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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 27 August 2015

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

The President read the Prayers.

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

CROATIAN ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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

- (1) That this House acknowledges that 24 July 2015 marked the 10 year anniversary of the Croatian Archive Association of Australia, which was formed at the Croatian Club, Punchbowl, on 24 July 2005.
- (2) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Croatian Archive Association of Australia seeks to preserve the history of Croats in Australia, to make the material available for research and exhibition, and to educate the Croatian community and the wider community on the history;
 - (b) the association collects material relating to the lives and achievements of Croats in Australia, including publishing material, personal material and records of activities of organisations, including photographs, videos and sound recordings; and
 - (c) in June 2004, the Croatian Intercommittee Council for New South Wales sent Anna Watson as its delegate to a multicultural documentary heritage workshop, hosted by the National Library of Australia, who subsequently recommended that a Croatian Archive Association be formed in order to fulfil the need of the Croatian and wider Australian community to make available the history of Croats in Australia.
- (3) That this House thanks the office bearers of the Croatian Archive Association of Australia for their commitment and dedication to preserving the history of the Croatian community:
 - (a) President Mr Fabian Lovokovic;
 - (b) Vice-President Mr Ante Glavor;
 - (c) Secretary Mr Boze Zuro;
 - (d) Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Mr Tomislav Beram;
 - (e) Treasurer Ms Natalie Zabek;
 - (f) Assistant Treasurer Ms Zorica Marusic;
 - (g) adviser Mrs Ana Zabek; and

- (h) publicity officer Mr Ante Peros.

INDIA-AUSTRALIA FRIENDSHIP FAIR

Motion by the Hon. SCOTT FARLOW agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the United Indian Association held the India Australia Friendship Fair at Blacktown Showground on 23 August 2015;
 - (b) the Friendship Fair was attended by former Australian Cricket Captain Steve Waugh, AO; the Hon. David Elliot, MP; the Hon. Barry O'Farrell; Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells; Mr Luke Foley, MP; the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP; Mr Matt Kean, MP; Mr Geoff Lee, MP; Ms Julie Owens, MP; Mr Mark Taylor, MP; Mr Damien Tudehope, MP; and the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC;
 - (c) the United Indian Association is an umbrella organisation representing New South Wales based Indian regional/linguistic associations and celebrates its twentieth anniversary in 2015; and
 - (d) the Australian-Indian community is a vibrant part of our community in New South Wales, with more than 160,000 residents of New South Wales speaking an Indo-Aryan language and 95,000 New South Wales residents born in India.
- (2) That this House congratulates the United Indian Association on its twentieth anniversary and its work in the community.

CHANGE THE RECORD CAMPAIGN

Motion by the Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 13 times more likely to end up imprisoned than non-Indigenous people;
 - (b) in the past 10 years there has been an 88 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people incarcerated;
 - (c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system, being 24 times more likely to be in detention than non-Indigenous juveniles;
 - (d) nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are twice as likely to be in prison than in university;
 - (e) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women make up 2 per cent of the Australian population but 34 per cent of the prison population;
 - (f) overall, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represent 2 per cent of the Australian population yet make up 27 per cent of the prison population; and
 - (g) between 1980 and 2011 there were 449 indigenous deaths in custody, which

equates to almost one death per month.

- (2) That this House notes that the National Justice Coalition is leading the Change the Record campaign to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in detention by engaging and working with leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, human rights and community organisations to find smarter solutions that increase safety, address the root causes of violence in the community and against women, cut reoffending and imprisonment rates and invest in early intervention, prevention and diversion strategies.
- (3) That this House congratulates the following groups that make up the National Justice Coalition on taking a new approach to addressing the underlying causes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda; ANTaR; Amnesty International; Australian Council of Social Service; Federation of Community Legal Centres [VIC]; First People's Disability Network; Human Rights Law Centre; Law Council of Australia; National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations; National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services; National Congress of Australia's First Peoples; National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum; Oxfam Australia; Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care; Sisters Inside; and the Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Andrew Jackomos.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVAL

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 15 August 2015 the Independence Day of India was celebrated at a community festival at the parade grounds, Old King's School, Parramatta, organised by the Federation of Indian Associations of NSW and attended by several thousand visitors; and
 - (b) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) the Hon. Philip Ruddock, MP, member for Berowra and Special Envoy for Citizenship and Community Engagement, representing the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, Prime Minister of Australia;
 - (ii) Ms Michelle Rowland, MP, member for Greenway, shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism, representing the Federal Opposition Leader, the Hon. Bill Shorten, MP;
 - (iii) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta, Parliamentary Secretary for Communities, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales;
 - (iv) Mr Luke Foley, MP, member for Auburn, State Leader of the Opposition;
 - (v) Ms Julie Owens, MP, Federal member for Parramatta and shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Small Business;
 - (vi) the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations;

- (vii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (viii) Mr Matt Kean, MP, member for Hornsby and Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury;
 - (ix) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, member for Prospect;
 - (x) Ms Julie Finn, MP, member for Granville;
 - (xi) the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC;
 - (xii) Mr Arvinder Ranga, representing the Consul-General for India in Sydney, Mr Sunjay Sudhir;
 - (xiii) Councillor Scott Lloyd, Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta; and
 - (xiv) local councillors, leaders and representatives of various Indian-Australian community groups.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) congratulates the President, Dr Yadu Singh, and the committee of the Federation of Indian Associations in New South Wales on their initiative in organising a successful festival to celebrate the Independence Day of India; and
 - (b) extends its congratulations and best wishes to India and the Indian-Australian community on the occasion of India's Independence Day.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL MAYORAL CHARITY BALL

Motion by the Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD agreed to:

- (1) That this Houses notes that:
- (a) on Saturday 22 August 2015 Liverpool City Council held its Mayoral Charity Ball at the Liverpool Catholic Club;
 - (b) the Mayoral Charity Ball is an annual event organised by the council to raise funds for nominated organisations working and providing much-needed services for the community of Liverpool;
 - (c) this year the causes were Share Care and Liverpool Hospital's trauma unit;
 - (d) the ball was attended by Ms Melanie Gibbons, MP, member for Holsworthy; the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister for Disability, Aging and Multiculturalism; the Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC; and the Hon. Shayne Mallard, MP; and
 - (e) the Liverpool mayoral ball is a leading example of cultural harmony activity.
- (2) That this House congratulates:
- (a) Liverpool City Council, councillors and staff on raising more than \$100,000 for Share Care and Liverpool Hospital's trauma unit; and

- (b) the Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Ned Mannoun, on hosting yet another successful Mayoral Charity Ball.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 330 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

AUSTRALIAN-EGYPTIAN COUNCIL FORUM AWARDS DINNER

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Sunday 12 July 2015 the Australian Egyptian Council Forum held an awards dinner at the Villa Blanca Reception Centre, Bankstown, to:
 - (i) honour the 2014 Higher School Certificate Egyptian-Australian high achievers who obtained a score of 90 per cent or more;
 - (ii) announce the Egyptian-Australian of the Year; and
 - (iii) announce the Non-Egyptian Australian of the Year for support given by that person to the Egyptian-Australian community of New South Wales.
 - (b) those who were honoured for having achieved a 2014 Higher School Certificate score of 90 per cent or more were, in alphabetical order:
 - (i) Dina Abd-Elmalak;
 - (ii) Youstina Armanyos;
 - (iii) Anthony Balamon;
 - (iv) Anthony Bibawi;
 - (v) Peter Bishay;
 - (vi) Loura Chambers;
 - (vii) Ireni Domadiou;
 - (viii) Monica Fahmy;
 - (ix) Jon Farah;
 - (x) Peter Francis;
 - (xi) Marina Gabraeel;
 - (xii) Andrew Gad;

- (xiii) Matthew Gerges;
- (xiv) Daniel Ghobrial;
- (xv) Adelina Guindy;
- (xvi) Mark Habashi;
- (xvii) David Ibrahim;
- (xviii) Jasmin Karras;
- (xix) Mark Loga;
- (xx) Merna Michael;
- (xxi) Kirolos Morgan;
- (xxii) Nardine Nada;
- (xxiii) Verona Nada;
- (xxiv) Kirolos Nasif;
- (xxv) Mark Rafla;
- (xxvi) Mina Roman;
- (xxvii) Yustina Shenouda;
- (xxviii) David Tadros;
- (xxix) Jessica Wahba;
- (xxx) Khalid Yehia; and
- (xxxi) Luke Youssef.

- (c) the award for Non-Egyptian of the Year was presented to the Hon. Victor Dominello, MP, Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, for his services to multiculturalism in New South Wales;
- (d) also honoured were Egyptian-Australian law graduates Miss Christine Baraya and Miss Margaret Malak, who recently were admitted to the New South Wales Supreme Court as solicitors; and
- (e) those that attended as guests included:
 - (i) Mr Craig Kelly, MP, Federal member for Hughes, representing the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, Prime Minister of Australia;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales;

- (iii) His Excellency Mr Youssef Shawki, Consul-General for Egypt in Sydney;
- (iv) Mr Ahmad Farid, Consul for Egypt in Sydney;
- (v) Mrs Enas El Ganzoury, Vice-Consul for Egypt in Sydney;
- (vi) Councillor Morris Mansour, Deputy Mayor of Ashfield City Council;
- (vii) Mr Nick Kaldas, Deputy Commissioner of Police, and Mrs Kaldas;
- (viii) Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian, AO, President of the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales;
- (ix) Dr Gorur Harinath, Chair of Multicultural NSW, and Mrs Harinath;
- (x) Mr Hakan Harman, Chief Executive Officer of Multicultural NSW, and Mrs Harman;
- (xi) Mr Tony Stewart, former member of the New South Wales Parliament and founder-convenor of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Egypt, 2000-2010;
- (xii) Dr Eman Sharobeem, Egyptian-Australian of the Year for 2014;
- (xiii) Mr Jack Passaris, OAM, Vice-Chairman of the NSW Ethnic Communities Council, and Mrs Passaris;
- (xiv) Ms Fatima Ali, President of the Arab Council Australia;
- (xv) Ms Randa Kattan, Chief Executive Officer, Arab Council Australia;
- (xvi) Mr Gadalla, Chair of the Upper Egyptian Association;
- (xvii) Mrs Rose Sorial, President of the Egyptian Women's Association; and
- (xviii) Principals of St Mark's College, St Mary's College and St Michael's College in Mount Druitt.

(2) That this House:

- (a) congratulates students honoured at the awards evening on their outstanding Higher School Certificate results, and other award recipients for their achievements and service to the New South Wales community; and
- (b) acknowledges and commends the senior office bearers of the Australian-Egyptian Council Forum for their initiative and work in organising the awards evening, particularly Dr Wafit Latif, President; Mr Amir Salem, Public Spokesman; Mr Victor Bassily, Secretary; and Mr Mohamad El-Mouelhy, Treasurer.

ANZAC CENTENARY SERVICE, GREAT SYNAGOGUE SYDNEY

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

(1) That this House notes that:

- (a) on Sunday 3 May 2015 an ANZAC centenary commemorative service of the New South Wales Jewish community was held at the Great Synagogue, Sydney;
- (b) the centenary service, which was attended by approximately 1,000 participants, was jointly initiated by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and the NSW Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, and was organised by an event organising committee chaired by Mr Garry Browne, AM; and
- (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, Prime Minister of Australia, and Mrs Abbott;
 - (ii) His Excellency, General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, and Mrs Hurley;
 - (iii) His Excellency Shmuel Ben-Shmuel, Israeli Ambassador to Australia;
 - (iv) Mr Hugo Llorens, Consul-General for the United States in Sydney;
 - (v) the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP, Federal Minister for Communications;
 - (vi) Senator the Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC, and Mrs Ronaldson;
 - (vii) Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services;
 - (viii) the Hon. David Elliott, MP, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Veterans' Affairs;
 - (ix) the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP, Attorney General;
 - (x) the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite, MP, member for Kingsford Smith, shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration;
 - (xi) the Hon. Philip Ruddock, MP, Federal member for Berowra;
 - (xii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (xiii) Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, MP, member for Coogee;
 - (xiv) Major General Gus Gilmore, AO, DSC;
 - (xv) Rear Admiral Ken Doolan, AO;
 - (xvi) Councillor Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney;
 - (xvii) Deputy Police Commissioner Nick Kaldas, APM; and
 - (xviii) representatives of religious, ethnic, ex-services and other community

organisations.

(2) That this House:

- (a) commends the Australian Jewish community for organising the ANZAC centenary commemorative service at the Great Synagogue on 3 May 2015; and
- (b) pays its respects to ex-servicemen and women of the Australian Jewish community.

INDIAN SUPPORT CENTRE INC.

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

(1) That this House notes that:

- (a) on Sunday 26 July 2015 the Indian Support Centre Inc. was inaugurated in Gilba Street, Pendle Hill, as an initiative of the Council of Indian Australians;
- (b) the purpose of the centre is to:
 - (i) provide a venue for community organisations to meet;
 - (ii) assist new arrivals to Australia;
 - (iii) provide support for the unemployed and for victims of domestic violence; and
 - (iv) disseminate information from and to the Indian Consulate in Sydney, and the Australian and New South Wales Governments.
- (c) the Indian Support Centre Inc. will be supervised by a committee comprising:
 - (i) Mr Subba Rao Varigonda, President;
 - (ii) Mr Tony Colaco, Vice-President;
 - (iii) Mr Stanley D'Cruz, Secretary;
 - (iv) Dr Sreenivas Pillamarri, Treasurer; and
 - (v) Anupama Suri, Jaspreet Chopra and Leroy Magee as members.
- (d) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta, Parliamentary Secretary for Communities, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales;
 - (ii) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, member for Prospect;
 - (iii) Mr Kevin Conolly, MP, member for Riverstone;
 - (iv) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, and Mrs Marisa Clarke;

- (vi) Ms Julia Finn, MP, State member for Granville; and
 - (vii) leaders and representatives of various Indian-Australian community organisations.
- (2) That this House congratulates the Council of Indian Australians on its initiative in establishing the Indian Support Centre Inc. and wishes the centre and its supervising committee success in future activities.

CENTRAL COAST NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Motion by Mr SCOT MACDONALD agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the 2015 NAIDOC week was celebrated by the Darkinjung people with a range of events on the Central Coast;
 - (b) Mr Scot MacDonald, MLC, had the pleasure of joining the Darkinjung Family Fun Day at Baker Park, Wyong, on 8 July 2015; and
 - (c) national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Week is an important celebration of the history, culture and achievements of the original inhabitants.
- (2) That this House commends the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council for organising a comprehensive, engaging, informative week of activities for their community.

NATIONAL DAY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) 23 July of each year marks the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt;
 - (b) to celebrate its National Day for 2015, a reception was held at the Consulate-General of Egypt, Sydney, on Friday 17 July 2015, hosted by the Consul-General of Egypt, Mr Youssef Shawki, and attended by members and friends of the Egyptian-Australian community; and
 - (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) His Grace Bishop Daniel of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales; the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Multiculturalism; and Mrs Marisa Clarke;
 - (iii) the Hon. Trevor Khan, MLC, Deputy President of the Legislative Council, representing the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, President of the Legislative Council;

- (iv) Mr Edmond Atalla, MP, State member for Mount Druitt;
 - (v) Councillor Mark Gardiner, Mayor of Marrickville Council; and
 - (vi) leaders and representatives of various Egyptian community organisations.
- (2) That on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt, this House extends its congratulations and best wishes to the Arab Republic of Egypt and to the Egyptian-Australian community.

BALTIC STATES MASS DEPORTATION COMMONWEALTH

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Sunday 14 June 2015 at the Latvian Centre, Strathfield, the Joint Baltic Committee of New South Wales held a commemoration to mark two forced mass deportations of citizens of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to Siberia by the Soviet Union in the 1940s;
 - (b) the first mass deportation, of 60,000 people, occurred on 13 and 14 June 1941 and the second, of 100,000 people, occurred between 25 and 28 March 1949; and
 - (c) those who attended the commemoration as guests included:
 - (i) Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, representing the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, Prime Minister of Australia;
 - (ii) Senator Sam Dastyari, representing the Hon. Bill Shorten, MP, Federal Leader of the Opposition;
 - (iii) Ms Jodi McKay, MP, member for Strathfield, shadow Minister for Justice and Police, shadow Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing Mr Luke Foley, MP, Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales;
 - (iv) the Hon. Philip Ruddock, MP, Federal member for Berowra, Special Envoy for Citizenship Engagement;
 - (v) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (vi) the Honorary Consul for Latvia, Mr Aldis Birzulis;
 - (vii) the Honorary Consul for Estonia, Ms Malle Tohver Tinni;
 - (viii) the Honorary Consul for Lithuania, Ms Ginta Viliunas;
 - (ix) Reverend Colvin MacPherson, Latvian Lutheran Church; and
 - (x) representatives of various Baltic and other ethnic community associations.
- (2) That on the anniversary of the mass deportation of citizens of the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia by the Soviet Union to Siberia, this House extends its condolences to

the three Baltic nations and to Australians of Baltic heritage.

6,765TH ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Sunday 22 March 2015 the Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian Australian National Federation organised a festival at the Fairfield Showground attended by several thousand members and friends of the Assyrian-Australian community to celebrate the 6,765th Assyrian New Year;
 - (b) those who attended as guests at the official opening included:
 - (i) the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, Prime Minister of Australia, and Mrs Margie Abbott;
 - (ii) Reverend Father Ninos Eliya, representing His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East, Diocese of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon;
 - (iii) the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP, Federal member for McMahon, representing the Hon. Bill Shorten, MP, Federal Leader of the Opposition;
 - (iv) Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services, representing the Hon. Scott Morrison, MP, Minister for Social Services; and the Hon. Peter Dutton, MP, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection;
 - (v) Mr Andrew Rohan, MP, then member for Smithfield and Chairman of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Assyria, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales;
 - (vi) Mr Guy Zangari, MP, member for Fairfield, shadow Minister for Citizenship and Communities, shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Joint Deputy Chairman of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Assyria, representing the Hon. Luke Foley, MLC, Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales;
 - (vii) Mr Hermiz Shahan, Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance;
 - (viii) Mr David David, President of the Assyrian Australian National Federation;
 - (ix) Mr Craig Kelly, MP, Federal member for Hughes;
 - (x) Mr Chris Hayes, MP, Federal member for Fowler, Chief Opposition Whip, and Mrs Bernadette Hayes;
 - (xi) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and Joint Chairman of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of the Assyrians, and Mrs Marisa Clarke;
 - (xii) Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, MLC, Assistant President of the Legislative

Council, and Mrs Silvana Nile;

- (xiii) the Hon. Amanda Fazio, then MLC and Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council;
 - (xiv) Mr Nick Lulich, MP, member for Cabramatta;
 - (xv) Councillor Frank Carbone, Mayor of Fairfield City Council;
 - (xvi) Superintendent Peter Lenon, Fairfield Local Area Police Commander;
 - (xvii) Mr Valos Oreopoulos, Trade Commissioner from the Greek Consulate-General in Sydney, representing Dr Stavros Kyrimis, Consul-General for Greece in Sydney;
 - (xviii) Ms Fiona Clarke, Assistant Director, NSW Settlement and Multicultural Affairs, Department of Social Services, and Mr Daniel Falero;
 - (xix) Sister Elizabeth Delaney, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia;
 - (xx) Mr Jeremy Spinak, President, and Mrs Lynda Ben-Menashe, Community Relations Manager, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies;
 - (xxi) Mr and Mrs Kerry and Karen Bos, Christian Faith and Freedom;
 - (xxii) Mr Vince Fonti, President of Marconi Club;
 - (xxiii) Mr Frank Oliveri, Director, Marconi Club;
 - (xxiv) Dr Peter Thang Ha, President, and Mr Davy Nguyen, Vice-President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter;
 - (xxv) Mr Peter Tadros and Mrs Monica Mikhail, representing the Australian Coptic Movement;
 - (xxvi) Mr George Vellis, President, Australian Hellene Council of NSW; and
 - (xxvii) Mr Jude Simion, Chief Operations Officer, Barnabas Fund, and Mrs Simion.
- (2) That this House extends its greetings and best wishes to the Assyrian-Australian community on the occasion of the 6,765th Assyrian New Year.

AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY INTERFAITH DINNER

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Sunday 4 July 2015 the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community organised an interfaith symposium and dinner at the Khilafat Centenary Hall, Marsden Park, attended by 700 representatives of a wide spectrum of religious faith traditions;
 - (b) those who spoke at the function included:

- (i) Imam IH Kauser, National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Australia;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales; and the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Multiculturalism;
 - (iii) Mr John Robertson, MP, member for Blacktown;
 - (iv) Ms Ayesha Amjad, representing Ms Michelle Rowland, MP, Federal member for Greenway and shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Citizenship and Multiculturalism;
 - (v) Ms Prue Car, MP, member for Londonderry;
 - (vi) Councillor Stephen Bali, Mayor of Blacktown City Council;
 - (vii) Councillor Jacqueline Donaldson, Blacktown City Council;
 - (viii) Bala Indra Kurukai, representing Hinduism;
 - (ix) Mr Aqeel Ibrahim, representing Islam;
 - (x) Rabbi Gac Krebs, St Ives Synagogue, representing Judaism;
 - (xi) Reverend Father Gerard O'Dempsey, Catholic Priest; and
 - (xii) Ms Durga Owens, Public Relations Officer, representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
- (2) That this House commends the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Australia for organising this interfaith symposium and dinner, and extends its best wishes to the hundreds of participants present.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Wednesday 15 April 2015 the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies hosted Yom Hashoah 2015, also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, at the City Recital Hall, Angel Place, Sydney;
 - (b) Yom Hashoah commemorates the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis during World War II and has a special focus on the lessons that can be learned from the Holocaust, particularly that the end result of racism is genocide;
 - (c) during the commemoration, the Israeli Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Shmuel Ben-Shmuel, presented a Righteous Among The Nations Award to the Dutch-Australian Korten family, who during the World War II occupation of the Netherlands by the Nazis, at great risk to their own lives, hid a Jewish family in the

attic of their home, thus saving them from almost certain death as victims of the Holocaust; and

- (d) amongst the 1,300 participants who attended this year's Yom Hashoah were representatives from both Federal and State Parliaments, various faith traditions and numerous ethnic and other community organisations.
- (2) That on the occasion of Yom Hashoah 2015 this House:
- (a) commends and pays its respects to Frederik Korten and Hermione Korten-Schippers and their family for their bravery and humanity in placing their lives at great risk in wartime Netherlands to protect a Jewish family who would otherwise have faced certain death; and
 - (b) extends its heartfelt condolences to the Australian Jewish community who are grieving at this time of Yom Hashoah.

MARONITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SOLEMN MASS

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Saturday 15 August 2015 the Maronite Catholic community of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Harris Park, celebrated a solemn mass for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, conducted by His Excellency Most Reverend Antione-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, and attended by 1,500 members and friends of Sydney's Maronite Catholic Community; and
 - (b) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier of New South Wales; and Mrs Mary Ajaka;
 - (ii) Mr Luke Foley, MP, member for Auburn and Leader of the New South Wales Opposition;
 - (iii) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta and Parliamentary Secretary for Communities;
 - (iv) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice; and Mrs Marisa Clarke;
 - (v) Mr George Bittar-Ghanem, Consul-General for Lebanon in Sydney;
 - (vi) Reverend Fathers and Sisters of the Maronite Catholic Church; and
 - (vii) leaders and representatives of numerous Maronite community organisations.
- (2) That this House offers its best wishes and regards to the Maronite Catholic community of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Harris Park, on the occasion of its celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

INDIA CLUB INC. DINNER AND VARIETY SHOW

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 15 August 2015 the India Club Inc. held a successful dinner and variety show evening at the Wesley Uniting Church Hall at Castle Hill to celebrate:
 - (i) the Hindu Festival of Teej;
 - (ii) the Independence Day of the Republic of India;
 - (iii) the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945, which brought the ending of World War II; and
 - (b) those who attended as special guests were Mr Damien Tudehope, MP, member for Epping; and representatives of various Indian-Australian and Hindu community organisations.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) congratulates the India Club Inc., its President Mrs Shubha Kumar and chairman Dr Aksheya Kumar on the holding of a successful function to celebrate the Festival of Teej, the Independence Day of the Republic of India and the ending of World War II; and
 - (b) extends its greetings to the Indian-Australian community and the wider Hindu community on the occasion of the Festival of Teej and the Independence of India.

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA DINNER

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) 15 August each year marks the Independence Day of the Republic of India;
 - (b) to celebrate that occasion a dinner and concert was held at Bowman Hall, Blacktown, on Friday 14 August 2015, organised by the Council of Indian Australians and attended by several hundred participants; and
 - (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta and Parliamentary Secretary for Communities, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier;
 - (ii) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, member for Prospect, representing Mr Luke Foley, MP, Leader of the Opposition;
 - (iii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, and Mrs Marisa Clarke;
 - (iv) Mr Matt Kean, MP, member for Hornsby, Parliamentary Secretary for

Treasury;

- (v) Mr Kevin Conolly, MP, member for Riverstone;
- (vi) Mr Mark Taylor, MP, member for Seven Hills;
- (vii) Councillor Gurdeep Singh, Deputy Mayor of Hornsby Shire Council;
- (viii) Councillor Susai Benjamin, Blacktown City Council;
- (ix) Police Superintendent Wayne Cox, Commander of Parramatta Local Area Command;
- (x) Police Superintendent Garry Merryweather, Commander of Blacktown Local Area Command;
- (xi) Police Superintendent Rod Smith of Quakers Hill Local Area Command; and
- (xii) representatives of various Indian-Australian community organisations.

(2) That this House:

- (a) congratulates the Council of Indian Australians, including President Mr Praful Desai, Vice-President Mr Mohit Kumar, Secretary and Cultural Director Mr Nitin Shukla, and Treasurer Dr Balu Vijay on their initiative in organising a successful function in celebration of the Independence Day of India; and
- (b) extends its congratulations and best wishes to India and the Indian-Australian community on the occasion of India's Independence Day.

CENTENNIAL PARKLANDS SCHOOLS ACCESS FEES

Motion by Dr JOHN KAYE agreed to:

(1) That this House notes:

- (a) the highly significant recent community victory that saw the Centennial Parklands finally act on concerns raised by parents and schoolteachers in Sydney's eastern suburbs about fee increases for inter-school sporting activities for public school students on Centennial Park grounds;
- (b) that the Centennial Parklands Executive Director wrote to the Sydney Coastal Primary School Sports Association [SCPSSA] earlier this month stating that they would "guarantee that any future increase in field hire fees payable by SCPSSA and its member schools will be equal to or less than the annual State consumer price index";
- (c) that the SCPSSA faced \$22,715 in fees last year after the parklands introduced a more expensive fee structure, up from \$75 in 2002;
- (d) that after The Greens raised the issue of fee increases in the *Wentworth Courier* in March this year, an intense six-month community campaign began, calling for guaranteed affordable access to the parklands' sporting grounds for public school students, led by the group Save Public Schools Sports Association in Centennial

Parklands; and

- (e) that the Save Primary School Sports Association in Centennial Parklands campaign involved successful lobbying for the public support of local State members of Parliament, councillors, parents and citizens associations and high profile sports organisations and teams including the Sydney Roosters and Sydney Football Club.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) congratulates all parents, teachers and members of the community involved in the campaign to secure affordable access to the grounds for use by public school students; and
 - (b) congratulates the Centennial Parklands on committing to an agreement with the SCPSSA for access to the sporting grounds for public schools and urges them to continue to engage in genuine consultation with public school communities and the SCPSSA over the outstanding issues including credits for rainy days and amended fees for changes in enrolments from year to year.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 347 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING PRACTICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Report: Inquiry into Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor, on behalf of the Chair, tabled the report entitled "Inquiry into Companion Animal Breeding Practices in New South Wales", dated August 2015.

Order to be printed on motion by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR [9.42 a.m.]: I move:

That the House take note of the report.

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

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps agreed to:

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

Order of Business

Motion by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps agreed to:

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

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 3 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Farlow relating to Lemnos1915.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 6 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Ms Taylor relating to the Hon. Jenny Gardiner.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 13 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Revd Mr Nile relating to the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Amendment (Rehabilitation of Persons with Severe Substance Dependence) Bill.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 286 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Green relating to National Child Protection Week.

LEMNOS 1915 COMMEMORATION

Debate resumed from 13 August 2015.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [9.51 a.m.]: I make a brief contribution to the debate relating to the Lemnos1915 commemoration motion. I hope members will bear with me if I slightly sidetrack because I do not want to speak about the actions of Australian soldiers, Greek soldiers or Greek civilians on the island of Lemnos; instead I want to pay tribute to one person in particular—a politician who did the right thing in the course of war: Prime Minister Venizelos of Greece. For those who might not be aware, at the start of the war Greece was in an interesting situation. King Constantine was married to Queen Sophia, the sister of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany.

Constantine had received military training in Germany prior to the war and could therefore be described as having general empathy towards the German cause, but he was conflicted because of what might be called the broad bloc of eastern orthodoxy, through which he was also linked to the Tsar in Russia. There was therefore a further complication when Serbia was attacked—again, part of what might be called the broad bloc of eastern orthodoxy—and there was a terrible conflict about what Greece should do. King Constantine's idea was that Greece should stay out of the conflict or remain neutral. Venizelos, on the other hand, took a different view. He wanted to enter the war on the allied side.

Greece was involved in a treaty flowing out of the earlier Balkan wars, so that if Bulgaria attacked Serbia, Greece would nominally come to the aid of Serbia. When Serbia was attacked, the royalist forces said that Greece was not meant to involve itself in major power conflicts and it would be purely a response to the earlier Balkan wars. The relationship between Constantine and Venizelos deteriorated, but Venizelos was determined—so much so that he invited a large contingent of British and French forces to land at Salonika in the hope that that would push Greece into war. Additionally, and what this motion is about, Venizelos allowed the allied contingents to use Lemnos as a staging place for the invasion of the Ottoman Turks at Gallipoli.

Venizelos continued to have this rather fractious campaign and eventually, by mid-1915, it was basically impossible for him to get anywhere with King Constantine. A series of manoeuvrings took place

later on—I will not go into detail—and eventually a coup was staged. Venizelos set up a shadow government in northern Greece and the army, which had remained overwhelmingly loyalist, was essentially demilitarised and confined to the southern half of the country. The Hellenic navy, ironically, was largely staffed by Frenchmen at that point in the war. Constantine and his wife, Sophia, maintained a sort of covert support of Germany but, ironically, because of the orthodox connection with Tsar Nicholas, could not be overthrown without theoretically risking the wrath of the Russians to come in against what might be called the parliamentarians at that point in time.

It was only when the fall of the Tsar took place that Constantine abdicated and handed over the throne to his son. All through this the bravery, the dedication and the foresight shown by Venizelos marks him as one of the great statesmen—a forgotten statesman who has been the subject of historical criticism for his actions relating to the Pontic Greeks in the immediate post-war period. Certainly during this time, without his inspiring leadership and without his dedication to the allied cause the war in the east may well have turned out markedly differently. Two and a half cheers for Prime Minister Venizelos.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [9.57 a.m.]: First, I thank very much the Hon. Scott Farlow for this important motion and I congratulate him on his depth of knowledge of the campaign in Lemnos and on his passion and commitment to the events at Lemnos. It is good to see that not only people across the political divide but also people of non-Greek heritage have a passion for talking about the relationship between Australia and Greece in the theatre of war and about not only what happened in Lemnos but also the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Crete next year. I, along with the Hon. Scott Farlow; the Hon. Courtney Houssos; Steve Kamper, the member for Rockdale; David Clarke; Nick Varvaris; Eleni Petinos, the member for Miranda; and a number of former members of Parliament—I apologise if I have forgotten anyone—attended the event at the Maritime Museum that the Hon. Scott Farlow mentioned.

This marked the 100th anniversary of Australian troops leaving Mudros Bay in Lemnos for the Gallipoli landing. Those of Greek heritage learned that this was part of what was done to set up the hospital for the landings. The fantastic former member and Minister of the Victorian Parliament, John Pandazopoulos, is President of the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association. He spoke to me when I first came to this place about the importance of Greek and Australian troops fighting together for freedom and democracy. He said it was imperative that we never forget what those soldiers did and that we must always talk about these events. We should commemorate and speak about the very important relationship between Australia and Greece. Along with my colleagues in this place, I have tried my best to do that.

This year marks the centenary of the Anzacs' landing at Gallipoli. The Gallipoli landings are one of the sacred moments in our nation's history and Australians across our country have rightly sought to honour the sacrifices made by Australian forces and the spirit of mateship they forged that endures in our nation's soul today. I spoke in this place in September last year, nearly a year ago, about the events planned for this year's commemoration of the centenary. Many events have been held in Sydney, Melbourne and Athens. A delegation of Australians attended a dawn service in Athens to mark the Anzac centenary. The service was led by a number of important people and *Neos Kosmos* reported on the events. Journalist Helen Velissaris wrote:

Veterans, community members, dignitaries, politicians and military personnel have gathered in Lemnos this weekend to mark the Anzac centenary.

Memorial services and wreath laying ceremonies have been organised in a number of areas of the island that held special significance to the Anzacs stationed there.

She made reference to the events in Lemnos. An event was also held in Athens. She further wrote:

Greek Cypriot Australian Lieutenant-Commander Argirides will be joining the Royal Australian Navy in an official capacity this year, assisting the Chief of Navy and facilitating his

communications between the Greek and Australian Navy in both Lemnos and Athens.

It's the first time Lieutenant Commander Argirides takes on such a major role in Greek and Australian military relations and says she's humbled by the inclusion.

"I am honoured and humbled to have been given this amazing opportunity to represent my country, my service and to commemorate the Centenary of ANZAC on board one of our Navy ships, she tells Neos Kosmos.

It is truly extraordinary to hear people who attended those events in Lemnos and Athens talk about their spiritual feelings and the importance of attending. I spoke about Lemnos in the House last year and since then a number of commendable community activities have commemorated the history of the Anzacs at Lemnos. Between February and May this year the State Library of New South Wales presented an exhibition entitled "Lemnos 1915: Then & Now". The display included photos of Lemnos as the Anzacs found it in 1915 and Lemnos as it is now. This fantastic initiative was led by Mr Con Havas, assisted by Elizabeth Kaydos and a number of volunteers and associations—people so passionate about showcasing photos and getting not only the Greek community but also the wider community involved. That was part of the Greek Festival of Sydney and was supported by the Lemnian community of New South Wales and the Greek Consul-General in Sydney, Dr Stavros Kyrimis.

A diverse range of commemorations of the Anzac history in Lemnos have been held across New South Wales. Hundreds of people attended a dawn service held on 4 March at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. I congratulate Kogarah City Council and the Lemnian Association on presenting a photographic exhibition and an exhibition featuring sculptures and work by artist Takis Kozokos. On 5 March, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Lemnos 1915 presented a lecture inspired by the Sir William Russell Flint painting "The Lemnians—Ancient Amazons of Lemnos to the Anzacs Nurses of WWI". On 7 March, the Hellenic Lyceum held a dance concert at the University of New South Wales to commemorate Lemnian culture and the centenary of the Anzacs' arrival at Lemnos. My colleagues and I tried to attend as many events as possible, and I attended the Hellenic Lyceum concert at the University of New South Wales because my two kids were dancing. It was fantastic and really moving. There were photographs that had not been shown before, an historical description of places, actions commemorating the events and then the dance. It was really special.

I congratulate everyone on their efforts. These people are all volunteers and they are all passionate about commemorating the soldiers, our wonderful nurses, the Australians, the Hellenics and those who fought for democracy. Their sacrifice means we are able to commemorate them today in a free and peaceful nation. On 3 March, a painting entitled "Lemnos Anzac Amazons 1915" was presented at Parliament House. They are some of the activities that have been held in New South Wales. I also acknowledge the activities many people have organised to recognise the Lemnos story as part of Anzac Day commemorations this year. I acknowledge also the efforts being made to commemorate Lemnos in Greece and on the island of Lemnos itself. I pay tribute to the crew of HMAS *Success*, one of the great prides of Australia's Navy, which docked in Lemnos. The crew participated in activities to commemorate the island's importance to the heritage of Australia's naval forces.

I mentioned the Lemnos 1915 committee in my speech in September 2014. I acknowledge also the Melbourne-based community organisation called Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee Incorporated. That committee has done fantastic work, and the photographs, articles and primary sources it has provided are amazing. For those who are interested, I recommend a book entitled *The Gallipoli Campaign Lemnos and Anzacs* by Aristides J. Tsotroudis. The first part of the book includes details of the campaign that were sourced from historical documents and abundant photographic material. In the second part, entitled "Lemnos and Anzacs", the author uses photographs and their captions to guide the reader's mind back in time to ponder the conditions in Lemnos only 2½ years after its liberation from the Turks.

I thank the Hon. Scott Farlow and my numerous colleagues who attended the many commemorative events. The Hon. Courtney Houssos, Mr Stephen Kamper, Ms Eleni Petinos and many others will also speak about commemorative events as we head towards the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Crete, an important First World War battle. Hopefully some of those events will be held at Parliament House. We will talk about the significant relationship between Australia and Greece. One hundred years ago the Anzacs forged a profound link with Hellenes when they landed on Lemnos. It is a link which has grown stronger throughout the past century and which many Australians take great pride in today. In my speech in September 2014 I said:

Since 1899 Australians and Hellenes have followed the recommendation of the sixth century Hellene philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras: *Tas leforous mi vadizeis*—do not follow the beaten track.

I commend all who have sought to commemorate the history of the Anzacs at Lemnos. I also thank the families of fallen soldiers and the nurses for everything they did for our freedom and democracy.

[Business interrupted.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I welcome the Hon. Michael Egan to the President's gallery.

[Business resumed.]

LEMNOS 1915 COMMEMORATION

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS [10.12 a.m.]: I will make a brief contribution to this debate and congratulate the Hon. Scott Farlow on moving this important motion. On Friday 24 April 2015 I was pleased to attend a Lemnos Anzac commemoration event at the Australian National Maritime Museum along with the Hon. Scott Farlow, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, and the Hon. David Clarke, as well as the member for Rockdale, the member for Miranda and many local government representatives from around Sydney. Also in attendance was the Hon. John Hatzistergos, a former member of this place.

The event, held on the eve of Anzac Day this year, commemorated the significant and strategic support role played by the island of Lemnos and its people during the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War. It may interest the House that Gallipoli is derived from the Greek word "kallipolis", which means beautiful city or beautiful town. That was a theme very much present in the minds of those who gathered to remember and to pay tribute to the people of Lemnos and, of course, the fallen Anzacs. One particularly moving aspect of the commemoration was a theatrical performance by Anna Conomos highlighting the many ways in which the Lemnians supported the Anzacs as they fought in Gallipoli. The people of Lemnos assisted the sick and wounded Anzacs, and mourned those who did not survive.

The performance intertwined the symbolism of Easter with the death of a wounded soldier, who was mourned by a young girl on the island who waited for the soldier's family, but they never arrived. It was a solemn reminder of the many Anzacs who never returned home and who have their final resting place in foreign lands. On the island of Lemnos today, Australians can find two military cemeteries for our fallen soldiers and a monument that serves to honour those who fought and died and those who gave assistance to our armed forces. This is a small but important representation of the meaningful relationship between Australia, the island of Lemnos, and the Greek people more generally.

As noted in the motion, more than 50,000 Anzacs passed through Lemnos during the nine months of the Gallipoli campaign. During the war, Lemnos was not only a safe harbour for the Anzacs but also a place of refuge, a place of healing and a place of recreation and respite from the horrors of the

campaign. In the 100 years since, Australia has opened its arms to the people of Greece again and again, and we have benefited from their friendship and goodwill. The story of Lemnos and the Anzacs is yet another example of the kind and generous spirit that I have experienced from Greeks, both here and in Greece.

There is no doubt that the first Anzac campaign at Gallipoli holds a special place in our Australian history. Others have canvassed its significance at length. However, many more recent migrants to Australia have told me that they find it difficult to identify with the Anzac story. Events like the Lemnos 1915 show how countries such as Greece, and there are others, played crucial roles in supporting the Anzacs. It provides an opportunity for those more recent migrant communities to share in the commemorations, especially during this special period, the Centenary of Anzac. I take this opportunity to thank the Greek Consul-General, Stavros Kyrimis—a truly dedicated, hardworking and very intelligent diplomat and able representative of the Greeks in New South Wales—and Lemnos 1915, the Lemnos Association of NSW Commemorative Program for the Centenary of Anzac, for organising such a meaningful commemoration. Lest we forget. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD [10.16 a.m.]: I support this motion and congratulate the Hon. Scott Farlow on moving it, because it is a significant connection to the Anzac legend and the centenary of Gallipoli. I will delve into some of the primary sources of history of the Lemnos story wearing my hat as a graduate of Macquarie University—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Shame, shame.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is a good left-wing university. I note that the chancellor was here earlier. I will also draw on my interest in Australian history. Lemnos was vital to the Allies' tragic and treacherous campaign as a principal assembly, embarkation and supply point for Gallipoli landings. It was a major staging post for naval operations in the Gallipoli campaign, including the submarine campaign. Lemnos was also the location of the major nursing stations for the campaign and was featured in the recent ABC drama *Anzac Girls*, which I hope many members watched.

For Australians, the image usually associated with 25 April 1915 is that of Australian soldiers charging bravely up the steep, barren and rugged slopes of Gallipoli. Less appreciated is the picture of an Australian nurse on that same day attending to hundreds of battered and bleeding men on the decks and in the confined wards of hospital ships. Those ships were berthed predominately at the island of Lemnos. *Anzac Girls* depicted a truly beautiful landscape. One cannot understate what the soldiers must have felt moving from such picturesque beauty to the horror of war. Of course, if they were lucky enough to find themselves back at Lemnos, albeit injured, they might have been thankful for being hosted on such a pretty and beautiful island.

While discussing these historical matters, I believe it is important to reflect on the individual stories of those who saw the carnage, trod the mud, and felt the pain and loss of war. I draw to the attention of the House the reflections of Lance Corporal Archie Albert Barwick, who joined the First Australian Imperial Force in Sydney in late August 1914, who served throughout the war in Gallipoli and on the Western Front, and who survived to return to Australia in December 1918. Throughout his time as a serviceman, Lance Corporal Barwick kept a diary, parts of which may have been written in retrospect. Sections of his diary deal with his time on the island of Lemnos. He states:

Lemnos is a one horsed place. It is very mountainous and steep. It has scarce a tree on the whole island though when we were first there the grass and clover were lovely and there were plenty of wild flowers growing everywhere. We enjoyed the little visits there then, there are little villages scattered all over it. They are built of stone, for this is a place where they say that wood is worth a £1 ... The people are practically all Greeks and they are 100 years behind the times. They do all their own spinning from the raw wool and make their own clothes from it. There are some very pretty girls there, they are snow white and very shy. They have the same old methods of

farming here as they have in Egypt—the same old piece of wood with an iron toe for the plough. Lots of the men dress in a sort of skin clothes cut from goats and sheep and nearly all wear skin shoes. They look tricks I can tell you. They grow a lot of grapes and figs on these islands. When we lobbed in there the 3rd Brigade had been there a month and were heartily sick of the place.

Lance Corporal Barwick's account is a reflection of the broader eagerness young men felt towards war. They did not fear war, as the lance corporal describes when he writes in his diary:

I should think it was about 6 o'clock then for the sun was just rising ... we scrambled up the hill for about 200 yards, & then we dumped our packs, & started off at a fair pace for the firing line ... it did seem funny to hear the bullets cutting into the scrub alongside of us as we went along, but no one seemed afraid, & we were laughing & joking as we went along, I don't want you to think I am skiting when you read this, for I will take my oath on it that it is true, I know myself I never felt the slightest fear the first day or two, it was when we began to realize that bullets hurt when they hit you, that we knew what fear was.

Returning to Lemnos, his recollection of the island creates quite a different image. It sounds much more like the paradise described by many Australians who now travel to the Greek islands for recreation. He wrote:

Arrived at Sarpy [Sarp] camp thoroughly knocked up, and were detailed off to the tents. How glad we were to throw our packs and rifles off and to get outside and buy some grapes and figs. The grapes were very plentiful and cheap you can buy enough for three as you could eat [?] ... Everyone gorged themselves with fruit for you know we were fruit hungry and it was a sort of craving we had on us. Needless to say we paid pretty dearly for it the next day didn't our stomachs ache and roll. Eggs also were plentiful and we used to get any amount of them and cook them for our tea.

After fighting on the Western Front, Lance Corporal Barwick ultimately returned to Australia in 1919 where he was formally discharged from the Army on 30 March that year. He lived a long life on a property near Armidale and died in 1966. *In great spirits: Archie Barwick's WWI Diary* was published in 2013. It is an honour to read excerpts of it in this House, which has continued to maintain a strong relationship with the Anzac legend during the commemoration of the centenary of Gallipoli and those touched by military service. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES [10.23 a.m.]: I thank my colleague the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving this extremely important motion. I also congratulate him on moving his first motion in this House. In my brief contribution I will not repeat some of the historical facts that previous speakers have so eloquently raised, but I will touch on some matters relating to the role of nurses in the Lemnos campaign. I will also speak about the work of President the Hon. Don Harwin and Speaker the Hon. Shelley Hancock in organising the Politics and Sacrifice exhibition. During the Great War—and indeed during all conflicts—nurses have been an essential part of military medical service. During the First World War Australian nurses from the Australian Army Nursing Service, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, the Red Cross and privately sponsored organisations made up the more than 3,000 Australian civilian nurses who volunteered for active service

Some nurses worked close to the front line at casualty clearing stations while others worked in hospitals or on hospital ships and trains. They served in all of our war efforts from Britain to India, France and Belgium, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. By the end of the war nurses had proven to be integral to the military process, and many of those who served were decorated for their efforts and commitment. Sadly, 25 nurses died during their service in the First World War, and I will use this time to honour them. During the First World War an overwhelming 80 per cent of Australian casualties occurred on the Western Front, and the serving nurses were required to very quickly devise a strategy of battlefield evacuation and treatment in order to cater to the thousands of wounded men.

Casualty clearing stations were usually sited some kilometres from the Western Front and most wounded soldiers eventually passed through them. Lemnos had a key casualty station that was the base for a number of nurses. Soldiers received treatment from surgeons and encountered nurses for the first time in the casualty clearing stations, and from there they were transported to a general hospital that could care for around 1,000 patients. After assessment and treatment at the general hospital, soldiers were evacuated to specialist hospitals in Britain, repatriated to Australia or returned to their units in the field of battle. Seven Australian Army Nursing Service nurses were awarded the Military Medal "for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire" while working in casualty clearing stations. It was the highest bravery award available to a serving nurse in the First World War.

The seven recipients were Sister Dorothy Cawood, Sister Clara Deacon, Sister Mary Jane Derrer, Sister Alice Ross-King, Sister Alicia Kelly, Sister Rachael Pratt and Sister Pearl Corkhill. Sister Alicia Kelly was awarded the Military Medal for her bravery following a bombing raid in August 1917 during which she shielded her patients' heads with wash basins and bedpans. She was discovered by a chaplain in a hospital tent holding a wounded man's hand as bombs fell around them. When asked why she stayed, Sister Kelly simply responded that she could not leave her patients. It is important to acknowledge the dedication and commitment that not only First World War nurses but also nurses around the world give to their patients. I also acknowledge Sister Claire Trestrail, who received the 1914 Star with clasp in recognition of her service in Belgium under enemy fire for many months.

As I mentioned earlier, the Politics and Sacrifice exhibition exploring the role of New South Wales parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in the Great War was the initiative of the President and the Speaker. They were instrumental in putting it together. The exhibition was the Parliament's tribute to the Centenary of Anzac and ran from 7 January to 30 April 2015. Twenty-five members and staff served at home and abroad during the war. Sadly, two members fell at Gallipoli. They were Lieutenant Colonel George Braund, the member for Armidale, and Edward "Teddy" Larkin, the member for Willoughby. I will outline their significant contribution shortly.

I acknowledge and thank the staff who put together the Politics and Sacrifice publication. They were Lynsey Blayden, Samantha Brown, Rachel Callinan, Emily Gallagher, Gareth Griffith, Sarah Hendersen, Donna Hogan, Mike Jarrett, Julie Langsworth, Brian Lindsay, Kate Mihaljek, Hilary Parker, Danny Said, Rachel Simpson, Allison Stowe, Natalie Udovicic, Susan Want and Yvonne Wilcox. I also thank the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of ANZAC committee members, former member for Blue Mountains Roza Sage, who acted as chair during the previous term of Parliament, and deputy chair, the Hon. Lynda Voltz.

I also acknowledge the work of the RSL and Services Clubs Association, and their branches—the Returned Service League of Australia New South Wales Branch, Leagues Clubs Australia and the Men of League Foundation. The exhibition highlighted the all-too-often forgotten but extremely important stories linking the Parliament, parliamentarians, and the community during the First World War. The exhibition "Politics and Sacrifice: New South Wales Parliament and the Anzacs" explored the remarkable accounts of the members and staff who fought for our country. It showcased the debates on issues such as recruitment, conscription and the treatment of enemy subjects; and the impact of the war on our political system. A number of artefacts, artworks and objects from the Parliament's significant and historical collection, such as photographs, the *Hansard* record and official communications, were on display in the Fountain Court.

I acknowledge our Aboriginal servicemen, and their work is discussed in the book as well. The Defence Act 1903 restricted service in the Australian Imperial Force to men "substantially of European origin or descent". However, this did not stop a large number of Aboriginal men from enlisting. Quite often they gave a false name and a false history by claiming they were of Pacific Islander, Indian or Portuguese descent to ensure they were able to sign up and serve. I pay tribute to them and to all who have served.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [10.30 a.m.]: I acknowledge the contributions of all those who have spoken in debate on this motion. This has been an enlightening debate. The motion moved by the Hon. Scott Farlow about Lemnos 1915 starts by noting:

- (a) 24 April 2015 marked 100 years since Australian troops left Mudros Bay in Lemnos for the Gallipoli landings;

In 1915 the deep-water harbour at Mudros was used as an organising point for the attack on the Dardanelles, some 50 kilometres away. As a medical facility, the island was intended initially to deal with only "light cases"—those classified as likely to be well within 28 days. But the "rush of wounded" from the early August offensive and the "flood of sick" that followed in late August, September and October necessitated its development as an intermediate military medical base. The No. 3 Australian General Hospital and No. 2 Australian Stationary Hospital were based at West Mudros alongside Canadian and British units. The "rest camp" at Sarpi, across a shallow inlet from the hospitals, became a convalescent depot. In the first relief of the Australian formations between 11 September and 17 September some 5,500 men in all, what remained of three brigades, had gone to the Sarpi relief camp. Instead of two weeks, it was two months before these "resting" troops were fit to return.

About 130 nurses served at the hospitals on the island. Many nurses also served on the hospital ships that passed through Lemnos to evacuate the wounded from the Gallipoli peninsula. The conditions under which the nurses worked at Lemnos were more crude than those met with at any other time in the war. The physical discomfort was great and the heat was intense. They had bell tents, mattresses and bedding and "hard" army rations, but little else. Facilities for personal cleanliness and sanitation were primitive. But it was chiefly in connection with their professional work that the women were tested to the utmost. I note reports that there was an almost total lack of nursing equipment, linen and any means of cooking. There was scant supply of medical comforts. It is clear, however, that the training in the nursing profession at the time was meticulous.

These nurses were self-disciplined and very resourceful in compelling order out of chaos. These attributes enabled these trained women to adapt themselves, as they had often done before, to circumstances; to bend to clearly recognised ends such means as could be found and in a short time obtain a comparative mastery of the situation. In the so-called wards and operating theatre the medical officers soon found that, while some of the amenities they had been accustomed to were lacking, the essentials of nursing had been carried out properly—that is, cleanliness, care of the skin, attention to the calls of nature, careful feeding and dressing of wounds. Without these, who could tell how many additional lives would have been lost? How many Australians would not be here today if it were not for the courage and resourcefulness of those nurses? Paragraphs (b) and (c) of the motion state:

- (b) Lemnos1915, the Lemnos Association of NSW's Commemorative Program for the Centenary of Anzac, marked the Centenary Commemoration at the Australian National Maritime Museum on 24 April 2015;
- (c) during the nine months of the Gallipoli campaign over 50,000 Anzacs passed through Lemnos;

I had the privilege of trekking the Kokoda Track. I think one of the most poignant moments of the whole experience was when we visited a little spot called Surgeon's Rock, which is where a couple of surgeons had to do instant triage during the war. Their decision was someone's final opportunity to live. There were amputated limbs and terrible injuries. Surgeons had to make split-second judgements about whether someone could be saved. They had to work in order to give soldiers a chance to live. The fuzzy wuzzy angels took those whom the surgeons thought had a chance of surviving to better care. At Surgeon's Rock one gets an understanding of what really happened. It would not have been then the nice tranquil spot in the rainforest that it is today.

There would have been people screaming in pain, confusion and the stench of death and decay. One can only imagine the blood that would have flowed down Surgeon's Rock and into the creeks and gullies. That was what the troops and the medical staff were dealing with. In a similar way, the nurses in Lemnos were somehow able to work through incredibly tense moments to help their patients live and heal. I do not think the mantra of nursing has changed from then to this day—a nurse wants only to see healing and wellbeing. Nursing is about hope and making a difference. I think those are the core values of most nurses. The experience at Lemnos is a great example of those values being tested to their utmost. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of the motion state:

- (d) Lemnos hosted hospitals, convalescent camps and housed the depots that supported the Gallipoli campaign;
- (e) 8,709 Australian lives were lost in the Gallipoli campaign and 148 Australians are buried at Lemnos as a result of that campaign ... ,

In addition to 8,709 lives lost at Gallipoli some sources say that about 18,000 Australians were wounded. For the record, it is important also to note that the British contributed about 350,000 troops in the battle of Gallipoli, with 80,000 wounded and 25,000 killed. The French had a total force of about 79,000, with 27,000 wounded and 10,000 killed. Turkish forces numbered 400,000, with 140,000 wounded and 86,000 killed. Paragraph (f) of the motion states:

- (f) the people of Australia and Greece share a close alliance that was forged since the battle of Crete, strengthened through the assistance of the Greek people in the Gallipoli campaign and survived today by an ever strengthened relationship between the Greek and Australian people, with more than 378,000 Australians of Greek ancestry and a close bond between the two nations.

Recently the Hon. Sophie Cotsis and I attended a function hosted by the Australasian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association [HEPA]. It would be fair to say that I have not met one Greek person who has not been generous in spirit—a wonderful legacy of our allegiance at that time, which is why we have such a strong bond with Greek people and we are able to share their cultural knowledge. I am sure their generosity will continue to contribute to Australia's legacy and prosperity. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW [10.40 a.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to debate on this motion—Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, the Hon. Shayne Mallard, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones and the Hon Paul Green. In particular, I thank all those in the community who have shown an interest in this motion and who have participated in the debate. I was surprised by some of the responses I received through social media as many people shared stories about Lemnos. One of the responses I received came from Debbie Papadakis, a woman who was born in Balmain, who grew up in Clovelly, who lived in Forestville for many years and who now lives in Greece. She took an interest in this motion when she saw it listed in her social media feed.

Debbie said that as someone of Greek origin she truly relates to the bond and the values that we share, in particular as she lived in Australia and is now living in Greece. Debbie, through her poetry, has made contributions relating to the Anzacs on Lemnos. These poems were shared with the Australian ambassador in Greece and at a ceremony held in Athens on 27 June 2015. I will read into *Hansard* one of the poems that Debbie shared with me through the social media as it is relevant to this motion. Sometimes it might feel as though we are working in a vacuum but members can rest assured that people in the community heed what is said in this Chamber. Debbie's poem entitled *The AE2 Australia's Pride in 1915* is as follows:

Indeed they will be remembered for their leadership at the "Great War"!

When the navy of "a New Nation" loyally pledged its support!
At a moment in time then when "The Mother Country" sounded those bells!
They chimed in time to the beat of the war drum.
Beat, beat, beating off to the Dardanelles!
The AE2 followed a new Australian submarine
That captured a moment, a moment of naval victory!

On 25 April 1915 it sailed through the Dardanelles
The strait lined with mines...A suicide mission, one could tell!
Reaching Constandinoupoli ... was its original goal, that time
Opening the gateway for the Russian Fleet.
And for the ANZAC "diggers" to storm the peninsula as an element of surprise!
The enemy's "jaw dropped" at the sight
Of the AE2 gliding in the darkness of the night!

But they were alone there ... no back up was able to be received.
And like a warrior she was struck and left for dead indeed!
The crew were saved and taken as POW
While the captain led her to rest at Marmara so sound!
That is how the story goes ... the secret mission assigned to our submarine
And she is remembered today to be the AE2
Of Australia's loyal Navy venturing at the Dardanelles near Constandinoupoli!!!

I thank Debbie for sharing her wonderful poetry with us. Unfortunately, time does not permit me to read more of her poems. I also thank those who reached out to me, in particular, Owen Lattin, whose great-grandparents served in Lemnos during the Great War. His great-grandmother was an Australian Imperial Force [AIF] nurse based at Lemnos, and his great-grandfather was an AIF medic who was based in Lemnos prior to being sent to the Western Front. This debate has enabled me to reflect on my family's military history and what may have been.

My great-grandfather, Rupert Stanley Reeves, went to serve in the First World War but he was run over by a truck on his way to serve on the Western Front and he did not seek overseas service after that. All members would have similar stories to relate. It is evident from some of the contributions that we heard, in particular, from those of Greek heritage, that we have a shared lineage when it comes to the Great War and the service of Anzacs in Lemnos and in other theatres of war. I thank all members for their contributions to this debate and commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

THE HON. JENNIFER GARDINER, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR [10.45 a.m.]: I move:

- (1) That this House notes the retirement of the Hon. Jenny Gardiner from the Legislative Council of New South Wales after nearly 24 years of service.
- (2) That this House congratulates Ms Gardiner on her contribution as a Nationals member of the Legislative Council.

It is a privilege to move this motion today not only to congratulate Jenny on her extraordinary career but also to thank her for her selfless commitment to New South Wales. In 1991 Jenny Gardiner arrived in this place as a newly elected member of the Legislative Council. She was held in high regard by the National

Party as it then was—a former general secretary with a long history of involvement in her party back to her days as a Young National. She left nearly 24 years later, an immensely respected member of this Parliament who was elected Deputy-President and Chair of Committees—a Nationals legend and life member, and a friend and mentor to so many.

Other members will speak of Jenny's time in this Parliament and of the impact she has had on this place over the past 24 years. When I told Jenny I would be moving this motion today she was touched but also shocked at the diversion in tradition, in that she is not dead. However, as a new member of Parliament and as a member of The Nationals, it is impossible to escape the overwhelmingly positive sentiments that have been expressed about her. I believe that I am not the only one who wishes to put on the record my appreciation for her service.

In her inaugural speech Jenny said that she hoped in 20 years' time, when someone else made an inaugural speech in this House, it might be able to be said that not all parliamentary committees were useless. Twenty-four years later I think we could agree that Jenny's hard work contributed in no small way to the good reputation of the Legislative Council committee system. In her time as a member Jenny served on committees that reflected her ability to establish not only what was correct but also what was right. The Procedure Committee, the Privileges Committee and the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters were some of the many committees on which Jenny served—she was a member of the Privileges Committee for her entire parliamentary career.

Jenny had a hand in too many inquiries to list, but many are worthy of mention. These included an important 1991 inquiry into gun law reform before she had had a chance to deliver her inaugural speech, inquiries into election funding and donation laws, and inquiries into the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Jenny achieved better outcomes for regional New South Wales through her work on rural and regional health services inquiries, and for New South Wales as a whole through general purpose standing committee inquiries into Orange Grove, the Pacific Highway and rail services, amongst many others. Jenny believed that the committee system gave this House its political potency and would ensure its relevance. She certainly contributed her fair share of time to the committee system. Jenny was the Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Legislative Council and in 2011 was elected Deputy-President and Chair of Committees unopposed.

Jenny is a campaigner at heart. She so enjoyed her work here and continued to have an impact on election day. It was not only through committees that her influence was felt. The role of duty member of the Legislative Council was something to which Nationals members in previous Parliaments were committed and in which they were outrageously successful. Jenny was duty member of the Legislative Council for the electorates of Tamworth, Tweed and Orange, all now held by The Nationals. On her retirement, Jenny ran the election campaign on the ground in Lismore, helping her colleague Thomas George to retain that seat. Jenny stayed up all night preparing for election day. She worked with other great members of The Nationals to win the seat of Lismore again. It was her last triumph in this Parliament.

While I cannot speak of Jenny's long history as a member of this place, I can attest to her standing in The Nationals and the contribution she has made as a representative of The Nationals. Jenny is a passionate member of The Nationals. Given her long history of working at all levels of our great party, she has a complete understanding of it. In her 24 years in Parliament she was driven to achieve great outcomes for people in regional areas. In her valedictory speech, Jenny noted with disappointment that the proportion of women in the Legislative Council had not improved significantly. Regardless, Jenny has always been a strong supporter of women in The Nationals and a trailblazer for what we could and can achieve. Jenny was the first woman to hold the position of chief executive of one of Australia's major political parties, guiding the party through some trying times but also experiencing great successes.

When Jenny was elected to the Legislative Council, she was only the second Nationals woman to serve in this Chamber. Her work since then has ensured that regional women continue to represent their

communities here. Jenny is an active member and supporter of The Nationals Women's Council. She is an extraordinary mentor and source of wisdom to many. I would not be standing here today if it were not for her wise counsel and the many hours that she spent talking to me. I am eternally grateful for that.

Jenny started in the party as a member of the Young Nationals and has been one of their strongest supporters. In recognition of her contribution, she is a life member of the Young Nationals and has an annual scholarship named in her honour. Jenny believed in The Nationals. She was significant in ensuring that the party evolved in regional New South Wales. The Nationals have relied very much on her wisdom and endless knowledge of all matters, including the Constitution, ethics, policy and campaigning. Jenny's depth of knowledge, combined with her passion for the membership, ensures that she makes an invaluable contribution to any debate.

Jenny was awarded life membership of the party in 2012, in honour of her exemplary service to The Nationals. Happily, despite her no longer being a member of the Legislative Council, our party still has the benefit of Jenny's involvement. Jenny has recently been appointed to chair The Nationals Leader's Taskforce, which will look at the many issues our party faces. We have no doubt that, through her stewardship and leadership, the party will continue to be in very safe hands. As a member of the Legislative Council, Jenny spent 20 years on the opposition benches. In her valedictory speech she used the old proverb, "Those who drink the water should not forget those who dug the well." She set the bar very high for those who follow. In her inaugural speech, Jenny farewelled Sir Adrian Solomons, of whom she said:

To me, the Hon. Sir Adrian Solomons was not only one of the greats of my party; he was not only an outstanding legislator; he was not only a distinguished Presiding Officer of this House of Parliament. Sir Adrian guaranteed wise counsel. He was a friend to all of us. He was someone upon whom you could lean your life.

Jenny came to possess all those qualities, and she exemplifies them for each of us here today. Her contribution to The Nationals will no doubt continue. For Jenny's contribution to New South Wales as a member of the Legislative Council, I offer my congratulations and my sincere and heartfelt thanks.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council [10.55 a.m.]: I support the motion congratulating Ms Jenny Gardiner. Jennifer Ann Gardner, known as "JAG" to just about everyone, would hate this. We are going to make it even worse for her.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: She won't read it.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: She probably will not read it. She would be embarrassed about it. She always operated quietly and positively below the radar. Members on both sides of the House who know Jenny Gardiner would appreciate her concern at being lauded so publicly. She deserves it. I acknowledge that members on both sides of the House are nodding their heads in agreement. Jenny was first in so many ways. She was a trendsetter. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor mentioned that Jenny Gardiner was the first woman director of a political party in this country. She was General Secretary of the New South Wales branch of the National Party, the old Country Party, a party of conservative blokes—mostly run by women, I must say.

Forceful females from regional New South Wales have always really run the party. It is only people outside Parliament who do not realise that. We on the inside know where the power blocs are. Jennifer Ann Gardiner came through that to become the first female State director of a major political party in this country, which is no mean feat. Jenny achieved a lot of firsts in her life, both inside and outside the Parliament. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor spoke of the influence Sir Adrian Solomons had on Jenny Gardiner's career. Sir Adrian Solomons held the illustrious role of Deputy-President, as have I. Sir Adrian Solomons was Chair of Committees when I first entered Parliament and when Jenny first entered

Parliament. Like Jenny, he was from New England.

Jenny Gardiner's career was influenced by her mentors in New England, including Sir Adrian Solomons, Sir John Fuller, Ian Sinclair, Sir Bill Davis Hughes and that great returned serviceman and local member Noel Park. Noel was an honourable man who brought the local regiment back from World War II. Their influence crafted Jenny Gardner's beliefs. Jenny was encouraged by Sir Adrian Solomons and spoke of him in a reverential tone in her inaugural speech. Jenny followed in his footsteps. She was Deputy-President of this Chamber, like Sir Adrian Solomons. I followed Sir Adrian in the role and Tony Kelly succeeded me. What a great role. One first noticed Jennifer Ann Gardiner, or "JAG", when she became the Young Country Party representative to Central Council in the mid-1970s. She was the first female representative to join Central Council from that body.

Firsts happened all the time with Jenny Gardiner. She first started working at the National Party head office when the General Secretary was Briggs. Then Charles Blunt became the General Secretary and she was the Assistant General Secretary. In 1984 she became General Secretary—or State Director, as it is called these days—when Richard Killen was the Chairman. Later, Senator David Brownhill became the Chairman of the party and then it was her great friend in politics Doug Moppett. There was an intense friendship between Jenny Gardiner and Doug and Helen Moppett and their children. Jenny Gardiner's belief in Doug Moppett was total and Doug Moppett's belief in Jennifer Ann Gardiner was total. As a team they were exceptional and their friendship lasted a long time.

Most political parties go through times of chaos and concern. We went through the "Joh for Canberra" era. Joh was a wrecking ball for the New South Wales Nationals. We abhorred many of the principles that the Queensland Nationals and the "Joh for Canberra" campaign espoused; the campaign was more troublesome than any Independent or any One Nation campaign. The activity it caused within our party was horrendous. Jennifer Ann Gardiner was our State Director and her strength kept us going. The Queensland Nationals were very silly. At one stage they phoned the head office in New South Wales to find out the boundaries of the electorate of the Hunter. With the arrogance of a Queensland male, Sir Robert Sparkes thought he was talking to an office girl when he spoke to Jennifer Ann Gardiner. She certainly gave them the boundaries of the Hunter, but it happened to be an electorate in the middle of Newcastle. To this day they are probably still wondering what happened.

Sometimes there are hiccups and hops in a party, and at the 1982 conference the National Country Party changed its name to the National Party. The feeling was that a change of name was imminent. A motion was moved at the conference, but no-one believed that it would get up. But get up it did—258 to 70. We went from being known as the National Country Party, a title by which we had been known for all of our lives, to the National Party. We did not have a logo, we did not have colours and we did not have a creed to represent the party. Jenny Gardiner and Arthur Hankin set about putting the colours together—green and gold—and the logo, which they achieved in a matter of weeks. Most importantly, we believe that Arthur Hankin and Jenny Gardiner were the key to crafting what the National Party believes.

Arthur Hankin was our advertising person at the time and, innovatively, we were using television advertising for politics. We were helped by the fact that it was cheap to go into regional television. No-one else was doing it at the time and no-one was doing it as professionally as Jenny Gardiner and Arthur Hankin. They put together top-class productions and did research on the content of the advertisements, which were way ahead of many other political organisations. Jenny and Arthur used what they called Hankin 7, which today is at the core of targeting electorates during election campaigns. Hankin said that 7 per cent of people change their vote in an election.

Hankin said not to worry about the people who always vote against you and not to worry about the people who always vote for you; the key is the 7 per cent in the middle. Core to any modern political party is targeting the swinging voters, and Arthur Hankin and Jenny Gardiner were doing it 20 years before the new philosophy came in—which I hope will eventually change because it has become very

cynical. Jenny Gardiner was ahead of her time in this area. Another thing I found out, which Jennifer Ann Gardiner will hate—and it appears on a document relating to her parliamentary service—is her date of birth.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I ask the Minister to table the document he is reading from, unless it is marked "confidential" or "in confidence".

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is marked totally confidential—never to be released. But I will tell the House that it is very close to my date of birth—something I could not believe. One would think Jennifer Ann Gardiner was at least 10 years younger than me. Jenny's time in politics has been great. Her contributions to the community, her love of her family—her nephews, her nieces, her brothers, her sister and her parents—endure to this day. She has moved from New England to the coast, to the same area where just about everyone from the Tamworth area moves. One will quite often see her with a niece or a nephew, mentoring them.

She continues her role in The Nationals. She was my deputy for a long time—I cannot remember the years—and at every moment I would know that I never needed to look over my shoulder, that my back was covered. She was always a little restrained in her comments, but if she went totally silent I knew I needed to ask her what the problem was. When I asked that question the advice she gave was outstanding. She continues to mentor people in The Nationals. There are a handful of great political operatives and mentors in all the political parties in this country and Jenny Gardiner is one of that elite handful. Thank you, Jenny, for your help and your friendship.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.05 a.m.]: I also make a contribution on this great motion moved by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor in relation to our friend and former colleague the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. In making some notes for this contribution to the House I thought about the time I first met Jenny, and it was when I first joined the party as a Young National back in 2006. As a Young National I also managed to serve on the Central Council and I probably started to get to know Jenny a lot better when I became chairman of the Young Nationals. Jenny is a life member of the Young Nationals, and certainly in the time that I served as chairman of the Young Nationals in New South Wales she was always available to me to provide information, guidance and friendship, and to act as a mentor.

I know that Jenny did not give advice and guidance only to me; she was also totally available for my predecessors and my successors in the Young Nationals, and she continues to be. I know that Dominic Hopkinson, the current Chairman of the Young Nationals in New South Wales, has been working with Jenny in recent weeks on a revision of the Young Nationals constitution in New South Wales. Jenny has given literally decades of service to our party and to the Young Nationals in particular. Our organisation is incredibly grateful to her for that contribution.

However, her contribution to and involvement with the Young Nationals has not finished. Indeed, she will be one of the contributors at the Young Nationals conference in Corowa this weekend, so she remains an important part of that wing of our party. A couple of years ago, when the Young Nationals initiated a scholarship worth \$2,000 to assist a regional student who has to live away from home to complete his or her tertiary studies, it was appropriate that the scholarship be named the Jenny Gardiner Scholarship in recognition of her ongoing contribution to the Young Nationals. I am sure all members would agree that is a fitting tribute to Jenny.

I have been privileged to serve with Jenny in our party organisation on the constitution and ethics committee. As members would no doubt appreciate, in all parties sometimes one has to deal with interesting issues involving its constitution and ethics. It is there that I appreciated fully Jenny's mindset and her attention to detail—her instinct on those sorts of issues is always right. The first thing that Jenny goes with we all agree to as she is never wrong. She has integrity that is not evident in any other individual. It is a real privilege to continue to serve with her in that capacity.

Jenny has a long history within the party. As the Hon. Duncan Gay touched on that issue in his contribution I will not go into it. One of the words that people tend to throw around in parties is "stalwart". I do not really like that word and I do not think it applies to Jenny Gardiner. I think a better word for Jenny Gardiner in The Nationals is "legend". She has had an amazing career within The Nationals. There is nothing in our party that she does not know. Someone could have a conversation with Jenny about a policy issue and say to her, "I think that might have been raised at a conference previously." Not only does Jenny know whether it has been raised; she knows when it was raised, at what conference, in what year, who moved it, who seconded it, who spoke for and against it, and what the vote was. It is extraordinary what she can remember about The Nationals.

As the Hon. Duncan Gay alluded to, Jenny has also had a lot of firsts as a female in the party, not least being the first general secretary of the New South Wales Nationals. She was elected to this place in 1991 and had an illustrious career in this Chamber. Her committee work is important to note as is her term as Deputy-President. Those who served in the last Parliament when Jenny was Deputy-President would remember the long nights and some of the tough bills, but Jenny was class under pressure. She did an exceptional job as the Deputy-President and we were all appreciative of her skills.

It is also fair to say that she is one of the few members, certainly during the time that I have been here, who was generally respected by all sides of the Chamber. She has a quieter personality. She is very calm, but she also has a wicked sense of humour and a giggle that would often set off the rest of us. She was great to have as a colleague and friend, and we certainly miss her. I was fortunate that when I began serving in this place Jenny was allocated to me as my mentor. We have a system in The Nationals where new members—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Niall got Trevor.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, I will acknowledge that; Niall did get Trevor. That is probably an example of the student becoming the teacher, but I might leave it at that. As a new member I felt it was appropriate and fitting to have Jenny as my mentor because she was certainly my mentor when I joined the party. It was really nice to have her mentor when I was a Young National and also a young and new member coming into this place. I do not think anyone could imitate her, nor should they try, but she is certainly someone we should all hope to emulate. I feel very privileged to have had her as my mentor and to continue to call her a friend. There is no doubt that we miss her in this place, but she continues to make a valuable contribution to our party. The Hon. Bronnie Taylor spoke about Jen's contribution to the campaign in Lismore. I do not think many politicians after 20-plus years of service would be happy to campaign as hard as ever and sleep in a car on election night, but that is the sort of person Jenny is.

Jenny is heading up The Nationals Leader's Taskforce, which will examine a range of issues within our party. It will include succession planning, further use of community preselection and the need to address diversity issues, highlighting the gender imbalance within our party. It is an important body of work and I cannot think of a better person to chair that task force than Jenny Gardiner. It is an example of yet another way in which Jenny continues to contribute to our party. I am sure that this task force will deliver excellent recommendations. I look forward to being part of the parliamentary team that helps to implement its work. This is a great motion. I know Jenny will be embarrassed by it, but it is very important that we put on the record our congratulations to her. I say a big thank you to Jenny Gardiner for 24 years of exemplary service in this place.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.14 a.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Bronnie Taylor on moving this important motion that recognises the great contribution that Jennifer Ann Gardiner made not only to this Chamber and The Nationals but also to politics generally in New South Wales and even Australia. Jenny has a great record in this Chamber of which most people are already aware. However, there are other things about Jennifer Ann Gardiner that should be placed on the public record. I first joined the National Party in 1987 and at that stage "JAG", as we affectionately knew her—and still know her—was general secretary of the party.

In 1988 I attended my first National Party conference where I met Jen. That was 27 years ago, just before she came into this place in 1991. Shortly after I joined the party I became involved at branch and executive level, and over the years Jenny was a regular attendee at our electorate council meetings in the New England-Northern Tablelands area—I think she filled the position as duty MLC for the Northern Tablelands at that time. She always attended those meetings and brought everybody up to speed with what was happening in Macquarie Street, giving her political expertise on the issues that were being discussed.

"JAG", of course, was very much a Tamworth girl—very much a New Englander, as the Hon. Duncan Gay mentioned. Everyone knew that she was from Tamworth and everyone appreciated the enthusiasm with which she supported the New England region. In 2000 I decided to contest preselection following the retirement of the Hon. Richard Bull from this place and I was fortunate enough to win it. As I was giving my preselection speech on that day I mentioned that at one stage my family had owned Bendemeer Station. I have memories of being a very young boy growing up in the beautiful old homestead on Bendemeer Station and playing in the river down below the house. I mentioned also that I spent the first two years of my senior schooling at Tamworth High School. I thought nothing more of it.

A few months later Jenny and I were having lunch together and Jenny said, "I didn't know you were at Bendemeer Station." Apparently, some years after my family left her parents bought Bendemeer Station. She also had very fond memories of that grand old homestead and playing in the river below the house. She, too, went to Tamworth High School, even though I did not know her when I was at that school; she was there a fraction before my time. We had that very strong connection and when I came into this place we always enjoyed that connection. Only last year, when I was going through some of my father's old photos and scanning them, I found a heap of photos of Bendemeer Station when it was covered in snow. I showed them to Jenny and she was blown away by them because she could remember times when Bendemeer Station looked as it did in those photos.

Jen was the font of tremendous knowledge. Whenever people went into Jenny's office to ask a question about an issue she would know what they were talking about. One had to sidle into her office to get around the volume of material that was stored in piles, around the walls and on shelves. However, if she was asked about an issue she would immediately pull out a sheet of paper from one of those piles and it would be what was needed. She knew what every sheet of paper in her office was about and where to find it. I do not know what she did with those piles of material when she moved office or retired. She had a huge amount of material clinically catalogued in her mind—it was better than any computer system that most of us use today. Incredibly, Jenny could remember exactly what she had stored and where to find it. I already miss Jen in this place. She was a great companion and a great person to discuss issues with. As the Hon. Duncan Gay said, when you asked Jenny for advice you knew you would get the very best advice. Jenny, enjoy your retirement; you have well earned it. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN [11.21 a.m.]: I do not intend to speak for long because most of what I would have said has already been said and repetition does not make the outcome more effective. I will concentrate on two things. All members have spoken about how quiet Jen is and how one could almost describe her as laconic and we all know that to be true, but I suggest there is another aspect to her personality. At the party forum I saw an entirely different Jen Gardiner, particularly at Central Council meetings or at conferences: The quiet, reserved Jen Gardiner could suddenly fall away and the true fighter that was in her soul would reveal herself. If a course of action was suggested that she believed was detrimental to the interests of the party, a different persona would emerge and, inevitably, Jen would carry the room with her. It was not simply Jen's quiet persistence but also the vigour with which she could put her case.

That change in her demeanour reflected not only part of her personality but also one of her many great loves—her love for The Nationals, for a party that she gave so much to, which in truth also gave so much to her. In many ways the party was at the core of her soul. We saw it in our party room so often, but

in a different way. We did not see the vigour she displayed at a conference, but we always knew that what Jen thought was in the best interests of the party, unlike so many who sit in all political parties, and not in her own best interests. For Jen it was all about the party and what progressed rural and regional New South Wales. For her it was what made this State and this country better. It was about personal sacrifice for her. She was prepared to take on our leaders and our colleagues if she did not believe their actions were necessarily best for her party, best for this State or best for this country. There are many who come into this place and occupy the chair, and many of them do a fairly good job—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You're doing a fairly good job.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I do my best. As with all Presidents, Deputy-Presidents and Speakers in various places what sets the truly great ones apart is the trust that both sides of the Chamber have in the quality of their rulings; in making a ruling because that is what they are supposed to do, not because it benefits their side of politics. What sets Jen Gardiner apart as one of the truly great Deputy-Presidents, compared to others who preside in other places who will never be remembered as anything but partisan, is not the fact that she held the position or that she had the respect of this Chamber but that she did that job with fairness—and fairness is also at her core. I think everyone has referred to Sir Adrian Solomons. Jen started her first job as a law clerk in the firm of Everingham Solomons. It is again one of those quirky acts of fate that in December 1985 I came to this Parliament to my first job interview in the law with Sir Adrian Solomons and in early 1986 I started in Everingham Solomons.

The Hon. Rick Colless: They are a family, aren't they?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: In truth they are. Unfortunately they sometimes have quirky children, but they seem to be able to cope with them fairly well. We also share the history of New England. Jen was there through the dark times when we lost the electorates of New England and Tamworth to the Independents. I do not need to get political, but Jen was quite persistent. She knew that we could win back those electorates if we did the right thing, not just right politically but right for the people of New England and Tamworth. That goes back to her core belief that we are there to serve; we are there to do what is best for the people, not what is best for us. She is a decent person. She is a leader amongst us all because of that fundamental strength of character, which we should all attempt to emulate.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [11.27 a.m.]: As the Leader of the Christian Democratic Party I will add a few words of support for the motion. I was pleased to serve with Jenny Gardiner in all those 24 years from 1991 to her retirement in 2015. My memories of Jenny are very simple. What stands out in my mind is that she is a quiet achiever. I never saw her flustered at any time when she was confronted with difficult matters, whether it was the Privileges Committee, or when she was the Deputy-President or Chairman of Committees. She was always calm and methodical. She dealt with all the committees very professionally, particularly as Chairman of Committees, when she had to deal with all the amendments and often difficult members arguing for their amendments. She kept control at all times and I believe she always made the right decisions. The Christian Democratic Party is pleased to support this motion, which states:

- (1) That this House notes the retirement of the Honourable Jenny Gardiner from the Legislative Council of NSW after nearly 24 years of service.
- (2) That this House congratulates Ms Gardiner on her contribution as a Nationals member of the Legislative Council.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [11.28 a.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Bronnie Taylor on moving this motion. I add my strong voice of support in recognising and acknowledging Jenny Gardiner. Members who have contributed to this debate have spoken about someone who is passionate and decent, and someone who has integrity but to me Jenny Gardiner is a ground breaker and a pioneer. I first heard of Jenny Ann Gardiner when I was at university in the early 1990s. I read about this new member of the

Legislative Council who was the first female general secretary of a major party. That was huge. We still have a long way to go in getting women into party official positions, but for The Nationals to have its first female general secretary was a big deal for members of major parties. It is true that the general secretary works in the back room managing and directing, ensuring that the party has the right candidates, setting up conferences and organising delegates, but it is about the end result—and the end result is creating a better New South Wales.

I admire the Hon. Jenny Gardiner because she was a fine parliamentarian. When I became a member of this place about five years ago there were very few female members. For me, Jenny Gardiner is in the same league as my colleague former President the Hon. Amanda Fazio. They are both strong and committed people who worked together for the betterment not only of this place but also of the people of New South Wales. I have listened to the impassioned statements of Jenny's peers and those she has mentored, and it gives me great delight to know that we have good people in this place who care about the next generation of men and women who will contribute to New South Wales. I admire what Jenny has done for her party and have enjoyed listening to the many fine speeches of her colleagues describing her contribution to their party and the people of the bush.

During the past four years in a tough period in opposition I have travelled across regional areas of our great State and seen some of the fantastic work being done by female members of the farming and business communities. They are reaching out to us, who are hundreds of kilometres away, to make sure that we advocate for them. Jenny always cared about and advocated for not only regional New South Wales but also women, including women in Parliament and official positions. She also demonstrated her advocacy in the way she chaired committees and through her involvement in a number of inquiries. As a parliamentarian I found Jenny to be a serious and intelligent role model. She had an excellent eye for detail and nothing would get by her. I had many exchanges with Jenny while she was Deputy-President. Sometimes it seemed to be torturous for her to be sitting as chair during the Committee stage of our legislative process. It was obvious at some points that she just wanted to reach out and—

The Hon. Ben Franklin: Throttle you.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I would not say that, but I accept the interjection. She was very calm but firm and I respected her fairness. I admit that I would push her to her limits. When we were debating industrial relations or local government legislation at 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the morning I loved it when, even though I could see her frustration, I could push to the limits and get her to crack a smile. I thank her for her contribution. From what members opposite have said, I know that Jenny Gardiner will continue to make a contribution within The Nationals. I am pleased that a scholarship has been set up in her honour. I wish Jenny well. She is someone to be revered and she is an excellent role model. I wish her all the best and am thankful for this opportunity to pay tribute to her.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.35 a.m.]: As a Liberal Coalition colleague of former member Jenny Gardiner I add my tribute to the many wonderful things that have been rightly said about her today. I acknowledge Jenny as the first female State party director in Australia. The Hon. Duncan Gay made a terrific contribution about how quietly she went about her job. It was such an important achievement for women everywhere, but Jenny never wore it on her sleeve; she just quietly got on with things. Jenny was elected to the upper House on 25 May 1991, replacing the Hon. Judith Jakins—another pioneering woman in The Nationals. She was re-elected to the Legislative Council in 1999 and again in 2007, holding the cherished number two position on the joint Liberal-Nationals ticket. That is the top position for a member of The Nationals and shows the high regard in which Jenny was held. On 31 March 2003 Jenny was elected as the Deputy Leader of The Nationals in the Legislative Council—another first. In 2011 she became the Deputy-President and Chair of Committees.

I would describe Jenny as a tribal, tactical champion for The Nationals. She was a member who liked team players, particularly those who got on with things without too much fanfare or fuss. Her network of people across New South Wales whom she could trust and rely upon to deliver for The

Nationals was absolutely fearsome. I am very glad that Jenny is continuing to work with The Nationals in that role because I do not think she has any peer in that organisation. She is a fearsome warrior for her party. In fact, the Liberals have often been at the receiving end of Jenny's best efforts for her colleagues, particularly in redistribution discussions when we had to sit down and agree on a common strategy. Jenny would never take a step backwards and always maximised her party's position. Of course, all of her actions had a purpose.

One of the great things about Jenny was her ability to make a quiet comment in the heat of the battle on a policy issue or during a debate. She would gently remind everybody what it was all about and what the greater outcome would be. Jenny always had a grounded focus on how our actions would impact on people around us in the Parliament and in the community. She always wanted to know what benefit would be gained from doing something. She was willing to embrace ideas that she felt took people forward and to jettison ideas that were not going to make much difference, which I suppose we must all do in politics. I admire Jenny's focus on the bigger picture that we are all here to work towards.

The Hon. Trevor Khan said that Jenny was a very fair person. I think he must have been referring to her role as a parliamentarian, in which she represented all the great traditions. I would say Jenny was a very thoughtful parliamentarian, a real contributor, a leader, a mentor, and a great example to her male and female Coalition colleagues. Jenny was a brilliant Chair of Committees. It is such a difficult and stressful job dealing with massive amounts of complex amendments. She had a terrific ability to speak quickly and clearly and to move us along.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Sometimes a bit quietly.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Always quietly. She saved us many hours of confusion and delay when dealing with big packages of amendments in Committee. Often on long sitting nights when trying to get through complicated amendments members would lose track of what we were discussing. Jenny was always there to gently catch them, to guide them and to keep everything on course. I know members from all parties appreciated that. On the other hand, politically Jenny was perhaps not such a fair person in the sense that she was so tribal and relentless. Something that perhaps deserves greater mention is that, in my opinion, Jenny had the driest, best wit in the place. She always had a pithy one-liner, particularly when baiting the likes of the Hon. Michael Costa and tormenting the likes of the Hon. Eric Roozendaal. Those one-liners always came out of the blue. They were pointed and they were hilarious. I remember the Hon. Michael Egan almost falling off his chair at times when laughing at some of Jenny's comments. We saw a lot more of that when in opposition because of course there are always more opportunities then.

While we are talking about Jenny's many marvellous attributes, we should also acknowledge that she had the capacity to be quite naughty in the name of a good cause. One night when we were in opposition and when Mr John Brogden was our leader, we had not been successful in getting a certain issue debated. I will not go into the issue, but it was very controversial at the time. Coalition members in the other place had been trying to get some information onto the record without success. There was set-piece strategy in this Chamber. I think the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt was the Minister at the table. The Hon. Michael Gallacher wandered around the Chamber and distracted Carmel while Jenny was acting as the temporary chair. The Hon. Patricia Forsythe, who was halfway through her adjournment speech, switched from what she had been saying to reading the information concerned onto the record.

At that point the Hon. Dr Meredith Burgmann came rushing into the Chamber and tried to get Jenny out of the chair. Jenny pretended not to have noticed that Meredith had come into the Chamber. She sat in the chair very calmly and politely. She had great gravitas and control. By the time Meredith got her out of the chair almost a minute later, Patricia had been able to get all of the information onto the record. It was a very naughty strategy, but it was the type of stunt that an opposition is tempted to pull from time to time. Jenny's role in that gave a big boost to our team. She really did make us all feel good about being on the same team.

I acknowledge The Nationals for supporting strong women in the Legislative Council. I have mentioned Mrs Judy Jakins. Other Nationals members of the Legislative Council include the Hon. Melinda Pavey, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and, from this year, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who moved this motion today. They follow in the finest of tradition. Jenny has enhanced not only their careers but also ours. They are a fine tribute to her in their representation in this place. The Nationals have the highest representation of women in the upper House of any major party. These women have a humility, an awareness and an intelligence about the special role that they play, obviously as members of The Nationals but more particularly as fabulous women in this Parliament; that is, as parliamentarians as well as politicians. It has been a great privilege to have served alongside the Hon. Jenny Gardiner and alongside all the women from The Nationals. I thank the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for moving this motion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE [11.43 a.m.]: I very briefly acknowledge the four years I spent here with the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. She was a wonderful Chair of Committees. She had a very dry wit. She did not go on at length, but what she said was worth hearing. She was impartial; she was decent; she was fair-minded; and I miss her.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE [11.43 a.m.]: I, too, speak in favour of this motion. At the outset, I have a warning. When the Hon. Ursula Stephens recently left the Senate a similar motion was passed. Little did people realise that Ursula was going to run for the seat of Goulburn. She then used the lovely comments made about her by members from across the Chamber in her election campaign. They provided the best political promotional material I have ever seen. I therefore place a caveat on this speech. If Jenny decides to run for the electorate of Tweed she cannot use this material. That is the caveat to my speech.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I hear she is interested in Newtown.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: She could run for the seat of Newtown. That would be quite fun.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: Can I add my name to that caveat?

Mr David Shoebridge: The caveat should apply to all of us.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Absolutely, as I said, Ursula produced the best election campaign material I have seen in a long time. Twenty-four years is a long time to serve in this place, and I was pleased to share 10 of those years with the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. When I think about Jenny Gardiner and her contribution, I must admit that I do not know her very well. However, she was a constant presence in this Chamber and a constant influence on the way it and our committees operated. I think her contribution is greatly underestimated and I am glad that we have the opportunity today to reflect upon it in an appropriate manner.

I think of the Hon. Jenny Gardiner as a sphinx-like character—calm, measured and shrewd. I am glad I am not a member of the Liberal Party—I would not want to have to deal with her. She also has a very sneaky sense of humour, for those who are willing to listen. I also think of her as a pioneer for women in politics. She was the State director of The Nationals, a party that is seen as conservative and male dominated. To be a woman at the centre of the apparatus and an apparatchik in that party is outstanding. We should not forget that the Labor Party in New South Wales is yet to have a woman as its general secretary. That is kudos to Jenny for running the ship 2½ decades ago. She taught many Nationals members what to do, and how to do it well, and I think we are all the better for her influence.

Jenny always put her party first, but in the best sense of the word when we are talking about a party. Some people think politicians are here for themselves. But those who hold the mantle of the institution, particularly those members of the older parties, take that responsibility very seriously; and I think Jenny always did that. When she was thinking about what was best for the party, it was not

necessarily in a political sense; it was actually about what she believed fundamentally was best for the people of New South Wales, and in particular best for the people of country New South Wales. I did not always agree with her on that, and I continue to disagree with The Nationals on many things. However, I have real respect for people who take that responsibility seriously, because it is not always an easy responsibility to take on.

Jenny Gardiner was important as someone who had been in the Parliament for a long time. I am genuine when I say that it is not a good thing that she was never given a ministry. I understand that her party was not in government for long, but given her legacy and talent I would refute any suggestion that she did not merit becoming a Minister. The fact that she was not a Minister is disappointing. From what people have said today, I think she should have had that opportunity.

Finally, I have three best wishes for Jenny in the future. Firstly, may the Sydney Swans continue to win. All of us were forced to sing the team song for the Sydney Swans in this Chamber thanks to her efforts. Secondly, may Jenny continue to love The Nationals, to watch over them and to care for the party. I continue to have many differences with The Nationals, and I hope to take many seats from them in the future. However, I hope Jenny can continue to guide The Nationals in the sensible, calm, measured and shrewd way that she always has. Thirdly, the one thing that Tony Abbott should do before he loses government is appoint Jenny as the ambassador to the Holy See. I think that would be an appropriate position for Jenny in her retirement.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE [11.48 a.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor to recognise the great work of the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. Her 24 years of service in this House and serving the people of New South Wales warrants our respect. As many of those she had contact with in the community and in The Nationals and others with whom she worked have said, Ms Gardiner was a brilliant individual. As the Leader of the Government said, she was a quiet, below-the-radar operator, and I agree. She was certainly reserved and quiet, but also alert and tactical. I think that captures Jenny Gardiner.

I agree with the Hon. Catherine Cusack that she did a brilliant job as Temporary Chair of Committees. The Hon. Jenny Gardiner can rest assured that the Hon. Trevor Khan is doing his best to fill the space that she has left. She was clearly a master on her own as Deputy-President and Deputy Leader of The Nationals. Given her performance on the various committees and select committees on which she served, she deserves our honour and respect. She is someone to respect and to remember. She was the quiet chair, and soon we will hear about the more active one, the Hon. Amanda Fazio. A motion will be moved soon to acknowledge her service to this House. I congratulate the Hon. Bronnie Taylor on moving this motion and I wish Jenny Gardiner all the best in her retirement.

Dr JOHN KAYE [11.50 a.m.]: I, too, pass my respects to the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. Brevity should never be taken as a measure of a lack of sincerity or fervour. That is certainly true of the Hon. Jenny Gardiner and it should be taken as true of this speech as well. I had the pleasure of sharing one-third of Jenny's time in this Chamber. During that time I observed a parliamentary performer who taught me much across the aisle: about dignity, about how to achieve things, and about how to be fiercely partisan and at the same time to be deeply principled. To this day when I think of Jenny Gardiner I am in awe of her capacities.

One of my abiding memories of Jenny Gardiner is when she was presiding over the Committee stage of a debate as the Chair of Committees. I will not say which legislation was being debated. Jenny was sitting listening to what I had to say and it was clear that she found my contribution not only deeply stupid but also somewhat offensive. However, to her eternal credit—and the Leader of the Government should listen to this very carefully—Jenny did what she often did, she put her head slightly on the side and looked at me. Either she was doing a wonderful job of concentrating, or she was somewhere else completely. However, as far as I was concerned, it did not make any difference, she was there.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I wish I could do that.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I acknowledge that interjection. I would contribute to a fund to educate the Hon. Duncan Gay in that regard. I will make one other observation about Jenny. Jenny was the rural health spokesperson in opposition and as an outside observer I believe that she performed spectacularly. She took to the issue of rural oncology services like nobody had before. In many ways the progress made under the previous Government and this Government in the provision of oncology services for people living in rural New South Wales owes its genesis to the work of Jenny Gardiner—quiet work, solid work, intellectually rigorous work, and high-energy work.

Jenny travelled and spoke to cancer sufferers across New South Wales and reported back to this Chamber on what was happening. She embarrassed the previous Government and set the tone for the current Government in terms of understanding that people in rural and regional New South Wales should not have to travel to Sydney to undergo chemotherapy or radiotherapy. There are tens of thousands of people across New South Wales who have undergone, are undergoing or will undergo oncology treatment in rural settings who probably do not know who Jenny Gardiner is, but we should all know that they are receiving that treatment close to home because of her work. I have cited just one example of Jenny's contribution—there are many, many more. Like Mr David Shoebridge, I came to deeply respect Jenny. I eventually learnt how one could have a conversation with her in the lift, and I always found them amusing, entertaining.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: They were not long.

Dr JOHN KAYE: No, they were not long; in fact, they were very short, and at times quite sharp, but not in a mean way. I learnt from Jenny that we can be quite pointed in our comments without being mean. As members have observed, Jenny is a true partisan for The Nationals, but in the very best sense of that word. We should all learn from her in that regard. Of course, her greatest loyalty transcends party politics—it is to the Sydney Swans, and that remains true to this day. I just missed witnessing Jenny lead the House in a rendition of the Sydney Swans' anthem. I am sorry I missed it, but I have seen photos. That is yet another precedent established by Jenny Gardiner.

I will not wish Jenny a long retirement because I know she is not retired. However, I thank her enormously for the peerless example she set this Parliament, particularly for those starting out. They can learn the wisdom that she brought to this Chamber and that that wisdom transcends party politics—even though she is truly partisan. The rest of us are poorer for not having Jenny here, but we are enriched by her legacy. The mover of this motion is a legacy of Jenny Gardiner, as is the Hon. Sarah Mitchell. That The Nationals encourage women into politics is a great thing. Frankly—and no offence intended to the Hon. Duncan Gay—they are much better than the men. I have served on committees chaired by The Nationals women and I have been in awe of their capacity. I look forward to watching both women promulgate Jenny's legacy and build their own legacies in this Chamber.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [11.57 a.m.]: I have not had as long as the Hon. Duncan Gay and others have had in this place with the Hon. Jenny Gardiner. However, it is a pleasure to hear about the journey they shared with her. I was fortunate enough to travel to Europe with the Parliamentary Friends of Europe, which the Hon. Jenny Gardiner led. She was a great ambassador. That is not surprising, given the things that have been said about her today. She led us through the European parliaments—of course, wearing her backpack—using few words. That is not a bad thing because the good book says "when there are many words transgression is unavoidable", and "even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise". As the Hon. Duncan Gay said, if we do not ask a question and dig in that well of wisdom we will not get water. Anyone wanting to ask Jenny something of significance had to use some energy and dig for an answer.

The Parliamentary Friends of Europe visited the French Senate and met with senators, and once again Jenny stood tall. She wrote down virtually everything said in those meetings, filling her little book.

We met someone every day and Jenny would be writing copious notes. I wondered whether she would have a whole library of notes about the trip. I marvelled that she did not miss a trick and was always listening and writing. I am sure that The Nationals will enjoy the fruits of her labour on that trip. While Jenny was in Paris, someone stole her wallet from her backpack. She was annoyed but it did not rattle her. She methodically went through the necessary steps to rectify the situation. Not a link in the chain was missing. Jenny kept going, meeting important people, writing notes and keeping the team together. I offer all credit to her.

I respected Jenny's chairing of the House. The Chamber can be loud on occasions and people become passionate. While members might banter and disagree with each other, we respect the role of the Chair. I cannot remember Jenny becoming annoyed while trying to bring the House to order. That members responded readily to her rulings was a measure of their respect for her as Chair. She held the House in good order while it worked through difficult legislation. Like Jenny, I am a keen follower of the Sydney Swans. I believe she also supports the West Coast Eagles, so she may be sitting at home listening to *Eagle Rock*.

My colleague Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile thanked Jenny on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party. I add my personal thanks to her for her mentorship. She was a mentor to members not only within her party but in all parties. Those who choose to be mentored can learn a lot from their colleagues. I thank Jenny for her guidance on the trip to Europe and for the way she chaired the House. I hold her in high esteem. I thank Jenny for her legacy to my future leadership.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN [12.01 p.m.]: It is a pleasure and a privilege to make a substantive contribution to this debate honouring an extraordinary woman, Jenny Gardiner. Jenny was born in Penola, in regional South Australia, and raised in country Victoria, where her father worked as a stock and station agent before the family went into farming in the beautiful South Gippsland region. In Jenny's teenage years the family moved to Bendemeer near Tamworth, where she first became involved in politics. Jenny responded to an advertised meeting with State member of Parliament Bill Chaffey, the Country Party member for Tamworth. She joined the Young Australian Country Party, becoming State secretary by the mid-1970s and representing it on the Central Council. She was one of only three women on that male-dominated council.

Jenny's most contentious moment came when she helped the Young Australian Country Party move a motion at the party's annual conference to democratise the Legislative Council. Back then, Legislative Council members were appointed, not directly elected. Unfortunately for Jenny and for the motion, older Nationals members of the Legislative Council were comfortable in their roles and, after aggressive lobbying, the motion was withdrawn. Despite that, as always, Jenny won in the end and the democratisation of this Chamber was enacted by the Wran Government in 1978. After working as a clerk in a legal office in Tamworth, Jenny was recruited to the Country Party secretariat in Sydney as a personal assistant to the general secretary, Colonel Bill Ford, OBE. Her friends say he was an enormous influence on her. In her tribute speech in Parliament at the time of his passing, Jenny said:

He was a talented teacher, a distinguished soldier, a community contributor wherever he lived, a leader and manager par excellence, a friend and mentor beyond compare, and a distributor of kind acts which made the lives of others easier to bear. This was a man—a man who acted with integrity his whole, long life and whose kindness to others was unbounded.

Jenny also said that Colonel Ford was ahead of his time in recognising the role of women in the party. She said of him:

Although the membership ranks comprised an unusually high proportion of women, that did not translate into their presence in numbers on the party's governing bodies, so he authored an amendment to the party's constitution enabling positive discrimination for women.

Jenny always pushed women to step up into senior positions in the party. Due in no small part to her leadership, since that time women have achieved significant roles in the organisational structure of The Nationals. They include Helen Dickie, a former State and Federal chair of The Nationals; Christine Ferguson, a former State chair and current Federal chair; Kay Hull, a former vice-chair; Emma Watts, a former vice-chair; my colleague Sarah Mitchell, a former State and Federal chair of the Young Nationals; Felicity Walker, a former State Chair of the Young Nationals; and Sara Burnheim, a former State chair of the Young Nationals.

I note that the leader of our party, Troy Grant, has established a task force to look into a broad range of issues that will affect the party in the years to come, including the number of female parliamentarians at a State and Federal level. Who better to chair the task force than Jenny Gardiner? At Colonel Ford's retirement, Jenny continued in her role under the new general secretary Mr Blunt. A defining moment for Jenny was an unexpected motion passed at the 1978 conference to change the name of the party to the National Party. With the general secretary out of the country, it fell to Jenny to coordinate the party's immediate response.

The Hon. Duncan Gay spoke about that in his speech on this motion. When Blunt moved to Federal Parliament, Jenny became general secretary—the first woman to hold the position of chief executive of any major party. I note that the Liberal and Labor parties are yet to appoint their first female general secretary. The then party chairman, David Brownhill, insisted that the party was not trying to make history but that "Jenny was simply the best person for the job". Jenny and David's partnership saw the party reach its highest ever membership base of more than 50,000.

Some say that Jenny's finest moment as general secretary came in 1988, during the "Joh for Prime Minister" saga. As the Queensland cohort was calling for an end to the Coalition and the ousting of Nationals leader Ian Sinclair, the New South Wales Nationals stood firm in their support for the Coalition and their leader. By all accounts, Jenny was incredible. In the New South Wales media she openly condemned the actions of the Queensland party. She stared down threats of total annihilation, with "Joh for Canberra" candidates running in New South Wales seats against leader Ian Sinclair and deputy Ralph Hunt. It was at that point that Jenny redefined the role of party secretary as that of a real political player and defender of the State's interests. At the 1988 State election the party won 20 of the 26 seats it contested, its highest representation in the New South Wales Parliament, apart from the 2011 landslide. With that record, Jenny won preselection to the upper House, ahead of the 1991 election.

Jenny's tempered and wise demeanour in the Legislative Council has been much remarked upon. She was a constant source of stability for The Nationals. She is known for her great knowledge of the processes of government. Jenny was thoroughly engaged in the committee process. She chaired many parliamentary inquiries and served as Temporary Chair of Committees from 2003 to 2010. Remarkably, Jenny was a member of the Privileges Committee for the entirety of her almost 24 years of service in this place. Jenny was Deputy Leader of The Nationals from 2003-15 and Deputy President and Chair of Committees from 2011-15. Members on both sides have told me that they found Jenny to be balanced, fair and decent in that role and that she always acted with the best interests of the Parliament and the Westminster system at heart. I am sorry that I did not experience that.

As the Hon. Sarah Mitchell pointed out, many younger Nationals will argue that Jenny's most meaningful contribution has been in the support of the Young Nationals. Jenny has ensured the future of the party through a constant involvement in the Young Nationals, of which she is a life member. Last year the first Jenny Gardiner Scholarship, which helps a young person from a regional area to obtain tertiary qualifications, was awarded. The scholarship was an initiative of the Young Nationals and shows their gratitude for Jenny's continued support, guidance and involvement. On a personal note, Jenny has been a rock for me in my career with The Nationals thus far. She was instrumental in my original appointment as State director. She and I had lunch together every month for the first year or so, when she gave me her deep insights into the role she held so formidably and into the party she loved. I say with hand on heart that I could not have done the job of director from 2008-15 without Jenny's guidance, support and

friendship.

I know that every sage piece of advice she gave was anchored in a wellspring of absolute integrity. When I told her that I had decided to run for the Legislative Council her support was immediate and unequivocal. I can say honestly that I would not be standing here today were it not for Jenny Gardiner. I am honoured to call her an adviser, a confidante and a close friend, and I hope I can live up to the faith that she has placed in me. Her legacy to the party, to the Parliament and to New South Wales has been extraordinary and will stand the test of time. It is something to which I believe all of us in this place can aspire.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water)
[12.09 p.m.]: I congratulate the Hon. Bronnie Taylor on moving this motion and it is with pleasure that I add my thoughts and support for the motion. Many of my colleagues and other members have reflected on Jenny Gardiner's role in the Parliament but I want to reflect on my time as a member not only of the governing body of the National Party but also as former chairman of the party and the role that Jenny played during my tenure in that position.

The first meeting I attended of the Central Council, the governing body of The Nationals, was for Jenny's last preselection—the same meeting at which the Hon. Trevor Khan was preselected for this place. Attending my first meeting of the governing body of the party and watching the preselection process was an eye-opener for me but what really struck me was that Jenny Gardiner stood up, addressed the meeting and sat down. I do not know what the final count was but she smashed the contributions of everyone else who went through the preselection process on that day—not because of her performance but because of everything she had contributed to the party and her standing in the party at that time.

I knew from the start that this was someone who obviously was special, who was held in high regard and who was respected by the party. That remains the case to this day. As a member of the Central Council, I had the pleasure of meeting Jenny and getting to know her. After going through my own preselection process and being elected to this place I witnessed her performance as Deputy-President and Chair of Committees, a longstanding member of this House and Deputy Leader of The Nationals—all the things on which other members have reflected. It was not until I became chairman of the party that her role within the party became evident to me.

It is fair to say that Jenny is the conscience of The Nationals. She has the most comprehensive knowledge about where we have been, why we are the way that we are today and what shaped the party. As chairman of the party I am happy to say that whenever I was chairing a meeting that involved resolving difficult issues I was scared when Jenny Gardiner took a point of order because I knew I had done something wrong and that she would be right. However, I also knew that when she sought the call to speak on any issue the debate would end because she could sway a room like no-one I knew. Jenny could sway a room on fact and she could sway a room on a motion. I know that some members might not understand that, as they have probably not seen that side of her. When Jenny Gardiner stands up in a meeting—either at an executive meeting or at the Central Council—and makes a point she makes it well and for good reason.

I believe that in her own mind Jenny has a quota of how many words she will use in her lifetime and she is worried about running out of that quota as she thinks about things a lot and only speaks when she needs to. She uses only a few words when making a point but when she makes it everyone listens. As a chairman that was terrifying but it was also comforting to know that when I had questions or concerns I could turn to Jenny Gardiner—"JAG" as we refer to her—because she knew the answer. Sometimes that would mean turning to her and saying, "Jen, have we ever experienced this problem before? Have you seen an issue like this?" Three or four days later she would come back with a handwritten note of an issue or a minute that she took at a meeting held in 1987. She has kept every handwritten note and article. Anyone who visited her office on level 11 and saw all the files in there would

understand what I am talking about. Jenny knew where those notes were and she knew what they meant; she had made those notes for good reason.

As a relatively new member and as a new and young chairman of the party, it was comforting to know that such corporate history was available and that I was not travelling into areas that would get me into trouble as I did not understand the issues or comprehend the level of emotion attached to them. I am aware of the conscience and heartbeat of party members, something that was evident in everything that Jenny did. Others have spoken about her time in this place, her ability to deal with legislation in Committee, and her contribution to the party on a number of matters. Everyone will read about Jenny's contributions in a number of areas as they have all been documented. She is a pillar of society and she played a significant role in the political history of this State. I want Jenny to write her memoirs. She has all the information; the only problem is that it is written on many different pieces of paper.

Let us celebrate the contribution Jenny has made to public life and to our party. I thank my colleague the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for moving this motion. She has large shoes to fill but she instinctively knows that she cannot go wrong if she follows the example of people like Jenny Gardiner. I want to say thank you to Jenny. I spent a lot of time sitting on her couch venting on a number of issues. The wonderful thing about Jenny was that she never interrupted me. She listened to what I had to say and often would give me wise counsel or offer me examples of how similar issues had played out in the past. As party chairman I found that very comforting and I looked up to her as a friend and mentor. When members leave this place I am sure they would be honoured if similar motions were moved and all members spoke about them in the same way as they have spoken about Jenny today. It is testament to her contribution and to the person that she is. Congratulations, JAG. We will continue to be the beneficiaries of your great work within the party. I thank the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for moving this motion.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR [12.18 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their incredible contributions to debate on this motion. I thank the Hon. Duncan Gay, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the Hon. Rick Colless, the Hon. Trevor Khan, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, the Hon. Catherine Cusack, Mr David Shoebridge, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, Dr John Kaye, the Hon. Paul Green, the Hon. Ben Franklin, the Hon. Niall Blair and Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. What an incredible and exceptional individual Jenny Gardiner is and we as Nationals are lucky to be blessed with her. We have heard brilliant and endearing stories of her sharp intellect, wisdom, integrity, good humour and, as the Hon. Catherine Cusack said, overall gravitas. It has been a privilege to listen to those stories.

As the Hon. Trevor Khan said, Jenny was never afraid of anyone; she was never afraid to take on an issue and she was never afraid to stick to her principles. She was and is brave. The Hon. Sophie Cotsis also mentioned Jenny's commitment to always thinking about the next generation. There could be no greater gift to a political party than that. That was also demonstrated by the words of the Hon. Sarah Mitchell about her commitment to the Young Nationals, a vital part of our great party. If all of us can achieve just one thing to honour her legacy it should be this: We should never forget that we are in this place not for ourselves. Jenny Gardiner was not here for herself. Jenny Gardiner was here 100 per cent for the people of this great State and particularly for the people of rural and regional New South Wales. Jennifer Ann Gardiner, we all miss you but today we salute you. I commend this motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT AMENDMENT (REHABILITATION OF PERSONS WITH SEVERE SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE) BILL 2015

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

Second Reading

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [12.22 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce this bill at what I regard as a crucial time in the history of this State and nation. I was reminded of this when I looked at the front page of the *Sunday Telegraph* of 23 August 2015 which has a large coloured photograph and the following statement:

Three guards, one cop, one ambo, four medicos, one raging drug addict. How ice is turning EVERY town into a war zone.

Members would also be aware of the statement by Senator Jacqui Lambie in the Federal Parliament. We were all surprised because often parents do not speak about their children in this way, but the situation was so desperate she believed she had no other option. Senator Lambie issued a desperate plea for action on Australia's ice epidemic, saying she was driven to do so by an overwhelming sense of powerlessness and a desperate desire to help her son. Senator Lambie said she hopes her 21-year-old son's battle will mobilise support for new laws to give parents the power to force their children into drug treatment. Since that revelation she has had a flood of calls from fellow senators pledging support for involuntary detoxification laws.

Her cry as a mother had a big impact on me. I thought that even though it is difficult to get bills through this place I would have another go with the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Amendment (Rehabilitation of Persons with Severe Substance Dependence) Bill 2015 because I believe the climate is now right and that members at both Federal and State levels understand the seriousness and necessity for involuntary drug rehabilitation programs. Members might also remember the recent report concerning Grammy award winner Amy Winehouse, who said:

They tried to make me go to rehab but I said, 'No, no, no.'

Amy Winehouse died of alcohol poisoning at the tender age of 27. If this bill had existed at that time it is probable that Amy would be still writing award-winning songs. I am pleased to introduce this bill. Members know that I have been working on it for more than eight years because of my deep concern and compassion for drug addicts, to save their lives and to give them a drug-free future, a drug-free life. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007 to further provide for both voluntary and involuntary rehabilitative care of persons with severe substance dependence and for other purposes.

As members know, alcohol is no longer the greatest threat. Now, ice has been called the most dangerous and destructive drug of our time. Ice, along with speed and base, is a form of the potent stimulant drug methamphetamine. Also referred to as shabu, crystal, crystal meth or d-meth, ice is the purest and most potent form of methamphetamine. It comes as a powder or crystals that are usually snorted, injected or smoked. Amongst methamphetamine users, the use of ice has more than doubled, from 22 per cent to 50 per cent between 2010 and 2013. The more shocking development is the association of ice with violence and often the inability of ambulance officers and others to control the person under the influence of ice. They have almost supernatural strength through the impact of the drug on them. On 31 March 2015 New South Wales Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, wrote:

The ice epidemic could bring Australia to its knees ...

If we don't adequately address this problem, it's not an overstatement to say that it could bring us to our knees as a nation.

This monster could steal everything we as Australians cherish so very much and it could be taken from right under our noses ...

We, the community, need to be united and together defeat this insidious poison and those that peddle this substance of misery.

As members of this House we must act in response to that cry for action. The latest figures from the National Drug Survey, as stated by Nicole Lee, an Associate Professor at the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction at Flinders University, suggest that 2 per cent of Australians use methamphetamine. About half of those who use methamphetamines say they prefer to take ice. According to Professor Lee, the number of people using ice has doubled since the last survey. The effects of ice usually last between four and 12 hours, although methamphetamine can be detected in blood and urine for up to 72 hours. All drugs have the potential for dependence. In 2013-14, 40 per cent of treatment in Australia was for alcohol, 24 per cent for cannabis, 14 per cent for methamphetamine and 7 for heroin. Compared to some other drugs it has moderate dependence potential. The rate of dependence among users is probably similar to cannabis.

However, because of the significant brain changes from the use of ice, once someone becomes dependent they often find it difficult to get off it. We do not know who will become dependent and who will not. Professor Lee and her colleagues who have done research in this area found that there was a year between when people started using ice regularly, weekly or more than weekly and when they started experiencing problems, including dependence. However, it is hard to predict who will become dependent and who will not, and once someone is dependent it is quite hard to get them off it because of its effects on their brain. It is those users who typically turn up in emergency departments and pose a challenge to medical staff. Dr David Caldicott, an emergency consultant at the Calvary Hospital in Canberra said:

This is because they are often dealing with [ice] ... "double-whammy" of physical as well as psychological effects, he says.

For instance a user could present to emergency with stroke like symptoms but be severely agitated and aggressive.

"It's kind of a Benjamin Button type drug so... [you could] see a stroke or aortic dissection in someone using ice in their 20s or 30s," he says.

Almost one quarter of regular methamphetamine users will experience a symptom of psychosis in any given year ...

It takes between 10 to 14 days to physically detox from [ice] ... almost twice as long as many other drugs. After an acute withdrawal period, there's a more chronic withdrawal period that may take 12 to 18 months.

We have all read the reports of the impact of the new drug ice. It seems everyone acknowledges that it is a drug such that we have never seen before. Ice is a drug that affects people like no other, leaving them unable to help themselves, and those who love them are powerless to intervene, as outlined by Senator Jacqui Lambie. I congratulate the New South Wales Government on pouring approximately \$7 million into opening dedicated ice clinics across the State. As members know, I have had an interest in this subject for many years. In 2005 my late wife, Elaine, and I undertook a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA] worldwide study of what we called the problems and solutions for the drug epidemic. We visited about 30 different countries inspecting their drug rehabilitation programs.

We particularly wanted to compare the different programs in Asia so we visited China, Taiwan and similar places, and we also went to the Middle East, Egypt, various European countries and, of course, the United States of America, although we did not want to copy what the United States of

America was doing. We were trying to move away from what I would call a western society approach to see whether other nations with other cultures had more effective programs. We were very impressed with the Swedish drug rehabilitation programs. Sweden has one of the lowest levels of drug use in the world, and this bill, I am not ashamed to say, is based on the Swedish legislation.

The program in Sweden is not radical, but it has been employed for many years now and has been very successful. My late wife and I inspected the three stages of the Swedish program where addicts were accommodated in various centres according to their progression through the rehabilitation treatment. The program consists of a number of stages: the addicts first come into one centre and then they go to another centre and then to another. We visited all of those centres and we also met with the drug addicts. The Swedish drug program is coercive; it is not voluntary. I know that social workers in New South Wales, and indeed throughout Australia, argue that drug addicts cannot be treated with any coercive programs. They should tell that to the Swedish Government, because Sweden has been doing it successfully.

I was amazed when I met with drug addicts in the first few weeks of the coercive program: They were resistant and unhappy. But as the effect of the drug wears off they realise that the program is for their benefit. I observed a remarkable change in attitude from drug addicts in the program from resistance to passiveness and then to co-operation. Obviously it is very difficult during the first few weeks of treatment because the clients have to go through withdrawal. For the first stage of the treatment they are in a facility that is something like a sanatorium, staffed by young men and women who wear white T-shirts and white slacks. It is not a prison; there are no police.

They told me that during the withdrawal phase, when symptoms are very upsetting to the drug addict, the staff would spend all night massaging the clients to help them get through it. Their attitude is so compassionate and caring that after two weeks the drug addicts, who might not have wanted to be there in the first instance, become completely cooperative and move through the various stages of the program. I believe the Swedish Government has shown New South Wales the way forward. I implore the House to support this drug and alcohol treatment amendment bill to further tackle the problem where it counts, to help people who cannot help themselves, and to empower those who care for those who are addicted to ice. The bill will amend the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007 to further provide for the involuntary rehabilitative care of persons with severe substance dependence. The main objects of the bill provide for the involuntary rehabilitative care of persons with severe substance dependence:

- (a) by providing a new option for rehabilitation, so that, instead of being detained, persons with severe substance dependence can (during a trial-period) agree to undergo out-patient treatment, including having naltrexone implanted under their skin and undergoing counselling for relapse prevention and other health issues, and
- (b) by amending the procedure for assessing persons for involuntary treatment, including by adding to the persons who can request an assessment and to the circumstances in which a person can be involuntarily treated, and
- (c) by amending the procedure for the detention and transportation of persons for the purposes of involuntary rehabilitative treatment and for the conduct of the subsequent treatment of those persons, and
- (d) by adding to the rights of detained dependent persons, including their right to plan their treatment and their rights to competent and reasonable care, to legal representation and to information about these and other rights, and
- (e) by further restricting the conduct of detained dependent persons (including by prohibiting the abuse or possession of addictive substances, including liquor or drugs, during the period of treatment), and

- (f) by increasing the maximum time for which a person may be involuntarily detained for treatment (from 28 days to 90 days) and by removing the ability to extend that time, and
- (g) by providing for the post-rehabilitative care of persons who were formerly detained or treated (which may involve a second detention or treatment if substance use continues), and
- (h) by applying the Act to young people and specifying the rights of their parents or guardians.

Part of the success of the Swedish program is the establishment of a Social Court, similar to our Drug Court, where a person who is addicted to ice appears before a judge and evidence of the drug problem is produced by the authorities, the police, social workers and family members. The judge then rules whether the person should be ordered into involuntary treatment. It is not heavy-handed police treatment but it is handled very carefully in the Social Court, which is required to make this legislation work. I do not think these types of cases would work in our normal court system.

As members know, ice is tearing families apart. Users of ice come from all walks of life and have all sorts of impacts: professionals who have had great jobs becoming unemployed; on families, destroying their lives through a family member taking these drugs; violence in families caused by people using ice who are unable to control their addiction or their violent tendencies; theft from family and friends by users seeking money to fund this drug; broken homes; and grandparents caring for grandchildren. Ice is incredibly pervasive and it is affecting people right across the community. The Christian Democratic Party applauds the State and Federal Coalition governments for working on education, health and law enforcement to try to solve the problem. Yet more is needed. We know that ice is extremely addictive and can cause people to be so violent that they do not recognise themselves and their lives quickly spiral out of control. Some users need help. When they are in that situation they cannot see it for themselves. We are the ones who must do all we can to provide that help.

In relation to the drug ice, the NSW Commissioner of Police Andrew Scipione said, "The community now frowns upon drink-driving and finds it socially unacceptable, and that is the cultural shift we need to achieve in relation to drug use. It's not going to be easy. It will be a long, hard road." This bill will do just that for drug users who are out of control and putting themselves and others in danger. We support a coordinated response to help persons who are victims of those using ice and, importantly, to help ice users to get off the drug. I commend the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Amendment (Rehabilitation of Persons with Severe Substance Dependence) Bill 2015 to the House.

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

NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

The Hon. PAUL GREEN [12.40 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes that:

- (a) National Child Protection Week is from 6 to 12 September 2015 and this year marks its twenty-fifth year anniversary;
- (b) National Child Protection Week supports and encourages the safety and wellbeing of Australian children and families through the Play Your Part Awards, events, programs and resources;
- (c) the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect's campaign aims to

provide communities and individuals with practical information on how to "Play Your Part", embed primary prevention messages into social discourse and provide a platform for communities to be empowered, resourced and mobilised to take action at a local level;

- (d) Bravehearts' nineteenth annual White Balloon Day will be held during National Child Protection Week on Friday 11 September 2015, which is about raising awareness and funds to enable the continued delivery of vital support, protection and prevention programs, and giving kids the confidence to come forward to break the silence; and
- (e) Bravehearts' key purpose is to educate, empower and protect Australian kids from sexual assault, and to call on the community to support National Child Protection Week and White Balloon Day.

National Child Protection Week and the efforts of Bravehearts are helping to remove the scourge of child abuse from our society. When we hear the statistics on child abuse it is often easy to see them as just a bunch of numbers. However, when we hear those numbers we should be thinking about individual people with lives and dreams. Each victim of child abuse represents a life that is shattered by abuse or neglect by people who should know better. According to a 2012 Bravehearts report, one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18 years.

The report also states that there is widespread agreement that child sexual abuse spans all races, economic classes and ethnic groups; one in three Australians would not believe children if they disclosed abuse; one in five Australians lacked the confidence to know what to do if they suspected abuse or negligence; 90 per cent of surveyed adults believed that the community needs to be better informed about the problem of child abuse in Australia; and 86 per cent of Australians believe that the Commonwealth and State governments should invest more money in protecting children from abuse and neglect.

The report goes on to cite several resources that explain the effects of child sexual abuse including triggering the development of future violent behaviour, resulting in criminal convictions, psychosomatic responses, psychiatric disorders, long-lasting emotional problems, youth suicide, regression, sleeping and eating disorders, lack of self-esteem, nightmares, mutilation, self-hatred, promiscuous behaviour and aggression. A wide variety of later effects were pointed out including sexual difficulties, inability to form lasting relationships, a serious lack of self-confidence, marital problems and poor parenting skills. Other effects include extreme distrust of others, self-blame, stigma, self-hatred and self-harming behaviours such as substance abuse, eating disorders, suicide, and a subconscious attraction to and re-victimisation by abusive partners.

The consequences of child abuse are ongoing and tragic. It is hard to believe that it happens so frequently in our society. As I said, one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18 years. We have an obligation as legislators to protect these children before they become victims of abuse. We need to ensure that our kids know that it is okay to say no and to communicate that issue. We need to remember these facts when we are confronted with statistics so that children are not at risk of becoming just another number.

National Child Protection Week invites all Australians to play their part to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The motto of National Child Protection Week is "Protecting children is everyone's business." National Child Protection Week is an initiative of the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect [NAPCAN], which was co-founded in 1987 by Rosemary Sinclair, AO, and Christine Stewart, OAM. Since then, NAPCAN has made a significant contribution towards the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people by raising public awareness of child abuse and neglect and its impacts and by developing and promoting effective prevention strategies and programs.

NAPCAN's strategy is to support and encourage changes in individual and community behaviour to stop child abuse and neglect before it starts by: promoting quality child abuse prevention research so the causes and impact of child abuse and neglect can be better understood and effective ways to prevent it can be developed and measured; advocating for changes in policies and strategies that place the wellbeing and safety of children and young people first; developing and promoting community-led prevention programs and initiatives that are evidence based and effective in reducing the risks of abuse and neglect for children and young people through programs such as Love Bites, All Children Being Safe, and Friends and promoting others through the Play Your Part Awards; and providing resources and training to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people ranging from role-based fact sheets and brochures to child-centred training, programs and initiatives such as the Aboriginal Girls Circle.

NAPCAN's campaign aims to provide communities and individuals with practical information on how to "Play Your Part" and to embed primary prevention messages into social discourse. It also provides a platform for communities to be empowered, resourced and mobilised to take action at a local level. This year NAPCAN encourages us to find out more about our role in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children. Playing our part can range from encouraging children and young people's participation in their community to hosting a National Child Protection Week event or promoting a family-friendly environment at our workplaces.

In debate on the Biosecurity Bill I said, "Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility." The same principle applies to the prevention of child abuse. I strongly urge and encourage all members of this House to have a good look at the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect [NAPCAN] website under the tab "How Can I Play My Part" under the resource hub. There is a wealth of information about what people from different walks of life can do to prevent child abuse. For the benefit of members, I will read out what politicians can do to help our kids:

Politicians play their part to protect and care for children and young people in our community by promoting child protection as a community responsibility and endorsing family friendly policies.

Be a positive role model. Be aware of your behaviour, what you say, how you say it and the way you act. Children and young people learn from the people they listen to, so make your influence positive!

Be aware that child abuse occurs across all communities and cultural groups. Promote child protection and spread the word that child abuse prevention is everyone's business.

Follow the principle of the environmental impact model, consider the impact of all legal, policy and service delivery reform on children. Ask yourself: where are the children in this change?

Become informed on the link between abuse and prevention of abuse. Ask for briefings which include information from child abuse prevention experts and be well-informed on the latest research.

Promote a long term view to child safety and wellbeing by addressing the overloading of child protection, health, housing and education systems. Invest in prevention strategies and early intervention services to reduce the risk of families' problems worsening over time and heading into a cycle of abuse.

Endorse family friendly policies across the workforce. Flexible work hours, job sharing and the provision of paid Parental Leave demonstrate that members of society are valued as parents as well as employees.

Implement universal home visiting to families at the birth of their first child. Support to new

families at this time has been shown by the David Old's model to prevent health and developmental problems for children.

Listen to and engage with the opinions of youth delegations. Refer to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Children have the right to express their opinions freely, and have their opinions taken into account in matters that affect them.

This week when I was sitting on the children and young people joint committee the commissioner mentioned that they interviewed five-year-olds about what they think. That is pretty amazing, but they did it. They managed to put the questions in the words of a five-year-old and frame them in a way that got responses. Many of us would wonder what a five-year-old would have to say.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: A lot. I live with one.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Yes, they had a lot to say. I have heard two-year-olds referred to as "little professors", so by the age of five they must have graduated. I am sure they all have something to say. The Hon. Courtney Houssos is yet to experience this with a five-year-old. She is at the little professor stage where a child will wrap you around their little finger. They tell you where they want to go and how they want to go. When they do not want to go somewhere, they will tell you. They are magical in communicating strong opinions using very few words. I think the Hon. Courtney Houssos is yet to enjoy that experience. The NAPCAN website says that politicians should:

Encourage organisations that work with children and young people to develop child-safe policies and procedures.

I think that is one of the biggest opportunities for the House, through the Government. The website continues:

A child protection policy should promote wellbeing and early intervention practices, as well as be consistent with state/territory mandatory reporting legislation, including ensuring that all staff and volunteers engaged in child related work hold a valid Working With Children Check.

A code of conduct for working with children and young people is another practical tool for promoting clear and consistent roles and behaviour. When implemented and supported consistently, these policies work to protect children, workers and the organisation.

Last year thousands of everyday Australians participated in White Balloon Day, raising much-needed funds and awareness to help Bravehearts educate 83,500 children about personal safety skills and deliver more than 5,000 counselling services in the past 12 months. This year is the nineteenth White Balloon Day. It will be held on Friday 11 September. There are a few simple ways all of us can make a lasting difference to the lives of Aussie kids. People can help by encouraging those at our workplace or child's school to wear something white. People can host a morning tea or barbeque at their workplace, school or community group to raise funds. People can order a fundraising box for their reception area or office and collect donations that way. According to Bravehearts founder and chief executive officer Hetty Johnston:

White Balloon Day is about raising awareness and funds to enable the continued delivery of vital support and prevention programs and giving kids the confidence to come forward and break the silence ...

From something as simple as wearing white and tying a white balloon to a letterbox, to hosting a fundraising event or luncheon, everyone can get involved. Protecting children is everyone's business.

We know that for the most part this crime is preventable, we just need adults to step forward and to prioritise the safety of our children. Let's rise up and work together to protect the most vulnerable members of the community—our kids.

White Balloon Day has been run by the Bravehearts organisation for a number of years. White Balloon Day is Bravehearts' annual signature event, held to raise awareness and funds for Australian children affected by sexual assault. The white balloon is considered symbolic of child sexual assault following a public demonstration held in Belgium in 1996. In that year 300,000 people gathered with white balloons and white flowers in a show of public sympathy and support for the parents of several young girls who were either murdered or abducted by notorious repeat sex offender Marc Dutroux.

Launched in 1997, this Australia-wide campaign is a key fixture during National Child Protection Week with funds raised going towards education, prevention and case management programs for the one in five Australian children sexually assaulted in some way before their eighteenth birthday. While the substance of this issue is of the utmost seriousness, White Balloon Day is a simple, fun and effective way to reach out to friends, family and community to promote child protection. Bravehearts is inviting schools, childcare centres, universities, small and large businesses, churches and governments—anyone and everyone passionate about child protection—to participate in the event by raising funds and awareness for Bravehearts and the one in five Australian children sexually assaulted in some way before their eighteenth birthday.

I encourage all members of this Chamber to get involved in this very important event by hosting a white-themed event, holding a morning tea, organising a free-dress day at your child's school or at your workplace, or by encouraging your community to take part. People can turn up to an event in their local community. People can also get involved through social media. Members can positively promote Bravehearts and White Balloon Day on their social media accounts using the hashtag #whiteballoonday. Involvement in White Balloon Day will show that you and your community have zero tolerance for child sexual assault. It will actively encourage survivors to break the silence and support and empower them. It will place the need to protect children above all other considerations and make sure that we as a community become part of the solution by activating change.

Just this week I was out and about and met a very big lad—I will not mention any name—and a very proud man in many ways. He was strong and bulky and stood tall. But he was literally brought to tears as he told me of an event that happened many years ago. He did what most men would do: he buried it. He thought it was done with. He thought he would not have to revisit it. He thought he had put it away. He thought he did not have to face it. He thought he could just get on with living life. It is some decades ago now, and here he was standing in front of me saying—"I thought I had dealt with it but it has come back to haunt me and I need to do something". He was asking me for some information. I have since given him that information and hopefully he will use it.

I was very proud of his saying "I don't want anyone else to face what I faced and I don't want them to have to relive what I am reliving". In this House many of us are working towards this. I thank the Government particularly because I note the Hon. Mike Baird committed \$4 million over four years for child protection initiatives. I am led to believe we will see a tender go out early next year and hopefully it will be part of the solution. I am absolutely committed to child protection empowerment and education. I believe with all my heart that if we can save but a percentage of these children—obviously we want to save 100 per cent—10 per cent, 20 per cent, then a lot of young girls will grow up adjusted, able to function, able to have careers, able to maintain their relationships, and able to hold their own in the world. Fewer drugs will be needed to cover the pain, less ice will be needed to dull the hurt.

For men it will mean fewer broken relationships because they will be well adjusted. Prevention is better than cure, and I am absolutely committed in my time in this House to ministering to the needs of kids across New South Wales in this small but significant way. We deal with a lot of things in this House—economics, infrastructure—but nothing is more important than trying to protect one, two, three,

hundreds, thousands or millions of our kids from sexual assault, which can ruin their lives. Sadly, it can be never-ending in that it haunts, wrecks, demoralises and breaks our communities. I, like all members in this House, am committed to making sure we save as many kids from sexual abuse as we possibly can.

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

[Deputy-President (The Hon. Trevor Khan) left the chair at 1.02 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SANTOS LEEWOOD WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that the Department of Primary Industries has warned that phase 2 of the Santos Leewood Produced Water Treatment and Beneficial Reuse Project at Narrabri would lead to a loss of agricultural capacity and carry significant adverse risk, what action will the Minister take to ensure that the consent conditions are met before final approval is given to the project?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Yesterday NSW Resources and Energy announced the approval, with conditions, of stage two of the Leewood Produced Water Treatment and Beneficial Reuse Project. This project is on the Leewood property belonging to Santos, 24 kilometres south of Narrabri. The Leewood project involves building and operating a facility to treat the produced water extracted from gas exploration activities, including a reverse osmosis plant and brine concentrator, associated pipework to transfer water and brine around the facility, treated water storage, and an irrigation system. Treated water will be reused for irrigation purposes, dust suppression, drilling, construction activities and firefighting.

The Department of Primary Industries reviewed the application from Santos and provided advice on potential water and agricultural impacts. This advice included: better clarification of the status of groundwater monitoring at the Leewood site and how it integrates into the broader Santos monitoring program; the inclusion of soil and surface water monitoring and contingency responses to minimise potential impacts; the requirement of a water use approval for the irrigation component of this project; and comments on the irrigation design, soil characteristics, soil enhancement and irrigated crop agronomy. The department is satisfied that this project will increase the agricultural productivity of the soils to be irrigated and does not pose a significant risk to surrounding agriculture. The Government is committed to the sustainable management of our groundwater resources, supported by a robust regulatory framework in New South Wales which will ensure the necessary level of protection.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I ask a supplementary question. In light of the Minister's answer, will he elucidate what role his department will play in ensuring that consent conditions are met on that project?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: My previous answer outlined the role that the Department of Primary Industries will play.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister please update the House on work the New South Wales Government is undertaking to upgrade roads in Western Sydney?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: When the Liberal-Nationals came to government there were 16 years of unfinished business to complete, a large amount of which was in Western Sydney. To complete that and to prepare for the future, the Government embarked on one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the history of this State, the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan. It is not a flash title; it says what it is. It is about getting on with the job. This is a \$3.6 billion project that we have funded with our Federal colleagues—

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The project will ensure that that thriving part of Sydney will succeed in creating housing and job opportunities now and well into the future. The plan will revolutionise travel in Western Sydney, particularly around the future second airport at Badgerys Creek. I am pleased to advise the House that this week work started on the first local road upgrade that is part of the infrastructure plan. It involves widening a 1.2 kilometre section of Wetherill Street from two to four lanes between Polding Street and Victoria Street at Wetherill Park. The work will also improve the alignment of Wetherill Street through The Horsley Drive intersection and provide new traffic lights to increase capacity and safety at that location. The Government is putting almost \$50 million into the Erskine Park Link Road and double that into Old Wallgrove Road. Opposition members are quiet. They have not been west of King Street, Newtown, in their lives. They have deserted the Labor heartland.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: I have taken this point of order before. It is disorderly for the Minister to invite comment from Opposition members when they are sitting silently and abiding by the rules of the Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The point has been well made, but it is a debating point. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I was trying to find out if Opposition members are alive, and it turns out that they are. Other projects under the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan include stage one of the \$509 million Bringelly Road upgrade, and the \$70 million Werrington Arterial Road upgrade, on which construction has already commenced.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Is that all?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Someone from the Labor Party who has not found his way past King Street in Newtown in living memory asks, "Is that all?" I was talking about the \$70 million upgrade to the Werrington Arterial Road, on which construction has already commenced. One would be hard pressed to find a member of the Opposition—except perhaps a newer member who was formerly in the trucking industry—who knows where the Werrington Arterial Road upgrade is. Work has begun on 14 intersections, almost eight kilometres of road and 10 kilometres of shared paths since the Government announced its historic Western Sydney roads package last year.

What is so great about these projects is that local contractors are doing the work. So far, \$18.2 million in contracts has been awarded to Western Sydney companies. About half the suppliers and subcontractors who are working on Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan projects are also based in Western Sydney. Major companies are investing in the area and bringing thousands of jobs with them. More than 200,000 jobs are forecast to be created in that area. There is much to be done to support future jobs growth in Western Sydney, but the Government is rolling up its sleeves and getting on with it. *[Time expired.]*

TAMWORTH BASE HOSPITAL

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Minister for Health.

Given that Tamworth Base Hospital is one of the busiest hospitals in rural and regional New South Wales, with more than 40,000 patients passing through its emergency department each year, and given that 31 per cent of patients wait for more than four hours for treatment—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Trevor Khan to order for the first time.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Why has the Government allowed Hunter New England Health to ignore an Industrial Relations Commission recommendation to increase Tamworth Base Hospital emergency department's nursing coverage by 10 hours on a night shift?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: It is extraordinary how the honourable member keeps forgetting Labor's failures during its 16 years in government—the complete and utter failure of the health system over 16 years.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. This Government has been in office now for five years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind honourable members on both sides of the House that points of order are not to be used to make debating points. We are 20 seconds into the Minister's answer, so it is a little too early for me to say that the Minister was not being relevant. All Ministers are reminded of the need to be relevant in the answers they give.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: What I was saying is relevant because we came into government four years ago with a hospital system that was in complete disarray as a result of Labor's failures—each and every hospital in this State was in disarray. We have a health Minister, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, who in four years has done more work to improve hospitals in this State, including Tamworth Base Hospital, than the former Government came near to doing in its 16 years in office. What is the reason for that? I do not think it ever had a health Minister who lasted more than one or two years; Ministers kept going through a revolving door.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. The question was about Tamworth Base Hospital.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is obviously important, even when talking about one particular institution, to place it within its context. I am reluctant to say that the Minister is not being relevant; he is certainly being generally relevant. If the Minister has some further material that is relevant he should continue his answer.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I have a little more. We are spending more than \$5 billion to build and upgrade more than 60 hospitals and health services over the next four years, bringing the total spend on health infrastructure to almost \$10 billion since the 2011 election. It is great work.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: A new hospital. Tick! Tick!

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I acknowledge the interjection from the Leader of the Government. A big tick: a new hospital. We are going across the State repairing hospitals and filling in the gaps where those opposite failed. Put simply, we are spending more in eight years than Labor spent in its entire 16 years in government. New hospital projects, including the new Rouse Hill Hospital, the redevelopment of Campbelltown Hospital and an increase in paediatric capacity in south-west Sydney will all be funded from the Rebuilding NSW Hospitals Fund and are in addition to the planned \$5 billion infrastructure program.

The New South Wales recurrent health budget has increased to \$19.6 billion, which is \$4.1 billion or 27 per cent more than Labor's last health budget. If in its 16 years in government the former

Government had had a health Minister like the Hon. Jillian Skinner, and if it had had a budget like our budget with increases of 27 per cent, we would not have these issues today. This increase will allow an extra 90,000 people to be treated in emergency departments, 40,000 extra hospital admissions and 3,100 additional elective surgeries. I am very proud of the work of this Government and I am extremely proud of the work of our health Minister, the Hon. Jillian Skinner.

FORESTRY CORPORATION LOGGING OPERATIONS

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries. Why is the Forestry Corporation refusing to have good-faith negotiations with adjoining landowners about the impact on local businesses and access to the adjoining South East Forest National Park caused by the heavy logging proposed in compartment 2431 of the Tantawangalo State Forest, and what will the Minister do to ensure good-faith negotiations commence?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I thank the member for his question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the Hon. Robert Brown and Mr Jeremy Buckingham wish to continue their conversation, they should do so in the members' lounge.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As the question relates to negotiations that the Forestry Corporation may be having, I will take it on notice and confirm whether they relate to a commercial agreement between the corporation and the parties with whom it is negotiating and bring an answer back to the member.

TIMEBANKING

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister outline evidence of the impact of Timebanking?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Timebanking, an initiative of the NSW Volunteering Strategy, is a social network of members who exchange services online.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the second time. I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: It enables members to earn time credits when volunteering their time providing a service and then to spend those credits on a service provided by someone else. People may join Timebanking for free at www.timebanking.com.au. Timebanking was originally trialled in the Hunter and on the Central Coast in 2012. Positive evaluation of this trial led to further expansion of Timebanking from 2014. Timebanking is now active in 69 communities, providing local access for 80 per cent of the New South Wales population. To date, 5,700 members have exchanged 20,500 hours of support.

A second evaluation of Timebanking is underway under the leadership of Professor Max Smith of the University of Newcastle, and the interim findings are excellent. The interim report indicates that Timebanking continues to demonstrate that it is a powerful mechanism for building community engagement and increasing volunteering. This has resulted in new support and care for those in need in our communities, increased social capital, the creation of new pathways to employment, and improved wellbeing and trust among participants. Key findings include that Timebanking is the largest single such system in the world, with 5,700 registered members, including almost 500 organisations.

Member numbers continue to grow steadily, with an increase of 44 per cent since 2013. Since the launch of Timebanking in November 2012, 20,500 hours of support have been exchanged. There has been an increase of 18 per cent in members using the system for trading compared with the last

evaluation. Timebanking is most active within smaller communities where the participants are embedded in their local community and existing organisations. Neighbourhood and community centres are the largest groups of participating organisations and are producing some of the most successful engagement, linking local people to Timebanking transactions. Trading and sustainability in new local communities and organisations are directly related to mutual support by participants and volunteer facilitators called "time brokers".

It has had a positive impact of mutual support, particularly in the lives of older and relatively poorer people, factors that will encourage future participation and sustainability into the future. Timebanking continues to achieve its program objectives. In particular, it supports the NSW Volunteering Strategy in removing barriers to volunteering. The interim evaluation report will be published today on the Department of Family and Community Services and NSW Volunteering websites.

The meaning and value of community exchanges to participants will be the subject of further case study and will be presented as part of the final evaluation, which is due at the end of this year. I assure honourable members that it is innovative volunteering initiatives like Timebanking that I want to hear about from people involved in the consultation currently underway to create a second NSW Volunteering Strategy. I was fortunate enough to visit the Centre for Volunteering last week along with staff from the Office of NSW Volunteering, where we called for public submissions to help inform the second NSW Volunteering Strategy.

HOME CARE SERVICE

Ms JAN BARHAM: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Disability Services. Noting that it is more than six months since the closing date for expressions of interest in the transfer of the Home Care Service, can the Minister update the House on the transfer process and expected completion date? Given that the Minister has previously indicated he is not advised of how many expressions of interest were lodged or which organisations were invited to participate in the final bidding stage, can he advise what safeguards are in place to ensure that the transfer will not reduce the quality or availability of home care services?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for her question. I might give the answer in reverse. Firstly, I can assure the member that all appropriate safeguards and protocols are in place. As to providing details of those who have lodged an expression of interest or registered an interest, that is commercial-in-confidence, so I am not in a position at this stage to provide any such information. As to when an announcement will be made, I can advise the member that the answer to that is soon.

SANTOS LEEWOOD WATER TREATMENT FACILITY

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that Santos Leewood water treatment project monitoring bores have not been built as required under the phase 1 consent, what action will the Minister take to ensure that phase 2 will not be approved to commence until a clear water management plan with adequate monitoring is actually in place?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: The approval process is managed by the Office of Coal Seam Gas.

GRAINS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. RICK COLLESS: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting research and development for the grains sector?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I thank the honourable member for his question and interest in this

important topic. Last week I took a trip to the State's north to attend AgQuip in Gunnedah. As always, I enjoyed the opportunity this presented to chat with a number of the producers who attended this landmark event and to hear their issues and views on the state of agriculture in New South Wales. I am happy to say that after the recent rainfall the mood on the ground was one of great optimism. The Government is investing in research and development [R and D], a key driver in improving productivity and profitability in our State's primary industries and unlocking new market opportunities.

We have developed an Agriculture Industry Action Plan, which aims to grow our primary industry sector over the next decade. Ongoing investment in and facilitation of cutting-edge R and D is critical to ensuring that growth. A key partnership between the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] and the Grains Research and Development Corporation [GRDC] is helping to drive these improvements in the grains sector. As result of this partnership we now have a \$140 million portfolio of grain research and development projects across New South Wales. While I was at AgQuip I was lucky enough to attend a joint GRDC-DPI breakfast involving our researchers and grain growers, which afforded an excellent opportunity to listen to the outcomes of this research.

Our researchers are truly leaders in their field and it was incredible to see the rapport that they have built with our farmers. I have to say that being able to sit there for a few hours and listen to the outcomes of this research was one of the best things I have done since being appointed Minister. Our researchers are not just locking themselves in a laboratory; they are out in the paddocks researching things like herbicide resistance, current diseases and the best grain varieties and, best of all, they are able to translate this into easily understood outcomes that farmers can take away and apply to their farming businesses. This is about making sure that our farmers have access to the latest innovations and technologies and ensuring that our research and development will help improve their bottom line.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind Mr Jeremy Buckingham that he is already on one call to order. He will shortly be on two calls to order. I would hate to see him leave the Chamber before the end of question time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The challenges that the grains sector faces, particularly in relation to herbicide resistance, are real and they demonstrate why investment in this ongoing research is critical. While I was at AgQuip I announced an allocation of \$9 million to strengthen our partnership and co-investment with GRDC to build grains research and development capacity at key DPI research centres in the northern region. This includes a \$7 million co-investment with the GRDC under the capacity-building project. Two staff members have already been recruited under this project and six more will be recruited over the next four years in areas of pre-breeding, pathology, physiology, agronomy, weeds and farming systems.

This co-investment also includes \$2 million to update research and development infrastructure and equipment at key DPI research centres at Tamworth, Narrabri and Trangie. It will now provide new glasshouse and controlled-growth environments at Tamworth Agricultural Institute so that it can undertake pathology, pre-breeding and agronomy research. New overhead irrigation systems will be installed at the Liverpool Plains Field Station and Trangie Agricultural Centre to allow crop trials to be managed with more controlled water application. Equipment such as precision planters, a harvester and a tractor will also be acquired to allow industry best practice summer and winter crop trials to be conducted across the region. This research is vital and we will continue to ensure it is invested in to deliver a vibrant future for our grains sector.

FIREARMS CRIME

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Duncan Gay, representing the Minister for Justice and Police. What percentage of all crimes committed in New South Wales in the past five years involved the use of a registered firearm by a licensed firearms holder?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for his question. Obviously I have not got that detail with me. I understand that the question relates to the number of illegal firearms that are in the community as opposed to the actions of people with legal firearms and responsible firearm owners. I will take the question on notice, refer the matter to the Minister and obtain an answer.

PADSTOW PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL AND MEMBER FOR EAST HILLS

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, representing the Minister for Education. Given the statement by the Minister for Education yesterday that "schools are not places for political issues to be aired", will the Government investigate why the member for East Hills, Glenn Brookes, is holding a barbecue on Padstow Park Public School grounds on Saturday 29 August and who approved this use?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I thank the member for her question. I will take it on notice and refer it to the Minister for Education for a response.

NORTH COAST ROADS

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to improve road and beach safety on the North Coast?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As a resident of the North Coast the Hon. Catherine Cusack was prompted to ask me this question following a great question I was asked yesterday by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey. In the 2015-16 State budget alone, the Government is injecting hundreds of millions of dollars into work on State and council-owned roads along the North Coast including: more than \$10 million to replace the bridge over Stingray Creek at North Haven on Ocean Drive, Port Macquarie; \$5 million to commence construction to replace the bridge over Sportsmans Creek at Lawrence; \$3.5 million to complete planning and invite tenders to replace the timber Tabulam Bridge over the Clarence River; \$3 million to upgrade McFarlane Bridge over the Clarence River, Maclean; and \$1 million for the construction of a network of shared pedestrian cycle paths in Forster to improve local connections, which will generate a lot of work in the local community.

The proof of the pudding is in the works that are currently occurring on the Princes Highway. New South Wales and Federal Coalition governments are funding and delivering the \$820 million Oxley Highway to Kundabung upgrade—major work started in 2014, with work expected to be completed by 2017; the \$230 million Kundabung to Kempsey upgrade—major work started in November 2014, with work expected to be completed by 2017; the \$830 million Warrell Creek to Nambucca Heads upgrade—major work started in 2014 and is due for completion in late 2017; and the \$780 million Nambucca Heads to Urunga upgrade—major work started in November 2013 and is due for completion by the end of 2016.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Hear, hear!

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank members for their support for these projects. In recent weeks Labor advertisements in local papers reflected that the Labor Party carried out those works. I wish we could have truth in political advertising as there is no truth in that. Under Labor and Albo the Man, this highway would have taken a further decade to build. On average, 28 people lose their lives on the Pacific Highway each year. If construction was delayed for another 10 years how many more lives would be lost? Anyone doing the maths would be able to establish that that is what would have happened under Labor. We noticed the woodie out there, the 1978 Ford country squire, the seven litre vehicle that was used in the United States. However, I will talk about that on another occasion. [*Time expired.*]

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ZONES

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, representing the Minister for Planning. Will the Minister advise the House, in hectares, what area of privately owned land in New South Wales is currently covered by E2 environmental conservation zones, E3 environmental management zones and E4 environmental living zones, excluding those areas under voluntary conservation agreements?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As I cannot name each and every zone I will refer the member's question to the Minister for Planning and come back with an answer.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that the Government is reviewing the business operations of the Department of Primary Industries Soil Conservation Service, what is the Minister's response to the concerns of farmers that this is a plan to prevent Soil Conservation Service business operations from providing that service which will lead to the Department of Primary Industries pricing itself out of the market?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Let me outline the great service being provided by the Soil Conservation Service to many landholders across New South Wales. The Soil Conservation Service operates commercially on a fee-for-service basis, undertaking works for both private and public sector clients across New South Wales. This incredible service, which this Government supports, has helped our farming sector and improved management of natural resources for more than 70 years. There is a growing demand for the services provided by the Soil Conservation Service, with the majority of the increased demand occurring east of the Great Dividing Range. These services are of a high standard and are sought after for their commercial and technical quality.

The Soil Conservation Service has offices in 27 locations across New South Wales and has approximately 140 staff. Ongoing low demand in some regional locations has led to the Department of Primary Industries commencing discussions with some of those staff about the service. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure that the service can continue to meet current and future needs of its diverse client base. Successful change will mean that clients will continue to receive the high level of service that they are used to, and the Soil Conservation Service will ensure its sustainability by reducing any losses. No decisions on operations, fees or staffing have been made. While this is an operational matter, I am advised by the department that it is engaging in a genuine period of consultation with staff to ensure they have input into the future of this important service.

The Government must ensure that the Soil Conservation Service is able to provide ongoing high-level advice and consultancy services to our farming sector. The pleasing thing about the service is that throughout the years it has changed as farming practices have changed. It has been able to keep up to date with modern practices and provide advice in relevant areas. My colleague the Hon. Rick Colless, who at one stage worked for the Soil Conservation Service, knows more than anyone that farming practices have changed. No-tilling farming and things like that have meant that, over time, the type of advice and consultancy services have changed, as has the need for some of the services provided by the Soil Conservation Service to the farming sector. This Government is making sure that that level of consultation and advice will continue in the future—something to which farmers in this State can look forward.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer and provide information about potential changes to operations and staffing decisions?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: No decisions have been made on either operations or staffing.

ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: My question—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Hyacinth!

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Point of order: I am sick of your innuendo and your whispered comments. You may want to bully people from the Labor Party but you will not be bullying me.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member will resume her seat. If she has an issue she wishes to raise she may see me after question time. That type of outburst is unparliamentary.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: Members are aware that they should not interject and that they should refer to members by their correct title, not some fabricated name.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: To the point of order: I fail to see how there is a point of order. The member was on her feet because she was called to ask a question. She then decided to yell across the Chamber. It is a bit rich for the Government Whip—

The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox: Why are you taking a point of order on a non-point of order? It is ridiculous. Sit down.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: The rules of this House allow for points of order to be debated. It is quite common for members to argue that there is no point of order. That is what is happening in this instance. Members on both sides should not yell across the Chamber.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: To the point of order: Many members of this House, including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, are quite firm about their titles. I cannot call him Walt; I have to call him the Hon. Walt Secord. When the Hon. Bronnie Taylor stood up to ask a question the Deputy Leader of the Opposition called her Hyacinth. It is not appropriate to do that to a female member of this Chamber in a demeaning manner.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I apologise that I did not hear that comment. I would have dealt with it at the time if I had heard it. I also apologise to the member that I did not hear it. Unfortunately, I am unwell today but I was trying to avoid having to give the chair to the Hon. Trevor Khan for a further period. It would have assisted had I heard it. To assist proceedings, perhaps the Hon. Walt Secord would not mind voluntarily withdrawing the remark. I call the Hon. Greg Pearce to order for the first time.

The Hon. Walt Secord: If it pleases the House, I withdraw.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Advocate for Children and Young People?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the member for her question and her continued interest in the welfare of children and young people in our State. The Advocate for Children and Young People promotes the wellbeing of children and young people from birth to 24 years of age by promoting their participation in the decisions that affect their lives. Earlier this year Mr Andrew Johnson was appointed as the first advocate after the office was established under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014. The advocate is supported by a team within the Department of Family and Community Services.

During 2015-16 the advocate is required to prepare a draft three-year whole-of-government

strategic plan for children and young people in the State. The plan aims to improve the lives of children and young people through covering systemic issues affecting their wellbeing and ensuring their participation in the decisions that impact their lives. Since commencing in the position, the advocate has begun the development of the strategic plan, consulted with more than 2,500 children and young people across the State, and convened a non-government organisation and civil society forum with more than 100 representatives.

The advocate has also established an interdepartmental advisory committee; produced materials to support organisations to consult with young people; provided advice on Cabinet minutes, proposals and reports relating to children and young people; and commissioned and contributed to research relating to children and young people, which has included issues relating to volunteering and the use of digital and social media. He has focused particularly on ensuring that there has been input from a diverse range of young people, including those who are Aboriginal, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or affected by disadvantage. That has included consulting with more than 300 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people at the recent PCYC Nations of Origin football tournament in Raymond Terrace.

The Office of the Advocate is also responsible for providing secretariat services to the NSW Youth Advisory Council. The council has a statutory role to advise the New South Wales Government on issues of importance to young people and has a responsibility in monitoring and evaluating youth-related policies and legislation that affect young people. Since the Office of the Advocate began providing that support the council has engaged in a number of activities. They include convening a forum on young people, identity, respect and inclusion; providing input and support for Youth Week 2015; leading consultations with a number of local government youth advisory councils; and providing advice to the Government on a range of issues including work development orders, a best practice guide to youth participation in local councils, privacy, mental health, drugs and alcohol harm minimisation, teaching life skills in school, and transport concessions.

There is substantial reform activity across New South Wales government agencies and a significant number of existing plans are relevant to children and young people. The strategic plan provides an opportunity to bring that work together with a focus on where greater cross-agency and cross-sectoral collaboration can more efficiently and effectively make New South Wales a better place for children and young people. The Office of the Advocate and the introduction of the corresponding Act demonstrate that this Government is committed to working with one of our most valuable resources—our young people and the future leaders of this great State.

MENINDEE LAKES POWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that power poles are being erected in the middle of the Menindee Lakes to service deep bores drilled in the middle of the lakes, what will happen to that infrastructure when the lakes fill again, or has the Government made a decision that the lakes will never be filled again?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: When I was at Menindee Lakes looking at the emergency works that this Government has funded shallow bores were being drilled to service the township of Broken Hill in the event that we need to switch to bore water. We are far from being at that stage. We have funded a reverse osmosis plant, which is being constructed as we speak. If necessary, it will be used to desalinate water that has been captured and is being stored around Copi Hollow and surrounding areas.

The Hon. John Ajaka: Point of order: It is difficult to hear the Minister's answer over the continuing commentary from Mr Jeremy Buckingham. I ask that he allow the Minister to answer the question.

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: We have funded the emergency works to give the township of Broken Hill some certainty. We took to the election a commitment to fund a long-term solution for the township of Broken Hill. We were willing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to address the issues that Broken Hill and towns above and below Menindee Lakes are facing due to water shortages in the area. We took that to the election and committed to the largest investment in regional town water infrastructure that this State had ever seen. We then brought that solution to this House for funding and Mr Jeremy Buckingham voted against it. He voted against something that would provide certainty to those people.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. My question specifically asked what would happen to the power pole infrastructure when the Menindee Lakes filled. The Minister is not within a bull's roar of giving a relevant answer. Mr President, I ask that he be directed to be more relevant.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister is in order.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Water issues that have been going on for decades are affecting the people who live in Broken Hill, around Menindee or above or below Menindee Lakes—all the people who live along that river. Everyone says that the long-term supply solution for Broken Hill and the management of the lakes is something that needs to be addressed. It does not matter whether it is a community member in Broken Hill, it does not matter whether it is an irrigator from above or below Menindee Lakes, and it does not matter whether it is someone advocating for the environment and the health of the river or the lakes. We need to address this issue.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: I again raise the issue of relevance. I asked a specific question about power pole infrastructure and Menindee Lakes. I do not believe the Minister is being relevant. I believe he is blathering because he does not know what is happening out there.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: To the point of order: Mr President, you quite clearly said today during question time that points of order should not be taken to make debating points. Mr Jeremy Buckingham asked a question and has since been constantly interjecting—just because he does not like the answer—and trying to chew up the time remaining by taking frivolous points of order. That is out of order.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: To the point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister is irrelevant.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The standing orders are quite clear. A Minister when giving an answer is only required to do two things. First, he must not debate the question. The Minister was not debating the question. Secondly, the Minister must be relevant. There can be no doubt that the Minister has been relevant in the information he has given throughout his answer. The Chair cannot direct a Minister how to answer a question. If a Minister chooses to not answer part of a question and to answer only another part, that is a matter for the Minister. The person who has asked the question has ample opportunity to ask a supplementary question, to ask another question or to put a further question on notice. The Minister was in order.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Mr Jeremy Buckingham gave up his opportunity to tell this Government how to build water infrastructure for the people of New South Wales, particularly in Broken Hill, when he voted against the one thing that it took to the election in order to fund a long-term solution for the people of Broken Hill and Menindee. We have funded the short-term immediate works. At the last election we took to the people of New South Wales a commitment to fund a long-term solution. Mr Jeremy Buckingham stood in the way of that. He now has the hide to try to tell us how we should be doing this.

He objected to the water security of that community every step of the way. He objected to the

tourism at Broken Hill. He objected to the mining future of the people of Broken Hill. He objected to jobs and certainty for people out there. Now he has the hide to come into this Chamber and tell us how to do it. He gave up that right when he voted against these solutions. I will not stand in this Chamber and be lectured by Mr Jeremy Buckingham about how we should be doing it. We took what we would do to the people. We will not kick this down the road any further. We said we would do it and we are doing it.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by outlining one of the long-term solutions he referred to in his answer?

The Hon. Rick Colless: Point of order: I submit that that is a new question and therefore it is out of order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister's answer certainly did canvas the aspects that Mr Jeremy Buckingham is seeking to elucidate. The Minister may answer if he has further relevant information to provide to the House.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: Absolutely. I will step Mr Jeremy Buckingham through the process. When a government is going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money it goes through a transparent and open process. It comes up with a business case. It brings together all the business infrastructure experts. It goes through a range of community consultations—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: One.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Mr Jeremy Buckingham has asked his supplementary question. If he interjects again, he will not remain in the Chamber to hear the rest of the answer.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: When a government is to spend hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer's money, it must go through the proper processes. That involves all the experts, either within government or within the private sector, coming up with potential solutions. That is what we are doing at the moment. I have met with many different people in the community who have different views on how we should be doing this. All those options will be considered by these experts, and then they will take to market what the solution should be. It is not my job to tell them what they should do. That is why we have the independent processes and the experts within government.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham stood in the way of hundreds of millions of dollars for the people of that community, and that is what we should be reminding those people. The certainty of jobs for the people of Broken Hill, the certainty of tourism in Broken Hill, the certainty of mining in Broken Hill and, more importantly, the environmental aspects of the river and the long-term management of the Menindee Lakes all relate to this project—a project Mr Jeremy Buckingham stood in the way of.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: I asked the Minister to outline one project.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the second time. Mr Jeremy Buckingham will resume his seat. He is yet again making a debating point. He has repeatedly flouted my rulings. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: A pipeline is one of the options that may be looked at, and so is the extension of the anabranch. These are some of the suggestions that have been brought to me.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: The anabranch?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: Mr Jeremy Buckingham does not even know what I am talking about when I refer to the anabranch. These are some of the suggestions that have been brought to me by the community out there and that the experts will assess as part of the business case.

RICHMOND RIVER CATCHMENT REMEDIATION

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that yesterday the Minister said "the health of native fish populations is inextricably linked to the health of our rivers and creeks", what steps has the Government taken to remediate the Richmond River catchment, which the University of New England rated a D-minus and described as having poor health?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I thank the Hon. Daniel Mookhey for his question and for paying attention during question time yesterday. He is right; as I said yesterday, we are committed to ensuring the health of our waterways and fish habitat. Some weeks ago I attended a meeting at the Sydney Fish Market relating to fish habitat. A number of stakeholders were at that meeting from a range of sectors, including commercial vessel operators, experts from NSW Fisheries and a number of other people. They were all concerned about water quality not only up and down our coastline but also in a lot of our inland waterways. The answer I gave yesterday outlined what we are doing about that. We are not just talking about it, like we were at that meeting; we are putting our money where our mouth is. We are committed to fisheries and to the health of estuaries throughout New South Wales because, as the member recalls from question time yesterday, the health of fisheries and estuaries go hand in hand.

The health of the Richmond River has long been recognised as an issue for the local community. North Coast Local Land Services [LLS] led development and implementation of the Ecohealth program that has assessed the health of several North Coast catchments over the past six years in partnership with local and State Government agencies and the University of New England. Part of the Richmond catchment was recently assessed through the Ecohealth program and results confirmed the need for further efforts to restore catchment health. Raising awareness of the issues and implementing on-ground works to improve catchment health has been a priority for the North Coast LLS and its legacy organisations for many years. These organisations have implemented on-ground works including riparian vegetation rehabilitation, riparian fencing and off-stream water supply to exclude stock, floodplain management, wetland rehabilitation and best-management practice for horticulture and grazing industries.

North Coast LLS has invested \$180,000 from Catchment Action NSW and the Australian Government's National Landcare Program in river health projects in the lower Richmond catchment over the past two years. North Coast LLS uses New South Wales and Commonwealth funds to leverage significant cash and in-kind contributions from other stakeholders, including local and State Government agencies, industry organisations and landholders to improve Richmond catchment health. North Coast LLS will continue to undertake and partner in projects aimed at improving the health of the Richmond River catchment.

The Department of Primary Industries [DPI] regularly monitors water quality at two sites on the Richmond River under the State Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Program. Results of this monitoring indicate that water quality in the Richmond River is neither discernibly improving nor declining, although it varies seasonally. The DPI's river condition index provides an holistic assessment of river conditions across the State's catchments. The upper parts of the Richmond River catchment are classified "good" to "very good". The lower river reaches, from downstream of Kyogle and Toonumbar Dam to Casino, are ranked as in poorer condition, mainly due to geomorphic condition and hydrologic stress. It should be noted that major flooding of North Coast rivers in the summer months can have a significant impact on water quality.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The time for questions has come to an end. If any members have further questions, I suggest they place them on notice.

Questions without notice concluded.

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome into the public gallery guests of the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, the Hon. Niall Blair, representatives of Sydney Water's corporate strategy team. You have seen your Minister put through his paces well and truly. I hope it has been an enjoyable visit to question time and that you have learnt a lot. Keep doing good work for the people of Sydney and the Illawarra.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Duncan Gay (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.33 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

HALAL CERTIFICATION FEES

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [3.33 p.m.]: I speak on the Senate inquiry into third party food certification. Imagine we had a religious tax on almost every product available to purchase—products from food to pharmaceuticals to cosmetics. Imagine that companies were charged fees for inspections and for the products to be prayed over. Imagine the outrage of the Australian people. It seems impossible to imagine that Australians who objected to such activity would be labelled as racists and bigots; that those who objected to such a scheme were dragged through the courts. It seems absurd, but that is precisely what is happening in Australia—and to Australians—with halal certification fees.

Halal certification fees are a religious tax paid by every consumer in Australia. Halal certification schemes are a transfer of wealth from the average Aussie and Australian producer and manufacturer to promote a religion that advocates the abuse of human rights. Aussies are often unwitting participants because products are not labelled clearly. Producers and manufacturers of said products are not always frank and honest with their customers. It is unacceptable that all Australians are being forced to pay a religious tax. The Government is complicit in this fundraising venture. A good is produced, the halal tax is added, then the 10 per cent goods and services tax is added. The State is directly benefitting from the religious tax—something that is clearly anti-constitutional. Consumers across Australia have rightly expressed their anger at this scheme through the current Federal Senate inquiry into third party certification.

Australians are concerned about third party certification, most notably halal certification. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the current Federal Senate inquiry into third party certification has received the largest number of submissions to an inquiry. Australian consumers want answers, and we applaud the Abbott Government for conducting this inquiry. The public needs, and indeed wants, extensive information about halal certifiers and halal certification. Most people are concerned about the lack of labelling and the hidden nature of halal certification. Organic, kosher and heart tick goods are clearly labelled so that consumers have a choice. Halal is often not labelled and therefore consumers believe halal fees and Islamic religious rituals are imposed upon them. Many Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Buddhists, atheists and more object to having religious rituals imposed upon them through their everyday grocery purchases.

Kirralie Smith, creator of the anti-halal choices website, shopping guide book and phone app, has become an expert on halal certification of foods and supermarkets in Australia. The list of products that are halal certified is now longer than the list of products that are not. Australian consumers want to know where their money is going. They do not want mosques and Islamic schools to profit from their grocery purchases. We should not have a structure whereby consumers contribute to the advancement of Islamic beliefs and practices without their knowledge and consent. Profiteering from halal certification is

unacceptable.

While nobody really knows where the money goes—\$3 trillion globally—we do know that the funds raised make millionaires out of the certifiers. We know that funds go towards advocating the religion of Islam. We know that funds go to support the building of mosques and other institutions. Since when did Aussies sign up for that? No-one in Australia would tolerate such a scheme if it were perpetuated by any other religion, by the Anglicans, the Baptists or the Catholics. We do not even want to talk about increasing the GST. Yet, we find ourselves living in this bizarre situation where a religious tax is applied to goods—many foods for which there are no substitutes—and we are criticised for criticising the tax.

Currently the average Aussie household and Australian businesses, which are already under financial pressure, have to pay this extra tax, a tax that effectively states the obvious about their products. Products that are already known to be halal—or in other words, permissible—are still subject to religious certification fees, products like breakfast cereal, honey, milk and bread. All people in this country ought to enjoy religious freedom—that is the freedom to choose or reject religious rituals, and whether or not they want to fund them. Australians opposed to halal certification are not bigots. They simply want to enjoy the tolerance and freedoms supposedly available to everyone in our democracy. Australians opposed to funding halal certification, whether it is \$1 or billions of dollars, have every right to do so. [*Time expired.*]

WANAARING PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR [3.38 p.m.]: I advise the House of a newly established pilot model for pre-schooling in remote villages of New South Wales that owes its existence not just to the Government but also to the community of the Wanaaring Public School that has developed the model for trial. This model is designed by people in the community, for the community. As a result it is a model that fits the nature of the problems experienced and identified by that community.

The remoteness gap, indicating the difference in educational outcomes between children in remote and metropolitan areas, is of great concern to the Liberal-Nationals Government. The Minister for Education commissioned a literature review that indicated that Australia has a large remoteness gap compared to other countries and that New South Wales has, over time, developed a large remoteness gap in education compared to other Australian States. As a result, closing the educational gap between children in remote and metropolitan areas has become a priority for the Government. The \$80 million rural and remote education strategy is designed to assist educational outcomes in geographically isolated areas of our State.

It is universally acknowledged that early childhood education leads to better educational outcomes. Studies clearly show a correlation between preschool attendance and improved results in the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy [NAPLAN]. However, opportunities to access preschool in the remote villages of New South Wales remain limited. Not only are the populations of three- and four-year-olds too small to sustain early childhood infrastructure but often there is no qualified early childhood teacher to direct the service. As a result, in the Far West of New South Wales, in the area bounded by Goodooga, Brewarrina, Bourke and Ivanhoe across to the South Australian and Queensland borders—which represents one-third of our State—there are only six preschools.

Given the paucity of preschool services, principals of remote schools in western New South Wales are concerned that young children are not school ready by the time they commence kindergarten, which means those students start from well behind. Unfortunately, many never catch up. Children in remote villages in the vast area not serviced by the current six preschools can only access preschool via distance education, through the Broken Hill School of the Air or the Dubbo School of Distance Education. In the past far too many children have fallen through the cracks and been unable to access any early childhood program. While those who access the programs receive many benefits, they miss out on the social aspect, leaving them without the resulting social development benefits.

Deborah Nielsen, a staff member at Wanaaring Public School, and Principal Chris Duley have established a unique and innovative model of remote village preschooling to overcome these barriers. Three- and four-year-olds at Wanaaring, 180 kilometres west of Bourke, are being enrolled in preschool through Broken Hill School of the Air. For two days a week they will attend Wanaaring Public School together, in a social cohort, under the supervision of a certificate III carer, to engage in a preschool program designed by early childhood teachers. Where appropriate, these children will integrate into school activity so that they become school ready in time for kindergarten in the following years. No new infrastructure is required, as the existing and underused Wanaaring Public School will facilitate the service. The only significant additional cost is the salary of the carer for two days a week, as she oversees the Broken Hill School of the Air program.

The Government is committed to regional education and to ensuring that children living in remote areas are school ready, having been exposed to early childhood literacy and numeracy, social interaction with other children and the many other benefits of early childhood education. Preschool provides opportunities for the identification of developmental vulnerabilities and for early intervention prior to school, which is of benefit, given the disadvantage experienced by many of the children involved. As numbers of pre-schoolers shrink and swell in the local area, so the model can be collapsed and reinvigorated at little cost or inconvenience, as there is no dedicated infrastructure beyond what already exists at the school.

If this pilot proves successful, it could readily be rolled out to other remote villages in far western New South Wales that have no alternative preschool service. This model could well prove to be the most economic and most successful way of providing early childhood education to children living in and around the remote villages of western New South Wales. I acknowledge the passion and energy of Deborah Nielsen and Chris Duley in designing the model to fit their community and establishing the pilot, to the great potential benefit of the future schoolchildren of Wanaaring.

SCHOOLS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ [3.42 p.m.]: Since the last election there has been significant debate about the lack of women elected to Parliament. We hear platitudes expressed that women's voices should be heard and that articulate, educated women should break through the glass ceiling and reduce the gap in pay equity. It was therefore interesting to see the treatment of some young women at Burwood Girls High School yesterday by a bunch of middle-aged blokes. The Burwood Girls High School students are the sorts of women we expect to see gracing this Chamber in years to come. Instead of being encouraged, they were shot down by the Baird Government in response to a single media report about a film they planned to show at school.

That the Department of Education and Communities has confirmed that no parents had objected to the showing of *Gayby Baby* during class time shows what a beat-up this is. Significantly, the students were shot down for doing what is consistent with the ideas and issues we ask them to examine as students. As a mother of two young women, one of whom completed the Higher School Certificate last year and one of whom is in year 9, I have a vague idea of what is taught in the New South Wales curriculum. Last year the theme for Higher School Certificate English was "belonging", as it has been since 2003. The Higher School Certificate has consistently expressed the theme of inclusion, and the exam questions reflect this. Here are two examples of the essay topics for Higher School Certificate English:

An individual's interaction with others and the world around them can enrich or limit their experience of belonging.

Through belonging people develop new understandings of themselves and the world around them.

That sense of belonging, of inclusion in a family and in an environment, is considered so important that it forms the basis of a student's penultimate exam. Students are asked to think about their place in our society and culture. The New South Wales Government is now sending an alternative message: that some do not belong, that somehow who you love defines the part you will play in society, or, as was so disrespectfully put to this Chamber yesterday, that you are part of the "promotion of the homosexual agenda" is a great personal insult to other members sitting in this Chamber.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the second time.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: I know the Minister for Education is aware of the Higher School Certificate curriculum. I do not wish to lay the blame entirely at his feet. I suspect that, left to his own devices, the decision to ban the film *Gayby Baby* from schools would not have been taken. If politics should be left at the school door, as the Minister told the media yesterday, there is a tremendous double standard. I will be interested to hear his response to why Liberal member Glenn Brookes has been permitted to use the grounds of Padstow Park Public School to hold a barbecue for his own purposes on Saturday. The Premier is at fault for requesting that the Minister for Education comply with his view. He has disempowered young women in our community and sent a message to the gay community that only the narrow views of a few should be reflected. As his Federal counterpart, Julie Bishop, noted when speaking at Burwood Girls High School:

I think (marriage equality) is a fundamental issue that confronts Australia at the moment... so I think it is great that the girls will have an opportunity to debate it.

It is rare for a senior Federal Liberal Minister to sound more progressive than her State colleagues. The Wear it Purple campaign was set up by Katherine Hudson, a student at Burwood Girls High School. When Katherine left school she handed the baton to Brenna Harding. I know them both well. They are young, dynamic women and I have seen the Wear it Purple campaign grow under their stewardship. I have seen it empower girls, including my daughters, to believe that not only should everyone have a place and receive respect but that their voices and opinions matter.

In one fell swoop, Mike Baird has undone the good work of these women and many other students across New South Wales. He has also undone the core messages of his own Department of Education and Communities. Conservative governments are showing themselves to be out of step with community values and social norms. No longer is marriage a social institution reflecting the values of the community in which we live; it is a construct defined by governments trying to beat back the tide of social change. Likewise, we are increasingly seeing conservative governments trying to impose controls on our educational institutions to hold back the inevitable. Ethics classes are a case in point. The Government's policy of giving principals greater autonomy also seems to have been tossed in the waste paper bin. In 20 years we will have to face the ridicule of the next generation over our absurd actions that hark back to another age. It is a great pity to live at a time when government lacks any real sense of vision.

SCHOOLS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Dr JOHN KAYE [3.47 p.m.]: This week, New South Wales politics provided yet another lesson in who sets the agenda for this Government. It might be a minority voice, but it is very loud and devastatingly effective. A vicious front-page attack by News Limited on the values and mission of public education saw the *Daily Telegraph* on Wednesday shaming Burwood Girls High School for organising a screening of the documentary *Gayby Baby* to celebrate annual Wear it Purple Day. Wear it Purple Day is a nationwide opportunity to show support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer young people. It is a celebration of diversity and an integral component of the work schools do to minimise at least one source of bullying.

The film tells the story of children growing up with same-sex parents. By Wednesday afternoon,

Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli had issued a memo to every public school principal restricting the showing of *Gayby Baby* to times when it would "not impact on the delivery of planned lessons". The Baird Government was once again responding to a screech piece in a News Limited journal. On display was not only the Premier's symbiotic relationship with the *Daily Telegraph*, built on mutually beneficial daily news drops and positive coverage—a relationship that was famously consummated in a News Ltd advertisement filmed in a Sydney Trains carriage—but a Government running scared from any threat of the public hysteria that only a good fear campaign can whip up.

The Government's response is laden with multiple layers of hypocrisy and double standards. A cross-party, community-wide consensus has asked New South Wales public schools to commit significant resources to reduce bullying. Staff and students at every school have taken up that challenge, using innovative and creative ideas to eliminate the discrimination that is, unfortunately, still prevalent. A brainstorming process of staff and students at Burwood Girls High School came up with the idea of showing the *Gayby Baby* film. The message sent to schools such as Burwood is that promoting inclusivity is acceptable but only within limits. As Premier Mike Baird put it, this is tolerance with parameters. It appears that at least one of those parameters is that the noisy bigoted minority cannot be unduly offended and that the *Daily Telegraph* cannot be stirred into action.

Gayby Baby is not a political work, nor does it promote a lifestyle. It is an educational tool to promote acceptance and inclusivity. It is not part of a debate where there is validity on the other side, unless, of course, bigotry and discrimination against people because of the gender of their parents has become socially acceptable. It was the view of the teachers, students and leaders at Burwood Girls High School that homophobic bullying should be addressed by showing this film. If there was any substance to the Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli's public school autonomy rhetoric, the matter should have been left to the school to determine.

Despite declaring that Local Schools, Local Decisions is "an education reform that gives New South Wales public schools more authority to make local decisions about how best to meet the needs of their students", the Minister and his Premier seem to think autonomy is limited to matters that do not antagonise vocal churchmen or the *Daily Telegraph*. However, the biggest double standard is the banishment of the film from curriculum hours while continuing to allow sectarian scripture classes to eat away up to one period a week of core school time. While a film about families is banished from school hours, all students continue to face the choice between thumb twiddling and exposure to a church proselytizer.

Less than a week before the *Gayby Baby* film was banished in New South Wales, the Victorian Government announced it would replace scripture lessons in public schools with new content on world histories, cultures, faiths and ethics, and compulsory classes addressing domestic violence and respectful relationships. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley, fell over each other in their rush to reiterate their commitment to scripture classes. Not only will scripture continue to take up the suddenly very valuable "class time" in this State's public schools, but the red carpet will continue to be rolled out to the providers of these classes.

Under new departmental guidelines, overseen by the Premier's office directly, if parents do not identify a religion on their child's enrolment form or the nominated religious persuasion is not available at the school, principals are required to hassle the parent into nominating a religion that is available at the school. Ethics classes are not even to be mentioned in this communication, even in schools where they are running. If it was not already clear who was running the show, after the *Gayby Baby* furore it certainly is now. Public education values of diversity, inclusivity and equal opportunity are being seriously undermined in this State.

SCHOOLS SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD [3.52 p.m.]: I apologise for just running into the Chamber. I have

been at a meeting with the Minister for Education talking about this topic. I, too, will speak about the issues concerning the Australian feature-length documentary *Gayby Baby*, directed and produced by Maya Newell and Charlotte Mars. The Hon. Penny Sharpe—who was also at the meeting with the Minister for Education—and I attended a screening of this film in the parliamentary theatre on Tuesday night as part of the launch of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex [LGBTI] Community. Frankly, I attended the screening with some indifference because, quite honestly, I am no fan of biography documentaries, particularly when they portray a community of which I am an active member. I am a bit over all the analysis.

When I woke up on Wednesday morning to see the front page of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* screaming "Gay Class Uproar" and "Parents outraged as Sydney School swaps lessons for PC movie", followed with learned, intelligent copy such as "1200 students watch a documentary on gay parenting instead of normal classes", I thought I must have seen a different film because the film I saw was not controversial; it was not promoting the so-called homosexual agenda or a so-called political agenda. The film portrayed in the press hysteria was not the film I and more than 100 others, including fellow members of this House and the other place, saw the other night. I hope members take the opportunity to see the film—perhaps the controversy around it may encourage more people to see it.

I was surprised at the emotions and the wonderful uplift I felt throughout the film, emotions that came about because—and this is a spoiler alert for those who may see it—this film deals with the ups and downs typical of everyday family life. Spoiler alert: The film deals with children's aspirations, hopes and dreams, and how their parents invest so much in what become their shared hopes and dreams. Spoiler alert: This film deals with human struggle, sickness and disappointment. In summary, the film is just about normal family issues. Yes, it does touch on the issue of same-sex marriage—that taboo—but in the context of a lesbian parent guiding her young son through his questioning of faith in God and his church, which his mother continues to strongly believe in and wants him to become involved in.

It is possible that Burwood Girls High School, a secondary school for 13- to 17-year-old girls—well versed in the ways of the world and life at that age—could have handled the communication of the film's presentation better. However, it should be noted that reports in the media today have confirmed that not a single parent of a child at that school made a complaint to the school. One can also imagine the excitement and pride the school would have felt in screening a film produced by one of its former students. I do not think that factor has been taken into account sufficiently.

But at the end of the day, showing this film is no more controversial than showing *To Kill a Mocking Bird* was in the 1960s or, in more recent times, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, which I understand is currently in the State's English curriculum, and so it should be. What we have seen in the past day is a taste of the prejudice and ignorance that the LGBTI community, its members and families, deal with each and every day of their lives. This leads me to flag a grave concern about the proposed plebiscite or the outrageous proposal for amendments to our national Constitution through a referendum on same-sex marriage. What we have witnessed in the past 24 hours is only a small sample of the vitriol and venom that will be unleashed by a prejudiced minority should the plebiscite proposal proceed.

This will result in harm to the vulnerable in our communities, it will fray the fabric of our community's harmony and it will increase the risk of driving a long-term, immovable wedge into our society. I encourage members to see *Gayby Baby*. Members will leave the film with their belief in families strengthened, their belief in parents strengthened, their belief in love strengthened and, I hope, their belief in the belonging of families of many types strengthened. One last spoiler alert: *Gayby Baby* is already being played out in our community today; it is already living in our streets today and, shock and horror, it is already happening in our schools today.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [3.57 p.m.]: The National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] is a

revolutionary new approach to supporting people with a disability. Developed by the former Federal Labor Government under the Hon. Julia Gillard, the NDIS will provide people with a disability with personally tailored support packages to assist them with everyday living. I do not have enough time today, but at another time I will acknowledge all the people who have been involved in the establishment of the NDIS—community leaders, people over the past 30 to 40 years, and members of Parliament across the political divide who are making this happen. The NDIS is a much-needed reform. In its 2011 report on Disability Care and Support the Productivity Commission stated:

Current disability support arrangements are inequitable, underfunded, fragmented, and inefficient and give people with a disability little choice.

The NDIS will replace the current system with a new model that provides people with a disability with greater choice and certainty. To its credit, the current New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government was the first State government to sign up to the NDIS—

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Say it again.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: I am fair—and it has supported the trial rollout of the NDIS in the Hunter, which has been underway since 2013. I also note that last month the New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth launched an early rollout of the NDIS for children and young people in the Nepean-Blue Mountains area. Recently I have held a number of roundtable discussions around the State with people in the disability sector, including service providers, carers, workers, parents and, most importantly, people who have a disability. I have held roundtable discussions in areas including the Macarthur region, the Blue Mountains and Sydney's inner west. I acknowledge the member for Campbelltown, Greg Warren; the member for Macquarie Fields, Anoulack Chanthivong; the member for Blue Mountains, Trish Doyle; the member for Summer Hill, Jo Haylen; and the member for Strathfield, Jodi McKay.

In addition, I had a number of one-on-one consultations with people around the State and many of my colleagues from the Hunter, where the trial is continuing, have been advocates. They too have concerns. Although people welcome the NDIS and the opportunities it promises, people consistently raise with me their concern regarding a lack of information about how the transition to the NDIS will actually work. People are particularly concerned because the statewide rollout of the NDIS is scheduled to begin in the middle of next year—in 10 months, with the New South Wales Government planning to completely vacate the disability service space by the middle of 2018, which is very concerning. This is a massive period of change and people are looking for information so they can plan and prepare for it. In April this year the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] Disability Reform Council issued a communique that said:

Information on transition timing and locations will be available by the end of August 2015.

Twice in question time this past week the Minister for Disability Services told this House that there would be no delays in delivering the NDIS in New South Wales. That means that there are just a few days left to meet the deadline agreed to at COAG and provide information on the transition to the public. One suspects, given recent media reports, that the Abbott Government is moving to delay the rollout of the NDIS. I commend Labor's shadow Minister for Disability Reform, Jenny Macklin, who is also the architect of the NDIS, for the incredible work that she has done. She is holding the Abbott Government to account, and day after day she has been asking questions about why Tony Abbott is not signing the agreement with New South Wales; why Tony Abbott is not at the table with Premier Baird and Minister Ajaka signing the agreement that they promised before the end of this month.

Any delay in the rollout of the NDIS would be a terrible broken election promise and a monumental breach of faith for the 140,000 people with a disability in New South Wales who stand to benefit from the NDIS. The New South Wales Government must ensure that the Commonwealth sticks to

the timetables and milestones that have been agreed to or they will risk creating huge uncertainty regarding the implementation of this important and much-needed reform. The New South Wales Government must also ensure that information is provided to the community about matters such as housing, transport and education services, and how these matters will be affected during and after the NDIS transition period.

The New South Wales Government must also ensure that there are comprehensive strategies in place to ensure that people from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities are informed about the NDIS and supported to take advantage of the scheme. This is a huge issue. CALD communities are not aware of the NDIS and they need information. The NDIS is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve the lives of more than 140,000 people with a disability in New South Wales.

MR BEN EMMS, WORLD CHAMPION MARKSMAN

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [4.02 p.m.]: In the very brief time remaining I place on the record my admiration for Ben Emms of Lyndhurst, a stock and station agent who effectively became the world champion in fullbore target rifle shooting. Whether the world championships are at Bisley in England or Camp Perry in the United States is something that shooters will debate no end. I had the good fortune to meet Mr Emms on many occasions when I was much younger. He was shooting in the country under-25 rifle team while I was in the city under-25 rifle team. Even at that stage he was a brilliant marksman. He went to the United States to shoot at Camp Perry and he won—a feat that has never been achieved by an Australian. It was a remarkable effort and I wholeheartedly congratulate him on it. Of course, fullbore rifle shooting has all the excitement of watching paint dry so he has no sponsorship. Therefore, despite the fact that he is the de facto champion marksman of the world, no doubt the following morning he went back to his job as a stock and station agent in Lyndhurst. Congratulations, Ben Emms.

[Time for debate expired.]

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.03 p.m. until Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 2.30 p.m.
