordable, that it will lower costs and household power bills, and that it is essential if New South Wales is to avoid the carbon dead-end that will hollow out jobs and destroy our economy. I turn now to some of the detailed provisions in the bill and I will explain how The Greens will deliver this plan. Part 2, clause 6 (1) of the bill states:

- (1) The Government of New South Wales is required to implement the process referred to in section 5 so that those energy technologies and energy efficiency measures make it possible for sufficient energy to be generated by renewable energy, or saved through energy efficiency measures, so that at least one coal-fired generator with a capacity of at least 500 megawatts, and a capacity factor of at least 73%, could be replaced by those sources, and decommissioned, by January 2017.

To this end, the Minister for Resources and Energy is to appoint an expert panel to consider and make recommendations on a portfolio of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures to meet this target. The panel is to consist of at least five independent experts, one individual with expertise in finance, representatives of UnionsNSW, the Council of Social Service of New South Wales, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the wind industry, the solar industry and the energy efficiency industry. That panel is to take into account a number of criteria, including the need to protect low- and middle-income households from rising electricity bills; opportunities for the New South Wales Government to support and facilitate community owned and operated renewable energy generation projects; the need to remove barriers that prevent private investment in renewable energy technologies; and the environmental, social and economic benefits of direct public investment and ownership of renewable energy projects.

Part 4, clause 14, of the bill creates a timetable for the closure of all existing coal-fired power stations by 2030. Acting on the advice of an expert panel, the Minister for Resources and Energy will be required to draft and table in both Houses of Parliament a timetable for the closure of all existing fossil-fuelled power stations by 1 January 2030. The timetable will be binding but can be altered by a resolution of both Houses of Parliament. The timetable is to include job guarantees for all displaced power station workers of a position on an equivalent pay scale, an equivalent level of job security and all benefits, including long service leave and superannuation to be preserved. Part 5, clause 16, of the bill imposes bans on new fossil-fuelled power stations.

Schedule 3 to the bill fixes up problems that have occurred in the distributed generation of electricity, including providing for a feed-in tariff for all distributed renewable energy at a price set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal that approximates the relevant retail purchase price. No longer will households get almost nothing for their rooftop solar stations but will be paid a reasonable price, which represents the profits that are made from that electricity by the electricity retailers. Part 7, clause 21, fixes the wind power problems that were created by the O'Farrell Government's draft NSW Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms. Those guidelines are to be replaced with rational guidelines that are based on science. They include sensible buffer distances and noise standards that reflect the South Australian standards.

It makes no sense to drive away 28 wind projects that offer New South Wales the possibility of \$7.2 billion in investment, 4,000 jobs and reducing our annual carbon dioxide output by 16.8 million tonnes. That would be a 28 per cent reduction in the State's greenhouse gas emissions from its electricity industry. I look forward to the debate about the future of the wind industry, which is a critical, initial and long-term player in the transition to 100 per cent renewables. It deserves better treatment than it is receiving from the Abbott Government, with its attack on the renewable energy target, and from the Baird Government's draft wind planning guidelines. The attack on the wind industry needs to end. The industry must be recognised as a responsible citizen that is critical to the future of this State, and part 7 of our legislation begins that process. Part 6 of the bill will remove New South Wales Government subsidies to coal and fossil gas operations for the purposes of electricity generation and redirect those subsidies into the renewable energy industry.

I look forward to the heated debate in this Chamber that this bill will stimulate. Some members will be worried about the stranded assets problem: What will happen to existing fossil fuel generators in a 100 per cent renewables future? I say to them that that problem is inevitable. This State's electricity generation will become 100 per cent renewable one way or another. Sooner or later those fossil-fuelled power stations will become the dinosaurs they deserve to be right now, and thus be stranded assets. This process has been occurring for some time. At the time of power privatisation The Greens warned that these assets were impaired not only by a carbon price but also by an imperative for this State to shut down its fossil-fuelled generators. Those who purchased the power stations cannot say they were not warned. My colleagues and I made public statements to that effect. I said in this Chamber that privatisation would undermine the capacity to close those power stations cheaply. Nobody can say they were not warned. That time has now come and those warnings were correct.

Some people will be worried about jobs in the electricity industry. We estimate that there are about 5,800 jobs in the fossil-fuel-fired electricity industry, about 1,800 in coal-fired power stations and about 4,000 in that portion of the State's coalmines that provide coal to the coal-fired power stations. But those 5,800 jobs are a relatively small number compared with the massive number of jobs that will be generated in the renewables sector. This bill has at its heart an employment guarantee promise to every worker in the coal-fired electricity industry that no job will be lost. It is a legislated promise that every worker will be compensated and be eligible to work in the renewable energy sector. This is not a jobs-killing bill; it is a jobs-creating bill. This bill will create a jobs-rich future for New South Wales. Those who now work in coal-fired power stations and in the coalmines that support them deserve to be moved first into new jobs, and The Greens will secure those jobs for them. They will be exciting, worthwhile and unionised jobs that will create a robust and secure economic future.

Some people will express concern about the impact on power bills. I say to them that there are strong reasons to believe renewable energy and energy efficiency can bring down power bills. Indeed, based on the evidence of Bloomberg and what is coming out of the University of New South Wales, if we want lower power bills in 2030 the worst thing we can do is sit back and continue with business as usual. New South Wales needs a transition plan that not only generates jobs but also brings down household bills. Yes, the price of electricity might increase, but households do not pay the price; they pay the product of price and quantity. The trick is to bring down quantity with energy efficiency to stop the waste of energy and to help households avoid squandering energy to make sure they have the opportunity to participate in the renewable energy revolution that will come to this State sooner or later. Some people reject the climate science and say that we do not have to make this change. They claim there is some kind of conspiracy. They say that the billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere each year are not affecting the climate, and that we do not need to worry about it. We say it is their right to believe that, but The Greens do not agree with them.

Every measure in this bill will leave New South Wales stronger, wealthier, with more jobs, with an economy that is more robust and resilient, less dependent on commodities and more dependent on the skills of the State's workforce. Everything in this bill says that we build a stronger New South Wales by making that transition. If for some bizarre reason members of this Chamber do not accept the overwhelming consensus of science that we have must reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, they should support this bill because it, even without climate impacts, is in the best interests of the State. Yes, it will annoy the fossil fuel industry and it will get offside those who are holding impaired and stranded assets. It will cause some people to be uncomfortable. It lays out a difficult and challenging path for New South Wales, a path that requires a skilled workforce, a path that will protect our TAFE system to make sure that we have the skilled workforce to make that transition in 15 years.

But at the end of the process we are not only stronger because of our economy but also stronger because we work together to achieve an outcome that is for the good of the people and for the good of the planet. This is a conversation that we have to have if we are to build a State that confronts the challenges of the twenty-first century in a way that leaves us proud of what we have done in this Chamber and proud of what we have done as a State. I commend the bill to the House.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Luke Foley agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 1777 outside the Order of Precedence, relating to the death of the Hon. Neville Wran, be called on forthwith.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Luke Foley agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 1777 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

DEATH OF THE HONOURABLE NEVILLE KENNETH WRAN, AC, CNZM, QC, A FORMER PREMIER, MINISTER OF THE CROWN, MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBER FOR BASS HILL

Debate resumed from 15 May 2014.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH [10.32 a.m.]: I wish to associate myself with this condolence motion for the Hon. Neville Kenneth Wran. My contribution will be brief but I feel it is important to add a country perspective to what has been said about Neville Wran during debate on this condolence motion. It is important to do that when expressing our deep regret in the loss sustained to the State by the death on 20 April 2014 of the Hon. Neville Kenneth Wran. As has been stated by previous speakers, Mr Wran was a former member of this House and a former Premier of New South Wales.

Neville Wran led the Labor Party in this place and in the other place. He entered the Legislative Council in 1970 and succeeded Reg Downing as leader of the Labor Party in the Legislative Council. As the Hon. Luke Foley stated, Reg Downing suffered a heart attack in 1971 and, with his support, Neville Wran succeeded him as Labor's leader in this place in February 1972. At the November 1973 election Neville Wran successfully transferred to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Bass Hill. Days later he was elected leader of the New South Wales Labor Party. A number of speakers have highlighted the achievements that followed. Who can forget that famous victory in 1976, or the four election triumphs and 10 years at the helm of a reforming Labor Government?

I have had a number of opportunities to discuss with Terry Sheahan, the former member for Burrinjuck and a Wran Government Minister, the Wran campaign in rural New South Wales. Indeed, Terry spoke of the importance of country seats to Labor's winning and holding government in New South Wales under Wran. If one analysed the 1971 election polling in rural New South Wales and then looked at the voting trends in 1973 and 1976 one would have to assume that Wran's strategic campaigning in rural and regional New South Wales was effective. Wran worked hard. As Richard Lucy put it in the book *The Wran Model*, he worked assiduously in country New South Wales. He held regular Cabinet meetings in regional New South Wales and he made at least two forays into rural and regional New South Wales each month. Country New South Wales certainly was the recipient of the Wran niceness when it came to capital works projects. The book *Ascent to Power: Wran and the Media* by Brian Dale states:

No ALP politician since Bill McKell, the World War II premier, worked the bush as hard as Wran. No politician since McKell was as successful in the bush as Wran. And no politician, including McKell, understood and used the media in the bush as well as Wran.

Wran would have been the commencement point for changing the role of the media in politics, particularly country politics. The book *Ascent to Power: Wran and the Media* includes an interesting story about Neville Wran and the country media. It is a yarn that resonates with a former shearer like me. With indulgence of the House I shall quote from the book. People who have been to country shows know the importance of visiting certain events and attractions at those shows, such as the cattle and equestrian events, woodchopping, certainly the show shearing and always the prize ram. Wran attended the Mudgee show. The book states:

... with the media, the committee and the local Country Party member in tow, Wran, Hooper and I went to look at the prize sheep.

The trouble began when the local photographer, wanting a photograph of Wran with a prize ram, said with a grin: 'Grab the ram Nev, it'll make a great page one pic.'

By this time everyone, from Wran and his entourage to the media and committee representatives, was on a first name basis. However, even the best politician sometimes forgets the Christian name of a person they have just met. When this happens the perennial 'mate' always suffices.

'Which one ... mate?' was the response. 'That feller in the pen there.'

For a few moments, the well-dressed city politician and the well-groomed wily ram, standing boot and hoof deep in straw, contemplated each other.

Audible to only Hooper and me, Wran said: 'Where do I grab the bloody thing?'

'Christ knows. Round the head I suppose,' was my contribution. Thankfully Hooper's country instincts surfaced and, disregarding the passive objectivity and detachment of journalism, he stepped in expertly, grabbed the ram and whispered to Wran: 'Watch me'. He quickly turned the ram to the photographer and covering his intervention, said to the photographer: 'Is this the angle you want?'

Receiving the acknowledgement that the required angle had indeed been set, Wran, nothing if not a quick learner or observer, stepped in and, following Hooper's actions exactly, professionally and with an air of expertise, held the ram for the time required to take the photograph. [He looked up and said] 'I owe you one, Kenny,' [and walked away].

Anyone who has been to a country show would be in no doubt about the difficulty of downing a prize ram let alone a city politician, in a suit trying to impress the country voters. Terry Sheahan spoke to me not long after Neville Wran's passing about the modern campaigning techniques that candidates employ as opposed to those utilised in his time. One of the big differences is the media and how we all now live by 24-hour news channels, social media and the use of technology. There is no doubt in my mind that the model applied by Neville Wran, built on the McKell model, for country New South Wales campaigning and the importance of country New South Wales to the Labor Party is something we should closely examine. It is a model that worked for McKell and it is certainly a model that worked for Wran. Neville led the way for Labor in country New South Wales, particularly west of the dividing range. He is a lesson for us all. Neville was a great leader for this State, an icon for the Labor Party and he will be missed.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY [10.39 a.m.]: I make a contribution to the condolence motion on the passing of the Hon. Neville Wran. While it is an important motion for members on this side of the House, I think it is important for members of Parliament in general because there is no question whatsoever that the Hon. Neville Wran was a giant not only in this State but also beyond the borders of this State. I do not seek to repeat comments made by the various members of this House who have spoken in the debate thus far. They have covered in some significant detail both his life and his contribution to serving the public of this State. I draw members' attention to the parliamentary library biographical profile which is worthwhile reading. It has been put together with significant detail and anyone interested in the contribution that the Hon. Neville Wran made to this State should access that document. I thank the library for the effort put into developing the document.

I make a particular reference to his association with and fondness towards the trade union movement and the trade union movement being at the heart of the Labor Party. His birth and early life in Paddington and Balmain exposed the young Neville Wran to what were then, in the 1930s and the early part of the 1940s, quite hard times for working people. It was his and his family's exposure to hardship and the experiences of those around him in Balmain and beyond Balmain that clearly opened his eyes to the importance of the role of collective organisation by workers—that ability of workers to band together and set their interests collectively to improve and enhance not just their wages and working conditions but also their general welfare.

It provided the opportunity for children born of those families to progress into opportunities of education and advancement in order to fulfil their potential, whatever that might be. That is not a dream or vision just for people associated with the Labor Party but for all parents who want to see opportunities for their children to receive an education and fulfil their dreams and possibilities. Clearly the young Neville Wran saw the importance of education and we know from past contributions by members in this debate that he was provided with an opportunity, through support from his loving parents and siblings, to attend primary school and to receive an education at Fort Street High School. That provided him with an opportunity to move on to university. We know that he served as a solicitor for 10 years before becoming a distinguished industrial barrister in this State, specialising in workers compensation and common law, and then entering a parliamentary career.

His time in Balmain exposed him to the role of trade unions and the great good that trade unions are capable of doing on behalf of working people. The trade union movement developed an award system that was managed and looked after by the institutions of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission at the time. Award applications by trade unions, because of their common law nature, meant that all workers in this State, irrespective of whether they were members of a trade union, benefited from the improvement in wages, allowances and award entitlements. It is the same Industrial Relations Commission which was subject to, from time to time, applications to enhance and improve those awards. The role of the trade union movement and its peak body, the Labor Council of New South Wales, influenced the Labor Party and brought before the Parliament over the years legislative changes, be it in the area of workers compensation, long service leave or annual leave.

Neville Wran well understood that the Parliament provided that opportunity for a well-organised and well-disciplined Labor Party to bring before it bills that, if passed, would like a rising tide raise all the boats. It was not just for people who were Labor Party members or members of trade unions, it was for all workers and their families to benefit from those improvements. He then entered into this House and moved on to his role as Premier of the State for 10 years. As a parliamentary representative of the Labor Party he understood full well how the Parliament could be used, through the passing of legislation, to enhance the lives of working people and their families. Neville Wran understood fully the issue of education and that providing opportunities for people would enable them to develop and reach their full potential. Neville Wran was clearly a giant in the Labor Party in this State.

He is a man whose affection was felt so strongly by so many people. I had the privilege of attending his State funeral. There were people at his funeral from the Labor Party and other political parties. The eloquent speeches at that State funeral made it clear to all of us how this individual, who in some sense we understand very well from his public life, which was lived so openly and so fully, was also a very private man that only the closest friends and his family members understood. There can be no question he made an enormous contribution to public life in this State. He is a person who will never be forgotten for the contribution he made to the Labor Party and working people in this State. I offer my sincere condolence to his family members, his political colleagues past and present, and the entire Labor family. The Labor Party has lost a giant. May his soul rest in peace.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY (Leader of the Opposition) [10.48 a.m.], in reply: I thank all members who contributed to this debate. I thank all my Labor colleagues who have made contributions. I thank Minister Ajaka for his contribution on behalf of the Government. I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, the only member serving in the House today who was a member of this Parliament when Neville Wran was Premier of the State. I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his contribution. There is nothing more to say. We have honoured a great man who served in this Chamber, who led the Labor Party in this Chamber, who then moved to the other place and led the Labor Party and the State with great distinction for more than a decade. May he rest in peace.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

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

Motion agreed to.

SENATOR LEE RHIANNON

Debate resumed from 8 May 2014.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN (Parliamentary Secretary) [10.50 a.m.]: I commend the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps for moving this motion. I will make a contribution to this debate because when moving the motion the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps referred to the impact that Lee Rhiannon and her supporters had on our troops in the Vietnam War. I was in Vietnam during that time and I can tell members firsthand about the impact that her campaigns had on our Vietnam veterans, not only while they were in Vietnam but also well after their return. In fact, as a result of the treachery of Lee Rhiannon's political supporters, a number of the soldiers who returned from Vietnam went bush, and many still live in the bush. They have been permanently scarred by that betrayal. There is no good whitewashing it and saying that it did not happen. One of the greatest heroes of our time, Sir Roden Cutler, had paint thrown at him by Lee Rhiannon's radical left-wing supporters and members of the movement she represented.

I recall the postal strike and its impact on soldiers in Vietnam. We did not have instant communications in those days; we had to wait for the mail, which was eagerly awaited because it was our only link with home. I remember one night when the strike had been going for a couple of weeks and a fellow sapper plant operator whom I clearly remember appeared outside my tent. I heard a noise and went out only to discover that he had an SLR, a full magazine and a round up the spout. He was looking for our platoon sergeant who had upset him earlier that day. The sapper had been married only a week before he was shipped out to Vietnam and he had not heard from his new wife for a couple of weeks. Apparently the platoon sergeant said something that upset him and he had gone to the boozier and decided that he would retaliate. I gently wrested the rifle from him, removed the magazine and then sat with him for a couple of hours while he broke down. That is an example of the impact of the strike. It generated a backlash and a campaign encouraging soldiers to punch a postie when they got back to Australia. Of course, they were vilified for being so callous to postal workers. That was the feeling they had and they had very good reason to feel that way.

The betrayal of Vietnam veterans was the greatest betrayal of our troops. We do not mind that in our free democracy anyone can take up issues with the government of the day. However, our duty as soldiers was to serve the government of the day regardless of its political persuasion. We saw it as our duty to serve the government of the day, as has every soldier who has served this country. The Australian defence community can be very proud of the bipartisan attitude it takes. Everybody has the right to demonstrate and to express their views, and we support that. That is what we fought and served for. However, demonstrators crossed the line by attacking the soldiers who had been sent by the government of the day rather than the government itself. They taunted soldiers parading through the streets of Brisbane and Sydney because they knew that they had the discipline not to retaliate. These cowards spat in their faces and threw eggs, flour and red paint at them.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Shame!

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: They did. To their great credit the soldiers maintained their discipline and never broke ranks. I was at the staff college at Queenscliff for the 1981 Anzac Day commemorations. World War I veterans attended a service at the Anzac memorial and a group of hairy arm-pitted women jumped in the Pool of Remembrance and mocked them. It was the greatest insult to those soldiers, who had stormed the beaches at Gallipoli and had seen the greatest carnage suffered by Australian forces. They were already scarred by that experience. Those women crossed the line by demonstrating at such a sacred memorial. When the

Hon. Dr Peter Phelps gave notice of his motion I did some research to establish whether those demonstrations were the greatest betrayal of our soldiers. In fact, a greater betrayal that occurred during World War II was only recently revealed in a book by Hal Colbatch.

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: The honourable member's contribution is not relevant to the motion, which does not reference World War II. Indeed, he has been straying from the motion for some time.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: To the point of order: We are debating a motion about Lee Rhiannon, the Communist movement she represented and its impact in World War II and the Vietnam War. This is my contribution to the debate. As a veteran, I want to put on the record the concerns of the veteran community in response to the issues that have been raised and the political ideology—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have the gist of the member's point of order. There is some substance to the point of order in relation to some of the material that the Hon. Charlie Lynn just traversed. However, as he was beginning to speak on a new subject it is too early for me to tell whether it is relevant. I ask him to confine his remarks to paragraphs (a) to (d) of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps's motion.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Paragraphs (a) to (d) of the motion call on Senator Lee Rhiannon to fully disclose all her interactions with officials of the Embassy for the Soviet Union in Australia and her activities while studying in Moscow. The motion also calls on the senator to answer questions regarding her behaviour, raised by Mark Aarons during her membership of the Communist Party of Australia and the Socialist Party of Australia. It goes on to call on the senator to fulfil her promise to address all aspects of controversy raised following the publication of her Australian Security Intelligence Organisation file. It notes that Greens protestations of openness and disclosure may have a modicum more credibility if their elected officials practised what they preached.

On the issue of the senator's membership of the Communist Party of Australia and the Socialist Party of Australia, I refer to a crucial battle in Milne Bay in 1942. As the Americans and the Australians were attempting to move urgently required equipment to the troops in Milne Bay, the Sydney waterfront, which was almost a branch of the Communist Party of Australia, went on strike. When the Industrial Commission ordered everybody back to work, they laughed and refused to comply even when the Prime Minister pleaded with them and reminded them that the Japanese were not far from Milne Bay. They went back to work only when the Soviet Embassy intervened. Artillery weapons were not loaded during the strike and the battle was fought without these weapons.

Mr David Shoebridge: One of your key witnesses was a six-year-old girl from Bondi.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: The Greens are not doing any good by trying to defend the indefensible.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Members will listen to the Hon. Charlie Lynn in silence.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Prisoners of war who had survived unspeakable horrors in prisoner of war camps and on the Sandakan death march returned to Australia after four years in captivity and had to wait offshore for 36 hours because the commos would not let them land.

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: The honourable member is flouting an earlier ruling by the President, who made it clear that traversing World War II and matters that are not related to paragraphs (a) to (d) in this motion are not relevant to the debate.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: I refer to paragraph (c), which relates to the senator's membership of the Communist Party of Australia and the Socialist Party of Australia. The activities of those parties are relevant, especially the senator's decision to join the parties, knowing their history and attitudes. This decision is just as relevant as if we were discussing someone's decision to join a Nazi party and said, "The Nazis haven't killed anyone since 1945, so it is okay to join." If that is The Greens' position, they should state that clearly.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: To the point of order: Paragraph (c) of the motion clearly states "fully answer the questions regarding her behaviour, raised by Mark Aarons, during her membership of the Communist Party of Australia and the Socialist Party of Australia". The key word is "during" her membership and matters in World War II could not—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: She joined it.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! With respect to the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, members must not interrupt. With respect to Mr Jeremy Buckingham, members must direct their comments through the Chair rather than argue across the Chamber. If members wish to contribute they should do so through the Chair.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: The point of order was to relevance and the honourable member was not addressing the key element, which is that even paragraph (c)—which I think is vexatious—relates to the time "during" the senator's membership.

Mr David Shoebridge: The entire motion is trying to draw attention from the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Members who take a point of order must address the Chair and must not have a cheer squad in the background, including Mr David Shoebridge. If members continue to behave in this manner they will be called to order. I was in the Chamber during the President's ruling; the ruling was not in the terms that Mr David Shoebridge has suggested. In that regard, I do not uphold the point of order. However, on the issue of relevance, membership of the Communist Party is generally relevant. I encourage the Hon. Charlie Lynn to address the terms of the motion rather than give an extended history of the Communist Party.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: During the senator's membership of the Communist Party in the 1970s and 1980s, progressive circles described anti-communist Vietnamese boatpeople as being capitalist tools and reactionaries. They were talked of as being Asians in terms essentially identical to those used at the turn of the century, invoking in traditional terms their alleged sexual vices and drug-taking, as well as the spectre of leprosy. This is what the senator drove during her membership. In one example among many, Brisbane waterside workers in 1979 addressed Vietnamese refugees as "dirty, grotty, little worms" and told them to "go back to your brothels, you bastards". They chanted, "You're not human."

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: This member's grossly offensive allegations of racism by Lee Rhiannon are totally out of order and well beyond any matter contained in this motion. This is a deeply unhistorical and deeply offensive personal attack on a woman who cannot defend herself. The member is a disgrace.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: If you hadn't taken a point of order, I would have given you the reference.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! That was not a point of order; it was a speech. I call Mr David Shoebridge to order for the first time. Members will behave with decorum or they will be called to order.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [11.05 a.m.]: This motion was raised by the Government Whip once Senator Lee Rhiannon was no longer in this Parliament, because none of the members opposite would have had the courage to stand up to Lee Rhiannon to make these unfounded and grossly distorted attacks on her character. This effectively is an attempt to do a character assassination of a woman who, when she was in this Chamber, fundamentally changed politics in this State in a way that continues to embarrass the likes of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and other members of this Chamber and in the other place, who are currently being disgraced because of their connections with lobbyists and acceptance of donations from property developers and the tobacco industry. They have been disgracefully successful in prostituting politics in this State to the highest bidder, whether a property developer, a tobacco company or a bank—whoever is willing to fill the pockets of the likes of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, who raised this motion.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: I take offence at the comments made by Mr David Shoebridge. He has named me as taking donations from property developers and from the tobacco industry. That is completely untrue and he should withdraw those allegations or present evidence to the contrary.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I will be very clear: I am talking about his party and I am talking about all other parties in this Chamber and the history that they have of taking money from property developers, from the tobacco industry, from any industry, regardless of its harm and damage. It is a reference to the party, not to the individual.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I refer Mr Jeremy Buckingham to my earlier ruling: When a member takes a point of order he or she does not need a cheer squad. Mr Jeremy Buckingham is not to be part of the cheer squad or I will call him to order. My ruling applies also to Government members. Mr David Shoebridge took points of order with regard to other members speaking to the motion; I invite him to speak to the motion. If he wishes to move a motion about the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps or the Liberal Party he obviously has the capacity to do so. However, I invite him to speak to the motion about Ms Lee Rhiannon.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Deputy-President, I respect your ruling.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): That is a good idea.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I do—whichever is in the chair, regardless of the personality. As I said, this motion is an attempted character assassination of a woman who fundamentally and positively changed politics in this State. It was her campaigning on the corrupting influence of corporate donations for more than a decade in this place that put the spotlight on the kind of corruption that we are seeing exposed in the Independent Commission Against Corruption currently.

It was her brave and courageous campaigning against politicians' perks that so offended the club in this Chamber when she first stood up and spoke about it and, in the face of a deeply hostile Chamber, pointed out the gross abuse of alcohol and how alcohol was being consumed by members who then came into this Chamber under the influence of alcohol and pretended to exercise their public office. It was a courageous and principled stance, for which she took enormous personal attacks, because she realised that the club had lost touch with the people of New South Wales. There were disgraceful examples of a former President being so clearly inebriated in this Chamber that he could not make effective rulings on issues raised in debate. The silence of the rest of this Chamber at the time, the refusal to take on board that destructive alcohol-driven culture, was only stopped when Senator Lee Rhiannon stood up here and said, "Enough is enough".

The people of New South Wales pay members to exercise their public office; they saw the Chamber reduced to those lows and the club defending its own, regardless of the kind of abuse of office that was happening. Lee Rhiannon's courageous politics is what offended people, right there and then. That is why the anger is so deep against Lee and the courageous stance she has taken. It was Lee Rhiannon, in her long history in politics, who stood up for peace and non-violence. She has a proud history of standing up for peace and non-violence, like the great bulk of Australians who now look back on the Vietnam War as an appalling misuse of our military, as a betrayal of those conscripts and soldiers who were sent to fight a grossly brutal war, using illegal methods with an ally who was unrestrained in its carpet bombing of neighbouring countries, in its napalming of villages and in its "kill a village to save a village" brutality in that war.

It was the likes of Lee Rhiannon who stood up and said that peace and non-violence need to be the principles not just for our country but for how we behave in international relations. For taking that courageous and principled stance she is sullied in this Chamber. It is a comprehensive and deliberate misreading of history and a comprehensive and deliberate attempt to attack the character of a woman who for decades and decades has been on the right side of these issues. She campaigned, as one of the founders of AidWatch when she was looking at how Australian taxpayers' dollars were being abused in the aid budget, to ensure that every dollar that went from this country to assist those in need in other parts of the globe was being spent on helping people in need and not being siphoned off into the pockets of dictators and large multinationals.

It was Lee Rhiannon and hundreds and hundreds of other women who protested against Australia's involvement with the United States in Pine Gap and how Australia was complicit in what was, and what continues to be in large part, a so-called nuclear deterrent—an escalation of violence that we have seen in the nuclear age, which risks our very survival. They had the courage to stand at Pine Gap and say that it is madness that we continue to build and multiply weapons of mass destruction that could end all civilised life on the planet. That campaign, consistent with decades of campaigning on peace and non-violence, is something that this Chamber should take pride in—that one of its members had such a courageous history of campaigning.

When we look at the history and the contributions of Lee Rhiannon throughout her political life, when we look at the changes she has driven in the political culture in New South Wales—changes to the politicians' perks and the abuse in this Chamber—we see they have had a real impact. We do not see the kind of alcohol-ridden debates that occurred a decade ago when Lee first belled the cat. Why not? Because Lee Rhiannon had the courage to take it on and change it, and she changed it for the better. We have seen now for

the better part of six years a ban on property developer donations in this State because of the courageous campaigning by Lee Rhiannon. We have seen more recently the efforts that politicians from the Coalition have continued to make to get around that ban, because they so want to be the recipients of those kinds of corrupting money-for-favours donations that have so riddled New South Wales politics for years.

Who was driving the campaign to ensure that property developer donations moved from the centre of politics in New South Wales to the far right fringes of politics in New South Wales? It was Lee Rhiannon, and that is a change for the fundamental good. Who has highlighted how major parties for decades received money from tobacco and then failed to take the obvious steps to reduce the deaths being caused by that murderous industry? It was Lee Rhiannon and her courageous campaigning in that regard. This is a woman whose political contribution to this State and this country is infinitely greater than that of the Government Whip and others who seek to bring her down and who seek to attack her political career. They are embarrassed by her achievements; they are embarrassed by their failings.

This motion was brought on at the high watermark of media coverage of the ICAC hearings exposing the continued grubby connections between the Liberal Party and property developers: business as usual in New South Wales—the kind of business as usual in New South Wales that Lee Rhiannon courageously stood up to try to change, in part. She continues to do it in the Senate. She is a woman who is worth 100 Peter Phelps and I oppose this motion as any person of goodwill would.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [11.19 a.m.]: I vehemently oppose this vexatious, venal, unnecessary motion. It is outrageous that the motion should come before the House. For members who are not aware, and as Mr David Shoebridge rightly said, this motion was cobbled together in a hate-filled, inaccurate way by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, literally on the back of a piece of paper in this Chamber, to create a distraction from the important debates occurring in New South Wales about corruption, decisions about donations and the appalling revelations at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. In May the then Premier fell on his sword because of the revelations at ICAC about a bottle of Grange. We are led to believe that more revelations will come out of ICAC in coming months.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: There is no mention of ICAC in the motion. If Mr Jeremy Buckingham is suggesting that my motion was brought forward to divert attention from some sort of investigation—

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! No.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: —then he is imputing my motives and I ask you to ask him to withdraw that.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I am not sure what the point of order was about. I think it was on the point of relevance. If that is how I am to take it, Mr Jeremy Buckingham is being generally relevant.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Clearly, ICAC is generally relevant to this debate because the motion refers to "Greens protestations of openness and disclosure". We do protest about openness and disclosure. It was one of the key elements that led to the Coalition victory. The Coalition said it would be a new broom and sweep out Labor's rottenness and corruption. How quickly the canker set in.

Mr David Shoebridge: It has moved to the other side of the room.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: That is exactly right. The rot runs deeply through the Government, as has been revealed. No other person in New South Wales, or indeed Australia, has done more to highlight and campaign against the insidious effects of donations, policy, the body politic and good governance in New South Wales and Australia than Lee Rhiannon. She is one of the hardest working members of Parliament in Australian history. She is a prodigious worker; she has an incredible work ethic. She was one of the first two Greens members in this place with the former member Ian Cohen. If one looks at *Hansard* and the thousands of speeches she made about many matters, one sees her legacy is profound in relation to donations and in the areas of mining, international aid, social justice, foreign policy and the like. Lee Rhiannon's contribution in all those areas is absolutely magnificent and we should be proud of that. I am certainly proud of it.

I came to politics because of Lee Rhiannon. She was the first Greens member of Parliament I met. Indeed, she was the first Greens politician I met. Alongside a highway in central western New South Wales, Lee

Rhiannon and Sylvia Hale said, "We want to build a political party that transforms New South Wales. We need passionate country people." They welcomed me into the party and opened doors. Indeed, Lee Rhiannon taught me how to be a campaigner. And what a prodigious and effective campaigner she has been. Her work has led to reforms and the establishment of the Democracy 4 Sale website with Dr Norman Thompson. Her reforms have led to bans on developer donations and on alcohol and tobacco advertising. At present there is a public debate about the public funding of elections, where the cap should be, what is at stake and what is for sale when money infects politics.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps raised the issue of the Communist Party as if it were a heinous crime to have been a member of the Communist Party 50 years ago, 40 years ago or 30 years ago. The member should be condemning the Labor Party. How many members of the Labor Party, or their parents or grandparents, have been members of the Communist Party? The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps should condemn his Government for travelling to Beijing and sitting down with the Chinese Community Party cap in hand, selling New South Wales resources and mining interests, prostituting us to the Chinese Communist Party. The Government is selling out New South Wales farmers to the Chinese Communist Party. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps is a hypocrite.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: The allegation that a member is a hypocrite is unparliamentary and I ask you to get him to withdraw that.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I withdraw.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! That certainly saves me making a ruling.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I am proud of my connections to the Communist Party. My great-grandfather was a member of the Communist Party in northern England and led his community in coalmining strikes, fighting against mining bosses who were destroying lives and profiting from the death and maiming of coalminers in northern England. That had a positive impact on those communities. That work was important. To characterise every person who was ever a member of the Communist Party as part of some Stalinist regime is absolutely outrageous and completely ridiculous. To characterise Lee Rhiannon's contribution to Australian politics in the way that Dr Phelps has in this motion is a disgrace. This motion is utterly unnecessary and vexatious. It is condemned by all Greens. Most people see it as an ideological, partisan and distracting attack on Lee Rhiannon simply because the Government has suffered as a result of her work. A Premier has been brought down and Ministers are in disgrace because of Lee Rhiannon's work. Her legacy will long outlive the contribution that the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps will ever make.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Ever is a long time.

Dr John Kaye: The stain.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: A greasy thin stain will appear in *Hansard* as the record of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' contribution. This motion is simply a partisan, ideological attack from a man who is clearly a crypto anarchist dressed up as a libertarian, a disgraceful human being. I condemn this motion, and I oppose it.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: The description of a member of Parliament as a "disgraceful human being" is unparliamentary and I ask you to get him to withdraw it.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I withdraw. I am not sure that the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps is a human being. It has been alleged that he was cracked out of an egg on another planet millions of years ago and has appeared here through time to infect our lives. This motion is atrocious. It should be condemned. It is a waste of the Parliament's time. We have important business, none less so than dealing with the insidious effect of donations on politics in New South Wales. Lee Rhiannon should take most of the credit for bringing that to the fore in this State.

Dr JOHN KAYE [11.30 a.m.]: I rise to oppose this motion with an enormous sense of boredom and ennui. I had hoped that Australian politics had reached a level of maturity and had moved beyond the era of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House un-American Activities Committee. I hoped we had moved beyond the era where smear was a replacement for genuine policy, and where character assassination was a replacement for taking on the issues. That was a time when you could raise a question about someone in Parliament—a coward's castle, hiding behind the protection of parliamentary privilege—and then say, "Well, I've done my day's work."

Despite my ennui, I read the motion moved by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I was going to re-read the article in *The Monthly* by Mark Aarons but then I remembered the overwhelming sense of nausea I felt when I read it the first time and I decided it was not worth subjecting myself to that again.

However, I have read the motion carefully and I make the following observations. The allegations by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps relate to things that Lee Rhiannon is purported to have done when she was a baby—mention is made to the colour of her diapers; I always thought they were called "nappies" but nonetheless—when she was five, seven, 13, 14, 16 and, heaven help us, when she was 18. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps then raised questions—the great McCarthyism smear technique; when you do not have any evidence you raise questions—about things Lee Rhiannon did when she was 19 and 20. He referred to a letter purportedly from Lee Rhiannon—which she denies writing—that the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation [ASIO] questions whether she wrote when she was 23.

I invite you, Mr Deputy-President, to remember what your political thoughts were at 18, 13 or five. I know what mine were, and I have no intention of divulging them to the House. I am lucky enough not to have had ASIO fabricating evidence about me, but my early political thoughts do not bear a whole lot of relation to what I believe now. It is called maturation—the process of maturing—and I strongly recommend it to the mover of this motion. He should give it grave consideration and move on from infantile politics to adult politics. It seems that has not happened to the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, but it would be a good thing for him to try. The allegations in respect of Lee Rhiannon before she was aged 18 come from ASIO. Actually, to be absolutely clear, they do not come from ASIO; they come largely from paid informers to ASIO. What does a paid informer do? I have not been one, and I suspect Mr Deputy-President has not been one either. But it is pretty easy to work out—maybe in his speech in reply to the debate the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps can tell us more about what paid informers do. My understanding of paid informers is that—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Dr John Kaye has just made an allegation that I am some sort of paid informer. I take offence to that and I ask him to withdraw it or to adduce evidence to that effect.

Dr JOHN KAYE: To the point of order: I never alleged that the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps was a paid informer. It is interesting he has responded in that fashion. I said that perhaps he could tell us about what he thinks paid informers do. I was about to say what I think paid informers do. But the comment is germane to the motion, most of which is based around what paid informers did. I am interested to hear the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' opinion on paid informers.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I apologise to both Dr John Kaye and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, but I was not listening closely to the debate. I accept Dr John Kaye's explanation of what he said. I do not uphold the point of order.

Dr JOHN KAYE: These allegations come largely from paid informers, and what do they do? Paid informers deliver information that the people who are paying them want. They make stuff up and put it to ASIO; it is a time-honoured profession. They think if the stuff they make up is exciting enough they will get the next contract to be a paid informer. It is what they do, and it is what has happened here. It is pretty clear that much of the material is fabricated. Interestingly, a meeting will be held, I think this week, at which people will talk about their ASIO—

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Is it a reunion of paid informers?

Dr JOHN KAYE: It is a reunion of the victims of paid informers, including a former President of this Chamber, Meredith Burgmann; one of Australia's most distinguished High Court Justices, Michael Kirby; and a vast number of people who one would not necessarily say were trying to subvert democracy but who are fine, upstanding citizens and who may have held—as we all have—a diversity of opinions. Another set of allegations comes from an article written by Mark Aarons in the May 2011 edition of *The Monthly*. As I said, I could not bring myself to re-read that article. I tried to—I came close—but I could not do it. I did not want to dredge through Cold War pabulum again—there is far too much of it in this motion already. I wrote a letter to *The Monthly* in response to Mr Aarons article, which was published in June 2011. It begins:

Did a five-year-old Lee Rhiannon not share the playdough with Mark Aarons, her fellow 'red-diaper baby' and childhood family chum in the 1950's? Aarons' piece of payback ... is more about old slights and antiquated ideological differences than it is about any modern reality. The article demonstrates the same over-cooked personal vendetta politics that have undermined socialist movements from within for more than a century. Aarons himself comes with an ideological pedigree. No one on our side of

politics ever sought to use it against him when he turned up as an adviser to the NSW Labor government ministers in NSW and even to Premier Iemma himself. Instead the Greens and the environment movement stood with him when he came under attack from developers and his own party's right wing.

In return, Aarons is now intent on joining the Right's chorus of lies, half-truths and logical leaps of faith that are part of the attempt to destroy Lee's reputation and undermine her effectiveness as a senator when she arrives in Canberra in four weeks.

I wrote this letter after Lee was elected to the Senate but before she was sworn in. The letter continues:

I have known Lee for a decade and a half and have worked closely with her for much of that time. My message to Aarons and his fellow smear merchants Rupert Murdoch, Miranda Devine, Imre Salusinszky, Eric Abetz and Gerard Henderson is: "You have no hope. Lee is tougher than you think and much smarter." She will be an exceptionally effective voice in the Senate for social justice and the environment.

Indeed she has been, and I have no doubt that is one of the reasons that we are debating this motion today. My colleagues have outlined the contribution of Lee Rhiannon in the New South Wales Legislative Council. I had the honour and the pleasure of working with Lee for 1½ years of that time. I witnessed her dedication, her principles, her commitment to social justice and to the environment, her intellect, and her ability to stand up and speak the truth to power. I advise the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to learn from that example. Rather than smear, I advise him to learn about courage and the capacity to stand up when things are tough and make one's opinion known—basing that opinion on a sense of social justice and commitment to the people of New South Wales.

The motion of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps focuses largely on Lee Rhiannon's parents. Let us be honest: It is more about the late Bill and Freda Brown than it is about Lee Rhiannon. The allegation clearly encapsulated in this motion is that Lee is a chip off the old block—that is, she has the same political views as her parents. Let us examine that suggestion. Consider what we would think about people if we concluded that they shared the views of their parents, uncles and aunts? For example, the uncle of Senator Eric Abetz is former SS-Standartenführer Otto Abetz—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Dr John Kaye has strayed far away from the substance of the motion. During my speech on this motion I referred specifically to Senator Rhiannon and her activities. I did not go into her detailed family history suffice to point out the obvious connections. Dr John Kaye has adopted a quite bizarre interpretation that is not directly relevant to the motion. I ask you to direct him to return to the leave of the motion.

Dr JOHN KAYE: To the point of order: Mr Deputy-President, I seek your permission to quote part of one sentence from the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' speech introducing this motion. He said:

... she would follow in her parents' communist political footsteps but according to Mark Aarons, he and Lee Brown were "red diaper babies", a term used by Communist Party of Australia members to affectionately refer to the children of communists destined to inherit their parents' political genes and memes.

If it is not appropriate for me to refer to political inheritance, why was it appropriate for Dr Peter Phelps to talk about it?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: I was clearly quoting from Mark Aarons in that context. They were not my words; Dr John Kaye knows full well that I was quoting Mark Aarons.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Further to the point of order: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps needs to correct *Hansard* because there are no quote marks. Whether he was quoting Mark Aarons or whether he was quoting Joe McCarthy, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps was using that quote to demonstrate that there was a political lineage. I am attacking specifically the concept of "destined to inherit their parents' political genes and memes". I do so by illustrating it with the case of Eric Abetz and his uncle Otto Abetz, who was a Standartenführer in the SS during the occupation of France.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! It is often suggested in this House that if a member traverses a particular topic during a debate it opens the door for other members to refer to that matter. The question of whether a matter is generally relevant should be dealt with not by reference to what other members have said but by reference to the substance of the motion before the House. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps moved a motion about Senator Lee Rhiannon. While I understand where Dr John Kaye is going, on the basis of the words contained in the motion before the House, I do not believe that matters relating to the lineage, political or otherwise, of Senator Abetz or any other person have anything to do with the motion. I uphold the point of order.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I specifically reject paragraph (c) of the motion, which refers to questions regarding Senator Lee Rhiannon's behaviour raised by Mark Aarons. Mark Aarons suggests in part that she was destined to inherit her parents' political genes and memes. I make it absolutely clear that there is no such inheritance. To allege that there is such an inheritance is to pass on to a number of people political views they do not hold. As much as I respect and love my late father, I spent many hours losing debates with him on a range of political matters that went way back to my childhood. I think I am strengthened by those disagreements but I do not represent his views in this Chamber. I do not believe anybody is destined to inherit their parents', their uncles' or their aunts' views, regardless of whether they were members of a political party and whether it was a political party of the extreme right, left or centre—it makes no difference.

I reject the motion's reliance on Mark Aarons' article, which is fatally flawed in so many different ways. I conclude by saying this: To smear Lee Rhiannon is to smear what she did in this Chamber. To smear what she did in this Chamber is to smear everything that has got us to the stage where we are able to talk about the corrupting influence of donations. For a Whip in a party that is currently enmeshed in a donations scandal to start smearing Lee Rhiannon is transparent and obvious in its intent. It is designed to detract from the reputation of a truly great former member of this place, and it is a distraction that ill befits this Parliament to engage in. We should be spending our time debating matters that are far more important than this ridiculous motion. It is contemptible, it is beneath contempt and it should be rejected.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Several members have taken points of order about offensive words. In this context, it is worthwhile considering the words of former President Johnson, who dealt extensively with offensive remarks. He said:

Points of order should not be used merely to contradict a statement made in debate or for making a personal explanation. Members should not trifle with the House by taking offence in respect of matters that might normally be expected to pass unheeded and which may be refuted later in debate.

He goes on later to state:

In judging what is an offensive remark, I consider that the following should be a useful guide. Offensive words must be offensive in the generally accepted meaning of that word. When a person is in political life it is not offensive that some things are said about him or her politically. Offensive means offensive in some personal way.

This motion involves robust debate. I encourage members not to interrupt the flow of that debate by taking inappropriate points of order. Members will be called to order if they continue to do so.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [11.45 a.m.]: I join my Greens colleagues to very strongly oppose and reject the motion moved by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. It is interesting to note that this motion has been put up by the same Dr Peter Phelps who stood in this Chamber last year and praised the military dictator Pinochet, calling him "a reluctant hero" and "a morally courageous man" when everyone—except of course the member—knows the reality is that Pinochet ruthlessly abused human rights. It is deeply embarrassing that a member of this House has put up a motion that is nothing more than a failed attempt at cowardly defamation and smear.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps needs to realise that the Cold War is over. He should stop living in the past and start focusing on the present—indeed, look to the future. The member should focus on the damage that those opposite are causing to our political system, our communities and our environment. Self-reflection is a particularly useful practice, especially with respect to the ongoing Independent Commission Against Corruption inquiries and investigation, which are revealing the depth and breadth of the murky relationships between this Government and its members of Parliament with business and lobbyists.

The Government, and indeed the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, can learn much from the integrity and hard work of Senator Lee Rhiannon, who is a leading light in The Greens. Her exemplary work in cleaning up politics and moving to ban developer donations is well known to everyone in this Chamber and in the community. Senator Rhiannon continues to be a passionate and incredibly committed advocate for our communities across New South Wales, for social justice across the globe, for the rights of women and refugees, and for the protection of our environment. I feel privileged to be serving in a seat that she first occupied. I completely condemn, oppose and reject this motion.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [11.47 a.m.]: I speak to the motion moved by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, and congratulate him on his bravery in doing so. Predictably, he is now the subject of abuse from The Greens members. The motion simply asks Senator Lee Rhiannon to disclose information. It states that this House:

... calls on Senator Lee Rhiannon to:

- (a) fully disclose all her interactions with officials of the Embassy for the Soviet Union in Australia;
- (b) fully disclose her activities while studying in Moscow;
- (c) fully answer the questions regarding her behaviour, raised by Mark Aarons, during her membership of the Communist Party of Australia and the Socialist Party of Australia—

As members will know and from my reading of history, Mark Aarons was active in the Communist Party. The motion continues:

- (d) fulfil her promise to address all aspects of controversy raised following the publication of her ASIO file—

It must be admitted that not many members would have an ASIO file so this raises national security concerns. The last paragraph of the motion states:

- (e) notes that Greens' protestations of openness and disclosure may have a modicum more creditability if their elected officials practised what they preached.

I am sure that all members of the House support the last paragraph of the motion because we all want to see honesty and transparency in political parties, by political parties and by their members. In reading the references to the Communist Party I am reminded of what happened in the 1970s when the powerful and active Communist Party of Australia decided to disband and adopt a new strategy and policy. It may have been reformed some years later but at this point it disbanded and adopted a new policy, which was summed up as "infiltration".

The Communist Party said at its conference, "We will be more effective if we use the issues of the day rather than trying to get people to join the Communist Party". It then listed the issues. It said, "We will disband the party structure but we will join together and use these issues." The issues that were raised included homosexuality, women's issues, education and especially the environment. It saw the environment as a ready-made political issue that could be exploited, and that has happened through The Greens and their campaigning. They used the issue to build political support and they have been very successful in achieving their aim, with members elected to all Parliaments and their Senators holding the balance of power in the Federal Parliament.

As members know from discussions in this House and in the media there are tensions within The Greens, and that is for them to reveal at some future date. The media talk about the "watermelons" within The Greens—they are red on the inside and green on the outside—who are seeking to take the party in a particular direction. It is not known whether Senator Lee Rhiannon is an important part of the watermelon wing of The Greens. The party has a lot of political influence and it is right that there should be analysis of members of The Greens and their political views. I note that in her Federal maiden speech Senator Lee Rhiannon stated:

On my political journey, I joined the Socialist Party and I am proud of the campaigns on unemployment, women's rights and nuclear disarmament that I was involved in. Over recent months, there has been a revival of cold war rhetoric and McCarthyism style politics with the intent to discredit my work and in turn that of the tens of thousands of Australians who have joined socialist and communist parties.

I take that complimentary statement to mean that she approves of the idea that thousands of Australians have joined socialist and communist parties. I am not happy with that development and its effect on the future of our democratic nation. I support the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' call for Senator Lee Rhiannon to be up-front and frank and to make a statement in the Senate under parliamentary privilege to put on record what happened in the areas raised in the motion. Then everybody would be happy to get on with their business.

The Hon. WALT SECORD [11.54 a.m.]: As the shadow Minister for Roads and the North Coast I will make a brief contribution to debate on the motion. I do not know the former member very well but I surmise from a survey of Lee Rhiannon's speeches in *Hansard* during her time in this Chamber that she would be interested in a number of issues on the North Coast. That would include the extremely close relationship

between the coal seam gas industry and the National party. While on the subject of the North Coast, I draw the House's attention to a pamphlet that is circulating on the North Coast which would catch her attention. It highlights the hypocrisy of The Nationals member for Lismore, Thomas George.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. Mr Deputy-President, you made it clear in an earlier ruling that member's contributions must be relevant to the words of the motion, not what other members have said in debate. The Hon. Walt Secord is simply using the name of a person mentioned in the motion as a link to other issues. His contribution is nowhere near relevant.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: To the point of order: Previous members have talked about the relationship of the former member and Ian Cohen with the North Coast of New South Wales. That was canvassed earlier in this debate. I am referring to and touching on their affection for the North Coast.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Further to the point of order: I reiterate an earlier ruling from the Deputy-President that members must be relevant to the words of the motion, not what others have said during the debate.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! As the Hon. Niall Blair points out, I ruled only recently that in determining relevance one should not look at the contributions that other members have made. It may well be that in those earlier contributions a point of order should have been taken to draw the member back to being generally relevant to the motion. When considering whether a matter is generally relevant one should have regard to the words of the motion. The words of this motion are quite plain. The motion refers to a number of specific items dealing with a former member of this place. The Hon. Walt Secord in making his contribution should address the motion rather than do what I think he is seeking to embark upon at present.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr Deputy-President, thank you for your comments. I will conclude my remarks by stating the fact that if the Government is re-elected in 2015 Metgasco will get the green light to go ahead. I end my remarks with that point.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! The Hon. Walt Secord has done this before. He is flouting a ruling of the Chair. If the member does so again and I am in the chair, I will call him to order.

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

DR MEHREEN FARUQI COMMENTS

Personal Explanation

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS, by leave: I wish to make a brief personal explanation under Standing Order 88. Dr Mehreen Faruqi ascribed to me certain comments in relation to the former Chilean dictator, which I did not make. In fact, I made it quite clear in my speech that night that I considered his murder of more than 3,000 people to be a terrible crime. I am sorry the member had to resort to faking quotes about me to make her point.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Amanda Fazio agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow a motion to be moved forthwith that Private Members' Business item No. 1766 outside the Order of Precedence, relating to the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery at Murwillumbah, be called on forthwith.

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Amanda Fazio agreed to:

That Private Members' Business item No. 1766 outside the Order of Precedence be called on forthwith.

MARGARET OLLEY ART CENTRE

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [12.01 p.m.]: I move:

- (1) This House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 15 March 2014 Her Excellency the Hon. Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO, the then Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia officially opened the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery in Murwillumbah;
 - (b) the opening was attended by 800 people and also served as a celebration of the life, legacy and works of Margaret Olley, AC, one of Australia's most loved artists and in accordance with her wishes, approximately 21,000 items were relocated from Margaret Olley's Paddington home to create a precise reproduction of elements of her home including the Hat Factory and the Yellow Room at the Margaret Olley Art Centre, which also houses a significant number of her paintings;
 - (c) Margaret Olley was strongly interested in regional galleries, and particularly the Tweed Regional Gallery as she had spent her childhood years in the region and in 2006 Margaret Olley opened a new wing at the Tweed Regional Gallery;
 - (d) Philip Bacon, representing the Margaret Olley Art Trust stated at the opening that the Margaret Olley Art Centre was a unique addition to what is already one of Australia's finest regional galleries and that the only sad note was that the star of the show, Margaret Olley, was not there to see it herself, and Mr Bacon further announced a proposal to locate the yet to be built Olley Memorial Garden at the Gallery; and
 - (e) the Tweed Regional Gallery was established in 1988 in a converted timber federation home and after extensive fundraising and a generous donation of land by Doug and Margot Anthony, the gallery moved to a new building designed by Bud Brannigan on 1 February 2004 and during the first year in the new location, 50,000 visitors toured the gallery and last year around 70,000 people visited the gallery and it is one of the draw cards of the region.
- (2) That this House further notes that the \$4 million project was funded by a \$1 million bequest from the Margaret Olley Art Trust, \$1.2 million from Tweed Shire Council, \$1 million announced by the Federal Government in November 2011 through the Community Infrastructure Development Grants Program, \$620,000 from the Tweed Gallery Foundation, \$200,000 from the New South Wales Government and \$100,000 from the Friends of the Tweed Regional Art Gallery.
- (3) That this House congratulates the Margaret Olley Art Trust, Tweed Shire Council, Sally Watterson, who catalogued and packed the collection, Susi Muddiman the Gallery Director, Ingrid Hedgcock the Curator and Collections Manager of the Margaret Olley Art Centre and the vision and generosity of the late Margaret Olley.

This motion concerns the establishment and opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery in Murwillumbah. On Saturday 15 March 2014 Her Excellency the Hon. Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO, the then Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, officially opened the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery. The opening was attended by 800 people and the gallery has advised me that the event was so popular that it had to establish a waiting list to accommodate the huge response from members of the public who wished to attend. The opening also served as a celebration of the life, legacy and works of Margaret Olley, AC, one of Australia's most loved artists. In accordance with her wishes, approximately 21,000 items were relocated from her Paddington home to create a precise reproduction of elements of her home, including the Hat Factory and the Yellow Room, at the art centre, which also houses a significant number of her paintings.

Margaret Olley was very interested in regional galleries, and particularly the Tweed Regional Gallery because she spent her childhood years in the region. In 2006 she opened a new wing at the gallery. Philip Bacon, who represented the Margaret Olley Art Trust, stated at the opening that the art centre was a unique addition to what is already one of Australia's finest regional galleries. The only sad note was that the star of the show—Margaret Olley—was not there to see it herself. Mr Bacon also announced a proposal to locate the yet-to-be-built Olley Memorial Garden at the gallery.

The Tweed Regional Gallery was established in 1988 in a converted timber federation home. After extensive fundraising and a generous donation of land by former Deputy Prime Minister Doug Anthony and his wife, Margot, the gallery moved to a new building designed by Bud Brannigan on 1 February 2004. During the first year at the new location, 50,000 visitors toured the gallery, and last year about 70,000 people visited. The gallery is one of the drawcards of the region. I have had a longstanding interest in regional arts and I take the opportunity during my frequent visits to country New South Wales to visit the many wonderful regional art galleries that have been established over the past 20 years or so in this State. The location of the Tweed Regional Gallery is superb. For those who have not been there, it sits on the crest of a hill and has a wonderful outlook over dairy farming land just outside the centre of Murwillumbah. I have been a member of the gallery for some years.

The Tweed Regional Gallery has a strong group of supporters in the local area and it is a tourist drawcard. I know that when many people think of northern New South Wales they think of the beaches and the nightlife in Byron Bay. However, we appreciate that the Northern Rivers area has a heavy concentration of practising artists; the artistic community is very strong and vibrant. One of the great strengths of the Tweed Regional Gallery is that it sells the work of local artists, and that makes it even more attractive to visitors.

The Margaret Olley Art Centre project cost \$4 million, which comprised a \$1 million bequest from the Margaret Olley Art Trust, a \$1.2 million contribution by Tweed Shire Council, and a \$1 million grant announced by the Federal Government in November 2011 through the Community Infrastructure Development Grants program. In addition, \$620,000 was raised by the Tweed Regional Gallery Foundation, \$200,000 was contributed by the New South Wales Government and \$100,000 was provided by the Friends of the Tweed Regional Art Gallery. My friend and colleague the Hon. Justine Elliot, the Federal member for Richmond, was instrumental in ensuring that the Federal Government provided that \$1 million in November 2011 through the Community Infrastructure Development Grants program. I thank Justine for her strong support for this project and her ongoing support for the Tweed Regional Gallery.

The Margaret Olley Art Trust has been very cooperative in assisting and ensuring that the project was completed. Paragraph (3) of my motion asks the House to congratulate the Margaret Olley Art Trust, Tweed Shire Council and Sally Watterson, who had the enormous and daunting task of curating and packing the collection at Margaret Olley's home in Paddington so that the perfect recreation of the rooms in the new extension to the gallery could be achieved. The motions also asks the House to congratulate Susi Muddiman, the gallery director, and Ingrid Hedgcock, the curator and collections manager of the Margaret Olley Art Centre, and to pay tribute to the vision and generosity of the late Margaret Olley.

It is a real pity that we in New South Wales do not promote our regional galleries more. There are excellent galleries throughout the State that provide not only a showcase for visiting exhibitions and resident collections but also for touring exhibitions such as ARTEXPRESS. The Archibald Prize exhibition is very popular on the regional gallery circuit. The fact that we have these art galleries means that people in regional New South Wales can access these wonderful exhibitions without having to have the time and financial resources to travel to Sydney to see them.

Regional galleries also showcase the work of local artists. The Goulburn Regional Gallery is very good at doing that; it is always having new exhibitions of not only the work of local arts but also themed local collections. I must admit that I am frequent visitor to regional gallery shops, which sell the work of local artists, craftspeople, potters, felters, embroiderers, jewellers and so. Artists and craftspeople have somewhere where that they can sell their creations in a way that supports their local gallery because, of course, part of the sale price goes back to the gallery.

These gallery shops are creative outlets that also help to support the work of local artists and craftspeople. For example, the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery hosts an excellent shopping opportunity in the run-up to Christmas to showcase local work. Regional galleries promote the development of artistic talent by organising master classes in a range of activities to encourage arts and crafts. There are classes in things such as collage, watercolour, jewellery-making and other activities to encourage local people, who are often reluctant to acknowledge their artistic ability. These activities make the network of regional galleries, including the Tweed Regional Gallery, a hub for artistic development in local communities.

When talking about this project, it would be remiss of me not to mention how Margaret Olley became a much-loved artist. A recent Art Gallery NSW magazine had an article about the Archibald Prize-winning portrait of Margaret Olley wearing a hat. In fact, Margaret Olley sat for the portrait wearing one of her brown smocks so that she did not get paint on the dress in the portrait, which was added afterwards. This shows Margaret Olley was a full-time artist. Her studio, which was her house, was cluttered. It was full of empty paint tubes, palettes for mixing colours, brushes and wonderful flowers in various stages of decay. That has been recreated in the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery.

She was a successful woman artist who strongly supported regional galleries. She spent her childhood in the Tweed region and had a great fondness for the region. She had a particular fondness for the Tweed Regional Gallery. She established the Margaret Olley Art Trust and bequeathed her studio to the gallery, along with \$1 million in funding to get the centre going. The woman who was loved as an artist was also a warm and generous person. We should never underestimate the power of philanthropy, particularly for the arts. The Tweed Regional Gallery has been blessed with donors, such as the Anthony family who provided the land on which the

gallery was established. Doug and Margot Anthony were star guests at the opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre. Encouraging philanthropy for the arts is worthwhile not just for the major centres but also for the regional galleries.

The New England Regional Art Museum [NERAM] was the beneficiary of two acts of philanthropy, first from the Hinton collection bequest. This collection was originally given to the council and when NERAM was established it was transferred to the museum. There is a strong connection between the two foremost collectors of Australian Surrealist art, James Agapitos and Ray Wilson, who bequeathed some of their collection to NERAM and to the Art Gallery NSW. Although many people do not find these works to their taste as they like more traditional Hinton collection, these works have strengthened the gallery's collection.

The regional gallery network is strong. Susi Muddiman, the director of the Tweed Regional Gallery, was the director of the Grafton Regional Gallery, a smaller gallery. Some galleries have very good infrastructure, including the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery, which has good premises—although its administrators would probably argue for an extension. The Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery has been extended in the last 10 years and it is hugely popular. The Archibald Prize exhibition is held there every year, and is one of its most popular exhibitions. The Tweed Regional Gallery has a spectacular location and the extension has given it undercover parking. The gallery set up a marquee to accommodate the 800 guests for the opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre and had the seating in the parking area. The opening day was typically warm and very sunny so it was good that guests were protected from the blazing sun.

This is a wonderful project and many people contributed to making it a success. There was a nice synchronicity in having then Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon. Quentin Bryce, perform the opening because she was a close friend of Margaret Olley. A lot of work went in to making the opening special. It is one of the better arts projects of the last 20 years in New South Wales. Even though we tend to focus on the arts in Sydney, where the Vivid festival is happening at the moment, New South Wales is particularly good at showcasing art in the regions. The Tweed Regional Gallery had 70,000 visitors last year and attendance is expected to go through the roof now that the Margaret Olley Art Centre is open. I have great respect for those who work in the New South Wales regional gallery network as well as those who provide the funding. They boost the arts in regional centres. I wish there was a bottomless pit of money to provide all these galleries with the resources the Tweed Regional Gallery is fortunate to have.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): I welcome to the gallery student leaders from Hornsby, guests of the member for Hornsby, Matt Kean.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK [12.19 p.m.]: I welcome the guests of the member for Hornsby who are in the gallery. Matt Kean is one of our rising stars in the New South Wales Parliament, so you are blessed to have him as your local member. Thank you for spending time here with us. I congratulate the Hon. Amanda Fazio on moving this motion in praise of one of the greatest artists not just of the modern era but of all time, Margaret Olley. She was a great artist, a great Australian and somebody whose life's work is so significant for our country that, following her passing, it ensured a legacy that has benefited the art world right across New South Wales but particularly in the Tweed with the Tweed Regional Gallery. I am from the far North Coast and I was there when the Tweed Regional Gallery was opened. Coincidentally, I just bumped into Larry Anthony in the corridor, whose family donated the remarkable site on which the gallery is built.

Mount Warning is iconic in the Tweed and the gallery is located on what is regarded as the choicest piece of land owned by anyone in the area. The Anthony family donated that land to the Tweed council for the art gallery. The view of Mount Warning from the gallery is absolutely stunning. The gallery contains numerous paintings of Mount Warning—to paint it is part of the rite of passage for local artists. When Murwillumbah and Lismore were combined in the same electorate and everyone was wondering what it would be named, I thought that Mount Warning would have been quite a good name for the electorate because Mount Warning is a significant geographical feature and it is incredibly, stunningly beautiful and important to all of us on the North Coast.

The Tweed Regional Gallery is purpose-built. Because it has an amazing view of Mount Warning, so as to not compromise on the amount of hanging space, in a very ingenious way the walls on which the pictures hang are wedged and little glass gaps are interspersed so that when people walk along they can see Mount Warning through the wall. Architecturally, it is one of the most clever and most beautiful designs I have ever seen. Before it was built and opened I spoke to the former mayor of Tweed, Max Boyd, and heard about the council's passion for it.

Tweed council should be congratulated because the initial plan for the gallery—and it was a very grand plan—involved a major bequest from the Moran family. Everyone believed that the endowment was there but something went awry and halfway through the project the anticipated funding suddenly was not available and there was a court case. It was a very controversial issue at the time. Moments like that are when projects can bite the dust, but everyone in the region was determined that the dream of a gallery would be fulfilled, particularly given the importance of art on the North Coast and the generosity of the locals. I applaud and thank the Hon. Amanda Fazio for raising in the motion the enormous achievement of the community in pulling together the Tweed Regional Art Gallery.

As the Hon. Amanda Fazio noted, the director of the gallery, Susi Muddiman, was previously at the Grafton gallery, which is a stunning gallery in its own right. The gallery is a great example of how historic buildings in country towns, which appear to have no significant use and which need to be used or they fall into disrepair, can be utilised. An art gallery is a fantastic use of a building. The gallery in Grafton has a little restaurant—which is fabulous and I recommend it to everyone—and upstairs there are studios for artists and art training. When the notorious decision was made by a former member of this House, Michael Costa, to close our beloved Tweed to Murwillumbah railway line and job losses were incurred in the railways, I remember speaking to conductors and staff. It was interesting how many of them had contacted the regional art gallery at Grafton and had booked themselves in for courses. They were looking forward to doing things such as pottery, and they were reframing their future, because they wanted to stay in the area.

Art galleries are a part of the social fabric of these communities and I cannot speak highly enough of the work that is done. Ballina council has recently opened its own regional art gallery—again a dream of many people locally. I celebrate the role our regional art galleries play; it is part of our economy. In Murwillumbah the Pacific Highway bypass, which is quite some distance from the town, has had a significant impact on the number of people passing by. The old Pacific Highway is now known as the Tweed Valley Way. That the art gallery has been attracting so many visitors when the only reason for people to be on that road is to go to the gallery shows what star power it has.

The addition of the Margaret Olley Art Centre is a huge economic shot in the arm for the Tweed area and we must thank the artist for her vision and generosity for that community. It ensures that she will be treasured and revered as a towering figure forever in the region. Everyone is rightly proud that she chose that area. The art centre will include a recreation of Margaret Olley's studio and elements of her home and collections. She lived in a terrace house in Paddington very close to the Royal Hotel. I lived in Paddington with my husband and young family for some years and the local parents and citizens association, of which I was a member, used to meet in the Royal Hotel. One of the parents complained—I do not know if anyone has ever heard a complaint about Margaret Olley but I received one—that her children played soccer in their back garden, which would not have been very much of a back garden in Paddington, that their ball continually disappeared and that one day Margaret Olley did not give the ball back. I do not think there was very much sympathy for this particular parent amongst the other parents.

Margaret Olley lived very quietly but she was a very treasured member of the Paddington community. From inner-city Sydney we have this marvellous commitment to regional New South Wales. The offer from the trust also includes a gift of works from the artist's collection, including finished paintings and a number of works in progress. The Tweed Regional Gallery was chosen as the site for the centre as the artist spent her childhood years growing up in the Tweed region. The centre will also include additional exhibition space, an education workshop facility, a library, collection storage, multimedia areas and a stand-alone artist in residence studio.

The residency program will see at least two invited artists participate in funded residency programs at the centre annually. The artwork resulting from these residences will be included in the gallery's exhibition program. The new centre will house a large number of the other artist's work, currently in the possession of her estate. The centre aims to bring a unique insight into her artistic life and work, and it will continue to be her legacy. It will ensure Margaret is remembered as a fine artist and as a generous philanthropist with a keen interest in regional galleries. The New South Wales Government is very proud to support the initiative. The \$1 million bequest from the Margaret Olley Art Trust has enabled those organising the new centre to attract matching grants. The New South Wales Government is very proud to be part of that process and is contributing \$200,000 to support this valuable project.

I congratulate the Minister for the Arts on organising that. Ongoing funding is important. I was involved with one small bequest, being that of Robert Nestdale. Robert Nestdale, who was a former president of

the Young Liberals, bequeathed his book collection to the Young Liberal movement. The collection was magnificent but we had to literally raise funds to buy bookshelves and find a place to put the collection; then it needs to be maintained. Anyone who has been involved with a bequest knows that it is a responsibility to accept the bequest, but the local community is committed to this.

Given the fabulous statewide significance of the Margaret Olley Art Centre, it is appropriate that the New South Wales Government is lending its support to establishing and ensuring the maintenance of the trust. Scholarships are an important aspect of the project. We all know that Margaret Olley was much more than her paintings, although her paintings are marvellous. Her approach to art, her investment in the future and these scholarships symbolise so much more about the bequest, its meaning and what it seeks to engender. Again, this is one of those great motions that all members of the House can support. I join other members in saluting our regional galleries. I absolutely love them. They are the custodians of amazing art collections.

During a recent bushfire when the Blue Mountains community thought that its library was under threat a mass of people rushed to evacuate and secure all the paintings for fear that they would be lost in the fire. The Blue Mountains is another artistic community. One sees in these small moments the passion that communities have for artworks and stunning art collections. I applaud regional galleries, and anything we can do to support them is worthwhile. I thank the Hon. Amanda Fazio and I look forward to supporting her motion.

Ms JAN BARHAM [12.31 p.m.]: I support the motion. I thank the Hon. Amanda Fazio for putting such an important motion on the *Notice Paper*. Sadly, I was unable to attend the opening of the new Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery on 15 March. However, I attended the opening of the Tweed Regional Gallery some time ago—I think it was 2004. It is a truly beautiful gallery and it is fitting that it is the home of the Margaret Olley Art Centre. Margaret Olley loved the natural environment and the North Coast and she found great inspiration in those environments for her work. I acknowledge the comments that have been made about the importance of regional galleries.

It is important to put on the record that regional galleries, particularly the Tweed Regional Gallery, are well received. The location of the Tweed Regional Gallery is important as it was the result of a philanthropic gesture by the Anthony family. The region will be grateful for that for all time. In October 2011, when Margaret Olley passed away, I moved a motion in this House. I was fortunate to have met Margaret Olley. She had been a great inspiration to many artists, particularly those on the North Coast, and women. She was a strong character, a vibrant and, some say, eccentric character. She was born in Lismore in 1923 and spent most of her younger life in Lismore and Kyogle. Many people on the North Coast paid tribute to Margaret Olley because her connection with that part of the world continued throughout her life.

She had lived on a farm. She attributed her great love of nature to her childhood, living on the North Coast and experiencing the wonderful lifestyle and beautiful natural environment. The last time I was able to see Margaret Olley and her work was at an exhibition at the Lismore Regional Gallery. The then Director, Steven Alderton, organised an interesting program. Mr Alderton became a great friend of Margaret Olley because she had gifted work to the gallery. The gallery put together well-established artists with newer emerging artists from the region to expose the community to the importance of the history of art, especially Australian art, and to acknowledge mentorship between artists. And Margaret Olley was no exception.

As I noted in my motion relating to Margaret Olley, one significant thing about her, beyond being an artist, was that she was a great supporter and mentor of emerging Australian artists. In about 2003 an exhibition at the regional gallery featured the works of Margaret Olley and a still life painter from the North Coast, Rose McKinley. Their work is similar in nature. Rose McKinley has acknowledged the importance of having Margaret Olley as a mentor. Margaret Olley grew up on the North Coast; she was born in Lismore and spent her childhood in Kyogle. The interesting background story is that it was imagined that her studio would end up at the Lismore gallery but that was not to be the case. The studio had been designated to go to the Lismore gallery; her chaotic studio and all the bits and pieces there were to be transplanted to Lismore.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Creative chaos.

Ms JAN BARHAM: It was very creative chaos. Anyone who knows Margaret Olley's work well need only look at one of her paintings to realise the depth of feeling in her work and the diversity of things that are sometimes hidden in her paintings. Her work has many layers. The story is that Steven Alderton and then Brett Adlington, who is the current director of the Lismore gallery, had been trying for years to expand Lismore Regional Gallery. The fact that Margaret Olley's work would find a home in the Lismore gallery was a great

honour for the area. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of Mayor Jenny Dowell and a strong contingent from that community to expand and redevelop the gallery in Lismore, it was not to be the case. The community was saddened at the thought not only of not having an expanded and updated regional gallery in Lismore but also of the potential loss of the Margaret Olley works.

Sometimes amazing things happen, particularly on the North Coast. Tweed Regional Gallery then emerged as the home for the Margaret Olley collection, which was fantastic. As I said at the outset, my only disappointment is that I was unable to be there. However, as a member of my local practising artists network I hope that I will be able to venture up there with a group during the July break and enjoy with other people the fabulous new Margaret Olley Art Centre. I support the importance of art to the region.

I have said before that the North Coast is the fastest growing creative industries area outside capital cities. We host so many artists and are continuing to attract people to our area. The importance of creative industries should not be overlooked. With the advancement in electronic technology and the National Broadband Network people who otherwise would not have been able to live in regional New South Wales have now moved there and operate as artists at a local, regional, national and international level. It is important to acknowledge that regional areas can host the inspiration and lifestyle that is craved by a lot of creative people.

Unfortunately, funding support for fine arts at TAFE has been cut in recent years, which is ironic because Margaret Olley and I were trained at East Sydney Technical College. As with most artists, training is the first step in a long journey. Art is a lifelong journey and a lifelong learning. Margaret Olley was a great supporter of training at technical colleges and the arts program that was established at Southern Cross University. She maintained her support for those educational opportunities right through to the end of her life at the age of 88 on 26 July 2011.

I was fortunate to be a member of the Northern Rivers arts organisation for a number of years. I support comments made by previous speakers about the importance of art in the region and regional galleries. I am a little sad to say that with such strong representation of regional galleries on the North Coast, my home area of Byron shire does not have one. However, a couple of years ago we established a gallery space within our new library. Whilst we do not have a Margaret Olley work at the library we feature a number of works by notable local regional artists. We continue to have works donated to the Byron Shire Council for exhibition at the Byron Shire Library Gallery. No doubt there will be some interest from other regional galleries to have some of those works exhibited at the Tweed and Lismore galleries because we are attracting some unique works to our exhibition. I appreciate artists who find inspiration in the North Coast area and are generous enough to present their work to community organisations so they can be viewed by all.

Margaret Olley was a very generous art donor. She owned an amazing collection of artworks which she distributed to many galleries throughout the country. Margaret Olley has certainly left a legacy and will continue to inspire people for generations. Her work is intricate and beautiful and instils a good feeling in people. I have never come across anyone who looks at her works that are full of joy and beauty who does not smile. No matter what else is going in the world or their lives, they are uplifted when they look at a Margaret Olley painting. She presented beauty, and the gift of all artists is to share, and for many people it is wonderful to cast their eyes upon a beautiful piece of work.

The motion moved by the Hon. Amanda Fazio congratulates the Margaret Olley Art Trust, Tweed Shire Council, Sally Watterson, who helped catalogue the collection, and Susi Muddiman, the gallery director. Susi has brought to the Tweed Gallery an amazing level of experience. Recently, Susi attended the Local Government Association Cultural and Art Awards in the Strangers' Dining Room, Parliament House. I believe the Tweed Regional Gallery won an award for the Margaret Olley Art Centre, together with many other communities that received awards, including Byron. The recognition of the Margaret Olley Art Trust, Margaret Olley Art Centre and the amazing work that has been done by the Tweed Regional Gallery is fantastic and the fact that it was recognised this week at the local government cultural awards is serendipitous.

I accept that the Tweed Regional Gallery also hosts an amazing location, which was a gift from the Anthony family. Margaret Olley also had a great respect for the first peoples of this country. The gallery looks out over Wollumbin, as it is known by the Aboriginal people, which some people prefer to call Mount Warning. It was known by Margaret Olley as Wollumbin, a hill in the Tweed Valley. I thank the Hon. Amanda Fazio for moving this motion to acknowledge the wonderful work of Margaret Olley and for providing us with the opportunity to recognise her work, and the fantastic outcome that has been achieved by the Tweed Regional Gallery.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [12.46 p.m.]: I am pleased to offer my support to the motion moved by the Hon. Amanda Fazio in relation to the Margaret Olley Art Centre. Although I do not have an artistic bone in my body—I get my artistic talent from my mother—my father and sister are extremely artistic. My sister has a side career in producing some very good works of art, both sculpting and painting, and my family is very proud of her talent. Recently when I was in the Tweed I took the opportunity to visit the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery and I was absolutely blown away by the construction of the display.

Several of the rooms from Margaret Olley's house in Paddington literally have been transposed to the museum. One can walk around and look into each room from the different windows and portals. It enables people to have a clear understanding of the sort of person she was, not that I ever met her or previously had seen much of her artwork. However, looking into those rooms is like looking into the very persona of Margaret Olley herself. It gives people some idea of the way she operated and how she produced her artworks, particularly as the empty paint tubes and brushes are still standing in the jars. One can almost imagine Margaret walking around the room, in her own beautiful way, as she produced some of her artwork. The display is fantastic.

After looking into Margaret Olley's rooms, people can turn around and look out the window from the beautiful ridge on which the gallery now sits, thanks to Doug and Margot Anthony, up the Tweed Valley across to the mountains, with Mount Warning in the background—an idyllic location for these significant artworks. It is important that the very talented Margaret Olley is honoured through the Tweed Regional Gallery, which now supports the Margaret Olley Arts Centre. Anyone who visits the Tweed should take the time to look at this wonderful display. I have never considered myself to be artistic but any person, whatever their level of skills, ability or understanding, can walk into that museum and appreciate this terrific display and the fantastic person Margaret Olley must have been.

I came to understand also that Margaret Olley was a very good cook and liked to entertain. She was not a recluse by any means; she enjoyed people's company. On display in one of the rooms was a table set with wine glasses and cutlery. It was interesting to work out how anyone else could have fitted into that room if she was entertaining more than a couple of people. As Ms Jan Barham said, there was creative chaos because of her extensive remnant artworks. Margaret Olley must have led a very interesting lifestyle. I commend the Hon. Amanda Fazio for moving the motion and I offer my support for the motion.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [12.51 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members who spoke in this debate. It shows the level of support across the Chamber and across different parties for the concept of regional galleries because I notice that was a common theme in the contributions today. I thank the members who spoke not only for their support of my motion on the Margaret Olley Art Centre, which has been established at the Tweed Regional Gallery, but also for their support for our regional gallery network, their complimentary comments about regional galleries and their support and commitment to regional arts in New South Wales.

Members have a different view about their favourite gallery but it shows that different regions respond to the arts in different ways. Galleries have a lot of local support and affection. The way in which philanthropy can contribute to the arts in the regional setting is worth noting. It is pleasing that we have had such a strong consensus on the value of regional arts in New South Wales. I do not want to put too much of a negative perspective on this but I hope that Government members will be successful in lobbying the new Minister for the Arts. Within the current Government we have had two Ministers for the Arts from regional areas. George Souris is from Singleton and Troy Grant, the new Minister, is from Dubbo, which has a gallery incorporated in the library area.

If all Government members are successful in lobbying the Treasurer and the new Minister for the Arts on the value of regional galleries and the support they give to local communities perhaps we will continue to see an expansion of the very vibrant regional gallery network in New South Wales. We will not always have the wonderful generosity of people like Margaret Olley who are able to contribute to ensuring that we have these standout attractions such as the Margaret Olley Art Centre in regional galleries but I hope we can encourage other artists and other wealthy people who have some philanthropic ideals to support regional galleries because of the strong commitment of speakers today for those galleries.

I wish the Tweed Regional Gallery every success into the future. I belong to the Friends of the Tweed Regional Art Gallery. If any member wants to know how one receives invitations to things like the opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre and exhibition openings of regional galleries in New South Wales, it is quite simple. People just have to join and become a friend of the galleries. They will then find out

everything that is going on, whether it is the opening of such splendid things as the Margaret Olley Art Centre, the opening of a new exhibition at the Goulburn Regional Gallery or exhibitions at the New England Regional Art Museum in Armidale. It is easy to get on the list. It does not happen because someone is a member of Parliament.

People must show a commitment to the local arts, not just by visiting these centres, taking friends to the cafes and encouraging people to buy the work of local artists, but by joining the friendship groups that belong to all these different galleries. I belong to a few of them as well as the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales. It is an easy way to be informed of what is going on in the art scenes and what is going on in the regional gallery networks. In this way people will be aware of what is happening and they will receive invitations to events such as the opening of the Margaret Olley Art Centre at the Tweed Regional Gallery. I thank all members for indicating their support for the motion. More strength to the regional arts in New South Wales!

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

Motion agreed to.

[Deputy-President (Ms Natasha Maclaren-Jones) left the chair at 12.56 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

RACHEL CALLINAN, USHER OF THE BLACK ROD

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that our twenty-fourth Usher of the Black Rod, Rachel Callinan, will shortly be leaving us to take up the position of Usher of the Black Rod in the Australian Senate in Canberra. On behalf of the House may I offer my congratulations to Rachel on this very significant appointment to what is a senior position within our national Parliament.

I further inform the House that I will be writing to the Premier recommending the appointment of Ms Susan Want as the next Usher of the Black Rod and in due course she will receive a commission from her Excellency the Governor as our twenty-fifth Usher of the Black Rod. In the meantime, Susan will be acting in the position from Monday 16 June 2014.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Why has the Minister claimed publicly that he was forced by the Federal Government to take public service provision out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] agreement when South Australia was able to maintain public service provision as part of its agreement with the Commonwealth?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The Leader of the Opposition is well aware that the heads of agreement that was signed by then Premier Barry O'Farrell and then Prime Minister Julia Gillard, well before my appointment as Minister for Disability Services, contains a specific provision. If I recollect correctly, it is provision 33 of the heads of agreement. It states that this State will by full transition to the NDIS cease providing disability services. Our obligation will be to provide almost 50 per cent of the total funding. The State will be providing \$3.1 billion in funding and the Federal Government will be providing \$3.3 billion. As Minister for Disability Services the position was clear: I have to comply with the heads of agreement.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for his answer. Will the Minister elucidate his answer with particular reference to his claims that he was forced by the Federal Government to take away public service provision?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The supplementary question was in order. The Minister may answer.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I said very clearly, that is what the heads of agreement requires me to do as Minister for Disability Services.

WESTCONNEX DELIVERY AUTHORITY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question is addressed to the Leader of the Government, and Minister for Roads and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on the appointment—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Luke Foley to order for the first time.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: —of a new member of the executive of the WestConnex Delivery Authority?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Vale Victoria. I am pleased, along with the chairman of the WestConnex Delivery Authority, Tony Shepherd, to announce today the appointment—

The Hon. Luke Foley: Tony does not have enough appointments?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is not Tony this time; we are appointing someone else: Dennis Cliche to the position of chief executive officer of the WestConnex Delivery Authority. I am delighted to have such a wealth of experience in Mr Cliche and Mr Shepherd leading Australia's largest transport infrastructure project. Mr Cliche has had a distinguished career in the Australian infrastructure industry and brings a wealth of public transport and motorway management experience to the authority. We have stolen him from Melbourne. He is currently chief executive officer at ConnectEast in Victoria and was previously chief executive officer at TransdevTSL and Yarra Trams. Mr Cliche's prime experience for the role comes from successfully managing the operation of a large, modern Australian toll road and tunnel. He also has extensive public-private partnership experience, an understanding of intermodal transport networks and will provide critical insight to the project. Importantly, Mr Cliche is particularly—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Opposition members who wish to converse they will do so in a way that is not audible.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: —experienced in ensuring that the interface between major roads, major motorways and public transport operations is efficient and effective for commuters—an issue that I know is important to many members in this House. He has demonstrated capability across a broad range of industries and geographies and has a successful track record in private, listed, government and multinational transportation and infrastructure industries. This will be invaluable as we prepare for the continued progress of the WestConnex project.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing contribution of Robert Rust, who will assume the role of chief operating officer of the WestConnex Delivery Authority. Rusty has been exceptional in getting the WestConnex Delivery Authority established and in charging ahead with the tender process for stage 1A, the M4 widening, and now 1B, the M4 East tunnel, for which we released the expression of interest earlier this week. We have an exceptional team leading WestConnex, with Mr Rust and Mr Cliche providing extensive international experience and innovation to deliver this world-class motorway project. We are focused on delivery and on track to start construction on the first stages of fixing the M4 and M5 next year.

As the House knows this project is expected to inject \$20 billion into the State's economy and create 10,000 jobs during the construction phase. It is critical to helping the city cope with an expected population increase of 1.3 million people in the next 20 years. It is further evidence that the best people in this country are now coming to New South Wales— *[Time expired.]*

PUBLIC SECTOR DISABILITY WORKERS

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Why has the Government still not resolved a number of outstanding issues arising from the proposal to transfer 10,000 disability workers employed by the New South Wales Government to non-government employment, and in particular what action has the Minister taken to fulfil his obligations under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NSW Enabling) Act to ensure that entitlements already earned by public sector disability workers, such as accrued annual and long service leave, are preserved properly?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. He can be assured that considerable work has been undertaken to date by me as Minister and by many of the staff within Ageing,

Disability and Home Care. The fact is that the staff are well aware and are being continually informed of the good work being undertaken within the agency together with Unions NSW, the Public Service Association and the Nurses Union in relation to this area and determinations are being made.

We are clearly in the early stages of the process. As members opposite know, the full transition does not occur until 2018 and we are now working at the trial site in Newcastle, which will ultimately extend to the rest of the Hunter. The work is being undertaken. I have been meeting with many of the staff, not only in the Sydney metropolitan area but also in the regions and in rural areas. Staff have assured me that they have been updated continually about each and every step of these transactions, and that will continue to happen. We are also finalising the Working Together strategy, which will go out in the near future to every member of staff. That is what it is all about, working together, and I congratulate the staff of Ageing, Disability and Home Care NSW for doing so.

FLYING FOX CONTROL

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Primary Industries. Given the reports of a person in Griffith being infected by a flying fox with the lyssavirus, and given that this is the fourth such case in New South Wales this year, what steps is the Department of Primary Industries taking to reduce human-bat interactions and will this include the relevant authorities taking steps to reduce flying fox numbers?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: This is certainly a concern for communities across the State, not only in the Riverina. As I am sure most honourable members are aware, very real concerns have arisen on the North Coast—that holiday destination that the Hon. Walt Secord flies in and out of all the time.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You have never been there.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am working and I drive on the roads of the State. The great member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis—who is known to many as "Batman"—has taken on the concerns of his community in this area. I am not aware of the most recent details of what the Department of Primary Industries is doing, but I am aware of the community's concerns and I undertake to get a detailed answer for honourable member.

MACARTHUR MAGIC SPECIAL NEEDS FOOTBALL CLUB

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: I address my question to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on sport for children with disability in the Camden electorate?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The New South Wales Government believes all children from all walks of life should have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of community life. On 21 May 2014, I was joined by Chris Patterson, the member for Camden, in presenting the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club with \$10,000. The funds are required to build a fence around Elizabeth Park at Narellan Vale to improve the safety of young players. Without the safety fence, the young players were not permitted to utilise the grounds for their games. I was delighted to support Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club and to meet the people who are responsible for its growing success. It was a joy to support a club that is encouraging children with disability to play freely and safely in an environment where they can get fit, build friendships and learn new social skills.

The member for Camden has been a staunch advocate for people with disability in his electorate. The residents and community organisations of Camden are well served by Chris Patterson and I thank him for bringing the Macarthur Magic Special Needs Football Club to my attention. The club sees the possibilities for children with special needs rather than their limitations. It is the only club of its kind in the Macarthur region and it was established in 2012 to give children with a physical, intellectual or mental disability the ability to participate in the world game. Macarthur Magic provides children with disability with an environment that enables them to join in the game to the best of their ability in a spirit of inclusion, tolerance and fair play.

By joining the club, members and their families become part of the fabric of the football community and develop social networks that are vital to everyday enjoyment of life. I am proud to support organisations like Macarthur Magic that are passionate about helping children with disability to fulfil their potential. I again thank the member for Camden for supporting children with disability to exercise greater choice and to have control of their lives, and for working to address the barriers in society that impede access to sporting activities and socialisation. I know that all honourable members in this House believe all children, regardless of their

ability, should have the same opportunities to play and to be among friends. I congratulate the club and its supporters, and thank them for giving their community's children a chance to be part of the football community. I acknowledge the tireless efforts of those who are working to improve services for people with disability and assure them that the New South Wales Government is committed to this shared goal.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Dr JOHN KAYE: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Premier. My question relates to the opening sentence of the New South Wales Government's "Response to Expert Panel's Call for Submissions Paper" with regard to the national review of the renewable energy target, which states:

The NSW Government is committed to a secure, affordable and renewable energy future for NSW.

What steps is the Government taking to remove all legal and administrative barriers to a renewable energy future for New South Wales?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: That question would probably have been better directed to the Minister for the Environment. There was a preamble about the statement, but it is a direct question about what the Government is doing. Off the top of my head, I am unaware of the detail the member has requested. I will refer the question to the Premier, although I suspect that the question should have been directed to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Rob Stokes. I will request a detailed answer and provide it to the House.

CHINESE RESTAURANTS AND MINISTER FOR FAIR TRADING

The Hon. ERNEST WONG: I direct my question to the Minister for Fair Trading. Has the Minister reconsidered his refusal to apologise for the comments he made in this place on Tuesday when he suggested that Sydney's Chinese restaurants are not meeting statutory health standards? Will the Minister now apologise?

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order—

The Hon. Peter Primrose: Why are you protecting him?

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I am not protecting him.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Peter Primrose to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Luke Foley to order for the second time.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Questions must conform to the rules of the Chamber. A question to a Minister is covered by certain rules and it must relate to his or her portfolio. Asking a Minister to apologise is not within those rules. My point of order is not about protecting the Minister; it is about proper processes being followed in this place. That is something you would not understand, cobber.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: To the point of order: The point of order taken by the Hon. Duncan Gay is that the question asked by the Hon. Ernest Wong did not relate to the Minister's portfolio responsibilities. It related to an answer given in question time earlier this week by the Minister, which was followed up yesterday and which is being followed up again today. It accords with the standing orders in the same way that any series of questions put to a Minister about his portfolio responsibilities accords with the standing orders as long as they do not contain argument or hypothetical issues. Mr President, I believe the question is entirely in order and I ask you to rule accordingly.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: Standing Order 65 (1) (b) states that questions must not contain arguments. There is clearly argument in the question because the questioner asserted a fact, the interpretation of which the Minister has previously denied. I suggest that if the questioner were to revise the question so as to remove the argument, it may well be asked; but at present the question is argumentative, which rules it invalid.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: To the point of order: I make an additional submission regarding tedious repetition. The question has been followed up and repeated. I put it to the Chair that the question is out of order on the grounds of tedious repetition, should the Chair so determine.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question certainly contained argument, but I will entertain it later if it is re-asked. I remind people in the President's gallery that rules apply to their presence. If the rules are not complied with, everyone in the President's gallery will be removed for the balance of question time

HOME BUILDING CONSUMER PROTECTION

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister inform members about how protections for consumers undertaking home building work are being enhanced?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I thank the honourable member for this timely question. As members would be aware, the changes to the home building regime went through this House last night. I have been fielding a number of inquiries today—some of them mischievous—from the shadow Minister, some of them reliant on misinterpretation of certain key provisions. I will celebrate some of the changes with members opposite. The new legislation is a breakthrough in terms of consumer protection in New South Wales, despite how those opposite might seek to illustrate the changes. The reality is that we now have clarity and certainty in key areas.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Did they vote against them?

The Hon. Adam Searle: No, we voted for them.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: After a long discussion and many amendments put in Committee, in the end they accepted there was good reason to support the legislation.

The Hon. Luke Foley: Are you reflecting on decisions of this House?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Certainly not. I am reflecting on the importance of this legislation to consumers in New South Wales and clarifying the mistruths being put about by people outside this place. The reality is that the consumers of New South Wales have a well-balanced package, which improves consumer protection on a number of fronts. The legislation passed last night contains changes, particularly in relation to the defect test and giving clarity on what is a minor defect and what amounts to a major defect. In that regard, for the first time we have identified significant damage from a water leak or in relation to fire systems as a major defect. That ensures a six-year warranty will apply to damage caused in that regard—an increase in consumer protection that has not happened for a long time in New South Wales. Prior to this legislation it was uncertain whether the warranty period was two years or six years. That has been clarified, and now all people in the industry are certain of their rights and responsibilities. I have received advice that lawyers will no longer be dining out on that uncertainty.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Shame!

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I know those opposite might be upset about that.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Some of them still want to practise.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: A number of them are de facto members of the so-called law society union and the barristers' board. They all have a home on the Australian Labor Party; they all have a union and particular people they represent. But there are mistruths about what has been promulgated by this House. That is not good news. The reality is this is a great win for consumers and some important messages have been sent to the building industry. This State has had a problem with phoenix companies, although those opposite might see phoenix companies in another light. Some builders have failed to fulfil contracts and have let down consumers.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: He's not going to insult bankers. Trevor is deleting you from his Christmas list.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: My preselection is over.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Trevor Khan and the Hon. Mick Veitch wish to have a private conversation they should do so outside the Chamber.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Some consumers have incurred very significant losses. But the builders just set up a new company and continue these poor practices. This is the sort of practice we need to crack down on in New South Wales. Last night we passed legislation that increases penalties for that sort of behaviour. Also, under the new legislation if builders continue operating unlicensed they may be sent to prison for up to 12 months if convicted. That is good news for the people of New South Wales. I will be delighted to give members further updates in due course.

SURESH NAIR PAROLE ELIGIBILITY

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services representing the Attorney General, and Minister for Justice. Is it a fact that neurosurgeon Suresh Nair caused the deaths in 2009 of two prostitutes in Sydney through drug abuse? Is it a fact that he was jailed in August 2011 and will be released in July 2014, after serving only two years in prison? Will the Attorney General review this case and determine whether Suresh Nair should remain in custody because of a heavy cocaine addiction and his risk to society?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question. As he is seeking a specific action by the Attorney General I will refer the question to him, and upon obtaining an answer report it to the House.

FEDERAL DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services. Yesterday in response to a question about what the Minister had done to take up community concerns about the Federal Liberal Government's axing of the position of Federal Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Graeme Innes, the Minister stated:

I have also raised these issues with the Federal Government.

What were those concerns? Who did the Minister raise those concerns with? When did the Minister raise these issues with the Federal Government? Did the Minister raise these concerns in writing?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for the question as it gives me an opportunity to praise the great work of Graeme Innes and again confirm the number of conversations I have had with him in relation to these areas. Graeme Innes assisted enormously on issues pertaining to people with disability. He provided great support and assistance in relation to the Disability Inclusion Bill 2014, which I introduced yesterday. From my discussions with Graeme Innes I am confident that he will continue to provide great advice and great support. Whether he is the commissioner or not, he has assured me that he will continue to work in the area of people with disabilities. He has a great passion for assisting people with a disability.

Much work is going on behind the scenes to ensure that Australia as a whole, and New South Wales in particular, is a welcoming and inclusive society for people with disabilities. I am proud of the work taking place in my portfolio and I will continue to work diligently, driven by so many committed people. It should be remembered that the Minister and the Government are well advised by myriad advocacy groups such as People with Disabilities Australia, Family Advocacy and the Council for Intellectual Disabilities. The funding provided to advocacy groups per annum is more than \$9 million. My office receives advice from the Disability Council led by Cain Beckett, the Carers Council, the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, the Home Care Aboriginal Advisory Committee, CALD Advisory Group and the person-centred advisory group. This Government takes a serious view in relation to obtaining advice and advocacy for people with disability.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I ask the Minister a supplementary question. In light of the Minister's answer, will he elucidate what I believe was an answer and give a commitment to publicly release all correspondence on the matter relating to the issues he has raised regarding Mr Graeme Innes?

The PRESIDENT: Order! While that was a nice try, it was clearly not a supplementary question—as the former President well knows.

ANZAC PARADE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST BRIDGE

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how the bridge across Anzac Parade will improve access to and from the sporting venues at Moore Park and Centennial Park?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Tibby Cotter?

The Hon. Luke Foley: He was great.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: A great guy. The concept of a bridge across Anzac Parade to and from the sporting venues at Moore Park has been a plan of the Centennial Parklands Trust for more than a decade to provide safe and easy pedestrian access—one which the then Labor Government was quite happy to ignore. The start of construction on the \$25 million project marks the start of a lasting tribute to Albert (Tibby) Cotter, a former Australian Test cricketer who was killed in action during World War I.

The Hon. Luke Foley: I have been to his grave.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Leader of the Opposition has been to his grave, as has the Deputy Government Whip.

The Hon. Walt Secord: I have too.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: And other dubious characters have been there as well. Moore Park is one of Sydney's key cultural precincts, with Sydney Cricket Ground, Allianz Stadium, the Entertainment Quarter and Fox Studios attracting almost 1.5 million spectators and event patrons and up to 350,000 pedestrians and cyclists annually. The Tibby Cotter Bridge will transform the experience for spectators arriving and leaving the precinct and for cyclists during non-event periods. Since 2002 significant changes have been made to Moore Park, including the dedication of the Korean War Memorial at the northern end of Moore Park west. This prevents a pedestrian bridge being built across Anzac Parade near the alignment of Moore Park Road and Fitzroy Street.

The CBD South East Light Rail is currently undergoing an environmental impact statement assessment. This large item of public transport infrastructure will fundamentally move the main pedestrian flow from Central station via Foveaux and Fitzroy streets to the Devonshire Street alignment. At non-event times the walkway will be a shared path. This will enable cyclists from the east to access the central business district cycle paths and the Bourke Street cycleway and enable people from the west to take bicycles to Centennial Park via Federation Way and Robertson Road gates.

Roads and Maritime Services prepared a number of alternative designs and undertook public consultation before selecting the option to best meet the needs of the sports spectating public, minimising impact on the heritage features of Moore Park, including the Moreton Bay fig trees. Its positioning was no accident. Some members, such as the Hon. Penny Sharpe, are trying to make out that it was in the wrong place. The preferred design was submitted to the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Heritage Council, which examined the bridge proposal and heritage approval was granted on 16 April. The project has the support of the trusts and the sporting teams as well as many people in the community.

The Hon. Luke Foley: Shepherd wants two bridges.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: No, he didn't say that. If we listened to the City of Sydney and its cheer squad, nothing would ever get built in this city. It is interesting that when we checked our files we found a letter from the Lord Mayor asking for just this bridge. It is the right bridge and it is in the right place when she wants it, but when we build it it is all wrong. What a hypocrite.

POLITICAL DONATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Local Government. Noting that on 31 August 2012 the New South Wales Liberal Party gave Ned Mannoun, the Liberal mayoral candidate for Liverpool council, \$25,361 for his local council election campaign, will the Minister advise whether any of this money was illegally sourced from Gazcorp donations and why Ned Mannoun did not declare receipt of the money in his electoral return?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Internal money transfers within the Liberal Party are hardly within the policy parameters of the Minister for Local Government. The question should be ruled out of order.

Mr David Shoebidge: To the point of order: The question directly related to a local council election campaign and the election of a local mayor. The question is clearly in order.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: The question asked for details of internal money transfers within the Liberal Party—or alleged money transfers within the Liberal Party. How is the Minister supposed to have any knowledge of that within his portfolio of responsibilities? The question is clearly out of order.

Dr John Kaye: To the point of order: The question related to a local government election conducted under the Local Government Act, which is a responsibility of the Minister for Local Government. Therefore, while the Minister may or may not wish to answer it, it is a matter that is directly within his portfolio. The Minister for Local Government has direct responsibility for the conduct of council elections.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will allow the question.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: My knowledge of Liberal Party fundraising is pretty scarce, being a member of the grand old National Party.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: But you go to them.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Not very often, but if I am invited I am pleased to attend. I will take the question on notice and refer it to the relevant authority. I do not think the Minister for Local Government is the relevant Minister but I will direct it to him anyway.

CHINESE RESTAURANTS AND MINISTER FOR FAIR TRADING

The Hon. ERNEST WONG: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading. I refer to the Minister's statement in the House on Tuesday this week in which he issued the following invitation to me:

I also extend this invitation in relation to Chinese restaurants in Chinatown, which we will visit with health officials.

Will the Minister withdraw that comment, given the offence taken by Chinese restaurant owners in Chinatown?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I thank the Hon. Ernest Wong for that interesting question. I welcome to the public gallery members of the Chinese community who have made their way here today, and it is good that they have done so. It is important for them to understand that this is a Parliament for all people, and that it is important for members to be careful about how they quote what people say. I have made it clear that the Hon. Ernest Wong is welcome to accompany me wherever he would like to go. I have extended the invitation in relation to traders at Paddy's Markets or, indeed, if Fair Trading officials visit people in restaurants.

The Hon. Ernest Wong: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. My question specifically asked the Minister whether he would like to withdraw his comment.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ernest Wong will resume his seat. The Minister is in order.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It is clear that the member has taken offence but I do not understand why. If he has taken offence I would be the first person to apologise, and I am willing to extend that apology. I meant no offence; I was simply making a point. I refer again to my comments yesterday and on the previous occasion.

The Hon. ERNEST WONG: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by explaining why he does not want to withdraw the comment, particularly as restaurateurs in the public gallery were offended by the Minister's comments?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ernest Wong will resume his seat. The supplementary question is clearly out of order.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: It is totally out of order. He is playing the race game, unashamedly.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Just like the Minister's comments were out of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Amanda Fazio to order for the first time. I call the Minister for Roads and Freight to order for the first time.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: Point of order: The comment made by way of interjection by the Minister for Roads and Freight to the Hon. Ernest Wong that he was playing the race card is offensive and should be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Amanda Fazio will resume her seat. There is no point of order.

PUBLIC HOUSING TENANCY

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services, representing the Minister for Family and Community Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is making the New South Wales public housing system fairer and more sustainable?

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The New South Wales Government inherited deep and systemic challenges facing the social housing system.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Steve Whan to order for the first time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: We inherited large and growing waiting lists, spiralling maintenance costs and inefficient vacant bedrooms. The community expects a system that not only manages disadvantage but breaks it. The 2014 rental amnesty is one example of how the New South Wales Government is working to improve lives by delivering a more transparent, fair and sustainable social housing system. An eight-week rental amnesty has given New South Wales public housing tenants the chance to disclose previously undisclosed income and property. It has given tenants who had failed to disclose the chance to do the right thing without fear of penalty or prosecution.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The amnesty helps to ensure that social housing is reserved and available for those most in need. When the New South Wales Government is collecting a fair amount of rent, that amount can be reinvested in the system. To put it simply, the payment of fair rent allows for the construction of more housing. Examples of undisclosed income include property assets, income from term deposits or bank accounts, income from casual work or an inheritance.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Amanda Fazio to order for the second time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Already we are seeing derived benefits from tenants who are coming forward to put the record straight, and from members of the community providing information about third parties. I am pleased to advise the House that as at 20 May 2014 more than 800 people declared extra income totalling almost \$20 million per year. More than 400 people had declared assets worth more than \$29 million, and more than 50 people had declared that they own their own property or land. The amnesty will mean that more money is invested into the social housing system each year. It is estimated that this will result in an additional income to the Government of approximately \$800,000 per annum—\$800,000 that can be reinvested into building and providing more properties.

I praise all those public housing tenants who have come forward to date and declared extra income or assets. The amnesty continues until midnight on Saturday 31 May. I continue to encourage public housing tenants who may have undisclosed income to come forward before 31 May without fear of prosecution or having to pay any back rent. Once the amnesty is over substantial penalties may apply, including eviction, if a tenant fails to properly disclose.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: You're very good at evicting people.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The Government will continue to work to improve lives by delivering a more transparent, fair and sustainable social housing system.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Hon. Sophie Cotsis that she is on two calls to order.

FORENSIC AND ANALYTICAL SCIENCE SERVICE FOOD TESTING LABORATORY

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Primary Industries. Today outside Parliament 17 scientists, along with other professional staff from the food testing laboratory at the Forensic and Analytical Science Service [FASS] at Lidcombe, protested the Government's decision to outsource their vital work and abolish their jobs. The laboratory and its dedicated staff have shown over many years their commitment to go above and beyond their paid hours to help stop outbreaks of deadly bacteria such as salmonella. Why is the Government putting the people of New South Wales at risk of food poisoning by sacking the experts who play such a vital role in protecting New South Wales residents from food-borne illness?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the member for his question. I know he regrets being put on the losers lounge and that someone else is doing well the job that he did badly. I am unaware—

The Hon. Steve Whan: There are rules against lying in the House.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I could take offence but I am not one who takes offence at such petty comments, unlike members opposite. NSW Health Pathology advised the NSW Food Authority in early April of its intention to cease offering food testing services through FASS. The decision by NSW Health Pathology was due to the services not being financially viable in the long term. The services will cease on 31 July 2014, although the NSW Forensic and Analysis Science Service has agreed to continue to work with the authority to ensure that there are no gaps in testing services while the authority sources new arrangements. To secure alternative arrangements, the authority will soon go to market with a tender for the services required. The authority is confident that the market is able to provide the services required.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much audible conversation on the Government backbenches and, unusually, not a whisper coming from the Opposition.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: A number of laboratories provide commercial food testing services, all of which are independently accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities to the same standard as the food laboratories at FASS. The authority already uses laboratories that provide commercial food testing services where FASS cannot provide the service. Other States, such as Victoria and Western Australia, use commercial laboratories. Food testing is only one component in keeping food safe for the community. The decision to close the laboratory will not impact on the ability of the NSW Food Authority to continue food safety incidents and conduct food safety analysis and research. I will obtain a detailed answer from the Minister to the rest of the question asked by the Hon. Steve Whan as it relates to staff.

GOING HOME STAYING HOME

Ms JAN BARHAM: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Family and Community Services. What research, evidence or advice was relied upon to determine that of the nine inner-city tender packages for the Going Home Staying Home reforms there should be only one women's only tender package for women experiencing domestic and family violence and no tender packages specifically for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness for other reasons, such as childhood sexual abuse, drug and alcohol issues, or women leaving custody?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am informed that there will still be specialist services for women in the new system. There will be services for women escaping domestic and family violence. Those specialist services will include services for single women with or without children. The Government is committed to protecting the vulnerable and delivering a reformed and improved homelessness service system.

NSW FAIR TRADING MY PLACE PROGRAM

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on his recent visit to Kogarah to meet with local real estate agents as part of the My Place Program of NSW Fair Trading?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I thank the Hon. Trevor Khan for this good question. Last Thursday I had a terrific trip to Rockdale, Hurstville and Kogarah with the wonderful NSW Fair Trading team—it was on fire. We visited the area as part of the My Place Program with a whole range of compliance and

outreach officers to inform members of various professions, including real estate agents, of their responsibilities under the various pieces of legislation administered by Fair Trading. Members would now be aware that Fair Trading administers 43 Acts, a range of which affect professions in a number of businesses. My first stop at Hurstville was the NSW Fair Trading office, which provides a wonderful range of services.

The Hon. Walt Secord: His brother's shop.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I did not see John there on that occasion.

The Hon. Walt Secord: John's brother was there.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I do not know whether John's brother was there. I imagine John Flowers, a very hardworking local member, was probably in the area. The staff at Fair Trading do a wonderful job for their community. I next visited Kogarah RSL, where I addressed some 60 to 80 real estate agents about their responsibilities under the various pieces of property legislation. It is a serious issue because there are significant responsibilities for real estate agents. All members, particularly those legal eagles on the other side of the House, are aware of trust account responsibilities. I see a nodding glow from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who understands the importance of trust accounts. Opposition members need to understand the importance of money boxes, let alone anything else, to understand the concept of saving. That would be great for the next time they might in a position of power.

Members of the Real Estate Institute were in attendance in force. NSW Fair Trading officers provided them with a wonderful program of outreach and informed them of their responsibilities under legislation. In that regard, not only did they attend in droves but they were also rewarded with continuing professional development, which is important for all professions. The Hon. Greg Donnelly could do with some continuing professional development too. Real estate agents received two points out of 12 that they have to achieve in every year for attending. They were advised of their responsibilities under legislation.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Greg Donnelly to order for the first time.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It is Thursday afternoon, Opposition members are getting excited and question time is drawing to a close. The program at Kogarah, Rockdale and Hurstville looked at a range of other areas. We visited a local school and spoke about the great Revved Up Program—members opposite are getting a little revved up—which advises students about their responsibilities and rights when buying a car. It ensures that those rights can be fulfilled should they buy a car that does not fit statutory warranties and the like. It was a great program. I think the residents of Kogarah, Hurstville and beyond were pleased to have Fair Trading in their area. No doubt I will report back on the level of compliance from traders in that area.

MOREE ARTESIAN AQUATIC CENTRE

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Local Government. Last year I asked a question about the increased cost to the public to use the Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre. Have costs again been increased? Does a single entry now cost an adult \$8 and a child or concession holder \$6, which makes it more expensive than the North Sydney Olympic Pool and the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre? Will the Minister investigate the equity and fairness of the costs? Are they in any way related to the executive staff costs of running the centre?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I do not know the answer to this question. The Hon. Robert Borsak indicated that the entry cost to Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre is more expensive than North Sydney pool. The good people of Moree would argue that the experience is much better, not that I have got anything against North Sydney pool but it is not an artesian bore. There are a few artesian bores on the other side of the House. I just heard one. I will refer this question to my colleague the Minister for Local Government and obtain a detailed answer.

SCHOOL STUDENT ROAD SAFETY

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight. Given the number of injuries to children walking to and from school, has the Minister sought specific advice from the Centre for Road Safety about additional measures, other than flashing lights, to improve safety for children around schools?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I will give the Hon. Walt Secord the benefit of the doubt that he has asked this question sincerely. I have not sought the advice because we have already put measures in place. We have a raft of things happening in this area. In the past week or so I have noticed some scepticism from the Opposition on the delivery of flashing lights. Unlike previous administrations, we have done the hard ones first. The schools that are most prone to accidents with higher traffic levels were the first to have flashing lights installed. The easier new schools that are located on roads with less traffic will be next. The former Government would have done the easy ones first and left the harder ones for later.

The key message is to be able to install the flashing lights and get people to slow down. We have put in place in schools a scheme called Safety Town, which covers children that are a little bit older. We do not have as much of a problem with accidents with preschool children because they are accompanied by their parents but when they get to age five, six and seven we let them develop and free range a little bit and we need to make them understand. We have been lucky that the great Swans player, the Australian of the Year, Mr Goodes, gave his services for nothing, which is pretty incredible for a high-paid sportsman because not many give their services for nothing to work with us in this sphere. We have learning aids in schools such as computer programs. Just this week I sent a letter to all the 3,200 principals in New South Wales about this issue.

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

The House continued to sit.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Just this week I sent a letter to each of the principals in New South Wales because I know they share my concern and I am sure the concern of every member in this House that in the last week or so five children have been injured in school zones. On top of that we are distributing through the principals of the schools a pamphlet to help schools and parents in relation to road safety. When the Opposition spokesman asks me whether I am going to talk to the Centre for Road Safety about what we can do in the future, my answer is an unequivocal, no, I do not need to because we have already taken steps to address these things. We will watch it. We do not pretend to know everything in this area. It is a hard area to get right but had the former Government had the guts to commit to putting those flashing lights at these schools, it would have made a hell of a difference. I did forget to say that we have an app to help people. No-one deliberately drives fast around schools but sometimes they forget and we have an app to warn people on approaching schools. We are trying to do whatever we can to protect our young people, as we should.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I ask a supplementary question. In light of the Minister's answer on flashing lights, will he elucidate why the State Government's rollout of school zone flashing lights is behind schedule, with 60 per cent of schools—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question is out of order. It is a new question.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Mr President, the Minister in his answer specifically referred to my scepticism about the number and being behind schedule. I am sorry, Mr President, but he referred specifically to my scepticism involving the delay in the program.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I honestly did not hear it but I have sought other advice. I will give the Hon. Walt Secord the benefit of the doubt and the Minister may answer it if he wishes.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is a huge distortion, verging on a lie from the honourable member. We are not behind schedule. Quite the contrary, we are ahead of schedule and we will deliver those flashing lights. I thank the honourable member for giving me an opportunity to answer this and reiterate to the House and the people of New South Wales that we are not behind schedule and we will deliver those flashing lights to every school by the end of 2015, as we said we would. How different is that from what the Hon. Walt Secord would do? He would have put a glossy brochure in the box. He was the man who last week said that you should not have red light cameras and you should be allowed to drive through red lights. He is a disgrace to the Opposition. The sooner he is moved out of the roads portfolio the better Labor will perform.

Reluctant as I am, I have to indicate that question time has expired. If members have further questions, they should place them on notice.

Questions without notice concluded.

Pursuant to sessional orders Government business proceeded with.

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox tabled the following papers:

- (1) Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985—Report of Department of Education and Communities for year ended 31 December 2013.
- (2) Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984—
 - (a) Final report of NSW Institute of Teachers for the period 1 July 2013 to 1 January 2014
 - (b) Reports for year ended 31 December 2013:
 - Charles Sturt University
 - Macquarie University—volumes 1 and 2
 - Southern Cross University
 - University of Newcastle, including financial statements
 - University of New England
 - University of New South Wales—volumes 1 and 2
 - University of Sydney, including financial statements
 - University of Technology, Sydney—volumes 1 and 2
 - University of Western Sydney—volumes 1 and 2
 - University of Wollongong—volumes 1 and 2.

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.35 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

BICENTENARY OF DEATHS OF CAPTAIN ARTHUR PHILLIP AND LIEUTENANT MATTHEW FLINDERS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [3.35 p.m.]: I speak on the bicentenary of the deaths of Captain Arthur Phillip and Lieutenant Matthew Flinders. This year, 2014, will see the bicentenary of the deaths of two of the most extraordinary men in Australian history—Captain Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales and the founder of our modern nation, and Lieutenant Matthew Flinders, the man who charted the entire coastline of the continent upon which he, for the first time, bestowed the name "Australia".

Described by former Premier Bob Carr as "the greatest ever Australian", Captain Arthur Phillip was born in London in 1738, the son of Jacob Phillip, a German-born teacher. He was a brilliant naval commander and administrator who joined the Royal Navy at the age of 15 and served his nation well in war and peace. Phillip captured the Spanish ship *St Augustin*, which carried three times the firepower of his own small vessel. After resuming active service with the Royal Navy, he later worked as a secret naval espionage agent in peacetime France, in between times tending his farm in Hampshire.

In 1787 his experience and resourcefulness made him the ideal choice to command the proposed First Fleet to establish a British convict settlement on the shores of a faraway Australia. He declared that "there will never be any slavery in this land" and we saw that in the way in which he administered the colony of New South Wales. An ailing Phillip returned to England after spending almost five years in New South Wales, leaving behind a well-established young colony. He hoped to regain his health and return but it was not to be. Reaching the rank of Admiral of the Blue, he lived in retirement in Bath until his death on 31 August 1814. He and his second wife, Isabella, now rest in peace in the country church of St Nicholas in Bathampton.

Matthew Flinders dedicated himself to a life of discovery and is ranked second only to Captain James Cook among the explorers of his time. Born in 1774, Flinders, like Phillip, joined the Royal Navy at the age of 15 and in 1791 served as a midshipman on HMS *Providence* under Captain William Bligh on his successful breadfruit voyage to Tahiti after the mutiny on the *Bounty*. Later, Flinders saw action in HMS *Bellerophon* at the naval battle of the Glorious First of June 1794. In 1795 Flinders sailed to Australia with the incoming Governor Hunter and began his long task of mapping the great south land.

Flinders proved that Tasmania was a separate island and completely charted Australia's coastline with such accuracy that some of his charts remained in use until World War II. His invention of the Flinders bar, which was a simple rod of soft iron placed near the compass to compensate for outside magnetic influences, was soon to be adopted worldwide. En route to England in 1803 to publish his maps, Flinders was captured by the French and kept as a prisoner of war on Mauritius before being released seven years later. Arriving in England in failing health in October 1810 Flinders was belatedly promoted to post captain and began work on his monumental work *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, which was published on 18 July 1814, the day before he died. He was buried at St James, Hampstead Road, but later alterations to the churchyard have obliterated his grave.

Captain Arthur Phillip's extraordinary achievement in herding and leading the First Fleet—11 ships filled with 1,000 of Britain's most unwanted—24,000 kilometres across the world will be celebrated on 9 July with the installation of a memorial stone at Westminster Abbey to mark the bicentenary of Phillip's death. The success of Arthur Phillip's journey from England was nothing short of miraculous, both in its undertaking and in its result. The question is why the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Historic Houses Trust are doing so little to celebrate the bicentenary of the deaths of Captain Arthur Phillip and Lieutenant Matthew Flinders. They have simply reinstated a bust of Governor Phillip, improved a walking track and organised a one-day seminar. Is that the best we can do in the State of New South Wales? The answer is, no. This is a great opportunity for Sydney to rise up and honour the founding fathers of not only this State but the nation. I urge the New South Wales Government and Premier Baird to make urgent decisions to fully honour our founding fathers Governor Arthur Phillip and Lieutenant Matthew Flinders.

GONSKI EDUCATION REFORM

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [3.40 p.m.]: Tonight I will talk about the important impact that Gonski schools funding would have on schools in the Monaro electorate and the tragedy that will come to pass if the Abbott Government proceeds with cutting the last two years of the six-year program. Gonski schools funding is vital to the future of education in Monaro. Some of the schools that were going to receive large increases in funding, enabling them to deliver the world's best education to their students, include: Monaro High School, which would receive just over \$2 million extra in funding over the six years; Karabar High School, which would receive \$3.4 million in additional funding from 2013 to 2019; and Jerrabomberra Public School, the biggest public school in the region, which would receive \$3.8 million in additional funding from the Gonski funding model between 2013 and 2019.

These schools need that vital education funding so they can help Australia move into the top five education systems in the world. It is a tragedy that the Federal Liberals and Nationals are cutting this funding from 2017. On an even split of funding—at this stage I cannot see the figures that will tell us how much will be lost by the schools in the last two years—and recognising the last two years are the highest levels of funding as the peak is reached, I estimate that the Monaro electorate will lose more than \$5 million of funding a year for local public schools. That would be an absolute tragedy for our local public schools.

A single-teacher school such as the Jerangle Public School will lose up to \$15,000 in funding if the Abbott Government proceeds. The State Government in New South Wales has not said whether it will reinstate the \$1.5 billion funding cut it announced before the Gonski model was introduced and which was then returned as the matching funding. We need assurances that that money will stay in place. It is not good enough for the Liberal-Nationals Government to make kids in the Monaro region suffer because of the Government's ideological bent on cutting funding for public schools.

Australia needs the skills developed in our public schools and we need the opportunities that education provides. In New South Wales we enjoy one of the highest living standards in the world, but if we do not invest in education we are condemning our children and grandchildren to lower standards of living over the longer term as we compete with the rest of the world on the basis of low wages instead of better skills. That is something that none of us can afford to do.

On top of the Federal budget announcements on school funding we see a detrimental decision to allow the deregulation of university funding. It is already expensive for a family in a rural area to send their kids off to receive an education at university. If fees are deregulated and, very importantly and very negatively, any decision is made to increase the interest rate on the Higher Education Contribution Scheme [HECS] payments—which is essentially keeping the same real level of debt—to a level of debt that would increase over time, then we will see people deciding not to pursue university education.

It will particularly affect country areas because they simply will not want the level of debt they will accumulate over that time. That is a negative decision for our State and our nation. It is one that should be strongly resisted. I hope that the Labor Party and The Greens in the Senate are able to block that measure. It would be an absolute tragedy if that was to go ahead. I have two children in tertiary education at the moment and even on a good income that is difficult to fund.

I cannot understand how any Government, particularly a Liberal and Nationals Government, could say to farming families and families from rural areas who are often asset rich but income poor, "We expect you to allow your children to build up debts of \$60,000 to \$100,000 to undertake a degree." What we are seeing from the Abbott Government is a tragedy for education in this State. If it is allowed to proceed with these measures it will be a tragedy for families in the Monaro, and we cannot count on Liberal and Nationals members at State and Federal levels to do enough to stand up to this outrage to education.

POLITICAL DONATIONS

Dr JOHN KAYE [3.45 p.m.]: Corruption and influence peddling are not victimless crimes. It is not only the State's reputation that suffers when government decisions are purchased by donations or influenced by lobbyists exploiting their political connections on behalf of a corporate client—households, the environment and the economy inevitably pay the price. For more than a decade The Greens have been warning that the State of New South Wales is in deep trouble. Hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate donations were not given to Labor and the Coalition parties because developers and wealthy companies seeking government contracts and other special favours had a sustained attack of charitable feelings towards politicians and their supposed causes.

That money was buying legislation that advantaged the donors over the rest of us. Developments and mines were being approved without regard to the impacts on the local community and the environment. Access to Ministers was on the basis of willingness to pay. At the same time, those who could pay for lobbyists with insider influence were getting a lion's share of the action. In short, democracy in New South Wales was heading towards banana republic status. Findings against former Labor Ministers Eddie Obeid, Ian Macdonald and Tony Kelly by the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] exposed a State being ripped off for millions of dollars by the unscrupulous scheming of a small number of senior figures in the previous Government.

Allegations currently before ICAC suggest that corruption and influence peddling had well and truly crossed the boundaries between political parties. The Liberal Party's relationship with Nick Di Girolamo, Australian Water Holdings, Eightbyfive, the Millennium Forum and the Free Enterprise Foundation did more than take out a Premier, two senior Ministers, a parliamentary secretary and a handful of backbenchers, it exposed a systematic attempt to subvert the intent, if not the letter, of the donations laws. It revealed a party organisation captured by a culture of lobbying, influence peddling and favours.

While Australian Water Holdings did not get its billion-dollar contract, it was able to extract massive salaries and other expenses from household water bills in Sydney and the Illawarra. Coalmines have been approved to enrich at least one member of Parliament. Leases to public properties were sold off at below their market value. A significant proportion of the Liberal Party's campaign spending on the 2011 election may well have been sourced from illegal donations. The list is long, damaging and shameful. By any reckoning New South Wales has been pillaged by politicians from both of the old parties.

This is much more than just a few individuals turned bad. The malignancy is entrenched within the system. It thrives in a culture of treating public office as an opportunity for self-enrichment, the laws regulating donations as optional and the community as a necessary nuisance who should be treated as mugs. This is the culture that grows when there is insufficient public scrutiny and accountability and when donations can be passed between organisations to disguise their true origins. It is a culture that flourishes where the expectation is that wealthy and powerful mates of the political elite will get the inside running.

These things can be fixed and The Greens have a plan that will begin to turn around New South Wales. Premier Mike Baird and Opposition leader John Robertson talk about a scheme to force taxpayers to pay for their election campaigns, hoping to distract voters from the real damage their parties have done to the State's democracy. The Premier's expert panel inquiring into the 100 per cent public funding scheme will not report back until New Year's Eve. Donations will continue to pour in from dodgy sources with no public accountability until it is too late. The next State election will largely happen under the old corruption-vulnerable rules.

Meanwhile, The Greens have developed a package of measures that ban the laundering of donations through front organisations, force politicians and their families to explain where their wealth comes from and

expose all lobbying to public scrutiny. The Greens will prohibit donations from the mining industry and government contractors and require all donations to be fully disclosed as they are received. Restrictions on election spending must be tightened to force parties to focus more on talking to the community about their vision for the future and less on soliciting funds from dodgy sources. However, it will take much more than a new set of rules to change politics in New South Wales. There must be an end to rich pickings for corporate sharks created by contracting out public services, selling off public assets and entering into sweetheart deals for casinos and motorways. There must be a richer, more engaging democracy in which communities have a real say in their own future. There must also be a change in our expectations of what politics can deliver.

ROYAL FAR WEST CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCHEME

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES [3.50 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to Royal Far West, a non-government organisation that provides health services to children living in rural and remote New South Wales. Working in partnership with families and local health and education providers, Royal Far West complements existing services within the community. Every year it helps thousands of country children who have non-acute developmental, behavioural, learning, emotional and mental health disorders to access specialist health care that is not available locally, regardless of where they live. The Royal Far West School and Drummond House provide children with an integrated model of care to the highest level of individual support. The Royal Far West School provides an educational service for patients and every child receives an integrated clinical and educational assessment and management planning. Short-term programs are delivered to four multigrade classes from preschool to year 12, one of which is for students with severe disabilities. These small groups provide a safe, secure and happy environment in which students can achieve success.

Drummond House provides comfortable and secure home-style accommodation for families while their child is attending appointments at Royal Far West. The facility enables families to stay together and to have easy access to the medical centre and Royal Far West School. Accommodation at Drummond House may also be provided for country children and their families accessing specialist services provided by other organisations. Both the school and the accommodation are located on site in Manly and they are within walking distance of Manly Beach, the wharf, the ferry terminal and the local shopping area. In partnership with the NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre, Royal Far West has developed SOLVE IT. This innovative, technology-based outreach learning program supports students in rural New South Wales. Services are delivered by clinicians travelling to rural locations or by using technology such as videoconferencing. Royal Far West is committed to delivering child-focused, family-centred care. Through constant communication with families and rural service providers it supports long-term change and the best outcomes for children.

Royal Far West is involved in a number of projects and programs, but I do not have time to detail them all. They include a week-long respite program held in January each year for children with special needs. Children and their families have the opportunity to enjoy a supported holiday by the sea. The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile is a 12-metre long vehicle with two clinical consulting rooms that provides specialist health services to hundreds of children. Royal Far West clinicians provide a range of health and promotion services, including paediatrics, speech therapy, oral health, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychology, psychiatry and social work. The Royal Far West team also provides health promotion activities and runs information sessions for rural and remote health and education professionals, often using video links to bring teams together.

Building on this technology advancement for the delivery of health services to rural and remote areas, Royal Far West is working in partnership with the University of New South Wales to implement and evaluate Australia's first telehealth treatment for children with conduct problems. This innovative research project is examining a new intervention for children with behavioural and emotional difficulties. The intervention will involve collaborative work with parents and a clinical psychologist with the goal of developing skills and knowledge about how to reduce problem behaviours. Royal Far West is also working in partnership with the University of Sydney to develop and deliver an innovative speech and language program to children in schools in rural and remote parts of New South Wales using technology.

Another initiative is the Skills of Understanding Relationships and Feelings project—also known as the SURF project. This is a collaborative research project between the University of New South Wales and Royal Far West aimed at improving the effectiveness of prevention, early intervention and treatment of child and adolescent developmental and mental health problems. Finally, Royal Far West received a Child Aware Approaches Initiative grant from the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to undertake a review of its screening tools and processes to better identify children at risk of being negatively impacted by these specific life experiences. I acknowledge chief executive officer

Lyndsay Cane, who is on the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Rural Health, which is chaired by the Hon. Melinda Pavey. I acknowledge the work of the Hon. Melinda Pavey, particularly with regard to Royal Far West and her extensive work to close the gap in rural and remote areas. Royal Far West has also received a Rural Health West Doctors' Service Award for its outstanding commitment to rural and remote health.

SCHOOL SPORT 125TH ANNIVERSARY

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY (Parliamentary Secretary) [3.55 p.m.]: In 2014 school sport turns 125 years old. We will be celebrating a milestone in the provision of sporting opportunities to students across New South Wales. Today, 75,000 students and 2,000 teachers are involved in school sports. That is very different from its humble beginning in 1889 with the formation of the Public School Amateur Athletic Association. Many of our Australian sporting identities who inspire our future champions started their careers in New South Wales public schools. I will focus on country sportspeople, and who better to mention first than Sir Donald Bradman, who attended Bowral Public School and Bowral High School. Lauren Jackson attended Murray High School and although Anne Sargeant attended a city school—Killarney Heights High School—she is my favourite sports star. Greg Inglis attended Bowraville Public School and Hunter Sports High School.

School sports championships and carnivals organised by the State and school sports regional associations showcase the enormous talent that is nurtured in our schools and encourage competitors to participate in a spirit of friendship, fair play and respect for others. That was certainly on display in the Riverina last week. I had the pleasure of witnessing my daughter Emily participating in the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association Girls Basketball Championships held at Lauren Jackson Sports Centre in Albury. The championship attracted teams from 14 regions of New South Wales and involved 104 primary schools. The winning team was MacKillop, a team comprising representatives from Catholic schools south of Sydney Harbour. All but one player in that strong team was from country New South Wales.

There was a bit of disappointment that the Riverina team, which came second, was not the winner. It is a fantastic team and has a magnificent coach in Damien Collins from Young North Public School. He was an inspiration for the girls. I am sure that player number 10, who is a six-foot-tall, stunning player, will be a star of the future. She had a great championship until the final, when she disappointingly had foul problems. The Christian independent school team, which came third, included an extraordinary player from the North Coast. She was one of only two team members from country New South Wales. Brianna Malouf from Coffs Harbour was also a star. Team Polding, whose members all come from country New South Wales, came fourth. The team included a six-foot-two-inch girl from Dubbo, whom I also believe we will see performing well in the future.

My favourite team was Barrier from the Broken Hill region. It probably has the smallest catchment area, but it is probably the strongest, gutsiest team I have ever witnessed. I congratulate the team's coach, Sarah Jardine. Barrier always finishes about fifth or sixth in the 14 team competition, which is a great accomplishment for a team with such a small catchment. I congratulate the Broken Hill Basketball Association on providing such strong coaching and support to its teams. It was a great event and I congratulate the Albury community on hosting the championship. It was very inspiring.

Following my visit to Albury I travelled to Perth for the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' Planning Workshop hosted by the Western Australian State Parliament. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Catherine Cusack on being elected chair of the committee. The aim of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Australia is to foster links between women parliamentarians in Australia and to encourage participation, particularly through the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnership, which allows us to help our sisters in the Pacific to increase women's participation in Parliament.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack has made the point clearly that we are going backwards in Australia in terms of female participation in our parliaments. The first Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting opened by the Queen and held in Edinburgh in 1997 resolved that we should work to achieve female representation in Parliament of 30 per cent by 2015. Sadly, Australia has not reached that target; we are ranked forty-third in the world with 26.2 per cent female representation. New South Wales had its lowest number in a decade, falling from 36 in 2003 to 34 in 2014.

Whilst we are helping our sisters in the Pacific, we have some work to do here. I highlight that the Hon. Catherine Cusack has made a suggestion to the steering committee about the program in the Pacific. This

suggestion is that we open nominations to all female parliamentarians across Australia, not just those involved in the steering committee, to participate in the Tongan parliamentary participation conference in July. This suggestion was supported by the committee and I encourage all women parliamentarians to join the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and get involved in the program. We particularly hope to have some female Indigenous representatives participate in the program.

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [4.00 p.m.]: A very important anniversary will occur in late September this year. It will be 20 years since the introduction of affirmative action for women in the national rules of the Australian Labor Party. This measure was driven by National Labor Women's Conferences. The approach adopted was based on a model used in overseas affiliates of the Socialist International that required that women hold 35 per cent of seats and men hold 35 per cent of seats and that 30 per cent be available for either gender. Then Prime Minister Paul Keating stated on 9 September 1994:

Last year, I called on the Labor Party to begin a process of reinvigoration. We needed to make the changes necessary to increase the number of women in State and federal caucuses.

Last Friday we took a significant step in that process when the national executive recommended to national conference the adoption of mechanisms that will substantially increase the number of Labor women in our parliaments. It was a just and wise decision. It will be passed by the national conference at the end of this month, and we will have more women in our parliaments. At the national conference in Hobart, rule 12c was adopted requiring that women be preselected for 35 per cent of winnable seats at all elections by 2002. I was a delegate to the 1994 conference and was involved in the negotiations leading up to this decision. I must say that I was not wholly supportive of the model adopted because I felt that the 30 per cent of seats left for either gender would be taken up by men who would continue to promote men just like themselves. I wanted 50 per cent of seats for women. However, I was either too idealistic or hard line, and the more moderate viewpoint prevailed.

The discussions and negotiations also involved the provision of recruitment, training and mentoring programs to underpin the rules and ensure that we had the framework to drive the success of affirmative action for women. It was very disappointing to me that these essential measures that were to be included in the affirmative action resolution were vetoed by a senior male member of the Left. So while many delegates danced on the floor of the conference after the affirmative action rule was adopted, my reaction was more muted as I was angry that a man who had taken no part in the extensive negotiations to date had been able to act in such a manner. It was truly an historic moment in the history of the Labor Party and one that led to significant increases in the level of the representation of women in public office. It was an historic decision that deserves to continue to be acknowledged and celebrated.

To implement the target, the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party introduced changes to the party rules at the 1995 State conference to reflect the then national rule 12c. These rules implemented a 20 per cent loading for women candidates in lower House preselections. In 2002 the national rules were changed to increase the target of women being preselected to 40 per cent of winnable seats by 2012. New South Wales Labor also adopted an affirmative action rule:

The ALP is committed to men and women in the Party working in equal partnership. It is our objective to have equal numbers of men and women at all levels in the Party organisation and in public office positions that the Party holds.

As well, New South Wales Labor recognised that cultural change must be encouraged to ensure that women are able to participate fully at all levels in the party. To help in this process, rules were introduced to deal with women's participation. In 1996 the Labor national executive established a working group, on which I served, to establish a body to promote women candidates based on the United States Democratic Party organisation called EMILY's List. Despite a lot of work, a consensus could not be reached on the matter.

A group of women, including former Victorian Premier Joan Kirner, established EMILY's List Australia. The national executive then established the National Labor Women's Network in 1996, and it is the peak women's organisation within the Australian Labor Party. It aims to increase the numbers of women active in the Labor Party at all levels and to facilitate and strengthen relationships between the State Labor women's organisations and the national network. In New South Wales the Labor Women's Forum is the body that works to increase the membership and involvement of women at all levels of the party, through training and communications strategies, and to enhance the levels of representation in public office of women.

Having been a party member since 1977, I know that without the introduction of affirmative action rules we would not have seen the dramatic increase of women in public office. I am not just referring to Labor women. Once one major party takes action the others will follow. The methods used will differ, but the outcome will be the same. We will have parliaments that are more representative of the population, but I still believe we have a lot further to go in order to increase the number of women in public office. I am pleased to announce that New South Wales Labor and the Labor Women's Forum will be holding a dinner on 15 August to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the 1994 national conference decision on affirmative action. We will be promoting our talented team of women candidates and supporting them in their campaigns to win back seats for Labor. As Paul Keating said when referring to affirmative action after the 1994 conference:

One, in particular, which I think will be around when all of us are gone was the decision, a very historic one, to increase the representation for women in the parliaments. That is the keynote change of this conference. That will be the one that will change the character of Australian politics; it's the one which will lift the opportunities for women to participate in the parliaments.

I thank all the Labor women from across Australia involved in the development and passing of the affirmative action rules in 1994, including Joan Kirner and also then Prime Minister Paul Keating, who strongly supported this historic decision.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.05 p.m. until Tuesday 17 June 2014 at 2.30 p.m.
