

ADJOURNMENT	6258
AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT	6214
AUSTRALIAN CHALDEAN LEAGUE	6212
BAPTISTCARE SERVICES	6210
BLUESCOPE STEEL, PORT KEMBLA	6250
BUSHFIRE PREVENTION STRATEGIES	6242
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	6210,
6212, 6213	
BYRON MUSIC SOCIETY	6212
CHRISTMAS APPEALS	6259
CLARENCE COLLIERY COALMINE SPILL	6248
CLIMATE CHANGE BILL 2015	6235
DATA SHARING (GOVERNMENT SECTOR) BILL 2015	6210
DELL COMPUTER COMPONENT REPLACEMENT POLICY	6260
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	6238
EDUCATION FUNDING	6261
GAMING MACHINE AMENDMENT (CENTRALISED MONITORING SYSTEM) BILL 2015	6234
GASTROENTERITIS OUTBREAK	6250
GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND FRESH PRODUCE	6240
HUNTERNET FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM	6211
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY	6258
MS SARAH HILT	6211
MULTICULTURAL NSW EXPENDITURE	6243
MULTICULTURAL NSW	6247
OPAL ELECTRONIC TICKETING SYSTEM	6258
PARIS, LEBANON AND IRAQ TERRORIST ATTACKS	6214
PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES WEBSITE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE	6247
PERINATAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AWARENESS WEEK	6212
PREMIER'S PUBLIC SECTOR AWARDS 2015	6248
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	6238
RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY SITES	6238
REGIONAL ROADS, MARITIME AND FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE	6239
SEASONAL FELICITATIONS	6251
SENIORS CHRISTMAS CONCERTS 2015	6248
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT	6214
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE	6213
STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2015	6210
TABLING OF PAPERS	6210,
6214, 6234, 6250	
TECH SAVVY SENIORS PROGRAM	6241
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG	6262
WATTLE STREET, ULTIMO, SCHOOL SITE	6244
WELLBEING INDICATORS	6249
WESTERN SYDNEY ROADS	6246
WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION AND FISHING INDUSTRY	6245
WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION COMPENSATION	6241
WORLD TOILET DAY 2015	6244
YOUTH	ACTION

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 19 November 2015

The President (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The President read the Prayers.

DATA SHARING (GOVERNMENT SECTOR) BILL 2015

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2015

Messages received from the Legislative Assembly returning the bills without amendment.

TABLING OF PAPERS

The President tabled the following papers:

- (1) Annual report of the Department of the Legislative Council for year ended 30 June 2015
- (2) Annual report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for year ended 30 June 2015
- (3) Parliament of New South Wales—Financial Performance 2014-2015 report

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay.

BAPTISTCARE SERVICES

Motion by the Hon. LOU AMATO agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) the great community work provided by BaptistCare services; and
 - (b) that BaptistCare specialise in providing much needed community services such as residential aged care, home care services, retirement villages, disability care services and mental health care.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) the dedication and commitment of the highly trained professional home care workers provided by BaptistCare services;
 - (b) that many of these employees work extremely long hours and are on call seven days a week providing much needed community services;
 - (c) that the great works that these dedicated individuals provide make it possible for many incapacitated people to live in their own homes;
 - (d) that the many services provided include showering, feeding, dressing and maintaining the personal hygiene and dignity of patients; and

- (e) that some patients are completely incapacitated with various types of disabilities, such as dementia, mental illness and other debilitating illness.
- (3) That this House also acknowledges the great love and dedication of family members and friends who also give of their time and resources in the care of their loved ones affected by debilitating illness.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 558 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

MS SARAH HILT

Motion by the Hon. LOU AMATO agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes the bravery of Sarah Hilt, who was raised in Theresa Park in the Macarthur region, and has recently celebrated her wedding to husband, Christo Gordon, after an 11-year recovery from a debilitating case of meningococcal sepsis contracted when she was just 19 years old.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) the invaluable work of those involved in meningococcal research who, since the introduction of the meningococcal c vaccine, have reported a drop from 162 cases in Australia during 2002 to just nine cases during 2011;
 - (b) the unconditional love and support of Sarah's family, particularly her mother, Gillian, and her father, Gary, who selflessly donated one of his kidneys during the course of Sarah's recovery; and
 - (c) the strength of will displayed by Sarah throughout her recovery, who returned to Sydney University to complete a degree in Economics and Social Sciences with first class honours in 2013, has trained for the Paralympics as a swimmer and holds five Australian and Oceania records, and took a leading role in creating the Sarah Hilt Foundation which hosts the annual Walk for Sarah event to raise funds for improvements to prosthetic technologies and the treatment of other meningococcal survivors, as well as raising awareness of meningococcal disease and being an advocate for organ donation.
- (3) That this House acknowledges those involved in organising the annual Secret Garden Festival in the Macarthur region, which has been a significant sponsor of the Sarah Hilt Foundation since 2009.

YOUTH ACTION

Motion by Dr MEHREEN FARUQI agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the 2015 NSW Youth Work Conference was held from 2 to 4 November 2015;

- (b) the conference addressed three central topics of targeted earlier intervention reform, best practice youth work and the youth policy agenda, through the wide-ranging program of workshops, panels, and speakers;
 - (c) the Youth Work Conference was organised by Youth Action, which is the peak body for young people and youth services in New South Wales; and
 - (d) members of the Parliament of New South Wales across parties attended the conference and spoke at various workshops and seminars.
- (2) That this House congratulates Youth Action for its ongoing work in youth advocacy, policy and representation.

HUNTERNET FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAM

Motion by Mr SCOT MACDONALD agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on 13 November 2015, the HunterNet Future Leaders Program Awards Dinner was held at the Harbourview Function Centre, Newcastle;
 - (b) HunterNet is a not-for-profit cooperative networking 200 manufacturing, engineering and specialist services companies located in the Hunter and Central Coast;
 - (c) the HunterNet Future Leaders Program is targeted at professionals with five to 10 years experience in their field and aims to equip them with the skills to be strong industry leaders for the Hunter and Central Coast;
 - (d) the project gave participants the opportunity to attend nine tutorials on leadership, split into teams of five and submit a written report on "the future drivers of economic growth in the Hunter and on the Central Coast";
 - (e) the written report was then judged by a group of executives from the Hunter and Central Coast;
 - (f) the winning team announced at the awards dinner included Kirsty Hedley, Mark McLean, Adrian Mannel, Rick Evans and Callan Boslem; and
 - (g) Mr Scot MacDonald, MLC, represented the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Hon. Andrew Constance, MP, and the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business, the Hon. John Barilaro, MP, at the event.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) congratulates all participants in the HunterNet Future Leaders Program and in particular winners Kirsty Hedley, Mark McLean, Adrian Mannel, Rick Evans and Callan Boslem; and
 - (b) thanks HunterNet acting Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, Mr Michael Sharpe, and HunterNet Future Leaders Program Chairman, Mr Steven Trolley, for their contribution to the New South Wales community through the support and

organisation of this program.

PERINATAL DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AWARENESS WEEK

Motion by the Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week will be held from Sunday 15 November until Saturday 21 November 2015;
 - (b) Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week is an opportunity to raise awareness, increase community knowledge and eliminate the stigma about mental health during the perinatal period so that those affected can feel free to seek help;
 - (c) formerly known as Postnatal Depression Awareness Week, perinatal means occurring around the time of birth, and refers to the period including pregnancy and one year after having a baby; and
 - (d) Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week is organised by WayAhead, which is formally known as the Mental Health Association NSW and is a non-government organisation and registered charity with over 25 years of experience in coordinating health promotion campaigns.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) congratulates and thanks WayAhead for coordinating Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week 2015; and
 - (b) encourages local communities to hold events to support Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week 2015.

BYRON MUSIC SOCIETY

Motion by the Hon. BEN FRANKLIN agreed to:

That this House:

- (a) notes that the Byron Music Society held its annual Youth Concert on Sunday 15 November 2015 at the Byron Community Centre;
- (b) notes that the mission of the Byron Music Society is to promote the study, performance, listening and enjoyment of group, solo, vocal and instrumental fine music for its members, and to present performances of this music to the public;
- (c) congratulates the organisers on facilitating the teaching and showcasing of young musicians on the North Coast; and
- (d) congratulates the participants on their hard work and extraordinary talent: Aaron Wilson, Mitchell Evans, The Accidentals, Jade Rushwood, Molly Jones, Richie Lan, Jilian Gao, Jaime Boman, Veronica Mason, Lecia Robertson, Jess-Lee Mahler, David Watts, Harry Lan, Jemima Drewes, Hannah Graham, the Mt St Patrick and St Joseph String Ensemble, Bodhi Scott-Jones, Francis Atkins, Jasmine Burke-Smith, Jordan Jantschulev, Byron Public School Choir, and the Byron Ballet.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business item No. 579 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

AUSTRALIAN CHALDEAN LEAGUE

Motion by the Hon. DAVID CLARKE agreed to:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Monday 21 September 2015, at the Lantana Reception Centre, Bonnyrigg, a function attended by approximately 500 members of the Chaldean Catholic community was held to celebrate the recent formation of the Australian Chaldean League, which acts as a co-ordinating peak body for all Chaldean community organisations in Australia;
 - (b) the function, which was held under the patronage, and in the presence, of His Grace Mar Amel Nona, Archbishop of the Chaldean and Assyrian Catholic Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, was also attended by special guests who included:
 - (i) representatives of both the Federal and New South Wales Parliaments;
 - (ii) representatives of Archbishop Malki Malki of the Syriac Orthodox Church, Archbishop Paul Saliba of the Antiochian Church, Archbishop Daniel of the Ancient Church of the East and His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia, AM, Metropolitan of the Assyrian Church of the East in Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon;
 - (c) the Australian Chaldean League has been designated as the Australian representative body of the International Chaldean League founded in Erbil, Iraq, on 3 July 2015 as an initiative of His Beatitude Louis Raphael I Sako, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Babylon and the world leader of the Chaldean Catholic Church; and
 - (d) the formation of the International Chaldean League in Iraq on 3 July 2015 and subsequently the formation of the Australian Chaldean League, as well as other branches throughout the world, is not only for the purpose of providing a worldwide voice for the Chaldean Catholic community, distinct from but working in coordination with the Chaldean Church, but also to act as a response to the accelerating persecution and genocide facing Chaldean Catholics in Iraq and Syria.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) congratulates the Chaldean Catholic community in Australia on the recent formation of the Australian Chaldean League;
 - (b) expresses its support and solidarity with the Chaldean Catholic community both here and abroad at this time when its members in Iraq and Syria are facing persecution and genocide; and
 - (c) calls on those in a position to help, to accelerate efforts to bring an end to the

persecution that Chaldean Catholics and others are presently experiencing in Syria and Iraq.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Formal Business Notices of Motions

Private Members' Business items Nos 582, 583 and 584 outside the Order of Precedence objected to as being taken as formal business.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

Reference: State Insurance and Care

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

- (1) That, in accordance with section 27 of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice be designated as the Legislative Council committee to supervise the operation of the insurance and compensation schemes established under New South Wales workers compensation and motor accidents legislation, which include the:
 - (a) Workers' Compensation Scheme;
 - (b) Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Scheme;
 - (c) Motor Accidents Scheme; and
 - (d) Motor Accidents (Lifetime Care and Support) Scheme.
- (2) That, in exercising the supervisory function outlined in paragraph 1, the committee:
 - (a) does not have the authority to investigate a particular compensation claim; and
 - (b) must report to the House at least once every two years in relation to each scheme.
- (3) That, as soon as practicable two years after the commencement of the State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015, the Standing Committee on Law and Justice is to conduct a statutory review, as required under clause 12 of schedule 4 of the Act.

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. Niall Blair tabled the following papers:

- (1) Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985—Report of Department of Family and Community Services for year ended 30 June 2015, volumes 1, 2 and 3
- (2) Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984—Reports for year ended 30 June 2015:
Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards
Mental Health Commission
New South Wales Institute of Psychiatry
- (3) Mental Health Act 2007—Report of Mental Health Review Tribunal for year ended 30 June

2015

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

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Clerk announced the receipt, pursuant to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, of the Auditor-General's Financial Audits Report, "Volume Six 2015, focusing on Transport", dated November 2015, received and authorised to be printed this day.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion by the Hon. Duncan Gay agreed to:

That this House at its rising today do adjourn until Tuesday 23 February 2016 at 2.30 p.m. unless the President, or if the President is unable to act on account of illness or other cause, the Deputy-President, prior to that date, by communication addressed to each member of the House, fixes an alternative day or hour of meeting.

PARIS, LEBANON AND IRAQ TERRORIST ATTACKS

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) [10.18 a.m.]: I move:

That this House:

- (a) expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq on the tragic losses, as a result of the terrorist attacks, last week; and
- (b) conveys to the French, Lebanese and Iraqi communities that the people of New South Wales stand in solidarity, with them, during this difficult time.

As the death toll mounts from last week's deadly terrorist bomb attacks in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad, I am sure all members in this House and all citizens of New South Wales will join me in expressing our deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq and other nations around the world that have been impacted by recent terror events. During these tragic times, the people of New South Wales stand united with the communities in Australia that have been affected by these despicable acts. Our hearts and prayers are with them. Families have been devastated by the cruel loss of loved ones—men, women and children. These cowardly attacks were designed to strike fear and hatred into the hearts and cities that we know and love. Terrorists do not care if they kill Christians, Muslims, believers or non-believers; they do not care if they kill men, women or children.

In the recent terror attacks in Paris on the evening of Friday 13 November, gunmen and bombers attacked the Paris concert hall, busy restaurants and bars, and explosions were heard near a stadium. At least 132 people were killed and more than 300 were injured in coordinated attacks at six locations. In Beirut on Thursday 12 November two suicide bombers terrorised a residential area of southern Beirut, ripping through a busy shopping district at rush hour. At least 43 people were killed and more than 200 were wounded. In Baghdad on Friday 13 November a suicide blast and roadside bombing killed 26 people and dozens were wounded. Residents of Sydney have experienced two tragic events. On 15-16 December 2014 a lone gunman, Man Haron Monis, held hostage 10 customers and eight employees at the Lindt Chocolate Cafe in Martin Place. Hostages Tori Johnson and Katrina Dawson were killed. Three other hostages and a police officer were injured during the raid. Recently at Parramatta, Curtis Cheng was shot by a 15-year-old gunman outside the NSW Police Force headquarters. He was a husband and father on his way home for a weekend.

Other terror attacks around the world this year include the downing of a Russian aeroplane in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, a car bomb attack in Somali, attacks in Gaza, suicide bombs in Nigeria, and an attack at a university in Kenya, among others. Sadly, more examples of these acts of terrorism can be given as one travels back in time. The difficulty, for the purpose of this motion, was when to stop travelling back in time. In the aftermath of the tragic events that occurred last week in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad, stories are emerging of people showing incredible courage and humanity in the midst of these horrors. In Paris, Ludovico Boumbas selflessly flung himself in front of oncoming bullets to act as a human shield to save a woman's life, while losing his own. In Beirut, Adel Termos tackled a man wearing an explosive vest and wrestled him to the ground before he could enter a crowded mosque. Then there is the story of H  l  ne Mui  l, a mother and wife, who was one of the concertgoers shot in cold blood at the Bataclan theatre in Paris. Her husband, French journalist Antoine Leiris, wrote on social media:

On Friday night you stole the life of an exceptional person, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you will not have my hatred ... If this God, for whom you kill blindly, made us in his image, every bullet in the body of my wife is a wound in his heart.

So, no, I will not give you the satisfaction of hating you. You want it, but to respond to hatred with anger would be to give in to the same ignorance that made you what you are.

Us two, my son and I, will be stronger than every army in the world. He is only just 17 months old. All his life, this little boy will be happy and free because you will never have his hatred either.

We unite in grief with these nations for the victims and their families. Terrorists want us to give in to fear, to regard our neighbours with suspicion and to revive ancient prejudices. To respond to such attacks with anything but compassion for the victims and unity with our fellow citizens across the world is to play into the hands of terrorists. This is what they want—they want to divide us. In this, they will fail. Violent extremists aim to incite fear and division. We have to resist that tactic with unity. That is our strongest response. Collectively, we have to tackle the "us versus them" rhetoric that violent extremists use to undermine community harmony. Despite attacks on our own soil, we remain strong together. By showing our unity, we are denying the terrorists their fuel of fear.

New South Wales sets an example to the rest of the world as a peaceful, harmonious and multicultural society. In Australia, the Premier's actions have shown that we are stronger when we are together. Simple acts of kindness and compassion in New South Wales add weight to the global response of unity. On Monday many members from this Chamber and the other place and I joined the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency the Hon. David Hurley AC, DSC (Ret'd), the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Mike Baird, the Consul General of France in Sydney, Mr Nicolas Croizer, and many religious and community leaders for a mass at St Mary's Cathedral. The mass was celebrated in solemn prayer, with people of diverse faiths joining together as a testament to the universal value we all hold dear. We are a multicultural society and we live in harmony together. Everyone here has the right, under law, to practise their religion, maintain their heritage and their language. We are kind, tolerant and caring people.

My agency, Multicultural NSW, has a charter to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious society that enriches the lives of all people in New South Wales. Building social cohesion and community harmony is a government priority that is embedded in the Multicultural Act 2000. We all have a role to play in safeguarding our peaceful way of life against extremist hate, violence and division. We must all realise that community harmony takes effort and commitment. Multicultural NSW, through its Harmony in Action strategic plan 2014-2017 and the new community engagement strategy, is working hard to build and maintain a cohesive and harmonious society. Through regular consultations with community and religious leaders, we discuss our differences and we reach a consensus.

Groups such as the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations hold regular interfaith

forums. I was pleased to attend one earlier this week with the Federal Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis and the Hon. Walt Secord. On Wednesday this week many members from this House and the other place and I had the privilege of hosting a pre-Chanukah event at Parliament House for members of the Jewish faith and other religious community leaders, celebrating the universal triumph of good over evil. The Chanukah message of peace is also one that resonates with many communities, such as the many Australians of Indian heritage who celebrated Deepavali or Diwali recently. The legends associated with that celebration also honour the power of light over darkness.

In times such as these, we must maintain our hope in the power of light over darkness, in the triumph of good over evil. Racism and bigotry have no place in Australia. Multiculturalism is our strength, and it must be protected from hate, racism and those who seek to divide us. We cannot allow violent race and hate speeches to fan the flames of division and tear our community apart. Whether one was born here or chose to move here seeking a better life, one has the right to live in peace, free from prejudice, racism and racist hate speeches. Everyone has the right not to live in fear of violent extremism or terrorism. Over the past seven months, as the Minister for Multiculturalism I have been listening to our communities about the ways in which to protect our young people from violent extremism. There are no simple solutions or quick fixes. Complex social issues transcend traditional questions of national security and counterterrorism. We need social responses that address the issues long before they turn into a law enforcement problem.

The Premier has set in motion a substantial response. On 2 November this year he announced a \$47 million package of measures to counter violent extremism. It includes a significant investment in our schools and in a range of measures to enhance the capacity of frontline staff to address issues relating to violent extremism. On the same day, applications were opened through the Multicultural NSW website for a new two-year, \$4 million Community Partnership Action grants program. This grants program, called COMPACT—which stands for Community, in Partnership, taking Action—will support an alliance of community partners to address and resolve community issues and tensions and will work to safeguard our young people from hate, violent extremism and division.

To build resilience, we must have strong, sustainable community networks that can be mobilised to respond to challenges and threats to community harmony, to resolve conflict, and to actively promote social cohesion. Recent events around the world will not sway the New South Wales Government from playing its part in assisting with the humanitarian crisis. We will welcome with open arms many of the 12,000 additional refugees who were displaced by the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, which Australia has agreed to settle. The New South Wales Government acknowledges that the Commonwealth Government has responsibility for various checks in relation to the refugees. At the same time, we have made it clear that we will assist in every respect with regard to refugees coming to our country and our State.

The Premier has said that our State is ready and willing to accept at least 4,000 refugees over the coming months. We are working closely with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories through the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group to ensure a coordinated approach. This group works to improve settlement services and outcomes for recently arrived migrants to achieve sustainable and positive settlement outcomes in Australia, and also encompasses support services for asylum seekers. The Premier has appointed Professor Peter Shergold, former head of the Australian Public Service, as the New South Wales Coordinator General for Refugee Resettlement.

Professor Shergold's work will focus on building partnerships with settlement service providers, members of the Syrian and Iraqi communities, schools and universities, and government and non-government agencies. The first family to flee Syria arrived in Perth on Monday night: a man, his three children and his pregnant wife. As the father of six daughters and as grandfather to my grandson, I found it extremely touching to read the father's letter thanking the Australian Government for welcoming his family. According to a statement released by Federal Social Services Minister Christian Porter, the father wrote:

We would just like to thank everybody for giving us a chance at happiness.

I'd like to provide a good education for my children.

From what I've seen just from the Australian embassy in Jordan, Australians are very fair and very kind, and I'm sure that I'll find the same treatment here as well.

My most important ambitions are to educate my kids well, to find safety, to get a job, and live in peace.

Clearly, that is what all members of this Chamber and all citizens of this State want for their family. His story and his hopes for his family resonate particularly with me, as does the right to build a new life in Australia. We should never forget that migrants have helped make our country great in so many ways and in all avenues of life. Migrants have helped drive our State's economic prosperity by forging new people-to-people trade links and building new businesses.

In conclusion, I thank all honourable members for allowing me to bring this motion on immediately today. I am sure that all members of this House will join me in extending the hand of friendship to refugees while mourning the victims of terror, not just in France, Lebanon and Iraq but throughout Nigeria, Kenya and Israel and other scenes of terror attacks across the world. I have said on a number of occasions in this House that terrorists are animals. Terrorists simply want to inflict as much horror, terror and tragedy as they can, irrespective of who suffers. Our freedoms are hard won and worth fighting for. Unity is our hope. I truly believe that good will always triumph over evil. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (Leader of the Opposition) [10.36 a.m.]: I support the statement by the Deputy Leader of the Government and record the Opposition's condolences for those affected by the tragic events in Paris, Beirut, Baghdad and, as the Minister indicated, in the many other places in our troubled world affected by terrorism. While we mourn the loss of life in Paris—as we did earlier this week at a church service at St Mary's Cathedral, in this place and elsewhere—if we are to remain true to the universal values associated with that city of liberty, equality and fraternity, we must, as we are doing today, acknowledge those lost to terror elsewhere.

We must acknowledge the 43 lives lost in a bombing in Beirut and the lives lost this year and in many previous years in Baghdad. As the Minister indicated, and as I indicated a couple of days ago in this place, more than 200 lives ended when a Russian plane was taken out of the sky over Egypt. We should reflect that in this year alone hundreds of lives have been lost to terror across the world. Other than the places mentioned in the motion, this has happened in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Kenya, Pakistan and Turkey—a country with a rich multicultural, multi-religious history, which has been at the crossroads of civilisations throughout the ages and has been a bridge between the West and the Islamic world—and in so many other countries. Each life lost matters, and we acknowledge their passing today.

This theme has been explored significantly in the media, particularly in social media. While acknowledging the atrocities in Paris, many have pointed to the wider impact of terrorism across the globe. One post that comes to mind had an image of the flags of all the countries affected by terrorist activity, with the words, "Pray for humanity," emblazoned across them. The person making the post captioned it with, "All lives matter." That is a most powerful message and one we should all heed. While Paris was the first place in the West to be attacked by ISIS, we must ensure that we do not fall into the trap laid by terrorists of creating the perception that the West is concerned only with itself, its own wellbeing and, dare I say, its own borders. We must recognise the impact of terrorism, wherever it occurs, and be resolute in our efforts to combat it, wherever it seeks to take root.

We also should reflect on the fact that while the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS] is the latest focus—as al-Qaeda was before it—an overnight report from the British *Independent* suggests that Boko Haram may have overtaken ISIS as the world's most deadly terrorist organisation. Boko Haram operates in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and of course northern Cameroon. Who can forget the kidnapped girl children, who still have not been recovered? This Nigerian-based terror group, which is also known as Islamic State's West Africa Province [ISWAP], has been responsible, according to at least one estimate, for more deaths in the past year than has ISIS. Of course, it is not a competition. I simply recognise that terror takes many forms in many places and we should combat it wherever it occurs.

As we know only too well, our own State of New South Wales and our own city of Sydney is not insulated from the cruelty of hateful ideology. We should think of the families of Curtis Cheng, Tori Johnson and Katrina Dawson. We think of all those recovering from the events at Parramatta and Martin Place. The past few days cannot have been easy for those who have been hoping to move on from their own exposure to terror. The tragic events this week in Paris are not the first act of terror and, sadly, they will not be the last. In the digital age—an age characterised by the best and worst of humanity entering our homes at the click of a button—violence of this type is hard to predict and even harder to prevent. The reality is that there are some, as there always have been, who want to replace the values we hold dear—liberty, equality and fraternity—with a barbaric pre-modernity, and we must reject that. We must weather the storm together.

In Paris the crowd at the Stade de France sang *La Marseillaise*, before the game and afterwards as they left the stadium. They did so as a reply to the terrible events with which they had been confronted. It was an act of defiance, bravery and solidarity. As we honour those who have been lost to us in Paris and in all the other places mentioned in the motion, as well as all those listed by me and the Minister, we should be equally defiant, brave and collective in our responses out of respect for the thousands lost to terrorist acts throughout the world. No doubt other places and events will be listed by members who also wish to speak in debate on this motion

The Hon. John Ajaka: Sadly, I wish there were not more events.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. We must honour the memory of those who are lost to us by neither compromising our collective values nor forgetting our common humanity. We must uphold our values of respect for difference and diversity, for people of all faiths and, indeed, for those of no faith. We must respect persons of all backgrounds. We must uphold and pursue resolutely our values of social harmony. Social harmony takes time and hard work. It is the work done by generations and it can be lost, shattered in an instant, by a thoughtless action or a calculated and malicious action. It will take a long time to repair because underpinning our social harmony are trust and acceptance. We must be resolute in our support for a multicultural and multi-religious accepting and tolerant society.

The key is understanding that, however differently we look, however different our lifestyles appear to be, however different are our languages and the way we view the world, we have a common humanity. We are all people. For those of faith, we are all God's children. We should never lose sight of that. We must continue to pursue without compromise our objective of social solidarity, not just in New South Wales and Australia but across the world. We must support those who are combating terror wherever it occurs and in whatever form it takes.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [10.44 a.m.]: I am pleased to support the motion that has been moved by the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka, which states:

That this House:

- (a) expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq on the tragic losses, as a result of the terrorist attacks, last week; and

- (b) conveys to the French, Lebanese and Iraqi communities that the people of New South Wales stand in solidarity, with them, during this difficult time.

We have been shocked, particularly with the attacks in Paris, by the lack of humanity or compassion shown by the perpetrators. Obviously the same applies to the attack in Lebanon and the bombing of the Russian airliner in which all the passengers were murdered by the explosion of a bomb that had been planted in the plane and caused the plane to crash in Egypt. On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party, I express condolences to the families and all those who suffered losses in such a sudden and unexpected manner. As I read the reports of the Paris attacks, I was struck by the lack of humanity or, to put it another way, the inhumane and barbaric attacks on innocent civilians who were not involved in any conflict and who were not causing any civil unrest. They were simply going about their lives, attending concerts, sitting at cafe tables in Paris and enjoying an opportunity to relax. The eight terrorists in Paris, particularly, showed no compassion and no mercy.

One eye witness report came from a man who was standing on the opposite side of the road from the cafe. He saw one of the terrorists pointing what he later realised was a rifle at the people. He could not believe what he was seeing until the people who had been seated in the cafe began to fall from their chairs to the ground. It was then he realised that they had been shot and killed. A similar lack of compassion and mercy was shown in the Bataclan concert hall, where mostly young people were attending a rock concert. The terrorists entered the hall, fired their weapons in all directions and killed the young people at the concert, ending in 129 fatalities.

Later reports revealed that the wounded were executed. The terrorists checked wounded people who were lying on the floor to see whether they were dead. If they were not dead, the terrorists would shoot them again. One man with an artificial leg was shot but not killed. A terrorist kicked his leg to find out whether he was still alive. If he reacted, he would be shot again. As his leg was artificial he showed no reaction and the terrorist walked away and killed the next wounded person. To ensure that they killed the maximum number of people, they threw grenades from the balcony into the audience. Those events show that the terrorists did not acknowledge in any way that they were killing human beings.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS] issued an explanation for why they attacked Paris. I will read from the statement, which obviously I totally reject. It says that ISIS attacked Paris because it is "the capital of prostitution and obscenity, the carrier of the banner of the Cross in Europe". I reject the references to "prostitution and obscenity", but not the reference to the "banner of the Cross in Europe"—although I note that France is a secular nation, since becoming a republic when there was a very strong move against the Church. I would not imagine Paris is guilty of aggressive church activity; in fact, far from it. However, in the words of ISIS, "the banner of the Cross in Europe" was said to be one of the reasons for attacking Paris.

I am concerned about the motivation for these barbaric attacks. How can these young men be indoctrinated to act in such a cruel manner? I believe one of the problems with the Islamic religion is that sections of the *Koran* can be used by organisations such as ISIS to motivate, brainwash and mobilise young men, and I believe that is what happened on this occasion. For example, the English translation of the original Arabic text of chapter 5, verse 33 of the *Koran* is:

This is the recompense of those who fight against Allah and His Messenger Muhammad, and hasten about the earth, to do corruption there: they shall be slaughtered, or crucified, or their hands and feet shall alternately be struck off; or they shall be banished from the land. That is a degradation for them in this world; and a heavy punishment is theirs in the hereafter.

I believe these types of quotes can be and are being used by terrorist groups such as the Islamic State to brainwash young men. What is the future for Australia? In a recent report in the *Daily Telegraph* in which the head of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation [ASIO], Duncan Lewis, discussed the attack

on Paris, he said:

These people are anti-Western.

...

Australia has, of course, been a terrorist target long before we became engaged in the Middle East, as you know. But we are as a culture, we are as a society, objectionable to them and they want to attack us, they want to destroy us.

Mr Lewis revealed the number of threats that have been made in Australia, which is a matter of concern. He said in the past 12 months Australia had three terrorist attacks involving fatalities and six thwarted terrorist attacks. In addition, ASIO and our security forces had identified six potential terrorist attacks, which means a similar attack to that in Paris could have happened in Sydney. Mr Lewis went on to say:

To put this in some sort of historic perspective, that represents just over two-thirds of the attacks or planned attacks we've had in this country over the past 15 years. So in the past 12 months we've had two-thirds of the attacks in the past 15 years.

I, and other members, appreciate the effective work of our security forces and I acknowledge that we give them our total support and encouragement. On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party, I express our condolences to all those who have suffered a loss as a result of these recent terrorist attacks in France, Lebanon and Iraq.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN [10.53 a.m.]: I will speak briefly to this motion, as I know many members will speak to it. We are as one in our sorrow for the victims of recent terror attacks. The attacks in Paris, Beirut and Baghdad have been felt around the world. The targeting of civilians going about their ordinary lives is a heinous and cowardly act that assaults the values we hold as decent human beings. But they are part of a recent reign of terror of ISIS around the world. Last month car bombings around Baghdad took the lives of 57 and a rocket fired into a mosque killed six in Achin, Afghanistan. A suicide bomber took the lives of seven people in Sana'a, Yemen; three bombs in Dhaka, Bangladesh, killed a 14-year-old and injured 60 to 80 people; a suicide bomber in Najran, Saudi Arabia, killed two and injured 19; and the suicide bomb attack on a peace rally in Ankara, Turkey, left 102 dead and 508 injured. The cowardly attack on Metrojet flight 9268 killed all 217 passengers and seven crew members.

This month, the world has endured attacks in Arish, Egypt; Baghdad, Iraq; Beirut, Lebanon; and Paris, France. These attacks have been on civilians whose only crime is to go about their lives in peace. These acts are abhorrent, cowardly and dishonourable. My heart aches for the victims and their families. Those killed leave behind loved ones who suffer a grief that no-one should bear. Those who lived through the events must recover both physically and mentally from their trauma. The cities and nations that experience these attacks must come to terms with this invasive and terrifying threat and try to combat it by carrying on in defiance.

Indeed, these attacks are not just on a people or a city, they are an affront to the values we all hold as good and decent human beings. They are attacks on our values and our way of life. But they must never divide us. Now more than ever we must come together to defend our unity and our decency. We must not let these cowards hold any power over us. I know the Muslim community that contributes so much to Australia condemns these attacks and abhors this group that falsely claims to represent Islam. But today is not a time for politics; that is for another arena. Today we are here to remember the deceased and show solidarity to the communities around the world that are grieving. We say emphatically to the people of Paris, Beirut and Baghdad: We stand with you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [10.56 a.m.]: As Deputy Leader of the Labor Opposition in the New South Wales Legislative Council, I speak in support of the motion moved

by the Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka, and to support comments by the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Adam Searle. I wholeheartedly support the sentiments expressed in the motion. I extend my deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon, Iraq and other nations affected by the losses as a result of the recent terrorist attacks, particularly those in Paris.

I note that on 16 November a large number of our colleagues from both Chambers, including the Governor, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition attended a Catholic service at St Mary's Cathedral. I too would like to comment on a special service that I attended on Sunday afternoon at St Andrew's Anglican Cathedral. On 15 November, I joined the New South Wales Governor, David Hurley; the Ambassador for France, Mr Christophe Lecourtier; France's Sydney Consul-General, Mr Nicolas Croizer; the New South Wales Premier, Mike Baird; the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies; the Acting Dean of Sydney, Reverend Canon Christopher Allan; and New South Wales Deputy Police Commissioner Nick Kaldas to participate in a service of prayer and sorrow for the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

We prayed, recited psalms and sang hymns and completed the proceedings with the French national anthem. It truly was an honour and a privilege to attend Sunday's service along with more than 500 people near Sydney Town Hall—although it is, of course, one we would all rather have forgone. What was on display that day was the unity of our political and community leaders. In politics, we often oppose the views and ideas of others, but we know that our freedom to do so is one of the privileges of political liberty. So when that liberty itself is attacked, we are completely united. The weekend decision to illuminate the Sydney Opera House in France's national colours and to fly the French flag over the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the New South Wales Parliament was a simple but beautiful and heartfelt gesture of that unity. We are also united in our grief with families of victims and the injured.

At the same time we remember the recent attacks in Turkey, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kenya and the downing of the Russian airliner in Egypt, as well as other attacks in Kuwait, Yemen and Israel. We must also not forget that a day before the Paris attacks, 43 people were murdered and more than 200 were wounded in Beirut by twin suicide bombers in Lebanon. Terrorism respects no borders and is not unique to Paris. Here in Sydney, we will never forget the attacks at Parramatta and the Lindt cafe. But that experience only strengthens our solidarity with the French people, who have responded with strength of community which demonstrates incredible character. We are united in our knowledge that liberty itself will prevail even in the wake of these horrific attacks which have so far claimed 132 lives and injured almost 350.

Among those murdered were French, Algerian, Belgian, Chilean, Mexican, Moroccan, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, Tunisian, British and American citizens. We know that liberty has been challenged many times and France, the home to the Enlightenment, throughout its history has seen dark days. That history shows even in the face of tyranny, fascism and terrorism the City of Light or La Ville Lumière is a symbol of how liberty prevails. It will prevail here too. We know that those who perpetrated last weekend's crimes were "false" Muslims. ISIS or Islamic State steals the name of a religion and distorts it in an attempt to justify heinous crimes, but we see through that. As American President Barack Obama pointed out we know that the majority of ISIS victims are Muslims and the majority of those fighting this criminal regime are Muslims.

We know that among the rescuers in Paris were ordinary French Muslims doing all they could to save those injured by the weekend's atrocities. I am sure members have read the harrowing BBC World News account of how a bartender known as Safer was caught in a hail of glass as the windows of his cafe were shot out, but ventured out into the gunfire on the street twice to pull two injured women into the basement of the cafe. He then bandaged them until emergency services arrived. That is what a real Muslim does. Those who fired the guns were real in only one sense, they were real criminals. As we gathered on Sunday afternoon at the Anglican Church in Sydney we knew that any murder claimed in the name of our Lord is a corruption of our faith. We knew too that murder in the name of Allah is just as false.

The Paris attacks must be seen as the antithesis of Islam. The emerging world response to this tragedy is sombre but positive and that message is thriving. Scanning the numerous responses of everyday people on social media from around the world we see that message shining through. One image, which has been reposted thousands of times, struck me deeply. It was an image of the Eiffel Tower with a quote from Dr Martin Luther King. It stated:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that.

On the weekend, and since, we have gathered in the hope and the certainty that from this day of darkness, light will prevail. New South Wales stands with Paris, the City of Light. Sydney itself is a global benchmark for how a city can be built from many nations and cultures. That is our legacy. It is at times like this that we must defend that legacy more than ever because abandoning it, weakening it, is exactly what the Paris terrorists want to achieve. They want Christian to turn on Muslim. They want neighbour to turn on neighbour. They want us to suspect and revile the thousands of New South Wales workers and families who live peaceful productive lives and happen to worship to Allah. We cannot let that happen. To do so would be to validate the actions of the Paris terrorists and desecrate the memory of their victims.

This is why interfaith activity and dialogue remains more important than ever. On that note, I had the pleasure to attend a meeting on Tuesday at State Parliament of the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations [APRO] interfaith forum with Federal Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, the Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka and the shadow multiculturalism Minister, the Hon. Sophie Cotsis. It was chaired by APRO members Josie Lacey and Natalie Mobini-Kesheh. They brought together Australia's peak Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Baha'i groups for their eleventh forum. They do fine forging better understanding and genuine community harmony. I applaud their efforts.

Similarly, on Saturday 31 October, I was fortunate to join hundreds of Australians who participated in National Mosque Open Day. It is an annual event which gives non-Muslim Australians a glimpse into the Islamic faith. I attended Lakemba Mosque where I listened to the Granville Boys High School's Sheik Wesam Charkawi respond to a question and answer session from locals. Many of the questions were direct and, admittedly, almost uncomfortable, but they were sincere. The visitors were seeking genuine information and were honestly attempting to understand Islam. Among the visitors were Deputy Leader of the Opposition Linda Burney and Granville Labor MP Julia Finn, Lakemba MP Jihad Dib and my colleague the shadow multiculturalism Minister Sophie Cotsis. This is not new to me. Whenever I visit a major centre I always make a point of visiting the local places of worship—churches, temples, synagogues, mosques and shrines.

I have visited: synagogues in Berlin, Tbilisi and Hong Kong; a mosque in Singapore; a Shinto temple in Kyoto; a Balinese Hindu temple in Indonesia; a Hare Krishna ashram in Ainslie in the Australian Capital Territory; the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple at Woolgoolga, near Coffs Harbour; and, the Baha'i temple in Haifa. Over the past 25 years, in various capacities, I have also visited numerous mosques in Australia and abroad. They include: the Blue Mosque in Istanbul; the historic Mulla Afandi Mosque in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan; the beautiful and palatial Jumeirah Temple and Sheikh Zayed Mosque in the United Arab Emirates; and Jakarta's Independence Mosque—the largest place of worship in South-East Asia with a capacity of more than 120,000 people.

I have also visited the elegant Tbilisi mosque in Georgia; the Sultan Mosque in Singapore; the oldest Islamic place of worship, the Jamia Mosque, built in 1890 in Hong Kong; the breathtakingly beautiful mosques of Moorish Spain including the Cordoba Mezquita, the fortress and palace of UNESCO-listed Alhambra, and the Muslim quarter of Albayzin in Granada. While I consider myself a nominal Christian from the Canadian version of the Uniting Church and the Anglican tradition, I have a deep interest in understanding and exploring the faiths of others. Members are well aware of my personal connection with the Jewish community and Judaism. Yesterday, we were all fortunate to attend an event

with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition marking the forthcoming Jewish festival of Chanukah.

Throughout my life, I have attended dozens of Jewish services from the Chabad-Lubavitch to the Adass Yisroel, mainstream Orthodox Judaism to the progressive reform movement, as well as many Shabbat dinners with friends in Sydney's north and east—particularly, the Lacey and Ehrlich families. Similarly, as a parliamentarian, I make a point of attending mosque open days whenever I can. In 2012 I attended the annual open day conducted by the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. It has been organising these open days since 2000—a year before the September 11 attacks in the United States. Over the years I have also attended services and events hosted by other faiths such as Buddhist, Shinto, Hindu, Balinese Hinduism, Hare Krishna, Baha'i, Sikh, Quaker, Mormon, Uniting, Hillsong, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Baptist denominations.

As I have often said in this Chamber, I am always interested in pursuing opportunities to discuss matters and engage with those of different faiths. Every time that I have done so those interactions have not only educated me about how others see the world but also showed me something new about my own beliefs. With this in mind, I wish to acknowledge a recent subtle shift in language and tone at the national level away from the divisive language of the former Prime Minister. It is welcome. If nothing else, it stifles the ambition of terrorists to divide us. While these are positive steps, I encourage the State conservative Government to take a stronger stand against the growing far Right movement in suburban New South Wales and regional Victoria. It uses the development application process for mosques as a recruiting tool and rallying point to create division.

On 8 November anti-Islam protestors from Queensland travelled to Kurri Kurri to speak against the construction of a mosque at Buchanan. One day later, Pauline Hanson of One Nation was on Sydney radio attacking the construction of two mosques in Western Sydney. In early October Labor leader Mr Luke Foley spoke against those opposing the construction of mosques. Mr Foley said he believed decisions by local authorities to reject approvals for mosques were counterproductive to fostering good relationships with Muslims in Australia. I share that sentiment. I would also like to see New South Wales conservative parties take a stronger stand in relation to preferences for groups such as the Australian Liberty Alliance, especially in the forthcoming Federal election.

Labor is clear on these types of parties and has been consistent since the emergence of One Nation that it will have no truck with parties of division. Such parties only serve to weaken our communities. I reiterate my earlier calls and urge members to support and attend future national mosque open days in their own communities. Such interactions can only offer insight into the commonality of our human condition. The aims of groups like ISIS fail when ordinary citizens simply continue with the Australian way of life: a life in which we do not measure people by where you were born or where you pray, but by what you do and what you achieve.

As our guide on the 2012 mosque open day at the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque observed, "We are all human beings with flaws", and, "Hell is very easy to get to, but heaven is very hard to attain." That is very true. However, I believe that how we choose to react and to engage with those with whom we travel through life makes a great deal of difference to that struggle. It is in this struggle that I have witnessed the very best from the people of New South Wales. In response to the Martin Place siege and the murder of Curtis Cheng, we stood shoulder to shoulder and displayed a unity that affirmed our resolve to combat the terrorists. Today we extend that unity to the grieving of Beirut and Paris and stand with them, shoulder to shoulder, as they return peace to the City of Light. I thank members for their attention and commend the motion to the House.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [11.10 a.m.]: I speak on behalf of The Greens to the motion moved by the Hon. John Ajaka, the Minister for Multiculturalism. The Greens wholeheartedly support the motion and join with Government, Opposition and crossbench members in expressing our sincere and heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of the victims, and the broader communities of France, Lebanon and Iraq affected by and suffering as a result of this terrorism and violence. The victims

of the attacks themselves are, of course, in the front of our thoughts. I thank the Minister for appropriately incorporating the multiple locations of the recent acts of terrorism.

Indeed, terrorism affects no singular location, race or religion. Christians, Muslims, Jews, the religious, the non-religious, Arabs, Europeans and Asians are victims of the violence, living in different cities across Europe, the Middle East and Asia. Now, 70 years after the last world war, violence on an international scale continues to be a miserable and undeniable part of our lives. Australia has thankfully not been the victim of any major terrorist attack, although of course we have had our share of incidents, unnecessarily and tragically resulting in a loss of Australian lives both at home and abroad. To us, the attacks in Paris understandably feel like an unimaginable escalation of the conflict in Syria by ISIS in the Western world. This, sadly, is an extension of the savage violence that has wracked Syria and Iraq for years.

The United Nations now estimates that more than 220,000 people have died in Syria. Three million are in the refugee camps in neighbouring countries and six million are internally displaced. This is suffering on an unimaginable scale. My thoughts are equally with them. My home country, Pakistan, is no stranger to terrorism. One report estimates that about 35,000 Pakistanis died as a result of terrorist activity in the decade from 2001 to 2011. Perhaps most unforgettable and horrific in recent memory, almost a year ago in December 2014, was a terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar, where 141 people, including 132 children were brutally killed.

In the aftermath of these tragedies, often feeling helpless and powerless, people will naturally look for an immediate response and retaliation. It is at this point that we must try to keep a collective level head and not jump to conclusions, behave irrationally, or point the finger at people who are entirely unrelated to the incident. I will be the first to admit that I do not have all the answers. I am disturbed by recent international events and I sometimes also feel helpless. However, I do know that simplistic solutions for complex problems are not the answer. More to the point, further demonisation, marginalisation and stigmatisation of innocent people will not solve anything. In this case, we must ensure that the Australian-Muslim community is part of any domestic responses to operations that target Muslims or attempt to address people who are at risk of radicalisation in the Muslim community.

Moreover, if our aim is to build a harmonious, accepting and peaceful society—which of course it is—we must investigate and address real causes that lead young people down this dangerous path to violence and not implement bandaid solutions. The Parramatta shooting earlier this year was a tragic and shocking crime, and the police must complete a full investigation. However, we cannot allow the event—and events like it—to facilitate further isolation of Muslim Australians and to divide our society. It is time to have a different conversation—one that explores deeper structural issues of injustice and disadvantage. This conversation must engage with the diverse Muslim community and the rest of our community, especially young people.

Australian political commentator and presenter of *The Project* Waleed Aly's response to Islamic State on Monday night on his Channel 10 show went viral. The clip on Facebook has now been viewed more than 23 million times. Aly's basic point was that we must not let acts of terror divide our society and further isolate the already marginalised, because that is what allows groups like Islamic State to thrive. They want us to be divided, and they want Muslims to turn away from a peaceful society and towards extremism. He called specifically on members of Parliament not to preach hate "at a time when what we actually need is more love".

It goes without saying that Western foreign intervention in the Middle East has a poor track record of resolving conflicts. We need to remind ourselves and others that there are few more colossal and repeated failures than the incessant and entirely futile attempts of Europe, the United States and its allies to control and extinguish very complex Middle Eastern conflicts. Learning from history is always useful and enlightening. Whatever strategies we come up with, we need to change the debate from war to peace. It is about changing culture and deep-seated views and finding a solution to the root causes not

simply attacking the symptoms every time. We must let wisdom prevail, because we cannot afford more violence, trauma and hate to destroy our humanity.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [11.16 a.m.]: All members of this place, and probably the majority of souls on Earth, are damaged when we see atrocities like those that have recently occurred. I think of my family and how I would feel to have them involved in something like that. We are all united in our sorrow. I will not be popular saying this, but it gets up my nose when politics—whether it be the politics of religion or simple left-right politics—creeps into debates like this. I believe we should be united, and I do not believe that rabid, mangy dogs like those bastards in the Middle East should be able to divide us. However, my solution is a little different from that of those who have made white-dove statements today. I do not call for peace; I call for war. Annihilate them!

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.17 a.m.]: The French lost between 1.6 million and 1.7 million people in the First World War, 600,000 in the Second World War, and more than 10,000 civilians in the Algerian war in the 1950s and 1960s. The French people have endured enormous losses throughout their history. If we were to go further back in history, there were also many casualties in the Napoleonic wars. The French are a resilient people, a brave people, a strong people and a determined people. I have no doubt that they will prevail. I had the good fortune to spend a month or so with some family in France and I found the French to be beautiful people in the main, even if they are unintelligible. I have enormous respect for them. Every conversation I had with French people highlighted their love for their homeland, their liberty and their values. They very much see their country as one of the crucibles of civilisation and reformation.

I extend my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of those killed and injured. The weekend's events were shocking, there is no doubt. As other speakers have mentioned, there have been many incidents across the Middle East and other parts of the world. This is not the first and it will not be the last. The brutality and the randomness make us draw our breath. It is an event that will probably mark a long, long fight. I will finish by echoing some other comments. I think democracy and freedom will prevail, but it does need resolve, leadership, resources and determination. The French people will prevail.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE [11.20 a.m.]: I speak in debate on this very important motion. First, I express my sympathies to the Cheng family. The sad loss of an innocent life taken by a 15-year-old child was a shocking act condemned by all decent-thinking human beings. I take this opportunity also to express my sincerest condolences to the families of all those whose innocent lives were taken by a heinous act of terror carried out by ISIS in the French capital. The terror attacks which targeted the Bataclan concert venue and the Stade de France football stadium, along with cafes and restaurants, left 129 people dead and many more injured.

Similar horrors were executed in other countries around the globe: Turkey, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Nigeria, Kenya, many of the African States, China, and many others we do not hear of—attacks committed by ISIS, al-Nusra and the many sister terrorist groups in Syria and in Iraq—al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and many others too numerous to mention. They should all be condemned. No-one should dance to their tunes for foreign policy interests. I offer condolences to the Russians and the families of the 240 innocent victims holidaying at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt and to those of Christian faith and other people of faith in the Middle East, including the Palestinian people, who have suffered 70 years of oppression.

Terrorism has not, does not and will not discriminate between Muslim and non-Muslim, between Arab and non-Arab, between poor and rich or between young and old. It has impacted on Muslims of all colours, Christians of all denominations, Yazidis, Kurds, Copts and any other minority that exists in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the picture we get in Australia of what is happening in the Middle East is a distorted keyhole view of the world as dictated by those in power and narrated by those entrusted with producing the agenda.

Those in positions of dominance construct knowledge and manufacture truths, stereotyping and categorising people. Manufacturing assumptions about violence due to Muslims as innate barbarism and tribalism is wrong and should not be perpetuated. Such representations become language, institutionalised and normalised, reproducing a narrative about the other, in this case the Muslims, as barbaric. That is how certain structures of knowledge become the dominant norm and that is why in Australia and around the world Muslims are depicted as a security threat, a threat to public safety, a cultural threat or an economic threat.

This skewed view of Islam legitimises public hate campaigns and thus lays the ground for further vilification and hatred of Muslims in Australia. It legitimises the nasty, trashy, vitriolic, hate-based attacks that we often witness in public and sometimes in this House. The Islamic community, like any other community, is comprised of people who go on with their daily lives like any other citizen. They work, they earn a living, they raise their kids and they contribute to the overall good of society. They have no more power or authority over criminals—in this instance, terrorists—than any other citizen. They do not sit in the wee hours of the night plotting the destruction of the State. Therefore people should not blame the Islamic community for what is currently unfolding. Muslim Australians deplore ISIS, condemn their attacks and are angry that they commit such horrific acts of violence in the name of Islam.

We have faith in the Australian Federal Police Specialist Response Group, the Australian Federal Police Protective Service, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, the Royal Australian Corps of Military Police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation. The Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command is responsible for the NSW Police Force's preparedness for, prevention of and response to the threat of terrorism in New South Wales. There is also the Coordinated Response Group, the Anti Terrorism and Security Group, the Operations Group, the State Protection Group and other groups within New South Wales police including the Middle East crime squad and many others. We have many security institutions and agencies that can keep us safe. Having said that, I believe everyone has a role to play—and that means everyone.

Finally I take this opportunity to raise an important issue for all to note. The State Government will reportedly overhaul hate speech laws. Attorney General Upton says, "The laws just don't work." And I agree. The Attorney is right. They do not work, particularly for the Muslim community in Australia. One of the reasons is that neither the New South Wales anti-discrimination law nor the Commonwealth racial vilification laws provide the Muslim community with necessary protections. It is time we fixed that. This is why in New South Wales we must immediately stop such attacks on this community and we must amend the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 to include religion as a ground of discrimination. With the exception of one or two States, all other State and Territory laws have religion, religious activity, belief, affiliation or religious conviction as a ground for unlawful discrimination. The Government needs to address this deficiency and ensure the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 provides proper protection to all religions, including Islam.

This Act ought to be looked at. In Victoria, for example, religious vilification is treated in similar terms to racism. The Human Rights Commission's recent report finds that Muslims have "limited protection" under the Racial Discrimination Act. This report has found that Muslim Australians are facing persistent abuse and discrimination. That ought to be addressed. Once again I congratulate the mover of the motion, the Hon. John Ajaka, and the Government on this motion. I mourn all the innocent lives lost and I condemn all responsible for the loss of innocent life. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary) [11.27 a.m.]: I join other members of this House in supporting this motion expressing sympathy for the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq who have been subjected to attacks from Islamist terrorists in the last few days, resulting in much loss of life. The attacks follow an attack only a few days prior in which 224 Russian tourists were killed when a Russian civilian aircraft was targeted in the Sinai Peninsula. In each case these attacks have been specifically directed at civilians, with the intention of causing maximum human destruction, mayhem and suffering, regardless of race, religion, gender or age.

Australians have not been immune as targets of such murderous attacks. We remember the 88 Australians murdered in Bali a few years ago, those in Martin Place a few months ago and then Curtis Cheng in Parramatta in recent weeks. In all of these cases, those who were targeted were innocent civilians just going about their normal lives. The motives of the murderous Islamist perpetrators are clear and unambiguous. By no stretch of the imagination can they be justified or excused. In each and every case they used clearly evil means to achieve clearly evil ends. It is therefore a matter of deep concern that a few who hold positions of some authority in our community obfuscate and distort the facts, send mixed signals and justify, minimise or excuse the actions of the murderers who committed those evil deeds in France, Lebanon and Iraq only a few days ago.

One example is the Grand Mufti of Australia, Ibrahim Abu Mohammed. He is recognised as Australia's most prominent and senior Islamic leader. He could have joined other leaders, including other Muslim leaders, who made clear and unambiguous denunciations of these recent Islamist terrorist murders. He could have, but did not. Instead, he sought to attribute blame to "causative factors such as racism, Islamophobia, curtailing freedom through securitisation, duplicitous foreign policies and military intervention". His words were not a mistranslation. They were not off-the-cuff throwaway comments. They were words that were chosen with great care and purpose as part of a prepared written statement released to the media.

His action in doing this was a disgrace and has been universally condemned, including by Federal Government spokesmen such as Minister for Immigration Peter Dutton, Treasurer Scott Morrison, and Assistant Minister for Multiculturalism Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells. His predecessor Grand Mufti of Australia, Sheikh Fehmi Naji el-Imam, also had a similar problem in identifying who the guilty ones were when it came to Islamist terrorism. He infamously obtained much publicity when he refused to accept that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, even though there was a widely circulated film of bin Laden claiming responsibility. When he was again asked whether he accepted that Osama bin Laden was responsible, he said, "How would I know. He is unable to be found."

However, his predecessor Grand Mufti of Australia, Sheikh el-Hilali, had no doubt whatsoever who was responsible for the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. According to him it was the Americans and the Jews. On other occasions he praised Islamist terrorism without any qualification. For example, in a sermon in 2001 he praised Palestinian suicide bombers as heroes for killing Israeli civilians. On other occasions he expressed support for terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad. It is ironic that the present Grand Mufti, Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, in his recent comments, cited racism as a cause of the terrorist attacks in Paris. His implication was that the terrorists were motivated not by their own racist beliefs but rather to fight the racism that the Grand Mufti believes is directed against the terrorists. They were not driven by any reasons given by the Mufti. They were driven by evil—in its purest and blackest form. It is ironic because one-time predecessor Grand Mufti, Sheikh el-Hilali, was on the record many times for his racist attacks on Jews.

Despite the recent attacks of terrorism, I believe that the commitment of decent people everywhere—regardless of their religious faith or nationality—not to be intimidated by ISIS terrorists and others is as strong as ever. In conveying in this motion our solidarity with the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq at their time of grief, I believe we are also conveying to them our solidarity in standing with them and others until the defeat of terrorism has been achieved, as it most surely will be.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS [11.33 a.m.]: I speak in support of the motion, which states:

That this House:

- (a) expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq on the tragic losses, as a result of the terrorist attacks, last week; and

- (b) conveys to the French, Lebanese and Iraqi communities that the people of New South Wales stand in solidarity, with them, during this difficult time.

It is appropriate that we are spending this time on the last day of the 2015 parliamentary sitting calendar to reflect on recent events, their impact on the world and the ways in which our community has responded. I commend the heartfelt and passionate contribution from my friend the Opposition Whip. He is a true leader and a fine example of our local Islamic community. I am proud to serve in the Parliament with him. The events in Paris last Friday were shocking. At least 132 innocent lives were lost. As is often the case with a tragedy on this scale, among the many horrific scenes that we see one stays with us.

I cannot forget the footage of a pregnant woman hanging out of a window in desperation for her life, pleading for help so that she would not fall. Thankfully she was able to get to safety. Sadly, many more could not. Like many others, I had friends travelling in Paris on the weekend. They were incredibly fortunate not to find themselves involved in these tragedies. I too have travelled to Paris and find it hard to reconcile my many fond memories of that great city with the tragic scenes that we have witnessed and the stories we have heard via media since last Friday.

Separate to this tragedy, many more innocent lives have been lost to terrorism this year and in previous years. In Lebanon last Thursday, two terrorists exploded themselves in the capital, Beirut. They decided to do this in a crowded marketplace, killing more than 40 innocent people and injuring a further 200. Among the dead were the elderly, the frail, the young, men and women, people of faith and people of no faith. They were simply going about their life and they did not deserve what happened to them. Similarly, in Iraq in the same week we heard about a string of terrorist bombings in Baghdad, one of which was a suicide bombing at the funeral of an Iraqi fighter who had been killed defending his town from Islamic State [IS]. IS detonated a bomb among the grieving family and friends, killing a further 21 people and injuring 50 more.

Earlier this year 150 innocent people were slaughtered in Kenya by al-Shabaab militants who decided to target university students. The dead were mostly aged in their twenties and had hardly been given a chance to make their mark on the world. Other events include the tragic bombing of the Russian plane over Egypt, the repeated and barbaric horrific attacks from Boko Haram across Nigeria, and the earlier *Charlie Hebdo* attacks in Paris. In Sydney we have felt the tragedy of extremism in Martin Place and Parramatta. I too take this opportunity to extend my sincere condolences to the Cheng family. For each life lost, parents, children, family and friends grieve, whatever country they are in, whether they are Sunni or Shia, Catholic or Protestant, Buddhist or Hindu, agnostic or atheist. Each of those lives lost is a life tragically cut short with potential unrealised. We remember all of those people today and pay tribute to them and express our condolences to their families.

The member for Lakemba and my good friend Jihad Dib is known for doing much good work in a disadvantaged area. The principal of Punchbowl Boys High School said that, in his experience, a focus on building supportive, cohesive and inclusive communities will always pay off. As public officials and leaders in our communities, we have a duty to demonstrate the value of unity and generosity following the tragedies we have witnessed and those which have been felt so deeply around the world. By and large we have seen that from elected representatives and community leaders.

However, in times of anger and despair some in our community have turned to defensive positions that seek to demonise all people of Islamic faith. The member for Coffs Harbour has taken such a position in calling for our borders to be closed to all Middle Eastern and Muslim refugees. To this I say no. We have never applied a religious test to our generosity in Australia and nor should we. Islamic State is a violent, murderous and despotic cult and no-one can say that it represents Islam when it murders more Muslims than any other group of people. The idea that we would choose not to be generous to family members fleeing death and unimaginable cruelty simply because they are Muslim is an affront to our national identity and all that we have become. I call on Mr Fraser to reconsider his position.

An overwhelming majority of Muslim-Australians love this country and would defend it wholeheartedly. If there are people who do not share this view, I suspect it is because they have never had the privilege of getting to know a Muslim family. If that is the case, they should stop thinking they are experts on the subject. Indeed, Mr Fraser claims that he was speaking for his community, but since 2008 Coffs Harbour has been a refugee welcome zone and a significant number of African refugees have settled there.

It is a multicultural hub, with a Sikh temple in Woolgoolga, and many other nationalities comprising the local community. I know that the people of Coffs Harbour are doing a lot to discover, acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of refugees in their city. I congratulate them on that because they are making a difference. When the local paper stopped people on the street to ask what they thought of Mr Fraser's comments, three out of four people said that they did not share their local member's views on this issue. While condemning his initial comments, I sincerely hope that Mr Fraser is now able to become welcoming in character, because misguided and inflammatory remarks will do a disservice to his community.

Earlier this week we welcomed the first of the 12,000 additional refugees from Syria. A family of five has arrived in Perth, including a mother who is seven months pregnant. We are reminded that these are people who are fleeing extremist attacks like the one I mentioned already. Sadly, we cannot help everyone but for those we can help we should recognise the horrors that they are fleeing. The disgust we feel upon seeing the images of these atrocities on the television are often living memories for the families we now offer refuge. In the wake of these tragedies our humanity must prevail. We should be the better people and mourn the lives tragically cut short, not seek to divide the community further.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS [11.41 a.m.]: Everyone is going to get a history lesson, whether or not they like it. The motivating influence behind ISIL is a particularly noxious but long-standing strain of Sunni Salafism known as Wahhabism. Wahhabism began—as the name might suggest—under the guiding influence of Abd al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century. He was a local religious figure who was outraged by what he saw as the corruption, decadence and perversion of the Ottomans who came to visit the holy cities. He took it upon himself to proclaim that he was leading a reversion to a purer form of early Islam.

In this he found allies in the local tribe called the Saudis. Together—with the Saudis as muscle and the Wahhabs as the ideological progenitors of what we see today—they gained a great deal of power, influence and, ultimately, territory. The fundamental difference with Wahhab was that he believed it was justifiable for certain enlightened people within the Sunni community to say that not only Sunni, Shia, Sufi or non-Muslims are outside the pale of Islam but also that people who self-identify as Sunni but who do not follow the laws as explicitly as deemed appropriate could be considered kafir, or outside the scope of respectable Sunni Islam.

Eventually, however, the Ottomans got jack of it, especially after the Saudis managed to take the two holy cities. So the Ottomans dispatched Turkish and Egyptian forces to crush the Saudi conquest, and eventually retook the two holy cities and drove them back deep into the desert areas—the less populated areas—of Saudi Arabia. That occurred in the early nineteenth century. For 100 years the Saudis slowly bottled and condensed that Wahhabist ideology so that it became the ideology of the Saudis and their allied tribes. Slowly the ideology fomented until the Saudis had the opportunity, in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire, to rebel. It was a revolt led by Abdulaziz Al Saud, aided and abetted by such people as T. E. Lawrence and other British agents who helped to unleash the resources which allowed the Saudis to be successful.

The Saudis were happy to do so; they had old scores to settle. Almost 100 years after they had first been crushed by the Ottomans this was a nice opportunity to get back at them. Ultimately, in the immediate post-war period when Sykes and Picot drew up the boundaries of the Middle East, the Saudis

were granted the overwhelming majority of the peninsula. With them, the Saudis brought the Wahhabist legacy. Even at the time it was created the Wahhabist strain was considered, by Egypt and Turkey—the Ottomans—to be outside the normal bounds of Sunni Islam. That particular strain was carried with the Saudis into government and into office.

It remains that way to the present day. Wahhabism is still the official interpretation of Islam within Saudi Arabia, despite a number of attempts to claw it back. So to say that Islam has nothing to do with this is just as wrong as to say that Islam has everything to do with this. It is undeniable that there is a small but powerful—in regard to temporal power through the Saudi royal family, through the Saudi Arabian petro-dollars and through the post-1970s expansion of religious instruction—Wahhabist tradition throughout Muslim countries.

That is the problem that we face. But it affects not only us. As the Opposition Whip and the Deputy Leader of the Government pointed out it affects Muslims even more than it affects non-Muslims. The Wahhabi interpretation of Islam demands the creation of a caliphate in which everyone—that includes Shia, Sufi, Yazidi and even the Ibadi of Oman—must submit to their particular interpretation. It is their view that they should create a caliphate of purity, at which point they can move on to attack what they see as the crusader world beyond that. What should we do? We cannot turn our backs. We cannot pretend it does not exist. We cannot say that we should not pay any attention to it. There are many things which should be done—not the least of which would be to help delegitimise the governments of the Gulf states, which promote and condone, either implicitly or explicitly, the Salafist ideology.

You can bet your bottom dollar that if ISIS had not explicitly denied the legitimacy of the Saudi royal family the Saudis would be supporting it in its broader attack on the Shia crescent. That is the simple fact of the matter. So perhaps it is time for the United States, Britain, Australia and the Western nations generally to take a good hard look at their support for Shia-majority but Sunni-ruled countries, especially on the Gulf. More importantly, those countries should examine their relationship with Saudi Arabia and stop pretending that everything is hunky-dory there. Let us go through the list that the Opposition Whip mentioned. ISIS is Wahhabi Sunni, al-Qaeda is Wahhabi Sunni, Boko Haram is Wahhabi Sunni and al-Nusra is Wahhabi Sunni. This is an emerging pattern which even the blind can see. We pretend it is a problem for us, but it is a broader problem for everyone—more particularly for those Muslims in the Middle East, who have to face this problem every day of their lives.

We talk about Paris, but we also talk about what happened in Beirut. Were people in Beirut attacked for their foreign policy stance? Were people in Iraq attacked for their foreign policy stance? This idea that terror attacks have something to do with ISIL outrage at the foreign policy stance taken by the West is a complete fabrication. What did the Lebanese Government do? We have to ask ourselves: What are we going to do? There is not much that we can do. We can be strong. We can maintain unity. We can simply refuse to demonise Muslims as a group. But I will demonise those who say that a Salafist ideology is appropriate for anyone at any stage and that an expansionist form of Wahhabism is good for anyone at any stage. Those who contend for that deserve to be demonised because they are absolutely wrong and should be condemned.

I conclude on a happier note. I must say that perhaps I am the only person in this Chamber—if not, indeed, the entire Parliament—who owns both *Death by Sexy* and *Heart On* by the band Eagles of Death Metal. It was somewhat ironic that that band was playing and in the Bataclan concert hall during the attack. I assume that ISIS did not have the band's back catalogue and choose that band directly for the attack, but in some ways it was prophetic. Jesse Hughes, who is the front-man for Eagles of Death Metal, said:

Have you ever seen anyone that's really dedicated to fun?

That's what our fans are.

Fun is not something for which the Wahhabi Salafists have much time. ISIS said, "The Bataclan—where hundreds of idolaters were together in a party of perversity ...", and I am pretty sure that Jesse would be happy to be thought of as engaging in a party of perversity. Jesse Hughes is a remarkable guy and the Eagles of Death Metal is a great band. In fact, it is not a death metal band but a rock band, and the title is ironic. Perhaps the best statement is from *Gigwise*:

... you're always left with the unshakeable sense that they live for fun, and for sharing it with their fans. Everything they do is a celebration. It's a simple expression of the liberties we may often take for granted.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH [11.52 a.m.]: My contribution to debate on the motion moved by the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism will be brief because I am aware of the time and that other members wish to participate in the debate to extend their condolences. I am not a foreign affairs expert, so following the act of the Government Whip would be quite difficult in this context, but I will rely on what I know. A number of years ago when I was a member of the Young Shire Council that local government area played host to approximately 110 Hazaran Muslim males. It would be fair to say that probably 2 per cent of the Young population was not happy about having Muslim gentlemen from Afghanistan in their midst. But the Muslim gentlemen were sensational individuals.

I joined a number of debriefing sessions when they conveyed their sometimes harrowing stories of their journeys to get to Young. Some of them despaired for their wives and families: They had to go their separate ways to secure the safety of their families and the plan was that at some stage in the future the family members would reconnect. Those men had no idea where their wives and families were. They were hoping to make a better life in Australia and to bring their families here to join them. They left behind all their paperwork. One of the men was a sensational stonemason but could not find work essentially because he could not provide evidence of being a qualified stonemason. He overcame that by doing some work in Young and taking photographs that enabled him to show people the quality of his craftsmanship. Others had similar stories about leaving behind paperwork and evidentiary support for what they were qualified to do.

There were some community issues. Accommodating 110 individuals in a community of approximately 12,000 people without a lot of planning was an error, in my view. There should have been more planning around accommodation, the provision of health services, mental health services and social support networks. When those support services were put in place after the arrival of the men, things were much smoother. But significant work was carried out voluntarily by a range of individuals in the Young community to provide not just social support but also peer and mental health support. It was significant because the Muslim men were emotionally scarred. Anyone with knowledge of the Hazaran Muslims would know that in Afghanistan they were the most vilified of Muslims.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Everyone—from all sides.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: That is exactly right—everyone attacked them. They arrived in Young with some terrible stories and significant emotional scars. The best thing that happened was that the community of Young, of which I am quite proud, opened its arms and exercised a superb and exemplary degree of humanity. While terrorist attacks are terrible, and while our heartfelt concern is for families, friends and the communities involved, the reality is that Australia has a role to play in accommodating and rehousing a number of people who have been vilified in all parts of the world.

Australians do that well. I understand that there is a range of views on this, but that is the beauty of a democracy. We can have a range of views, we can ventilate those views and normally we can discuss them in a sane and rational manner. We must ensure that we have a continuing capacity to do that because that is one of the wonderful things about our democracy and our nation. I join other members in extending condolences to everyone who has been impacted by those terrible terrorist attacks

as well as those impacted by terrorist attacks that are not mentioned in the motion. Of course there are other places in the world that require the same degree of sympathy and empathy in relation to terrorist attacks. The important point is that Australia continues to embrace, support and provide opportunities for people who are fleeing from terrible regimes and that we continue to do that in a humane manner. I commend the motion to the House. We should all take a moment to reflect.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE [11.57 a.m.]: The motion states:

That this House:

- (a) expresses its deepest sympathies to the people of France, Lebanon and Iraq on the tragic losses, as a result of the terrorist attacks, last week; and
- (b) conveys to the French, Lebanese and Iraqi communities that the people of New South Wales stand in solidarity, with them, during this difficult time.

I wholeheartedly support the motion. I thank the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism for moving the motion. I am not in a position to give a geopolitical analysis; nor can I talk about comparative religions. They are not my fields. As interested as I am in reading related articles, I am not in a position to judge. My background as a former social worker is in dealing with people. I spent a considerable period of my life as a bereavement counsellor until I burnt out and decided to enter an easier field—politics. It is through the prism of my experience in dealing with people that I will address my remarks to the motion.

When I was thinking about an appropriate way to deal with the aftermath of the attack, I talked with my research officer, Amanda McCormack, and we visited the Peace Garden on level 9 of this Parliament. In this garden are many fine sentiments etched onto plaques. One is from the sub-continental community, which reads: "As many faiths, so many paths". That is one thing I draw out of this debate that I would like people in our community to remember. Also when thinking about the aftermath of such crises, I remembered two stories that mean a lot to me.

The first was told to me by a Catholic priest. It is a well-known story concerning a young boy walking along a beach and looking for sea stars that had been washed onto the shore. The boy found thousands of sea stars on the beach and picked them up one at a time to throw them back into the sea. He was advised that he could not save all of them and was asked why he tried to do so. He said, "They're going to die". He kept picking them up and throwing them back into the sea and every time he saved one he would say, "Not this one".

The other story was told by the Indian Consul-General at a Deepavali function at this Parliament House a number of years ago. He spoke about the meaning of the lighting of the candles during the celebration. He said that for him lighting the candles was the sharing of light in that when lighting a candle one does not diminish the light from the original candle and one is never too sure where that light will ultimately lead. To me, both of those stories mean that when we are focusing on mass geopolitical issues the thing that is often forgotten is that we are dealing with individuals, families and relationships. As worthy as it may be to deal with the great issues of geopolitics, comparative religion, governments and defence forces, it is also important to consider that we are dealing with individuals.

One of the worst concepts in bereavement counselling is "closure". People go through the five stages of grief as postulated by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and at the end they are expected to be cured. But I can say—although I have not dealt with clients in grief counselling for 20 years—I still often wake up in a sweat having revisited the emotional experiences of some of my clients. I have not experienced closure 20 years after dealing with second-hand grief, so the idea that affected people will recover and get on with life in a few weeks is nonsensical. These attacks will affect them for the rest of their lives. They will affect the whole of society and the world but especially the individuals who were at the venues and the

families of those who died or were injured.

Members would have read internet reports on the Paris attacks and their aftermath. I will relate two of the stories that affected me. Many of us would have watched a video on YouTube showing a father explaining the attacks to his young son. I found the video very moving, as it shows a family trying to deal with this tragic event. So far, the video has been viewed more than 11 million times. In the interview, a television reporter asks a young boy who was visiting a site with his father if he understood what had happened and why the people had carried out the attacks. The little boy answers, "Yes, because they're really, really mean", and he says his family will have to move. At that moment, his father intervenes and reassures his son that he does not need to worry and that they do not need to move, saying "France is our home".

The boy looks troubled, turns to his father and says, "But they're bad guys, daddy." The father replies, "Yes, but there are bad guys everywhere." His son says, "They have guns, they can shoot us because they're really mean, daddy". His dad once again reassures him, saying, "It's okay, they might have guns but we have flowers." He goes on to tell his son the flowers and candles placed all around the site—and we in Sydney have tragically experienced the same tributes only recently—are part of the fight against guns. At the end of the interview, the reporter asks the boy, "Do you feel better now?" and he replies, "Yes, I feel better."

A second story dealing with individuals affected by these attacks is one in which a husband writes on his website a tribute to his wife killed in the Bataclan massacre, in a defiant message to the gunmen. Antoine Leiris, who has a 17-month-old son, told the attackers that they "will not have my hatred". When gunmen stormed the Bataclan venue on Friday during an Eagles of Death Metal concert and fired into the crowd they killed at least 89 people, and his wife was one of them. The Parisian said he had met his wife 12 years ago and described her as an "exceptional being". He wrote online:

On Friday night you stole away the life of an exceptional being, the love of my life, the mother of my son, but you will not have my hatred. I do not know who you are and I don't want to know, you are dead souls.

If the God for whom you kill so blindly made us in His image, each bullet in my wife's body would have been a wound in His heart.

We are only two, my son and I, but we are more powerful than all the world's armies. Every day of his life this little boy will insult you with his happiness and freedom.

Therefore, I will not give you the gift of hating you. You have obviously sought it but responding to hatred with anger would be to give in to the same ignorance that has made you what you are. You want me to be afraid, to cast a mistrustful eye on my fellow citizens, to sacrifice my freedom for security. Lost. Same player, same game.

He went on to say he would give the attackers the "tiny victory" of "being devastated with grief" but it would be short term and that his wife would "join us every day". He continued:

I saw her this morning.

Finally, after nights and days of waiting. She was just as beautiful as she was when she left on Friday evening, as beautiful as when I fell madly in love with her more than 12 years ago.

Of course, I am devastated with grief, I will give you that tiny victory, but this will be a short-term grief. I know that she will join us every day and that we will find each other again in a paradise of free souls which you will never have access to. We are only two, my son and I, but we are more powerful than all the world's armies. In any case, I have no more time to waste on you. I need to

get back to Melvil who is waking up from his afternoon nap. He's just 17 months old; he will eat his snack like every day, and then we are going to play like we do every day; and every day of his life this little boy will insult you with his happiness and freedom. Because you don't have his hatred either.

I commend the motion to the House. I know all members genuinely believe that this motion affects not only nations, defence forces, religions and people in power but also everyday individuals, people like us, and our hearts go out to them.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [12.09 p.m.]: I thank the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism for bringing this motion to the House. All members are one on this motion. I acknowledge the members who have spoken about the horrific events that have occurred over the past couple of months and years and the tragic toll inflicted on the victims and their families. I offer my prayers and condolences to all those affected by the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut and Iraq. I offer also my prayers and condolences to the victims of other recent terrorist attacks, including those in Africa perpetrated by Boko Haram and the bombing of a Russian aeroplane over Egypt. We have recently experienced similar terrible events on our own shores, metres away at Martin Place and outside police headquarters in Parramatta.

There is no excuse or justification for these terrorist attacks. Innocent civilians, including women and children, have been murdered in these cowardly acts. We reject these dreadful acts of violence over many years in which hundreds of people have been killed. These acts of violence seek to foster hatred and division. It is that agenda we reject and we will continue to reject. I am deeply impressed by the way our society has come together to confront this senseless violence. I am not surprised, but I am impressed and inspired. We live in a beautiful and democratic nation. We know the people who live next door and those in our communities. We are fortunate to be able to raise our kids and grandkids in this wonderful nation. We will take the necessary steps to ensure that we continue to live a free and democratic existence.

On Monday evening I joined thousands of Sydneysiders, together with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, religious leaders of different faiths, colleagues and community members, to attend mass at St Mary's Cathedral. A mass was held the previous day at St Andrew's Cathedral and services have been held across Sydney, in the regions and throughout Australia to honour the victims of recent attacks. It was inspiring to see community leaders of all faiths come together in a spirit of harmony and friendship. On Tuesday this week that spirit of solidarity was at work when the Minister and members of this place attended a forum at Parliament House organised by the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations. I acknowledge the organisers of that event, Josie Lacey and Natalie Mobini who embody the best of modern multicultural Australia.

Members in this place and community leaders have asked, "What can we do to stop these attacks? How can we prevent them from happening?" My response is that we continue to reach out and talk to people from different cultures and religions. We must continue to reach out to young people of different backgrounds and include them in society. That is what we saw last Tuesday in Parliament House. We are a diverse society but it is only by bringing people of all faiths and backgrounds together that we become a strong society. Many members in this place have similar backgrounds to mine, but I will tell the House my story of growing up in the 1970s. My parents migrated to Australia from Greece, a war-torn nation that had been fighting for its independence for hundreds of years. It had experienced military coups, dictatorships, civil wars and internal divisions which resulted in poverty and lack of opportunity. Many thousands of people from Greece and other European nations fled from oppression, poverty and lack of opportunity.

Australia embraced all those young migrants and encouraged them to start a new life and to lay a foundation that would build the new nation. I, like many of my colleagues in this place and millions of people across Australia, am the fruit of that labour. The migrants of those years are the giants who laid

the foundation. Their children were able to receive a good education and to become good members of our community and society. I grew up in a cul-de-sac in Canterbury and had German, French, Italian, Cypriot, Greek, Lebanese, Jewish and Chinese neighbours. It was normal to grow up amongst people of different backgrounds. They were all young working people in their late twenties and thirties trying to make a go of it. Daily life transcended religion and culture.

These young migrants had a bigger job to do. They had to clothe, feed and educate their children, to pay off their mortgage and to live within the rule of law. They were a part of Australian society and contributed to building our communities. In those days entertainment was scarce and there was very little money, so we celebrated each other's cultural days and name days. There was an ethos of giving to each other and helping each other out. I have often spoken in the House about my mum and her experiences. Although at the time she had limited English, she had friendship and the help of others in her community. Australian society is about reaching out to others and helping them to build a better life. That is happening today and will continue to happen. It is about encouraging interfaith and intercultural dialogue, understanding where we come from, and respecting each other.

All of us have grown up in multicultural communities. Ours is a unique society and we do not want to lose that as a result of terrorist attacks on our democracy. It means a great deal to have the freedom to follow our religion and to express our culture, and we do not want those freedoms to be stolen. That is why we must continue to reject and condemn these violent acts. As I said, it is by bringing people of all faiths and backgrounds together that our society will become stronger. Many of us have been living a multicultural life, and it is our responsibility to ensure that that continues. It is an ongoing project and it offers us endless opportunities to enrich our lives and to embrace new friends and cultures.

I recently had the privilege of speaking at Amity College in south-western Sydney. It is an amazing school that has students from more than 40 different nationalities. I was profoundly impressed by the young women at the school. Each of them has a different personal heritage and ancestry, and that is not a source of division but of strength. It provides them with a window to the world as they prepare to embrace the opportunities that our country offers. I say in response to these attacks: Nothing will divide us. Australia will always seek to be a leader in the world and to demonstrate that harmony and unity are not mere ideals but the foundation of our national ethos. We will promote harmony rather than hatred and dialogue rather than division. We will demonstrate that using our voices and not violence is the way to build a better world. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. ERNEST WONG [12.22 p.m.]: I join my colleagues in extending my deepest and sincerest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who tragically lost their lives in that vile act of evil and cowardice on the morning of Saturday 14 November, Australian Eastern Standard Time. I also extend my best wishes to all those injured during these attacks and the survivors and witnesses, who have a long road of healing and recovery ahead of them. Our thoughts and prayers are with each one of them. I would like the citizens of Paris, friends and visitors to know that we from across the globe stand with them defiantly united in preserving the freedom and security for which we have long fought. These barbaric acts are aimed at injecting fear and division into our peace-loving communities. Our only option to conquer them is to continue to maintain and to uphold those values. We must stand unified, dignified and resolute in our reaction.

As we have seen many times, these despicable attacks always have consequences. The attacks carried out by these extremists are contrary to any religious doctrines and teachings, and should not reflect on those who represent the genuine beliefs and values of the Islamic faith. We should make no mistake: these gutless acts of terror are a violation and contravention of all religions, ethics and morals. There is no religion or faith that condones or promotes senseless acts of hatred against innocent human beings. It is imperative that we do not ride this wave of hate and violence and stigmatise or smear any culture, faith or individual.

We must remain united and stand together against those who aim to exploit our current sense of

vulnerability. We must maintain calm and poise and be resilient and measured in our actions and reactions. We cannot, we must not and we will not succumb to those who purposely and calculatedly attempt to undermine the freedom, security and safety of our communities across the globe. These very acts pose the greatest challenge to our community cohesion, and we must not waiver in our show of solidarity. We are people of love, peace, tolerance and inclusion, and we must resist the temptation to stray from those values. I congratulate the Hon. John Ajaka on moving this motion and all the members who have contributed to this debate. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (Parliamentary Secretary) [12.25 p.m.]: Like other members, I am horrified by and grieve about the recent terrorist events, three of which are referred to in the motion, and the events in Nigeria and other countries. We are all horrified by this violence and by the loss of lives, and particularly by the loss of young lives. Other members have spoken well about these incidents, the outpouring of grief and the revulsion felt by civilised people around the world. We must not give in and we must not be changed. We must not allow our culture and our institutions to be changed by these attacks. I will speak a little more bluntly about some of the remarks I have heard in recent days. I repudiate the remarks of those who, rather than blaming the Islamic State and its associates for these attacks, seek to blame all Muslim people. From that premise, they leap to the conclusion that Australia should shut its doors to all Syrian immigration.

I have two points I wish to make. First, I do not believe in scapegoating an entire community—it is not a race of people because it encompasses many races—on the basis of one attribute. That is the antithesis of what we stand for as Australians. It horrifies me that anyone would suggest that we should close our doors. I read Andrew Fraser's Facebook page on Sunday and saw many comments that alarmed me. They included comments from conspiracy theorists suggesting that French intelligence services are responsible for the attack on the basis that if it occurred they would get a boost in funding. I am not kidding, but one comment was, "We are a Christian country. Get rid of the do-gooders." How ironic, and what a perversion of the meaning of Christianity.

I say openly that the *Daily Telegraph* has taken a very strong line, particularly against the Grand Mufti of Australia. I am disappointed in the lack of tolerance that has been displayed to people who hold different views about how we should react. Malcolm Turnbull is being attacked for allegedly not being tough enough. Some are suggesting that we should put boots on the ground immediately rather than take a more thoughtful approach. It is not as though that has been a great success since September 11. Those like the Prime Minister who want to pursue the more thoughtful approach are being criticised. A dreadful opinion piece by Canadian author and right-winger Mark Steyn appearing in the *Daily Telegraph* today talks about the Islamisation of Europe.

It disappoints me that these views are being presented instead of a more thoughtful and moderate perspective. Andrew Bolt would argue, and it has been argued, that freedom of speech gives people the right to vilify others. However, whatever the Grand Mufti has said—and there is debate about the interpretation of his words—on these occasions we should hear from everyone. Everyone is entitled to enjoy freedom of speech and no-one should be told what they can and cannot say. What this country wants and what the world wants is a thoughtful and informed discussion and approach to resolving this issue. Violence is rarely a solution to violence, and bullying is rarely a solution to bullying. We need a political solution in Syria and a unity of purpose in wiping out the cause of these attacks, that is, the Islamic State. We must defend both Christians and Muslims, who are the overwhelming victims.

Heartbreaking stories of Muslim victims of the heinous events in Paris include those of a violinist, an architect, a shop assistant. We want to protect all people who share our values, and that includes Muslim people and Christian people. To all those who are extreme on either side of the debate, I certainly defend their right to freedom of speech, but at such a difficult time I think a more respectful and thoughtful tone would serve us well. I congratulate and thank all the members of this House for the tone of the remarks today, which I believe are very much in keeping with what our community wants to see, as was demonstrated after the Lindt cafe siege. Rather than being a sign of weakness, I believe it is a great sign

of courage and strength to hold on to those views and to be willing to speak out in favour of them.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY [12.30 p.m.]: I also extend my congratulations to the Minister for moving this motion and I make a very brief contribution to the debate. It is poignant that this House is mourning the atrocities visited last week upon Paris and Beirut, as well as those that have been recently inflicted upon Iraq. Paris and Beirut are cities that are entwined with each other—in grief, in history, but also in character. Both Paris and Beirut are famous for their joie de vivre, cities with a propensity to revel in their syncretic tradition, cities that have a history of enmeshing different religions, cultures and schools of thought, and cities that sport a defiant cosmopolitanism: an insistence that all of us, Christian, Muslim and Jew—even the occasional Hindu—can live together and learn from each other.

Paris is the city of liberty, fraternity and equality. It is often overlooked, but Beirut is the city of the Justinian Code—a very famous seer for Roman jurisprudence. Both cities are Enlightenment cities and their citizens have always led Enlightenment lives. One can see this trait in the lives of those who died last week. It is the thread which weaves together all their stories. It is present in Guillaume Decherf's story. He was a father of two young girls and a journalist for a French music magazine. He died in the attack on the Bataclan concert hall. It also surfaces in the fate of Kheireddine Sahbi, known as Didine, a 29-year-old violinist and composer from an Algiers suburb who was studying ethnomusicology at the Sorbonne in Paris. He was killed by gunmen on Friday night on his way home.

Guillaume was a Christian and Didine was a Muslim, and both had to die because their killers could not coexist with the concept of pluralism, the command to be empathetic towards strangers regardless of faith, to see God and humanity in each other's eyes. The killers' ideology insists on a pathological dualism, the mentality which Rabbi Jonathan Sacks says "divides the world between those who are unimpeachably good and those who are irredeemably bad", which insists that the expression of true faith requires the destruction of those who do not share faith. This ideology will lose, not just because of superiority of arms but because of superiority of ideas.

As David Brooks said this week, "We support the ethic of justice, a very different example of how to believe, think and live, an example centred on universalism and a willingness to see humanity in each other's eyes." May this ethic guide this Parliament and all parliaments in formulating our response. May this ethic act as an exhortation to all to prize unity over disunity. May this ethic temper those who are prone to falling into the trap of supporting an "us versus them" mentality in matters as large as foreign policy and as small as halal certification. And may this ethic offer some solace to the victims. I join the House in offering my condolences to all who died last week.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) [12.34 p.m.], in reply: I thank all members for their support for this motion. I will not read out the name of each member who spoke. If I have counted correctly, it was a total of 18 of us, from all sides of this Chamber. There are days when I stand in this Chamber very proud to be a member of the Legislative Council—days when we stand together united, from all sides of politics, in a bipartisan way to give support to a motion such as this. We stand together, united. We in this Chamber come from different countries of origin and practise different religious beliefs, whether they be Christian, Muslim, Hindu or any other belief. Whether we practise religious or secular beliefs, we stood united against terrorism and we stood united expressing our condolences to those victims and their families. I commend the motion to the House.

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that on behalf of members of the Legislative Council and the people of New South Wales I have sent messages of condolence to the ambassadors of Lebanon and France expressing sympathy to the relatives and friends of the people who were killed or injured by the recent terrorist attacks that hit Beirut and sites across Paris.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

GAMING MACHINE AMENDMENT (CENTRALISED MONITORING SYSTEM) BILL 2015

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

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. John Ajaka tabled the following papers:

- (1) Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985—Report for year ended 30 June 2015:

Department of Premier and Cabinet
Parliamentary Counsel's Office
Public Service Commission
- (2) Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984—
 - (a) Reports for year ended 30 June 2015:

Barangaroo Delivery Authority
Cobar Water Board
Dams Safety Committee
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
Infrastructure NSW
Local Land Services
Natural Resources Commission
New South Wales Electoral Commission
New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority
NSW Food Authority
Rice Marketing Board
Technical and Further Education Commission
Veterinary Practitioners Board

Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust
 - (b) Report of Election Funding Authority of New South Wales for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 November 2014
- (3) New South Wales—Queensland Border Rivers Act 1947—Report of Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission for year ended 30 June 2015
- (4) Water Industry Competition Act 2006—Report of Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "Licence compliance under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006: Annual Report: Report to Minister—Water—Compliance Report", dated October 2015

Ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. John Ajaka.

CLIMATE CHANGE BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October 2015.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD [12.38 p.m.]: The New South Wales Government opposes this bill. Despite what might be good intentions, it is unnecessary, unrealistic and impractical. It will not surprise members that I have some sympathy for the bill, but it has unintended consequences and the New South Wales Government is in fact doing much of what the bill seeks to do, which I will outline in a minute. I want to make it clear to this House that the New South Wales Government accepts the science of climate change. We must take concrete action to address climate change, and New South Wales is doing so in a serious and meaningful way, which I will also outline shortly. New South Wales is a recognised national leader on energy efficiency. We are the recognised leader in climate adaptation and resilience. We want the jobs and investment of renewable energy to make us a clean energy powerhouse State.

We support the Australian Government negotiating and delivering national targets for greenhouse gas emissions in international negotiations through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As we know, the United Nations convention seeks to limit global temperature rises to no more than two degrees. This is a necessary step to avoid the projected risks of climate change which, for Australia and especially regional New South Wales, are deeply concerning. We are hopeful of a successful summit in Paris to deliver a binding global deal on emission reductions, which is a meaningful and significant first step. We are glad our Prime Minister is attending those talks and we wish him and other world leaders the best in their discussions.

New South Wales is taking a leadership role to mitigate climate change and to help Australia meet its emission reduction targets. In particular, we are focusing on energy efficiency and renewable energy. We have taken major steps to establish New South Wales as a true leader of energy efficiency in Australia. We have a genuinely ambitious energy savings target of 16,000 gigawatt hours by 2030 and this Government is committed to delivering it. A massive expansion has been made to the NSW Energy Savings Scheme, which will ramp up targets by 70 per cent, extend the scheme for another five years and expand it to gas. A raft of administrative changes will be introduced to ensure it operates efficiently and effectively. We are aiming to join with other States in working towards a national market for energy efficiency with harmonisation as the first important step.

The reforms to energy savings schemes will contribute an additional 524 gigawatt hours towards the New South Wales energy savings target. The reforms will deliver 5.2 petajoules of gas savings in 2020. The Energy Savings Scheme will drive a reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 1.9 million tonnes by 2020. The improvements to the scheme will also deliver an additional \$8.2 billion in much-needed energy bill savings for New South Wales households and businesses over the next 25 years. The reforms to energy savings schemes are proof that this Government is taking real action to reduce carbon emissions while also strengthening the economy and looking out for families and businesses bearing the day-to-day brunt of energy bills.

We have not stopped there. To set the broader direction for energy efficiency in New South Wales, we released our Energy Efficiency Action Plan in 2013. That includes 30 actions to drive energy efficiency in this State. The plan is creating new jobs for tradespeople and energy efficiency professionals across New South Wales to help reduce people's bills. Earlier this year, we announced \$61.5 million in new funding from the New South Wales Climate Change Fund to implement aspects of the NSW Energy Efficiency Action Plan. The funding includes \$26.8 million for a new home energy action program to assist low income households to reduce their energy bills and \$3.5 million to assist businesses to reduce their gas bills. This program follows on from the success of the Home Power Savings Program, which delivered bill savings of \$36 million per year to more than 220,000 low income households in New South Wales.

We have not stopped there. Last year the Government Resource Efficiency Policy was released.

This policy recognises that the New South Wales Government can make a big contribution through its own actions. It purchases around 1 per cent of all new cars in Australia and owns half of all the land in the State—approximately 400,000 square kilometres. From fire stations, to hospitals, to schools, to community centres, this Government can make a real difference. The New South Wales Government Resource Efficiency Policy introduced clear and effective standards and policies for water and energy use and waste management in government operations. Agencies now spend less time gathering data so that they can focus more effectively on real energy efficiency improvements. This policy will help government agencies reduce their energy bills by an estimated \$27.5 million each year. Those savings can and will be redirected into front-line service delivery.

The Government is also firmly focused on building the renewable energy sector and it has made commitments to a secure, affordable and clean energy future for New South Wales. In 2013, the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan was released, which is a blueprint to drive investment and renewable energy in New South Wales. The action plan positions the State to increase energy and renewable sources at the least cost to customers. By driving the investment in renewable energy, we can create thousands of jobs across New South Wales—I am sure The Greens agree with that—while cutting emissions by increasing energy from renewable resources.

New South Wales is primed for growth in renewable energy generation. There are approximately 2,700 megawatts of renewable energy projects with development approval in this State and 600 megawatts of renewable energy projects are under construction. In addition, approximately 5,100 megawatts of renewable energy projects are in the planning pipeline in this State—10 times what is on the ground now. These projects involve investments worth billions of dollars in this State. There are approximately 4,900 direct renewable energy jobs in New South Wales. Many of the jobs are in regional areas which support economic growth throughout this State. This Government is making New South Wales home for innovation-based jobs in Australia.

A renewable energy advocate has been established to work closely with New South Wales communities and industry to facilitate investment in renewable projects and increase renewable energy generation in New South Wales. This initiative is a first for Australia. The New South Wales Climate Change Fund is also helping to drive serious investment and new jobs and opportunities. Supported by the New South Wales Government and investment from the New South Wales Climate Change Fund, the construction of AGL's \$450 million, 155 megawatt Solar Flagships projects is being completed in Nyngan and Broken Hill. The 102 megawatt solar power station in Nyngan is the largest solar plant in the Southern Hemisphere and the new 53 megawatt solar station in Broken Hill will generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of 17,000 homes. A blueprint for what could be Australia's first renewable energy self-sufficient town in Uralla has been launched. The aim of the blueprint is to identify how an Australian community could satisfy all of its energy needs from renewable energy in a way that is competitive in price, quality, security and reliability. These investments are fundamental to a bright solar future for regional New South Wales.

The Government has been prominent in supporting the emerging community renewable energy sector, and our Regional Clean Energy Program has provided regional coordinators to help communities engage with renewable energy projects. We are also supporting the Australian Government's mitigation efforts by working closely with industry and carbon service providers in New South Wales to support abatement opportunities under the Emissions Reduction Fund [ERF]. At least 41 projects for the second ERF auction have been registered in New South Wales by commercial providers since participating in the roadshows, workshops or outreach activities coordinated by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

One of the largest projects to receive funding under the Emissions Reduction Fund is the Ashwood Native Forest Protection Project north of Cobar. The Ashwood project will protect native forests and reduce emissions by more than 1.25 million tonnes over the next 10 years. This project alone will inject more than \$17 million into the Bourke and Cobar shires. Eight New South Wales waste projects that are now registered would have been ineligible without the Office of Environment and Heritage negotiating

access for Waste Less, Recycle More projects. A total of 143 Western Division leaseholders have been approved to register for the second ERF auction. The New South Wales Government has worked hard in identifying and overcoming barriers to businesses and landholders participating in the ERF. The results are now showing.

I turn to the bill. In contrast to the Government's action on climate change, the proposal by The Greens is impractical. It is unnecessary and costly for the people of New South Wales. The Greens bill proposes greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for this State. In the lead-up to the United Nations climate change conference in Paris in December, the Australian Government has a current emissions reduction target of 26 per cent to 80 per cent on 2005 emissions by the year 2030. The targets proposed by The Greens in the bill are extreme.

For example, The Greens 2030 target of 60 per cent to 80 per cent less than emissions in 2000 is more than double the equivalent national target. Unfortunately, there is no modelling on the impacts of these targets on New South Wales; no consideration of how New South Wales would meet the targets; and no consideration of its interaction with the overall Australian target. There is no consideration that this could lead to New South Wales moving emissions and jobs interstate. Instead of providing proper details, The Greens have placed onerous restrictions on how the target could and must be met. They mandate that no more than 20 per cent of emission reductions can be achieved through trading schemes.

As I have said, this House recently increased, by 70 per cent, the target of the State's flagship Energy Savings Scheme—a scheme which delivers low-cost abatement and downward pressure on bills—but The Greens seem to want to increase the expense of abatement. Moreover, in one of the many impractical provisions, the bill proposes requiring all State legislation—not just future legislation but all State legislation—to be interpreted in accordance with "guiding climate change principles".

This is completely unworkable and, unfortunately, illogical. It would open up avenues for enormous amounts of litigation as centuries of legal precedent would be exposed to the risk of awkward reinterpretation and, potentially, overturning. It would be a lawyers' festival. Worst of all, the Premier could be taken to court for not meeting the State's targets, even though we live in a federation, and States do not hold all policy levers on climate policy. In addition, the places where abatement will occur in Australia depend upon a range of interstate factors. That means that the Premier would be liable to court action for any failure by New South Wales to reach its targets, even when that failure is wholly attributable to the actions of other jurisdictions. That is illogical, and would force New South Wales into making bad policy decisions to compensate for the actions of other jurisdictions, as opposed to working with other jurisdictions as a federation.

New South Wales has been open about our desire eventually to establish a national market for energy efficiency by building upon our Energy Savings Scheme. That is a good example of New South Wales having an impact on climate change, even though it reduces emissions in other States as well. In another example of impracticability, the bill requires that all public authorities, including local councils, when exercising all their functions—I emphasise that it relates to all of their functions—ensure that they do not decrease the State's ability to meet greenhouse gas targets or adapt to the impacts of climate change. This could have a severe impact on the day-to-day functioning of public authorities—even the operational decisions of emergency services—and open the gates for costly litigation and court proceedings.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: You guys write this rubbish.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: We'll all be rooned!

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We are prepared to consider it and respond. The New South Wales Government accepts the science of climate change, is ramping up our serious action to tackle climate change in New South Wales, and accepts the need for further ramping up over time across

Australia. New South Wales is the national leader on energy efficiency, is aggressive on renewable energy, and is focused on building resilience to the impacts of a changing climate. Our enhanced Energy Savings Scheme, Energy Efficiency Action Plan, Renewable Energy Action Plan and the Government Resource Efficiency Policy, along with the New South Wales Climate Change Fund and our engagement with the Federal Government's Emissions Reduction Fund, are not only reducing carbon emissions, but driving investment in new jobs, reducing electricity bills for everyday families and businesses, and ensuring that this Government is a leader in sustainability.

Our reforms are delivering real and genuine benefits for the people of New South Wales and our environment—not the bureaucratic field day and litigation nirvana proposed by The Greens in this bill. This bill is unnecessary and ill-conceived, and would impose expensive burdens on the New South Wales Government, New South Wales businesses and New South Wales taxpayers disproportionate to our international obligations. It is impractical, unworkable and irredeemable. It cannot be supported. The Government will oppose this bill.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM [12.53 p.m.]: I support my colleague Ms Jan Barham and her brilliant bill, the Climate Change Bill 2015. I congratulate Ms Jan Barham and her staff and all those people that she has worked tirelessly with to bring this bill before the House. The lead-up to the Paris talks—the global forum on climate change—is an important time to consider this bill. I congratulate Ms Jan Barham wholeheartedly for her determination to create this bill and to bring it before the Parliament to stimulate this debate. It is an indictment on all of us in this Parliament that in New South Wales there is no coherent framework for ensuring that the Government delivers an adequate and coordinated response to climate change. The key thing about this legislation is that it forms a framework that builds a coherent, thorough, deep response to the existential crisis of climate change.

It is a complete cop-out and an abdication of our responsibilities to leave it to the Federal Government alone to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change, especially when we know that they are failing on all counts with their expensive and ineffective direct action farce and their attacks on renewable energy. I note that the United Kingdom today announced a complete phase-out of all coal-fired power in that nation by 2025. That shows real leadership and a massive advance in renewable energy in that country. They have grasped the opportunity to transform their economy and their energy sector. In the past decade a number of jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, have enacted legislative frameworks to achieve specified targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to promote adaptation to the impacts and risks related to climate change.

Climate change legislation ensures that governments commence and continue the process of planning and acting to address climate change across the whole of government, with the view to achieving long-term targets for mitigation and implementing adaptation strategies to promote the long-term wellbeing of people, communities, and ecosystems. This bill introduces a corresponding legislative framework in New South Wales, with statutory emission reduction targets that reflect the current evidence about the need for a rapid transition to a decarbonised society and economy to limit global warming, comprehensive climate change adaptation planning requirements, decision-making requirements so that government decision-makers must consider the impact of their decisions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and judicial review to ensure compliance with the principles and provisions of the bill.

The bill will require current and future New South Wales governments, across all departments and in coordination with local councils, to plan for and deliver effective action for climate change mitigation and adaptation, to work toward ensuring human and ecological health and wellbeing, and to recognise the need for a plan for climate impacts on all people, particularly the vulnerable and disadvantaged. In my contribution to the debate on this bill, I wish to focus on the impact that ignoring climate change will have on our agriculture sector. Members opposite, especially members of The Nationals, like to talk about their support for our farmers and our food security but it is important that they

are held to account and that they begin to take the issue of climate change and its impact on agriculture and our farmers very seriously. It is also clear that by ignoring climate change and its impacts on our future agricultural production and productivity, The Nationals are hanging farmers out to dry.

In this year's New South Wales budget a clear link was drawn by the Treasury between a more than \$2 billion decline in real farm production in New South Wales over the past five years, and El Niño and adverse weather conditions clearly related to climate change. The New South Wales budget reports that following "a large decline in 2013-14, agricultural commodity exports are estimated to have fallen again in 2014-15, as poor growing conditions led to reduced crop production". It also states that "the recently declared El Niño phase, which increases the likelihood of drought, may constrain farm production and exports". That would be a bad outcome for New South Wales.

The evidence that climate change will lead to more extreme and unpredictable weather patterns, and that this will have serious consequences for our agricultural production, is incontrovertible. We know that Australia is the driest inhabited continent on Earth. Already, our rainfall is four times more variable than Russia's, three times more variable than the Americas' and double the variability of New Zealand and India. A recent in-depth study of the impacts of climate change on agriculture in Australia, titled "Feeding a Hungry Nation: Climate change, food and farming in Australia", found that climate change is driving an increase in the intensity and frequency of hot days and heatwaves, changing rainfall patterns, increasing the severity of droughts and driving up the likelihood of extreme fire danger weather.

[Deputy-President (The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones) left the chair at 1.00 p.m. The House resumed at 2.30 p.m.]

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the President's Gallery Mr John Evans, PSM, the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser and former Clerk of the Parliaments.

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

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

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY SITES

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that Sallys Flat near Hill End was short-listed as a possible nuclear waste storage site by the Federal Government, what is the State Government's response to community concerns about the suitability of the site and, in particular, concerns expressed by local sheep farmers, who have said, "It's a disgusting proposition"?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I note that short-listing of potential sites right across Australia has generated a fair bit of discussion. Recently as I was driving I listened to some of the Western Australian proponents, who voluntarily have submitted their properties or farms for consideration as part of the short-listing for those sites. Some points made related to a site being an optional economic driver, but we are also talking about particular types of waste. It was felt in those communities—and I emphasise this relates to Western Australia and ask the Leader of the Opposition not to become confused with what is happening at Sallys Flat—that they would be interested in being able to take that on. They felt that they could run their farming practices alongside the waste. I reiterate that those ideas are from the mouths of farmers who have put their properties forward for consideration.

There is a long way to go in deciding on nuclear waste storage in Australia, and obviously that is a matter for the Commonwealth Government. However, the New South Wales Government will continue to listen to the concerns of farmers in a range of areas. I have read some of the comments in the media. I know the history of some of the old sheep stations in the Sallys Flat area and that we have some historic sheep properties there. I know that some owners of old properties that are near, but are not directly at Sallys Flat—slightly farther afield—have been expressing concern.

The New South Wales Government will continue to listen to those concerns from a State perspective. At this stage, it is merely a short list. I know that Sallys Flat is in the Bathurst City Council area and that some producers have been calling on the mayor of Bathurst City Council to have conversations with them on that topic. The New South Wales Government will continue with what it usually does and listen to some of the concerns. If the New South Wales Government has a role to play in making comment, it will do so. But at this stage, it is very early days in the process.

REGIONAL ROADS, MARITIME AND FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will he update the House on the New South Wales Government's achievements in roads, maritime and freight in regional New South Wales?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack for her question and especially for her particular interest in freight. This is a most important question. When coming into government in 2011, I knew we desperately needed to invest heavily in regional transport and, as the Hon. Catherine Cusack adverted to, freight-related infrastructure. When living and travelling in country New South Wales we experienced the crumbling weight-restricted bridges, potholed pavements, dangerous intersections and poor road connections to rail heads, silos, saleyards, abattoirs, fuel depots and supermarkets. Investment in grain rail lines was at rock bottom, freight was a dirty word, and regional maritime and boating facilities were being neglected and mismanaged—nowhere more so than in the region in which the Hon. Catherine Cusack lives. For five years, our party and leadership have been working hard and smart to fix the problems left by Labor. We are rebuilding the bush.

Historic levels of funding are flowing into roads, maritime and freight infrastructure in regional New South Wales. In fact, since 2011, \$19.5 billion has been invested, with an extra \$4.1 billion committed for our regions under the Rebuilding NSW infrastructure fund. Well done to this Government! Everywhere we look, there is action—the Princes, Great Western, Newell, New England, Mitchell, Oxley, Silver City and Cobb highways are all receiving major upgrades. This Government is constructing extra overtaking lanes on the Bells Line of Road, sealing shoulders on Kidman Way and replacing and upgrading dozens of timber bridges through our Bridges for the Bush and Fixing Country Roads programs. At the conclusion of my answer I will have a question for the Opposition, except for the Hon. Mick Veitch—who is not present in the Chamber at the moment—about where Kidman Way is. No other Opposition member would know the answer.

It is not all about roads: Rail lines are being refurbished across the length and breadth of our grain belt, providing producers with more reliable services and allowing grain wagons to carry heavier loads. Since coming to office the New South Wales Government has refurbished more than 1,300 kilometres of track, including replacement of 330,000 old timber sleepers.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Is that all?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: They are a bit like the Hon. Greg Donnelly. The Government will replace them with modern long-life steel sleepers. The Liberal-Nationals Government also has successfully secured \$400 million over the coming years under Rebuilding NSW for a new funding initiative named Fixing Country Rail. In this Government's second term, we will focus on providing more

bypasses on major regional highways, including on the Newell Highway at Parkes, on the New England Highway at Muswellbrook and on the Pacific Highway at Coffs Harbour. I have always believed people living outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong should have the same opportunities to enjoy coastal waters, not to mention inland rivers and dams. Through our Boating Now program the Government is spending record levels of funding to upgrade boat ramps, jetties, fishing pontoons, sewage pumps and parking facilities in country New South Wales. There is no better time than now for critical roads, maritime and freight infrastructure in regional New South Wales. *[Time expired.]*

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX AND FRESH PRODUCE

The Hon. WALT SECORD: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given the NSW Farmers' horticulture committee has warned that broadening of the goods and services tax [GST] to fresh and packaged groceries would lead to a surge in imports and squeeze out New South Wales primary producers, what steps has the State Government taken to ensure New South Wales farmers are not disadvantaged?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: I thank the member for his question. Obviously, the GST is a matter for the Federal Government. However, in relation to what this Government is doing to ensure that the horticulturalists of this State have a bright future, I will not have enough time with the three minutes and forty seconds remaining for this answer to run through all we are doing. But I will give it a fair crack. One thing I have spoken about many times in the House is the Industry Action Plans that the Government has developed with industry to try to advance the \$12 billion—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. My question was about GST on fresh and packaged groceries in New South Wales and its impact in concerns expressed by NSW Farmers' horticulture committee. The Minister is talking about other subjects.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. However, I remind all Ministers that answers must be generally relevant to the question asked.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: From what I understand, the Prime Minister has not ruled in or ruled out whether the GST will be raised or extended to fresh fruit and vegetables. I want to clearly point out that there is a range of issues that may face our producers now and in the future. These issues may have an impact on their competitiveness in domestic and global markets. We need to be ready and able to make sure we add to the \$12 billion that the primary industries sector contributes to this State. In particular, when we talk about horticultural varieties—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order again goes to relevance. Mr President, being mindful of your previous ruling, the Minister has not mentioned or referred to GST or its impact once in his answer.

The PRESIDENT: Order! That is clearly not the case. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: In a competitive market, when it comes to our primary industries—whether the impact costs, the use and availability of our natural resources, the prevention of pests and diseases, biosecurity risks or food safety—this Government has a plan to ensure that whatever is thrown at primary producers in New South Wales they are resilient and at the forefront of technology. We are making sure that primary producers, through some of their industry associations such as Horticulture Innovations Australia and NSW Farmers, are at the forefront of production and able to withstand any challenges into the future.

When we talk about some of the disadvantages this country faces through things such as input costs, including labour and transport, we know that our horticultural sector in New South Wales in particular can produce high-quality products. We also know that New South Wales has some distinct

competitive advantages. I will reiterate what I believe some of these competitive advantages are. Our biosecurity measures and system are second to none and we will never compromise on the system when it comes to ensuring that our producers—whether they are small market gardeners in Western Sydney or large horticulturalists in the Riverina, whether they grow nuts, stone fruit or fruit and vegetables we enjoy—are protected by our system. This is one of our competitive advantages.

Another advantage is our food safety standards. I have spoken in this House about the contaminated berry scare that affected some producers in the horticulture market, particularly producers of frozen berries. I was recently on the mid North Coast and saw the increase in blueberry production with some producers moving into frozen products. I have every confidence that the future for our horticulturalists is bright and we will support them through any challenge they face. [*Time expired.*]

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION COMPENSATION

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. What actions has the Minister taken to lobby the Federal Government to extend the compensation package to all residents in the Williamtown area and surrounding communities who are affected as a result of the chemical contamination?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The question asked by Dr Mehreen Faruqi is very broad—she asked about "all residents".

Dr Mehreen Faruqi: Affected.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Yes, all affected residents. One thing I have said over and over when it comes to the issues in Williamtown is that, on behalf of my agencies that are responding—particularly the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] through its fisheries division and DPI Water and Hunter Water—we are continuing to work with all residents and businesses affected as a result of the contamination. We are taking forward the issues the affected people are facing. I do not have responsibility for the lead agency—that is, the Environmental Protection Authority [EPA].

I have said before that we have put in place an expert panel, led by the Chief Scientist and Engineer, to lead the response. We will continue to monitor the situation and have discussions with the Federal Government through the EPA. We firmly believe in the polluter-pays principle in Williamtown, as I have also said. I am not the lead Minister in relation to this response. Through my agencies I continue to have contact with the affected people and we will continue to do whatever we can to make sure that the immediate response is as efficient and diligent as it can be.

TECH SAVVY SENIORS PROGRAM

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support seniors to be tech savvy?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for her question. This Government is committed to supporting our seniors to save money on products and services that help them to maintain a good quality of life. As members will be aware, at the election this Government committed to provide more savings for Seniors Card holders by investing a further \$2 million to expand the number of businesses offering discounts. Recent research has revealed that around 30 per cent of older people in New South Wales are not connected to the internet, citing affordability as the main barrier.

That is why, as part of the expansion of the Seniors Card, the Government committed to working with a telecommunications company to provide lower cost broadband. I am delighted to inform the House that the Baird Government has delivered on yet another election commitment. Yesterday I announced the

Telstra Senior Starter bundle for the internet, as well as the expansion of the successful Tech Savvy Seniors program. The Telstra Seniors Starter bundle is now available for New South Wales Seniors Card holders who have not previously been connected to the internet. The offer is specifically designed as an entry-level plan for seniors, particularly "beginner" internet users, to start their online journey in an affordable way, and for New South Wales Seniors Card holders to enjoy the social and community benefits of being connected to the internet.

The Telstra Seniors Starter bundle includes home phone and internet connection, Telstra Broadband Protect, unlimited local calls, great value national and international rates, 25 gigabytes of data and a Telstra Air enabled gateway, allowing customers to access their home broadband data allowance at thousands of hotspots across the country, as well as within their homes.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: How do I get that?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Getting connected will be easy. The best way for seniors to find out more about the details on this offer is to visit one of the hundreds of Telstra stores or, for the Leader of the Government, to call 1800 859 533 to speak to a consultant in Wollongong. New South Wales Seniors Card holders who take up a Telstra Seniors Starter bundle will also have the option to add a Samsung Galaxy tablet to their plan and enjoy an extra 500 megabytes of Go Mobile broadband data. The offer will complement those seniors who have undertaken digital literacy training by adding a friendly way for them to get connected to the internet. I encourage all New South Wales seniors to take advantage of the fantastic discounts offered across the State through their Seniors Card.

Yesterday, in addition to the Telstra Seniors Starter bundle, I announced an expansion to the Tech Savvy Seniors training program. The program is delivered in partnership with Telstra through local libraries and community colleges. It will be expanded from 72 to 104 community college locations and from 15 to 31 library locations across the State. Training will be expanded to eight languages other than English, with courses available in Mandarin, Cantonese, Dari, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Vietnamese and Arabic. The growing number of healthy, active and tech savvy seniors is a powerful force.

Seniors are a source of knowledge and expertise that, when shared, assists the social and economic development of the community of New South Wales. The Government acknowledges and appreciates the contributions seniors make and is committed to doing whatever it can to remove any barriers to digital participation by older members of the community. Should people wish to enrol in a Tech Savvy Seniors course, I encourage them to contact their local community college or library or to contact Service NSW.

BUSHFIRE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I direct a question to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Given the recent flush of hot weather and the current fires in Western Australia, will the Minister update the House as to what strategies are in place for bushfire prone areas to prevent harm to people and properties across New South Wales?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for his question. It certainly is a timely question. Today is a lull day, as such. It was hot yesterday, but the temperature has gone off and it is milder today. It was slightly cooler overnight. As my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries tells me, in western New South Wales—

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Who is that?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The great Minister Niall Blair. I have to retrain you every day; you are one of the world's great sleepers. I thank the Hon. Greg Donnelly for his work towards enhancing the relationship between the Government and the Christian Democratic Party.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: I know the Minister is very excited about Christmas, but I would like him to be drawn back to the original question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! While the Minister was straying from the Hon. Paul Green's question, I am sure he intended to return to it.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I did; I apologise—I was distracted by the member opposite. As I was saying, in the Riverina a stop harvest notice has been issued. Most members of this House, and probably some people in the gallery, would realise that equipment in the wheat, oat and canola fields is metal against metal and sometimes there is a spark. On a critically hot day that is all we need to get a fire running, particularly with a breeze. There have been four deaths in Western Australia already. Three people were backpackers who were moving a horse—

[Interruption]

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members will remain silent. The Minister is giving an answer.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I am giving a sensible answer to a sensible question. Obviously some members are not interested in that.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: I'm very interested—call me on Boxing Day.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Christmas comes early for some. As I was saying, the backpackers who tragically lost their lives were trying to save a horse on that farm. The anecdotal stories that have come out of Western Australia inform us that a farmer, who was a father and husband, lost his life while trying to help his neighbours. It is a huge tragedy for his family and that community. Early burning has been done during the season and extra resources have been allocated to new equipment across the State. On my farm my ute has the tank and the fire pump loaded on it. The honourable member and I spoke a month ago about the fact that he is getting his pump ready on his farm. There are new and better planes available this season to help us get through it. We will have to work together and make sure we are vigilant and particularly careful during the summer.

MULTICULTURAL NSW EXPENDITURE

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I direct my question to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. On page 91 of Multicultural NSW's 2014-15 annual report it states that spending on consultants has increased fourfold from \$104,000 to almost \$400,000. How does the Minister reconcile this expenditure increase with the decision to make 13 staff redundant?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the honourable member for his question. The years 2014 and 2015 were a transformational time for Multicultural NSW: the legislation was amended, a new strategic plan was developed, a new grants program was established, extensive stakeholder consultations were conducted and many other new initiatives were delivered. Two of those new initiatives include a skilled migrant employment pilot and a multicultural women's hub. Both of these projects were developed through the partnerships grants facility of the agency and with appropriate probity and processes to deliver them. The use of specialist consultants and contractors has played a role in this transformational year to ensure that the outstanding vision is developed and implemented.

The Harmony in Action plan provides a framework for Multicultural NSW to better service the needs of multicultural communities across our State and includes a number of key initiatives. Contractors and consultants provide flexibility and enable the use of specialist skills on an as-needed basis. Specialist

knowledge was utilised to assist with external stakeholder consultation and delivery of probity services for procurement. On any measure Multicultural NSW has achieved an outstanding transformation of its business and organisation over the past year. I am unapologetic for being part of a Government that finally brought public sector expenditure under control through practical pragmatic controls.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: What we have here today, as occurred yesterday, is an attack by the Labor Party upon Multicultural NSW. It is an attack by the Labor Party upon operational matters conducted by Multicultural NSW; it is an attack upon the chief executive officer and the great staff of Multicultural NSW who are making the right decisions in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. Members opposite do not want Multicultural NSW to organise any functions.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: They do not want Multicultural NSW to use the best skills available to ensure that programs are delivered in the best way possible. What do members opposite want? They want the staff of Multicultural NSW to lock themselves in their offices and to do nothing. They do not want them to hold events or to spend money.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: They do not mind attending Multicultural NSW events. They also do not mind yelling and screaming and asking for guarantees about funding for Deepavali and Parramasala. They are always screaming, "Guarantee funding for three years." However, the minute any money is spent they scream about that. They do not want money to be spent. I am proud of the fact that this Government has increased the Multicultural NSW budget so that it can deliver great services. The best thing happening in New South Wales for Multicultural NSW— *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I have a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by explaining how a fourfold increase in the cost of consultants and the sacking of staff has improved efficiency?

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

WORLD TOILET DAY 2015

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I address my very important question to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water.

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

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Will the Minister update the House on the importance of World Toilet Day?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: While many of us are feeling relief that the parliamentary sitting year is nearly over, I will talk about a different kind of relief and encourage members to recognise the importance of international World Toilet Day, which marks the United Nations inaugural World Toilet Summit. Why am I talking about this? As the Minister responsible for Sydney Water, your business is my business. While I am sure that all members of this House are familiar with the excellent drinking water delivered to millions each day by Sydney Water, the equally important wastewater services often go unnoticed. Members may not be aware that 2.3 billion people around the world do not have access to a safe, private toilet. This means they have no choice but to face the indignity of going to the toilet in the open, where they are exposed to disease and are vulnerable to attacks. A clean and safe toilet ensures health, dignity and

wellbeing. Every dollar spent on water and sanitation generates a \$4.30 return in the form of reduced healthcare costs.

I commend Sydney Water, which is celebrating World Toilet Day today and helping to raise awareness by supporting the cause. Today, Sydney Water staff will donate a gold coin when visiting the toilet to raise funds for the World Toilet Organization. It is great to have a few Sydney Water staff members in the gallery today. I suggested a number of names for Sydney Water's initiative, including "Dollar for the Dunny" and "Pound for a Pee". However, my suggestions were trumped by "Fundraise in a Flush". Sydney Water's 24,000 kilometre wastewater network, 680 pumping stations and 29 treatment plants carry the waste of 4.6 million customers across Sydney, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra every day. Prior to the wastewater system being constructed in Sydney in the late 1800s, communities were impacted by diseases such as typhoid and serious pollution, and wastewater was directly discharged into Sydney Harbour. Once a proper wastewater and stormwater system was constructed, there was a dramatic reduction in disease and mortality from typhoid, the incidence of which dropped by as much as two-thirds.

Continuous improvements to the wastewater system over the last century, new technologies and engineering feats such as the construction of three deep-ocean outfalls at Malabar, Bondi and North Head in the 1980s have brought us to where we are today. The wastewater system protects not only our health but also our environment and waterways. Some members may have seen earlier in the week the significant improvement that those ocean outfalls have made to our environment. The Government and Sydney Water are committed to ensuring that we protect public health and the environment by investing \$90 million to upgrade the reliability of the wastewater network, and \$126 million to upgrade the reliability of wastewater treatment plants across the Sydney Water network in 2015-16. I encourage all members to support this cause when they visit their clean and safe bathroom today. Be grateful that that we as human beings can take this simple task for granted every day is not so simple for about 2.3 billion people around the world.

WATTLE STREET, ULTIMO, SCHOOL SITE

Dr JOHN KAYE: I direct my question to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, representing the Minister for Education. What steps has the Government taken to conduct an independent assessment of the contamination risks and remediation costs at the Wattle Street site, which was previously agreed to by the Government for a new 1,000 student Ultimo primary school? If no independent assessment has been conducted, why not?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The Department of Education enlisted an independent firm to conduct an expert analysis of the Wattle Street site, which is owned by the City of Sydney council. The expert analysis is contained in a report by the department's project managers, McLachlan Lister-Hill International. That report was made available publicly on 25 June 2015. The independent report, which can be viewed on the Department of Education's website, has revealed serious soil and groundwater contamination. I am sure members will agree that when it comes to our children we should be doing our very best to safeguard their health and future. That is why the Minister for Education has always insisted that any site remediation works be to a standard that ensures the long-term safety and wellbeing of our staff and students.

The department has advised the Minister that while it is committed to increasing capacity in the Ultimo-Pyrmont area, it cannot support the relocation of Ultimo Public School to the council site at a cost that could deliver up to three new primary schools. I am pleased to assure the House that the New South Wales Liberals-Nationals Government will be honouring its commitment to build a new school for the Ultimo-Pyrmont community. In the absence of any viable alternative, the Minister has agreed to the redevelopment of Ultimo Public School on its existing site and instructed the department to commence consultation and concept design.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION AND FISHING INDUSTRY

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I direct my question to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. In light of community concerns raised by commercial fishers impacted by the Williamstown contamination that the Federal Government's compensation process is cumbersome, onerous and humiliating, will the State Government consider making an interim one-off payment to ease the stress and angst of these fishing families and to get them through Christmas, and subsequently seek reimbursement from the Federal Government?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I thank the honourable member for his question, and I listened with interest to his adjournment speech this week on the same topic. The background of this matter should be familiar to all members, but for the record I will outline a brief history. NSW Health recommended a fishing closure on 3 September 2015 in Fullerton Cove and upper Tilligerry Creek following detection by the Department of Defence of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid or perfluorooctane sulfonate [PFOS] in a limited number of fish found close to Williamstown air base. A ban on the sale of farmed oysters from the Tilligerry oyster harvest area was also implemented. Subsequent testing of farmed oysters cleared them of any health risk and the industry recommenced sales on 7 October 2015. Oysters have a capacity to purge PFOS from their systems.

The first round of fish, prawn and crab sampling from Fullerton Cove and upper Tilligerry Creek gave mixed results, leading the expert panel to recommend a more comprehensive second round of sampling for an expanded list of commercial and recreational species over a wider area. The expert panel also recommended an extension to the fish enclosure to 30 June 2016. This would allow for a comprehensive health risk assessment to be completed. The Hunter River prawn trawl industry decided to delay the commencement of the prawn season on 1 November this year until testing results were available. Seafood testing has been prioritised in the laboratory and the NSW Department of Primary Industries [DPI] sampling program is well underway. Sampling for Hunter River school prawns is complete and tests are being assessed for dietary intake. This information has been provided to the expert panel for analysis. The expert panel has advised that should a species group be cleared for consumption it would reopen the fishery for that species group.

The Commonwealth Government announced an income assistance package for fishers affected. Other primary industry sectors including oysters were not included. The income support package is a matter on which the Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Mr Scot MacDonald, and his office have been particularly proactive in liaising with the Commonwealth Minister's agencies and officers. I congratulate him and his office on their work to date. I understand from his office that the Commonwealth payments are indeed now starting to flow to fishers, which I believe has only recently started to occur. We will continue to monitor this area and continue to make representations to our Commonwealth counterparts.

I am also pleased to advise that the New South Wales Government via DPI has made a financial contribution to a marketing campaign, led by Port Stephens Council, to rebuild confidence in the seafood sector. Seafood brand damage is impacting sales of oysters from Tilligerry Creek and Hunter River seafood more generally. The Government acknowledges this is a serious issue. We have been on the front foot in informing the community. There is a great deal of scientific uncertainty; therefore, we have to be cautious. The protection of residents' health remains the priority. We will continue to pressure the Department of Defence to meet its responsibilities.

On the last day of Parliament for the year, I indicate to the affected fishers who may be reading the *Hansard* that we will continue to leave no stone unturned in the coming months to ensure that the impact of this heartbreaking closure is minimised. I understand the point that the member makes about the upfront payments. The difference is that the money has started to flow this week. Again, we will closely monitor that issue. Let us be honest, nothing replaces the dignity of these proud business owners being able to start their motors and go fishing. This Government can facilitate the financial assistance with

the Commonwealth Government. But we want to get these commercial fishers back to work as quickly as possible because that is as important as the money itself.

WESTERN SYDNEY ROADS

The Hon. LOU AMATO: My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is transforming roads in Western Sydney?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank the honourable member for that question. He is one of the few members in the Chamber from Western Sydney.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: That's not true. I grew up there.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Well, there are not many Labor people there now. As far as they are concerned, Ultimo is Western Sydney. Together with our Federal colleagues, the Government is delivering the biggest transport and roads construction boom in the history of this State. We call this our "wave of infrastructure".

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: We call him "mumbles".

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Hon. Greg Donnelly has provided enough help this week; we do not need any more. This wave is bringing exciting transformations to Western Sydney, including \$5.5 billion worth of major projects being planned and delivered over the next—

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Is that all?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Hon. Greg Donnelly interjects, "Is that all?" There is already \$5.5 billion out there. It is absolutely unbelievable just how out of touch the Labor Party is. This Government is doing what they should have done, and he says, "Is that all?" That is the level of engagement from the Labor Party in regional New South Wales. The Government offered to give up one of its adjournment spots to this member because he gives us more help than almost anyone else.

Already construction is in full swing on numerous large projects in western and south-western Sydney. The first section of WestConnex, the \$500 million widening of the M4, is going gangbusters. After waiting 16 long years with no action, the people of Western Sydney can finally see a major upgrade of this critical motorway. The \$509 million Bringelly Road upgrade and the \$70 million Werrington Arterial Road project are both well advanced and kilometres of bitumen have already been laid. The upgrades of Schofields and Narellan roads, not to mention Camden Valley Way and Old Wallgrove Road are powering ahead.

Just today the Government announced the opening of a new section of Richmond Road and unveiled the preferred route for the Denmark Link Road upgrade which will cut delays at a nearby well-known congestion hotspot in Riverstone. I challenge members opposite to go and find Riverstone. There is so much more in the pipeline, including a new M12 motorway linking the M7 motorway and the Northern Road, a 35-kilometre upgrade to the Northern Road, and grade separated interchanges for the M4 motorway, the new M12 motorway and at Bringelly Road.

This Government is planning ahead for the growing region. Already contracts have been awarded to 65 Western Sydney suppliers as part of road upgrades to support the second airport at Badgerys Creek. More than 300 full-time staff have been employed so far, a number that will increase to around 4,000 direct and indirect jobs over the next 10 years. We are partnering with the Federal Government to deliver a 10-year, \$3.6 billion road investment program for Western Sydney to provide essential road improvements for one of Australia's fastest growing regions. These transformational road upgrades are

due to open before the new airport opens at Badgerys Creek in the mid-2020s. The plan also includes a \$200 million Local Roads Package, which is fully funded by the Australian Government.

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES WEBSITE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I ask the Leader of the Government, representing the Premier, a question without notice. Is the Minister aware of the "Happy Holidays" message posted this week on the New South Wales Parliament's intranet home page? Does the Government acknowledge that replacing the traditional "Merry Christmas" greeting with the United States' politically correct "Happy Holidays" message is offensive to Christians working at Parliament House and the majority of the population of New South Wales? Will the Minister have the message changed to the traditional Australian Christian Christmas greeting, "Merry Christmas"?

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: What about Boxing Day? Fred, you took the Christ out of Christmas, mate.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: There are some comments that are best left off *Hansard*, and that is one of them.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Or you decide.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. Walt Secord: I said, "Or you decide."

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has the call.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Trying to intimidate people all the time.

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

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his question to me, representing the Premier, about the Americanism, "Happy Holidays". As a child growing up, it was always "Happy Christmas".

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: A long time ago.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: If Opposition members want to ask me a question, I have been sitting here with a file full of notes, great information in my head, great messages and some nice stories to tell. They have not asked me a question.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The Minister is not being generally relevant.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: They will complain about the fact that question time is over but they have not even asked me a question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has been interrupted by a series of disorderly interjections. The disorderly interjections will cease. The Minister will continue his answer.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I apologise, Mr President. I say to you: Merry Christmas.

The PRESIDENT: Merry Christmas to you too.

MULTICULTURAL NSW

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Given that the annual report of Multicultural NSW states that two New South Wales government agencies have failed to comply with the Annual Reports (Departments) Regulation 2010 regarding multicultural policies and services, what steps have been taken to enforce this legal requirement?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I can assure the Hon. Sophie Cotsis that Multicultural NSW is doing an outstanding job ensuring that all requirements will be adhered to, notwithstanding that Opposition members do not want it to spend any money whatsoever.

SENIORS CHRISTMAS CONCERTS 2015

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister update the House on the annual Seniors Christmas Concerts across New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: As members of the House are aware, a priority of this Government is to increase opportunities for seniors in New South Wales to fully participate in community life. We are coming to a special time of the year and our seniors deserve a special occasion to bring the joy of the festive season to them. In 2013, the Government made changes to the locations of the Christmas concerts to allow seniors in outer metropolitan and regional communities to have an opportunity to attend. We want to ensure that we provide opportunities for our seniors across the entire State to enjoy these special occasions. Last year the Christmas concerts toured to Lismore, the Central Coast, Queanbeyan and Wollongong. These were wonderful events and were warmly received by local communities.

Following their success, I am pleased to announce that this year concerts will be held in Newcastle, Dubbo and Parramatta. Two concerts are scheduled to be held in Newcastle on Monday 23 November at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.; in Dubbo on Wednesday 2 December at 11.00 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.; and in Parramatta on 8 December at 12 noon and 2.45 p.m. As members know, we celebrate a different Christmas from that celebrated in other parts of the world. We do not have snow and, quite often, it is a little too hot to do much of anything. To recognise this and to pay tribute to our unique country, the theme for this year's concerts will be "Camping Out for Christmas". It is a shame that Opposition members do not want to hear about our Seniors Christmas Concerts.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have secured some outstanding Australian talent again this year, including hosts Glenn Butcher and Maggie Dence; singers Melinda Schneider, Stephen Mahy and Alana De Roma; and pianist Max Lambert. The concerts at all three locations will be free for New South Wales seniors and will be supported by an Auslan interpreter. Special tickets have been organised for a number of deaf seniors to attend the concerts. The Government will continue to produce a limited edition Christmas concert DVD, which will be distributed to seniors, aged-care residents and those less mobile who cannot attend the concerts in person. This year's DVD will be made available in mid-December and will be provided to all members of Parliament for distribution to their electorates, communities and areas of responsibility. I encourage members to allocate the DVDs to any organisations and seniors who they feel will benefit.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: We will find them on [www—](http://www.seniorschristmasconcerts.com.au)

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I do not think the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane ordered any last year. In particular, if there are community organisations that work with seniors to alleviate loneliness or social isolation, the DVD may present a wonderful opportunity to spread some Christmas cheer for their clients or members. Sydney residents also will have something exciting to look forward to—planning is already underway for the Seniors Week Premier's Gala Concerts in April next year. I look forward to updating the House in the new year on the planning and progress of these spectacular concerts. It may be a little early,

but I wish everyone here and the people of New South Wales a very merry Christmas.

CLARENCE COLLIERY COALMINE SPILL

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: My question is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Given that coal fines from the Clarence colliery have spilled into the Wollangambe River within the Blue Mountains World Heritage-listed national park, when will the spill be cleaned up?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I thank the member for her question and wish her well in recovery. Having experienced losing my voice, I know what she is going through. I will refer the question to the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Mark Speakman, for a response.

PREMIER'S PUBLIC SECTOR AWARDS 2015

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on the winners of the 2015 Premier's Public Sector Awards?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: On Tuesday evening, the 2015 Premier's Public Sector Awards were announced at a reception at Sydney's Conservatorium of Music. The awards recognise excellence and delivery of services to the New South Wales community by the public sector, not-for-profit organisations and private businesses. They aim to celebrate the achievements of our leaders and the great work being done across our community. I am pleased to announce that this year two inspiring and dedicated staff members from the Department of Primary Industries were recognised for their tireless work and received awards on Tuesday night. The Premier's Award for Individual Excellence and Achievement in customer-focused delivery was awarded to John Filocamo, Operations Manager for Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW. This award recognises those who make outstanding contributions to the delivery of quality customer service for the people of New South Wales.

John has been recognised for his dedication and commitment in helping an Aboriginal family reclaim the remains of a lost family member who was a member of the stolen generation. John worked tirelessly for nine months on behalf of the Walker family from Orange who wanted their uncle's remains relocated from the Field of Mars Cemetery in Sydney to Coonabarabran. Mr Walker had recently found out that his father's brother was a member of the stolen generation and had been taken from his family at a young age. The Walkers sought the help of the Government on exhuming their uncle's remains so that he could rest in peace beside his long-lost brother.

John worked extensively with NSW Health, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, the Field of Mars Cemetery, and the Burra Bee Dee Aboriginal burial grounds in Coonabarabran on the project. His hard work and dedication resulted in the uncle's remains being exhumed from the Field Mars Cemetery and transported to the Burra Bee Dee Aboriginal burial grounds where the Walker family held a burial service to lay their long-lost uncle to rest beside his brother. John's unwavering dedication is worthy of such a prestigious award. His commitment, knowledge and selfless efforts provided an efficient and personal service to the Walker family, concluding in a heartwarming result.

Another Department of Primary Industries representative was formally recognised for his methodical and impartial management of water resources and its customers in New South Wales. Michael Erny, the Menindee Lakes Project Director, was the recipient of the award for "Strengthening the economy and making NSW a better place to do business". This award recognises those who make outstanding contributions to the New South Wales economy and services. Michael received his award for his management efforts in delivering water to the Lower Darling, the Menindee Lakes, and the Western Murray areas through recent droughts and water shortages. Innovation has been a driving factor in Michael's achievements. His good management has enabled the successful and equitable distribution of

water delivery, making a difference in primary industries. His customer-focused approach has stood him in good stead to balance the primary industry and its needs with that of the health of the rivers and streams it relies on. His work has forged a positive pathway to a more sustainable future for the State's resources.

John and Michael have shown great leadership and dedication to this State and it is only fitting that they were recognised for their service. Their work reflects on a positive and innovative primary industries sector, supported by dedicated individuals who are leading the way forward. As Minister for Primary Industries, I am proud that staff within the department are being recognised for their efforts, and I thank them for all they do for their communities. As Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water I would like to make a few closing remarks as we move into the Christmas break. Make sure that your meat and seafood are cooked properly and that the preparation is done well. Make sure you keep the food standards high. Enjoy the break and we will see you next year.

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

WELLBEING INDICATORS

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: On 15 October 2015 Ms Jan Barham asked me a question about wellbeing indicators. The Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations, has provided the following response:

The Government recognises the importance of measuring performance across a number of social, economic, environmental and governance indicators, which is why on 14 September this year the Premier announced 30 State Priorities, including 12 Premier's Priorities to grow the economy, deliver infrastructure, protect the vulnerable, and improve health, education and public services across New South Wales.

These priorities will be measured against the best available indicators of economic growth, infrastructure delivery, service provision and other measures of community wellbeing and safety across New South Wales.

The Government is committed to ensuring that New South Wales is the best place to live, work and do business.

GASTROENTERITIS OUTBREAK

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: On 15 October 2015 the Hon. Lynda Voltz asked me a question about the gastroenteritis outbreak. The Minister for Health has provided the following response:

On 1 October NSW Health issued a media release to raise awareness in the general community of the current risk of gastroenteritis, and to advise on measures community members can take to reduce the risk for vulnerable elderly and infants, including regular hand washing and delaying visits if affected by gastro symptoms.

Institutions including aged care facilities and child care centres are required under the New South Wales Public Health Act 2010 to notify their local public health unit of an outbreak of gastroenteritis. The public health unit works with the institution to ensure the outbreak is controlled and those in institutions are protected from ongoing disease risk.

NSW Health has resources to assist facilities respond to outbreaks, such as the "Gastro Info Kit" which is available on the NSW Health website at www.health.nsw.gov.au and actively promoted to industry peak bodies and facility managers.

Prior to the introduction of the rotavirus vaccine on the National Immunisation Program in 2007, rotavirus infection was the most common cause of hospitalisation of young children from gastroenteritis. Since its introduction there have been marked reductions in hospitalisations for childhood gastroenteritis.

The New South Wales Government campaign "Save the Date to Vaccinate" promotes on-time vaccination of children to reduce the risk of vaccine preventable diseases such as rotavirus infection.

BLUESCOPE STEEL, PORT KEMBLA

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: On 15 October 2015 the Hon. Paul Green asked me a question about BlueScope Steel, Port Kembla. The Minister for Regional Development has provided the following response:

I am aware that the Australian Workers Union [AWU] commissioned a report on Australian steelmaking. However, the report has not yet been made public, therefore I cannot respond in detail to the conclusions the report makes.

The New South Wales Government continues to be a strong supporter of the Australian steel industry. Over the past three years alone, New South Wales Government agencies have paid approximately \$26 billion to 97,000 suppliers in the construction and facilities maintenance industry. Over two-thirds of this spending—\$17.2 billion—was with New South Wales-based businesses. Almost all of the remainder was paid to Australian-based companies. In the Illawarra region, the recently completed Foxground and Berry bypass used 54 per cent Australian steel, and the Princes Highway upgrade at Gerringong used 62 per cent.

The recent launch of the Government's \$20 billion Rebuilding NSW infrastructure program, which NSW Labor has failed to support, will provide significant new opportunities for the New South Wales steel industry. The Government is committed to ensuring that Rebuilding NSW and other government projects offer as many opportunities as possible for New South Wales businesses.

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. Niall Blair tabled the following papers:

- (1) Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985—Reports for year ended 30 June 2015:

Office of Finance and Services
Service NSW
- (2) Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984—Reports for year ended 30 June 2015:

Board of Surveying and Spatial Information
Building Insurers' Guarantee Corporation
Government Property NSW
Lifetime Care and Support Authority of New South Wales
Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales
New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council
New South Wales Government Telecommunications Authority
NSW Self Insurance Corporation
State Records Authority
Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Teacher Housing Authority of New South Wales
WorkCover Authority
Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Board

- (3) Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) and Education and Care Services National Regulations—Report of Education and Care Services Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners for year ended 30 June 2015
- (4) Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008—Report of Coal Innovation NSW Fund for year ended 30 June 2015
- (5) Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987—Report of NSW Climate Change Fund for year ended 30 June 2015

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

SEASONAL FELICITATIONS

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [3.32 p.m.]: I move:

That this House notes its thanks to the members and staff of the Parliament and wishes seasonal felicitations to all.

We have come to the end of another successful year for the Legislative Council. We have all done very well. The year was topped off by the re-election of the hugely popular Baird New South Wales Government. This year this House has passed over 60 bills. That is a mammoth effort when we consider that this year was interrupted by a small thing called an election. We have also examined those bills in detail, with great forensic skills, and moved 581 amendments to legislation—not something to be so proud about—and reluctantly agreed to 93 of those amendments. I am sure some of those amendments will have made the legislation better.

To protect against my encroaching grumpiness, there were only three days this year where the House sat past midnight. That is not a bad effort from all of us. I take this opportunity to firstly thank my whole team—my former Chief of Staff Jason de Sousa, who has gone on to different things, and my new Chief of Staff Andrew Huckel, as well as Deputy Chief of Staff Emma Higginson, and the whole fabulous team. I would also like to thank my parliamentary colleague the deputy Government leader, John Ajaka. He did the long hours while I was bludging a week or so ago. I had my feet up but I am sure he was not complaining.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: He was complaining.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: He was?

The Hon. John Ajaka: I missed you.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thank my friend and colleague Niall Blair for his work as a Minister. I pay tribute to former Minister Matthew Mason-Cox for his role as a Minister. I acknowledge the President, Don Harwin. Sometimes he is too tough on the Government but he strikes a good balance, he gets it right. The Opposition had a little bit of a whinge yesterday about a ruling but I said, "Fair go; he really is pretty fair when it comes down to it. He gets the rulings pretty right." Very quickly, the Leader of the Opposition begrudgingly said, "Yes, that's right."

The Hon. Mick Veitch: I thought he was going to call you to order.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: He put me on a call; it was appalling. Occasionally he gets it wrong but not very often. Likewise, the President's deputy, Trevor Khan, gets it wrong occasionally and names the Leader of the Government. It is disgraceful! Both the President and the Deputy-President have done a great job. I congratulate them on the roles they have played. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Adam Searle, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Walt Secord, for our working relationship. We do not always agree when we meet but the integrity of the decisions with respect to the House has been outstanding. I turn now to the Whips. The irascible Government Whip—I am trying to think of an appropriate word—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Brilliant.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: He has suggested that I use the word "brilliant".

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Shy and retiring.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I will use the word "shy" rather than "retiring" because we want him to stay, despite his misdemeanours. I thank the sorcerer's apprentice, the Hon. Ben Franklin, who is hitting his straps in that role. I thank the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane for the role that he is doing as well. Who is the Deputy Opposition Whip?

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Me.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Enough has been said about the member today. He has had enough praise! We have welcomed eight new members to the House—all hard at work brushing up their debating skills. Frankly, each one of them has made a mark in a very good way. We have almost forgotten the people they have replaced—no we have not; we love the people they replaced.

I thank all parties in the House, including The Greens, the Christian Democratic Party, the Shooters and Fishers Party and the Animal Justice Party, for their work. The roles of those on the crossbenches in this House are particularly tough given that this is a parliament where the Government does not have a majority. The scrutiny and work that the members on the crossbench have to do with respect to bills is quite exceptional. I do not think anyone realises the amount of work and wisdom that is called on from the crossbench in this House. I thank all those members for their work, even on the days when they do not agree with us.

This is my second year as Leader of the Government. That means it is two years since my friend, the Hon. Mike Gallacher, left the role. It also means that this is the second Christmas Mike and Judy Gallacher have gone through without having their situation resolved.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Shameful!

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is a shame. I suspect that every member of this House, having worked with the Hon. Mike Gallacher for a number of years, respects him. I know Mike and Judy Gallacher and their children as a family. They have had this uncertainty and slur over their heads for a second Christmas. I certainly hope that that is not over their heads for a third Christmas and that the matter is resolved with some alacrity.

On a happier note, I note that the executive manager of the Department of Parliamentary Services, Rob Stefanic, shortly will be off to Canberra. The Federal Parliament's gain is our loss. Like Rob, his deputy, Julie Langsworth, is a former Clerk at the table from the Legislative Council. All the good people are or were! I thank the Hansard team, led by Scott Fuller and Karen Turner. Sadly, once again Hansard experienced the sudden loss of one of their respected and valued colleagues. I thank the staff of

the Legislative Council Table Office, including a number of new staff, Stewart, Christine and Shu, who are now in different roles and who together with the regulars, Stephen, Jenelle, John, Allison and Sarah, have seamlessly continued the always high level of service to members;

The Legislative Council Committees staff did not get the usual once-every-four-years break in 2015. They had to work pretty much up to election eve in 2015 and were kept busy all the way through. I urge members to take a little solace for themselves and the committee staff to give both parties a chance to catch up. In the past financial year the Office of the Black Rod and the Chamber and support team supported two openings of Parliament—the opening of Parliament in September 2014 and the farewell to former Governor Bashir in October 2014, and the opening of the new Fifty-sixth Parliament in May 2015—and I thank Susan, Alex, Maurice, Richard, Charles, Lucy, Mike, Mark and John. We see them daily and they are just so terrific to us.

I thank the Office of the Clerk, particularly Katie Cadell, who is a star—we all know that. We also know that it is really Katie who runs the place, not David and Steven—just like my office. I certainly thank David as well as Steven, who stepped up as Acting Clerk during David's absence. It has been a tough year for David. As the Clerk of the Parliaments, David Blunt is without peer and simply is outstanding. I think there is a probably a swear word in the Italian language "montrone", which is the surname of Susanna Montrone, the upper House liaison officer from my office.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: She does a great job.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The Deputy Opposition Whip says Susanna does a great job, and she does. I pay tribute to all our staff. They all do a fantastic job. I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Have a great break and, reverting to my work momentarily, I say, "Please drive carefully." We have lost too many people this year. It has been a horrible year. As much as I blue with Opposition and some crossbench members, I like them and I would like to see them and their families in the new year.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (Leader of the Opposition) [3.43 p.m.]: On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Government and Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and I support his comments. My thanks go to the Clerks of the Parliament, in particular to the Clerk of the Parliaments Mr David Blunt, whose continued support, guidance and wisdom are valued and appreciated by every member of this Chamber.

I thank all the workers in this Parliament, who help us to carry out our duties: the cleaners, the catering staff, the special constables, the attendants, Hansard, the Information Technology staff, the staff of the Parliamentary Library and of course the staff of members of the Legislative Council—those who work most closely with us as members. I acknowledge, as did the Leader of the Government, the important work of the Legislative Council committee secretariat staff whose quality and diligence under pressure have enabled this House to continue to produce interesting and important reports on significant matters of public interest. We simply could not fulfil those important roles without their high-quality work. We also note the quality of the Parliamentary Library whose librarians and research staff are without peer. It is worth noting that this year the Parliamentary Library celebrated its demisemiseptcentennial or quarto-centennial—175 years of operation. It is a very important part of the work of this Parliament.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: We look forward to its dodransbicentennial.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. I also pay tribute to the great people in the Legislative Council Procedures Office, Stephen Frappell, Jenelle Moore and others, and I join with the Leader of the Government in thanking Robert Stefanic, who shortly will depart to embrace a new challenge in the Commonwealth Parliament, as well as his deputy, Julie Langsworth, and the team of the Department of Parliamentary Services. I referred earlier to the hard work of the Hansard staff, who make amazing efforts to translate discourse in this place into readable text and to report not only accurately but

also sensibly the deliberations of this Chamber. They face the considerable challenges of their role with great skill and the quality of their reporting, as opposed to what members say, cannot be doubted. I thank Maurice Rebecchi and his team of attendants, Charles, Lucy, Mike, Mark and John. I have known Charles, Lucy and Mike for two decades. I say to all the Legislative Council attendants that they help to make this place run smoothly. None of us could do our jobs without the good work of each of those members of staff.

To members of all political colours, including the crossbench and the Government, I wish you all well and thank you for your contributions during the year and for your professionalism. Much of the work of parliament rests on personal relationships, conventions and, in no small measure, trust, as well as the conventions upon which this Parliament operates. It is in all members' interests as well as in the public interest to continue those traditions.

Mr President, I thank you. You are respected by all members on the Opposition side of the Chamber. Mr President, your chairing of the Chamber is fair, which frankly is more than our colleagues in the other place can say. I particularly thank my Labor colleagues in this Chamber for their support and assistance in my relatively new role as Labor leader in this Chamber. With their help, I will strive to prove to be a worthy successor to those who have held the post before me. I thank my deputy, the Hon. Walt Secord, and our Whips, the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Greg Donnelly, for all their support and their good work. I also thank my shadow ministerial colleagues for their advice and encouragement: the Hon. Peter Primrose, who is a former President of this Chamber; the Hon. Penny Sharpe; the Hon. Sophie Cotsis, and the Hon. Mick Veitch.

I also thank the Hon. Lynda Voltz, not only for her indefatigable work in pursuit of her targets on the other side of politics, or indeed in the other place, but also for making sure that none of us becomes too comfortable. I also recognise the hard work of the Hon. Ernest Wong. I welcome our new members, the Hon. Courtney Houssos and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, who already have made notable contributions. I thank my staff member, Rob Allen, and all those who work for Labor members of the Legislative Council. I thank Trish Marinozzi for her work in assisting Labor's Legislative Council members and for her ongoing work in liaising with Government staff, including Susanna Montrone, who works for the Leader of the Government in this place.

I also thank the crossbench staff, who also assist to make sure this place runs properly. I say to each of the Labor staffers, of whom I was once one, that without your diligence, creativity and sheer hard work we would not be able to undertake our duties as the Opposition with the success we have enjoyed. We recognise and respect publicly your contribution to the ongoing project of rebuilding Labor across the State and to making good public policy and laws in this place. This is important work.

I thank the crossbench for the courtesy and consideration they have given to the issues we have sought to advance during this year, sometimes with success and sometimes not. They play an important role in our parliamentary democracy, as the Leader of the Government recognised, by steering a course between the government of the day and the Opposition. I thank the Leader of the Government for his bonhomie and evergreen good humour, even during the late-night sittings. I also thank the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon. John Ajaka, and of course the relatively newly minted Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water, the Hon. Niall Blair. After this year, I think his training wheels have come off.

It is worth noting, in the spirit of seasonal felicitations, the ascendancy on the Government benches of The Nationals. Members of The Nationals lead the Government in this place, are two of the three Ministers in this place and hold the position of Deputy President, that is, the Hon. Trevor Khan. The Nationals are carrying the Government in this place.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Adam, it's not quantity that counts, it's quality!

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: You said it. In conclusion, I wish all members and workers in this building all the best as we enter the summer season. I hope that everyone has a safe festive season and a happy and productive new year on our return.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) [3.50 p.m.]: As the Leader of the Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of Government in this place, I support the motion of the Leader of the Government, the Hon. Duncan Gay. At the outset I acknowledge the great work of my friend and former Leader of the Government in this place the Hon. Michael Gallacher and support what was stated by the Leader of the Government. As a lawyer, I consider it is a matter of fairness and equity that this issue be determined in the near future. It has gone on for too long and should not continue.

I am fortunate to have served under two wonderful leaders since I arrived in this place in 2007, the Hon. Michael Gallacher and the Hon. Duncan Gay. They have assisted and guided me and they continue to do so. To the credit of the Hon. Michael Gallacher, since the day I was appointed Minister, Leader of the Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Government, he has continued to support and advise me. That shows the true character of the man. It was an honour to be sworn in again as Minister for Ageing, and Minister for Disability Services and to pick up the new portfolio of Multiculturalism, as well as responsibility for youth and volunteering.

I acknowledge and thank my ministerial colleague the Hon. Niall Blair and look forward to working with him. I acknowledge your hard work, Mr President. I thank you for being fair and even handed in running this place, as acknowledged by the Leader of the Opposition. Most importantly, I thank you for managing this Chamber and all its members. It is hard for some to realise that members make your role difficult for you on many occasions and yet you ensure that the Chamber runs smoothly. I thank the Deputy-President and Chair of Committees, the Hon. Trevor Khan. We came to this place together. A former Labor Minister—I think, Michael Costa—nicknamed us the Bobbsey twins. When the former Chair of Committees, Jenny Gardiner, announced her retirement many of us were concerned about who would fill her big shoes. The Hon. Trevor Khan has shown in the way he has conducted Committee proceedings that we had nothing to be concerned about.

I thank the Assistant-President, the Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, and Deputy-Presidents Ms Jan Barham, the Hon. Paul Green and the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones. I thank the Clerk of the Parliaments, David Blunt, the Deputy Clerk, Steven Reynolds and the Usher of the Black Rod, Susan Want. I thank all of the attendants. What I love about the attendants is that they are next to us whenever we turn around to ask a question or hand over notes. They can anticipate our needs and are always there for us. I thank the Hansard staff. I love reading *Hansard* because it always makes me sound so much better than I could put into words. I also thank the Parliamentary Library staff.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues from the Liberal Party and The Nationals for their support and outstanding work this year. I thank the Government Whip, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, and the Deputy Government Whip, the Hon. Ben Franklin, for their hard work. They both do an outstanding job in keeping us on time when we are on duty. The fact that we are here on time during a division shows how the Whips work well.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It's something I dream of; hopefully it will start next year.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I welcome our new members: the Hon. Lou Amato; the Hon. Shayne Mallard; the Hon. Bronnie Taylor; and the Hon. Scott Farlow, who is not here at the moment. You have fitted in well and have done well since day one. You have a great future in this place and I know you are happy to have joined the Government team.

I thank the crossbench—the Christian Democratic Party, the Shooters and Fishers Party, The Greens and the Animal Justice Party—for your cooperation and assistance in the way you have

continued to work with the Government. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and all Labor Party members for the times they have worked with me. I know there have been a few times when we have not agreed but I accept that that is what Opposition members are meant to do.

I take this opportunity to thank my staff for all their great support: my Chief of Staff, Adam Zarth, Alasdair Cameron, Tamara Sargent-Strachan, Michael Shaw, Nicolle Nasr, Emma Dunn, Amelia Lincoln and Barry Heyder, together with my department liaison officers Damien White, Tegan Summerill and Amy Kabani. Most of them are sitting in the Chamber today. If I am fortunate I will be allowed back into my diary; I have been denied access as they do not trust me with my diary.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Don't go to the cricket.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: They booked that. I say a fond farewell to Alasdair Cameron who joined my staff on day one of my appointment as Minister. He was formerly a staffer of the Hon. Greg Pearce so he has been with us since day one of government. He is moving on because he has received his commission in the Australian Army Reserve, for which I congratulate him. He is also taking a job in the corporate world and I know he will be outstanding. I hope he will take with him lessons he has learned from working with this team.

As members know, we are all too often kept from our families. To my beautiful wife, Mary, my six daughters and my gorgeous grandson, I promise that I will do my best to spend a little more time with you and I apologise for breaking the same promise I made last year. Finally, as Minister with responsibility for volunteering and carers, I simply say a big thank you to all our carers and volunteers. At this festive time there are many vulnerable people who feel the pain of loneliness and need support. It is our volunteers and carers who give so much for many residents of New South Wales. I wish everyone a very merry and safe Christmas and I look forward to seeing you all when we return next year.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE [3.58 p.m.]: I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Government, the Hon. Duncan Gay. On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party and my colleague, the Hon. Paul Green, and our staff, I wish all members and their families a very warm, friendly and merry Christmas as we adjourn for the Christmas season and celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, as described in the Holy Bible, the word of Almighty God. I will read a couple of verses from the Gospel of Luke chapter 2, as I have done for 34 years, to remind us of what we celebrate at Christmastime:

- 1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
- 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

It is interesting to note the historical reference. These are historical events, not a myth or a legend. I continue:

- 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
- 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
- 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.
- 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

- 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

May God bless us all. I express our appreciation for the help and cooperation received from the President, the Hon. Don Harwin, and the Deputy-President, the Hon. Trevor Khan. I express my appreciation for the cooperation received from the Leader of the House, the Hon. Duncan Gay, and his associate, the Hon. John Ajaka, as well as the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Adam Searle, and the Hon. Walt Secord. I thank all the staff who assist us here in Parliament: the Clerk of the Parliaments, David Blunt; the Deputy Clerk, Steven Reynolds; the Usher of the Black Rod, Susan Want; and the Legislative Council officers, especially those who serve and help us in the committees, Teresa McMichael, Madeleine Foley, Rebecca Main, Stephen Frappell and Beverly Duffy. I thank our Legislative Council attendants, Mark, Lucy, Richard and Charles. Merry Christmas. I thank the library staff, catering staff and, at this particular time, our security staff and the NSW Police Special Constables. Happy New Year to everyone.

Ms JAN BARHAM [4.02 p.m.]: On behalf of The Greens, I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Government. This year began with an election campaign. And were we not all pleased when that finished and we were able to return to the House with some new colleagues, along with familiar faces? We spend so much time together. I often say this to people but they do not believe me: It is an honour and a privilege to work with people who choose to serve the community. A fine group we are, despite what the media says. My Greens colleagues and I are pleased to have had the opportunity to work with so many members in different roles. But we have reached the time of year where we are looking forward to spending some time away from this place, a bit of a reprieve. I welcome this motion as an opportunity to thank all members and staff. I thank all the staff in this place whose hard work keeps the Parliament running, and it does take a lot of people.

If one thinks about it, a lot of people are required to deliver democracy in New South Wales, and they are appreciated. Their support and companionship in this building make the long days and nights possible. I was surprised to learn we sat only three nights after midnight, as it seemed like a lot more. Members of this place undertake other activities, many of which are more important than what we do in this Chamber—but I think that is little known outside this place. I will talk later about how I am a fan of committees and believe much great work is done outside the Chambers. I thank the Clerks, the attendants and the Procedure Office staff, who ensure that the business in this Chamber and elsewhere runs so smoothly. I thank the Hansard staff for ensuring that there is a clear, accurate and sometimes amusing record of what we have said in this place. When we stumble and mangle our words, the Hansard staff untangle them and seem to understand and capture what we meant, even though it was not always what we said.

I thank the staff in Information Technology, facilities, Finance, Human Resources and all those other areas that deliver the services and support we need to get our work done, not just here but when we travel. I thank the cleaning staff, who keep our offices comfortable and habitable. I thank the staff in the dining room, stores, the mailroom and particularly the cafeteria—we could not survive without the early morning coffees and the late-night hot chocolates. They are lovely people. It is always nice to have a chat and smile. Is it only me, but I get a funny feeling of home? It is only me; that is weird. It is a great privilege to be here and all these people make it possible for us to do what we do. I thank the library staff, who supply the video and media clips and the research that informs our contributions. Now that we have the new technology we can get the clips, put up the YouTube videos and capture everyone at their best. That is fun. It has been an interesting new way of engaging with the public and for them to see what we do and what goes on. I hope other members have had the positive feedback from the public that I have had when they see us as their representatives and also having a bit of fun.

I am a big fan of committee work. It is important that we are able to come together and work collaboratively on important issues. I appreciate that. It is my first year as chair of a committee and it has

given me a greater appreciation of the skill and diligence the staff of committees provide to ensure that our inquiries draw on every shred of evidence, give consideration to every possible issue and bring the members of the committee together to try to reach agreement on recommendations. For the most part that job is done incredibly well. I acknowledge how important their role is to support members of the public who are having their first engagement with the Parliament. They are often surprised to find that they have the right to put their views forward and come before members of Parliament. It is a privilege for many of them. They learn a lot from the process and begin to understand what is important about this place. They are treated with such respect by the staff, for which I thank them. I thank the Leader of the House—who is not listening to me.

The Hon. John Ajaka: He can do two things at once.

Ms JAN BARHAM: He can. I thank him for his fairness and patience.

Dr John Kaye: There is a new Leader of the House? When did that happen?

Ms JAN BARHAM: You should be careful, Dr John Kaye. The Hon. Duncan Gay has provided some great laughs and has a great sense of humour. I thank all the other members at the table. I thank Susanna Montrone for her great work, the respect she shows members, and for keeping us informed and up to date with what is going on in the House. She has fulfilled that role very well. She is also performing a policy role for the Government. I had thought she had a full-time role looking after what goes on in the Chamber. On behalf of The Greens members of Parliament I thank our staff. What happens in this Chamber is supported by a whole lot of other people. On behalf of The Greens, I thank all the staff in our offices. I send special warm wishes to Kelly Marks, who works for Dr John Kaye. She started her maternity leave today and is due to welcome her second child in five weeks. We will miss her, but we wish her well.

This will come as a surprise to members but I also thank the Government Whip, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps—not so much for what he does in the House but for what he does outside the House. His introduction of the Whip's private members' meetings has been very successful. It has been great for crossbenchers to have a clear understanding of what happens on private members' day. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps has been of great assistance and has many more ideas that we look forward to hearing.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: You are encouraging him.

Ms JAN BARHAM: I am encouraging him to introduce some great ideas. Mr President, as has been said, all members acknowledge your fair leadership and management of the House, despite you sometimes being tested. As I have explained to others, you do not direct members to remove themselves from the Chamber, which makes this place less exciting than the other place.

The PRESIDENT: I can fix that if the member wishes.

Ms JAN BARHAM: I would not be ejected, but I could name a few who would be. The Hon. Trevor Khan has stepped into the Hon. Jenny Gardiner's formidable shoes. He has done well, but he needs more practice. Like everyone else, I am a big fan of Jenny's; she did a great job in the chair. I am not denying that the Hon. Trevor Khan has done well, but Jenny was exceptional.

I had the pleasure of being in the chair and I thank my fellow occupants. I wish everybody a safe and enjoyable break. If members miss this place, I think there is something wrong with them. As Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile said, this is a time to think of those who are less fortunate, those who are on their own and those who are struggling. It is also a time to remember that they rely on us to look after their interests and to support them. It is a time when we do and should think of others. We should enjoy our time with family and friends but also think about those who are less fortunate. It has been a fun year. Members are a great bunch of people and it is a privilege to be here.

The PRESIDENT: Election years are often a little more fraught than others. It has been my experience in the almost 17 years that I have been here that they are the most difficult on members. Given the immensely hard and intensive effort involved in an election campaign, followed either by the highs or lows of the aftermath depending on the results, and then packing everything into a shortened sitting calendar compared to other years, by the end of the year everybody is ready for Christmas. I am certainly no exception this year, that is for sure. I am hoping to see a lot more of the white sands of home and far less of the red leather of the Legislative Council over the next few months.

I found something Ms Jan Barham said particularly apposite. She asked whether she was weird in feeling a little sense of excitement every time she comes into the Chamber. I hope all members as they drive up Hospital Road or walk across The Domain or up Macquarie Street continue to feel a sense of excitement every day when they come into this place. It is an incredible honour and privilege to serve, and the day we stop feeling that is the day we should make way for someone else. After all, we are volunteers, not conscripts. I could not do the job I do in this place without the Deputy-President, who has handled the new Committee of the Whole process extremely ably this year. I also thank the Assistant-President and the three Temporary Chairs. There are only three Temporary Chairs this year. We have had more in the past, so a great workload has fallen on them. I am immensely grateful for the work that they do in this Chamber, because without that I would not have the time that I need to attend to other matters within the precinct.

Of course, I would not be able to deal with any other matters if it were not so ably led by my Chief of Staff, Dr Brian Lindsay, along with Stephen Marriott, Joel Schubert and, of course, the long-suffering Janet Parnwell, who must put up with me and whom everyone raves about, and justifiably so. This year Dr Lindsay not only acted as chief of staff but he was also the force behind the Politics and Sacrifice exhibition. He managed the whole exhibition, and as an act of commemoration by this Parliament it was outstanding. It did everybody involved, including staff from the House departments and the Department of Parliamentary Services, immense credit. It was much commented upon by members and warmly received by the public.

Members who have contributed to this debate have mentioned the staff of the three operational units of the Department of the Legislative Council and the five operational units of the Department of Parliamentary Services, who do so much to support us. This year I will single out only a few because there are so many, and I obviously spend a lot of time interacting with them. I note that this year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of David Blunt coming to work in the New South Wales Parliament. As the Clerk of the Parliaments, his efforts are truly outstanding. Happy anniversary, David. As many of us know, it has been a tough year for him personally, and Steven Reynolds has stepped up and taken a great deal of the load during that difficult time. I congratulate David on his leadership of the department and 25 years of outstanding service to the New South Wales Parliament. David is, of course, ably assisted by Kate Cadell, who is a special favourite of many.

This year I particularly thank our special constables and our security manager, Ralph Ewen. Some months ago we were all shocked by the events at the NSW Police Force headquarters in Parramatta. I am particularly mindful today and always that we and the staff who work in a high-profile institution such as this are in the hands of our special constables, who put themselves at risk to ensure our safety. I deeply thank all of them on behalf of everyone. This is, of course, Australia's oldest continuously used public building and our Parliament is the nation's first Parliament. It is a special place and most of my work involves the precinct area. The departments do such fine work and much is happening in the building. More physical changes have happened to the building over the past two to three years than have probably happened in the previous 20 or 30 years. I know that everyone appreciates the changes, although not necessarily every aspect of them, as we have heard in the estimates committee hearings and other places.

It is good that Parliament House is coming into the twenty-first century and that is very important.

The Parliament is very keen to promote visitors to the precinct. Increasingly a lot of work is going into improving the visitor experience in this place. There is never enough money to do it as well as we would like, but without the efforts of our sponsors—and I particularly want to mention them in closing—who give us money to support our visitor initiative, there would not be any of the visitor initiatives. So it is right and proper for me to mention Telstra; Desane; Coal and Allied; the RSL and Services Clubs Association, including several of its member clubs; the Returned and Services League; Leagues Clubs Australia; and Men of League, who have all supported our exhibitions and our art prizes this year. Their support is very much appreciated as well.

The new members have been spoken of several times today. There are eight of them and fortunately they have not picked up the bad habits of the rest of the members—yet. Sometimes new members find this a completely different experience to what they were expecting; sometimes people are a little put off by it—I do not know. I hope all of you have enjoyed your first nine months here as members of Parliament. We wish you a happy break too. May all of you keep safe over the Christmas period and return to us afresh and ready to work for the people of our State and Australia in 2016.

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

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Report: Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety in NSW

Dr Mehreen Faruqi tabled report No. 1/56 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled "Inquiry into Motorcycle Safety in NSW", dated November 2015.

Ordered to be printed on motion by Dr Mehreen Faruqi.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.21 p.m.]: I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned on motion by Dr Mehreen Faruqi and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.22 p.m.]: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

OPAL ELECTRONIC TICKETING SYSTEM

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI [4.22 p.m.]: Electronic ticketing for public transport was originally planned to be completed for the Sydney Olympics. More than 15 years later, Opal will effectively complete its rollout on 1 January 2016 with the removal of the pensioner excursion ticket and a range of other popular paper tickets. Electronic ticketing and, better still, an electronic fare system make sense for global cities like Sydney and the shift to Opal is almost there. Recently I launched an online community survey for people's feedback on how they find the Opal system. I have already had several hundred responses to this survey and I take the opportunity tonight to share some of the key insights.

While people are generally pleased with some aspects of the convenience of Opal and the

environmental impact of the shift away from disposable paper tickets, there were a few serious concerns that repeatedly came up. The availability of top-ups is one of these concerns. The \$10 increments and minimum amounts of \$5 and \$10 make little sense, with low-income respondents to my survey querying why they cannot simply top-up the amount of their next bus trip when they are low on cash. There is no reason. The Government must look at scrapping the current minimum top-ups and allow people to top-up however much they can afford.

As for the broader availability, as we all know, the Government has been getting rid of ticket sellers at train stations while relying on external retailers and some top-up machines. People are frustrated that station ticket-selling staff are not able to help them with top-ups, fare glitches and being overcharged. Top-up machines continue to be slowly rolled out. I hope the Government will achieve its target of 350 machines by early next year. Many of the external retailers, aside from not having trained staff able to assist people in using the transport system, put additional fees on card transactions to top-up, ranging from 5¢ to several dollars—and in some cases, we hear, more than \$10—making public transport more expensive simply because the Government will not sell top-ups at stations, either via an adequate number of machines or staff. When asked about this the Minister responded, "This is outside Transport for NSW's responsibility."

The central problem people have with the Opal system is the lack of integration of fares across transport modes. Many thousands of people use multiple modes of transport to get to and from work, home or elsewhere. They are currently charged full fares for both trips, despite being part of the same journey, which means they only count as one journey for the purpose of reaching their eight journeys for free travel. More people have been forced to do this since the central business district [CBD] bus overhaul, which has forced people to use two modes of public transport as their bus now terminates before entering the CBD. I am looking forward to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] public transport fare report, which I hope will recommend eradicating these unfair double charges. Broken Opal card readers are one of the more common complaints people have reported. Today the Auditor-General has released a report noting that there have been 15,000 reader breakdowns in a system that was launched only a few years ago and is costing taxpayers more than a billion dollars. Surely having working card readers is a pretty basic requirement.

Finally, Transport for NSW makes no secret of its willingness to comply with police and other Government requests for personal information on its customers, including journey data. While adult Opal cardholders can opt out of this system by purchasing an unregistered Opal card, students and now pensioners cannot as they must register for a concession, therefore tying every journey they make to their name and details, searchable and accessible within Transport for NSW's system. Questions on notice earlier in the year revealed that for about 30 per cent of requests Transport for NSW gets from law enforcement it gives up people's information. As the last big batch of paper tickets is removed on 1 January 2016, I urge the Government to take stock of people's problems with Opal and make the necessary changes, so we can operate a ticketing system that our State deserves.

CHRISTMAS APPEALS

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN [4.26 p.m.]: As we turn the calendar over into December, we will inevitably be thinking of the Christmas holidays. We will be sending Christmas cards, shopping for our friends and family, and preparing for our various work and home functions. For many there will be prawns, oysters, turkey, drinks and presents. But this year, like every year, we will also turn our attention to those less fortunate for whom the holidays can sometimes be the hardest time of the year. We will think of those who have lost or fallen out with family, those who have no family, those who are a long way from home or have no home, those who are suffering drought when they should be in harvest, and those who are living below the poverty line.

In the Northern Rivers, many of us will be looking to embrace the spirit of giving and volunteer our time, our possessions or our money for the needy. There are many ways we can make Christmas special

for someone less fortunate. The Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal gives hope at Christmas for those who have little. They provide homelessness services, domestic violence services, hot meals and presents for the less fortunate. Residents of the North Coast can donate, fundraise, donate Christmas cards and hampers or volunteer at their local Salvos at 5 Banksia Drive, Byron Bay, or 73 Tamar Street, Ballina. Likewise, the St Vincent de Paul Society Christmas Appeal takes financial donations as well as items for its Christmas gift drive. I encourage people to drop in and see how they can help at 2 Marvel Street, Byron Bay, and 7 Martin St, Ballina.

The Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal, now in its twenty-eighth year, partners with the Salvation Army and Mission Australia to provide Christmas gifts for those in need. It is not just for children but also for adults and seniors who are having a hard time. People can give a gift in store at Kmart Ballina at the corner of Fox Street and Kerr Street or donate online. For those who want to help people directly, the Adopt a Family Christmas appeal is a way for people, families and businesses to adopt a family and ensure that they can give their children a joyous Christmas. People can contact Wesley Mission in Ballina and choose a family to help. All adoptees are different and require different donations depending on their circumstances, but all deserve to have some happiness at this time of year.

The Buttery, a Bangalow-based, not-for-profit charity that specialises in the treatment of alcohol and other drug misuse and problem gambling, will also be endeavouring to make its residents feel safe and happy this Christmas. People can visit the website to see how they can help. In Byron, Liberation Larder at the Byron Community Centre rescues and takes donations of food or produce and prepares and stores it for redistribution in the community. The Larder provides hot lunches, bags of fresh produce and emergency frozen meals to those in need. Its mission is to make sure that all community members have access to healthy food and that good food does not go to waste.

The good people at the Larder will be working hard through the holiday season and will be running a Christmas lunch. A donation of fresh food will be used by them to make someone's life easier in the holidays and at their Christmas lunch special. The Larder is located at the community centre in the Fletcher Street Room. In the same building, the Byron Community Centre volunteer hub directs people to where they can best help this Christmas. It serves year round as a point of contact for those interested in volunteering in their community and facilitates them to assist various local charity organisations. I encourage people to drop in to the community centre to see Cherie or Pippy to find out how they can help.

Lastly, and importantly, there are some people who are not recipients of charity but for whom the holidays represent hardship. For those who are not in a position to give, they can contribute by showing kindness to people around them. Sometimes we will never know how much a little bit of kindness will mean to someone who lives in a world of hostility. As the old saying goes, it does not cost anything to be nice. If we cannot brighten someone's day in the holidays, when can we? Christmas is a time of sharing and togetherness which should be exemplified by us all this holiday season. May we all remember to love and respect those around us. Be good to each other—it is Christmas.

DELL COMPUTER COMPONENT REPLACEMENT POLICY

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE [4.30 p.m.]: Several months ago I was contacted by a constituent who was concerned that his new computer monitor, which he returned to Dell, was replaced with a second-hand refurbished unit. I thank my intern, Mr Jason Lu, for his assistance in investigating this matter. The constituent had purchased the monitor for his photography business but soon realised that it was not functioning properly. After reporting this to Dell, he returned the defective monitor and received a replacement. It was evident from its condition that it was not new. Dell later confirmed that it was indeed a refurbished monitor and told him that the company was well within its rights to supply him with a "fair like-for-like replacement".

Under Australian Consumer Law, manufacturers, suppliers and businesses accepting goods for

repair must provide consumers with the repair notice if it is their standard practice to replace a defective product with a refurbished one. The same goes for the use of refurbished components in repairs. Such a notice has to be in writing and must be received by the consumer before the goods are accepted by the business for repair. This is important as it allows the consumer to respond to the notice and to decide whether they wish to accept the service or seek an alternative course of action.

Dell failed to comply with these provisions in replacing the defective monitor with a refurbished one. On those grounds, my constituent lodged a complaint with NSW Fair Trading, to no avail, and has since lodged a claim with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]. In answering my questions on the matter, the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation advised that Fair Trading had been receiving numerous complaints similar in nature to this one, suggesting that this was not an isolated incident. The Minister went on to announce that Dell and its retailers are under investigation by Fair Trading for their warranty repair business practices. In a later statement, a Fair Trading spokesperson said:

Fair Trading's initial priority when handling disputes is to assist in achieving a resolution acceptable to all parties. In this instance, a resolution that was satisfactory to [the constituent] could not be achieved. He was provided with information on pursuing a claim with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT).

Regardless of any warranty period offered by a trader, the Australian Consumer Law does not impose time limits on consumer guarantees. If the goods have a major defect the consumer can choose a remedy which might include a refund, replacement or compensation. However, if the failure is not major the business can choose the applicable remedy which might include repairs, replacement or a refund.

It went on to state:

NSW Fair Trading has reviewed [the] complaint and interviewed senior staff from Dell computers concerning its obligations under the Australian Consumer Law. Fair Trading is satisfied that Dell is complying with its obligations to inform consumers that they intend to use second-hand or refurbished parts when a faulty product is returned for repair.

In reviewing [the] complaint, it would appear that NCAT may be the best venue for this to be determined.

From this statement, Fair Trading made it clear that it had spoken only to Dell senior staff regarding the issue and following what seems to be a cursory inquiry it concluded with rather more certainty than seems justified that there was no issue to be answered. This hardly seems like an investigation in any form, let alone a proper one. Unfortunately, this raises critical questions about the ability of NSW Fair Trading to assist community members in upholding their rights as consumers. Is this really "supporting local communities", as its tagline claims? This inconsistency is a serious issue which ultimately speaks to the accountability of the Baird Government and the effectiveness of the regulatory bodies that it manages.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Dr JOHN KAYE [4.35 p.m.]: The history of public education is punctuated by a series of remarkable documents. In 1880 the Public Instruction Act established that every child had the right to be educated in a free secular public school. In 1956 the Wyndham report created the universal secondary school system. In 2002 the Vinson report identified the need for substantial reform of school funding. In December 2011 the Gonski inquiry report was published. Each, in its own way and in its own time, responded to the imperative of providing quality education for all children. That is why The Greens enthusiastically hosted on Monday 26 October at Parliament House what we believe to be the first National Gonski Week event.

The Gonski report put into words what every public schoolteacher has known for decades: funding matters and it must be allocated in a way that recognises the basic rights of every child. The Gonski review panel put forward three great notions that have forever changed the debate. First, public funding of each school should secure a standard of resources to ensure that every student can achieve quality outcomes. Secondly, further funding must be provided to meet the challenges of economic, social and geographic disadvantage. Thirdly, students with special needs must be funded to meet the expectations that they can achieve great outcomes. Gonski is much more than another program to address disadvantage or to boost public school funding, even though such programs have been critical in the past. It has created an irreversible shift in the commonly held understanding of how the nation's wealth should be allocated to education.

Gonski is the genie that can never be put back in the bottle, no matter how hard some politicians might try. Parents, teachers and students in public schools now know what is possible and they will never again have to settle for second best. The line in the sand drawn by Gonski is indelible; it is a game changer. It is the result of the work of the Australian Education Union, the NSW Teachers Federation, the Parents and Citizens Federation, and teachers, parents and students in public schools. These groups did more than just capture the Labor Party; they set alight the hearts and imaginations of the entire population. To do so, they had to overcome the entrenched interest and vicious opposition of the private school lobby. They had to defeat the absurd myth that money does not matter—a myth that is still peddled today by Federal education Minister Simon Birmingham. That myth has been exposed as a nonsense by the extraordinary political and public relations effort expended by the private and Catholic school lobbies to protect and grow their public funding.

Like the Public Instruction Act 1880, the Gonski report and the National Education Reform Agreement have been compromised by the power of vested interests. The resource gap between public and non-government schools will not be closed. The historical inequality has been locked in by the politics of the possible, leaving Australia and New South Wales with an unjust and divisive education funding regime that squanders public funds and rewards privilege over equity. However, despite being constrained by Prime Minister Julia Gillard's obsequious relationship with a non-government school lobby, the inescapable logic of the Gonski report is that wealthy private schools should not be entitled to public funding. For The Greens, there never will be a time when the appalling impacts of public funding of non-government schools can be ignored.

The Greens "give a Gonski" and we do so enthusiastically because we know that public schoolteachers, principals and parents will take whatever they can get and still do great things. For now, the focus is on retrieving the last two years of Gonski, worth \$944 million, from the Federal Government and giving it to New South Wales public schools, whose funds were dishonestly reneged by the Federal Liberal-Nationals Government. Even the relatively small amount of money that has flowed into schools so far is having a real effect on school outcomes.

At Merrylands High School, learning engagement has been boosted by 14 per cent, and now 62 per cent of its Australian Tertiary Admission Rank [ATAR] students go on to university. At Smithfield Public School the community collaborated on spending the money to address the effects of language disability. Homebush Public School has employed a speech therapist one day a week and secured learning engagement for students who would otherwise have been excluded. Burwood Girls High School employs additional community liaison officers to engage children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additional maths classes have been provided at Homebush Boys High School and two staff at Croydon Public School now focus on developing reading. This is real money making a real difference to students and their futures. National Gonski Week reminds every Australian of what is at stake and how important it is to get every single politician in this country to give a Gonski.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

The Hon. GREG PEARCE [4.40 p.m.]: I am sure all honourable members in this Chamber join with me in congratulating the University of Wollongong on 40 years of existence—first as a college and from 1975 as a university. The university has always been deeply engaged with the community, contributing to growth and change in the region, and it has always been student focused. The university is now ranked in the top 2 per cent of world universities and is ranked twenty-sixth amongst universities under 50 years of age. That is quite a remarkable achievement. The university has a very strong international presence with nearly 13,000 international students, which make up about one-third of its enrolment.

The university was established under an Act of this Parliament that was passed in 1972 following a vigorous campaign for an independent university by Illawarra leaders, academics and businesses and the entire Illawarra community. The first vice chancellor was Professor Michael Birt and the first chancellor was eminent jurist Mr Justice Robert Hope. From the beginning, the university worked closely with the community, collaborating with business and industry. For example, in 1981 it formed the Illawarra Technology Corporation to bring together independent and semi-commercial businesses and research. In 1989, with the assistance of an international company, it established a telecommunications research centre, which became the catalyst for development of what is now the Southern Hemisphere's biggest information and communications technology research and study facility.

The university's overseas presence began in 1988, when the first 80 overseas students were enrolled. In 1993 the university took a remarkable step and established a campus in Dubai. I visited that campus when I was the Minister for the Illawarra. For the benefit of the *Daily Telegraph*, I should mention that the trip was at my own expense and took place when I was on leave. During my time as shadow Minister for the Illawarra and later Minister for the Illawarra, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet, to get to know and to work with Professor Gerard Sutton, who was the vice chancellor for 16 years from 1995. Under his leadership, the university continued its quite remarkable growth. That growth has been recognised widely. In 1999 to 2001 the *Good Universities Guide* recognised the university as the Australian University of the Year for outstanding research and development. In 2006 the university was awarded Commonwealth University of the Year in the *Times Higher Education* supplement, particularly for its community engagement.

The university has established the Innovation Campus, the Sydney Business School, the SMART Infrastructure Facility, and iAccelerate. Recently the university allocated \$10 million for seed funding for new and innovative businesses. Professor Sutton was replaced by Professor Paul Wellings—an absolutely fantastic choice to lead the university into its next phase of growth and development. Professor Wellings was vice chancellor of Lancaster University in the United Kingdom prior to his appointment, and prior to that he headed the Innovation and Science Division of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources and was Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the CSIRO, which indicates a fantastic focus on technology and innovation.

In 2013, whilst I was still the Minister, I was privileged to visit the university's worldwide-winning entry in the Chinese solar decathlon, a liveable solar house. It was quite a remarkable achievement. In 2015, the university formed partnerships with Malaysian, Hong Kong and Singaporean institutions. When the Government executed the long-term lease on the port it was able to provide additional funding, which has assisted the university. The University of Wollongong is a key asset for the future development of the Illawarra region and has a significant international reputation and future. It is a great privilege to congratulate the University of Wollongong on its fortieth year. I wish all honourable members and the community best wishes for the season.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS [4.45 p.m.]: It is a fitting time to reflect on the events of the past year. Most notably, it was an election year and I was very pleased that my party, the Labor Party, increased the number of seats it held in the lower House. However, one of the interesting episodes of the year was

Premier Mike Baird's decision to live tweet the final of *The Bachelor*. It later emerged that these tweets were a play for publicity. The *Sunday Telegraph* reported on 27 September that the tweets had been "carefully planned" by the Premier's staff, and the *Daily Telegraph* reported on 22 September that taxpayers had paid \$30,000 for the Premier to be taught how to use social media.

Just as it might be interesting to see who receives a rose on *The Bachelor*, it also is interesting to note who the Premier has chosen to favour with roses throughout the year. The Premier has handed roses to the top end of town, with recent changes to retail trading laws which delivered a big win for the four big banks and major retailers. Those roses for the top end of town came at the expense of more than half a million retail and finance sector workers, who have lost long-held protections that ensured that they spent Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Easter and half of Anzac Day with their families. Many others have lost out under the Baird Government's agenda.

This year's budget showed that 5,200 fewer people with disability are now enrolled at TAFE. That is as a result of the Baird Government's decision to cut staff and resources, particularly the very important staff at TAFE who support people with disability. I urge the Government to restore the support staff and to rethink its strategy on people with disability who want to enter the workforce. Those people need TAFE; it is their lifeline. I point out that the figure of 5,200 fewer people with disability enrolling at TAFE relates to this year's budget only. It does not take into account cuts over the three years, which raises the figure close to 11,000. Education through TAFE is an essential stepping stone for people with disability who want to gain skills and employment. Yet the Baird Government has cut essential resources that people with disability have previously been able to access so that they could attend TAFE.

Another group that has missed out on roses from Premier Mike Baird this year are the people of Western Sydney. Despite the Government's promises that it would create jobs in Western Sydney, Premier Baird has decided to help the Commonwealth Bank move almost 10,000 jobs out of Western Sydney and into Redfern. The Baird Government's decision to support the move through its property developer UrbanGrowth NSW might be a rose for the Commonwealth Bank but it is a slap in the face for thousands of people in Western Sydney. These are the people that the Premier and members of his Government continually talk about, saying that they have a plan to increase the number of jobs for people in Western Sydney.

Opposition members know that 300,000 jobs need to be created in Western Sydney, but we do not see any plans for that from the Government. There is high unemployment in Western Sydney, particularly amongst young people. Young people generally and people living in regional New South Wales are ending the year feeling shunned by Premier Baird because he has failed to take any meaningful action to address the jobs crisis that affects so many communities across our State. I note in particular that unemployment rates in the Hunter are almost twice the State's average, yet the Baird Government has failed to take any meaningful action to support jobs for Hunter families.

I conclude my speech by reminding the Government that governing is not a game. It is not a contest like *The Bachelor* where some are handed roses and others are shunned. Governments have an obligation to act in the interest of the whole community, not to pick winners and losers. The Government is entering its sixth year in office and has an obligation to the next generation of young people who need a job, who need to engage, and who need to be part of the community. I urge the Baird Government to formulate a plan to address youth unemployment in Western Sydney and in the State's regions where unemployment rates are going into double digits. The Government needs to act. I wish everyone a safe, healthy and merry Christmas. I thank the staff of Parliament House, particularly my staff, Tom Hollywood and Alisha Aitken-Radburn, who are fantastic.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.50 p.m. until Tuesday 23 February 2016 at 2.30 p.m.
