

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS	2032
ADJOURNMENT	2079
BROTHELS	2043
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	2035, 2036, 2037, 2048, 2056
CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN	2045
COAL SEAM GAS	2040
DEFENCECARE.....	2034
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.....	2031
DON'T DIS MY ABILITY.....	2039
DR EMAN SHAROBEEM	2035
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AMENDMENT (BUSH FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION) BILL 2014.....	2031
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2014	2031
FAIR TRADING WEEK.....	2045
GOING HOME STAYING HOME	2046
GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES.....	2048
GREEN SQUARE TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PLAN.....	2041
HEAVY VEHICLE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY	2042
HONG KONG DEMOCRACY.....	2036
ILLICIT DRUGS.....	2081
KINGS HIGHWAY	2080
KOKODA DAY	2033
LIBRARY ACT SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY.....	2033
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS	2047
M5 AND M4 EAST EXTENSION	2039
M5 EAST EXTENSION	2042, 2043
MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT BILL 2014	2049
MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY	2038
MR SAM BURGESS	2036
MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY	2039
NORTH COAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT	2047
NORTHERN BEACHES HEALTH SERVICE REDEVELOPMENT	2031
NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT.....	2040
NSW FAIR TRADING WEEK LICENSED AND LOVING IT	2041
PENSIONER DEEMING RATES	2037
PETITIONS.....	2048
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.....	2037
REGIONAL RELOCATION GRANTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014	2056
ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL	2044
SHINE PROGRAM.....	2083
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE	2032, 2037
SURVEILLANCE DEVICES AMENDMENT (POLICE BODY-WORN VIDEO) BILL 2014	2031
THANK A PARAMEDIC DAY	2044
THE HONOURABLE EDWARD GOUGH WHITLAM, QC, AC, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER	2082
TRIBUTE TO ANNETTE CHAPPELL.....	2084
TRIBUTE TO JEREMY AND SUE CHALLACOMBE	2084
UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION	2037
VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY	2048
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	2081
WATER NSW BILL 2014	2065
WESTPAC 100 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE AWARDS	2033

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 5 November 2014

The President (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 2.15 p.m.

The President read the Prayers.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome into my gallery and the public gallery religious leaders who are here as guests of the Deputy Leader of the Government, the Hon. John Ajaka. In particular to the President's Gallery I welcome His Eminence and Beatitude Mar Bechara Boutros Rai, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, who has been visiting Parliament House today as his visit to Sydney nears its conclusion. We trust you have enjoyed your visit today as much as the faithful have been inspired by your message to them as you have travelled around Australia.

He is accompanied by the Most Reverend Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Bishop of the Maronite Church in Australia; His Eminence, Metropolitan Archbishop Paul Saliba, Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand; the Most Reverend Robert Rabbat, Bishop of the Melkite Eparchy; Archbishop Paul Sayah, Vicar-General of the Maronite Church; and His Eminence Mor Malatius Malki Malki, Metropolitan Archbishop for Australia and New Zealand of the Syriac Orthodox Church. Welcome all of you to the Legislative Council Chamber. You honour us by your presence.

SURVEILLANCE DEVICES AMENDMENT (POLICE BODY-WORN VIDEO) BILL 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Bills received from the Legislative Assembly.

Leave granted for procedural matters to be dealt with on one motion without formality.

Motion by the Hon. John Ajaka agreed to:

That the bills be read a first time and printed, standing orders be suspended on contingent notice for remaining stages and the second readings of the bills be set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

Bills read a first time and ordered to be printed.

Second readings set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AMENDMENT (BUSH FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION) BILL 2014

Message received from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendment.

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

NORTHERN BEACHES HEALTH SERVICE REDEVELOPMENT

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. WALT SECORD [2.20 p.m.]: I seek leave to amend Private Members' Business item No. 2054 outside the Order of Precedence by omitting "14 days" and inserting "21 days".

Leave granted.

Motion by the Hon. WALT SECORD agreed to:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 April 2011 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Health, the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Treasury and the Treasurer:

- (a) all documents, including but not limited to ministerial briefing notes, email correspondence, financial documents, memos, file notes, meeting papers and meeting minutes relating to:
 - (i) the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment;
 - (ii) the business case of the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment;
 - (iii) the public-private partnership agreement of the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment;
 - (iv) the relationship between the provision of public health services and private health services at the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment;
 - (v) the workforce and industrial relations issues including support and administrative staff, nurses, doctors and maintenance and cleaning staff at the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment; and
 - (vi) the calculation of the value of the land surrounding and hosting the Northern Beaches Health Service Redevelopment for the purposes of entering into the public-private partnership.
- (b) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE**Report**

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [2.21 p.m.]: I seek leave to amend Private Members' Business item No. 2086 outside the Order of Precedence by omitting paragraph (b).

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: And replace it with what?

The PRESIDENT: Order! For the assistance of honourable members, removing paragraph (b) means that the ordinary standing orders will apply to time limits for debate.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: It is very difficult, when members do not have prior notice of amendments, to try to work out what is happening. It would help if what is happening could be clarified.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We will return to Private Members' Business Item No. 2086 later in Formal Business. In the meantime, members can have discussions that may facilitate the issue.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS**Production of Documents: Order****Motion by Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE agreed to:**

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 12 days of the date of the passing of this resolution the following documents created since 28 March 2011 in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water, the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and the Department of Education and Communities:

- (a) all documents, including but not limited to ministerial briefing notes, legal advice, emails, correspondence, memos, file notes, meeting papers and meeting minutes, relating to the Land and Environment Court proceedings in *Coffs Harbour and District Local Aboriginal Land Council v Minister Administering the Crown Lands Act* regarding Aboriginal Land Claim 5133 near Red Rock;
- (b) all documents, including but not limited to ministerial briefing notes, legal advice, emails, correspondence, memos, file notes, meeting papers and meeting minutes, relating to legislation and policy for Aboriginal land claims regarding beaches and coastal lands, or to the Crown Lands Amendment (Public Ownership of Beaches and Coastal Lands) Bill 2014; and
- (c) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

KOKODA DAY

Motion by the Hon. CHARLIE LYNN agreed to:

- (1) That this House acknowledges that:
 - (a) on 3 November 2014 a Flag Raising Ceremony for Kokoda Day was held at the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Concord to commemorate the day victory was declared on the famous trail;
 - (b) Australians must never forget the contribution of Australian troops and local carriers—the legendary "Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels" who were vital to the survival of Australian soldiers fighting along the Kokoda Trail in 1942;
 - (c) the Kokoda campaign lasted from July to November 1942 as troops turned back the Japanese advance that swept through Asia and the Pacific;
 - (d) our Australian troops absorbed everything the advancing Japanese army could throw at them across the formidable Owen Stanley Ranges in Papua New Guinea; and
 - (e) Kokoda Day should one day be officially proclaimed by the Australian Government and rank as importantly as Anzac Day, because at Gallipoli we fought for Britain and lost, while at Kokoda we fought for Australia and won.
- (2) That this House commends the chairman of Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, Mr John Haines, AM, the secretary, Ms Alice Kang, and the organising committee for hosting an exceptional service.

LIBRARY ACT SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Motion by Dr JOHN KAYE, on behalf of Ms JAN BARHAM, agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) that 3 November 2014 was the seventy-fifth anniversary of the passage of the Library Act 1939 by the New South Wales Parliament;
 - (b) that the Library Act 1939 established a framework for the creation of free public libraries across New South Wales, with the government committing to provide a subsidy of one shilling per resident to local authorities that established library services;
 - (c) that the State Library of New South Wales, along with public libraries across the State, have had a program of events and activities to commemorate the anniversary of the Library Act, including:
 - (i) social media activities for people to share images, stories and events relating to their local library;
 - (ii) a workshop building on the Bookends Scenarios project to explore the future of New South Wales libraries;
 - (iii) an oral history project to allow former managers, staff or members to share memories of their library; and
 - (iv) hosting the eleventh Australian Library History Forum, "Libraries for the People", on 18 and 19 November 2014.
 - (d) the benefits that libraries provide to the wellbeing of our communities and their contributions across a broad range of portfolio areas, including health, aged care, education and e-commerce; and
 - (e) the 2013 report on the National Welfare and Economic Contributions of Public Libraries by SGS Economics estimated that the contributions of libraries through their services and programs, the social interaction they facilitate, the sense of place and enhanced local amenity, the environmental savings generated through re-use of library collections, their contributions to language and computer literacy, and their contribution to improved education, career development and health outcomes, results in every dollar spent on public libraries in New South Wales delivering a community benefit of around \$3.20.
- (2) That this House acknowledges the vital contribution public libraries have made to the wellbeing of people and communities across New South Wales over the past 75 years, and their continued importance in providing information, services and lifelong learning.

WESTPAC 100 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE AWARDS

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) the third year of the *Australian Financial Review* and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards, which showcases some of the country's highest-achieving women in 2014;

- (b) that the award is dedicated to recognising Australian women who have committed time and energy to help and encourage other women in their industry and who are fighting for positive change;
 - (c) that the 100 winners have been selected across 10 broad categories: Board-Management, Innovation, Public Policy, Business Entrepreneur, Diversity, Young Leader, Global, Social Enterprise, Not for Profit, Philanthropy and Local and Regional;
 - (d) that the overall winner was announced on 22 October 2014 at Sydney's Town Hall—with Elizabeth Broderick being awarded the 2014 Woman of Influence in recognition of her far-reaching work as Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner; and
 - (e) that nine other awards in various categories were presented in recognition and celebration of the outstanding contributions of the women and their impact throughout Australia, including:
 - (i) Professor Jane Halton, Senior Public Servant—winning the Public Policy category;
 - (ii) Alex Birrell, Chief Executive Officer of PAFtec—winning the Business Enterprise category;
 - (iii) Anne-Marie Corboy, Chief Executive Officer of HESTA Super Fund—winning the Board Management Category;
 - (iv) Anne Henderson-Sellers, Professor Emerita at Macquarie University—winning the Global category;
 - (v) Janette Savage, Regional Coordinator and chairperson of Funding for Cancer Care Western NSW—winning the Philanthropy category;
 - (vi) Jo Cavanagh, Chief Executive of Family Life—winning the Social Enterprise-Not-For-Profit category;
 - (vii) Linda O'Brien, Granville Boys High Principal—winning the Local-Regional Category;
 - (viii) Rebecca Ivers, Director of the Injury Division at George Institute for Global Health—winning the Innovation category; and
 - (ix) Genevieve Clay-Smith, Co-founder of Bus Stop Films and Taste Creative—winning the Young Leader Category.
- (2) That this House acknowledges and commends the work of the following New South Wales women in their contribution to New South Wales and Australian society: Jayne Hrdlicka—CEO, Jetstar Group, Jane Needham—Sydney Barrister, Senior Council, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz—CEO, Mirvac Group, Nazha Saad—CEO, St George Community Housing, Robynne Quiggin—CEO, Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, Meg McDonald—COO, Clean Energy Finance Corporation, Eva Cox—Professorial Fellow, UTS, Judith Fox—National Director Policy and Publishing, Governance Institute of Australia, Rosalind Croucher—President, Australian Law Reform Commission, Monica Barone—CEO, City of Sydney, Olivia Loadwick—Executive Director, Pottinger, Megan Motto—CEO, Consult Australia, Dr Diann Rodgers-Healey—Executive Director, Australian Centre for Leadership for Women, Jenny Morris—CEO, The Orijen Group, Dai Le—CMO, Beloka Water, Dawn Hough—Director, Pride in Diversity, Elizabeth Broderick—Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, Janette Savage—Regional Coordinator and Funding Chairperson, Cancer Care Western NSW, Sally Crossing—Chair, Cancer Voices, Helen Wiseman—Director, Imalia, Le Ho—Owner, Capital City Waste Services, Monica Davidson—Business Advisor for Creative People, Creative Plus Business, Alex Birrell—CEO, PAFtec, Sarah Lux-Lee—National Copyright manager, NSW Department of Education and Communities, Georgie Aley—Managing Director, Grains and Legumes Nutritional Council, Nicola Ison—Senior Research Consultant, Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS, Stephanie Lorenzo—CEO, Project Futures, Genevieve Clay-Smith—Co-founder, Bus Stop Films and Taste Creative, Nadia Badawi—National Director Grace Centre for Newborn Care, Westmead, Moya Dodd—Partner, Gilbert and Tobin, Andrea Myles—CEO, China Australian Millennial Project, Catherine Burke—CEO, The Hunger Project Australia, Ann Henderson-Sellers—Professor Emerita, Macquarie University, Jalea Skehan—Director, Hunter Institute of Mental Health, Ellie Brown—Director, NSW Business Chamber, Linda O'Brien—Principal, Granville Boys High School, Amanda Salis—Associate Professor, The University of Sydney, Boden Institute of Obesity, Nutrition, Exercise and Eating Disorders, Sally Dunwoodie—Head of Embryology Laboratory, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, Maree Teesson—Professor, UNSW, Amanda Davis—COO, Brien Holden Vision Institute, Public Health Division and Rebecca Ivers—Director, Injury Division, The George Institute for Global.

DEFENCECARE

Motion by the Hon. CHARLIE LYNN agreed to:

- (1) That this House acknowledges that:
 - (a) on 1 November 2014 the Central Council of Women's Auxiliary gathered at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park to mark the completion of their fundraising efforts for RSL NSW DefenceCare;
 - (b) the Lest We Forget Quilt was a project born out of the ideas and efforts of the Central Council of Women's Auxiliaries to commemorate the 100 year centenary of Anzac;
 - (c) the Lest We Forget Quilt for RSL NSW DefenceCare involved sending out 300 blocks for ladies to sew across the various locations for the women's auxiliaries to form the Lest We Forget Quilt;

- (d) the proceeds raised will be used by DefenceCare to support current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force and their families in times of injury, illness or crisis;
 - (e) DefenceCare provides assistance in the areas of Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA] entitlements, advocacy at the Veterans' Review Board, counselling and crisis support, financial assistance, transition to civilian life and many other important support services; and
 - (f) DefenceCare also works closely with defence bases, Joint Health Command, rehabilitation teams, DVA, RSL NSW, sub branches, ex-service and community organisations.
- (2) That this House commends the Central Council of Women's Auxiliaries, DefenceCare General Manager, Ms Robyn Collins, and Fundraising and Marketing Manager, Ms Jill Solomons, for their commitment and dedication in providing such an important service to the Defence Force community.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 2093 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

DR EMAN SHAROBEEM

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
- (a) the outstanding work of Dr Eman Sharobeem for almost three decades for immigrant and refugee communities in Australia and abroad, especially for women and their families;
 - (b) that Dr Eman Sharobeem's hard work and commitment has helped shape the global paradigm shift on policies and programs impacting the lives of tens of thousands of women and has promoted greater gender equality whilst simultaneously stimulating greater public awareness and community harmony;
 - (c) that at the present time Dr Eman Sharobeem is a serving member of numerous organisations representing immigrant and refugee women, including:
 - (i) the Chief Executive Officer of Immigrant Women's Health Service;
 - (ii) a statutory board member of the Anti-Discrimination Board NSW;
 - (iii) advisory board member of the Community Relations Commission for Multicultural NSW;
 - (iv) Convenor of the Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network;
 - (v) Chairwoman of Non English Speaking Women's Housing;
 - (vi) member of the Association of Former International Civil Servants; and
 - (vii) member of the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Council;
 - (d) that Dr Eman Sharobeem has received many accolades in recognition of her outstanding contribution to improving the lives of many immigrant and refugee women, including:
 - (i) the Ambassador for India Australia Business and Community Award in 2014;
 - (ii) the Australian Egyptian of the Year in 2014;
 - (iii) a certificate of commendation from the Parliament of Australia in recognition of her service and inspiration to Australian women in 2013;
 - (iv) an Australia Day Ambassador in 2014; and
 - (v) being selected as a finalist in the Premier's Award for Woman of the Year in 2013;
 - (e) that apart from Dr Eman Sharobeem's active service to the immigrant and refugee community within Australia, she has also served actively abroad, including:
 - (i) serving as a manager of the Micro Finance Unit for the United Nations Task Force in Egypt;
 - (ii) serving as a mediator and negotiator of USAID Education Treaties with the Middle East in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia; and
 - (iii) serving as the General Manager of the Department of International Relations of the National Council for Women in Egypt;

- (f) that one of Dr Eman Sharobeem's greatest contributions in Australia is exemplified through her involvement in the Immigrant Women's Health Service, which promotes the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of women in immigrant and refugee communities in order for them to be able to lead healthy, fulfilling lives in Australia;
 - (g) that the service is staffed by 23 part-time workers and 35 volunteers who run social support groups, literacy programs and health information workshops; and
 - (h) that between 2013 and 2014, the Immigrant Women's Health Service attended to 12,201 cases on a variety of matters including: domestic violence, child marriage, drug and gambling addictions, female genital mutilation, through to learning English and understanding life in Australia.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) commends Dr Eman Sharobeem on her many years of outstanding service to the tens of thousands of women and their families living in immigrant and refugee communities both in Australia and throughout the world;
 - (b) recognises the importance of organisations such as the Immigrant Women's Health Service in delivering partnership programs between various ethnic communities and promoting multiculturalism and integration in New South Wales, where there are large ethnic immigrant and refugee communities; and
 - (c) wishes Dr Eman Sharobeem all the very best in her future endeavours.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 2096 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

MR SAM BURGESS

Motion by the Hon. MARIE FICARRA agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
- (a) the outstanding achievement of Clive Churchill Medal winner Sam Burgess who became the first English winner of the Rugby League International Federation International Player of the Year Award;
 - (b) that the prestigious award was presented to Sam Burgess at the Royal International Convention Centre in Brisbane on 23 October 2014;
 - (c) that Sam Burgess' exceptional performance has recently been demonstrated at the World Cup in England in 2013 and throughout the 2014 National Rugby League [NRL] season in which he played for the grand final winning team—the South Sydney Rabbitohs; and
 - (d) the award was conferred upon Sam Burgess by a voting panel comprised of 10 judges from around the world representing both the Super League and the NRL.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) acknowledges and commends Sam Burgess on his success in being named Rugby League International Federation International Player of the Year; and
 - (b) congratulates Sam Burgess on his involvement in NRL in Australia and wishes him all the best in his switch to rugby union representing Bath Rugby in England.

HONG KONG DEMOCRACY

Motion by Dr JOHN KAYE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) Hong Kong was granted autonomy under a "One Country, Two Systems" principle through the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong;
 - (b) the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ["The Basic Law"] came into effect on 1 July 1997 after it was adopted by the Seventh National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on 4 April 1990;
 - (c) Article 45 of The Basic Law states that the ultimate aim is to "select the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures";

- (d) the democratic spirit of Article 45 has not been honoured in the decision made by the August 2014 Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the Democratic Republic of China to nominate two to three candidates for the 2017 election to the office of Chief Executive through a nominating committee;
 - (e) the 2014 pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, led by Occupy Central with Love and Peace and student protestors, has campaigned for genuine universal suffrage in the 2017 election for the Chief Executive; and
 - (f) the United Nations Human Rights Committee has called on China to establish universal suffrage in Hong Kong, defining universal suffrage as the right to vote, as well as the right to stand for election.
- (2) That this House expresses its support for the Hong Kong democracy movement and its campaign for universal suffrage in the election of the Chief Executive and a free and fair election of a candidate representative of the people of Hong Kong.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business items Nos 2100, 2101 and 2102 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

Report

The PRESIDENT: The House will now return to Private Members' Business item No. 2086 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. David Clarke.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [2.29 p.m.]: I seek leave to amend Private Members' Business item No. 2086 outside the Order of Precedence by omitting paragraph (b).

Leave granted.

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

That, on the Chair of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice moving that the House take note of Report No. 55 entitled "The Family response to the murders in Bowraville", debate on the motion take precedence of all other business on the *Notice Paper* for that day only, until adjourned or concluded.

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox tabled a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 4 November 2014.

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

PENSIONER DEEMING RATES

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I direct my question to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for the Illawarra. What is the Government's response to community concerns in New South Wales about the Abbott Government's decision to cut the deeming rate threshold for single pensioners from \$46,000 to \$30,000 and for couples from \$77,400 to \$50,000? Has the Government completed any modelling on the impact on New South Wales seniors and government programs?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question. The New South Wales Government takes an active approach to managing issues facing older people, including the challenges that many face in meeting the costs of living. The NSW Ageing Strategy outlines the major initiatives being implemented by this Government to support older people. A key element of the strategy is the expansion of the Seniors Card program, which aims to reduce the costs of living for people over 60 years of age. The New South Wales Seniors Card is the largest seniors card program in Australia, with well over one million members. It is currently seeking to relieve cost of living pressures for older people in the following ways: by highlighting the discounts available to seniors—

The Hon. Steve Whan: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister was asked a specific question about changes to the deeming rate for pensions. Outlining the benefits of the Seniors Card goes nowhere near answering the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I uphold the point of order.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Developing various applications for seniors to assist them with their costs of living is imperative to this Government, and that is what it is continuing to do. Through the Seniors Card the Government has been assisting older people to meet their costs of living. The Government acknowledges the contribution of the Council of Social Services of New South Wales [NCOSS] to the evidence base for the development of public policy. The first NCOSS cost of living report released in March 2014 presents an analysis of cost of living impacts on low-income households in New South Wales, including on the increasing—

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I have already ruled on the Minister's answer. Does the Minister have any further relevant information to add?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: No.

MOTORCYCLIST SAFETY

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's commitment to improving motorcyclists' safety?

The Hon. Rick Colless: Charlie should answer that.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Charlie is here today. Good man! The Hon. Charlie Lynn is a motorcyclist. I have said it before and I keep saying it: Nothing is more important to this Government than keeping people safe on our roads. That is very different from the Opposition's approach when it was in government. Members opposite want people to be able to run red lights. While our State's overall road toll has reduced significantly over the past decade, sadly, motorcycle fatalities and injuries have been increasing. That is a real concern. In the past 10 years motorcyclist deaths have nearly doubled from 11 per cent to 21 per cent of the road toll. That is not acceptable and it is why the Government is prioritising improving safety for motorcyclists across the State. It has been a big year for the Government in this space.

Delivering on a promise I made in 2012, this year the Government legalised lane-filtering after a successful trial, which showed that when done safely it can improve travel times without compromising road safety. I commend the Centre for Road Safety and the motorcycling community for their efforts to make lane-filtering a success. Over the past year we have made the most of new technology by installing satellite roadside phones on one of our State's most travelled motorcycle routes—Putty Road—so that help can be called in an emergency. I do not want any grey nomads re-equipping their Winnebagos with our phones.

Just last week I launched this Government's new motorcycle education campaign, Ride to Live, which sends a clear message. The campaign provides an online information hub for motorcyclists. It highlights the risks facing motorcyclists and how to manage them. The website has everything from riding safety tips to hazard tests. Motorcyclists can even get advice on selecting the right helmet and protective gear. There are interactive maps of some of the State's most popular riding routes, live traffic updates, details of the location of recent accidents and where rest stops can be found. We have a problem with middle-aged motorcycle riders in that some may be first-timers or may be returning to riding and perhaps are not as familiar with the risks and not as agile as they once were.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: I know that feeling.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am talking about motorcycle riders. This campaign focuses on potential risks and provides useful advice to help all riders to keep their skills up to scratch. That is extremely important. It is also important that the Government has worked closely with motorcycling bodies across the State to ensure that this campaign is useful, relevant and sends the right message. I am excited about the campaign and everything else that the Government has done in this space. It is all about saving the lives of our more vulnerable road users. I pay tribute to motorcyclists across the State who have been so—
[Time expired.]

M5 AND M4 EAST EXTENSION

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Freight. When will the routes for the M4/M5 East extension be announced? Will further compulsory acquisitions occur along the route through Erskineville, Petersham, Newtown, Enmore, Camperdown and St Peters?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Yesterday the Government announced the new M5 and talked about the residences that will need to be taken. We carefully enunciated to the gathered media, and I enunciated to this House yesterday, that we are not taking these residences to build WestConnex. The route of WestConnex has nothing to do with it. Frankly, I do not know how senior journalists can get that wrong when the houses we were talking about were on the routes that connect to WestConnex.

We were talking about dedicated roads designed for future expansion where traffic exits the motorway. When we were talking about building WestConnex into St Peters, a journalist wrote about thousands of cars going nowhere and The Greens made some inane comments on radio station 2BL that not even the morning announcer understood. He sounded very confused when he was listening to The Greens, as were most other people. We were talking about a proper process, something properly put together—an enhancement of the roads that lead off that area. This is stage two and it was properly said that there will be a stage three. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had sat in Parliament yesterday and listened to the Government's answer, he would not have asked this stupid question.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Western New South Wales. Is the Minister aware of criticism of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority by irrigators between Wentworth and Pooncarie, where the Darling has been on restricted flows from the Menindee Lakes system for several months? Are their claims that the Lower Darling is being overlooked by basin authorities valid? Will the Minister approach the authority to ensure these claims of mismanagement of water will not impact on future permanent plantings?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am not aware of the complaints about the Murray-Darling Basin Authority in that area. I suspect it is not unusual for there to be complaints about the authority from irrigators in that area. I will take this question on notice because I know the member has a good knowledge of the area and he has good local contacts. I am sure the question is well founded and I will obtain a detailed answer.

DON'T DIS MY ABILITY

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Services. Can the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to help build inclusive communities?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: This week marks the start of the month-long Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign, which is funded by the New South Wales Government. During this campaign, the whole community is offered an important opportunity to reflect on the way in which we deal with barriers within our society. This campaign is about everyone making a choice to be part of an inclusive society. It is a call to action for each of us to change the way we interact with and speak about people with disability. In New South Wales we take this opportunity to think about social inclusion through the annual Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign, now in its eleventh year. The focus of this year's campaign is to make everyone in the community aware that each of us every day makes choices that include or exclude people with disability.

Inclusion brings benefits for everyone, not just for people with disability. It is up to all of us—and it is in all of our interests—to build a more inclusive community. The decisions that we make that exclude are not conscious. They are often driven by a fear of offending someone with a disability or of saying the wrong thing. The messages that come out of the Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign are designed to help everyone better deal with these fears, and provide valuable guidance that is worth heeding. As with so much of the way we communicate with each other, it is about language and etiquette. The Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign this year includes What's Hot and What's Not—a guide to appropriate language and etiquette. An inclusive community is a better community and one that benefits us all.

People with disability face challenges that many of us will never need to face and find difficult to adequately understand. This will be best represented by the Don't DIS my ABILITY ambassadors, a group of

people with disability from all walks of life who have volunteered their time to help spread the message of the campaign. These ambassadors are a diverse and talented group of individuals. Among them are artists, athletes, and entrepreneurs. They are young and old. They are people with disability who are leading jam-packed lives and participating fully in their workplaces, schools, communities and at home. The way in which we all interact with people with disability, and our understanding of the challenges that they face, reflects on us as a community and reflects on the values that we hold.

During the campaign we encourage all members of Parliament and their offices to get involved in events being organised by local organisations, to promote their local ambassador and to tweet with *#Don'tDISmyABILITY* about the campaign to help gain awareness of inclusive communities. For more information about the campaign and its ambassadors members should visit *www.dontdismyability* or contact my office for more information.

COAL SEAM GAS

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: My question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Trade and Investment. Policy TI-O-120, the policy that bans benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylenes [BTEX] chemicals for use in fracking, states:

All CSG drilling additives and CSG fracture stimulation additives must be tested by a NATA-certified laboratory and demonstrated to meet Australian drinking water health guideline values.

Can the Minister assure the House that AGL has complied with its licence and the Government's policy that requires testing of all coal seam gas additives by a National Association of Testing Authorities certified laboratory before fracking occurred in Gloucester?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I can give the member a couple of assurances. One is that I take this question seriously and I will take it to the Minister for a detailed answer. The other is that in opposition I was the shadow Minister who first alerted New South Wales to the banning of BTEX chemicals from fracking. This was done in other States, but New South Wales under the Labor Party-Greens coalition was not party to that. When it comes to coal seam gas and the red marks for exploration licences, some of the worst practices in this State come from the period when the Labor Party-Greens coalition was running this State.

NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question is directed to the Minister for the North Coast. In light of the community outcry this morning over the Northern NSW Local Health District chief executive officer's criticism in the October newsletter of staff taking too many sick days because they were "engaging in unhealthy lifestyles, (eg smoking, excess drinking, overweightness, and being unfit)", does the Government support this statement? Does the chief executive officer retain the Government's full support?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Nineteen days—that is how long it has taken the shadow Minister for the North Coast to discover that the Minister for the North Coast was sitting across from him in Parliament. Goodness knows what has been happening to those communities in that time. During that time the Government has had a competition to name the big boring machines for WestConnex. Do members know what the favourite name is for those boring machines?

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. I would like to nominate the Minister as the big borer.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I will wait until next week to give members the favourite name for the big boring machines. This obviously is a question for the Minister for Health and as such I will pass it on. The Minister for Health is doing an absolutely outstanding job. When the Hon. Walt Secord gave up on being shadow Minister for Roads and Freight and became shadow Minister for Health, I said to the Minister, "You are the luckiest woman in this State." The Hon. Walt Secord was my Alan Bond—lazy and loose with the truth—and the Minister for Health has never looked better. She lost a reasonably good shadow Minister and got the Hon. Walt Secord. She is excited.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I ask the Minister a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer in relation to whether the Government will consider disciplinary action against the health district chief executive officer?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The supplementary question is clearly out of order. I call the Hon. Melinda Pavey to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Steve Whan to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the second time.

NSW FAIR TRADING WEEK LICENSED AND LOVING IT

The Hon. JENNIFER GARDINER: My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister advise how NSW Fair Trading is helping customers find a licensed tradesperson or two?

The Hon. Robert Borsak: Make sure he's not Irish.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It is a very topical question. There is still a bit of room to move. I note the interjection about the Irish; I think that refers to the travelling con men. The Irish are wonderful people—indeed, I have great Irish heritage—but I understand a group of people from a couple of towns in Ireland come regularly to Australia, gather together and wander around in a structured way to do a range of jobs that require a licensed tradesperson. They are known collectively as the "travelling con men". Obviously NSW Fair Trading is always on the lookout for people like that and we are keen to gain further information about the travelling con men—not a local Labor branch but travelling con men from a couple of villages in Ireland.

Last Friday, as part of Fair Trading Week, I was pleased to launch a new campaign focused on warning consumers to ensure that the tradesmen they hire hold licences to carry out important work in their homes. The campaign is called Licensed and Loving It. We released a wonderful video showing a range of licensed tradespeople telling consumers what they do and explaining how important it is that consumers get licensed tradespeople to carry out work. Members will be aware that Fair Trading has zero tolerance for unlicensed builders and tradespeople. They will also be aware that we regulate all trade occupations through various pieces of legislation.

It is worth reminding members about the recent amendments to the Home Building Act, which introduced increased penalties for unlicensed builders, including imprisonment for up to 18 months for repeat offenders. Those important changes send a strong message to the community that we will not tolerate unlicensed home builders who are repeat offenders and that the community expects such people to pay a fair penalty for any serious activities impacting on their lives. As part of our efforts to stamp out these types of rogue operators and our risk-management approach to regulation we have carried out a range of onsite inspections.

In the past financial year NSW Fair Trading has received about 670 complaints, which we have investigated to check compliance with the Home Building Act, and a further 1,147 home building inspections took place during these compliance programs. Earlier this year, NSW Fair Trading was involved in the successful prosecution of Mr Xi Lin, who was convicted by Parramatta Local Court for breaches of the Home Building Act that included unlicensed contracting of residential building work. To refresh the memories of those opposite, the maximum penalties for seeking or doing unlicensed work are \$110,000 for a corporation and \$11,000 for an individual. Those penalties will increase under the amendments to the Act that we expect will come into force later this year. I know that those opposite are very interested in that, particularly in relation to the definition of minor and major defects. It is pleasing to note that NSW Fair Trading is in the marketplace and will continue to be in the marketplace to ensure that consumer protection is always put first.

GREEN SQUARE TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Minister for Transport. Given the already high levels of traffic congestion experienced by residents in and around Green Square, what is the Government's transport plan for an estimated 100,000 additional residents who will move into that area in the next decade? Will the Government commit to additional public transport infrastructure such as light rail?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: On those mornings of the week that I walk from Redfern to Green Square I have noticed that the one thing that stands out more than anything else at Green Square is the new heavy rail station—a fabulous railway station that forms part of our public transport system. Also, as I stand outside that railway station I notice that buses are going past. Despite the fact that there is heavy rail, buses, taxis and the odd aeroplane that flies over, The Greens' answer to everything is to put in place light rail. I cannot add any more. The member has been to Green Square. I cannot believe that someone as bright as she is has not noticed the public transport that is there.

M5 EAST EXTENSION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight. Why has the proposed M5 East extension been announced with no provision for public transport?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Once again the Opposition spokesperson has got it wrong. She would be better off sneaking her questions out through the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rather than asking them herself because she holds herself up to ridicule for not knowing that public transport runs on those roads. Those roads also have bus routes. For some unknown reason the Labor Party is in denial. If we build a major road we can put buses on it, and buses do travel on it. There is also a rail line in that region. Opposition members are asking why the M5 East extension is not being provided with public transport when it is.

By 2021 there will be 1.5 million additional people in New South Wales. We are building the best public transport structure this State has ever seen—the South West Rail Link, the North West Rail Link, light rail, extra bus services and improved public transport. After 16 years of Labor neglect we have chaos on the roads. Even without additional people we have to build new roads so that groceries can be delivered, children can get to school, people can get to a doctor and people can leave their homes. Labor Party members are the same as The Greens—they do not give a damn; they just want to play politics with the best infrastructure projects we have seen in this State.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Rubbish.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Leader of the Opposition promised them without a penny to pay for them. Opposition members are infrastructure vandals—they are as bad as The Greens. These projects are properly funded and we have been totally transparent—

The Hon. Peter Primrose: Where's the money coming from?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: —unlike the way in which Labor ran projects with glossy brochures and nothing else. Tell us about the Rozelle metro. You were a Minister, you sat in Cabinet and you ticked off on the Rozelle metro. You should not say a word in this House as you are completely flawed and your mate beside you is just as flawed. You are both a disgrace.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have had enough of the two members shouting at each other across the table. The Hon. Peter Primrose will cease interjecting. I call the Hon. Peter Primrose to order for the first time. The Minister should, as frequently counselled, ignore all interjections.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I ask a supplementary question. The Minister chose not to answer my question, but—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Penny Sharpe will resume her seat.

HEAVY VEHICLE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on heavy vehicle reforms in New South Wales?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Recently the Government introduced further reductions in freight red tape by abolishing the need to pay stamp duty when transferring truck trailers, previously registered in other States, to New South Wales. Logistic companies, which tend to operate in multiple States, now have more flexibility about where they choose to register their trucks and trailers. Calls by transport operators to introduce this reform had fallen on deaf ears under numerous New South Wales Labor finance and roads Ministers.

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: You can't even prove that statement.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Under Labor, freight was a dirty word; it did not appeal to the leftie hipsters quaffing ciders in the inner suburbs of Sydney, swapping electoral stories with their Greens mates. Worse still, New South Wales had been missing out on millions of dollars in annual registration revenue that

was going to other States, notably Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, although many interstate registered trucks and trailers travel through our State every day. More than 60 per cent of the national road freight task travels through New South Wales. We are the through State for the eastern seaboard of Australia, so our road maintenance bill is higher. And yet for 16 years Labor had surrendered vital truck registration revenue to the other States. In other words, we were carrying interstate registered trucks on our roads but were forfeiting millions of dollars in annual registration revenue—money used to upgrade and maintain roads.

We cannot overturn the geography that puts New South Wales where it is, but we can overturn bad Labor policies. And we have. The list of Labor's failures in freight is long, including a gross underinvestment in upgrading grain lines; failure to provide width concessions for the safe movement of wool, hay, straw and cotton bales; failure to develop and introduce a grain harvest management scheme and a livestock loading scheme; and failure to develop and implement a freight and ports plan for the State.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Since the initial reforms in late 2012, transport operators have also been taking advantage of lower or no stamp duty rates on new trailer purchases in other jurisdictions. Our reforms have opened the door for transport operators to re-establish their businesses in New South Wales. That shows that the New South Wales Government is working hard to remove red tape. Our new stamp duty exemption is effective immediately. Eligible freight operators will receive the exemption on the spot when applying to establish registration for their heavy trailers at Service NSW or Roads and Maritime Services branches. The industry is ecstatic. Transport operators have been waiting years to register their vehicles in New South Wales. They were embarrassed to have to carry the plates of other States, but the short-sighted Labor Government forced them into exile.

BROTHELS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I ask the Minister for Roads and Freight, representing the Premier, a question without notice. Is the Government aware that Liverpool City Council is considering buying brothel business leases and/or properties in an attempt to close brothels in the city centre of Liverpool? Is the Government also aware that under existing laws councils must apply to the Land and Environment Court if they want to shut down a brothel, which involves lengthy delays and expensive legal costs? What will the Government do to give councils absolute power to close brothels and to reject brothel applications?

The Hon. Steve Whan: Tell us how you are defending these small businesses.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his question. I acknowledge the inane interjection from the Hon. Steve Whan—I will ensure that it gets back to the people of Monaro. I will take the question on notice. This important question indicates concern and shows the lengths to which councils will and are prepared to go. I will refer the question to the Minister involved and seek a detailed answer.

M5 EAST EXTENSION

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads and Freight. Will Sydney Park in St Peters be retained in its entirety as open space with the construction of the M5 East extension?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The short answer is yes. The longer answer is that the space we are looking at in St Peters, the current Dial-a-Dump site, is about nine hectares. It is not only an ideal place to put an interchange but also an ideal place for a work site. Sydney Park, known to some as dog park because of the large number of people with dogs in that park—

The Hon. Amanda Fazio: I thought you went walking there.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Hon. Rick Colless, who walks in that park, told me that a large number of dogs use that park. A fair amount of work has been done to the park; the park was pretty good but it seems to have been improved. In case anyone is in doubt, what we are doing on WestConnex is within the existing corridor. It will be a tunnel. The tunnel will commence between King Georges Road and the current

start of the M5 East. The final design will be determined by the preferred contractor. The new M5 will connect directly with the M4. The only traffic that needs to come out at St Peters is traffic that already has access to the area and its industrial sites.

Currently, major roads carry heavy vehicles. They are major connector roads. As I said, we will be widening the main arterial roads in the St Peters area. Only one of the three exit options will take motorists through St Peters; the other two head out of St Peters. If motorists come up to the surface at St Peters one option goes north, one goes west and one goes east. The northern option is Euston Road, which runs into Alexandra. The eastern option is to turn right onto Campbell Street, which runs into Mascot. The western option is to turn left onto Campbell Street, which takes motorists to the west just over Unwins Bridge Road. As I said, the properties are being acquired only to enable key road upgrades such as those to Campbell Road and Euston Road. It is important to note that these properties are in road corridors and have been subject to road reservations since 1951.

THANK A PARAMEDIC DAY

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Will the Minister update the House on Thank a Paramedic Day?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Today is Thank a Paramedic Day. This is a day for all of us to reach out and give thanks to local paramedics. Paramedics provide both lifesaving and life-changing care, and today marks an important occasion to recognise their commitment and compassion. Paramedics are regularly ranked as the most trusted professionals and it is easy to see why. The dedication that our paramedics show to both patients and their loved ones is unparalleled. We are truly lucky to have them working in our community. It is not often that we get the opportunity to say thanks and to acknowledge the hard work of vital members of our community, but today is that day and I ask everyone to reach out and to say thanks to our paramedics.

In 2013-14 the NSW Ambulance Service provided more than 1.2 million emergency and non-emergency responses—an average of 3,383 responses per day or a call every 26 seconds. Under the Liberal-Nationals Government the NSW Ambulance Service workforce continues to grow with an additional 205 paramedics now on road since the election. We have also boosted the NSW Ambulance Service budget by \$30 million this year to a record \$752 million to ensure paramedics can continue to deliver first-class care to patients. The Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, marked today's occasion by presenting an inaugural Minister's bursary for excellence to a NSW Ambulance Service paramedic who has delivered excellent clinical care with integrity and compassion.

The \$5,000 bursary was today awarded to Annette Tierney, an intensive care paramedic at Wauchope on the mid North Coast of New South Wales. Minister Skinner said the decision was a difficult one, with superb paramedics recommended from every corner of the State, but Annette shone as an exemplary member of the NSW Ambulance Service team. Annette has been a member of the NSW Ambulance Service for more than 15 years, delivering compassionate care to patients and being a strong support to her colleagues. She has shown great leadership and tremendous clinical skills. Annette said she will use the bursary to fund further education with a university degree in aged care and community health. This is wonderful news for a whole community.

The Government has the utmost respect and admiration for our paramedics, who undertake extraordinary work in what can only be described as extraordinary circumstances, which is why it is important to highlight Thank a Paramedic Day. When we need them they are there, and for that I am sure everyone in this Chamber can only say thank you. An official Thank a Paramedic Day ceremony was held in Sydney today to formally acknowledge paramedics, control centre staff and other members of the NSW Ambulance Service. Twenty-six paramedics were also given service awards for outstanding commitment to their duties at an official Thank a Paramedic Day ceremony today. The community is encouraged to leave a message for paramedics on the NSW Ambulance Service Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages using the *ThankaNSWparamedic* hashtag.

ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Dr JOHN KAYE: My question, which is directed to Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Health, relates to a statement made by a spokesperson for the Minister for Health, the Hon Jillian Skinner, and quoted in the *North Shore Times* on 28 October 2014 in reference to the Royal North Shore Hospital. It states, "A plan to part-fund the hospital redevelopment through a land sale was approved in 2006." Will the Minister

inform the House which Labor Minister and which government department or agency approved this plan? Will the Minister indicate why the Coalition Government believes it is bound by that approval to sell or lease part of that public land at the Royal North Shore Hospital site?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Clearly the question indicates the decision was made by the former Labor Government. I do not know the name of the relevant Minister at the time as there were so many changes in many portfolios in such a short time that it was impossible to keep up. As I entered Parliament in 2007 it was also before my time. I would have thought Dr John Kaye would ask members of the Opposition, who should know more about it.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by explaining why this Government believes it is still committed to and why it cannot change that decision?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The supplementary question is clearly out of order.

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: My question is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading, representing the Minister for the Central Coast. The State Government's glossy brochure entitled "Central Coast Regional Action Plan" states on page 16 under the heading Regional Action Plan, "The Government will secure 10 new events for the Central Coast by mid-2013." What were those 10 new events secured by the Government to the Central Coast? I will provide a copy of the glossy brochure.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: This is a terrific brochure that goes into a lot of detail. On the third page it states, "A new approach across NSW". It is refreshing. It is uplifting. It has a lot to say.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Point of order: My question specifically referred to 10 new events in the document on page 16. I ask you to draw the Minister back to answer the question.

The Hon. John Ajaka: On the point of order: As part of the question the brochure was handed to the Minister to comment on. He was being specifically relevant to that brochure.

The PRESIDENT: Order! While that is indeed the case, the Minister was asked a specific question which did not give him leave to just read generally from the contents of the brochure. If the Minister has anything generally relevant that he would like to add he may do so.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I will take the question on notice because I would like to provide the member with a complete and comprehensive answer. I know the Minister for the Central Coast is keen to elucidate on key events that were brought to the coast at that time. I will provide an answer in due course.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer with respect to nominating one, just one, event that this Government has secured for the Central Coast in accordance with the Central Coast Regional Action Plan?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Greg Donnelly will resume his seat. The supplementary question fails on a number of grounds.

FAIR TRADING WEEK

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Fair Trading. Will the Minister update the House on Fair Trading activities during Fair Trading Week?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: Last week was a great week. I know members of the Opposition participated at various events across the State and it is important to reflect on them because they will have to wait another 51 weeks for the next opportunity. It is important to thank the NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe and all his staff for a wonderful week of activities. They have done a great job and it is important to recognise their wonderful work. I am glad to hear strong and unanimous support for that wonderful work across the State because they are working 24/7 ensuring that consumers across the State are protected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Sophie Cotsis will restrain herself if she can.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: It is worth reflecting on the workload not only during Fair Trading Week but also during the year.

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

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: The Hon. Sophie Cotsis is off in a bubble somewhere.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister should not give a commentary on points of order.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: During the past financial year NSW Fair Trading received 6.4 million requests for service which is a huge workload for it, and there were more than four million visits to its website.

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

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I encourage members of the Opposition to visit the website of NSW Fair Trading because it has a lot of very useful information.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Hon. Amanda Fazio that she is already on two calls to order.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: During Fair Trading Week thousands of people attended more than 95 information education events across metropolitan and regional New South Wales, 42 information sessions, 21 information stalls, trader visits in 27 different locations across New South Wales, and I was pleased to attend one in Strathfield.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: You actually got to one.

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I got to a few, in fact. It was terrific because we cannot put the message in the marketplace enough about what NSW Fair Trading is all about. I spent some time in Kiama with the local member, Gareth Ward, who is doing an absolutely outstanding job. As the Leader of the Government said yesterday, he is modest and unassuming. We went to a Money Stuff presentation, a wonderful program that Fair Trading runs for kids across New South Wales. It is about explaining their rights and responsibilities in the marketplace under Australian Consumer Law as well as practical things about budgeting. It would probably be a good idea if a few members of the Opposition's economic team went to a Money Stuff seminar. They would learn a few things and learn about budgeting. They would learn how to manage money. They need to learn how to manage money at a personal level before they end up on the Treasury benches sometime in the next millennia.

Money Stuff is a wonderful program and it was certainly a pleasure to be at Kiama High School with the member for Kiama. The students learnt a range of things, including consumer rights, budgeting, scams, their rights potentially as tenants and mobile phone contracts, which are an issue for students of that age, as well as information about buying their first car. They learnt all the things that are very important to young consumers and Fair Trading will continue to ensure that information gets out.

GOING HOME STAYING HOME

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Family and Community Services. Given the recent challenges of the Going Home Staying Home tender process and outcomes, can the Minister explain to the House what steps the Government has taken to listen to all stakeholders' concerns about the same types of issues arising out of the home care tendering process?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that he is on two calls to order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: In June we announced record funding over a three-year period to tackle homelessness head on. Going Home Staying Home will mean more money, and more and better services

delivered to areas of greatest need. It means more dollars for our regions and suburbs—regions and suburbs that were clearly forgotten by Labor when it was in government for 16 years. Unbelievably those opposite have the gall to stand in this House opposing our reforms and standing in the way of more money for the regions and more and better services. They are happy to play politics with people's lives, happy to prey on the fears of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Clearly we want to get these reforms right. We want to get the reforms right for the sake of people whom we are trying to help and assist. We want to deliver the best possible service to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. For 16 years those opposite had their heads in the sand on these issues and only this side of the House and the Minister are doing the necessary work to do the appropriate reforms for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for his comprehensive answer on that matter but can I have an answer to my question, which was Home Care tendering?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member cannot simply re-ask his question as a supplementary question, regardless of what answer was given.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Fair Trading, representing the Minister for Local Government. Given the Minister for Local Government said in a 31 October 2014 media release that proposals by councils to voluntarily amalgamate will be assessed by independent experts, who are those independent experts and how were they selected?

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I am really pleased that the member is taking an interest in local government because it is a very important part of this State. As to assessment of any proposals that come forward in the Fit for the Future program, I will take that question to the Minister, obtain a detailed answer and bring it back to the House and member as soon as possible.

NORTH COAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: My question is addressed to the Minister for the North Coast. Will the Minister please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is working with local councils on the North Coast?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Finally, we have someone positive on the North Coast. We have had the doomsayers from the other side. I thank the honourable member for her important question. The House would be pleased to know that since April 2011 I have been up to the North Coast 45 times and it will be even more now that I am the Minister. That had been in my capacity as the New South Wales Minister for Roads; I am everywhere. It has become clear to me and the communities up and down the North Coast that Labor did very little to provide vital community infrastructure. While Labor abandoned these communities the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have put the North Coast back on the map and back in the centre of our aspirations. The Minister for Local Government, that great Minister, Paul Toole—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Opposition front bench that at least four of them are on two calls to order.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: —has also met with 10 of the 13 North Coast councils since the \$1 billion Fit for the Future reforms were introduced in September of this year. North Coast councils have benefited from the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme introduced by the Liberal-Nationals Government, which addresses the absolutely disgraceful \$7 billion infrastructure backlog left as part of Labor's legacy to local government. Together, the North Coast councils have unlocked funds to invest in new infrastructure left to rot under Labor. North Coast councils under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme are benefiting in ways this region has never seen before.

Tweed is getting more than \$1 million for a revamp of its drainage system; Nambucca Shire Council is seeing nearly \$2 million being spent on replacing eight bridges outside the major towns of Macksville, Nambucca Heads and Bowraville; Port Macquarie-Hastings Council is receiving a revamp of its local roads, with \$5.6 million to be spent on the upgrade of Hastings River Drive; and Richmond Valley has secured

\$8 million for the Casino regional livestock exchange upgrade. The Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme also built the \$7 million new Byron Ballina Airport runway where passenger numbers are now forecast to increase to 500,000 per annum over the next few years, including the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

For 16 years Labor looked after only those in the city but this Government is delivering for regional New South Wales. While those opposite are loose with the truth, we look at the facts: Since 2011 we have spent \$1.5 billion to help councils across the State upgrade their roads, bridges and culverts. That equates to an increase of 79 per cent for Nambucca; an increase of 111 per cent for Byron; an increase of 118 per cent for Port Macquarie; and an increase of 204 per cent for Greater Taree on Labor's last full financial year in government. That is just fantastic. That is what they were getting when the Hon. Walt Secord was running the place. To think Labor had the audacity to boast about what it did for the North Coast of this great State. But members opposite cannot hide now; the facts speak for themselves. They did nothing. It is no wonder the big guy did not ask me a question; he was in hiding. [*Time expired.*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD: My question is directed to the Minister for Disability Services. Recognising that violence against people with disability, including domestic violence, is far more extensive than violence among the general population, what action has the Government taken to ensure that the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] develops crisis protocols for plan revisions in conjunction with New South Wales' domestic violence pathways and protocols?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for her question. I assure her that much work is being done in relation to the NDIS with safeguards to be implemented and the tier 2 provisions that are required, which will cover many of the areas that have been raised by the honourable member.

The Hon. Peter Primrose: That's ridiculous.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is with great regret that I indicate that the time for questions is over. If the Hon. Peter Primrose has further questions perhaps he would like to put them on notice. We look forward to receiving them in the usual manner in which he sends them.

Questions without notice concluded.

PETITIONS

10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice

Petition requesting that communities be allowed to opt out of the 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Code of Practice, and calling for an immediate and independent review of the code and its suspension until the review is completed, received from **Mr David Shoebridge**.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Withdrawal of Business

Private Members' Business item No. 2093 outside the Order of Precedence withdrawn by the Hon. Robert Brown.

Private Members' Business item No. 2102 outside the Order of Precedence withdrawn by Dr John Kaye.

GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Presentation of Address

The PRESIDENT: I announce to the House that I have ascertained it to be the pleasure of the Governor to receive the Legislative Council's Address-in-Reply to His Excellency's message communicating the fact of his assumption of the administration of the government of the State at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday 11 November 2014 at Government House.

MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT BILL 2014**In Committee**

The CHAIR (The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner): There being no objection, the Committee will deal with the bill as a whole.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [3.42 p.m.], by leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 10 on sheet C2014-117E in globo:

No. 8 **Public notice period**

Page 16, clause 43 (5) (b), line 33. Omit "2 months". Insert instead "3 months".

No. 10 **Public notice period**

Page 18, clause 49 (3) (b), line 32. Omit "2 months". Insert instead "3 months".

Both of these amendments seek to reinstate the three-month public consultation period for draft management rules and draft management plans for marine parks and aquatic reserves. These are complex decisions and the public must have enough time to be able to understand them before making submissions. In a show of good faith and given that the Leader of the House has said that public consultation is important, I ask the Government to support these amendments.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.44 p.m.]: The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 10. In regard to amendment No. 8, the minimum period of two months or 60 days for consultation is prescribed for the review of draft management plans for a marine park or an aquatic reserve. While that has been reduced from the 90 days required under the Marine Parks Act, Ministers may extend the formal consultation period. It is envisaged that formal consultation will be only one step in a series of public engagement activities that will be carried out to inform the development of management rules. For example, in addition to statutory consultation on draft management plans, the Government will consult on a final draft plan after changes have been made in response to community views. This will ensure that people have an opportunity to see how their views have been considered before the plans come into force.

The Government will not support amendment No. 10 because statutory public consultation is included in the review cycle to ensure ongoing public engagement in marine park management. A minimum period of two months or 60 days consultation is prescribed for the preparation of a draft management plan for a marine park or an aquatic reserve. While the consultation provided for in this legislation is less than the 90 day period required under the Marine Parks Act, Ministers may easily extend that period if further consultation is required. The statutory consultation period is envisaged by the Marine Estate Management Authority as just one step in a series of public engagement activities. Where necessary, the Government will undertake extended consultation. There will also be opportunities for all stakeholders to engage with management planning processes at many stages on both a formal and informal basis.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [3.46 p.m.]: The Opposition has circulated amendments on sheet C2014-137A to the same two clauses to change the consultation period from 60 days to 90 days. Given that the Opposition amendments and The Greens amendments are similar, we will support The Greens amendments and will not proceed with ours. The Government's saying that the Minister will often extend the consultation period is not good enough. I well remember the cries from Coalition members when they were in opposition about needing much longer for public consultation. The standard period for public consultation has been three months in the past and it is entirely reasonable for that to continue into the future.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [3.47 p.m.]: The Shooters and Fishers Party will not support The Greens amendments because of our experience with this Government. The Opposition spokesperson is correct in stating that there was considerable unrest in the fishing community, for example, during the public consultation period for the zoning of marine parks. However, since this Government has been in office, constituents have approached me on four or five occasions to ask a Minister for an extension of time and the Minister has obliged each time. That is particularly true when the subject matter is complex. Many of the people who want to make submissions work for a living. They do not attend university and they are not professional protesters. They have to work to put food on the table. As I said, I have never had any issues with Ministers extending the public

consultation period. In fact, when Ian Macdonald was the Minister for Agriculture and I approached him requesting an extension I had no problems. I am prepared to take the Government on its word and accept that this will be done in good faith.

Dr JOHN KAYE [3.49 p.m.]: I support The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 10 on sheet C2014-117E, as moved by Dr Faruqi. I have sympathy for people who have jobs, having worked with communities of people who have jobs and who have difficulty finding the time to create submissions. I would have thought a longer time period would be better and that the Hon. Robert Brown provided an eloquent argument in favour of Dr Faruqi's amendments.

Question—That The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 10 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 19

Ms Barham	Mr Moselmane	Ms Westwood
Ms Cotsis	Mr Primrose	Mr Whan
Mr Donnelly	Mr Searle	Mr Wong
Dr Faruqi	Mr Secord	
Ms Fazio	Ms Sharpe	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Foley	Mr Veitch	Mr Buckingham
Dr Kaye	Ms Voltz	Mr Shoebridge

Noes, 22

Mr Ajaka	Mr Gay	Mrs Mitchell
Mr Blair	Mr Green	Reverend Nile
Mr Borsak	Mr Harwin	Mrs Pavey
Mr Brown	Mr Khan	Mr Pearce
Mr Clarke	Mr Lynn	
Ms Cusack	Mr MacDonald	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Ficarra	Mrs Maclaren-Jones	Mr Colless
Mr Gallacher	Mr Mason-Cox	Dr Phelps

Question resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 10 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [3.57 p.m.]: I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2014-117E:

No. 1 Objects of Act

Page 2, clause 3 (a) (ii), line 18. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead:

- the maintenance of ecosystem integrity across the whole of the marine estate, and

The CHAIR (The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner): Order! Members who wish to conduct conversations will do so outside the Chamber.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: The aim of this amendment is to commit to maintaining ecosystem integrity across the entire one million hectares of the marine estate, not just for marine parks and aquatic reserves. I might be accused of being pedantic or splitting hairs, but it is important at this time, when we are having attack after attack on the environment from the Government, to make sure that we put those protections in place in legislation.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.58 p.m.]: I will not accuse the member of being pedantic but I will accuse her of being wrong in saying that there has been attack after attack by the Government.

The Hon. Robert Brown: Point of order: Usually no-one in this Chamber has trouble hearing the Minister, but there is too much noise.

The CHAIR (The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner): Order! There is too much noise on both sides of the Chamber.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: We do not support this amendment because the Government considers that it does not reflect the Government's new approach to managing the New South Wales marine estate by better balancing socio-economic and environmental conditions. The purpose of these reforms is to try to get the right balance between the various interests in the marine estate, not to give primacy to just one of those interests. The bill is about ensuring that all relevant considerations are taken into account so that we can deliver on the Government's vision for a healthy coast and sea and ensure that it is managed for the greatest wellbeing of the community now and into the future.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [4.00 p.m.]: The Opposition will not be supporting this amendment. The use of this wording is not well established in this type of legislation. It is difficult to see what its application as an object of the Act would be in practice. The Opposition's view is that the existing wording is adequate.

Question—That The Greens amendment No. 1 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put and resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendment No. 1 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.00 p.m.]: I move The Greens amendment No. 2 on sheet C2014-117E:

No. 2 Objects of Act

Page 2, clause 3 (c), lines 22–23. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (c) to provide for the conservation of marine biological diversity and marine habitats through the declaration and management of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine parks and aquatic reserves,

This amendment relates to the objects of the Act. The purpose of this amendment is to reinstate conservation aims into the objects of the Act and for the conservation of marine biological diversity and marine habitats through the declaration and management of not just a comprehensive system but of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine parks and aquatic reserves. As the marine park system occupies over one-third of the marine estate, the objects of the Act must include strong conservation values. Additionally, to support conservation aims, I seek to incorporate the principle of a comprehensive, adequate and representative system, which is internationally recognised as a standard for protected areas and a framework recognised by the Australian Federal Government. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.01 p.m.]: The Government does not support this amendment. The Government considers that this amendment includes a level of detail about the criteria for declaring and managing marine protected areas that is more appropriately located in policy rather than in legislation. Overly prescriptive requirements will prevent management approaches from evolving over time to align with best practice.

The new approach to management provided in the bill will be informed by the outcomes of a threat and risk assessment. New South Wales has agreed, along with other Australian jurisdictions, to use comprehensive, adequate and representative [CAR] principles for the selection of marine protected areas. These CAR principles will complement the new threat- and risk-based approach that is at the centre of the new management framework for the marine estate. The CAR principles have come to be used as the key criteria for establishing and managing marine protected areas. As I have said, they will complement the new threat- and risk-based approach, and the way that they will be integrated into the threat and risk assessment process is being reviewed, as recommended by the independent marine parks audit. The Government's commitment to comprehensive management principles is signalled by the objects of this bill, which provide for the declaration and management of a comprehensive system of marine parks and aquatic reserves.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [4.03 p.m.]: As the Minister has quite eloquently said, the comprehensive, adequate and representative criteria is used extensively throughout legislation and in the objectives of reserves in Australia and around the world. The Opposition does not see any reason why it should not be reflected in the objects of the Act as well and we support the amendment.

Question—That The Greens amendment No. 2 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put and resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendment No. 2 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.04 p.m.]: I move The Greens amendment No. 3 on sheet C2014-117E:

No. 3 **Principles of ecologically sustainable development**

Page 3, clause 4 (1), line 21. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead:

principles of ecologically sustainable development means the principles of ecologically sustainable development contained in section 6 (2) of the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*.

This amendment relates to ecologically sustainable development. As the Leader of the House put it quite eloquently yesterday, ecologically sustainable development principles have been put into this Act intentionally. But, unfortunately, the bill's definition of the principles of ecologically sustainable development is not consistent with the standard New South Wales definition as contained in section 6 of the Protection of the Environment Act 1991, which is far more comprehensive and detailed and provides much better guidance for implementation. This guidance is necessary when we want to look at how these principles will be used when we are conserving and preserving our marine estate and marine parks.

The definition of "ecologically sustainable development" in the Marine Estate Bill 2014 is a truncated version of the principles and removes essential details such as guidance on how to apply the precautionary principle or that the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration. This amendment is about maintaining the standard New South Wales definition contained in section 6 of the Protection of the Environment Act for consistency and to ensure good environmental outcomes that are not undermined by other pursuits.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.05 p.m.]: The Government opposes this amendment. Dr Mehreen Faruqi talked about the standard "ecologically sustainable development" definition. I am aware of at least 10 different definitions. There seem to be different definitions that suit different situations; there are some that are used more than others and some that particular groups prefer to others. We do not support this amendment because the bill emphasises that the principles of ecologically sustainable development require the effective integration of economic, social and environmental considerations in any decision-making process that is likely to affect the marine estate.

The Government is committed to ensuring that a real triple bottom line approach will be used for the management of the marine estate. For too long, management of the marine estate has been fragmented and the wide-ranging interests of the community in the estate have been disregarded. This bill will ensure that the deep connections held by the community in the social, economic and environmental values of the marine estate are fully represented in management decisions. The marine estate is not only valued for its biodiversity, it is used for an extraordinary range of activities, with more than 85 per cent of households in New South Wales having some connection to the estate through business or recreation. These reforms are about balancing the needs of those diverse interests across the whole of the marine estate, not just a narrow band.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [4.07 p.m.]: The Opposition believes that the bill as proposed has a reasonable definition and we will not be supporting this amendment.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [4.07 p.m.]: In concert with the Opposition spokesperson's comments, we too believe that the definition of "ecologically sustainable development" in this bill is adequate—in fact, it is more than adequate. We would go so far as to say to the Government that when it considers broader environmental legislation next year it should think about just how simple and straightforward this particular definition is. We will not support the amendment.

Question—That The Greens amendment No. 3 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put and resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendment No. 3 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.08 p.m.], by leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 5 and 6 on sheet C2014-117E in globo:

No. 5 Composition of Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel

Page 5, clause 9 (1), line 34. Omit all words on that line. Insert instead:

- (1) There is established a Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel.

No. 6 Composition of Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel

Page 5, clause 9 (3), lines 38–41. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

- (3) The Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel is to consist of 6 members. Of the 6 members:
 - (a) 3 are to have expertise in the area of ecological science, and
 - (b) 2 are to have expertise in the area of economics, and
 - (c) 1 is to have expertise in the area of social sciences.
- (4) Subject to this section, the regulations may make provision for the constitution and procedures of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel.

Both these amendments relate to the composition of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel and seek broad representative and balanced expertise on the board. As the Minister and the Leader of the House said, we need balance among the interests, but that balance of the economy, our commercial fishing and the recreational use of our coastal areas can only be achieved if the environment is protected. The Greens amendments specify what the make-up of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel should be: six members, three of them to have ecological science expertise, two to have expertise in economics and one to have expertise in social science. I commend the amendments to the Committee.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.09 p.m.]: The Government opposes these amendments. We oppose amendment No. 5 because as part of implementation of the bill there is a clear need for the current Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel to continue for the foreseeable future. However, once the bill has commenced and its provisions are fully implemented, there is room for flexibility in how the knowledge panel will be used. The Government is committed to ensuring that decisions about the marine estate are underpinned by the best possible evidence. However, that does not mean that it needs to waste time and resources on establishing a panel when its services are not required. As drafted, the bill provides the necessary flexibility in the long term for the panel to function on an as-needs basis if required.

Amendment No. 6 is opposed because the Government considers that it will create unnecessary red tape and make it difficult to establish a Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel that meets the management needs of the marine estate in the long term. The role of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel is to provide advice to the Marine Estate Management Authority on any matter referred to it. Under the bill, the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for the Environment must nominate members on the panel who have relevant expertise in the field of ecological, economic or social science. To include prescriptive requirements about the number of members of the panel and their particular expertise would create unnecessary restrictions on the structure of this advisory body and undermine its role as a responsive advisor that will turn its attention to a range of issues on an as-needed basis.

The new approach to managing the New South Wales marine estate is based on balancing economic, social and environmental considerations, and it would not be appropriate to stack the panel with more ecologists than experts from other disciplines. The relevant Ministers will appoint the best advisors for the issue identified. This will mean that advice about marine estate management includes a range of views and an appropriate mix of expertise that reflects true triple bottom line thinking.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [4.12 p.m.]: The Opposition has decided not to support the amendments. The Minister's explanation for opposing the amendments worries me because it appears, from the way he was talking, that the Government intends to structure panels to suit its purposes. That raises several concerns. It reminds me of the Snowy Scientific Committee, which the Government simply did not bother to appoint from the beginning of its term through to when the committee was finally abolished by the Parliament. I am more

concerned about this now than I was when the Minister started speaking. Essentially, he said that the Ministers will be able to construct a panel to suit the needs of the government of the day. It is difficult to trust this Government.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Don't judge people by yourself. I keep telling you that.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The Minister says, "Don't judge people by yourself." Indeed, I am judging strongly the Minister for Primary Industries and her appalling performance on the Snowy Scientific Committee. Nevertheless, I believe the composition of the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel proposed by The Greens is too prescriptive and does not leave enough flexibility. The Opposition will oppose the amendments.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [4.14 p.m.]: The Shooters and Fishers Party will not support these amendments for much the same reasons as those laid out by the Minister. Balance is balance. Balance is a mathematical term. When there are three prongs to a particular philosophy—in this case economic, social and environment—balance means exactly that. It does not mean that we have three ecologists, one economist and one social science advocate. Secondly, it does not matter because the bottom line is science. The expert panel is there to provide proven science as part of its recommendations to the Marine Estate Management Authority. The days of balance meaning more ecologists and greenies than anybody else are gone. Let us now put in place legislation that provides a true balance and good science. Hopefully, the Government will then keep its intentions clear—that is, to take the advice of the expert panels. There is not much point having an expert panel loaded one way or the other if the advice is seen to be biased. Balance means balance. We do not support the two amendments.

Question—That The Greens amendments Nos 5 and 6 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put and resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendments Nos 5 and 6 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.16 p.m.], by leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 7, 9 and 11 in globo:

No. 7 **Period of review**

Page 8, clause 18 (2) (a), line 29. Omit "10 years". Insert instead "5 years".

No. 9 **Period of review**

Page 16, clause 44 (1), lines 39–43. Omit all words on those lines. Insert instead:

(1) The relevant Ministers are to conduct a review of the management rules for each marine park and aquatic reserve to determine whether the management rules remain appropriate for securing the purposes of marine parks or aquatic reserves (as appropriate) as soon as possible after:

- (a) in the case of the first review—the period of 5 years has elapsed since the date that the management rules commenced, and
- (b) in any other case—the period of 10 years has elapsed since the conclusion of the previous review.

The relevant Ministers may conduct such a review at such other times as the relevant Ministers consider necessary.

No. 11 **Period of review**

Page 19, clause 52 (2) (a), line 16. Omit "10 years". Insert instead "5 years".

These amendments seek to restore to five years the first review period of the Marine Estate Management Strategy and the marine park management rules and plans. The first review period set in the Marine Estate Management Bill 2014 is 10 years. Monitoring and evaluation should be an ongoing process and feed into the review of the strategy, rules and plans much sooner than 10 years. This is important to avoid any significant or irreversible damage. Hence The Greens want to revert to the five-year review period. Ultimately, it is crucial that our marine estate environment is conserved so that we have a flourishing industry around it and we can enjoy and recreate within those waters and the coast. I commend the amendments to the Committee.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads and Freight, Minister for the North Coast, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.17 p.m.]: The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 7,

9 and 11. I will talk in particular about amendment No. 7, but my general comments relate to amendments Nos 9 and 11 as well. The marine estate strategy is to be independently reviewed at least every 10 years. The review will be informed by community input. The 10-year review period is a maximum requirement. The relevant Ministers may conduct an earlier review if that is considered necessary. The 10-year review period is considered the optimum time frame for the implementation of a comprehensive long-term strategy. A shorter period will not deliver sufficient certainty to stakeholders or provide enough time for comprehensive management initiatives to be implemented and assessed.

The strategy will guide the long-term management of the marine estate, including marine parks. The strategy will outline the coordinated program of works for the Government to deliver on its vision for a healthy coast and sea managed for the greatest wellbeing of the New South Wales community now and into the future. While the strategy will provide an overarching framework for management of the marine estate, it is envisaged that a non-statutory implementation plan will provide the necessary detail to support the rollout of the plans. The implementation plan can be updated at any time and will allow for an adaptive management approach, ensuring that flexibility is built into management of the marine estate. Many people associated with these regions are in change burnout. We need to provide an opportunity for all the recent changes, including this bill, to be implemented and carefully examined. That, as much as anything, is what this bill does.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [4.19 p.m.]: The Opposition will support the Government's case for 10 years and not The Greens amendments. I said in my contribution to the second reading debate that I believed five years under the old law was too short and we can see that it was not adhered to in many cases. The Batemans Marine Park was established in 2006-07 and I do not believe that a review has commenced more than five years later. But there has not been a huge outcry in the community. As I said yesterday, commercial fishermen see a need to review some matters in the area. I think five years from establishment is far too early to undertake a review process as it is still being established in that time. As a result of what has happened in the past in relation to these parks, I believe the maximum of 10 years to be reasonable.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [4.20 p.m.]: The Shooters and Fishers Party does not support amendments Nos 7, 9 and 11 moved by The Greens not only for the reasons expressed by the Minister and the Hon. Steve Whan but also because both scientific expert panels—one under Labor and one under Professor Beeton—came to the same conclusions. We cannot expect to get good data sets on marine biodiversity in five years. Both scientific reviews said exactly the same thing. They were both critical that the baseline data was not put in place when the marine parks and the reserve system were put in place. Both panels said that during that period—either an extended period of 10 years or 15 years in Professor Beeton's case—the Government needs to ensure that it puts adequate funding into the physical science. I suggest that adequate funding and resources be put into the social and economic sciences.

I concur with the Minister's comments that a lot of these communities have change burnout. That is the correct way to put it. Commercial enterprises cannot plan on changes to their industries that are regularly changed and rolled over on a five-year basis as it just does not work. Banks will not lend money on a short-term situation where legislation may change. Certainly from a social point of view, communities have shown the difficulty that they have encountered in adapting to changes—for example, I refer to the tourism profiles of those areas. I do not know how many times I have been up and down this coast and spoken to what I call the haves and the have-nots.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: The tourist industry in Baradine that The Greens said would happen.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Yes, and the river red gums, et cetera—the story goes on. There are good reasons on all legs of the three-legged stool—environment, social and economic—to give longer considerations to these sorts of changes. If we want something long-lasting it should be done right at the start and provide adequate time for those changes to be adapted by communities. For those reasons, the Shooters and Fishers Party does not support the amendments.

Question—That The Greens amendments Nos 7, 9 and 11 [C2014-117E] be agreed to—put and resolved in the negative.

The Greens amendments Nos 7, 9 and 11 [C2014-117E] negatived.

Title agreed to.

Question—That this bill as read be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Bill as read agreed to.

Bill reported from Committee without amendment.

Adoption of Report

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That the report be adopted.

Report adopted.

Third Reading

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Postponement of Business

Government Business Orders of the Day Nos 2 and 5 to 8 postponed on motion by the Hon. Niall Blair and set down as orders of the day for a later hour.

REGIONAL RELOCATION GRANTS AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Second Reading

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Parliamentary Secretary) [4.26 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I am pleased to introduce the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014.

This amendment bill proposes legislative changes to the Regional Relocation Grants Act 2011.

The Act provides for the Regional Relocation Grant Scheme to encourage population and economic growth in the regions.

Since its inception in July 2011, the scheme has helped over 4,400 people and their families relocate from metropolitan areas of New South Wales to regional New South Wales for the purpose of employment, self-employment or purchasing a home.

The scheme is part of the Government's Decade of Decentralisation policy, a key Coalition election commitment which aims to stimulate regional economic development.

Complementary initiatives include the Jobs Action Plan, which has supported the creation of more than 15,000 regional jobs through payroll tax rebates to eligible businesses for creating new jobs; and Government Agency Decentralisation, which has a target to relocate 1,500 jobs to regional New South Wales by 2021. So far, 466 jobs have been relocated or planned for relocation.

Other complementary Decade of Decentralisation initiatives include government funding through the Regional Industries Investment Fund and the State Investment Attraction Scheme. These funds have helped regional projects that will generate investment of almost \$3.9 billion and are expected to create more than 11,600 regional jobs.

The Regional Relocation Grant scheme includes two categories of grants: the Regional Relocation Home Buyers Grant and the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive.

The skills incentive was introduced in January 2014 as part of the Government's efforts to better target the scheme to a younger, more economically active demographic.

Both the home buyers grant and the skills incentive have been administered on a first-come first-served basis and the scheme is subject to the available budget allocation. The scheme's budget for 2014-15 reached capacity in August 2014.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Government published a legislative order on 29 August appointing a scheme closure date of 30 September 2014. The Government recognises that the skills incentive has been successful in meeting its target audience—a younger, economically active demographic—and in helping to attract much-needed skills and businesses to the regions.

This is why the Government has agreed to deliver additional funding to continue the skills incentive.

We have made the difficult decision to discontinue the other part of the scheme, the home buyers grant—which has been less successful in meeting the Government's objective to drive economic and jobs growth in regional New South Wales. The home buyers grant is not directly tied to jobs or regional skill needs.

As the Act does not provide for partial closure of the scheme, both the home buyers grant and skills incentive were closed.

The key purpose of the amendment bill is to enable the continuation of the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive, which contributes to the Government's continuing efforts to drive growth and employment in regional areas.

The key amendments proposed are:

Firstly, to allow the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive to operate retrospectively from 30 September 2014 through to 31 March 2015.

Secondly, to confirm closure of the Regional Relocation Home Buyers Grant as of 30 September 2014 by specifying that this grant is only applicable to relocations that commenced on or before 30 September 2014.

Thirdly, to provide for a few consequential amendments and general provisions to clarify the operation of the amended Act.

The skills incentive will continue to be offered as a \$10,000 incentive as of 30 September 2014 through to the newly defined "incentive scheme closure date" of 31 March 2015.

The bill does not change the eligibility requirements of the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive.

The grant will continue to be paid in two equal instalments of \$5,000 to eligible applicants who relocate from metropolitan to regional areas in New South Wales.

The first instalment will continue to be paid no sooner than three months after an eligible relocation and the second at least a year after payment of the first instalment.

For self-employed applicants who are relocating or setting up their own business, engagement with the small business advisory services of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner is still required.

This was a suggestion by the shadow Minister during discussions on previous amendments to this legislation, and one which the Government was happy to accept.

A small change is proposed to the wording of this engagement with the small business advisory services, namely to "participate in an approved program" rather than "complete an approved program" to better reflect the ongoing nature of the business advisory services and program.

The bill proposes to rename the Act to reflect its new focus on the skills incentive and to make a few minor amendments such as the making of applications and the removal of redundant clauses.

Applications for both the home buyers grant and the skills incentive cannot be made more than six months after each grant's respective closure date. This is in keeping with standard practice and the initial intent of the Act.

The skills incentive scheme closure date is specified as 31 March 2015; however, the Minister for Finance and Services may appoint an alternative scheme closure date by legislative order.

The amendment bill enables the continuation of the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive. The skills incentive has successfully targeted the desired economically active demographic for relocation to regional New South Wales.

The Office of State Revenue reports that since the introduction of the skills incentive on January 2014 until the end of July 2014:

- 32 per cent of recipients were under 30 years of age;
- 75 per cent were under 40; and
- 92 per cent were under 50 years old.

Continuation of the relocation skills incentive means that it will continue to attract city-based families, young professionals, small business owners and tradespeople to regional communities.

The skills incentive has already helped attract doctors, architects, real estate agents, engineers, mining and farming workers, chiropractors, optometrists, teachers and police officers to regional New South Wales.

It is estimated that continuation of the skills incentive will help deliver 85 successful job seekers or business operators and their families to regional New South Wales per month.

Continuation of the skills incentive will help deliver employment outcomes and support existing efforts to drive business and job growth in regional communities and boost local economies.

It provides an important incentive to help attract the much-needed skills, jobs and business opportunities that contribute to the prosperity of regional communities and this State as a whole.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Just get out your old speech, Mick.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH [4.28 p.m.]: I acknowledge the interjection. I should just dust off my old speeches, and maybe some of my press releases from the early days, in regard to Regional Relocation Grants. Essentially the scheme was a dud, which is pretty much what I said at the start. It has eventuated to a point where we now have the latest iteration in the form of the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014. One could almost say that this is the full stop on Andrew Stoner's ministerial career. I would not say it is an exclamation mark because this scheme did not really go to plan. As I have said in this place a number of times, the original concept of this scheme was flawed. I believe it was not only flawed but also poorly administered and implemented. This has led to a scheme with an allocation of \$50 million in this Government's first budget to go towards stimulating the economies of regional New South Wales. As that scheme did not work it is now being wound back.

I am concerned because that money should still be allocated to the economies of regional New South Wales and should not be moved into other programs. At the outset, this scheme was for someone who owned a house, sold it and then moved to regional New South Wales. The numbers cited at the last election were something like 40,000 allocated places. After the election Treasury looked at the scheme and decided money would not be available for 40,000 places. The Government reduced it to 7,000 places a year under this scheme.

I speak with cynicism when I say that the scheme has been a rip-roaring success. In its first year of operation that 7,000 figure was nowhere near being reached. Indeed, we did not get anywhere near 50 per cent of that 7,000 figure—or even 10 per cent of that figure. By any measure, that scheme failed in its first year. To date how many places have been filled across the full three years of this scheme? In fact, I do not think that 7,000 figure been reached in total under the scheme. By any definition one uses, whether it is political or otherwise, the scheme has been a dud and it has failed.

We are now at the stage of essentially closing down the dud part of the scheme and we are left with the jobs part. The Opposition supports the Government in its attempt to encourage jobs in regional New South Wales. My trip to the Central West last week highlighted that there have been 10,000 job losses in that area in the past 12 months. This is according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures; they are not my figures. Anything that we as parliamentarians can do to stimulate job retention and job creation in regional New South Wales is a good thing. As I have said, the bill removes the dud part of the scheme and continues to support the good parts of the scheme. I have had briefings with the Minister's office on the bill and I appreciate those briefings. They were better briefings than the briefings I had this week on the Crown Lands Amendment (Public Ownership of Beaches and Coastal Lands) Bill. They were different types of briefings.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: I did not get briefings at all, Mick, when I was in your shoes. I had no briefings. For years I had no briefings.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: One was constructive and the other not so constructive.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Stop whingeing.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I am not whingeing.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: You are.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Actually, no, I am not. I was congratulating the staff on a good job in giving the briefing. The member is making the wrong comments there. She is attacking them for giving a good briefing. Apparently they did not give her a good briefing. We will take that on notice. This bill wraps up the scheme and it does not take a lot of pages to do so. In essence, it is not an exclamation mark to Andrew Stoner's

ministerial career; but it may well be a question mark to his political career. Certainly, in my view, it is a full stop. The Opposition will support the bill because it closes the scheme. However, I ask the Parliamentary Secretary what has happened to the money that was originally promised to stimulate regional economies in New South Wales? I am referring to the \$50 million in the Government's first budget in 2012-13. That money should still be allocated to regional economies and not moved elsewhere. The Opposition supports the bill but asks where that money has gone.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [4.32 p.m.]: On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party I speak in debate on the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014. I acknowledge the comments of the Hon. Mick Veitch, who has taken a keen interest in this matter during budget estimates and in other places. As we toured the State during inquiries of the Standing Committee on State Development the Hon. Mick Veitch asked questions about the effectiveness of the scheme and he has articulated fairly well the outcome of the grant. It was an "A" for trying but a "D" for dud. However, I acknowledge that the scheme was an opportunity to try to stimulate growth in regional areas, but unfortunately this one did not reach its target. I agree with the Hon. Mick Veitch that the unspent moneys in this area should be hypothecated back to regional areas for other initiatives. If this money were put in a pool many councils in those areas could use it, multiply it in different ways for distance economies and return a triple bottom line if they were given the chance to do so.

This amendment bill proposes legislative changes to the Regional Relocation Grants Act 2011. The Christian Democratic Party acknowledges that the Act provides for the Regional Relocation Grants Scheme to encourage population and economic growth in the regions. Since its launch in July 2011 the scheme has helped more than 4,400 people and their families relocate from metropolitan areas of New South Wales to regional New South Wales for the purpose of employment, self-employment or to purchase a home. The specific aim of this initiative was to stimulate regional economic growth. The key purpose of the amendment bill enables the continuation of the regional relocation incentive, which continues efforts to drive growth and employment in regional areas.

The key amendments proposed in this case are, firstly, to allow the skilled regional relocation incentive to operate retrospectively from 30 September 2014 to 31 March 2014; secondly, to confirm closure of the regional relocation home buyers grant as of 30 September 2014 by specifying that this grant is only applicable to relocation that commenced on or before 30 September 2013; and, thirdly, to provide for a few consequential amendments and general provisions to clarify the operation of the amended Act. The skills incentive will continue to be accessible as a \$10,000 incentive as at 30 September 2014 through the newly defined incentive scheme closure date of 31 March 2015.

The Christian Democratic Party understands that the bill does not change the eligibility requirements of the skilled regional relocation incentive. The grants will continue to be paid in two equal instalments of \$5,000 to eligible applicants who relocate from metropolitan to regional areas in New South Wales. The first instalment will continue to be paid no sooner than three months after an eligible relocation. The second will be paid at least a year after the payment of the first instalment. Engagement with the small business advisory services of the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner is still required for self-employed applicants who are relocating or setting up their own business. A small change is proposed to the wording of this engagement with the small business advisory services, namely, to "participate in an approved program" rather than "complete an approved program" to better reflect the ongoing nature of the business advisory services and program.

The bill renames the Act to better reflect its new focus on the skills incentive and to make a few minor amendments, such as the making of applications and the removal of redundant clauses. The Christian Democratic Party understands that applications for both the home buyers grant and the skills incentive cannot be made more than six months after each grant's respective closure date. The skills incentive scheme closure date is specified as 31 March 2015 but the Christian Democratic Party understands that the Minister for Finance and Services may appoint an alternative scheme closure date by legislative order. I understand that in the other place Minister Barilaro stated:

The amendment bill enables the continuation of the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive. The skills incentive has successfully targeted the desired economically active demographic for relocation to regional New South Wales. The Office of State Revenue reports that since the introduction of the skills incentive in January 2014 until the end of July 2014 some 32 per cent of recipients were under the age of 30 years of age, 75 per cent were under 40 and 92 per cent were under 50.

Continuation of the relocation skills incentive means that it will continue to attract city-based families, young professionals, small business owners and tradespeople to regional communities. The skills incentive has already helped to attract doctors, architects, real estate agents, engineers, mining and farming workers, chiropractors, optometrists, teachers and police officers to regional New South Wales. It is estimated that continuation of the skills incentive will help to deliver 85 successful job seekers or business operators and their families to regional New South Wales per month.

I note that according to the Minister the incentive has delivered 85 successful job seekers but that is just part of the solution. When the Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing visited Dubbo we found that many young professionals were trying to relocate to the area but they could not do so because there were no rental properties available. Renting was unaffordable and by the time those young professionals contested for rental properties, it did not weigh up against the mining contingent. It was hard for young families to relocate because of the housing shortages in key regional areas. It is not enough to hand out a cheque and say, "We will help you move and we will get you going"; we have to make sure that we are not setting people up to fail. If people want to relocate the Government must ensure that there are affordable rental properties or opportunities to buy affordable properties.

The report of the Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing refers to such difficulties. I look forward to the Government's response to that report because those are the issues that people face when they relocate. If people cannot find a place to call home they will find they have been given a dud deal and either will not relocate or will return from regional areas. People will not want to suffer the unrest that comes with relocating their families. Many members are parents and will understand that it takes a lot to mobilise one's family and move—even if it is just up the road. It takes a lot of energy, emotion and support from many people to be able to move from one place to another. At the end of the day, when relocating people in rural areas, we must ensure that mums and dads and other people who take the opportunity to relocate are not being set up to fail. People who relocate to regional areas should not find that they are worse off because they have relocated. Relocation is something that should benefit the individual and the State. I commend the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014 to the House.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [4.43 p.m.]: I lead for The Greens in debate on the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014. The Greens support the bill.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: You support regional relocation, don't you?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: We do support regional relocation—unlike the member opposite. I would like to relocate the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to the outer regions of Mongolia.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: What is wrong with Mongolia?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Perhaps somewhere less populated than Mongolia would suffice. I am resisting the temptation to crow about the demise of the Regional Relocation Grants scheme. At the outset, together with the Hon. Mick Veitch, The Greens raised concerns about the mechanisms and framework of the scheme and whether or not it would deliver the expected outcome. However, we support the idea of regional relocation. The Hon. Mick Veitch, the Hon. Paul Green and I come from regional areas and we know that getting skills to the country and getting young families to the regions are important. The objectives of the Regional Relocation Grants scheme are commendable but we always had concerns about delivering those objectives and ultimately our concerns have proven valid. The scheme has not met expectations.

The Regional Relocation Grants scheme was originally allocated \$50 million and was expected to get 7,000 grant applications where families would be paid to move to the regions. However, four years later only a fraction of that funding has been used for about 4,400 homes, costing about \$28 million. The original scheme applied to city home owners buying a new property in regional areas. Five of the 7,000 grants were paid to applicants who moved less than two kilometres.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: Wollongong to Shellharbour.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: That is right—there were teething problems. The majority of grant recipients were over the age of 60 and were most likely moving to the country to retire. Who can blame them for doing that? Retirees should go to Orange or Cabonne or one of the many beautiful places in the Central West. The Government has refined the bill so that it is focused on skills-based applications. This has encouraged more young people to apply which will assist in revitalising rural and regional areas. We need to decentralise and take development pressure off the metropolitan areas. Recently I bumped into David Woodall, an old colleague of mine, who runs development services at Orange City Council. He is a good planner on Orange City Council. I was talking to him about the how and why of Orange's prodigious growth. Orange is ringed by a number of substantial property developments.

The Hon. Greg Pearce: Mines—goldmines.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I did ask: Is it just the mines? I asked why Orange was growing and Mr Woodall put it down to a high employment rate: the mines, the university, a booming agricultural sector, a hospital and a public service. He told me that a radiographer had moved to the town, drawing a significant wage and bringing his family and his children to the schools. Those things flow on to the economy. These schemes cannot happen in isolation. As the Hon. Paul Green said, we need to make sure there is affordable housing and employment—not for one person but for a variety of people. Educational opportunities, quality schools and health care are the things that underpin regional development and when one gets it right, one's communities become robust.

The Cadia Valley mine in Orange has had a significant decrease in its workforce and the closure of Electrolux factory has affected employment. Those closures have been foreshadowed but Orange has been able to deal with them very well because it has a robust, diversified economy. That is what the Government should consider when cutting services or allocating infrastructure spending. It is those things, in combination, which could turn cities such as Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Goulburn, Armidale and Tamworth into thriving metropolises. I believe that those regional centres could be much bigger and would not need much assistance, other than some resetting of government policy.

The Hon. Niall Blair: It's The Greens' policy.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It is now.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: Policy on the run.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: That is right and it sounds good. Members will acknowledge that the State needs employment. Unemployment in those regional areas has increased by 2.6 per cent over the past five years and 6.5 per cent in the past year. It is not all a pretty picture. There has been an 11.4 per cent growth in long-term unemployment in regional areas over the past five years. The Illawarra has youth unemployment of 16.9 per cent. There has been no growth in full-time employment in the past five years and a 2.8 per cent decline in the past year. What growth there has been in employment has been in part-time employment.

As policymakers, we cannot put all our eggs in the one basket. In the Hunter Valley 150 job losses were announced just yesterday—a savage blow for that community. The Greens do not want to see people having jobs ripped out from underneath them without warning. We want to transition away from coal but we want that to happen in a just, measured and reasonable way. Mining in New South Wales employs only 3 per cent of the workforce—less than half that of agriculture and six times less than the retail, accommodation and food services industries. In Orange many people are employed in sustainable agriculture and the delivery of local quality food, which is underpinning the local economy.

In Orange on a daily basis, a new enterprise opens: a new cafe, a new provedore or a new food manufacturer, providing niche, quality food. For example, there is a local company, Fresh Fodder, a fantastic operation producing such things as high-quality gourmet dips and antipasti. They are growing and employing people and they underpin the economy and lead to diversity. We should not put all our eggs in the mining basket or overstate the mining industry's role in our economy. Mining is susceptible to booms and busts. How do we ensure that regional centres and enterprises grow? We must provide a skilled workforce. That is why the war on TAFE funding makes no sense. The Greens believe that it is essential that we have a local skilled workforce available to work locally.

The other issue the Government has failed to address is renewable energy. It offers an enormous opportunity to reinvigorate the regions. People with skills will move to the regions if we as policymakers and the Government get out of the way of renewable energy. Billions of dollars of renewable energy projects in New South Wales are under construction and far more could be constructed and would revitalise places such as Blayney, Nyngan and Broken Hill. Those areas have traditionally relied on mining and suffered booms and busts. The bonus of renewable energy is that it is long term and permanent. It also provides a skills base that attracts other enterprises. Areas in the north and west of New South Wales offer excellent prospects for baseload solar thermal energy production.

The Southern Highlands, the Central West and the Northern Tablelands have huge potential to generate wind energy. Infigen Energy is raring to go. It will provide thousands and thousands of jobs. There are more people employed in renewable energy in the United States than in coalmining. The whale oil merchants in the Government who fail to acknowledge that the world is moving on from burning rocks should realise that the

cost of their policy setting is that they will prevent opportunities emerging in regional centres. People will go to those centres because living in regional New South Wales is fantastic. It is easy to get around, people can get their kids to sports events, they do not have to use tollways and motorways and there is no air pollution. It is marvellous. I recommend that people move to regional New South Wales. Dubbo and Wagga Wagga could be centres of excellence and their economies could be thriving—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: They already are.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: They would be even better if we got out of the way of renewable energy. There are 18 wind projects and two large-scale solar projects on the books at the Department of Planning and Environment. If the Government got out of the way of wind farms we would see them up and running and delivering for regional economies.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Do you have any at your place?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I have a small-scale solar plant on the roof of my house.

The Hon. Niall Blair: You referred to wind farms.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I would be more than happy to have a wind turbine on my property.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: How far from your house?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: A reasonable distance—500 metres or whatever. I do not mind. I think they are beautiful. I have often stopped by the Blayney wind farm to take in the beautiful view. Unlike coal seam gas projects, wind farms do not emit polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. The Government Whip has clearly had too many polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons for lunch because it is affecting his contribution and judgement. Surveys indicate that the majority of people in Blayney, the Northern Tablelands and even in Crookwell support the production of wind energy. The Government should wake up and smell the roses and the future—it is beautiful, crisp, clear wind energy.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Uranium?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The Government Whip mentions uranium. The Government is pushing for uranium development and a de facto uranium mine is proposed for the outskirts of Dubbo. If the Government intends to put all its eggs in the mining basket it will be making a big mistake. Members opposite should go to Cobar to see the effects of the vagaries of international markets and booms and busts. The future of regional New South Wales will be built on education, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Baseload solar?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Absolutely.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: How much solar energy is produced at midnight?

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Sarah Mitchell): Order! The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps will cease interjecting.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It depends where it is in the world. It is always midday somewhere.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Sarah Mitchell): Order! I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the first time.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps does not understand that we now have baseload solar thermal technology that allows us to store energy and to use it around the clock. He is 10 or 15 years behind the times. Some would say that he is 150 years behind the times. I acknowledge the windup from the Hon. Niall Blair. The Greens support this bill with a heavy heart. The Government was on the right track but, as I said, regional development should be built on education, skills, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. We should not gamble with the boom and bust vagaries of—

The Hon. Niall Blair: What about the thoroughbred breeders?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: They certainly have some animal welfare issues to address.

The Hon. Rick Colless: Do you support them?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Absolutely. I have no problem supporting them and I am proud to do so. I have said again and again that I have no problem supporting agriculture. However, rather than handing money to people to move, we should be investing in a comprehensive plan to transition regional economies to attract people. They must be confident that they will have a house, a job and a hospital, and that their children will get a quality education. That has been done very successfully in Orange. There has been growth in employment in agriculture, in education and in all the other sectors that underpin the local economy. I served on Orange City Council and worked on the economic development plans. That success was the result of smart planning by the council. It provided services, a theatre, a library and an aquatic centre and they attracted people to town. People can live in North Sydney, Western Sydney or the inner city, but what quality of life do they have? If they compare their life in the city to what is on offer in a regional centre, they often make the move, and I congratulate them on doing so. The Greens support the bill, but with a heavy heart.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [4.59 p.m.]: I support the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014 and congratulate the former Deputy Premier, the Hon. Andrew Stoner, on his initiative and vision in encouraging families to relocate to country areas. This policy of the Government is also the policy of the Christian Democratic Party. Decentralisation is a key plank of our policies. We do all we can to support people who live in country areas and encourage those who wish to move to country areas. As members know, I moved to the South Coast for 17 years so I have experienced some of the issues that affect people who live in regional areas. The Hon. Andrew Stoner retired as the Deputy Premier for family reasons. The Christian Democratic Party supported Mr Stoner during his years of service in the Parliament. We had great cooperation from him and admired his conscientious stand on many issues. He leaves the Parliament with our good wishes.

This bill will allow the skilled regional relocation incentive to operate retrospectively, from 30 September 2014 through to 31 March 2015. It will also confirm closure of the regional relocation home buyers grant as of 30 September 2014, by specifying that this grant is only applicable to relocations that commenced on or after 30 September 2014. The bill will allow for that extended time by specifying the skills incentive closure date as 31 March 2015. However, it gives the Minister for Finance and Services the power to amend the closure date by order as needed. At present the Minister for Finance and Services may amend the closure date if the scheme has reached its funding capacity.

This is obviously a budget matter as a specific amount of money is allocated for this project. When that money has been used, the scheme comes to an end but there is nothing to stop the Government from allocating further funding in the next budget for a similar relocation scheme, particularly one targeting the skills incentive, which was done by government amendments to the original scheme. The skilled regional relocation incentive has to date successfully targeted the desired economically active demographic for relocation to regional New South Wales. Since the skills incentive was fully effective in April, 32 per cent of recipients of grants paid from that date to the end of July 2014 were under 30 years of age, 75 per cent were under 40 years of age and 92 per cent were under 50 years of age. Under the original scheme the majority of recipients were in their fifties or sixties, at or near retirement age, whereas to get the full benefit of the scheme it needs to attract people under 30 years of age to contribute to the communities to which they move.

The new skills incentive has helped attract doctors, architects, real estate agents, engineers, mining and farming workers, chiropractors, optometrists, teachers and police officers to regional New South Wales. It is estimated that the continuation of the skills incentive will help to deliver 85 successful job seekers or business operators and their families to regional New South Wales per month. Continuation of the skills incentive will support economic and jobs growth in regional New South Wales, which the Christian Democratic Party fully supports.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [5.03 p.m.]: The shadow Minister for Regional and Rural Affairs, the Hon. Mick Veitch, spoke on behalf of the Labor Party in debate on the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014, so my contribution will be brief. In my portfolio area of local government I have had the privilege to drive to many places I have not been to before in New South Wales, particularly in country areas.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Sussex Street?

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I am from suburban Sydney and I undertook to travel across New South Wales as a shadow Minister. I have been to the Central West and the far North Coast in trying to understand the concerns of regional and rural communities. The sentiment of the skilled regional relocation incentive in principle was important: to relocate people from metropolitan areas to regional areas. However, unfortunately this government scheme did not work because it lacked coordination and organisation. From the outset my colleague the Hon. Mick Veitch identified the many flaws in the program. The Labor Party supports people moving to the country, as does the Christian Democratic Party and The Greens, but we have to do it in an organised and coordinated way. The Hon. Mick Veitch raised many questions about the program in this place and at budget estimates. I remember a debate about a motion on this subject in which we heard, for example, about people in Shellharbour being paid the \$7,000 incentive to move to a home two streets from their original home. This was not the intent of the program.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Down the road.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: That is right: they moved down the road. This is a lesson for policymakers to make sure this does not happen again. This program involved taxpayer money and resources are scarce, as we all know, so it is important to target where those resources go. The Hon. Mick Veitch has been calling on the Government to change this scheme to make it a skills-based and jobs-based scheme. I commend the Government for making this change. We know this program did not work because the target of the Government was not met. Instead people took the incentive and moved two streets away.

It is important to partner with local councils on such schemes when the State Government, of whatever political persuasion, introduces them. If local government is a partner it can identify areas where such incentives should be targeted. We should encourage people to move to our regional areas, but we need to ensure that there are jobs for them and that we promote opportunities. It is also important to have educational infrastructure and to encourage new industries in regional areas if we can use the regional relocation program to promote products for new markets.

It is important to ensure that there are guiding principles for the future program and that a number of regional coordinators are placed in the Department of Premier and Cabinet to coordinate these programs across departments and to make sure we get the best outcomes. There must be better planning and coordination of services and programs to ensure there is sufficient housing. The Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing visited regional areas to hear from peak bodies and community groups who raised the importance of housing and jobs in regional communities.

I commend the Government for listening to concerns about deficiencies in this program 3½ years after my colleague first raised them. I commend the Hon. Mick Veitch as a strong member of the Country Labor team for the fantastic work he does. I also commend the Hon. Steve Whan. Both members have raised these issues constantly. I will continue to advocate strongly for better coordination and, as the Hon. Paul Green said, for an increase in the supply of housing to link with this scheme.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay, in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Regional Relocation Grants Amendment Bill 2014: the Hon. Mick Veitch, the Hon. Paul Green, Mr Jeremy Buckingham, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Sophie Cotsis. The key objectives of the bill are to allow the Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive to operate retrospectively from 30 September 2014 through to 31 March 2015; to confirm closure of the Regional Relocation Home Buyers Grant as of 30 September 2014 by specifying that this grant is only applicable to relocations that commenced on or before 30 September 2014; and to provide for a few consequential amendments and general provisions to clarify the operation of the amended Act.

This bill will enable the Government to continue to provide the successful Skilled Regional Relocation Incentive, in keeping with our commitment to make additional funds available for this incentive until March 2015; to target the scheme to a younger, more economically active demographic; and to attract much-needed skills and business opportunities to the regions. The skills incentive will contribute to the Government's objective to drive economic growth and employment in regional New South Wales. Legislation for the skills incentive is intended to apply retrospectively from 30 September 2014 through to 31 March 2015. Eligibility requirements will remain unchanged.

In relation to a point raised by both the Hon. Mick Veitch and the Hon. Paul Green about spending within the regions, I can assure those members that we will continue to invest in our regions, with record

numbers of front-line jobs, including police and nurses, and investment in infrastructure, including roads and hospitals. This Government has budgeted for more than \$13 billion in infrastructure spending for our regions. We have also created more than 25,000 jobs in regional New South Wales—15,000 through the Jobs Action Plan and 11,800 through the Regional Industries Investment Fund and the State Investment Attraction Scheme. This Government has a strong commitment to spending to improve the lives of people and to provide infrastructure in regional New South Wales, and we will continue to do unashamedly.

I thank Mr Jeremy Buckingham for congratulating the Government on the regional infrastructure improvements to improve the quality of regional communities and for his support of the thoroughbred racing industry—a brave move by him as it is in contrast to his Greens colleagues. All members on this side of the House know that the thoroughbred racing industry is a major contributor to regional economies in New South Wales and a major employer. Although he may be a lone voice, it is pleasing to hear his support for the industry. The skills incentive would help support our existing efforts to stimulate regional economic development. Any initiative that aims to drive economic growth and employment in regional communities should be supported. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Leave granted to proceed to the third reading of the bill forthwith.

Third Reading

Motion by the Hon. Niall Blair, on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay, agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

WATER NSW BILL 2014

Second Reading

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Parliamentary Secretary) [5.14 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay:
I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Water NSW Bill 2014 provides for the merger of the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water Corporation into one statutory State-owned corporation—Water NSW.

The merger will deliver efficiencies in water infrastructure management that will improve customer service outcomes and enable the rollout of much-needed capital investment in water infrastructure across New South Wales.

Proper management of this vital resource is necessary to ensure the future health and wellbeing of the environment and the people of New South Wales.

This bill will enable the achievement of important public health outcomes through improved water quality.

For the first time, rural and regional communities across New South Wales will be able to obtain the benefit of the Sydney Catchment Authority's skills and experience in catchment management.

The bill provides the framework for the implementation of long-awaited improvements in water quality for rural and regional towns, which will lead to important public health benefits.

The bill will also enable the delivery of improved service to agriculture and industrial stakeholders by creating a stable platform for infrastructure investment.

Bulk water is a crucial part of the water cycle in New South Wales.

Bulk water is managed to ensure there are potable supplies for town water, irrigation, stock and domestic purposes in rural areas, industrial purposes, industry and power generation, as well as water for the Sydney area.

The future health and wellbeing of the environment and the people of New South Wales is dependent on efficient and effective management of our State's bulk water resources.

Water NSW is being created to bring together two equals—Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water Corporation—into a modern and responsive service provider.

For this reason, this bill re-enacts and consolidates with necessary modifications the provisions of both the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1998 and the State Water Corporation Act 2004 into one Act.

Water NSW will provide the critical mass to further develop the skills, knowledge and experience needed to meet the increasing challenges of water management and water infrastructure in the future.

The two organisations have complementary knowledge and skills that Water NSW can foster and enhance for a more effective sharing of knowledge and expertise.

It will provide a focus on the most efficient way to manage bulk water in New South Wales, to provide certainty for food production, and to continue the high levels of attention given to the health aspects of drinking water.

I turn now to a more detailed discussion of the proposed bill.

The principal objectives of Water NSW will be to:

- capture, store and release water in an efficient, effective, safe and financially responsible manner; and
- ensure that declared catchment areas are managed and protected to promote water quality, for the protection of public health and safety.

As a statutory State-owned corporation, Water NSW must also maintain and operate its works efficiently and economically and in accordance with sound commercial principles.

The bill also provides for a range of functions for the management of catchment areas to ensure water quality and public health and safety.

These special catchment management functions will apply in "declared catchment areas".

At the present time, only one catchment is declared—the Sydney catchment area.

Catchment management in the Sydney area will continue to be carried out by a specialised division within Water NSW comprising the staff from Sydney Catchment Authority.

The bill retains all of the existing protections and regulatory controls for the Sydney catchment provided by the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1998.

Protecting catchment health requires a collaborative and long-term approach because of the wide range of land uses and the many individuals, businesses, industries, community groups and government agencies whose actions can affect water quality.

This bill recognises that over time it may be necessary to declare other catchments so that catchment management initiatives can be implemented to improve drinking water quality.

For this reason, provisions of the bill will make it possible to roll out catchment management initiatives in a scalable way.

Catchment audits, catchment reporting and even declarations of special areas may be implemented for any catchment in New South Wales that is declared for that purpose.

This is just one of the many ways that this bill will deliver real benefits to rural and regional communities.

The bill continues the stringent regulatory controls that presently apply to maintain the safety of dams and water management works and ensure that the Sydney catchment special areas are protected from pollution.

These regulatory functions include the planning approval and concurrence role carried out by Sydney Catchment Authority in relation to development in the special areas.

All of these regulatory controls will now be enforced by a regulatory authority.

The regulatory authority is the Minister administering the Act.

The Minister will also be able to nominate a public authority or a government agency to carry out regulatory functions.

In this way, it will be possible to ensure that the authority or agency with the best expertise and experience implements the regulatory framework for bulk water and catchment management.

The Minister administering the Act will maintain ultimate responsibility for overseeing the manner in which regulatory functions are exercised.

If there are concerns about the manner in which any regulatory function is addressed, it will be possible to withdraw the nomination as regulatory authority at any time.

In addition, there are a number of agencies which play an important role under other legislation to ensure that water quality standards are maintained and that bulk water is supplied to rural and regional communities in accordance with established rules.

These agencies include the New South Wales Office of Water, NSW Health, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] and the Environment Protection Authority.

The Water NSW Bill 2014 provides improved financial stability for water operations.

It will provide widespread benefits for public health and safety, water quality and healthy water catchments to all areas of our great State.

The provisions contained in this bill provide a best practice framework to ensure this Government meets the highest governance standards for the management of bulk water.

I commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [5.15 p.m.]: The Water NSW Bill 2014 is a bill proposed by the Government to essentially amalgamate the State Water Corporation and the Sydney Catchment Authority [SCA] to become Water NSW. The Opposition is opposed to this measure to amalgamate those two bodies for a number of reasons. We have expressed concern about this amalgamation when it was first raised by the Government. At the time it was first introduced the Minister responsible for the Water portfolio was Minister Hodgkinson. The Minister now responsible for the portfolio is Minister Humphries.

Minister Humphries has done nothing to alleviate the concerns of the State Opposition about the proposals to amalgamate the two bodies and we remain very concerned about what we have seen so far in the way that the New South Wales Government has behaved in relation to State Water in particular and has treated rural inland water users and disenfranchised them in the process. Clearly, the Government has attempted to turn State Water into a body that is less focused on the delivery of good service and reasonable prices to the people of regional New South Wales, particularly to irrigators, and to have on its board people who are obviously looking at business opportunities and the ability to return greater revenue.

The Opposition opposes the bill because we are not satisfied that the Government has sufficiently dealt with those concerns. The two organisations service extremely different groups of clients. The Sydney Catchment Authority was established for a very specific purpose; I will return to that later in my contribution. State Water is an organisation that was created to run bulk water delivery in rural and regional New South Wales and it is critical for rural water users, including irrigators. This Government's history in relation to State Water is appalling. When it came to office the Government removed representation of inland New South Wales from the board and there was no board member, other than an executive director, who lived west of the Great Dividing Range. If the amalgamation goes ahead, I doubt we will have any representation on the board from inland New South Wales.

At one stage the Government even appointed Nick Di Girolamo to the board, which was a very clear conflict of interest. The Minister at the time was asked a number of questions about the matter but she tried to deflect the questions to the then Treasurer and now Premier. She said that he was responsible for the appointment of Mr Di Girolamo, who has been questioned by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and is a former close affiliate of and donor to the Liberal Party. It was an outrageous appointment of a person who worked in the industry and had the potential to have a conflict of interest in the position.

State Water and the Sydney Catchment Authority have very different client groups. Labor is not satisfied that this legislation is going to end up with anything other than a situation where rural water is being run by a Sydney and coastal-based board of directors, appointed by the Coalition and with no interest in anything other than profit. As I said earlier, I raised this criticism when former Minister Hodgkinson announced an intention to merge the two bodies, but the issue was not adequately dealt with. Minister Hodgkinson had the Water portfolio taken away from her and it was handed over to Minister Humphries. However, the Minister's second reading speech gives no reassurance on this issue.

Despite The Nationals, pre-election, making much of the price of irrigation water in rural New South Wales, Minister Hodgkinson effectively washed her hands of irrigation price increases. She blamed the

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] for pricing and refused to take responsibility for the Government's submission to the ACCC, which advocated the price increase. When we questioned the Minister in estimates, effectively she said that State Water had not shown her the submission and she had not vetoed it. Clearly, that was ludicrous. Submissions are ticked off by Cabinet before they are forwarded to bodies such as the ACCC.

In other words, we saw yet another attempt by Ministers to escape their responsibilities and blame so-called arm's length bodies. Previously in this place I have expressed concern about the use of arm's length bodies to remove responsibility from politicians, who are elected to exercise responsibility. The clear message is that under this Government State Water has progressively stopped representing rural water users and been tuned up to be motivated purely by profit. Naturally, that concerns the Labor Party because we see that as setting up State Water for future privatisation.

The legislation is simply another step in separating the users from the decision-makers. Specifically with regard to the Sydney Catchment Authority, Labor believes that this bill forgets the genesis of the Sydney Catchment Authority. The Sydney Catchment Authority was established as a direct result of the recommendations of the McClellan inquiry into Sydney Water. The inquiry followed the cryptosporidium outbreak in Sydney's water supply and the SCA was the direct result of recommendations in that report. Nowhere in the Minister's second reading speech did he acknowledge that history and nowhere did he provide a guarantee that the new structure would continue to comply with the recommendations in the McClellan report.

It is easy to forget these things over time but those who remember that outbreak know that it caused considerable distress to the residents and water users of Sydney. It is appalling for the Government to simply ditch the structure recommended by the inquiry without giving specific consideration as to whether it continues to meet the requirements set by the McClellan inquiry. I note that the bill transfers most existing regulatory functions of the Sydney Catchment Authority and leaves elements of the operations separate. However, the Opposition is not satisfied that in creating this new entity the Government has dealt properly with the issue. The Minister in his second reading speech said:

The bill provides that all the regulatory functions carried out by the Sydney Catchment Authority and the State Water Corporation will now be carried out by the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority is the Minister or a statutory body or an agency nominated by the Minister. The bill enables more than one regulatory authority to be nominated in order to leverage off the existing expertise across government in the bulk water sector and ensure the best possible regulatory outcomes.

The Opposition is concerned that the Minister did not go on to define more precisely who those regulatory authorities might be. Again, that appears to be inconsistent with the original reason for establishing the Sydney Catchment Authority, as recommended by the McClellan inquiry. On 2 June 2014 the Leader of the Opposition and the Hon. Peter Primrose jointly issued a press release headed "Liberals should abandon plan to scrap Sydney Catchment Authority". The release states:

The Labor Opposition has called on the Baird Liberal Government to abandon its scheme to abolish the Sydney Catchment Authority, following the NSW Chief Scientist's call for an increased focus on protecting Sydney's drinking water.

It then goes on to talk about the Chief Scientist's report. The Opposition is of the view that the proposed new body will not allow the Sydney Catchment Authority to have the same focus on Sydney's water supply as it does currently. The release also referred to the cryptosporidium outbreak and the McClellan inquiry and states that the Government is leaving little room to ensure that those recommendations continue to be enforced. As shadow Minister for inland rural water, my concern is obviously for State Water's existing clients. I believe those clients have been treated poorly by the Government, particularly when I look at its pre-election rhetoric. That rhetoric referred to relief from fixed water charges and the high rates of fixed water charges across the State.

When Labor waived fixed water charges in the drought, the then Opposition said it would commit to doing the same if it were elected to government. However, when legislation was introduced the Government had significantly watered down that commitment to farmers. Pricing structures in regional New South Wales are causing significant distress in some valleys at the moment. The ACCC and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, in making recommendations to the Government on the price of inland water, recommended phasing in cost recovery in some catchments. The New South Wales Government did not even bother to respond, which is appalling for water users in those areas. Once again the Government is seeking to push off to other people responsibility for decisions that it has the power to oversee. It is not good enough when the Minister is supposedly from an area affected by irrigation water prices and a significant number of constituents are affected by those pricing structures.

It is not good enough that the Government thought it was appropriate to appoint Nick Di Girolamo to the State Water board, because he was a mate and he had donated to the party, when there was not one representative from west of the Great Dividing Range. It is an appalling sellout of the people whom the Liberal-Nationals claim to represent in this place. Is it any wonder that the Opposition does not trust the Government when it is seeking to combine these two authorities? We will oppose the bill. We believe that is the best way to ensure that the people and water users of rural New South Wales have a chance in the future, when a Labor government is elected, to have a State Water board that gives a damn about them, while protecting Sydney Water users by ensuring that the Sydney Catchment Authority remains focused on the health of the water supply in the Sydney catchment.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [5.26 p.m.]: I lead for The Greens on the Water NSW Bill 2014 and I will start my contribution by putting The Greens' position. Like the Opposition, we are opposed to this bill. We believe that the bill has major flaws. It was introduced by a Minister who is struggling in his portfolio areas. He has been a major failure in the Crown land space. Clearly, this is another failure and not good policy. One only has to ask the people of Broken Hill what they think of the water Minister and his handling of their water crisis to learn more. That issue has not rated a mention in the Parliament at all. Although the 30,000 people of Broken Hill, plus the mining and agriculture industries, are going to the wall, the local Nationals member, who has one foot in retirement and one foot in political oblivion, has failed to raise the issue in the Parliament. The Hon. Kevin Humphries, who represents the Barwon electorate, has failed to raise the issue. It is symptomatic of a Minister who is out of his depth in the Water portfolio.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Point of order: I appreciate that there is wide latitude in the second reading debate, but this rant from planet green has no relevance to the bill. I ask you to bring Mr Jeremy Buckingham back to the leave of the bill.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): Order! I do not uphold the point of order. Wide latitude is extended during second reading debates. Mr Jeremy Buckingham has the call.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It is symptomatic of a Minister who is out of his depth in the Water portfolio.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: Mr Jeremy Buckingham is casting aspersions on a member in the other place. The member should deal with such matters by way of substantive motion and not in his contribution to the second reading debate.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): Order! I warn Mr Jeremy Buckingham that he is erring towards casting aspersions. At this stage the member can continue.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Clearly, irrigators and others are very concerned about the direction the Government and the Minister are taking with this legislation and the Water portfolio. This bill will come back to haunt the Government because in the future during a time of crisis people will look at the management of the Sydney catchment and realise it went wrong with this legislation. I concur with the Hon. Steve Whan, who said that the State Water Corporation and the Sydney Catchment Authority serve different masters. They have different functions and should remain separate entities. The bill provides for the State Water Corporation to become Water NSW and abolishes the Sydney Catchment Authority and transfers all its functions to Water NSW. There will be one body with different functions.

The bill repeals the Sydney Water Catchment Act 1998 and the State Water Corporation Act 2004 and re-enacts their provisions with some modification in a consolidated form. The bill provides for certain regulatory functions under the proposed Act to be exercised by a regulatory authority and to make consequential amendments to certain other legislation. The Greens are extremely concerned, however, that this bill will place the safety and security of Sydney's drinking water supply at risk and will lead to the alienation of rural water users from decision-makers. The creation of a Sydney Catchment Authority to protect Sydney's drinking water catchments was a key recommendation of the McClellan inquiry following the 1998 Sydney water crisis when cryptosporidium and giardia contamination was detected in Sydney's drinking water.

Some of my family members became ill in that crisis. At that time people turned their attention to the management and regulation of water and, in good faith, assumed that the Government would handle it in a responsible and reasonable way. They would now be very concerned that this Government is undoing the framework that was put in place as a result of issues raised during the McClellan inquiry—which was not

referred to in the Minister's second reading speech. This legislation will impact on the economy, and the quality of life and health of millions of people in the Greater Sydney area. The McClellan inquiry found that the management of Sydney's catchments was inadequate and required a specialised agency that could coordinate the roles of a number of organisations, such as NSW Health and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, in order to ensure the provision of safe, clean drinking water to a city of four million people.

The 10-year review of the Sydney water inquiry conducted by the Hon. Barry O'Keefe in 2010 found that "the issues raised by the McClellan inquiry remain relevant and important today". Twelve years after the crisis and the McClellan inquiry in 2010, the O'Keefe review said that the issues raised in the inquiry remain relevant today. In order to fulfil this role, the Sydney Catchment Authority undertakes vital catchment monitoring, assesses and remediates threats to drinking water supplies, and provides advice and education on issues affecting water quality and quantity.

On the other hand, the State Water Authority was created to manage bulk water delivery in rural and regional New South Wales for uses such as town water supplies, stock and domestic purposes, irrigation, environmental purposes, industrial purposes and power generation. There is considerable disquiet in regional and rural New South Wales about cuts to the State Water Authority and about the remoteness of decision-makers. I draw to the attention of the House what is occurring in Broken Hill. To my knowledge, no other member of this House has referred to the water crisis in Broken Hill. The Broken Hill community has been told that because of decisions of the State Water Authority, the over-allocation, basically, of water to cotton growers in Queensland, and a failure of inflow into the Menindee Lakes they will have to move to using bore water.

Bores have a diminished water quality and are highly saline. Air conditioners, which are almost essential to living in Broken Hill, will deteriorate with the use of highly saline water. The people of Broken Hill believe that the authority is already letting them down. The Greens hope that the Minister for Natural Resources, Mr Kevin Humphries, and The Nationals pay attention to this issue and do not force that community to move to using bore water. I hope that the State Water Authority has a solution so that the community is not forced to use permanent bores. It must look at the management of the Menindee Lakes and the allocation of water in the Darling River system to ensure that this city of 30,000 people does not run out of water. I will continue to raise this issue in the House over summer.

The Hon. Rick Colless: You won't get much of a chance this summer to raise it in the House.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Unlike the Hon. Rick Colless, I will still be at work over summer. I will still be working away in this place.

The Hon. Rick Colless: So you will be here?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Absolutely I will be here in summer. I do not take a holiday as soon as Parliament rises. I stay here. Taxpayers pay me to work right up until Christmas and I will continue to work in Parliament during January and over summer. I will continue to raise the issue of a water crisis in Broken Hill on the floor of Parliament as I have just done and in my other work. It is crucial for water users, including irrigators, and the environment that the State Water Authority is representative of and services the different users and needs associated with bulk water provision in rural areas. Establishing a single board will reduce the relevant knowledge and skills available for ensuring that the primary roles and responsibilities of the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water are maintained.

Providing safe, clean drinking water to a city of millions of people is a vastly different role to that of the provision of bulk water in rural New South Wales for irrigators and the environment. Merging the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water will create a clash of organisational cultures and is likely to diminish the important role of the Sydney Catchment Authority and result in a reduction in the representation of rural water users. Both areas will be losers and, ultimately, everyone will see a reduction in service. Rural users will be further alienated from the authority that regulates water and a single entity will struggle to deal with all the issues that were formerly managed by specialist bodies.

Absorbing the Sydney Catchment Authority into NSW Water also will diminish the important advocacy role this organisation has played in protecting drinking water supplies from serious threats such as longwall mining and coal seam gas extraction. I wonder if there is a subtext to this move. The authority has been remarkably independent in its criticism of the threatening processes of longwall mining and petroleum

exploration in the special catchment areas. The Sydney Catchment Authority has made submission after submission on various development proposals. The test for the special catchment areas is that any development must be beneficial or neutral at worst.

The board has made submissions opposing coal seam gas exploration in the special catchment areas, stating that it was not beneficial or neutral but that it posed a risk—and it was right. The people of New South Wales, Sydney in particular, want their drinking water catchments protected from key threatening processes, whether they are abattoirs or mining operations or coal seam gas exploration. If any members have been to the special catchment area they would know that it is an incredible place because it is relatively pristine.

The Hon. Steve Whan: You are not allowed to walk in it.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: You are allowed to walk in there if you have permission.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Who gave you permission?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I certainly had permission. I put on the record that I had permission from the Sydney Catchment Authority to be in there.

The Hon. Niall Blair: We'll check that.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Check that, and I had better check that too because it is an \$11,000 fine; I know that much. I was escorted to this remarkable place, along with a number of journalists.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Did they have permission?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: They certainly had permission. It is a sandstone escarpment, with beautiful perched lakes, swamp areas, remnant vegetation, Aboriginal artefacts, beautiful gorges. It is absolutely remarkable, but it is being undermined by longwall mining that is causing subsidence and collapse of the escarpment. The goaf from longwall mining is causing this subsidence and that is diminishing the quantity of Sydney's drinking water supply. The Hon. Barry O'Farrell during his time as Premier recognised this as a major issue. He said he would take it to the election—no ifs no buts—and he would give a guarantee that there would be no mining in drinking water catchments. That commitment, as with the premiership of the Hon. Barry O'Farrell, has gone the way of all things. However, the principle remains that we cannot muck around with drinking water catchments, and the Sydney Water Catchment knows that.

This fiercely independent body has made submission after submission about key threatening processes in that catchment. These had potentially serious impacts. However, this body had the high level of expertise required to assess and provide advice on the impacts of current and proposed operations. Its scientific knowledge, its understanding of the infrastructure, the management of water and the threatening processes, based on the science, should be supported. The Greens will move an important amendment to the bill to prevent petroleum prospecting in those special catchment areas so that the people of New South Wales can have certainty that no oil and gas development will occur in their drinking water catchments. They will know that should the authority declare a special area now or in the future, drinking water catchments will be ruled out as areas for petroleum exploration and prospecting.

That is The Greens policy. If there are to be no-go zones for gas and oil exploration, drinking water catchment areas should be the first of those no-go zones. Indeed, the member for Heathcote, a Government member, has called for exactly that protection and the Opposition has moved that way also. Therefore, we seek support from the Opposition, the Shooters and Fishers Party and the Christian Democratic Party to support our amendment to ban coal seam gas exploration and prospecting in drinking water catchments. It is a reasonable minimum that the Government should support and goes a little way towards improving the bill, which we have major concerns with. As I stated at the outset, this bill will be revisited in the future by an inquiry or a review if it goes ahead and mistakes are made. People assume that governments will protect their water and air because it is intrinsic to good quality of life. It is a fundamental role and responsibility of government to make sure they get that right. The Greens believe that keeping the two bodies separate is the key to that and also that our amendment goes some way towards improving the bill.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [5.44 p.m.]: On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party I speak on the Water NSW Bill 2014. The Christian Democratic Party understands the bill has been developed to provide a

best practice governance structure for bulk water storage, release and supply, and catchment management functions across the State. The bill merges the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water Corporation into one State-owned corporation. This merger will enable the achievement of important public health outcomes through improved water quality, deliver efficiencies in water infrastructure management that will improve customer service outcomes and enable the rollout of much-needed capital investment in water infrastructure across New South Wales.

The key proposals in the bill will rename State Water Corporation as Water NSW; abolish the Sydney Catchment Authority and transfer its functions to Water NSW; consolidate the provisions of both the Sydney Water Catchment Management Act 1989 and State Water Corporation Act 2004 to ensure that the new corporation will be able to carry out the full range of functions that were carried out by the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water Corporation; provide for Water NSW to initially hold two operating licences, one for the Sydney catchment area and one to carry out its functions in relation to dam infrastructure in rural and regional New South Wales; and provide that the regulatory functions previously carried out by the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water Corporation will now be carried out by a "regulatory authority".

Water NSW will be able to leverage off the skills and experience of State Water Corporation to deliver improvements in water quality for towns across New South Wales. Irrigated agriculture will continue to benefit from the engineering and water management expertise that has been the core business of the State Water Corporation. The same qualified staff from both entities will continue to carry out functions under the new corporate structure. However, costs associated with the intensive management initiatives required in respect of the Sydney catchment area are ring-fenced by provisions of the bill in order to ensure that rural and regional water users do not subsidise those costs.

The bill attempts to provide a best practice governance structure for the provision of bulk water storage, release and supply, and catchment management functions across New South Wales. The manner in which the obligation to carry out functional responsibilities is linked in the bill to the terms of the operating licences granted under the proposed Act will allow for a scalable and flexible response to identified future needs for bulk water delivery. At this point I note that the legislation gives the Government great discretion for the rest of the State in being able to "allow other catchment areas to be declared in the future, where appropriate". I have not received or been made aware of any feedback on whether the Government has considered the potential impact that this may have for any smaller water authorities.

I note that there are about 100-plus water utilities across New South Wales and no doubt some might be very nervous about the meaning of that clause. It will be up to the Government to explain the meaning. From the conversations I have had, people do not have an overwhelming issue with the clause but would prefer to have it defined a little more clearly. I am unaware of the ramifications of this bill for councils that are local water utilities. I await that clarification. I have one of the best water utilities in Australia, Shoalhaven Water, which is very well managed.

It was rumoured amongst the local government area that the previous Labor Government was trying to package everything up in an attempt to sell and water utilities across the State that were struggling would be embraced by bigger, more successful water utilities. Under the guidance of John Gould, the former Chief Executive Officer, Shoalhaven Water has built an excellent record in delivering water infrastructure to the State. He and his successor, Carmel Krogh, had an exemplary ability to manage the water assets of Shoalhaven. Their abilities are widely used across the nation and globally.

The Christian Democratic Party is concerned about the ratepayers—the people who have paid for the infrastructure to go into the ground, the pipes, the water, the pump stations et cetera. When Mr Rees addressed the Local Government Association about water utilities we raised the point that it would be unfair to transfer bad management to a local area. If ratepayers have done the right thing by paying for infrastructure, they should not be burdened with a cost-shifting mechanism to subsidise a badly managed local water utility. Water utilities age in the same way that other infrastructure across New South Wales ages—whether it be roads, bridges or aviation infrastructure. Local councils are already struggling to meet the needs of asset maintenance and are always trying to fund a buck to maintain assets. Water utilities are no different; they need to be paid for.

Reducing water utilities across New South Wales is not optimal. The taxpayers and ratepayers of New South Wales deserve the best water supply maintenance systems and assets and should get fair value for their money. When one is trying to reduce overheads a merger can be more efficient and good for the consumer. We understand the need to do that but the Christian Democratic Party has concerns that, in merging the Sydney

Catchment Authority with Water NSW, the objectives of the Sydney Catchment Authority [SCA] should remain as part of the operating procedures. Those objectives are important and must be met in any merger with Water NSW.

The Greens have foreshadowed that they will move an amendment relating to the need for no mining or prospecting in special areas. We have asked the Government to define what this might mean in respect of "special areas". The Parliamentary Secretary will address both our concerns about the objectives of the SCA and the amendment The Greens have foreshadowed it will move during the Committee stage. The Christian Democratic Party cautiously supports the Water NSW Bill 2014. We will be watching with interest that the legislation is to ensure efficiencies and better management of water utilities and not an opportunity to flog them off in the long term.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS [5.53 p.m.]: I support the Water NSW Bill 2014. The member for Liverpool in the other place was concerned that the focus of Water NSW will be on issues related to the Sydney catchment, to the detriment of rural and regional New South Wales. That is simply not the case. Nor will people in the bush be paying for catchment management activities that are carried out in the Sydney catchment. The functions that Water NSW will carry out in respect of the Sydney catchment area will be ring-fenced from those it carries out in respect of the remainder of the State. This change to a single corporate entity focused on the provision and protection of bulk water emphasises the importance of the critical objectives for bulk water in New South Wales. These include ensuring that dam operations support rural towns and irrigated agriculture through increased efficiency and improved service outcomes. That is what the bill is about.

The role of Water NSW includes important public health and safety objectives in maintaining water quality. The existing protections conferred on the Sydney catchment special areas are maintained without change. It is important to note that the provisions of the bill will enable similar protections to be put in place in other catchments to maintain water quality in rural and regional drinking water catchments.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham spoke about Broken Hill. I am not sure whether he has been to Broken Hill, but over the years I have spent many weeks working with the Broken Hill community. The member made the comment that Broken Hill has a population of 30,000 people. The population of Broken Hill did reach 30,000 people, but that was in the 1960s when mining was going well in Broken Hill. Today the population of Broken Hill—the member is deliberately not listening to this because he does not want to hear it—is 18,500, according to the Census figures. I do not know how the member gets the figure of 30,000 people. That was the figure back in the 1960s. He is accusing us of living in the past, but he is living in the 1960s.

The other thing that has impacted on Broken Hill is that The Greens' policies have cruelled rural industries in the west, the Far West, the Central West, the South West and the North West. In communities all around New South Wales people are reeling from the policies of The Greens and Labor over the 16 years that they were in power. We are still suffering as a result.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The Government is ensuring that rural and regional communities will be able to benefit from improved catchment management initiatives. The member opposite tried to make out that he knew something about the concept of catchments, catchment management and so on. He talked about drinking water catchments. He does not realise that, no matter where we walk in New South Wales, we are in a catchment—as we are now. We are in catchments all the time.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: No, there are lots of catchments where you do not capture drinking water.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: There are a lot of catchments where people use the water in those catchments for drinking. The member opposite talks about the management of Menindee Lakes. The funny thing about this is that rivers usually only run when it rains and the Menindee Lakes only fill up when the Darling River runs.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: That's not true, it's fed by groundwater. You are wrong.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The Menindee Lakes only fill up when the Darling River runs and the Darling River only runs when it rains. That is a fundamental issue that the member opposite needs to

understand. The problem with the management of the Menindee Lakes is that the previous Government developed a plan that had been designed, redesigned and proposed for many years. According to that plan, works would be carried out in the Menindee Lakes that could be done only while the lakes were dry. That work should have been done 15 years ago.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: In the drought.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: The work should have been carried out in the drought when, for 10 years, the lakes were dry. That was the time to do it, but the previous Government and The Greens procrastinated. They did not want that work done and still do not want the full job completed. The Greens still do not believe that work should be done. This bill will deliver better water quality to towns across New South Wales, which will lead to important public health improvements. There will be no cross-subsidisation by rural and regional water users for the cost of the intensive catchment management initiatives that are required to maintain the health and safety of the Sydney drinking water supply.

At the commencement of the proposed Act there will be two operating licences—one for the Sydney catchment area and one that regulates the functions now carried out by the State Water Corporation in respect of rural and regional dams. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal will deliver a price determination for the Sydney catchment area and separate price determinations for regional areas will be delivered by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. This bill will provide widespread benefits for public health and safety, water quality and healthy water catchments to all areas of the State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD [6.00 p.m.]: The Water NSW Bill 2014 provides for a range of functions for the management of catchment areas to ensure water quality and public health and safety. The special catchment management functions apply only in declared catchment areas, and only one catchment area has been declared—the Sydney catchment area. All catchment management functions provided for in the bill must be carried out in respect of the Sydney catchment area. Contrary to concerns raised in the other place, there will be no adverse impact on water quality as a result of the merger of the Sydney Catchment Authority and the State Water Corporation. Existing authority staff will continue to carry out the same functions in relation to the Sydney catchment area under the same rigorous controls and protections. Catchment health indicators and catchment audits will continue to be required in the Sydney catchment area. Water NSW will be required to evaluate the findings of a catchment audit and incorporate them in its risk framework, its programs and other activities relating to catchment management.

A multi-barrier approach is used to protect water quality as recommended in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2011. This approach recognises that, while individual barriers may not completely prevent or remove contamination, multiple barriers collectively provide a greater assurance that water will be safe to drink. The actions taken in the catchment to reduce the risks to water quality and to improve catchment health will be outlined in the new Water NSW Healthy Catchment Strategy. This strategy will set the priorities for several years and outline the work and activity required to address priority areas. One of the benefits of the merger will be that rural and regional communities will now be able to obtain the benefit of Sydney Catchment Authority expertise in managing catchments to ensure the highest drinking water standards. This Government is focused on being positive, not dragging down rural areas. This legislation is designed to put everyone on the same footing.

The merger of the Sydney Catchment Authority and State Water as proposed in the bill will allow for the shared expertise of these two entities in catchment management and dam operation to be directed towards improving water quality across rural and regional New South Wales and other environmental outcomes. The bill provides for scalable catchment management initiatives to be rolled out in respect of other catchment areas where they are most needed. It provides a flexible and responsive architecture that will allow other catchment areas to be declared in future where appropriate. If catchment management initiatives are required in a rural catchment, it will be possible for that catchment to become a declared catchment for management purposes. Upon that declaration a range of powers can be triggered under the new legislation. Audits will be conducted in respect of these indicators every three years. Catchment health indicators and catchment audits will continue to be required in the Sydney catchment area.

Water NSW will be required to evaluate the findings of a catchment audit and incorporate those findings in its risk framework, programs and other activities relating to catchment management. The Governor may declare an area of land to be a special area in order to provide special protection for the quality of stored waters or to maintain the ecological integrity of the land. Where a special area is declared, the bill provides for a heightened range of controls. These include controls that may be imposed by regulation, such as restrictions on

the types of activities that may be carried out in the special area. These controls will ensure the protection of water quality and the ecological integrity of the protected area. It is disappointing that The Greens will not support the ecological integrity of our special areas.

Plans of management for each special area must be prepared. They will provide the strategic framework for shared planning and delivery of land management activities within the special areas. All the existing regularly controls that apply to the Sydney catchment area will be continued. The Sydney Catchment Management Regulation has simply been renamed the Water NSW Regulation. Regulations may be made in the future for the protection of the other special areas that may be declared. This will ensure that the Government has the means to respond rapidly and effectively to changing needs across regional New South Wales. In a similar vein, the bill allows the Governor to issue an order declaring an area of land owned by or vested in Water NSW to be a declared area. The powers governing declared catchment areas and special and controlled areas will ensure that the best protections are in place to protect water quality, to restrict harmful activities and to help manage our natural resources. I commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [6.05 p.m.]: I support the Water NSW Bill 2014. It contains a number of provisions that regulate activities in and around dams and catchment areas. It provides that all the regulatory functions carried out by the Sydney Catchment Authority and the State Water Corporation will now be carried out by the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority is the Minister or a statutory body or agency nominated by the Minister. The bill will enable more than one regulatory authority to be nominated in order to leverage off the existing expertise across government in the bulk water sector and to ensure the best possible regulatory outcomes. It is anticipated that the NSW Office of Water will be nominated to carry out the prosecution functions presently provided to the Sydney Catchment Authority. However, compliance and planning functions relating to water quality and catchment management will be carried out by Water NSW as the nominated regulatory authority. This is sensible because Water NSW has staff transferred from the Sydney Catchment Authority with relevant experience and expertise in this regard.

However, to ensure that probity is maintained, Water NSW is not permitted to grant concurrence or approval in respect of its own development. Furthermore, the Minister for Water will maintain ultimate responsibility for overseeing the manner in which regulatory functions are exercised as the Minister administering the Act. The bill ensures that the exercise of these regulatory functions will be transparent and accountable by requiring nominated regulatory authorities to provide detailed annual reports about how regulatory functions have been exercised. These reports must be tabled in Parliament.

If there are concerns about the manner in which any regulatory function is exercised, it will be possible for the administering Minister to withdraw the nomination at any time. In addition, a number of other agencies play an important role under other legislation that will ensure that water quality standards are maintained and that bulk water is supplied to rural and regional communities in accordance with established rules. The current regulator of bulk water is the NSW Office of Water. It has the responsibility for water sharing, monitoring of water quality and water management in rivers and groundwater. This role is not disturbed by the bill. Similarly, the Environment Protection Authority will continue its role of providing important oversight in relation to pollution of water sources through the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

NSW Health retains its public health regulatory role in respect of provision of drinking waters. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] will have a range of regulatory functions for Water NSW. Some of these responsibilities relate to the operating licence, such as making recommendations regarding the operating licence to the Minister and determining the operating licence fee. The tribunal will monitor and report to the Minister on compliance with the operating licence and will impose monetary penalties if the licence is contravened. The bill requires the tribunal to conduct operational audits of Water NSW, reporting to both the Minister and Parliament.

IPART will also be responsible for determining the price of water delivered by Water NSW along the New South Wales coast, including to Sydney. Through the use of a regulatory authority, the bill provides a mechanism that will ensure that the regulatory functions will be carried out by the body or agency that has the most appropriate relevant experience and expertise, in an open and accountable way. This is a great bill from a great Government and I commend it to the House.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Parliamentary Secretary) [6.09 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay, in reply: I thank all members for their contribution to the debate, in particular the Hon. Steve Whan, Mr Jeremy Buckingham, the Hon. Paul Green, the Hon. Rick Colless, Mr Scot MacDonald and the Hon. David Clarke. The Water NSW Bill 2014 provides the critical mass to further develop the skills, knowledge and experience needed

to meet the increasing challenges of water management and water infrastructure in the future. The bill will bring together two equals, the Sydney Catchment Authority and the State Water Corporation, into a modern and responsive service provider.

Water NSW will give priority to the protection of catchments associated with bulk water storages and will provide a consistent approach to water quality solutions and water supply modelling. Existing monitoring, regulatory and reporting regimes in relation to water quality will be maintained. By uniting water quality, dam management, flood mitigation and catchment management skills and expertise, this new and stronger organisation will ensure the highest quality and the most efficient service to customers across New South Wales. The new structure will assist the New South Wales Government to anticipate, plan and react to environmental issues such as drought, flood and water quality.

A number of issues were raised by the Hon. Paul Green. In regard to the role of the Sydney Catchment Authority, I assure the House that the protections provided by the authority will not in any way be compromised. In fact, the catchment protections that are provided with Sydney's water catchment area can and will, where appropriate, be extended to other water catchments in New South Wales. This expertise in catchment management should be to the benefit of all water users in New South Wales. Extending it to catchments beyond the Sydney Basin will not water it down. In relation to protection of the Shoalhaven catchment, the majority of the water management areas feeding the Shoalhaven area are already part of the Sydney catchment area, and their designation as special areas will remain unchanged. For the small area downstream of Tallowa Dam to have the same restrictions on access that apply in Sydney catchment areas, this bill extends and strengthens water quality protocols for that area.

It is interesting that The Greens intend to oppose this bill as I have been informed that they voted with the Government to support it in the other place, which is inconsistent and shows they are at sixes and sevens on a number of issues. They have foreshadowed that they will move amendments to the bill although when they were in league with the Labor Party petroleum exploration licences were issued for some of these areas. They are now backflipping, which is a bit rich. The creation of Water NSW will see improved catchment management and water quality arrangements and measures rolled out to catchments beyond the Sydney drinking water catchment, which will result in an improvement in regional water quality outcomes. I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes, 21

Mr Ajaka	Miss Gardiner	Reverend Nile
Mr Blair	Mr Green	Mrs Pavey
Mr Borsak	Mr Khan	Mr Pearce
Mr Brown	Mr Lynn	
Mr Clarke	Mr MacDonald	
Ms Cusack	Mrs Maclaren-Jones	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Ficarra	Mr Mason-Cox	Mr Colless
Mr Gallacher	Mrs Mitchell	Dr Phelps

Noes, 18

Ms Barham	Mr Primrose	Mr Whan
Mr Buckingham	Mr Searle	Mr Wong
Ms Cotsis	Mr Secord	
Mr Donnelly	Ms Sharpe	
Dr Faruqi	Mr Shoebridge	<i>Tellers,</i>
Dr Kaye	Mr Veitch	Ms Fazio
Mr Moselmane	Ms Westwood	Ms Voltz

Pair

Mr Gay

Mr Foley

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The CHAIR (The Hon. Jennifer Gardiner): There being no objection, the Committee will deal with the bill as a whole.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [6.21 p.m.]: I move The Greens amendment No. 1 on sheet C2014-147:

No. 1 **No mining or prospecting in special areas**

Page 25. Insert after line 39:

50 No mining or prospecting for petroleum in special areas

A petroleum title under the *Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991* must not be granted or renewed in relation to land within a special area.

This amendment tests the Government on its commitment to protecting special areas. This amendment would ensure that a petroleum title under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 could not be granted or renewed in relation to land within a special area—no ifs, no buts, just a guarantee that no petroleum title will be renewed or granted in those areas that are considered so important to drinking water quality that they are designated as special areas.

The entire Sydney catchment area is not designated as a special area; only an insignificant proportion of thousands of hectares is designated as a special area. A special area is an area in which activity would have a neutral or beneficial effect. It is clear that prospecting for petroleum or gas in our drinking water catchments is not a neutral activity; it is certainly not beneficial to water quality and there are high risks associated with it. This amendment specifies that a petroleum title under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act 1991 must not be granted or renewed within a special area. This is entirely appropriate as special areas are our most precious drinking water catchments and are declared for either or both of the following purposes: to protect the quality of stored water whether intended for drinking or other purposes, and/or to maintain the ecological integrity of an area of land to be declared to be a special area in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of Water NSW.

The amendment does not cancel any existing petroleum licence but it prevents the Minister from renewing or modifying a licence. The amendment implements the famous Coalition promise before the last election that the next Liberal-Nationals Government will ensure that mining cannot occur in water catchment areas and that mining leases and mining exploration permits will reflect that common sense—no ifs, no buts, but an ironclad guarantee. This amendment does not preclude long-wall coalmining and it does not relate to the mining of minerals; it deals only with titles under the Petroleum (Onshore) Act, which includes coal seam gas, unconventional gas and oil.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Do you want to start taking out other minerals?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: As a very first step the Government can ban coal seam gas mining in some of our drinking water catchments. The Government could say that there will be no gas development in a tiny fraction of the State because gas development in water catchments has all kinds of risks associated with it. Produced water high in salt can contain toxic radioactive compounds and heavy metals. There are risks associated with the fracking process, the drilling, the potential for spills, and vehicular movements. Large volumes of contaminated water are stored in holding ponds that are at risk of leaking or overflowing and releasing contaminants into the environment. The coal seam gas industry has conceded that extraction will inevitably contaminate aquifers. Ross Dunn from the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association told a public meeting in Sydney that good management could minimise the risks of water contamination but never eliminate them, which is recognised by the Sydney Catchment Authority.

The Federal Government's WaterGroup estimates that the industry will draw at least 666 gigalitres and up to 5,400 gigalitres of water out of the ground each year. As a comparison, Australian households use 1,872 gigalitres of water a year. The CSIRO has said that coal seam gas is a risk to surface and groundwater and will result in aquifer drawdown. The National Water Commission says that coal seam gas development represents a substantial industrialisation of the landscapes for roads, well pads, pipelines, compressor stations, wastewater storage ponds and is a risk to sustainable water management. In a designated special area one cannot bushwalk and one cannot ride a trail bike.

The Hon. Robert Brown: You can't hunt.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: People cannot hunt; they are physically not allowed to enter special areas. Yet the Government and those who would vote against this amendment—

The Hon. Rick Colless: But you admit that you went in there.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Not without authority. People cannot even walk in a special area without risking an \$11,000 fine. This amendment will ensure that coal seam gas exploration cannot be undertaken in those areas that are so special that one is not allowed to walk in them. It is a reasonable amendment on any test. I implore the Government to put aside its ideological differences with The Greens and recognise that this is a reasonable amendment. I commend the amendment to the Committee.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [6.27 p.m.]: I take the member's word for it that his amendment is within the leave of the bill, but as the member only brought the amendment to our attention six minutes ago it appears to me that this is a rushed amendment. I refer the member to the recent findings of none other than the Chief Scientist and Engineer in New South Wales.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Parliamentary Secretary) [6.28 p.m.]: The Government opposes the amendment. There is an existing moratorium on mining in the special areas of the catchment. During debate on this bill the Minister assured the House that that will continue. The amendment mentions mining. The Government is not singling out a particular type of extraction, but this amendment does. The member is trying to score some points in one area. Mining and prospecting includes petroleum. Listing just one resource effectively precludes other resources. Mr Jeremy Buckingham argued that this is a special area, yet his amendment picks on only one type of mining. He said that it may include others and that it is just the start. If The Greens are fair dinkum about that they will support the Government on its existing moratorium on mining in those special areas. The Minister is committed to that moratorium and has consulted with the Sydney Catchment Authority and other key stakeholders on the issue. That is why the Government opposes the amendment.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [6.29 p.m.]: The Opposition has a clearly stated policy in New South Wales that it wants coal seam gas exploration and extraction banned within the special areas of the Sydney Catchment Authority. We announced that policy some time ago and, from memory, the Leader of the Opposition sought to introduce legislation to implement that. We have that policy for good reasons. The special areas are small areas. As Mr Jeremy Buckingham said, people are severely restricted in their ability to enter those areas and go walking.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Which he did, with permission.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: People can go in and walk, with permission. We will have to take Mr Jeremy Buckingham's word for that.

The Hon. Niall Blair: We'll be checking.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Over many years we have heard that there is limited access to these areas, even for emergency services. The issue was raised with me when I was emergency services Minister. That is all about preventing and reducing disturbance to the ground, which could produce runoff and sediment in the drinking water catchments. It is completely inconsistent then to allow drilling or any other activity that would involve disturbance of the ground in those areas. I note the Government's response. It is quite different to talk about mining because mining is already taking place under these areas. We have made it clear that we do not support closing those mines. We are most concerned about surface disturbance in the area, which is why the area is protected by designation as a special area under the Sydney Catchment Authority Act. As such, the Opposition will support The Greens amendment because it is consistent with the position that the Opposition has publicly stated.

Question—That The Greens amendment No. 1 [C2014-147] be agreed to—put.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 18

Ms Barham	Mr Searle	Mr Whan
Mr Buckingham	Mr Secord	Mr Wong
Ms Cotsis	Ms Sharpe	
Mr Donnelly	Mr Shoebridge	
Ms Fazio	Mr Veitch	<i>Tellers,</i>
Mr Moselmane	Ms Voltz	Dr Faruqi
Mr Primrose	Ms Westwood	Dr Kaye

Noes, 21

Mr Ajaka	Mr Green	Reverend Nile
Mr Blair	Mr Harwin	Mrs Pavey
Mr Borsak	Mr Khan	Mr Pearce
Mr Brown	Mr Lynn	
Mr Clarke	Mr MacDonald	
Ms Cusack	Mrs Maclaren-Jones	<i>Tellers,</i>
Ms Ficarra	Mr Mason-Cox	Mr Colless
Mr Gallacher	Mrs Mitchell	Dr Phelps

Pair

Mr Foley

Mr Gay

Question resolved in the negative.**The Greens amendment No. 1 [C2014-147] negatived.****Title agreed to.****Question—That this bill as read be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.****Bill as read agreed to.****Bill reported from Committee without amendment.****Adoption of Report****Motion by the Hon. Niall Blair, on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay, agreed to:**

That the report be adopted.

Report adopted.**Third Reading****Motion by the Hon. Niall Blair, on behalf of the Hon. Duncan Gay, agreed to:**

That this bill be now read a third time.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for the Illawarra) [6.42 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones): Order! There is a far too much noise in the Chamber. I suggest that members who want to continue discussions should leave the Chamber.

KINGS HIGHWAY

The Hon. STEVE WHAN [6.42 p.m.]: Last weekend a couple of hundred delegates attended the Country Labor Conference in Queanbeyan. During the conference a \$60 million minimum funding commitment was made to the Kings Highway by the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Minister for Roads and Ports and me. That will equate to at least \$15 million per year to the Kings Highway, a critical link for our region. The Kings Highway runs from Queanbeyan down to the South Coast and is used very frequently by our local residents who commute to Canberra for work and by people from Canberra heading to the coast on the weekends. It is a busy highway on which people, most importantly, need to drive carefully.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: They should pay a toll.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: I acknowledge the Government Whip's interjection that there should be a toll for people from Canberra—and perhaps a gate. No, I did not say that. The Kings Highway is a critical link that needs a long-term substantial funding commitment. An amount of \$15 million a year should be a minimum spend on this road for a number of years. Over the past few years this Government's commitment to the highway has been inconsistent at best. Unfortunately, we have seen a huge amount of spin relating to funding of this highway, particularly in this place this week and in media releases from the Minister for Roads and Freight. This week the Minister said quite falsely that this Government was providing record funding for the Kings Highway.

This year the Government is providing \$15.6 million, but that is the most it has made available since it came to government. In the Government's first three years the funding for the highway was significantly less. Some people might see it as cynical that \$15.6 million has been allocated for the Kings Highway this year and only \$9.5 million next year with no ongoing funding commitment from then on. I suspect that people who think that is cynical might be right. The Australian Labor Party believes that it needs a consistent allocation, as we said in the lead-up to the 2011 election, over four years. In fact, the record funding so far in a single year from a State Government for the Kings Highway was \$17.5 million in 2008-09 by the former Labor Government. The record amount of funding spent in a single year on the highway was the combined total of funding from three levels of Labor governments—the Australian Capital Territory, the Commonwealth and New South Wales—when the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory chipped in \$26.3 million in 2007-08.

Out of that funding we have seen significant improvements to the highway. When I was the local member, seven new overtaking lanes were built on the Kings Highway between Queanbeyan and Clyde Mountain. This Government is just starting construction of its first overtaking lane on the Kings Highway. It is simply not good enough. Previously we saw a significant widening of the road and improvements to areas but there is still a lot to do, particularly in the area between Mongarlowe River and Clyde Mountain which has a 90 kilometres per hour speed limit and needs to be widened and improved. We need additional overtaking lanes but, most importantly, we need a consistent commitment.

It is incredibly disappointing for the people of our region that in response to Labor's commitment of at least \$60 million in funding—not a massive, unaffordable increase but a realistic amount of \$15 million per year to the Kings Highway—this Government has not matched it but said that its allocation of \$20 million is enough. Local residents simply do not agree that \$20 million allocated by this Government over several years is enough to improve the highway. It needs a lot more funding. It is embarrassing for Government members to claim a positive record on the Kings Highway when their record is clearly one overtaking lane, construction of which has just commenced. When I was the local member we provided seven overtaking lanes in the Monaro stretch of the Kings Highway.

The Country Labor Conference welcomed that announcement and also discussed a number of other very important matters, including our concerns about the \$7 general practitioner tax and its impact on regional hospitals and the Commonwealth Government's lack of commitment to the National Broadband Network. Very importantly, the Country Labor Conference brought a couple of hundred hungry and thirsty guests to Queanbeyan who stayed in our local hotels. It resulted in a very big night for the Royal Hotel last Saturday night and for other places around the area and they gave a significant economic boost to the region.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: You should have taken them to the railway pub.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: And Walsh's hotel on Friday night, by the way. As well, the delegates doorknocked a couple of hundred houses to assist our campaign.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [6.47 p.m.]: On Friday 31 October Sydney's Hyde Park hosted Reclaim the Night, an annual international event which actively campaigns against all forms of violence against women. In New York city anti-street harassment group Hollaback filmed a woman being harassed or catcalled 108 times over 10 hours. Although I note the criticism of this film for showing overwhelmingly African Americans and Latinos as the perpetrators, the subject has stated that she was harassed by people of all races. The threat of violence against women is ever-present, whether it is street harassment, the risk of walking home alone at night and being physically and/or sexually assaulted or the risk of domestic violence at home.

More recently, Muslim women have been the target of assault and abuse because of the way they choose to dress, whether it is in a hijab, niqab, burqa or other forms of veiling. We are facing very dark times at the moment. There have been dozens of attacks on Muslim women in our streets and in our communities. A Muslim woman's arm was broken after being pushed onto a road in an unprovoked racist attack in Melbourne's north. A brick was thrown at a mother and her three children in Greenacre. Two women were attacked while driving in Newcastle. This is on top of reported cases of verbal abuse in doctors' surgeries, playgrounds and shopping centres.

The debate around the banning of the burqa unfortunately has resurfaced. Some have claimed that this debate is about liberating Muslim women, but so far it has only succeeded in further restricting women from public life through the violence and intimidation it has ushered in. We have to ask the question: Why has a piece of clothing become a raging political debate? Is it just a way to create a fear of differences and give legitimacy to those in our society who have bigoted, prejudiced and racist views? It seems that everyone has an opinion on Muslim women. I wonder how many have actually met and talked to a Muslim woman, especially one who chooses to wear a veil.

Last week I had the pleasure of launching Dr Sahar Amer's book entitled *What is Veiling?* I had a conversation with her about her research and thoughts on this topic. I can highly recommend this book to anyone wanting to find out more about the religious, historical, cultural and geopolitical practices of veiling, which is definitely not limited to Muslim women. One of the topics we discussed was the stereotypical view that somehow a woman who wears a veil has no agency and is oppressed. Sahar explores a multiplicity of complex reasons why a woman might choose to wear a veil, including piety, spirituality and modesty. Many American Muslim women are increasingly adopting veiling and insisting on the public display of their religious identity in the face of expanding Islamophobia and discrimination. It is their choice to do so.

The concept of choice is also worthwhile exploring as it ranges from American-style individualism to an emphasis on group allegiance to larger communities to assert a sense of belonging. Both these choices are valid and should be respected. Of course, no-one can deny that some women may be under pressure to veil but the bottom line is: How is forcing a woman not to wear a piece of clothing any different from forcing her to wear one? Both positions take away her right to freedom of choice. The burqa ban fiasco may seem trivial or distracting on the surface but it is incredibly revealing of what some in the political class think about who is on so-called Team Australia and who is not.

This is a time to stand up and unite as a community that values our multicultural society in all the diverse and different ways it adds richness and uniqueness to our State and country. We must say a loud and clear no to discrimination, bigotry and violence against women, whether it is attacks while walking home after a night out, increasing rates of domestic violence in the home, or being physically or verbally attacked for wearing a veil. Women need to reclaim the night but we also need to reclaim all our public spaces where a woman can wear whatever she chooses without the threat of violence or intimidation.

ILLICIT DRUGS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES [6.51 p.m.]: This evening I speak on the disturbing rise of illicit drug use in Australia, the weak drug policy of harm minimisation and the loose term "recreational drug use". This year our country reached an international low. According to the United Nations 2014 World Drug Report, Australia is leading the world in the use of ecstasy, third in the use of methamphetamines and fourth in the use of cocaine. The availability of drugs and the complacency of governments about the pro-drug agenda have led to the increase in illicit drug use by younger generations. The replacement of the word "illicit" with "recreational drug use" by the pro-drug elites has led to a society that condemns the legal use of tobacco whilst remaining indifferent to illicit drug use.

The debate on harm minimisation is clouded by the ill-defined terms and the greatest point of difference when it comes to illicit drug policy is between those who advocate for a drug user being free of drugs and those who see continued use as acceptable. The problem is that we have allowed the self-appointed drug policy experts to hijack the debate, advocating for an acceptable level of illicit drug use. The annual Illicit Drug Data Report is produced by the Australian Crime Commission and provides a statistical overview of illicit drug arrests and seizures, as well as profiling the current situation, the national impact and the emerging trends and threats of illicit drugs in Australia.

The 2012-13 report highlights the rise of drug use in Australia and the involvement of organised criminals in the operation of drug use and distribution. It has been reported that organised crime costs our community up to \$15 billion a year and the illicit drug market remains the principal source of income for organised criminals. Surprising and disturbing is the record 86,918 illicit drugs seizures reported nationally in 2012-13. This is a 66.4 per cent increase in over a decade and the weight of illicit drugs seized nationally has increased 75 per cent in the last decade. Furthermore, 10 years on, arrests have increased by 27.2 per cent, from 80,020 to a record 101,749. The public have a right to be concerned about the rising levels of illicit drugs, particularly ice and crystal methamphetamine.

Despite ice being a problem for decades we unfortunately do not have comprehensive statistics. With greater awareness we are now seeing more reports of the devastating effects that ice is having in our community, particularly in regional communities. Results from the Australian Crime Commission Illicit Drug Data Report reveal disturbingly that methamphetamine use in Australia is up more than 300 per cent in the past 12 months. This is based on the number of ice seizures. Ice is part of the amphetamine family of drugs, which also includes speed. It is the most pure and potent form of amphetamine and is crystallised. It can be swallowed, smoked, snorted or injected. It is easily accessible and affordable and with its destructive side-effects has been likened to crack cocaine, which has caused significant problems in other countries, particularly the United States.

According to the Australian Department of Health ice produces a very intense rush that can last hours. Ice users experience a feeling of exhilaration and increased activity levels. Ice users may also experience panic attacks, anxiety and aggression. When ice is used, the receptors in the brain are flooded with monoamines. As more is taken, these receptors can be destroyed. Prolonged ice use can lead to the point where the user no longer feels pleasure without further ice use. Because the high experience from ice is much more intense, it is highly addictive. Unfortunately, powerful responses follow these intense reactions. As the user is coming down the user may experience depression, radical mood swings, uncontrollable violence and exhaustion, with the potential for addiction and chronic physical and mental problems.

I have witnessed a drug-induced psychotic episode of an ice user coming down and the sheer strength of the man, who was able to pull a hand rail off a hospital wall; it was terrifying. I remember eight to 10 security and nursing staff were needed to sedate him. We are now seeing more and more isolation rooms being set up in emergency departments and psychiatric units to deal with the increasing numbers of patients presenting and, unfortunately, it is the front-line staff who have to deal with this problem. There have been a number of reported instances over the past 12 months of ice-addicted people being involved in violent assaults and attempted murders and causing fatal car accidents. Our weak drug policy of harm minimisation advocated since the 1980s and the promotion of the term "recreational drug use" have contributed to the surge of illicit drug use in our society.

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD GOUGH WHITLAM, QC, AC, A FORMER PRIME MINISTER

The Hon. ERNEST WONG [6.56 p.m.]: This morning we paid our last respects to former Prime Minister, the Hon. Gough Whitlam—honourable indeed. It was a celebration of the life of a giant of Australian politics. I was joined at Sydney Town Hall by members of State and Federal parliaments from both sides and diplomats, including the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Mr Ma Zhaoxu, and the Consul General, Mr Li Huaxin, together with thousands of people who came to farewell the former Prime Minister. Since Mr Whitlam's passing on 21 October 2014, at the age of 98, tributes have flowed from across the generations and across the political spectrum. It is truly touching and is an illustration that what Australians have in common is far greater, and more golden, than what divides us.

This is something Gough Whitlam himself believed and practised and it is timely that modern Australia should be reminded of this. Indeed, it is very timely. Whitlam relied on the optimism and intelligence of Australians to establish a vision for a better and more progressive nation. It was not a vision without risk or cost but he appealed to our desire to take the chance to pursue something greater rather than our desire to cling to

what we have. It was through a positive, progressive and optimistic agenda that he led Labor out of the Federal wilderness and into office. It was through the same positive, progressive and optimistic agenda, combined with a relentless appetite for prosecuting change, that he created the most sweeping reforms to Australian government since Federation. While Whitlam's term of government was not long, the legacies of it remain decades later. As former Prime Minister Julia Gillard put it, while the man himself is dead his vision is alive. She said:

Gough will live always in our nation, which he transformed. He is alive in our universities and the many lives he changed by giving free access to university education ... Alive in Medicare and the uniquely Australian health system we now take for granted. Alive in our suburbs and in our family law. Alive in our relationship with China and our multicultural society. Alive in our embrace of land rights for Indigenous Australians and our hope for a truly reconciled future.

Indeed, Gough Whitlam created an Australia that made it possible for me to be here—the Australia that valued tertiary education, the Australia that recognised diversity for its enormous economic potential and the Australia that opened itself to China and the rest of the world. The excitement, potential and diversity were all palpable and deeply enthralling and these things define the character of Australia in the post-Whitlam era. I pay special attention to Whitlam's unique and world-leading role in pioneering Australia's modern relationship with China. It was characteristic of Mr Whitlam's long-term vision that he saw beyond the then hiatus in the Australia-China relationship.

Whitlam instead looked both to the past—at the heritage of the Chinese Australian contribution that had helped in building this nation from the early nineteenth century—and to the future, in which he was the first to sense, correctly, that the twenty-first century would be dominated by growth in the Asian region. Seeing both these things and having a long-term view to Australia's interests, Whitlam—the then Opposition leader—broke ahead of other world leaders to visit then Premier Zhou Enlai. It was a staggering demonstration of both his belief in Australia and his capacity to lead Australia. Whitlam's bold and forward-thinking engagement with China has been commented on regularly since his passing, even by those of the most un-Whitlam-esque political persuasions. For example, Tom Switzer, the well-known conservative economics commentator, has noted:

Whatever doubts conservatives have raised about Gough's domestic and foreign policies, there is no question the Prime Minister deserves high praise for his overtures to China.

He not only spectacularly wrong-footed Liberal Prime Minister Bill McMahon and even preceded Richard Nixon's historic visit, he established one of our nation's most important diplomatic relationships that has helped guarantee a prosperous Australia that is fully engaged in east Asia.

I concur with Mr Switzer on this point. It was Whitlam's visit that, in tandem with his official recognition of China on his election, decisively secured Australia's trading priority and positive partnership with China. This is a partnership that continues to benefit generations of Australian workers, businesses and communities to this day. And while this is a legacy that the Chinese Australian community rightly celebrates, it is but one of the many legacies of a bold and brilliant man who strived constantly for a bolder and more brilliant Australia. I thank him and commend him for the Australia he forged—the Australia I know and love.

SHINE PROGRAM

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [7.01 p.m.]: I speak tonight on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party about an active solution that is helping young people to deal with the challenges they are faced with today. Victor Hugo wrote, "He who opens a school door closes a prison". Many of our young people today are searching for identity and feel imprisoned amidst issues of low self-esteem, lack of confidence, hopelessness and the pressure of living in a fast-paced electronic age. It therefore comes as no surprise that one in four young Australians have a mental health condition and suicide is known to be the biggest killer of our young people aged 15 to 24.

What are we doing as a nation to address these growing problems? Why are we not teaching our young people to have a greater understanding of their identity, intrinsic worth, strengths and purpose? We must equip our youth with tools that establish them on a firm foundation and release them into adulthood with a deep understanding of their worth and the realisation that they can be a powerful agent of change in their community, their nation and the world. The SHINE program is a solutions-focused personal development tool which has had a significant impact on youth in Australia. I will read some testimonies:

Shine has helped me cope with the loss of my best friend when I wasn't able to cope before.

You made me feel that I am worth something.

I have learnt that I am unique, one of a kind and priceless. I belong to this world as myself, who I am and what I will become. The SHINE program has made a huge improvement in my life.

Shine has helped my friends through some hard times recently.

Since 1997 the SHINE program has been used in Australian schools for students in years 6 to 9. The program has five curriculums, including ShineGirl and Strength for boys. It has been successfully utilised in hundreds of organisations, including schools, community centres, refuges, religious groups and correctional facilities, in 41 nations. The SHINE program transcends cross-cultural barriers and is relevant irrespective of race, religion or socio-economic background. The learning outcomes of SHINE are that young people will identify themselves as valuable and having much to contribute to today's society. The program strengthens decision-making and problem-solving skills and aims to build increased confidence, the ability to identify personal strengths and to set and achieve personal goals.

Empirical research completed by Nandila Spry and Teresa Marchant in 2014 on ShineWomen has demonstrated that women experienced an increase in self-esteem, emotional intelligence and a sense of purpose. Women were mobilised to help others by up to 12 per cent. This has been recognised as significant in academic research and aligns with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals No. 3 to promote gender equality and empower women. The New South Wales Institute of Group Leaders has also endorsed the SHINE curricula and noted their contribution towards group work learning.

As members of Parliament and as lawmakers of this nation representing communities with growing youth populations, we understand the importance of education in equipping our young people to make a meaningful contribution to society. These SHINE curriculums can act as a tool in the hands of our educators to keep young people connected to school and to enable them to build the confidence and strength they need to embrace different pathways, to rise to new challenges and to take healthy risks. Equipping individuals with the tools they need to make destiny-defining choices can bring lifelong change that will impact generations. The right intervention at the right time can create powerful transformation and the kind of change that carves out new life directions. Imagine a future where our young people are equipped as healthy, thriving, successful members of this great nation. This is not a time to rest but a time for action, a time to shine. The Christian Democratic Party commends the SHINE program to the House.

TRIBUTE TO ANNETTE CHAPPELL

TRIBUTE TO JEREMY AND SUE CHALLACOMBE

The Hon. JENNIFER GARDINER [7.06 p.m.]: Last week The Nationals and communities in New England, the Clarence Valley and beyond lost three notable contributors. Annette Chappell, the wife of the former Nationals member for Northern Tablelands and Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Small Business, Ray Chappell, passed away. Annette had been ill for some time. Indeed, she was at times quite ill while Ray was the member for Armidale and the Northern Tablelands. It is a trial for parliamentarians who have to be away from home when a dear family member is ill. After living in Sydney and elsewhere for some time after Ray left the Parliament, they had returned to Armidale to live the last phases of Annette's life. Last Friday the people of New England turned out to bid farewell to Annette and to fill the cathedral of St Mary and St Joseph at a service that was beautiful, sacred, apt and authentic.

One of Annette's daughters said her mother used to say she was not a saint, but her daughter said that Annette could perform miracles with a lump of quality minced meat. Annette was a great cook and Annette and Ray were well known for their warm hospitality to friends and strangers alike. It is extremely rare to hear an officiating priest at a funeral service refer to the departed as a saint but that is indeed the way in which Father Aloysius Mowe, who knew Annette and Ray well through Ray's work with refugees at St Vincent de Paul, spoke of Annette. For the past 20 years Annette had worked in the field of palliative care.

In 1995 Annette was already recognised in that field by being awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary Club of Armidale Central. Rotary recognised Annette's "enormous contribution to the wider community as a palliative care massage therapist". We know that she brought comfort to many people, both personally and professionally, by offering this service, which allowed so many at this time of life to approach their passing with dignity. That quote was made on behalf of Rotary by Dr David Breusch of Armidale. Ray and Annette were married for 50 years and she was a great supporter to Ray in all his endeavours. Condolences are extended to Ray and his children, Maree, Louise, Linda, Carolyn and Paul and their extended family.

We also lost two Nationals stalwarts in the Clarence Valley. Jeremy and Sue Challacombe died in a tragic car accident in South Grafton. Jeremy was a former chairman of the Nationals Page Federal Electorate Council, the Clarence State Electorate Council and the Grafton branch and rose to be the New South Wales vice-chairman of the party. In 1996 Jeremy was appointed the director of Rural Services at the University of

Adelaide and while in South Australia he became the party's South Australian chairman and served on the Federal Council. Former National's member for Clarence Steve Cansdell has said that Jeremy was foremost a community member and was no political animal. He said:

"When the Government downsized Grafton Gaol, Jeremy spoke out against it." He said, "No-one should forget the role Mrs Challacombe played. They were together in just about everything they did, they were inseparable. Wherever there was something on, Sue would be there too with Jeremy, working with him and supporting him. It's tragic that they went together but in a way it is sort of fitting as well. I don't know what the one would have done without the other.

Steve's successor, Chris Gulaptis, has been a beneficiary of the Challacombe's support and voluntary work. He said that Jeremy proved his popularity when he was easily elected to Clarence Valley Council, where he demonstrated the Challacombe values of common sense and fairness. He was a strong and well-known community and business leader and led our local chamber of commerce with distinction. Clarence Valley Mayor Richie Williamson said that Sue and Jeremy were enormous assets in the community. Jeremy was the president of the chamber of commerce for several terms and he worked in natural resource management, tourism and community development for more than 40 years. The Challacombe's farm at South Grafton was renowned for its strawberries, and Jeremy and Sue were fixtures at local markets selling strawberry ice cream.

The community in Vanuatu recently heard the shocking news of Sue's and Jeremy's death. Those who worked with them in Vanuatu in the late 1980s described them as a lovely couple who were very down to earth. Jeremy was involved in organising the Grafton Farmers and Growers Market and the Yamba Farmers and Growers Market. He was chairman of the council's saleyard committee and was a member of the Total Catchment Group, a board member of the Susan Island Trust, a board member of Clarence River Tourism and Northern Rivers Tourism, and vice president of the Grafton Show Society.

Our colleague the Hon. Niall Blair was a close friend of Bart, one of the Challacombe's sons. My Nationals colleagues know Bart's brother, Murray, who has been active in the Young Nationals and on The Nationals Central Council. On behalf of all my Nationals colleagues, I offer our condolences to the Challacombes. Sue and Jeremy were exemplars of Nationals members who immerse themselves in excellent community work.

MELBOURNE CUP 2014

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO [7.11 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the incidents that occurred at the Melbourne Cup yesterday, and particularly the attacks on the thoroughbred racing industry. Why have the people who made those attacks not also questioned the actions of the irresponsible parents who allowed their small child to get very close to a champion racehorse and wave a flag in its face? That spooked the horse and caused it to get caught on a metal fence and shatter its back leg. Those people should be ashamed of their behaviour. It was appalling.

[Time for debate expired.]

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.12 p.m. until Thursday 6 November 2014 at 9.30 a.m.
