



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 2 June 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Motions	1
National Reconciliation Week	1
White Stone Support Services	1
Arabic-Australian Poets	2
Community Forum on Social Media, Cyber Safety and Bullying	3
Bills	3
Unproclaimed Legislation	3
Documents	3
Auditor-General	3
Reports	3
Irregular Petitions	3
Gold Coast Airport Extension	3
Notices	3
Presentation	3
Business of the House	4
Postponement of Business	4
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Order of Business	4
Order of Business	4
Documents	4
Learning Management and Business Reform	4
Production of Documents: Order	4
Visitors	7
Visitors	7
Business of the House	7
Postponement of Business	7
Bills	8
Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016	8
Second Reading	8
Visitors	21
Visitors	21
Motions	21
Schizophrenia Awareness Week	21
Visitors	25
Visitors	25
Motions	25
Schizophrenia Awareness Week	25
Rulings	28
Notices of Motions	28
Members	28
Representation of Ministers Absent During Questions	28

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*continuing*

Questions Without Notice.....	28
Students with Disability.....	28
YMCA Services.....	29
Rookwood General Cemeteries Reserve Trust.....	30
Biodiversity Protection Legislation.....	30
Beekeeping Industry.....	31
Kangaroo Meat Consumption.....	31
National Disability Insurance Scheme.....	32
National Disability Insurance Scheme.....	33
Yoogali Traffic Lights.....	34
Forestry Corporation Operations.....	34
Agriculture Ministers Forum.....	34
Local Government Amalgamations.....	35
Forestry Corporation Operations.....	35
Carers Awards.....	35
Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan.....	36
Williamstown Land Contamination.....	37
Seafood Labelling Scheme.....	37
Williamstown Land Contamination.....	38
Motions.....	38
Schizophrenia Awareness Week.....	38
Committees.....	42
Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission.....	42
Reference.....	42
Adjournment Debate.....	42
Adjournment.....	42
Climate Change.....	43
South Durras Hazard Reduction Burn.....	43
Federal Election Campaign.....	44
Boer War Commemoration.....	45
Bankstown City Council Local Area Plans.....	46
Religious Freedom.....	47

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 2 June 2016

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin) took the chair at 10:00.

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Motions

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (10:02): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) National Reconciliation Week will run from 27 May to 3 June 2016;
 - (b) this year's National Reconciliation Week theme is "Our History, Our Story, Our Future"; and
 - (c) National Reconciliation Week is coordinated by Reconciliation Australia and its State counterparts.
- (2) That this House notes that the beginning and end dates of National Reconciliation Week are important milestones in our country's journey of reconciliation, as:
 - (a) 27 May marks the anniversary of the 1967 referendum which gave the Commonwealth Parliament the power to legislate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and recognise them in the national census; and
 - (b) 3 June marks the anniversary of the High Court of Australia handing down its Mabo decision in 1992.
- (3) That this House acknowledges and expresses its ongoing support for the important work of Reconciliation Australia and encourages the people of New South Wales to take part in the various activities planned around the State as part of National Reconciliation Week 2016.

Motion agreed to.

WHITE STONE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 12 March 2016, His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, and Sister Rose Theresa Tannous of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family, and Chairperson of White Stone Support Services, hosted a gala dinner at Fairfield, attended by approximately 1,000 people in support of White Stone Support Services to assist individuals and families impacted by gambling, drug and alcohol addiction;
 - (b) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) Archbishop Robert Rabbat, Archbishop of the Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Australia and New Zealand;
 - (ii) Mr Craig Laundry, MP, Federal member for Reid, Assistant Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Prime Minister, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP;
 - (iii) the Hon. Chris Bowen, MP, Federal member for McMahon;
 - (iv) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. Mike Baird, MP, Premier;
 - (v) Mr Luke Foley, MP, member for Auburn and Leader of the Opposition;
 - (vi) the Hon. Victor Dominello, MP, member for Ryde and Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation;
 - (vii) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta and Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism;
 - (viii) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, member for Prospect;
 - (ix) Councillor Khal Asfour, Mayor of Bankstown City Council;
 - (x) Councillor John Chedid, Parramatta City Council;
 - (xi) Mr Tony Issa, former member for Granville;
 - (xii) Reverend Fathers of the Maronite Catholic Church and Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family; and
 - (xiii) representatives of numerous Lebanese community organisations.

- (c) White Stone Support Services is an initiative of the Maronite Catholic Eparchy of Australia and the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family, which provides:
 - (i) counselling for those affected by addiction;
 - (ii) referral, advocacy and children's support programs;
 - (iii) visitation and respite programs; and
 - (iv) community education programs about drugs, alcohol, gambling and their impact.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) commends the Maronite Catholic Eparchy of Australia and the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family for their fine efforts, through White Stone Support Services, in assisting those who have been impacted by drug, alcohol and gambling addiction; and
 - (b) extends its regards and best wishes to members of Australia's Maronite Catholic community.

Motion agreed to.

ARABIC-AUSTRALIAN POETS

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Thursday 24 March 2016 at Parliament House the Association for the Development of Arabic Folk Poetry in Australia and the Arab World held a function to honour Australian poets of Arabic descent for their efforts in advancing the Zajale style of Arabic language folk poetry;
 - (b) those who were honoured at the function comprised:
 - (i) Issam Melkey, poet, born in Bechmizine, North Lebanon;
 - (ii) George Mansour, poet, born in Mitrite, North Lebanon;
 - (iii) Hanna Chalouhi, poet, born in Darb Achar, North Lebanon;
 - (iv) Romeo Oueis, poet and journalist, born in Rachghine, Zgharta;
 - (v) Wadih Saadeh, poet and journalist, born in Shabtin, North Lebanon;
 - (vi) Charbel Baini, poet, writer, critic, scholar and journalist, born in Majdalaya, North Lebanon;
 - (vii) Fouad Neaaman El-Khoury, poet, journalist and accountant, born in Bouhwaita; North Lebanon;
 - (viii) Shawki Moslemani, poet and journalist, born in Kawnine, South Lebanon; and
 - (ix) Dr Emile Chidiac, poet, journalist, social scientist, accountant, researcher; interpreter, translator and linguist, born in Beirut, Lebanon.
 - (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) the Consul-General of Lebanon in Sydney, Mr George Bitar Ghanem;
 - (ii) the Consul of Iraq in Sydney, Miss Rokiya Abd Alkader;
 - (iii) His Eminence, Archbishop Paul Saliba, Primate of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand, Philippines and Dependencies;
 - (iv) Sheik Khaled Taleb, representative of Dar Alfakwa of Lebanon in Sydney;
 - (v) Sheik Iyad Abou Arja, representative of the Mufti of Lebanon;
 - (vi) Mr Luke Foley, MP, member for Auburn and Leader of the Opposition;
 - (vii) Mr Jihad Dib, MP, member for Lakemba;
 - (viii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice; and
 - (ix) representatives of various Arabic-Australian community organisations.
 - (d) the Association for the Development of Arabic Folk Poetry in Australia and the Arab World was established on 6 May 2013 by Dr Bahia Abou Hamad, with its objectives including:
 - (i) developing and promoting Arabic folk poetry in Australia and the Arab world;
 - (ii) organising seminars, lectures and poetry events relating to Arabic folk poetry in Australia, the Arab world and the Arabic diaspora;
 - (iii) publishing academic studies and research regarding Arabic language folk poets and poetry; and
 - (iv) encouraging young poets to enhance their talents.
- (2) That this House:

- (a) congratulates those Australian poets of Arabic heritage who were honoured at the function held at Parliament House on 24 March 2016; and
- (b) commends the Association for the Development of Arabic Folk Poetry in Australia and the Arab World, its President, Dr Bahia Abou-Hamad, and its executive for its ongoing work in encouraging Arabic-Australian poets and Arabic folk poetry in Australia.

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNITY FORUM ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CYBER SAFETY AND BULLYING

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Sunday 6 March 2016 the India Club Incorporated together with The Hills Local Area Command of the NSW Police Force held a well-attended community forum at the Wesley Uniting Church Hall, Castle Hill, on the issue of "Social Media, Cyber Safety and Bullying"; and
 - (b) those who addressed the community forum comprised:
 - (i) Mrs Shubha Kumar, President of the India Club Incorporated;
 - (ii) Superintendent Rob Critchlow, Commander of The Hills Local Area Command, NSW Police Force;
 - (iii) Senior Constable Rob Paterson, Youth Liaison Officer, NSW Police Force; and
 - (iv) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice.
- (2) That this House commends the India Club Incorporated and The Hills Local Area Command of the NSW Police Force on their initiative in organising the community forum.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: According to Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 1 June 2016.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: According to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report, Volume Two 2016, focusing on universities, dated June 2016, received out of session and authorised to be printed.

Irregular Petitions

GOLD COAST AIRPORT EXTENSION

Ms JAN BARHAM: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the presentation of an irregular petition from 23 citizens of New South Wales concerning the extension of Gold Coast Airport.

Petition received. [*During the giving of notices of motions*]

Notices

PRESENTATION

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: My point of order relates to whether the motion is in order given that it is canvassing a decision of the House.

Mr David Shoebridge: To the point of order: The matter is being dealt with by way of substantive motion, which is according to the standing orders in these circumstances. Mr Jeremy Buckingham is entirely in order.

The PRESIDENT: I will allow the member to conclude giving his notice of motion. I will consider the matter further and make a ruling later.

[*Later,*]

The Hon. John Ajaka: Point of order: I acknowledge it is belated but my point of order relates to the last notice given by Mr Jeremy Buckingham on the same basis as that put by the Hon. Penny Sharpe earlier. I ask the President to consider my point of order together with that of the Hon. Penny Sharpe when making a ruling later.

The PRESIDENT: Mr Jeremy Buckingham has given two notices of motion.

The Hon. John Ajaka: I refer to the last one he gave. I ask that when the President considers Mr Jeremy Buckingham's first motion he give consideration also to the second motion.

The PRESIDENT: I shall rule on the Deputy Leader of the Government's point of order later.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I move:

That Government business notice of motion No. 1 be postponed until the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

- (1) Private members' business item No. 634 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Adam Searle relating to an order for papers concerning Learning Management and Business Reform monthly reports.
- (2) Private members' business item No. 821 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Scott Farlow relating to Schizophrenia Awareness Week.
- (3) Private members' business item No. 669 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of Mr David Shoebridge relating to the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016.
- (4) Private members' business item No. 766 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile relating to the Local Government Amendment (Parliamentary Inquiry Recommendations) Bill 2016.
- (5) Private members' business item No. 6 in the order of precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Pearson relating to the Roman Catholic Church.
- (6) Private members' business item No. 771 outside the order of precedence standing in the name of Mr Jeremy Buckingham relating to the Biofuels Repeal Bill.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

LEARNING MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS REFORM

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:21): I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 2011 in the possession, custody or control of the Office of the Minister for Education or the Department of Education:

- (a) all Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] monthly reports to the Department of Education executive; and
- (b) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

This matter has come before this House once before, last year, but, sadly, the Government took an unduly technical approach to the documents it chose to produce. The Learning Management and Business Reform program is a New South Wales Department of Education project designed to replace various computer systems and to roll them into one information technology system in schools and TAFEs, including human resources, payroll, finance and

student administration, and was supposed to be completed and operating across all 2,218 schools by December 2014 at a cost of \$483 million. As at November of last year the program had cost \$573 million, was \$90 million over budget and at that time was six months late in being rolled out to schools. It is now more than 12 months late.

Importantly, the Government has repeatedly refused requests to release information about the project's total costs. The Auditor-General reached the figure of \$483 million and stated that that figure is an underestimate and that not all costs had been included. The Government has resisted producing more information, citing commercial-in-confidence. The issue has been pursued in this place and in the other place through questions without notice 16 times since May of last year; it was pursued in the budget estimates Education hearings, when about 60 to 70 questions were asked, including follow-up questions; and in the Treasury budget estimates hearings last year a number of questions were asked, including follow-up questions.

The Treasurer confirmed that the Department of Education would be forced to cover the costs of the blowout from its existing funding, which would mean that schools would be forced to raid their capital expenditure budgets, meaning less money and upkeep of the schools. Of course, as we see, the New South Wales Government is some \$732 million behind in its school maintenance program. That information comes from Government Information (Public Access) Act applications, which show the maintenance backlog for schools has blown out sixfold or sevenfold since this Government came to office.

The final cost of implementing the Learning Management and Business Reform is said to be anywhere up to \$1 billion. The Premier told Parliament last August that the LMBR would be implemented across 2016, but late last year it was revealed that implementation would begin only in September 2017, and of course it could even be later given the Government's track record. Access to these documents is vital if we are to shine a light onto this important area of public administration. Surely the investment of resources in our schools and TAFEs across New South Wales, and whether that is being spent properly and efficiently, is of vital concern, particularly given the backlog of maintenance for schools and the butchering of the TAFE system on this Government's watch.

We need access to these monthly reports to the Department of Education executive about the LMBR if we are going to get to the bottom of what is really happening in this area. The Government at every turn has resisted transparency, scrutiny and openness. This House took the step of joining with the Opposition to call for papers in this area last year. As I said at the outset, the Government took an unduly narrow and technical approach to the documents it chose to produce. We have recast the Standing Order 52 request in a way that we hope will get to the bottom of this matter. I earnestly enjoin all parties and all members to hold the Government to account and to call for these important documents.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (10:26): The Government opposes the motion of the Leader of the Opposition. Costs and budget for the Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] program have been consistently and transparently made available to the public through the Auditor-General's reports on the Education and Communities cluster. The New South Wales Government has answered many questions relating to the LMBR program in budget estimates hearings. The Government has already made publicly available on its disclosure log under the Government Information (Public Access) Act documents relating to the LMBR program. This includes executive minutes for August 2014 to September 2015, which I note were the subject of another call for documents under Standing Order 52 on 18 November last year. The honourable member could easily obtain a copy of these reports from staff in the Legislative Council. The reports are subject to very limited redaction relating to commercial negotiations with external contactors or material that is cabinet-in-confidence.

I appreciate that honourable members may wish to access additional information, but unnecessary calls for papers place considerable resourcing pressures on departmental staff who are responsible for the identification, collation, assessment, cataloguing and provision of documents in response to the call. It is an administratively cumbersome process for the department, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the offices of the Parliament. The call for papers may release commercial-in-confidence information with providers and suppliers. Diversion of departmental staff from those school-focused tasks in order to answer an unnecessary call for papers is unreasonable at this time, particularly given that a large number of related papers are already available through both the Government Information (Public Access) Act and the response to a motion under Standing Order 52 made by the honourable member just last November.

The LMBR program was established in 2006 under the previous Government. The Labor Government neglected information technology in schools and TAFE with 25-year-old DOS-based systems—totally inadequate for twenty-first century teaching and learning—and a finance system based on cash accounting. LMBR delivers seven major solutions. So far it has delivered a new SAP-based finance system into corporate offices and TAFE; new HR-payroll and student systems for TAFE; and a rollout to 279 schools for finance, student administration and learning management [SALM], and wellbeing.

Since the initial rollout the department has provided additional training, support and staff to assist schools. Since 2014 updates to the system have been made to provide additional features and more detailed reports and to correct small defects. The LMBR pilot deployments to the 229 schools provided a range of learning opportunities to help inform the deployment strategy for the almost 2,000 remaining public schools and to support the successful deployment of LMBR solutions during 2016 and 2017. The Government urges all members to vote against the motion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (10:29): The Greens support this call for papers under Standing Order 52. The Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] system has been a disaster, particularly for TAFE. Enrolments have been extraordinarily difficult. Even the basic information is not being transferred between students and TAFE. People pay fees and do not know whether they are enrolled. This is not a partisan issue. Labor admits that it signed the contracts on LMBR five or six years ago. Those contracts have been a disaster. The Opposition has accepted part of the fault. We ask the Government, which is having to deal with that legacy problem, to be transparent about what is going on with LMBR. This should not be a partisan issue. This should be about obtaining enough information to see exactly what is going wrong and to find out what the costs are. We can apply our collective will to making sure that the LMBR system is fixed so that when people enrol at TAFE they can start their course on time.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (10:30): The Christian Democratic Party supported this motion last time it was moved by the Hon. Adam Searle. The Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] system was launched in around 2006, under the Labor Government. I have said on the record—and in the report of the inquiry by General Purpose Standing Committee No. 6 into vocational education and training—that the system is a dog's breakfast. It has been a big distraction for providers of vocational education, TAFE in particular, to have to work with such a system. To his credit, Minister Barilaro has indicated that he will abolish the system and go back to the drawing board. The Christian Democratic Party does not support this call for papers under Standing Order 52 because of the resources needed to meet the request. As Labor has said, funding is tight in education and health. We would rather the resources be spent on the front line in schools, on buildings and children, than on responding to a call for papers. It is my understanding that the Clerk has copies of the reports that the Hon. Adam Searle is seeking to access through this motion. We do not support the motion.

The Hon. GREG PEARCE (10:32): The previous two speakers pointed out the problem. It is instructive to note that the Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] system was a botched contract entered into by the Labor Party. The Government has had to deal with that mess over the past five years. To suggest that the Government is not being transparent is to play politics with the mess that was left by the Labor Party. The Auditor-General, in her December 2015 report, detailed the capital costs of the program for TAFE, schools and corporate providers at \$405 million, as at 30 June 2015. That figure is within Treasury capital limits for the program. The nub of the problem is that additional unbudgeted costs detailed in the report—unbudgeted because the Labor Party made such a mess of this—relate to operational expenditure. That includes staff training, which the Labor Party did not realise would be required, as well as interim maintenance, system support, change management activities and the supplementation of existing resources to ensure business as usual—all of which Labor did not think about.

The Hon. Paul Green pointed out that the system has been a dog's breakfast. Those are the reasons that it has been a dog's breakfast. Labor was incompetent. It did not consider the implementation and operation of the scheme. The Auditor-General put capital and operational costs for TAFE, schools and corporate providers at \$578 million, as at June 2015. Of that, \$405 million was capital costs within Treasury capital limits and \$173 million was operational costs. Of those costs, almost half again were because of the incompetence of the Labor Party. The Government opposes the motion.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (10:34): I will add to a comment made by my colleague the Hon. Paul Green. I have made inquiries of the Government about the requested documents. The reports referred to in this call for papers under Standing Order 52 were made available under the previous call for papers. I endeavoured to obtain a copy of the reports to show members today, but the Clerk has advised me that, because the request was made under Standing Order 52, the reports must remain in the Clerk's office and cannot be photocopied. The Hon. Adam Searle is free to read the reports in the Clerk's office. They are all available.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:35): In reply: I thank members for their contributions. If this request under Standing Order 52 related to the same documents that were requested last time, the Opposition would not be pressing the case. This request seeks additional and different documents that Labor believes are necessary to get to the bottom of the matter. The Government is playing politics by blaming the Labor Government even though it is now in its sixth year in office. It is only by obtaining access to all the monthly Learning Management and Business Reform [LMBR] system reports to the executive of the Department of Education—and not merely the reports that deal with those reports, which is what the earlier call for papers asked for—that we can resolve this.

It is a limited cohort of documents. There will not be volumes of them. The collation of the documents will not cause great inconvenience or expense to the Department of Education. It well knows which documents are requested. They are not the same documents that were called for in the previous request under Standing Order 52. If they were, the Opposition would not be resubmitting the request to the House. The Government is engaging in hard spin to avoid the light being shone on this area of public policy. It is only once we obtain access to the documents that we will fully understand how and why the costs blew out to such a degree. Was it only because of the previous contracts or was it because of the way in which this Government has implemented the program? It does not really matter who is to blame. We need to get to the bottom of what has occurred and why. The Government has not been open and transparent. It is the role of this House to hold the Government of the day—whichever party it comprises—to account. We ask members who do not support the request to reconsider their position and to join us in this call for a limited cohort of papers.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes 18

Noes 19

Majority..... 1

AYES

Dr Faruqi
Mr Buckingham
Mr Moselmane (teller)
Mr Searle
Mr Wong
Ms Houssos

Mr Borsak
Mr Donnelly (teller)
Mr Pearson
Mr Shoebridge
Ms Barham
Ms Sharpe

Mr Brown
Mr Mookhey
Mr Primrose
Mr Veitch
Ms Cotsis
Ms Voltz

NOES

Dr Phelps
Mr Blair
Mr Farlow (teller)
Mr Khan
Mr Mason-Cox
Ms Maclaren-Jones (teller)
Reverend Nile

Mr Ajaka
Mr Clarke
Mr Gallacher
Mr MacDonald
Mr Pearce
Ms Mitchell

Mr Amato
Mr Colless
Mr Green
Mr Mallard
Ms Cusack
Ms Taylor

PAIRS

Mr Secord

Mr Gay

Motion negatived.

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the public gallery school captains and other school leaders from primary schools in the Hornsby electorate. They are visiting Parliament House today as guests of their local member, Mr Matthew Kean, the member for Hornsby. I hope their visit to Parliament House today is interesting and informative and that they really enjoy their day here. I thank them all for coming.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

That private members' business item No. 821 outside the order of precedence be postponed until a later hour of the sitting.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***STEEL INDUSTRY PROTECTION BILL 2016****Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 17 March 2016.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (10:49): The Government opposes the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 introduced by Mr David Shoebridge. Let me step through each of the reasons the Government opposes the bill. The Government is concerned that the bill would violate Australia's free trade agreements. If we want Australian industry and consumers to have access to global markets and to realise the benefits from our free trade agreements, New South Wales must also adhere to those agreements.

This bill mandates the use of Australian steel in New South Wales government and local government construction work. It will breach the terms of free trade agreements that successive Australian governments have signed with other countries to eliminate tariffs and other restrictions on trade between countries. This is likely to prompt other countries to place tariffs on Australian exports like agricultural products, natural resources and professional services, not only steel. In that context, it is worth noting the potential for retaliatory action by our trading partners.

The Senate Economics Reference Committee which inquired into the future of the Australian steel industry was recently advised that Australia was the most active initiator of trade retaliation cases in 2015. The second and third most active initiators of retaliation cases in the same period were Mexico and the United States of America respectively. It is also worth noting that during the same year Australia produced 4.5 million tonnes of crude steel, compared with 16.8 million tonnes in Mexico and 73.1 million tonnes in the United States. So it would not be unreasonable to expect that several of Australia's key trading partners, which have substantial steel industries, would be concerned about their interests if this bill were to become law.

In many cases the markets to which our exporters have access through free trade agreements are much larger than the markets that are available in Australia. For example, the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement gives Australian exporters an opportunity to supply goods to the United States Federal Government, which spends at least US\$535 billion annually. This export opportunity equates to approximately 50 times the expenditure of the New South Wales Government on all goods and services. We want local businesses to have an opportunity to supply both the New South Wales Government and the United States Federal Government, but this will occur only if we adhere to free trade agreements.

This bill promotes unfair competition in the steel industry in Australia and therefore will encourage our trading partners to rethink the terms under which we are given access to their markets. The New South Wales Government is working on reducing regulation and making it easier to do business in our State. The bill introduces onerous red tape requirements for suppliers and contractors to report on the origin of steel products in public projects. It would also force tens of thousands of suppliers, including small- and medium-sized enterprises, to create duplicate supply chains, one for government and one for everyone else. Many of these suppliers are small- and medium-sized enterprises that will find it difficult to cope with these requirements, and all of this will add to the cost of managing construction projects.

The proposal to mandate the use of Australian-made steel on all infrastructure projects might end up hurting many more industries and jobs in New South Wales than it protects. The New South Wales Government is a strong supporter of the local steel industry. New South Wales leads the nation in the delivery of roads, rail and other infrastructure and is the largest purchaser of steel in the nation. The Baird-Grant Government is already the largest customer of Australian steel, which supports the industry. This Government has infrastructure projects costing more than \$65 billion—for example, the M4 widening and the Gerringong and Berry bypasses—all of which use a majority of Australian steel.

New South Wales is the largest steel purchaser in the nation through the use of big government mandates and this Government is delivering projects that encourage investment and growth. The Pacific Highway Kempsey bypass project used 400 massive steel piling tubes that were produced in Brisbane and Coffs Harbour. The majority of the steel used on the M4 widening was locally sourced. Significant quantities of Australian steel are also being used on the Sydney Metro Northwest, Wynyard Walk and Barangaroo Ferry Hub.

Increasing the cost of steel by 20 per cent would put hospitals, highways and other infrastructure projects in jeopardy. It would also reduce the number of projects that could be delivered in the future. The New South Wales Government engaged in other measures to support the local steel industry. It acted decisively and extended support in the form of \$60 million in payroll tax relief to BlueScope Steel to help to maintain its steelmaking

capability at Port Kembla. This Government is also working with the Australian Steel Institute and Standards Australia to develop a new standard for the fabrication and erection of structural steel. This will apply to all New South Wales infrastructure projects and will ensure that domestic suppliers are not competing with lower quality steel sourced from foreign suppliers.

As we move into the campaign phase of the Federal elections we have an opportunity to do more to support our steel industry. The Australian Labor Party—the alternative government in Canberra—wants to reintroduce the carbon tax, which will place a big burden on the steel industry in New South Wales. The Labor Party also opposed the proposed cuts to corporate tax, which are designed to boost the economy. We have to take all those factors into account when we are talking about supporting the steel industry. The best way to support our steel industry is by building infrastructure projects and putting in place competitive business policies, which is what this Government has done. The Government opposes the bill.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:57): The Opposition supports the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 but will move amendments in the Committee stage to improve and expand its scope by mandating the use of Australian-made steel in projects paid for by the New South Wales Government and by local councils. Our proposed amendments will provide for a tough cop on the beat to ensure adequate compliance with Australian standards, and other matters to which I will refer.

The future of steelmaking jobs in the Illawarra and elsewhere, and for those dependent on the steel industry, is a matter of prime concern. It is a matter of public record that there is a full-blown crisis in the Australian steel industry. Having heard the response from the Government, it is unfortunate that it does not appear to understand the gravity of that crisis or the need for resolute action by all levels of government. We must ensure that this strategic industry is given the best chance of a secure future not only because of the thousands of jobs it supports directly and indirectly and the effect that has on our economic and social fabric but also because of the impact it will have on supply chains in New South Wales and elsewhere.

On Monday this week in the Illawarra the shadow Treasurer and shadow Minister for the Illawarra, Ryan Park, and I announced Labor's comprehensive Secure and Sustainable Steel Jobs package of measures proposing substantial changes to the State's procurement policy, which will for the first time explicitly consider a whole-of-life assessment of steel use in major infrastructure projects. The package includes a review of the State's infrastructure plan, which will provide indicative future demand for Australian-made steel and infrastructure projects and set up a known pipeline of projects so that Australian steel producers can plan for the demand. A steel industry advocate would also be appointed to ensure that new Australian standards and certification for Australian-made steel use are monitored and complied with and it will be based in the Illawarra. Those matters will be the subject of Labor's amendments.

Our amendments will stop different classifications of steel and low-quality imported steel from being used in publicly funded State infrastructure. The steel industry advocate will also be tasked with undertaking a major New South Wales steel and fabrication sector review, focusing on the supply chain capability of the sector, coordination of innovation, research and development, and investment in plant and equipment. Labor's steel and jobs policy follows extensive consultation with a range of steel unions, workforces and steel industry stakeholders after threats to the continued production of steel at BlueScope Steel last year.

New South Wales Labor supported the State Government's payroll tax concessions for BlueScope Steel last year. We did not seek to play politics because we recognised that supporting the Government's offering was in the public interest. It is a shame that the Government has not reciprocated on this steel plan initiative. It is critical that no further measures have been implemented to support a sustainable future for the steel industry and jobs in that industry. A BIS Shrapnel report published in August 2015 confirmed that if the steel industry stopped steel production in the Illawarra it would wipe \$3 billion from the value of the region's economy and up to 10,000 jobs would be lost.

The damage would go even further. Many businesses and communities supply goods and services to the steel industry. A large number of them are located in Sydney's west and south-west and in the Hunter. The closure of the steel industry in the Illawarra would impact the supply chains of other industries and potentially do immeasurable damage to our economy. This is a case not of protectionism but of sensible recalibration of government policy. I note that the Minister's first desperate port of call was to say that this would somehow violate our free trade agreements. I will come to that because it is worth noting that many of the countries with which we have free trade agreements are in the process of imposing tariffs to protect their domestic steel industries.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Like the United States.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection.

Mr David Shoebridge: Like Illinois.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Yes, tariffs are being imposed at a State level in America. Some countries are also taking other measures. We do not think this would violate any of Australia's free trade obligations because we are not seeking to mandate this policy for industry generally. This goes to the choice of the customer, being the New South Wales Government and taxpayers through councils.

Mr David Shoebridge: The biggest single customer for infrastructure in the country.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection as well. Our policy simply lays down a marker saying that we as a purchaser will take a certain approach. Customers are allowed to do that. There is nothing in the free trade agreements mandating that customers must somehow divvy up their purchases domestically and internationally.

Mr David Shoebridge: It's about ideology.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: The Government's response is about ideology. To place this matter in context, BlueScope Steel is the major flat steel producer for the domestic Australian, New Zealand and United States markets from New South Wales. It is a leading international supplier of steel products. Over the years, the high Australian dollar, weakening product demand and oversupply of cheap international steel being dumped onto the domestic market has led to BlueScope facing significant financial trouble.

The long-term stability and sustainability of the BlueScope steelworks is at risk, which is creating substantial job uncertainty in the Illawarra and, as a consequence, for those who work in businesses providing supplies to the steel industry in areas including south-western Sydney and the Hunter, as I indicated. Of course, it will also affect Illawarra industries. Taking all of those pay packets out of the local area and away from the supermarkets and other industries will cause a death spiral for the Illawarra community and economy. Like throwing a rock into a body of water, those effects will ripple outwards across the New South Wales economy.

In 2015 BlueScope Steel sought government assistance for payroll tax relief. The New South Wales Government eventually provided that assistance, which includes \$60 million in deferred payroll tax payments over three years from 2016 to 2018. While payroll tax concessions are an important step towards improving BlueScope's financial position, the ultimate solution will be increasing the demand for Australian steel. That is the only real solution to ensuring the company's ongoing sustainability and—more importantly than the fate of any one company and its workers—the continued production of steel in New South Wales.

The steel industry employs more than 100,000 people in Australia. However, it should be noted that New South Wales is the heartland of the steel industry. The construction sector makes up 80 per cent of demand; however, private demand has contracted and is expected to continue to contract over the next three to four years. Domestic production now supplies less than half of the steel used in public infrastructure projects, having contracted by 5 per cent of market share since 2010. That is a very important factor which no doubt has led to this bill and to Labor's comprehensive steel jobs plan that we will seek to add to the bill through amendments.

The proposals contained in the bill and our amendments are not novel or out of left field. Labor governments in South Australia and Victoria have implemented procurement policies which assist the sustainable production of steel in regional areas. The South Australian Government is focusing on measures that recognise the economic benefit from procurement through labour, capital investment and supply inputs via small- and medium-sized enterprises in the steel value chain as well as mandating supply to Australian standards and third-party compliance to lift the quality of government projects.

Mr David Shoebridge: And federally they do it on subs.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I will come to that. While the Victorian Government has also developed procurement practices that recognise the economic value through the value chain, it has strengthened this through a focus on strategic projects such as the East West Link having 90 per cent local content rules for steel and the level crossings work requiring 100 per cent local steel content. The Australian Government has recently announced new duties of up to \$4 million penalising the dumping of steel on the Australian market. The Prime Minister recently announced that the 600-kilometre rail line operated by the Australian Rail Track Corporation would be built with steel produced from Arrium in Whyalla—without any tender process taking place. The Prime Minister also indicated that the submarines that were the subject of a hotly contested procurement tender process in South Australia would be built with Australian steel. There was no tender and no talk about a mix of Australian and international steel. The Prime Minister just waved the wand then issued a fiat that Australian submarines and the Australian Rail Track Corporation rail line will be built using Australian steel.

Staring down the barrel of judgement at an election, the Prime Minister knows which side the community is on. He knows that when an industry as big and important as steel is in crisis governments must not only put their shoulders to the wheel through getting the best trade deals but also put their money on the table. They must

say that the Government as a customer will prioritise the use of Australian steel for important Australian infrastructure projects. Overseas governments are taking similar approaches. For example, the British Government has already put in place regulations that allow producers to consider environmental and social criteria, including employment and supply chain activity, when vetting contracts for construction and infrastructure projects. In addition to recognising the value to the supply chain, they also include a whole-of-life assessment for infrastructure projects using steel.

Mr David Shoebridge: That would be a Tory government.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: That is in fact a Tory government—not a coalition Tory government but a Tory government. The approach means assessing projects and tenders beyond just the up-front construction and implementation costs to take account of whole-of-life costs such as maintenance and repairs. I draw the attention of members to the Australian Steel Institute submission to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure Inquiry into the Procurement of NSW Government Infrastructure Projects. It is definitely worth a read and would educate members opposite on a rational economic response to the crisis in the Australian steel industry rather than an ideologically blinkered approach.

The approach of the British Government also means looking at the economic benefits of better engaging with local industry. Interestingly, the Cameron Government in the United Kingdom has responded to the steel crisis and domestic pressure to save the British steel industry by announcing its part-nationalisation. That is not a course of action that Labor recommends, but it indicates the flavour of what is happening internationally and what governments of all stripes and persuasions are doing to save their domestic steel industries. They are not only important economically but they also have amazing important strategic value for those countries and Australia. How can we take a lesser approach than that of David Cameron's Tory Government in the United Kingdom?

The Australian Senate is currently conducting a public inquiry into the Australian steel industry. All major submissions to the inquiry have called for a change to procurement policy by Federal, State and Territory governments, including 90 per cent mandating of Australian steel use in all publicly funded infrastructure projects. While Australia has obligations under existing free trade agreements, which restrict procurement policy changes on the grounds of competition, I do not believe that this legislation or the policies it would embody, including the amendments that we propose, would breach those free trade agreements. Article 15 of the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement [AUSFTA] provides for government procurement preferences in certain circumstances.

It should be noted that the AUSFTA exempts the United States steel industry and large sections of government procurement. This agreement was due for a 10-year review in May last, which provides a great opportunity for Australia to seek to exempt our steel sector generally as well. I repeat, I do not believe that this legislation or our amendments would breach the free trade agreements because we are not seeking to put this stamp on all players and all projects in the steel industry everywhere, only on those paid for and acquired by the New South Wales State Government and its instrumentalities and local government.

The Hon. Robert Brown: You mean by the New South Wales taxpayer.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. We are simply saying that as a customer we would take a certain approach, which we are allowed to do. The claims by the State Government that Australia is constrained and may face retaliation if Australian governments favour local steel are highly questionable—for example, the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement [ChAFTA] does not contain an agreement on government procurement. I have already referred to statements by the Prime Minister regarding the new submarines to be built with Australian steel and the Australian Rail Track Authority's approach to building its track. The United States has gone as far as imposing 260 per cent tariffs or duties on certain product groups and is proceeding to strengthen domestic procurement requirements, particularly at a state level, and a number of states such as Illinois have produced what can only be described as old-fashioned protectionist measures to bolster and protect the American steel industry. We are not proposing those approaches at all. We are taking a much more cautious, sensible and balanced approach, mindful of things like free trade agreements.

It should be noted that the New South Wales Labor Government introduced a limited preference for small- and medium-sized enterprises in its procurement policy in 2010-11, which was discontinued by the O'Farrell Government, and changes to the NSW Procurement Policy were a key component of Labor's 10 point Illawarra Jobs Plan launched in 2015. This builds on those earlier announcements and we will seek to go further with our amendments. There is also further scope for New South Wales to review the steel and fabrication sector regarding its supply chain capability and improve coordination, innovation, research and development, which we will seek to advance through our amendments. There is substantial criticism that the steel and fabrication sector is highly fragmented, its supply chain capability is compromised and investment in plant and equipment is declining. BIS Shrapnel has indicated that a local content policy achieving a 90 per cent local steel content for publicly funded projects would provide a substantial net benefit to the economy and lead to only marginal

increases in total construction costs of 0.2 per cent. A local procurement policy of the kind proposed in the bill and in our amendments—

Mr David Shoebridge: Which we support.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. A local procurement policy of the kind proposed in the bill and in our amendments will greatly strengthen certainty in the sector and provide a platform for investment growth, and even expansion, not only in steelmaking but also throughout the supply chain—not only for the steel industry but also for others. The benefits to the manufacturing sector will fan out from Port Kembla through the west and south-west of Sydney, the Hunter region and across the great State of New South Wales. The reason for this is that fabricators and manufacturers that rely on steel inputs will be on a more level playing field than we see currently where overseas competitors use sub-cost and substandard steel to undercut competition for New South Wales Government and local council projects. This is a cost-effective policy change that will deliver gains much greater than any nominal increase in any ticketed price for steel.

The Australian Steel Institute states that maximising local content is of huge importance, estimating that for every \$1 million of local manufacturing output gained or retained in New South Wales six full-time jobs are retained, \$225,300 of tax revenue is generated, and nearly \$65,000 worth of welfare benefits are saved. BIS Shrapnel estimates that the proposed 90 per cent local steel content would cost anywhere between \$61 million and \$80 million annually for Australia, which would translate to an impact for New South Wales of between \$19 million and \$24 million annually. We think this is an investment worth making when one considers the devastation of the loss of jobs to local economies and the increase in welfare, to say nothing of the additional pressures placed on families and society through marriage and other relationship breakdowns consequent upon economic—

The Hon. Paul Green: Social breakdown.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. We want to invest a small amount of money to prevent this devastation.

The Hon. Paul Green: It is an investment, not a cost.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: That is absolutely right. This is not just a secure and sustainable industry for the Illawarra; it is a steel plan for all of New South Wales. The "whole-of-life" assessment focus will improve the integrity and longevity of every publicly funded infrastructure project in this State and provide better value for money—by looking not only at the up-front costs but also at the total cost over the lifecycle of a project. The plan will also provide confidence and secure the future for those companies that supply products and services to the steel industry in the Illawarra. Labor's message is very clear: We support the steel and manufacturing base in the Illawarra and the tens of thousands of jobs that rely upon that industry remaining strong and focused. I repeat, not only for steel and the Illawarra but also for the supply chains and industries that depend upon it.

The Hon. Paul Green: Biofuels.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Including biofuels. Labor will be supporting the second reading of this bill, and I urge members to support its amendments.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (11:17): I make a contribution to debate on the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016. Indeed, that excellent, if somewhat long, speech by the Leader of the Opposition has pretty much said it all. This morning when I got out of bed I decided that I would be only 49 per cent free marketeer—the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' model—and 51 per cent protectionist. I think I also stepped across the line in the negotiations with the Government over the Newcastle light rail line and the Government agreed that it would ensure that Australian firms were on the tender list for rolling stock and other things for that project, including steel. This is not just about the Illawarra, but it has got a lot to do with it.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It has got a lot to do with Newcastle too.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: It does, absolutely.

Mr David Shoebridge: Broken Hill.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Yes. I state at the outset, for the benefit of the members of The Greens in the Chamber, that to make steel you need coking coal. To make steel you need steaming coal.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: You need to dig up iron ore as well.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That too. As members well know, my colleague the Hon. Robert Borsak has interests in manufacturing industries in New South Wales and, woefully, from time to time has to buy Chinese steel—not that there is anything wrong with the Chinese or Chinese steel except that in many cases it does not

meet Australian standards. The briefing we were given by the Minister's office pretty much lined up with the Hon. Niall Blair's response as to what the Government thinks about this and what it believes can be done.

The Hon. Niall Blair: In due course.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That is the problem—in due course. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is a States' rights party. We are generally what I would call economic dries, but there is a really strong argument in a lot of cases, particularly in Australian industries, for a little bit of boiler-plating, a little bit of protectionism—if that is not too dirty a word. In the case of the steel industry, everybody knows that we have gone backwards. With free trade agreements we have to combine a mix of export products to get the deal—we have to ensure that we can live-export our cattle, we can sell sheep, we can sell wool, we can sell our rice and all the other things. Generally speaking, the dirty end of that stick—and do not ever let anybody say that it is clean both ends and that they can pick it up without getting it on their fingers—is always the manufacturing industries because Australia, as Mr Keating once famously observed, and excuse the unparliamentary language, is at the arse end of the earth. So we have always had problems with the distance from our markets.

I have said in the House before that these things will go full circle. In another 50 years Australia will be in a prime position to be providing a lot of products to the entire world—not just agricultural products—because we have still got those resources in the ground; we have still got mountains of iron ore, and mountains of coke and coal and steaming coal. We can take our time and when the market is right towards the end of the century we will have them under our boot heels. Of course, I will not be here. In the meantime, with every steel mill that closes, every rolling mill that closes, every time we export our trade technology and we let other people build stuff for us, we lose the skills. Steelmaking is a skilled art; there is a lot of science in it but it is a skilled art.

Mr David Shoebridge: And we're very good at it.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: We have been and we probably still are. I would hate to see that go. We will support Mr Shoebridge's bill. It is a rare thing to see the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party support a Greens' bill—very rare—

Mr David Shoebridge: We're quite anxious about it.

The Hon. Adam Searle: We're quite comfortable. It's bringing everyone together.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That is right. We also have some admiration for the amendments that will be moved by the Labor Party, so we will probably give them really good consideration too. We commend this bill to the House.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (11:22): It is nice to see those men in the gallery.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Pursuant to the longstanding rules of this House, the wearing of badges and signs is disorderly and the member should be asked to remove it.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will happily do that. I am not one to break the rules of conduct of the House. I do apologise; I was not aware that an armband would be out of order, hence I put it on my clothing and did not hold it up.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): I thank the member.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: There is no truer message than the one on that sticker, which states "Save Our Steel". I speak in debate on the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party, which is also the workers' party. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile tells me that for years he has defended workers' rights across the State. On many, many occasions when we have been called to negotiate we have worked very hard with the unions to get what they think is a fair deal across the State, in particular with a lot of the reforms that have happened over the past few years. We support this bill. The object of the bill is to ensure, as far as practicable, that all steel used in public works or infrastructure constructed by or on behalf of authorities is manufactured in Australia.

First and foremost, I commend the late Dr John Kaye and Mr David Shoebridge for trying to safeguard the long-term security of Port Kembla and Whyalla steelmaking. The bill aims to do this by ensuring that public money is spent on Australian-made steel products only. Port Kembla is known for the BlueScope Steel steelworks operations on Springhill Road and throughout north Port Kembla. Port Kembla steelworks covers more than 780 hectares—it is a massive industry. It has four railway stations servicing the steelmaking plant. It once employed more than 22,000 workers, but now there are fewer than 5,000, and 500 of those recently took redundancies. I applaud the Government's initiative, together with the Christian Democratic Party and the member for Kiama, in trying to get 100 sponsored traineeships so that many of those workers could re-skill or re-focus or do something in another field. I acknowledge that we got those traineeships through the Minister for Small

Business, Minister Barilaro. I also put on record that I got the idea to do that from none other than Arthur Rorris, who told our parliamentary vocational education inquiry that that initiative was introduced when the positions of 22,000 workers were being downgraded.

Last year we saw the challenges faced by a regional job provider, BlueScope Steel. The Christian Democratic Party, along with the Government, the Opposition and other crossbench parties, worked to preserve the BlueScope Steel mill in Port Kembla. We supported the Payroll Tax Deferral (BlueScope Steel) Bill 2015. The bill allowed the deferral of BlueScope Steel payroll tax to the value of \$60 million to be paid back over a 10-year period starting in 2020. We are in this together. This is not a slap in the face of the Government; we are merely pleading a case that there may be a better way to secure the longevity of those regional jobs in the Illawarra, but particularly in all of New South Wales, because any job loss in any regional town in New South Wales affects the State as a whole.

In addition, the unions agreed to give up 500 jobs and management undertook to reduce costs by up to \$200 million. Everyone is pedalling on this bike to save this great industry of the Illawarra. This is an important example of how all the parties can come together to preserve Australian business interests. In particular, I acknowledge the management and workers of BlueScope Steel—some of whom are here today in the gallery—for their willingness to negotiate in order to preserve this great Australian company. I note that the late Dr John Kaye stated:

Consultants to the Australian Steel Institute estimate that for every million dollars spent on Australian-made steel, over \$700,000 comes back into the Australian community, six full-time jobs are supported, and over \$200,000 of overall tax revenue is generated.

A state government procurement policy that required Australian steel to be used in all state government infrastructure projects is both affordable and rational. The additional 0.2 per cent costs to the state's \$17 billion annual infrastructure spend amounts to just \$34 million a year.

This is a small cost to avoid the potential loss of thousands of jobs in the Illawarra and billions of dollars in lost GDP by providing long-term security to the Port Kembla blast furnace.

Arrium Limited is an international diversified mining and materials company. Arrium Mining includes the company's iron ore export business, which achieved sales of 12.5 million tonnes of hematite ore for the 2014 financial year. Arrium has mining operations at Middleback Range, as well as a wholly owned port at Whyalla, South Australia, with a current capacity of approximately 11 million tonnes per annum. In addition to the export iron ore business, Arrium Mining also supplies iron ore to the company's integrated steelworks at Whyalla.

Arrium's steel business is Australia's only manufacturer of steel long products with steelmaking capacity of approximately 2.5 million tonnes per annum. It is also Australia's leading steel distributor and reinforcing steel supplier. Arrium has been hit by the plunge in iron ore and steel prices over the past two years. It delivered a full year loss of \$1.9 billion in 2014-15. Arrium says its Whyalla steelworks in South Australia and its iron ore mining business are draining around \$230 million cash every six months.

The company had debt of \$2.1 billion in just December. Australian lenders are reportedly pushing this struggling company to go into voluntary administration, and we know there has been a lot of work there. Australia's steel industry has long complained about government inaction in the face of a slump in prices and a surge in cheaper imports, particularly from China. In the Australian Workers Union report entitled "The Benefits of a Local Procurement Policy for Local Steel in Government Construction", which I have here if members want to read it, BIS Shrapnel states:

The Australian steelmaking industry is under severe pressure from rising imports, in particular escalating imports of cheap steel from China. A significant proportion of this steel being exported to Australia is reputed to be 'dumped' at prices which are below the cost of production i.e. at a loss by the Chinese and other Asian producers. For the Australian steel to remain viable and profitable, it firstly needs to produce at (or near) capacity and secondly, sell as much of its product as possible into the domestic market, and sell less into the less profitable (or often unprofitable) exports markets where global oversupply has pushed down prices and margins.

BIS Shrapnel estimates that a local content policy achieving about 90 per cent of local steel content will cost an average of \$61 million to \$80 million annually in extra costs to the public sector—government and government business enterprises—which represents only an extra 0.2 per cent of total construction costs for the public projects. This extra cost is based on the assumption that the price of locally sourced steel is about 10 per cent higher than the equivalent imported product and based on the projected import steel price for the next five years. BIS Shrapnel said to add a cumulative \$1.3 billion to real gross domestic product [GDP] over the next five years, which is the equivalent of about 0.3 per cent of the 2014-15 GDP, if the extra tonnages, which average 690 kilos per tonne annually, were supplied by extra production from steelmakers, while leaving export tonnage constant at 850 kilos per tonne rather than switching to sales for public sector construction. It said these prove a substantial net benefit to the economy after accounting for only marginally higher public construction costs.

The Government believes this bill takes the wrong approach to supporting domestic steel producers. It believes it will increase the cost of steel by 20 per cent, be an unfair burden on New South Wales taxpayers, violate free trade agreements, add more red tape, create duplicate supply chains, and remove the incentive for industry to innovate. The New South Wales Government is a strong supporter of local steel and local jobs, with the New South Wales Government being the largest purchaser of steel in the nation. Almost 70 per cent of the New South Wales Government's \$26 billion in construction spending over the past three years went to New South Wales-based suppliers. That is to be applauded; we do not try to take away from that. We just seek to increase that by 30 per cent.

The Government advised it has sourced significant quantities of Australian steel for major infrastructure projects such as Sydney Metro Northwest; Sydney Metro Northwest Skytrain, Princes Highway Gerringong upgrades—fantastic projects for which the Government should be applauded, especially section 3. I look forward to 100 per cent Australian steel being used on the third river crossing at Shoalhaven when it is announced. Other major projects are Wynyard Walk, Barangaroo Ferry Hub, M4 widening, Kempsey bypass and Pacific Highway Emigrant Creek Bridge upgrade. The Government is doing a damn good job of focusing a lot of that resource there, but the question is: Can we do more? We believe we can. The Australian Workers Union states:

Domestic production now supplies less than half of the steel used in public sector construction, having lost over 5 per cent of this share of the market since 2010. If overseas steel companies are allowed to continue to dump their steel product on local markets, domestic producers will continue to lose market share in both public and private steel markets.

That is not the only concern. One must consider the life of the steel. It may have a lifespan of 10 or 20 years without any standards or certification—if no magnifying glass is put on the quality of that steel. We might think we are getting a bargain, but a bridge with an expected life of 50 or 100 years might last only 20 years because of fractures.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Like the Hawkesbury.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Like the Hawkesbury. We must be mindful to purchase good quality steel and we would argue that Australian steel undergoes great standardisation and strong scrutiny. It is probably the best steel in the world.

Mr David Shoebridge: I have no argument.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: No argument. I was just waiting for a "Hear, hear!" It is the best steel in the world.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: There have been repeated rulings by the President that members, while conducting their debate, should not be interacting with members of the gallery. Madam Deputy President, I ask you to draw the member's attention to the repeated rulings of the President not to do this, nor to encourage members of the gallery to behave in a disorderly manner, making a large amount of noise whilst the debate is occurring.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: To the point of order: The member should just raise his point of order and not debate the matter.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): I acknowledge the point of order made by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. Interjections from the gallery or within the Chamber are disorderly at all times. I ask the Hon. Paul Green to acknowledge that.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I was hoping my colleagues would say, "Hear, hear!" The fact that members in the gallery joined in was merely an endorsement of such a great comment.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: I ask the member not to canvass your ruling. This has been an orderly debate. Remarks should be made through the Chair. We have listened intently to the member. I acknowledge the intent of the member but we need to ensure that the rules of debate are upheld. I ask that the member direct his comments through the Chair and not canvass your ruling.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): I refer to numerous rulings that members must address their remarks through the Chair.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. If overseas steel companies are allowed to continue to dump their steel product on local markets, domestic producers will continue to lose market share in both public and private steel markets. This bill aims to address this shortfall by ensuring that public money is spent on only Australian-made steel products. We must ensure the long-term security of New South Wales steelmaking and New South Wales regional jobs. Australia's steel industry employs around 90,000 people directly and indirectly and has an annual turnover of about \$30 billion. The integrated steel channel typically holds in

excess of two million tonnes of inventory available through distributors located on over 300 sites across the country.

I do not normally get a bit cheeky in my speeches and I acknowledge the comments of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I have certainly sat in your position, Madam Deputy President. I have heard some of his comments and I understand where he is coming from. I have taken the liberty to make jovial comments on certain things, but there is nothing more serious in this situation. I have stood here for nearly six years defending regional jobs—whether it relates to moves by Mr Jeremy Buckingham to repeal the biofuel bill that will impact up to 10,000 jobs in regional New South Wales, defending chaplains jobs in New South Wales, people in the steel industry, or people losing their jobs at Pentair or Australian journalists who have lost their jobs.

If I can find a way to save a job in regional New South Wales, I will stand up here and do it. Yes, we are going against the grain by calling for 100 per cent Australian steel, but if we think that is all this is about then we have missed the point. In regional New South Wales it is easier to keep a job than to create a new one. If we do not keep those jobs there is social disruption. Job loss affects people's families and marriages. They cannot pay the mortgage. They cannot pay the power bill. They cannot put enough fuel in the car to last a week. They cannot put food on the table. Their children cannot be educated. They do not have the money for quality of life. That is what it comes down to.

This bill is not really about the State Government and local government authorities using only Australian steel. This is another bill that reminds us to be mindful that in regional and rural New South Wales it is easier to keep a job than to create a new one. Members of this House need to be mindful of those people in regional and rural New South Wales who are lucky to keep their jobs. It is becoming harder to maintain jobs in regional areas. It is our job to defend the mums, dads, children and seniors who are affected by the decisions that we make in this House. This is an opportunity for us to buy into their lives, their dreams. This is an opportunity for us to ensure the security of their jobs, to enable them to have the quality of life that most members are fighting for day after day. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (11:40): I speak against the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016. The best thing that we can do for the steel industry is to grow demand. I stood here a year ago when members opposite, The Greens and the Labor Party, voted against Rebuilding NSW and the sale of poles and wires. That was \$20 billion—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): Order! Members have the right to be heard in silence. Constant interjections are disorderly.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: We have a strong economy in New South Wales. A year ago the Opposition and The Greens voted against Rebuilding NSW and the long-term lease of our transmission networks. That is \$20 billion of infrastructure that would not have happened if the views of members opposite had prevailed. I will read out some of the projects that members opposite spoke against so vehemently: Sydney Rapid Transit, \$7 billion; Sydney's Rail Future 2 upgrades—

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: My point of order goes to the point you ruled on earlier, Madam Deputy President. This debate has taken place in an orderly fashion. The Hon. Penny Sharpe has recently come into the Chamber and we are now hearing interjections from the Opposition benches. I ask that the member be brought to order. Interjections are disorderly. Government members have allowed members on the other side of the Chamber to make a contribution without interruption. I ask that the member be brought to order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): Mr Scot Macdonald will continue.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: I will read a short list of projects: Parramatta Light Rail, \$600 million; Bus Rapid Transit priority infrastructure, \$300 million; WestConnex northern and southern extensions, \$1.1 billion; pinch points and clearways, \$400 million; and Smart Motorways, \$400 million. I will read out some regional projects: Regional Road Freight Corridor, \$2 billion; Regional Growth Roads, \$1 billion; Fixing Country Roads, \$500 million; Fixing Country Rail—which usually involves a fair bit of steel—\$400 million; Bridges for the Bush, \$200 million; and water security, \$1 billion. In education the projects include Future Focused schools, \$700 million; and the Regional Schools Renewal Program, \$300 million. In health the projects include the Hospital Growth Program, \$600 million; and regional multipurpose facilities, \$300 million. In culture and sport the projects include—

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: The standing orders prohibit the reading of lengthy lists.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: David, you have made an art form of that over the years.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: It is disorderly for members to address each other rather than speak through the Chair. Mr Scot MacDonald, as Parliamentary Secretary and a member of the Executive

Government who has been in this House for five years, really ought to know better than to flout the conventions and rules of this place.

The Hon. Niall Blair: To the point of order: Members know that the raising of debating points during points of order and constant interjections are against the rules of debate in this House. The member has the right to make his contribution to the debate without interruption. Mr David Shoebridge, who has carriage of the bill, will have the right to raise any issues in his speech in reply. Mr Scot MacDonald is referring to projects that are directly relevant to debate on the second reading. The interruption, through a frivolous point of order, serves no purpose. The debate should continue in an orderly manner.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): I draw the attention of members to a ruling made by Deputy President Gardiner on 2 June 2011 that members should not attempt to read onto the record comprehensive lists but instead should give a precis of a number of examples. I also remind members of numerous rulings from the Chair that members are entitled to be heard in silence. This debate has been respectful. I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The next member who interjects will be called to order.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: My point is that this Government has engaged in a comprehensive asset recycling program to a level that is probably unprecedented in this country. We are responsible for three-quarters of the country's infrastructure. Opposition members hypothecated that the sky would fall in and we would all be ruined. But asset recycling is about renewing our assets to build the infrastructure that we need. The steel industry would not benefit from cumbersome legislation that is not uncharacteristic of North Korea or some command controlled economy.

The Greens are trying to implement a commissar of steel. It will not work. It has not worked overseas. Where such measures have been implemented, the cost to the consumer and taxpayer is a burden. As has been mentioned, by implementing this legislation we would be in danger of violating our free trade agreements. Obviously it would impose a burden on taxpayers and would add red tape to the industry. The bill screams red tape. The construction of contracts that are probably unenforceable will require a bureaucracy that will become self-generating.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): Order! I call Mr David Shoebridge to order for the first time.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: Everybody in this room wants to see a strong steel industry. The State Government implemented a tax rebate holiday to the tune of about \$60 million. That provides some relief for the steel industry. I make this plea: We have the evidence, we know the history, we know what the consequence will be. We saw it with companies such as Kodak. We saw it with the vehicle industry. Billions of dollars were poured into a subscale industry. That drove up costs, inhibited innovation and did not accelerate exports.

We know what happens when we bring in protectionism. It is a plea to maintain the status quo, if you like, and to reach out to people who are in those difficult circumstances. I acknowledge what the Hon. Paul Green was saying about regional New South Wales. I too come from regional New South Wales. We feel the pain as industries restructure and as they face the global winds of change. But the worst thing we can do is to build a protectionist wall, because we know that when it comes down—when that dam wall bursts—the pain will be even greater. We need to send the signal that industry needs to be innovative, to adopt new practices and to be globally competitive. It has to stand on its own two feet.

I come back to the point I started with—that is, the Government has only so many levers. It has limited levers in this situation. At the end of the day, those levers that are successful and effective are not clumsy pieces of legislation such as this. It might look good and it might feel good, but it has no hope of being successful nor efficient. As someone who has come from the business sector, I am concerned about the consequences of it. Again we see the approach of Labor and The Greens is to build a protectionist wall and to hope that everything will be all right when we know, and when the evidence tells us, that it will not.

I come back to the list I was talking about earlier when I was interrupted. The point is that the role of the State Government is to run an efficient and sustainable economy where we live within our means and get our debt levels down. We have now got our debt down to roughly about a third of what it was when Labor left office. As a result, we are not paying as much interest. Instead we are building things and we are renewing things. I urge those on the other side to reflect on what they did here a year ago when they stood in this place and did their best to obstruct the long-term lease of the polls and wires, and the subsequent \$20 billion worth of infrastructure—some of which is new and some of which is renewal.

This \$20 billion of infrastructure would not have been possible if those opposite had had their way. Fortunately, this side of the Chamber prevailed and all those projects are now underway. That is the best thing we can do. We have a budget coming up in about three weeks. Those are the sorts of parameters that we work within.

What we in this place have to do is to manage those parameters so that we are living within our means and so that we have the capacity to support our schools, to support our bridges, and to build our rail network, including the light rail at Newcastle. That is the best way that we can support the steel industry. I do not support this bill.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (11:52): On behalf of The Greens, I support my colleague Mr David Shoebridge and the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016. I also pay tribute to my dearest friend and colleague the late Dr John Kaye, MLC, who was a tireless advocate for the workers and who crafted this bill. He is truly missed today. I thank the Opposition, the Christian Democratic Party and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for their support for this very important reform. The purpose of the bill is to secure a future for the steelmaking industry at Port Kembla in the Illawarra by mandating that Government infrastructure projects use locally manufactured steel. Currently the last remaining blast furnace at Port Kembla is at risk of closure due to a downturn in international steel prices and the dumping of below-cost steel by foreign manufacturers. If it were to close, approximately 4,500 jobs would immediately be lost, with a large negative knock-on effect on the Illawarra economy.

The Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 would secure a future for steelmaking in New South Wales. The key provisions in the bill include a mandate that all New South Wales government-funded infrastructure and housing projects using more than two tonnes of steel must use only steel from Australian blast or electric arc furnaces. It would prevent price gouging by the mill owners by imposing a price limit set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, but not less than 20 per cent above international steel prices. The bill would also exclude products that cannot reasonably be made in Australia or from Australian steel. This is a carefully crafted bill, contrary to what the Government has claimed.

This mandate would represent only a tiny fraction of the annual \$17 billion infrastructure budget of New South Wales. A BIS Shrapnel report in 2015 estimated that introducing a local steel procurement policy would add only 0.2 per cent to the cost of infrastructure projects. That is a very small investment to save an entire industry and thousands of jobs, especially given the propensity of this Government for cost blowouts in infrastructure projects—adding 0.2 per cent to save an entire industry is an extremely modest investment.

I remind members of the 280 per cent cost blowout on the Tibby Cotter walkway, the 240 per cent cost blowout on the Arncliffe pedestrian tunnel, the 31 per cent cost blowout on the CBD and South East light rail project and, who can forget—my favourite—WestConnex, which has now blown out to an incredible \$17 billion from the original price of \$10 billion. A BIS Shrapnel report published in September 2015 estimated that less than 50 per cent of steel used in Australian public sector construction is produced domestically. This share is forecast to fall to 43 per cent by 2019-20 as government contractors increasingly turn to cheaper imported steel. Implementing a public sector procurement policy is a cost-effective measure that would provide the local steel industry with certainty and help to secure the employment of 4,500 workers.

This bill is supported by the local community and the workers, including the Australian Workers Union at Port Kembla, the South Coast Labour Council and the Maritime Union of Australia. I acknowledge the presence of some of them in the public gallery today, including Arthur Rorris and members of The Greens from the Illawarra. If we are serious about having a strong steel industry in this country then we must take action. This bill gives our Parliament an opportunity to do just that. I urge all members to be leaders for once, not only in New South Wales but also in Australia. We must save our steel, buy it here and keep it here. I strongly commend the bill to the House.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (11:56): I support the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 and the Labor amendments that will be debated during the Committee stage of this debate. In doing so, I acknowledge the contributions of Dr John Kaye and Mr David Shoebridge in introducing this bill. In particular, I acknowledge the advocacy of the Leader of the Opposition in this place as well as the shadow Treasurer. Most importantly, I acknowledge the people who work in the steel supply chain, be it in the Illawarra, the Hunter, Whyalla, Broken Hill or the other steelmaking communities in this State and in this country.

Prior to my election to this Parliament I had the tremendous privilege of representing the truck drivers who transport the steel from the BlueScope Steel manufacturing facilities in the Illawarra to Port Kembla and Port Botany. It was my privilege to work cooperatively with those workers and BlueScope Steel in the design of a supply chain around transport that reflected the danger of moving steel rods. There was a level of maturity displayed by all actors in that segment of the transport industry, given the special risks that this posed. In the course of doing that work I came to understand a lot of the realities about the steel market in which the BlueScope and Arrium workers compete.

These realities have so far eluded this Government, so it would be wise of me to remind this House of these facts before it makes its decision. Fact number one is that steel is indeed a globally traded commodity. Its price is set according to the sea-based freight index, and that includes the steel that is sold domestically. It does

not matter whether or not it is transported across the ocean; the reality is that all steel prices and all contracts are benchmarked according to that price. Fact number two is that the biggest producer in the global steel supply chain is China, and this reflects a deliberate policy of the Chinese Government of investment-led growth. It has resulted in 50 per cent of gross domestic product growth in China being sourced from investment. That investment-led growth is not according to free market principles; it is at the direction of the Chinese Government.

It resulted in the construction of a plethora of steel mills in China, all of which have been operating below average cost for a decade, which in turn led to a glut in the steel market which necessitated the Chinese Government dumping its steel on worldwide markets. A non-transparent currency compounds this policy of the Chinese Government. Traditional competitors to BlueScope Steel—those in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America—have a floating exchange rate but our current competitors do not, which is impacting on the trade of all manufactured products.

Price sensitivity—which occurs as a result of exchange rates—is not present in the manufacture of Chinese steel. That protectionist statement was not made by the Trotskyite world institute; it was made by the World Bank, the World Economic Forum in Davos and the European Union. That is a judgement of the United States Government and, incidentally, it is also the judgement of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which last time I checked does not have a Labor Minister in charge. Compounding the pressure on the Australian steel industry is a historically high Australian exchange rate, which has occurred because of two factors: first, historically low interest rates, negative interest rates in major economies like Japan and the United States as a result of the global financial crisis; and, secondly, a 13-year terms of trade boom in mining, which placed huge upward pressure on the Australian exchange rate and resulted in the hollowing out of the Australian manufacturing industry.

The Federal Labor Government was committed to imposing a minerals resource rent tax as that was the best way of ensuring that the Dutch disease that afflicted many advanced economies that have large mining sectors would not afflict us. It was designed to preserve some balance in our economy and to ensure that a once-in-a-lifetime boom did not result in the permanent destruction of the Australian manufacturing industry. The long-term capability and comparative advantages that have been created in places like the Illawarra and the Hunter, as well as Whyalla in South Australia, were achieved as a result of a historical generational commitment that resulted in jobs that anchored those communities for 100 years.

In the global free trade environment in which we operate the comparative advantages that have been achieved over generations will enable places like the Illawarra to maintain viable private sectors in the future. These are the types of places that governments worldwide are trying to create. If we take into account economic agglomeration and the worldwide fanfare about Silicon Valley, it is easy to see that governments are trying to replicate what Australia has done in the Illawarra and the steel industry. It would be ridiculous and callous in the extreme to throw all that away.

Let me inform members what will occur if this bill does not receive assent. The issues to which I referred earlier are the reasons the steel industry is under pressure. However, the consequences will be felt locally by all those small enterprises in the Illawarra and the Hunter—those mum and dad enterprises, petrol stations and all the small businesses that provide good private sector middle-class jobs. All those businesses will be affected if the Illawarra and the Hunter de-industrialise, but this Government is indifferent to their plight. It will lead to the destruction of jobs that for so many have been such an escalator to the middle class. We are in a worldwide debate right now about whether everybody has a right to partake in the wealth that is being created by technological change.

This morning we were reminded that Australia's economy is being narrowed to such an extent that essentially everybody will derive their wealth from a combination of the tradeable sector and/or the service sector. This morning we were told that Australia now has the lowest proportion of manufacturing jobs in the OECD. When those types of jobs are lost in the Illawarra, the Hunter and Whyalla we will effectively be saying to people in those areas that because we are indifferent to their jobs, which are too old and too twentieth century, they do not have the right to be part of the twenty-first century.

Trades-based workers have every right to enjoy a middle class life, as do service-based workers, public servants, bankers, information technology staff and those in the other wonderful jobs that are being created. They have just as much right to enjoy a middle class life. If we become indifferent to deindustrialisation we will allow circumstances to emerge such as those that prevailed in the Appalachia of the United States—generational poverty and welfare dependency—that could have been avoided by adopting sensible policies. This Parliament is presented with a choice. What exactly is the appropriate response?

A high threshold must be satisfied before industry implements measures such as this. There should be a demonstrated willingness on the part of all enterprises and parties to the supply chain to adjust—a responsibility

that has been acquitted by every person in the Illawarra supply chain. It is testament to the maturity of the industrial leadership of workers in the Illawarra that they were able to engage in fraught and difficult negotiations that required workers to give up much of what they had fought for over generations. Last year the Australian Workers Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Maritime Union of Australia conducted negotiations in the interests of the broader community—negotiations that were facilitated under the Fair Work Act and that demonstrated that that type of adjustment was possible under the Act.

It is a tribute to people like Daniel Walton, Assistant National Secretary of the Australian Workers Union who spearheaded those negotiations; to Arthur Rorris and the South Coast Labour Council for being so supportive; to Tim Ayres from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union; and to Paul O'Malley, Chief Executive Officer, BlueScope Steel for coming to the table and preserving capability in that area. They met their responsibilities, which means that this Government also won. What is being proposed by Labor's amendments is not at all revolutionary. Who is sponsoring the measures that Labor is advocating? David Cameron and his revolutionary communist Government apparently have nationalised and transferred to public ownership the remaining aspects of the United Kingdom's steel industry.

Mr David Shoebridge: The people's republic of Illinois.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Indeed, the people's republic of Illinois. I add to that the famous Pittsburgh steel mills in Pennsylvania. I am shocked that rabblers in Germany—in Merkel's Government—are following suit and that that vanguard of the revolution, the European Union [EU], is sponsoring such a policy as an EU-wide policy. Those are all wonderful references from overseas, but I was looking for like examples in Australia to establish who is backing this policy. When I googled it I quickly found that it was the fixer of the Australian Cabinet, Mr Christopher Pyne, the Federal Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science.

In the lead-up to the Federal elections he is traversing South Australia and is saying, "Guess what? Federal Liberal Government submarines are made of 100 per cent Australian steel." That was always going to happen. We now find ourselves in a wonderful position. The Federal Liberal Government is saying that it is good enough for submarines, but the State Liberal-Nationals Government is saying that it is not good enough for trains. Earlier Mr Scot MacDonald made vile statements about North Korea and criticised the Federal Liberal Government for implementing an almost identical policy.

Mr David Shoebridge: On an ad hoc basis.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: On an ad hoc basis. The Federal Liberal Government realised that the people of South Australia care that they have jobs and they want to preserve their industries. It has also woken up to the consequences of baiting the Australian car industry offshore. It has come to understand what that means for the steel industry. It is now aggressively trying to present itself to the Australian people as the real friend of steel, even though it is backing Labor's policy relating to submarine manufacturing.

Labor's amendments are sensible and straightforward. Our position is different from that in the bill in that we would create the position of a steel industry advocate because we understand that the small- to medium-sized enterprise [SME] sector that exists as an adjunct to the supply chain in the Illawarra requires coordination. It requires a person who is able to work to obtain public interest exemptions from the Trade Practices Act and to liaise directly with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on behalf of SMEs. Labor's amendments also recognise that New South Wales is part of a global supply chain. We cannot fall into the trap of presuming that Arrium must remain in permanent competition with BlueScope. The reality is that both steelmakers are in competition with government-owned steel mills that are not operating in accordance with free market principles.

In response to our suggestions we have heard from the Government the same tired argument that these things will happen organically. Mr Scot MacDonald recited a list that I presume he derived from the budget papers of all the projects that he claims are being funded through Rebuilding NSW. Ironically, he was essentially saying to Illawarra workers that the only way the Government will save their jobs is if it is allowed to privatise their assets. Putting that argument aside, in all of the projects he listed he did not once mention how much Australian steel would be used. He did not once make the point that as the biggest customer of Australian steel the New South Wales Government has more leverage than anybody to ensure that the benefits are spread.

We also heard a nonsensical argument from the Minister and Mr Scot McDonald about this being in breach of the free trade agreement, particularly the agreement with the United States. If this policy is in breach of the free trade agreement, so is Malcolm Turnbull's policy on submarines. I invite the Government to explain why that policy is not in breach of the agreement but this policy is. We have a high obligation here. This policy is about modernisation and ensuring that we preserve our hard-fought comparative advantage. It is about making sure that

everybody—regardless of whether or not they are a tradesperson—has the chance to live a middle class life. I commend the bill and the amendments to the House.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (12:11): My colleague the Hon. Paul Green has spoken in debate on the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016 and outlined the Christian Democratic Party policy. I was very impressed by the contribution and arguments of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey. I was hoping we would vote on this bill today but I have been advised that the debate will be adjourned and there will not be a vote. That will be very disappointing to the steelworkers who are in the gallery. It is unfortunate that after hearing all the arguments we will not bring this matter to a conclusion today.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (12:12): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Steel Industry Protection Bill 2016. I commend the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, who eloquently and articulately laid out the strong economic case for supporting this bill. I will make a few short points. My first point is that being in government is about making choices. In his rant Mr Scot MacDonald completely failed to deal with the fact that the Government has choices inherent in this, and it is choosing to throw the Illawarra under a bus. It is choosing not to use Australian steel in any of the projects Mr Scot MacDonald listed. The irony of that is too exquisite.

My second point is that being in government is about pulling levers. This is about procurement levers that could be pulled to look after the regions, to protect 10,000 jobs and to save a \$3 billion economy. We are currently enduring a long Federal election campaign that is supposed to be about jobs and growth. I do not think a contraction of the Illawarra economy by \$3 billion or the loss of 10,000 jobs is anywhere close to the idea of jobs and growth. In fact, it will take us backwards. This bill seeks to deal with that matter by investing strongly in manufacturing and jobs in our regions. It is to be commended.

Two furrphies have been raised in this debate. The first is about how much the measures in the bill will add to the cost of projects. It is not significant and the payoffs will be high. I come back to my point that we make choices. We need to choose jobs for the Illawarra. The second furrphy relates to the free trade agreement, which the Hon. Daniel Mookhey addressed. The Government's argument would mean that Australia is out of the free trade agreement because of its submarine policy and it would also mean that the United States and United Kingdom are not acting fairly in respect of their free trade agreements. It is simply wrong. We can do this and we can make the choice to save those jobs.

I commend the people who have travelled here for this debate and the people of the Illawarra and South Coast who have fought so hard. They are fighting for not only their own jobs and families but also an entire region that we can build and grow and provide with more opportunities. I commend them for their work and am very proud to support this bill.

Debate adjourned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): I welcome to the public gallery students from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program conducted by Parliamentary Education.

Motions

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (12:16): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Schizophrenia Awareness Week, which this year took place from 15 to 21 May 2016, comprises activities which run from 14 May to 2 June 2016;
 - (b) Schizophrenia Awareness Week is an annual event which plays an important role in raising awareness about this mental health condition and the particular challenges it poses; and
 - (c) schizophrenia is still widely misunderstood, even in Australia, where there is constant and productive work to educate and to remove mental health stigma.
- (2) That this House commends the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW and the Chief Executive Officer of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW, Mr Rob Ramjan, who, during Schizophrenia Awareness Week, hosted a range of activities including:
 - (a) a symposium held in Sydney on 28 May 2016, which heralded the theme "Succeeding Together in Mental Health"; and

- (b) a parliamentary luncheon to be held on 2 June 2016, which will be attended by the Chair of Mental Health Australia, Ms Jennifer Westacott.
- (3) That this House commends the important role that non-government organisations play in the mental health sphere.
- (4) That this House supports aims and initiatives to destigmatise mental health illnesses.

It gives me great pleasure to move this motion in the House. Schizophrenia Awareness Week is an annual national event to raise awareness of schizophrenia and to highlight the services and education available to the community through a range of activities, including information displays, events across the State including a symposium, poetry and photography competitions, and media coverage. The week is organised and hosted by the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc. This year Schizophrenia Awareness Week ran from 15 to 21 May 2016. The activities of the week will culminate today with the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW parliamentary lunch, which is probably getting underway as we speak.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that brings together consumers, carers and professionals to work to improve the lives of people living with schizophrenia and associated disorders. The fellowship works to eliminate stigma and to create a society that is understanding and accepting. It ensures that people with a mental illness and their carers and relatives have access to information and appropriate services. It advocates on behalf of people with a mental illness, their carers and relatives and mental health professionals for better government policy in research, treatment, rehabilitation, housing and other relevant areas. It also provides innovative programs and support to consumers and carers and ensures that the fellowship has effective and accountable management, which is so important for non-government organisations.

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), the thirty-eighth Governor of New South Wales, commenced his five-year tenure as the patron of Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW in October 2014. Last year I took part in the 2015 Wellness Walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and for the first time ever the Governor allowed the walk to start in the beautiful setting of Government House. That fantastic event, which is designed to raise awareness of mental health issues, was attended by thousands of people. Indeed, the Wellness Walk, which is modelled on the famous Brooklyn Bridge Walk in New York, continues to go from strength to strength, particularly thanks to the work of the Governor.

This year one of the major focuses of Schizophrenia Awareness Week is the average life expectancy of people with mental illness—for example, the average life expectancy of someone with schizophrenia is 54 years. Statistics show that the average life expectancy of people with mental illness is 25 to 30 years less than for other people in general. This is not only because of their mental illness but also because of associated physical illnesses that go unchecked.

This week the Hon. Sarah Mitchell and I heard from the Mental Health Commissioner of cases where people suffering from certain disorders have had their physical ailments discounted because they are seen as possibly being due to the person's psychosis. Some are also referred to services that deal only with their mental illness. It has been found that smoking also contributes to this morbidity and lower life expectancy. People with schizophrenia often find the calming effects of smoking to be self-medicating. The smoking rate for people with schizophrenia is around 70 per cent compared with the national smoking rate of 13 per cent, and more holistic work needs to be done to address these issues.

It is estimated that 50 per cent of Australians who have a serious mental illness are not getting the treatment they need, which is part of the problem in raising awareness about mental health in the community. People in need of help should not be afraid to seek it. Schizophrenia is now impacting on almost one in every 23 Australians. Put another way, it impacts on around one million Australians, including those with schizophrenia, their carers and family members. Rob Ramjan, Chief Executive Officer, Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW, said:

We categorically feel schizophrenia is one of the nation's most stigmatised mental illnesses. It is largely treatable. The myths around schizophrenia are such total nonsense. Many people with mental illness have a good quality of life.

Schizophrenia is a complex brain disorder that affects the normal functioning of someone's brain. People with this illness do not have a split personality—and treatment is out there. The fear around schizophrenia is very worrying. This fear hurts everybody involved. We have got to get rid of the demonization around schizophrenia. It is an illness that can be managed. A variety of medical and other types of support are available. We know they work.

The work of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW is fundamentally important to destigmatising the illness of schizophrenia and in providing services to so many families. The fellowship was founded some 30 years ago and it has had a significant impact on the lives of people with mental illness and their carers, some of whom are joining us today for the parliamentary luncheon. Their consistent efforts across a broad range of mental health services, including daily living supports, peer support groups, clubhouse programs, employment services, mental health respite and carer support are to be commended. Indeed, their efforts represent a significant contribution to mental health care in this State, and it is a record of which we can all be proud.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW plays an important role as an advocate for individuals, consumers, carers and workers and I am certain that through their continued commitment, and the support of this House, they will fulfil their mission to improve the circumstances of people with serious mental illness, their relatives and carers as well as the professionals who work in this area. Through a strong, sustainable and effective health system, in which non-government organisations like the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW have an integral role, working in partnership with the Government to meet the needs of people experiencing mental illness and their families and carers, we will ensure the best mental health outcomes for the people of New South Wales. I place on record my thanks to the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW for its work in organising Schizophrenia Awareness Week. Last weekend I was also proud to take part in the Schizophrenia Symposium and, as I mentioned earlier, I will be joining the parliamentary luncheon today.

These events are so important in raising awareness in the broader community and for bringing together consumers, carers and professionals to address the issue of mental health and its destigmatisation. The symposium was addressed by many practitioners and experts in the mental health field, including the chair of the National Mental Health Commission, Professor Allan Fels; the chief executive officer of the Primary Health Network, Dr Michael Moore; Neuroscience Research Australia [NeuRA], University of New South Wales, Professor Cyndi Shannon Weickert and Professor Thomas Weickert; Pioneer Clubhouse, one of the great services provided by the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW, consumer speaker Sissi Ervasti; carer Sheila Openshaw; Eddie Bartnik, Strategic Adviser National Disability Insurance Scheme; and Dr Kate Holland, University of Canberra.

The object of the symposium is to come up with new and innovative ideas and to share people's experiences as to what works. I take this opportunity to thank in particular Pam Bruce from the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW. Pam came to the fellowship as a carer after the passing of her son who had suffered with schizophrenia. For the past 25 to 30 years she has dedicated her life to making sure that she can make a difference to people who live with schizophrenia, their families and carers. Pam has such a compelling story to share. She is an inspiration and a treasure not only of that community but also of New South Wales. I was lucky enough to see Pam on my way into the Chamber. She will also be attending the parliamentary luncheon today, which will be addressed by the chair of the Mental Health Council of Australia, Jennifer Westacott.

Events like the Schizophrenia Awareness Week and today's parliamentary luncheon are important tools in helping to create an awareness of mental illness. It is interesting to note the prevalence of mental health in our community. Approximately 230,000 people in New South Wales, or 3 per cent, live with a severe mental illness; approximately 340,000 people in New South Wales, or 5 per cent, live with a moderate mental illness; approximately 670,000 people, or 9 per cent, live with a mild mental illness; and 83 per cent of people in New South Wales have no diagnosed mental illness. We also know that at some stage approximately 50 per cent of the population will suffer from a mental illness.

So it is not necessarily an area of categorisation where people are on a band for ever. It is important to note that people who live their life with mental illness often go through different bands of mental illness. One in five Australians experience mental illness within any one year. Unfortunately, the figures for those who commit suicide are harrowing. I attended a forum this week with the shadow Minister, Tania Mihailuk, which particularly addressed men's suicide. Men are three times more likely than women to take their own lives and, unfortunately, the figures for men's suicide have been increasing in recent years.

Mental illness affects not only those people who suffer from it but also their families and carers. It has been estimated that 2.7 million workdays are lost each year because of mental illness and that 54 per cent of the New South Wales mental health budget is spent on inpatient care. Those figures are changing as we try to address the problem earlier by way of a primary care model more than an institutionalised hospital care model. As the Mental Health Commissioner remarked the other day, in many ways mental illness is a young person's disease because 50 per cent of lifetime mental illness is present by the age of 14 and 75 per cent by the age of 24. Unfortunately, suicide is the leading cause of death of young people in our community.

As discussed before in regard to the high morbidity rate for those who suffer mental illness compared to the rest of the population, it is not necessarily because of the mental condition of a person but because they do not have a healthy body and mind. Half of the number of people with psychosis have metabolic syndrome, which hugely affects mortality rates, and one-third are at risk of a cardiovascular event within five years. A quarter of people in New South Wales live outside major cities, but 91 per cent of psychiatrists have their main practice in a major city. That is a challenge in providing primary care models and being able to treat people where they live.

As part of this response the New South Wales Government has introduced Living Well, which is a 10-year vision for reform in mental health care in New South Wales. It came about after a long consultation period and it was spearheaded by the Mental Health Commission in New South Wales, which consulted more than 2,000 people and organisations in developing the approach. It is a whole-of-life and whole-of-government approach to mental health care in New South Wales and it is modelled on the principles of recovery and person-centred care,

ensuring that the individual is at the heart of the system and that it is not the system at the heart of care. The New South Wales Government undertook to take on all of the recommendations of that report, and in launching that plan the Premier said:

The NSW Government today committed to a once-in-a-generation overhaul of mental health care service delivery ... The Government has accepted all actions outlined in the Commission's plan.

As part of that plan, the New South Wales Government wants to improve mental health services and the wellbeing of the community, particularly in partnership with non-government organisations, consumers and carers, to deliver better lives for people with mental illness, their families and carers. That is part of building a world-class community-based mental health care service in New South Wales so that people with mental illness can live a better life. As part of that plan there is a \$1.7 billion commitment for mental health in 2015-16 and the reform is being delivered through a \$115 million boost to the budget for mental health over three years.

Our Government is committed to growth and reform in mental health services and it places a high priority on ensuring the proper development of a full range of community mental health services as we continue reform. The Government has been working hard to create the building blocks of reform to shift the balance from hospital-based care to community-based care. Hospital care will always be an important option for those needing a higher level of care, such as people with schizophrenia. However, evidence shows that mental health care should be recovery-focused. Care should be provided in the least restrictive setting, close to home where possible, with minimal disruption to a person's family, community supports, networks and relationships. These need to be supported by high-quality and responsive hospital services.

The reforms are focused on improving five key areas: strengthening prevention and early intervention; a greater focus on community-based care; developing a more responsive system through improved specialist services for people with complex needs; working together to deliver person-centred care, including better integration between mental health services, mainstream health, justice and human services and Australian government-funded services; and building a better health system. The Government is investing significantly in ensuring that these reforms can be delivered. One of the exciting programs being delivered is LikeMind, which currently has two pilot sites in Penrith and Seven Hills, with another two commencing this year. LikeMind is an innovative model of integrated care, providing triage, assessment, treatment, care coordination and discharge planning for people experiencing mental illness.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship has particularly worked on the Family and Carer Mental Health Program. That program provides education, training and individual support services to families and carers of people with mental illness. The Schizophrenia Fellowship's Carer Assist program is the only service that has been in place since the beginning of the Family and Carer Mental Health Program. The Carer Assist program will receive \$2.2 million in 2015-16 to deliver its successful suite of initiatives in five local health districts across New South Wales: Sydney, South Western Sydney, Southern NSW, Murrumbidgee and Hunter New England. It is important that we hear from those people who have a lived experience of mental illness and put them at the centre of the program. I commend this motion to the House and thank the Schizophrenia Fellowship in particular for its work across the community.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (12:36): I support the motion and congratulate the Hon. Scott Farlow on recognising the Schizophrenia Fellowship and Schizophrenia Awareness Week. The Schizophrenia Fellowship is an important organisation in New South Wales, which deals with some of the more difficult cases of schizophrenia in this State. It has long been a strong advocate for patients, their families and the community in relation to mental health. I have spoken at length about the Schizophrenia Fellowship in motions that we have put before this Chamber relating to section 14 of the Mental Health Act and best interest capacity-based treatment of patients with mental illness. Section 14 of the Mental Health Act comes to the fore in cases of schizophrenia. I have spoken at length in the House about the case of Anthony Waterlow, which is just one example of where we need to reform the Act.

While we have the opportunity to talk once again about mental health issues, I again urge this House to follow up on the actions that this House took in the last Parliament when we asked the Government to hold a public inquiry into section 14 best interest capacity-based mental health treatment to ensure that not only those people who have a recognised mental illness are treated but also those people who do not realise they have a mental illness or do not have the capacity to recognise they have a mental illness and therefore do not get treated and are denied health treatment that could make their life so much better. Mental illnesses are very difficult for the people who have them; they feel isolated because they are disenfranchised from the community.

Particularly with schizophrenia, it is not only treatment with drugs but also the psychotherapy that goes with it that can make all the difference in the world. To great credit, in 2012 psychotherapy visits were introduced,

and I am pleased to see that the current Federal Government has increased the number of visits allowed, which had been reduced to 10, to 16 visits. That is such an important element in getting people back to work.

The Government is always announcing reviews into the disability support pension, but it is important to acknowledge that the majority of people thrown off the disability support pension under the last review were people under the age of 35 who suffered from mental illnesses. Because of its recurrent nature, a person with mental illness may present on one day as being capable of working but the next day be incapable of working. It is extraordinarily difficult to have a strict regime for people with mental illness. I urge my colleagues opposite and all Federal colleagues to take that into consideration when discussing the disability support pension. People may make a judgement about someone on the street who may have a serious illness that one cannot see.

The other area of concern to people within the mental health regime is the shift towards non-government organisations in the treatment of people with mental illness. In the past crisis teams have always been at the front line in helping people with mental illness. Often families and carers have to deal with quite violent reactions and difficult circumstances. Nurses on crisis teams have told me that it is a seven-day wait for an appointment in their regions. That is a completely unacceptable response for families with a person who may be violent. Given that the Department of Health says it has no records of crisis teams attending mental health call-outs to police, it is becoming more apparent that the frontline response in our mental health services is now falling to police, not to where it should be—within the Health portfolio.

Again I ask members in this Chamber to give consideration to a review of section 14 of the Mental Health Act so that we look at the best interest capacity base while of course preserving people's civil liberties; they should never be trampled on. It is far too easy to do that with people with mental illness. At the end of the day, people with serious medical conditions—medical conditions they do not control—need our help. It is remiss of us as politicians to leave them untreated when their lives could be so much better. I thank the Schizophrenia Fellowship for all the work and constant advocacy it does. I am pleased that members of the fellowship are present in the Parliament today for a luncheon. I urge them to continue their good work.

[Business interrupted.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): I acknowledge the 15 members of the Berry Country Women's Association who are present in the public gallery, guests of the member for Kiama. We all recognise that they live in the best part of the world. Welcome to the Parliament.

Motions

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK

[Business resumed.]

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (12:43): Society has come a long way in understanding mental health problems and breaking down the stigmas attached to them. As the motion states, unfortunately schizophrenia is still widely misunderstood and misconceptions about the illness remain. Too many of those affected by schizophrenia do not seek clinical help because of this stigma, and that is a real shame. Awareness weeks like the one we are acknowledging today help to break down this stigma by spreading knowledge and, most of all, understanding.

The good work of groups such as the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW to break down this stigma is to be commended and it is an honour to speak on the motion today. Schizophrenia is a devastating yet misunderstood mental illness with wide-reaching social and economic impacts. It ranks among the top 10 causes of disability in developed countries worldwide. It is the most severe of the mental illnesses and can affect all spheres of life, including perception, thought, judgement, mood, drive, and ultimately personality. Sufferers often profoundly withdraw from their family and friends and experience delusions and hallucinations. Not only do they withdraw from their friends and family, but because of the stigma and lack of understanding, society withdraws from them as well.

In my community down south many people live with schizophrenia. We talk about the stigma of mental illness and I talk about it particularly in regional areas. I know that a lot of small communities like mine are like tribes; we look after people and we look out for people. We try to reach out and support in any way we can those who suffer from exacerbations of their mental illness from time to time. That is one of the great things about living in a regional and rural town in New South Wales. Schizophrenia is 10 times more common than AIDS, cot death and melanoma combined. It is a major cause of suicide with higher rates than the general population. Life

expectancy of people with schizophrenia is reduced by up to 18 years. Approximately 15 people in every thousand will be affected over their lifetime. This will lead to well over a million Australians, including family and friends, being directly involved. I, like so many in this Chamber and so many in the community, have a personal experience with family with mental illness. We all know the challenges and we all share them. Awareness weeks like this allow not only the people suffering from the illness but also their families and carers to take part in more education and understanding, which will lead to better health outcomes.

In addition to the profound emotional cost to families, schizophrenia costs the Australian community approximately \$2.6 billion per annum in both direct health costs and loss of productivity; 85 percent of sufferers receive welfare benefits. I have talked also about medical research. We continue to search for ways to understand, better treat, prevent and cure schizophrenia. Just last month the Hon. Pru Goward announced \$2.5 million to fund a landmark merger between Australia's leading schizophrenia research organisations—Neuroscience Research Australia and the Schizophrenia Research Institute. The merger gives the two institutes the combined forces of their shared resources, expertise and knowledge. The importance of medical research in continuing to understand and fight schizophrenia and other mental illnesses is paramount. I have seen firsthand the impact of medical research in the cancer sphere.

I remember one of my first visits after I became a registered nurse and worked for the Sydney Home Nursing Service. I was really lucky that I had a real interest in cancer and palliative care. One of my first ladies—I remember her to this day—was Mrs Jenkins. She was a beautiful lady, and I still have a beautiful vase that she gave me. When I use it I am always so careful not to break it because it means so much to me. I remember when I first went to see her she had advanced bowel cancer. She had very extensive liver and lung metastases. I knew when I saw her that her days were numbered, so I knew that my job was to make her as comfortable as I could and to make her life as enjoyable as I could. I hope I did that, along with her family. Now if I went to see someone who had a primary bowel cancer and liver metastases they may very well be a candidate for surgery. We have come so far with medical research in areas like cancer that we can do that as well for mental illness. That is why medical research is so important. It makes me very proud to be part of a Government that also values research. I commend the Minister's recent announcement.

With almost four million people in Australia likely to experience a mental illness in any one year, the work of those involved in services in this area is as important as ever. Mental illness is the third largest cause of disease burden in Australia after cancer and cardiovascular disease, and the largest single cause of non-fatal burden. The Government established the Mental Health Commission, which developed a 10-year road map. That plan was adopted and released by the Government in 2014. It indicated five key areas through which to better improve mental health services in New South Wales: A greater focus on community-based care, which I highly commend; strengthening prevention and early intervention, which we know is so important and which leads to better outcomes; developing a more responsive system—and we must always strive to do better; working together to deliver person-centred care; and obviously building a better system.

The Government has invested \$1.7 billion in mental health in 2015-16. That is a committed effort. A further \$15.5 million will strengthen workforce support services, innovation and research into mental health. The amazing Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, is doing extraordinary work as she oversees the building of new hospitals across regional New South Wales. The Government is ensuring that these new hospitals have mental health facilities to provide the best possible help to those suffering from acute mental illness. I draw to the attention of members the wonderful new hospitals in Bega, Wagga Wagga and Byron Bay. They include purpose-built facilities designed to assist in the treatment of people suffering from acute episodes.

I know that the Deputy President in the Chair, the Hon. Paul Green, has experience working in an emergency department. It is important to have the right facility to be able to treat people in the right way, responsibly, with the dignity and respect they deserve. I commend the Minister for providing these fantastic facilities. This is about providing the best possible support to people living with mental illness. There are no easy solutions. We all acknowledge that. It is important to focus on both prevention and early intervention, providing both community- and hospital-based treatment, and rehabilitation services. It is also important to ensure that there are opportunities for those living with mental illness to access housing and to engage in education, employment and, most importantly, social interaction.

The motion commends the role of non-government organisations in the mental health sphere. It is important to reflect on their contribution. The non-government sector plays many roles in mental health care, from advocacy to service delivery. The Government's plan acknowledges the important role that those agencies play. I strongly believe that patients benefit when government and non-government service providers are able to work together. An exciting development in this area is the creation of LikeMind centres, a fantastic example of government and non-government partnership that puts the patient at the centre of accessible, flexible and responsive care.

LikeMind centres provide a range of support services for those living with mental illness. Anyone can walk in without an appointment or a referral from a health practitioner or organisation. People who walk through the door seeking help are triaged. They are assessed and a care plan is developed to help them stay well. LikeMind centres are one-stop shops to take care of all their needs, such as finding a doctor, accessing drug and alcohol services and housing services or receiving help with the justice system. Instead of having to go from service to service to access treatment—that is, if they have been able to identify those service providers in the first place—people can receive assistance in one place. People will have to tell their story only once, and a care plan will be developed in the one place, with the input of a number of different services. This is of particular interest to me, after heading the recent Legislative Council inquiry into service coordination—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Hear, hear!

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I thank the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps very much for his acknowledgement of such a fantastic report. There are already people on the ground doing fantastic work in mental health services, but there is a need to bring people together to share information. The goal is to put the client at the centre of that care. By doing that we will achieve good outcomes. This is another initiative supported by the New South Wales Government that is working well. I am excited about it. It is moving mental health care to where it needs to be. Minister Dominello is doing incredible work in bringing government and non-government organisations to the table to discuss how they can work better to make the client the central focus. That is exciting work. Although it may not grab headlines, this is the sort of innovation that will change service delivery.

The provision of accessible and comprehensive assistance means that those living with mental health conditions can access the help they need before they need to be hospitalised. Two LikeMind centres are already open, in Seven Hills and Penrith. I look forward to the opening of the Orange LikeMind Centre in July. That will be another great regional service. The Orange facility is the first regional centre to be opened and is the result of a \$2.3 million investment by the New South Wales Government. It will complement other services in Orange, including headspace, and provide services to people in the Central West. With The Nationals in the Government coalition, people in regional New South Wales know they will have access to the latest models of care, just like their city counterparts. I commend the Hon. Scott Farlow for his motion. Mental illness—and schizophrenia in particular—does not have to be a life sentence. Breaking down the stigma and improving our services and facilities gives those living with mental illness the best opportunity for a fulfilling life.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS (12:54): I acknowledge the Hon. Scott Farlow for bringing this very important motion to the attention of the House. This year Schizophrenia Awareness Week activities were held from 14 May to 2 June. I note that there has been a function in Parliament House today. Schizophrenia is a common illness that affects between 1 per cent and 3 per cent of the population. It is a condition characterised by disturbances in a person's thoughts, perceptions, emotions and behaviour. It is a complex condition that affects each individual differently. Taking into account the effects of schizophrenia on family and friends, the illness affects the lives of at least one million Australians. Despite this prevalence, schizophrenia is widely misunderstood.

There is a general perception in the community that schizophrenia is untreatable and hopeless. This is inaccurate. Schizophrenia is a common and treatable health condition. Treatments, both medical and psychosocial, are becoming more effective and early intervention programs are demonstrating encouraging outcomes. The problem with the misconceptions in the community about schizophrenia is that they lead to stigmatisation, which in turn prevents people from seeking and receiving the help that is available to them. Research shows that 30 per cent of carers avoid telling others about their situation and that 60 per cent of people have experienced negative and offensive attitudes from others.

I commend the efforts of the Schizophrenia Fellowship to raise awareness of schizophrenia in the community. I also acknowledge the work being done through NOUS, a recovery program that provides support for people with a mental illness and their carers. It is aimed primarily at people from Greek and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The word "nous" is a Greek word meaning "mind". NOUS is based in Burwood and provides an accommodation service in partnership with Evolve Housing. NOUS provides individual support to tenants with a mental illness in the transitional accommodation service and helps individuals move to more long-term independent accommodation, with support during and after transition.

Services such as NOUS that recognise the importance of developing culturally appropriate services are vital if we are to address the needs of all citizens in our diverse society. I also acknowledge the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils in Australia [FECCA]. In the November 2015 issue of its magazine, *Australian Mosaic*, it looked at mental health and a range of other health issues that affect culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities. One of the articles, "Mental Health Stigma—Influencing help seeking behaviour in CALD communities", is by Penny Antonopoulos, who has worked in health and community care for more than 15 years as a health education officer with NSW Health. The introduction to the article says:

Penny has a wealth of experience in community development and has played a key role in the development of service partnerships, collaborative working relationships and service sector capacity building as manager of the St George and Sutherland Multicultural Access Project and CALD Community Care Program ...

These are important programs, collaborations and partnerships. For people in CALD communities, it is important that mental health services take into account the language barrier. I have spoken often about the barrier of language for older people from CALD communities. For Penny and the many others who work in multicultural health it is important to target resources as the population ages. Many people of non-English-speaking background have difficulty understanding medical terms. For them, speaking about an illness may also be a cultural taboo. Building programs that take into account their language difficulties and cultural taboos benefits people from CALD communities. I thank everyone who provides care and support to people with schizophrenia. I encourage everyone to continue to raise awareness of this condition. Let us bring this condition and the people it affects out of the shadows so that everyone receives the treatment, care and support they deserve.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Paul Green): I will now leave the Chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Rulings

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The PRESIDENT (14:30): This morning Mr Jeremy Buckingham gave a number of notices of motions. Points of order were taken in relation to two of those notices of motions, dealing with ethanol and protest laws. I reserved my ruling. Standing Order 91 (1) provides that a member may not reflect on any resolution or vote of the House, unless moving for its rescission. Of course, there are difficulties with the idea of rescission of a vote of the House in relation to a bill that has since become law. The appropriate form of words in relation to a bill would be to call for its repeal.

There are President's rulings dealing with Standing Order 91 (1). Those rulings provide that, whilst a member may not reflect upon a vote of the House, this does not prevent a member referring to a vote or a matter previously decided by the House, or referring to community reaction to a decision of the House, provided the member is not critical of the actions of the House. There are elements of the notices of motions given this morning by Mr Jeremy Buckingham about both ethanol and protest laws which offend against Standing Order 91 (1). I therefore recommend that the member seek advice from the Clerk about amending these notices to conform with the rules of the House. Otherwise they will not appear on the *Notice Paper* for the next sitting day.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I advise honourable members that in the absence of the Minister for Roads and Maritime Services I will deal with any questions relating to his portfolios and those in the Legislative Assembly that he represents.

The PRESIDENT: Order! According to sessional order, proceedings are now interrupted for questions.

Questions Without Notice

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:32): I direct my question to the Minister for Disability Services. Given that the number of students with a disability in New South Wales enrolled in TAFE has fallen by 11,500 since 2012, does the Minister stand by his Government's claim that he is assisting and supporting students with disabilities?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (14:33): Absolutely I stand by that claim, and the Government continues to do so. The Leader of the Opposition failed to take into account that TAFE is not the only option for people with disability. People with disability have the right to choose the courses they wish to undertake and whether they wish to go to direct employment. Increasing employment and employment opportunities for people with disability is one of the major aspects of this Government. The Government recognises that education is an integral part of the growth and development of young people with disability. That is why it has introduced a Smart and Skilled initiative to support vocational training. This initiative enables people in New South Wales to get the skills they need to find a job and to advance their careers.

Beginning in 2106, students with disability eligible for Smart and Skilled training will not pay fees for any course they undertake up to a diploma level. In addition, other students who are interested in entering disability services have access to subsidised fees. TAFE NSW supports students with disability through specialist teacher

consultants and assistance staff. Support services include tutorial support in and out of class, staff who can act as note-takers, providing software and hardware such as speech-to-text software voice recognition, and adapted work stations.

Arrangements have been put in place to ensure a coordinated approach between the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services [FACS] and TAFE NSW to help people with disability to realise their vocational goals. A memorandum of understanding between FACS and TAFE NSW is in place to support young people with disability wishing to undertake TAFE studies as part of their post-school program. The memorandum of understanding sets out arrangements and responsibilities of FACS and TAFE NSW to ensure the provision of appropriate vocational education and training for young people with disability. Provisions such as reasonable adjustment, assistance with the enrolment processes, tutorial support, adaptive technology equipment and personal care support are clearly set out. These supports ensure the best outcomes for young people with disability.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:36): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by outlining any evidence he has that the 11,500 persons who are no longer enrolled in TAFE are enrolled with other training providers, as he seemed to claim?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (14:36): I am happy to take the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition on notice and come back to him with a response.

YMCA SERVICES

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (14:36): My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is working with the YMCA for the betterment of the community?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (14:36): On behalf of Premier Mike Baird, I recently had the opportunity to attend a business breakfast at the YMCA to launch its newly published conversation book titled *Healthier Happier Connected Communities*. The book outlines the services provided by the YMCA, its achievements and ongoing commitment to the community, and how its inclusive programs have enriched the lives of young people. With a history of more than 160 years, the YMCA has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to the cohesion and health of people in New South Wales. This is achieved by assisting people to live healthier, happier lives through various community-based programs involving both sport and recreation. Some of the services provided by the YMCA include camps, before and after school care, community recreation and sporting facilities, swimming pools and youth services.

At the event I had the great pleasure of speaking with six members from the YMCA in Broken Hill, the "Y" men. These men, who have between them a combined service of 170 years, shared inspirational stories of the work they do to support people in their community. One of the many programs operated by the Broken Hill club is a mobility equipment program. Through this program they sell mobility equipment to people in need for as little as one dollar. Through fundraising efforts, they have also provided two \$5,000 scholarships to local young people attending university for the first time. They purchased equipment for a child with disability, a piano for the local hospital, and made many other donations to support the local community.

As part of the national YMCA Swim-A-Thon, Broken Hill raised more than \$16,000 to support people with disability in their community to access their pool. People with disability often require specially qualified instructors, or accessible facilities, and the funds raised will support people with disability to learn to swim or enjoy the water safely. The Government understands the benefit that sport and recreation play in the lives of people with disability. That is why this year my department is providing the YMCA with total recurrent funding of more than \$600,000 to support people with disability to attend day programs, supporting community inclusion and flexible respite for children, including out-of-school care and vacation care.

YMCA is committed to disability inclusion, which is evident through its delivery of inclusive programs that consist of a full suite of health, fitness, sport and recreation activities. It encourages participation, support connection, independence and choice, and helps build self-esteem of people with disabilities. This inclusive approach is consistent with the New South Wales Disability Inclusion Act and the principles of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. YMCA works successfully in partnership with government, business and the community for the benefit of the people of New South Wales. As Minister for Disability Services and Minister responsible for youth and volunteering, I am delighted to see YMCA running inclusive programs that are tailored to the needs of people with disabilities. I thank YMCA for its ongoing commitment to assist people with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives with choice, independence and control.

ROOKWOOD GENERAL CEMETERIES RESERVE TRUST

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:40): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Why are there different prices for non-Christian burials within Rookwood general cemetery, and do these differences contravene the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:40): Pricing at Rookwood Cemetery and the Rookwood General Cemetery Trust area in particular have been included as part of the review the Government requested, and the administrator will be looking at those issues. Since we have brought in the new structure, pricing for burials is in the hands of the different trusts—whether the burials be in the Catholic section or in the general section. The interim administrator will review that matter in response to the investigation that I as Minister asked to be conducted. As I said, pricing was one issue raised with us. We asked the consultants to look at it and the administrator will address it as part of the response.

BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (14:42): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Is the New South Wales Government considering establishing an amnesty for breaches of the Native Vegetation Act 2003 and will he rule one out?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:42): As I said in answer to a question on this topic earlier in the week, our proposals are in the draft legislation that is currently out for public review and consultation. We could not be any more open about this. We are genuinely talking with stakeholders and industry. What will be in or out of the legislation will be determined by this House.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Ruling it in.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Members opposite who want me to start ruling things in and out now obviously do not understand the meaning of the word "consultation".

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As part of our consultation we are speaking to stakeholder groups about the options for this legislation. We will bring the result of that consultation back for further discussion within Government and then we will bring it to this House for debate. We went to the 2015 election saying that we would do this. That can only be applauded by all stakeholder groups. Everyone is invited to—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The question asked about breaches of the Native Vegetation Act and possible amnesties. The Minister has not yet referred to either of those issues. I ask him to be more relevant to the question that was asked.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As I was saying, everything that we are looking at is being covered off by the—

The Hon. John Ajaka: Point of order: Mr Jeremy Buckingham wants the Minister to answer the question but he will not cease interjecting. It is impossible for the Minister to remain generally relevant when there are continual interjections.

The PRESIDENT: Mr Jeremy Buckingham has already been called to order once. I do not want to have to call him to order for a second time. The Minister has the call. I ask Mr Jeremy Buckingham to listen in silence to the answer to the question his colleague asked.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: As I said, we are having an open discussion with all stakeholders. As part of that discussion people are asking questions such as that asked by Dr Mehreen Faruqi about amnesties. We look forward to the day when we can replace the current legislation that has led to a decline in biodiversity in the State and placed unfair burdens on farmers. Until that time the legislation remains in force and should be conformed with by members of the rural sector. I am sure they will do that. Our farmers welcome trust being placed back in them through our proposed balanced legislation that will respect their role in the preservation of the environment. Our reform package is out for public consultation—like I have said when asked about it in this House on numerous occasions. I encourage all members to provide a submission to that process.

If The Greens want to suggest that our farmers would behave in any way that would compromise that, it shows the disrespect of The Greens for our rural sector. That is exactly why we are engaging the sector as part of the solution. It is time that we stopped locking up things and leaving them. It is time to implement proper biodiversity management practices. We will do that by including our farmers as part of the solution. Even when

we want them to set aside pieces of vegetation for the greater good of our biodiversity we will not just lock up those areas. We will manage the areas properly by controlling weeds and pests. That is good practice and good management. Members opposite do not understand that. As I said yesterday, I welcome the debate in this House. I welcome further scrutiny on this. [Time expired.]

BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (14:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to support the beekeeping industry in New South Wales?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:48): On 13 May I had the pleasure of attending the NSW Apiarists' Association annual conference in Albury. It was a great opportunity to meet our beekeepers and to thank them for their dedication and hard work in all they do to keep the bees busy, the honey flowing and the crops pollinated. New South Wales has the largest beekeeping sector in Australia. It accounts for about 45 per cent of the national honey crop and the industry contributes about \$36 million annually to the State's economy. Members might remember that I have a keen interest in our beekeeping sector that stretches back to my time studying at Hawkesbury Agricultural College. I have recently got into recreational beekeeping with my son. We have a couple of registered hives.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I cannot hear the Minister.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: At the conference I was pleased to reiterate the New South Wales Government's strong support for the beekeeping industry. We need this industry to remain economically viable, sustainable and productive not just for the future of our beekeepers but also for the invaluable contribution the sector makes to pollination of some of our key flowering agricultural and native plants. Some horticultural industries such as almonds, apples, pears, blueberries and cherries depend almost totally on bees for pollination. There has been a significant increase in the production of blueberries on the New South Wales North Coast, which is totally dependent on honey bee pollination services. Honey bees are also critical in pollinating economically important crops like canola, fava beans and lucerne.

There can be no doubt about the one issue that is front of mind for our apiarists: land access. There is an undeniably inconsistent approach to the issue of land access for apiarists to public land in New South Wales. This ranges from pricing to the administrative process and length of tenure of access. How Local Land Services goes about allowing access onto travelling stock reserves is different from the Forestry Corporation's approach to allowing access to State forests, which is different again from the approach of National Parks and Crown Lands. As yet I have been unable to find a good reason why there are so many different forms of access across government. I know that a trial auction that the Forestry Corporation undertook on a small selection caused alarm in the commercial beekeeping sector. The pause button has now been pressed on those trials while we undertake a body of work within government. What we want to achieve is simple. We want to have a consistent policy for the transparent allocation of permits across public lands and different land management agencies, and also to provide greater certainty for the commercial beekeeping sector.

Recently the Department of Primary Industries circulated a discussion paper that it drafted at my request to the NSW Apiarists' Association and other key land management agencies. Once submissions have been received from those parties, the Department of Primary Industries and I will then work within government to achieve a consensus position. The Department of Primary Industries is playing a key role in supporting the growth of the beekeeping sector while also protecting its precious biosecurity status to ensure that we keep out pests and diseases like varroa mite. The "bee team" has five dedicated positions, which are bolstered by 18 biosecurity officers across the Department of Primary Industries who are also authorised to undertake regulatory work for bees. It has recently published the *Queen Bee Breeding AgGuide*, which has been developed to help beekeepers successfully breed healthy and productive queen bees. The Department of Primary Industries also provides vocational education and training to the beekeeping industry delivered through Tocal College. Our aim is to ensure that the New South Wales beekeeping industry remains viable, sustainable and productive.

KANGAROO MEAT CONSUMPTION

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (14:52): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries. Has the NSW Food Authority conducted a robust and detailed analysis on kangaroo meat sold for human consumption? If so, did this analysis test for E. coli, salmonellosis and other relevant contaminants as well as acetic acid, which make it delicious. If E. coli was detected, was typing done for the specification of the E. coli? If no such analyses have been done, will the Minister authorise the appropriate testing to be conducted?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:53): When it comes to the safety of our food—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Government backbenchers will come to order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: When it comes to food safety and the kangaroo meat industry the NSW Food Authority has an excellent record. About two trips ago when I visited the NSW Food Authority, I ran into an inspector who had just returned from an inspection at a kangaroo meat facility. Indeed, when I was asked this question about the role of the NSW Food Authority and kangaroo meat, I was reminded of that chance encounter. I am aware of media discussion regarding an ongoing campaign intended to bring attention to alleged cruelty in the kangaroo meat sector. I am also aware of claims, repeated in the media, that kangaroo meat contains pathogens that can be harmful to humans.

First, let me say that as kangaroos are native fauna, the Office of Environment and Heritage manages the commercial harvesting program in New South Wales. This program is intended to ensure that kangaroos are culled humanely and that kangaroo populations are sustainable. Requirements for the humane slaughter of kangaroos are specified in the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Commercial Purposes. This code of practice is prescribed as a condition of licence by the Office of Environment and Heritage. The risk that meat for consumption will come into contact with pathogenic organisms such as salmonella or E. coli is not a risk that is specific to kangaroo meat; this is a known risk factor for many types of meat and other food products.

A key component of the role of the Food Authority is to work closely with industry in New South Wales across all points of the supply chain to minimise the risks posed by such pathogens. For the kangaroo meat industry, the Food Authority licenses kangaroo harvesters and processors in New South Wales and those facilities must be able to show traceability of product throughout the supply chain from harvest to the plate. All kangaroo game meat processed, manufactured or sold in New South Wales must comply with the Australian Standard for Hygienic Production of Game Meat for Human Consumption. The Food Authority also enforces established handling and storage requirements for kangaroo meat to further reduce any risks due to microorganisms. While the Food Authority has strict systems and requirements in place to ensure that kangaroo meat is safe, it is important that all raw meats are cooked and stored at the correct temperature. This helps to reduce the presence of any microorganisms that may be present in the meat and to prevent microorganisms forming after it is cooked.

Government authorities, including the Food Authority, also regularly inspect game meat processing facilities, field depots and harvesters—for example, the chance encounter I had with the inspector to which I referred earlier. The authority's audit and inspection program ensures that kangaroo harvesters, chillers and processors comply with the food safety requirements set out in the specific food safety program that each business is required to have. The minimum inspection frequency varies for different types of facilities. Harvesters are inspected once every two years, chillers are inspected—*[Time expired.]*

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS (14:57): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Earlier this week the Minister told Parliament that the Baird Government would ensure that part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] funding packages would provide support to assist TAFE students. Is the Minister aware that the NDIS will not address TAFE cuts that affect students with disabilities as the April 2013 Council of Australian Governments [COAG] agreement is clear that vocational education and training providers and not the NDIS are responsible for providing supports to assist people with disability to achieve their education and training goals?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (14:58): I thank the member for her question but she fails to appreciate that—

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: No, it is here.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: The member fails to appreciate that persons with a disability who enter into a plan to obtain the funding that they need to achieve all that they want to achieve—

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: It is not.

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

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: A plan and funding based on functionality that provides support to assist persons with a disability are part and parcel of all other funding provided to persons with a disability. The NDIS does not stand on its own; the NDIS works in conjunction with other facilities and departments and with other funding that is available to people with a disability. It is no different in relation to education, health and mental health. A person's funding needs are based on that. It is taken into account when a plan is prepared. That is what

occurs to allow a person with a disability to achieve the best outcomes. It is taken into account and it is what the planners do. That is how it works.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS (14:59): I ask the Minister a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer when he said, "That is how it works"?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:00): I rely on my earlier answer. I add that the New South Wales Government, together with the NDIS, is ensuring that all people who commence the planning process and become NDIS participants are ready to develop plans that reflect their needs and aspirations through pre-planning information and supports. The NDIS will provide eligible participants with an individually funded package of reasonable and necessary supports tailored to their specific needs, goals and preferences. That is what I said.

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis: Not the agreement that you signed. You are cost shifting.

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the member wants to say anything further on this issue, she can make an adjournment speech.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Hon. LOU AMATO (15:01): My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister outline how the New South Wales Government is ensuring that people with a disability and their families are ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:01): What a good question. The foundation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme [NDIS] is choice and control for people with disability. For people with disability to have complete choice and control they need to know what they have to choose from. Ensuring that people with disability and their families are ready for the NDIS is a priority for the Baird Government. Last week I announced an additional \$3 million investment to support this.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: This is clearly a ministerial statement. The custom in this Chamber is that the Opposition is given equal time to respond to a ministerial statement.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I draw the member's attention to the standing orders. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: This investment will enable the NSW Consumer Development Fund, My Choice Matters, to continue until June 2018. My Choice Matters was created in 2012 and is administered by the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability. It helps people with disability and their families prepare for and participate in the NDIS through workshops, resources and e-learning tools such as My Learning Matters.

As at 31 December 2015, more than 17,000 people had directly benefited from participating in My Choice Matters and other capacity-building projects. As the Minister for Multiculturalism, I am pleased that all My Choice Matters activities aim for a minimum target of 25 per cent participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and 5 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In addition, the Get More Skills program has workshops tailored for Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Turkish communities as well as workshops for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers of children with an intellectual disability.

Ms Bik-Noc Pham is a person with disability who was born in Vietnam and has participated in the highly successful Run Projects initiative. The aim of Run Projects is to increase the capacity of people with disability to have more control in their lives by learning new skills or trying something different. Ms Pham came to Run Projects feeling shy, lonely and lacking self-confidence. Her goals were simple yet important. She made it clear that she wanted to build connections with other people through social and sporting groups; extend herself physically, emotionally and socially; build her self-confidence; and feel strong enough to look for full-time work. After completing the program, Ms Pham said it made a huge difference in her life. Ms Pham said she has now learnt to be confident, positive and happy with who she is.

As the Minister responsible for implementing the NDIS throughout New South Wales, this feedback confirms what we always knew: enabling people with disability to have choice and control allows them to achieve great things. Ms Pham's feedback is mirrored by other participants in My Choice Matters activities, who report increases in perceptions of their capacity, skills and confidence. I am pleased to advise the House that Ms Pham has now begun the My Choice Matters groundbreaking Become a Leader Online program. Become a Leader Online gives people with disability and their families skills in leadership that they can use in their own lives and

in their communities. Having attended the Become a Leader graduation ceremony, I can attest that the results demonstrated by the participants are nothing short of amazing. Ms Pham's experience with My Choice Matters amply demonstrates why this additional \$3 million commitment is so important in helping people with disability and their families get ready for the NDIS. It builds their capacity so that they, in the words of Ms Pham, "can have more choice, voice and control in their lives".

YOOGALI TRAFFIC LIGHTS

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (15:05): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism, representing the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight who represents the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Many constituents are concerned about the Yoogali intersection, which traverses Burley Griffin Way just outside of Griffith. This crossing is used daily by disabled students, their parents and teaching staff to access Griffith Post School Options. Due to the precarious angles and poor visibility of the intersection, it is difficult to safely judge oncoming traffic, which slows down in that area from 100 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour. Will the Minister advise the House what Roads and Maritime Services is doing to address the safety of this intersection, possibly by the installation of a set of traffic lights?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:06): I thank the member for his question. I know that he wants me, on behalf of the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, to refer the question to the Minister for Transport but I believe that it may come within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Roads. In any event, I will refer the question to both Ministers and come back with an answer for the member.

FORESTRY CORPORATION OPERATIONS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (15:07): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. What is the Minister's response to the families and businesses affected by the recent decision of the Forestry Corporation of NSW to slash jobs at its three workshops in Bombala, Bathurst and Batlow?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:07): I thank the member for her question. It is something that the Forestry Corporation has been looking at. The Forestry Corporation reviewed its management model for fleet and workshop services and determined that these can be delivered more effectively by an external provider. This is a decision that the board of the Forestry Corporation has taken as an operational matter, which it makes independent of me as portfolio Minister under the State Owned Corporations Act. The Forestry Corporation is proposing to appoint a fleet management organisation to oversee the fleet and to subcontract mechanical service repairs to maintain the fleet. The Forestry Corporation is currently consulting with its staff on this proposal. I was made aware that one of the potential options is that those staff may be picked up by the private contractor, but it is too early to confirm whether that will be the case at this stage. That is the situation to date.

AGRICULTURE MINISTERS FORUM

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (15:09): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on the key priorities for agriculture discussed at the 2016 Agriculture Ministers Forum [AGMIN]?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:09): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for her question. It was my pleasure to chair the meeting of agriculture and primary industries Ministers on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and AGMIN chair, the Hon. Barnaby Joyce, in New Zealand last month. The forum addressed a number of key priorities for the agriculture industry, starting with biosecurity systems in Australia and New Zealand as well as opportunities for us to work together to enhance and, where possible, align some of our programs.

Ministers agreed that it was the role of all States and Territories to promote Australia's strong biosecurity measures internationally and to highlight to communities the benefits of working together. Ministers questioned whether biosecurity risks in Australia sit within the broad responsibility not only of agriculture but also of health, trade and trade industries. We also discussed the next steps on taking a national approach to control programs to develop and maintain a consistent focus.

National programs, where possible to implement, would enable a thorough and decisive method of engagement for both agencies and communities across the country to maintain and manage biosecurity risks, with a dedicated common ethos and set of procedures. Among other topics discussed was the national program for the biological control of rabbits and the progress on its implementation. The use of an overseas strain of calicivirus

was discussed, with the planned release of the RHDV K5 strain as part of a long-term program to effectively combat the issue. Wild rabbits in Australia are not resistant to the K5 strain and its use in this country has been developed through consultation and collaboration by the Government with industry, research organisations and other States and Territories. It has been estimated that Australian agriculture loses more than \$115 million a year because of overgrazing by rabbits. This issue was discussed at this meeting, along with many State agriculture Ministers from the Labor Party. Imagine our surprise when we saw the mascot for Labor's animal welfare program going into the Federal election.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Point of order: The Minister knows that he should not be using props.

The PRESIDENT: Because Parliament has an oral tradition, it is generally the case that the use of any item in an illustrative sense in debate is unparliamentary. Even something as simple as a piece of paper is seen as what has been traditionally called a prop because it cannot as such be recorded in *Hansard*. Even though it is hard to consider a piece of paper as a prop, consistent with previous Presidents' rulings it is appropriate to suggest to the Minister that he does not have recourse to such an item while giving an answer. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I was surprised, along with others, that the visual logo chosen by the Federal Opposition for its animal welfare policy was a feral animal that many of the State and Commonwealth governments are trying to eradicate and one that is responsible for the loss of agricultural production in this State. Using a European-introduced rabbit as its logo for its animal welfare campaign shows that the people sitting in an office in Sydney looking for a nice fluffy logo for their policy are out of touch with the biosecurity risks and loss of production for primary producers across this country. They are out of touch at a State level—

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much noise from Government backbench members.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: —and what my counterparts in South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory are trying to eradicate ends up as the poster figure for the policy for the Federal Labor Party. Labor Party members are out of touch. It is disappointing and they should be condemned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (15:15): My question is directed to the Hon. John Ajaka, Acting Leader of the House, representing the Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird, and the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Paul Toole. Is it a fact that the forced council mergers were supposed to reduce council expenditure by the economy of size? Is it a fact that the new merged Northern Beaches Council has just announced it will spend \$148.5 million on staff in the next financial year, with a total cost of \$355.2 million? Is it a fact that the three former councils in the 2014-15 annual reports paid staff a total of \$119.8 million versus the proposed \$148 million? Will the Government therefore review its forced council mergers?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:16): I thank the member for his question. I will refer it to the Premier and come back with an answer.

FORESTRY CORPORATION OPERATIONS

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:16): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. In light of the Minister's previous answer on the removal of jobs at the three Forestry Corporation of NSW workshops in Bombala, Bathurst and Batlow, what is his response to community concerns that fewer employees will result in a reduced capacity to respond to bushfires and to engage in hazard reduction?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:17): The answer that I gave to the Hon. Courtney Houssos was in relation to the workshop staff. The board of the Forestry Corporation made that decision. It is an operational decision. I am sure that as part of that operational decision it would have considered all its responsibilities as part of its operations, including issues like fire prevention and suppression.

CARERS AWARDS

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (15:18): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. What is the New South Wales Government doing to acknowledge and celebrate carers in New South Wales?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:18): In our lifetime many of us are likely either to provide care for a family member or friend or need care ourselves. Without carers many people would not be able to remain living in their own home

and to participate in their community. In New South Wales alone there are more than 850,000 carers, of which an estimated 100,000 are young carers.

These carers are family members, friends, neighbours and work colleagues who provide unpaid support to people who need it because of disability, chronic illness, mental illness, dementia or ageing. To recognise and acknowledge carers for their tireless work, the New South Wales Government presents the New South Wales Carers Awards during Carers Week. Carers Week is celebrated nationally in the third week of October each year. It provides a platform from which to speak to the broader community about the work that carers do.

Last Friday I announced that the nominations for the 2016 New South Wales Carers Awards are now open. The awards raise community awareness of the work of unpaid carers and provide carers with the opportunity to share their story. Ten awards will be presented across five categories: Young Carer, Senior Carer, Family Carer, Carer Support Group and Carer Employer. I encourage everyone to nominate an exceptional carer or exceptional carer support group or other organisation before the nominations close on 10 July 2016. This year's recipients will be honoured at a prestigious awards ceremony where the 2016 New South Wales Carer of the Year will also be announced.

Not only do we celebrate our Carers Award recipients during Carers Week, we support local celebrations for carers across the State. The New South Wales Government funds Carers NSW to run a local grants program. Carer support groups and organisations can apply to receive \$250 to organise an event during Carers Week. Applications for these event grants will also close on 10 July 2016. In 2015 more than 330 events were organised for carers. They were attended by more than 5,000 carers, including more than 500 carers who had not previously identified themselves as a carer. Carers and the broader community can apply for a Carers Week grant or nominate a carer or organisation for a New South Wales Carers Award through our Care for a Carer website.

The Government continues to do more for carers in New South Wales. In 2014 it was my pleasure to launch the NSW Carers Strategy 2014-2019. The Carers Strategy is a five-year plan to improve the position of carers in New South Wales. It is being implemented through partnerships between government, community and private sector organisations and carers themselves. The strategy provides a broader context for the ongoing implementation of the New South Wales Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. This important legislative recognition has provided opportunities for carers to be more visible in the community. This year I consulted with carers and the broader community about the extent to which the Act has increased awareness of the contribution that carers make to our communities. My department is now evaluating feedback from that review.

The legislation, the Carers Strategy and the New South Wales Carers Awards improve the visibility of carers. These activities are working because carers tell us that they are experiencing greater recognition. Carers see themselves as ordinary people and would like us to see them that way too. But they need our recognition and our support. I encourage all members to promote the New South Wales Carers Awards.

BRUNSWICK HEADS BOAT HARBOUR MASTER PLAN

Ms JAN BARHAM (15:22): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Is the Minister aware of significant concern in the local community about the draft Brunswick Heads Boat Harbour Master Plan, particularly in relation to the use of Crown land for private commercial activities that are inconsistent with the village's motto of "Simple Pleasures" to promote lifestyle and visitor appeal? Will the Minister commit to carry out direct consultation and engagement with the local community to ensure that any planned use of public land at Brunswick Heads boat harbour will genuinely serve the public interest?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:23): I thank the member for her question. The Department of Primary Industries—Lands is in the process of preparing a master plan for Brunswick Heads boat harbour. The purpose of the master plan is to examine issues, consider options and develop a preferred option that would improve and/or modify various ageing assets. The project commenced in February 2015. Since that time there have been two stakeholder workshops and individual consultations with harbour user groups. From memory, the Hon. Ben Franklin may have attended one of those meetings. I will confirm that.

Consultants have prepared several reports that described issues and options. In March 2016 the various reports prepared were published on the Department of Primary Industries—Lands website with an invitation to the community and stakeholders to have their say by way of a survey. The "Have Your Say" survey also provided the community with an opportunity to submit ideas on the preferred form of facilities and uses. The survey closed on 26 April 2016, with 105 responses received online, 33 by mail and 30 by email.

The *Byron Shire Echo* published an article on 27 April 2016 that mentioned a meeting conducted by the Brunswick Heads Progress Association on 21 April 2016 at which the association's president was quoted as

saying, "The options in the survey were inadequate and not in keeping with the town's 'Simple Pleasures' ethos." A further stakeholder workshop will be conducted to report on community and stakeholder feedback and to present an assessment of options, with a view to identifying the preferred layout for the boat ramp, arena and related parking. Urban design features will then be integrated to produce a final master plan.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:25): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that after nine months the Federal Government has finally promised to clean up contamination from the toxic leak at Williamtown, what steps have the Minister and his department taken to ensure that commercial fishers are properly compensated and that the 200 homes have a clean and safe water supply?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:26): I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe for her question. This is an issue that we have spoken about numerous times in this House. Members would be aware that the Government announced the structural adjustment program for the reform of the commercial fishing sector earlier this week. I met with the commercial fishers from Williamtown. Obviously it is a trying time for them as the fishing closures are still in place. The closure of prawn fishing was implemented directly by the industry. The New South Wales Government put in place the other closures until more information is available. We continue to test fish from the affected area. We have said all along, and we still maintain, that compensation is a matter for the Commonwealth Government to address. We believe that the "polluter pays" principle must be adhered to in this case. We are steadfast in our response on compensation for the fishers.

I turn to the commercial fishing reforms. I have made a commitment to the Williamtown fishers. We would like them to be part of the reform process that we are undertaking. If at the end of the reform process, around September, fishers want to remain in or exit the industry through the reform process, then we will have a discussion with the Williamtown fishers about a specific timeline for them. I am hopeful that we will receive more information about the future of that industry and the response from the Commonwealth Government before we reach the end of our reform. I made the commitment publicly when we announced the reform and I reaffirm the commitment in the House today that we will not leave those fishers out in the cold as a result of that reform. The question also asked about drinking water. Members would be aware that the Government has committed \$3.5 million to connect a reticulated water supply to affected households in Williamtown. Mr Scot MacDonald has been heavily involved in that as the Parliamentary Secretary for the area.

We announced funding for that project prior to Christmas, and Hunter Water is working through that at the moment. We need to be mindful of the fact that many of the affected bores in that area were not registered as drinking water bores, but we understand how much of a concern that was for residents. That is why the Government took the decision, through Hunter Water, to spend the \$3.5 million to connect these properties. Obviously, the connection is to the front of the property and it is then the responsibility of householders to organise their own connection from the water meter to their homes. We have taken this matter seriously. I appreciate the concern shown by all members of this House; we have all been concerned about this issue. As I said, we will continue to work on our response to the drinking water issue and commercial fishers with the affected householders and businesses.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:30): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer in relation to the \$3.5 million cost for the connection to town water? Will the Minister confirm that all those houses have now been connected or indicate what the time frame for that is?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:30): I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe for her supplementary question in relation to how many of the houses have been connected. I have a lot of information on this topic in front of me. I do not want to take up too much of the time of the House going through all that information, so I will take the question on notice and come back to the Hon. Penny Sharpe with those details later.

SEAFOOD LABELLING SCHEME

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (15:31): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's proposed new labelling scheme aimed at promoting the consumption of local seafood?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:31): I thank the Hon. Rick Colless for his question. Last week I had the great pleasure of joining the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Troy Grant, and the member for Tweed, Mr Geoff "100 per cent" Provest, to announce the New South Wales Government's proposal for a new labelling scheme aimed at promoting local seafood

consumption. As we stood on the banks of the Tweed River, we could see all too clearly how important the region's commercial fishers are to our coastal communities. So it makes sense for this Government to do what it can to support the State's \$90 million commercial fishing industry.

Under the New South Wales Government's proposal, seafood lovers will be able to read on the menu from where the seafood they order is sourced. This is about supporting the New South Wales seafood industry by promoting our locally sourced products, from the fish markets all the way through to diners' menus. Currently, restaurants, cafes and outlets selling seafood for immediate consumption are exempted from the Commonwealth-mandated country of origin labelling requirements. This means that customers do not have information about from where their seafood has been sourced. Seafood caught in New South Wales is among the highest quality and most sustainably caught seafood in the world, and we want to make sure that all customers have the knowledge to choose our top-quality New South Wales products over cheaper, imported fish.

I think most consumers, as well as members of this House, would be shocked to know that 85 per cent of the seafood we eat in New South Wales is in fact imported. An origin labelling scheme would go a long way towards helping consumers to choose a local product and to support the local industry. Fresh is best and we have a lot to promote in New South Wales with our sensational locally caught prawns, tuna, rock lobster, abalone and numerous varieties of fish, all of which deserve star status on our menus. But the only way for a scheme like this to work is to develop it hand in hand with commercial fishers, wholesalers and food services to make sure it delivers benefits to everyone. The initiative has been widely applauded by many peak bodies as an idea whose time has come.

However, we do not underestimate the number of issues that need to be addressed and the implications these changes would have for seafood retailers. It is certainly not our intention to impose unavoidable costs on businesses—whether it be a fish and chip shop in Moree or a Thai restaurant in Moorebank. That is why the New South Wales Government will work closely with all these industries to investigate how a source of origin labelling scheme could operate in this State.

New South Wales seafood fishing is sustainable and the backbone of our coastal communities; the seafood is fresh and safe. The New South Wales Government will invest \$400,000 in a campaign to promote this State's \$90 million seafood industry to consumers and local communities. This campaign will promote the role of the seafood industry along our vast coastline, from Tweed to Eden. We want to promote our local fishing industries in our communities from the ground up with local events like "meet a fisherman" and seafood barbeques and also by funding fishermen to become certified through the OceanWatch Master Fisherman Program.

Since becoming Minister last year, I have travelled up and down the coast of New South Wales meeting with fishermen and seeing firsthand how important commercial fishing is to coastal communities like Ballina, Yamba, Nambucca Heads and Port Macquarie, to name but a few. New South Wales has some of the best seafood in the world. We want to make sure that whether people are heading to their local fishmonger, lining up for fish and chips or dining at a restaurant, New South Wales products are in hot demand.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If members have further questions, I suggest that they place them on notice.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water)
(15:35): Earlier in question time I was asked a supplementary question by the Hon. Penny Sharpe in relation to details around the connection of properties in Williamtown to the town water supply. Hunter Water has commenced the connection of the 165 currently unconnected properties located in the Williamtown investigation area to the reticulated town water supply. Construction will take approximately 14 months and require the construction of more than 12 kilometres of new water mains. Access to town water will give locals confidence in the long-term integrity of their drinking water. I am advised, as I mentioned, that this work is likely to cost \$3.5 million.

To provide further information to the community, Hunter Water is making available the results of water sampled for PFOS/PFOA from across its network to demonstrate that potable water remains unaffected by the contamination. There have been nil detections of contamination of the Lower Hunter's drinking water. Hunter Water has also written to customers in and around the investigation zone to communicate the existence of its payment assistance scheme.

Motions

SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. LOU AMATO (15:37): Schizophrenia is in many ways one of the most tragic illnesses that can afflict a person. Contrary to popular belief, schizophrenia does not involve split personalities but rather a single personality that is no longer able to rely on normal sensory information as interpreted by the brain. The person afflicted with schizophrenia suffers a range of debilitating symptoms, such as confused thinking, which may deteriorate into psychotic episodes where normal mental processes become disordered.

Everyday thoughts that are needed to process our place in the world become confused and disjointed, rendering some sufferers incapacitated. The person may suffer from delusional thinking, which can be defined as a person maintaining a false belief that is not held by others of the same cultural background. The sufferer may experience hallucinations, such as hearing disembodied voices that no-one else can hear. Other sensory systems such as hearing, touch, smell and taste can be affected. In this instance, normal stimuli are incorrectly interpreted by the brain or perceived as a real experience even though no actual physical stimuli are present.

The person may experience abnormal motor behaviour, which can vary in each sufferer. Some people may suffer a catatonic state and completely withdraw from their environment, manifesting an inability to talk or move. Abnormal motor behaviour makes it difficult to manage normal day-to-day tasks. The sufferer may become easily agitated, display childlike behaviour and experience negative thoughts, which may manifest itself in a depressive-like state. During episodes of negative thinking the person is less able to experience pleasure and may not be able to recall past pleasurable events. The sufferer may find it difficult to be emotionally expressive.

Presently the causes of chronic schizophrenia are little understood and medical science does not yet have a cure. In most cases the only treatment options available are the ongoing use of anti-psychotic medications. Unfortunately, the use of these medications can manifest with several severe side effects resulting in many patients withdrawing from pharmacologic treatment options. Some of the side effects include sedation and increased fatigue, headaches and blurred vision, diarrhoea and/or constipation, anxiety, dry mouth syndrome, akathisia which is often experienced as a distressing sense of inner restlessness, dystonia which is a state of abnormal muscular tone manifesting in severe muscular spasm and abnormal posture, muscular tremor, slow movement, loss of speech and other Parkinson's-like symptoms, sexual dysfunction and increased weight gain.

The suffering caused by schizophrenia is not limited to the patient but extends to family and friends, who are also affected. In many instances they find it difficult to make sense of the illness as the symptoms are hidden in the mind of the afflicted. Articulation of how one feels in a compromised mental state where thought processes are disorientated is somewhat difficult. In particular, the children of a parent suffering schizophrenia are at a particular risk of experiencing their own emotional and mental challenges. From my birth my mother suffered severe mental illness due to schizophrenia, and I am intensely aware of the challenges faced by many sufferers of this terrible disease. I understand all too well the effect it has on children.

As a child I remember the terrible emotional suffering of watching my mother experience ongoing delusional episodes, accompanied with acute auditory hallucinations. My beautiful and gentle mother could hear voices commanding her to inflict harm upon my siblings and me. I remember her pain as she fought with the voices to make sure that never in her life did she harm us in any way. Unfortunately, my mother's illness did cause terrible fear for us children. A child is just not equipped to make sense of this terrible affliction.

I still remember the love, support and dedication shown by my dad to my mother in order to ensure that she took her medication and he took her to the psychiatrists and hospitals. But I think about all the people who do not have such support from their friends or family, and my heartfelt compassion goes out to them. I think about the people who have been put in hospitals and prisons as a result of these delusional effects. Earlier, the Hon. Scott Farlow said that some schizophrenia sufferers have other ailments which doctors do not pick up on. I recollect my mother had pain. She kept going back to the doctors, who said that it was all in her mind. That pain was cancer. She died a horrible death from this so-called "pain in her mind". My mother never touched a cigarette.

Just last year Premier Mike Baird hosted a Mental Health Awareness function at Parliament House, and I acknowledge also the function that was held here today. I was happy to have the opportunity to talk with many of the great support organisations that not only offer support to the sufferer but also provide ongoing care for the family and those who experience a lot of mental health issues. Years ago those services were not available. I applaud the Premier and all members of the Legislative Council for their efforts in destigmatising mental illness and increasing awareness of it. Increased awareness has facilitated a new understanding of mental illness and has seen the creation of a host of support organisations, but so much more work needs to be done. As someone who was affected as a child by witnessing the terrible suffering of mental illness, I again applaud the Premier and all mental health support organisations for their great efforts in increasing awareness and support for sufferers of this terrible disease. I especially thank the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving this motion of support for all people afflicted by this terrible disease.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (15:46): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Scott Farlow relating to schizophrenia and congratulate him on bringing it to the attention of the House. It is important also to thank the Hon. Lou Amato for his personal contribution, which would not have been easy to talk about. Well done, Lou, for being brave enough to talk about your mum. The debate on this motion will certainly be better for your contribution. I also refer to the role of the Hon. Scott Farlow as chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health group, of which I am a member and which he formed. He is obviously very passionate about this matter and is strongly aware of being an advocate for raising awareness of mental illness and mental health issues both in this Chamber and within the Parliament. I congratulate him on that.

This week representatives from the Mental Health Commission met with the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health group. The meeting provided a good opportunity to go through some of the work that the commission does and to learn a little more about its initiatives. In particular, I was interested in having mental health first aid courses available to members of Parliament and staff. Those courses are being rolled out across the State to give people an awareness of and understanding about how to approach people who might be having an episode or an incidence of their mental health condition in public or in one's office. It is about raising awareness of what might be going on, taking some of the fear out of dealing with those who are suffering a mental health episode and learning more about what can be done to help them.

This motion provides a good opportunity to talk about the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW and the work it does as a community-based organisation focused on eliminating stigma and creating a society that is understanding and accepting of those who suffer from the illness. On its website, the Schizophrenia Fellowship states as its mission that it is committed to improving the circumstances and welfare of people with a serious mental illness, their relatives and carers, and professionals working in the area. That is obviously a worthy goal. Perhaps more importantly, the vision of the fellowship is to create a society in which people with mental illness are valued and treated as equals. That is really the key to this debate.

We need to understand that people do not choose to suffer from schizophrenia or other mental illnesses and they do not bring those conditions on themselves. Mental illness is a disease in the same way that diabetes and cancer are diseases that need to be managed and treated. It is not a reflection on the person who has the illness or on their family and loved ones. It is a medical condition for which they need to be supported. Schizophrenia sufferers need to be seen through that prism and to be valued as equal members of the community. I commend the Schizophrenia Fellowship for that view.

The fellowship does a range of great work, including running programs and providing support for families and carers. It also provides respite services. It is sometimes tough for families to deal with someone going through the phases of this illness, so giving them an opportunity for respite is really important. The fellowship also runs live-in programs and provides mentors and helpers. The list of the support it provides goes on and on, which is a real credit to the organisation. It is appropriate that we are acknowledging the Schizophrenia Fellowship through this motion today.

Paragraph (3) of the motion talks about the role of non-government organisations in the mental health sphere more generally. I have had a bit to do with one such organisation during my time in this place and particularly since becoming Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Health. Based in Orange, the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health is an initiative run through the University of Newcastle. It also receives some support from NSW Health. The Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health brings education and research programs to all rural areas of New South Wales through effective partnerships. It works to improve the mental health of rural and remote communities through collaboration and achievements in research, education, service development and information services.

I have been fortunate to visit the centre once and I have met with some of the staff on a number of occasions. I particularly acknowledge Professor David Perkins, who is the director. He provides strong leadership and is a passionate advocate for improving mental health services in regional areas. I also acknowledge Trevor Hazell, who is the executive manager of programs and services. He does a great job in advocating for the centre and unashamedly talking it up—as he should because it provides an important service. Fiona Livingstone, whom I have been lucky enough to meet, is based in Inverell and works as part of the centre's Farm-Link program. That program is about making sure facilities are available for farming families, who often do it tough when seasonal conditions make things difficult in the bush. We need to be aware of keeping people in regional areas mentally healthy.

A particularly great initiative created by the centre is Mentally Healthy Orange, which was run in November last year. It came about as a result of a campaign called Act-Belong-Commit, which originated in Western Australia. The "Act" part of that campaign refers to keeping mentally, socially and spiritually active by encouraging people to take a walk, read a book or do a crossword or something else on a daily basis to increase their activity and help their mental health. "Belong" is about encouraging people to belong by perhaps joining

a local book club, taking a cooking class or becoming more involved in a group they are already a member of so they feel they are part of their community. The "Commit" part of the campaign asks people to take up a cause, help a neighbour, do something in their local community or take on a challenge.

Putting the three concepts of Act-Belong-Commit together proved, first in Western Australia and then through the program in Orange, to be useful at helping people to become more mentally healthy and to treat their mental health as they would their physical health. I commend the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health in Orange for that. From all reports, the campaign went well in Orange and they have talked about what can be done in other regions.

Members who read *The Land* would be aware that the centre also issues the *Glove Box Guide to Mental Health*, which comes out every year. Last year 49,000 copies of the guide reached more than 127,000 readers across New South Wales. The guide is an insert in the local newspaper that gives readers in regional areas ideas about what they can do to improve their mental health and wellbeing. I congratulate the centre on being part of that. I acknowledge former member for Orange Andrew Gee, who is now a candidate in the Federal election and a big supporter of the centre. I also acknowledge the Minister for Mental Health, Pru Goward, who this year announced \$19 million of funding over the next five years to help the centre and the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program. It is good that the Government has committed to support the organisation.

Paragraph (4) of the motion talks about supporting aims and initiatives to destigmatise mental health illnesses. In this debate we have spoken a lot about schizophrenia. Many speakers have done that far more eloquently than I. Another area of interest to me in my age group is postnatal depression. A group called PANDA, which stands for Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia, offers a phone line service and other services for women who go through challenges during their pregnancy or after having a child. We are starting to talk more about postnatal depression and beginning to remove the stigma associated with it, but more can be done. As the mother of a young child and someone with family and friends who have been through some tough times post pregnancy I know it is important to use any opportunity we can to speak about the issue.

It is important to talk about postnatal depression even though women are often able to move through it eventually and it might not always be as constant or debilitating as schizophrenia. The other day I was speaking to a friend whose husband suffers from depression and anxiety. I would never make light of those issues and I would never say that I had postnatal depression, but for a couple of days after my daughter was born I did have what my mother calls the moody cow blues. That is the third day after giving birth when all mothers get a bit teary but they are not sure why. Then it passes.

At the risk of oversharing, in the first couple of weeks being home with Annabelle I had terrible trouble breastfeeding. It was not a great time. If I knew then what I know now I probably would have taken a different approach. I did many things to try to improve the situation but I was not handling it very well and I felt like I could not tell anyone. I remember just trying to get 10 minutes in the shower where I could cry and be upset. My sister, who had similar troubles, came to visit. I said I was all right. I told her I was struggling a bit but seeing a lactation consultant and taking medication, expressing and doing everything between feeds to try to make it happen. On top of that, I was exhausted with having a young child and learning how to be a mother. My sister said to me, "Are you crying in the shower?" I burst into tears and said, "Yes, I am. It's really hard."

After that I felt much better and I spoke to my midwife. I experienced those feelings for a period of no more than 10 days and as soon as I felt I could talk about it I was fine. I am not a psychiatrist or psychologist so I would not diagnose myself, but that brief period of feeling terrible and like a bit of a failure gave me a tremendous insight. If people who have depression, anxiety and mental illness feel like that all the time, I now am so much more sympathetic. I went through a tough week but those people have tough months, tough years and tough lives.

The small insight I gained really helped change my view and further destigmatised mental health issues for me. I know I was doing nothing wrong and I know I was a good mother but for that brief period things were not great. It must be very difficult for people who cannot break out of that. I take my hat off to people and their families who deal with mental illness on a daily basis. It would not be an easy journey. It is important for us to be talking about all aspects of mental health under the auspices of Schizophrenia Awareness Week. We must become aware of what we can do to support people with mental illnesses. I have taken up too much time, so I will finish by commending the member for his motion.

Ms JAN BARHAM (15:59): I acknowledge the Hon. Scott Farlow for bringing this matter to the attention of the House. I also moved a motion on 11 May 2016 relating to Schizophrenia Awareness Week. Interestingly, in this debate today we heard how personal the schizophrenia experience is. Everyone has an awareness of mental health—in their community or family or individually. I think paragraph (4) of this motion refers to the most important focus of Schizophrenia Awareness Week, namely, the need to destigmatise mental

health illnesses. As a society we continue to struggle with this. Frankly, it is still fairly new that as a community we can openly discuss the fact that many people struggle on a day-to-day basis with their wellbeing.

A lot of people think they know what schizophrenia is but it is not what they think it is. The media and the arts, for example, have promoted it as a way of hearing voices and of having split personalities. I have found one of the best references to it on the headspace website, which is a recent innovation to support young people. Schizophrenia is often about youth trauma. When people experience trauma in their youth they carry it with them forever and that is why so often in this place I talk about early intervention. Although we expect early intervention from government agencies, each of us should know when to recognise changes in behaviour, mood swings or if someone is exhibiting antisocial behaviour and we should talk to them. We need to ask those questions and be a good friend or community member. In the package members received from the Mental Illness Fellowship there was an interesting poster. In fact, we have been asked to photograph it and to tweet or use it on social media. The poster states:

Even in an educated country like Australia it's amazing that it is still widely believed that a person with schizophrenia does not recover or get to enjoy the ordinary things in life. They can and do.

It's also believed that they can be violent, but the truth is they are more likely to be the victim of violence ...

I urge members to use this important piece of information on social media as requested. I do so because the concerning figures associated with mental illness are important to our considerations as legislators. Research shows that of the 10,000 people currently in the corrective justice system some 7,700 have a mental health condition. That is shocking. We need to look at how we can support people.

I am conscience of the time constraints this afternoon but I want to share something very positive that I have come across. We need a tool to support not only doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists but also community health workers. Others have spoken about mental health first aid, which is fabulous, but there is also the opportunity to support some of the great research that is being done. The Australian Schizophrenia Research Bank and others have come up with a screening test that is so simple it can be used to assist people in community health services. We need government support to allow something like this to be rolled out to help people recognise and support those who might need our help.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): According to sessional orders, proceedings are interrupted to permit the Minister to move the adjournment motion if desired.

The House continued to sit.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION

Reference

Consideration of the Legislative Assembly's message of 1 June 2016.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I move:

That this House refers:

- (a) the statutory review of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 under section 32 of that Act; and
- (b) the Public Interest Disclosures Steering Committee's Review of the *Commonwealth Public Interest Disclosure Legislation* dated January 2014, for consideration as part of that statutory review to the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Police Integrity Commission and the Crime Commission.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I move:

That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by this House this day.

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms JAN BARHAM (16:07): Last week a report was issued that captures the ongoing failure of good governance and the mismatch between the focus of governments and the values of our society. Today I speak on the NSW Intergenerational Report 2016 and its failure to live up to its title, "Future State NSW 2056". Governments have a responsibility to look to the wellbeing of future generations. Their decisions on policy should be about not just what they deliver in the years between elections but the opportunities and quality of life our communities enjoy over the years and decades to come.

A forecast of societal challenges and changes over the next 40 years should underpin everything a government does. Why is this intergenerational report such a disappointing reflection of the priorities of the current Government? Let us begin with the absence of any recognition that our future wellbeing depends on the state of our natural environment. The environment plays literally no role in this Government's model of the future. The projected state of our biodiversity and quality of air, water and land are pivotal to the health and success of our communities but they have been ignored. Climate change is mentioned once in the entire document. On Tuesday, my colleague Mr Jeremy Buckingham pointed out the truly incredible assumption that we will continue mining more and more coal and selling it at ever-increasing prices.

A recent analysis by Carbon Brief shows that at current global emissions levels our carbon budget for keeping a two in three chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius will be exhausted in just over five years from now. There is no more urgent challenge facing our society than climate change and we need to seize the opportunities to lead a rapid transformation. But in the Intergenerational Report there is no analysis of the changes needed to limit global warming, nor the strategies, investments and costs involved in preparation and adaption to the impacts of a changing climate.

Renewable energy is not mentioned, let alone disaster preparation or infrastructure investment to deal with health or a changing climate. The report does not even give adequate consideration to inequality and the deepening issues of social exclusion and disadvantage that affect the quality of many people's lives. A focus on overall economic indicators of productivity, growth and demand fails to take into account the challenges facing particular groups and communities. It limits the ability to ensure that everyone has opportunities to participate fully in society and ensure their wellbeing.

In the area of housing, the report treats increasing supply as the only mechanism needed to ensure people will have appropriate and adequate homes. But ensuring that people on low incomes have the opportunity to live close to work and education and are connected to their communities and services requires more than that. We need inclusionary planning regulations for all new developments to deliver affordable and social housing to ensure that all our communities are accessible, liveable and diverse. What is more, the report acknowledges the Government will be increasingly reliant on stamp duty for its revenue, yet shows no sign of changing course. This should be ringing alarm bells as it gives the Government a vested interest in fuelling speculative investment in property and continuing to cash in on high turnover at high prices. Reform is needed to ensure taxation and housing policy focus on affordability and availability of homes for everyone.

We need a fundamental shift in what our governments measure, analyse and value when they set the direction for our communities and our State. New South Wales should look to its namesake in the United Kingdom. In 2015 and 2016 the Welsh National Assembly implemented a Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, which ensures a focus on long-term social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes, and an Environment Act, which promotes climate action and sustainability. It is time to adopt frameworks that take into account all the challenges of the future, including climate change and a broad conception of wellbeing that reflects the social, environmental and economic factors affecting our lives and communities. These are the building blocks to ensure governments are genuinely acting in the best interests of our society and the generations to come.

SOUTH DURRAS HAZARD REDUCTION BURN

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:12): I raise the issue of a small but important piece of land on the South Coast next to Murramarang National Park. It was formerly known as vacant Crown land Portion 92 to 95 and it exists just west of South Durras. The reason I bring this to the attention of the Parliament is that on 18 May a hazard reduction burn was carried out in that area, which has resulted in the local community raising a number of concerns. The issue I wish to raise is how we manage to deal with the threat of fire but also protect the endangered species that live in and amongst our very precious forests and small pieces of land. On this small piece of land we know there exist at least 38 mammals, 192 birds, 12 different types of reptiles and 12 different types of frogs.

In particular, key threatened species also live in this area: the yellow-bellied glider, the glossy black cockatoo, the masked owl, the powerful owl and the sooty owl. The reason these particular animals are able to

live in this beautiful piece of bush is that there is a lot of old-growth forest in there. The area was logged a very long time ago, but there are significant trees there—some more than 200 years old and up to 300 and 400 years old—and their hollows provide somewhere for these animals to live in this very special space.

I also raise the issue of the greater glider that lives in this area. The area has been described by some environmental consultants on the South Coast as one of the best areas for greater glider habitat that they have ever seen. The greater glider is a very beautiful little critter; its proper name is the *petauroides volans*. It is the longest glider in Australia and it can glide for more than 100 metres between trees at night. It feeds exclusively on eucalypt leaves and buds and it shelters in tree hollows. It has a very small home range of between one and three hectares. There is a significant population of greater glider on the South Coast and it has been identified as an endangered population. The greater glider has recently been listed federally as vulnerable to extinction—a listing that is welcomed by conservationists and those who care about this creature.

I also raise my concerns about the way in which the forest hazard reduction burn happened. In 2015, local groups, including the Friends of Durras, met with their local Rural Fire Service to speak about how important this little piece of land was for the greater glider and other threatened species. They sought assurances about low-intensity burning and care being taken in the hazard burn. We should be able to reduce the hazards but also look after the trees, but what has happened has been quite disastrous. I have put a number of questions on notice to the Minister for Emergency Services specifically about this issue. Basically what happened with this hazard reduction burn is that it got out of control. We now know that the area has lost between five and six significant habitat trees, including a tree that is more than 200 years old. There is now more debris on the floor of this forest than there was before the burn, and there are really significant questions about why it was done in secret, why it was unmonitored and why the previous commitments to being careful in this area were not adhered to.

I place on record my appreciation to the Rural Fire Service for the incredibly important work that it does. But if we are serious about dealing with biodiversity and about trying to look after critters like the greater glider and these other endangered animals, we should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. That means that we should be able to reduce hazards but we should also ensure that we are not destroying habitat unnecessarily. As I said, I have put a number of questions on notice to the Minister for Emergency Services in relation to this matter. I thank the Friends of Durras for bringing this matter to my attention. Once that habitat and those greater gliders are gone they will not be back, and that is a loss to us all.

FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (16:17): I recently had the honour of attending and speaking at the campaign launch of the Liberal candidate for Newcastle, Councillor David Compton. David is a great candidate and is the best hope for the people of that electorate to have an effective, relevant member representing them in the Federal Parliament. For too long the Hunter has been treated as a sinecure by factional hacks of the Labor Party. It is heartbreaking to see the disinterest by members of the Labor Party in their supposed safe seats. Labor shadow Ministers are trotted out every three years for a few hours, they make a couple of vacuous statements and heavily qualified promises and they quickly retreat to Sydney or Melbourne. I am hopeful that the people of Newcastle, Shortland and Paterson realise their best hope for relevancy and future opportunities is with Liberal representation by Karen Howard, Councillor David Compton and Jenny Barrie.

At the campaign launch I took the opportunity to remind everyone of one of the key reasons the election was called: that we have a very stark choice. The Labor Party is led by a man who is hostage to the worst elements of the union movement. Bill Shorten proudly stands by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union [CFMEU], which has more than 100 officials before the courts on serious charges. As the royal commission into trade unions outlined, the CFMEU granted enterprise bargaining agreements to phoenix companies and career criminals. They leave a trail of destruction, including wages and entitlements unpaid to working Australians and suppliers denied critical cash flow.

The royal commission identified that the leadership of the Victorian branch of the Australian Workers Union [AWU], including Bill Shorten, conspired against their members' best interests to lock in enterprise bargaining agreements that delivered lower than award pay and conditions. The Australian Labor Party and Bill Shorten pontificate about fairness. What is fair about Shorten's 2004 negotiations with Cleanevent, which cost workers around \$10 per hour? Five thousand of Australia's lowest paid workers are thought to have lost \$400 million, courtesy of Bill Shorten's ethical bankruptcy.

I urge members to read the transcripts of the royal commission following the sweetheart deals between Bill's AWU mates and compliant employers. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were paid to the union for industrial peace masquerading as training, not for the benefit of workers, but flowing to the union head office and union officials. Perhaps a good insight into the character of Bill Shorten came during the royal commission as the Leader

of the Opposition continued to obfuscate in his answers. Commissioner Heydon said to Mr Shorten, who was in the witness stand:

What I am concerned about more is your credibility as a witness and perhaps your self-interest as a witness as well.

This is a double dissolution election because Labor, The Greens and a motley crew of Independents refused to reintroduce the Australian Building and Construction Commission and pass the Registered Organisation Bill, in spite of documented evidence of systemic corruption and unlawful conduct in the union movement and the extra cost of this behaviour of delivering infrastructure to the community. The inflated cost of hospitals, schools, rail and road is directly attributable to the cabal of dishonesty and thuggish behaviour endorsed by Labor and notably its leader, Bill Shorten.

Character and values matter in our leaders. Federal Labor has had its share of maddies and fiscally illiterate narcissists but in this election the alternative Prime Minister is a self-confessed captive of the union movement who offers no moral bulwark against unethical deals, vested interests and economy-eroding policies. In contrast, Prime Minister Turnbull has a vision for modernising our country. He understands the need to live within our means and he has the leadership skills and experience to stand up to rent seekers. I was motivated to join the Liberal Party in the 1990s because, as a business owner, I directly felt the harm caused by Keating and his recession we had to have.

Labor's policies were a huge financial strain and directly led to crippling unemployment. And here we go again—a Labor leader promising to be a fiscal conservative whereas we know his record demonstrates a subservience to the self-interested union agenda, inevitably leading to economic chaos. From now until 2 July I will be doing everything in my power to stop Shorten. Every fibre of my being knows that a Labor-Greens-Independent will be harmful to Australia. The choice is straightforward: embrace a modern, growing nation under the Liberals and Nationals or turn to the knuckle-dragging, risky Labor which is beholden to a few dinosaurs of the union elite.

BOER WAR COMMEMORATION

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (16:21): Tonight I reflect upon and commemorate the Boer War. The Boer War is often described as the "forgotten war" and is commemorated on 31 May. The Boer War began when the southern tip of Africa had been shared between British colonies and the independent republics of Dutch Afrikaner settlers, known as Boers. The relationship between the British and the Boers was an uneasy one, with Britain extending its control by seizing Natal in 1845. Throughout the nineteenth century tensions were often high and in 1880-81 the two sides fought a war in which the Boers inflicted several costly defeats on the British Army. Coupled with the advent of a new government in London that was reluctant to fight the war, this ensured that the Transvaal was able effectively to maintain its independence.

On 31 May 1902 the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed, which then officially ended the Boer War. It is now 114 years later. Like any quarrel, the Boer War continued to have an enduring effect on the men and women involved and their families who fought long after the war ended. Approximately 80 residents from the Shoalhaven participated in the Boer War and are mentioned in local Keith Paterson's book *South Africa The Volunteers War*. Two of these locals were Trooper John Waddell from Pyree who was killed at the siege at Elands River and nursing sister from Berry Alexandrina McLay, who paid her own way to Africa to work independently. Alexandrina had been employed at the Berry Cottage Hospital and ended up being the sub-matron and eventually matron at the Imperial Refugee Hospital at Middleburg, which also oversaw the treatment of war casualties.

This was an interesting time for Australia, as the nineteenth century drew to a close and the twentieth century began. Our people were sent to represent Britain, even though this was our country's first military involvement as a nation; Australia was at this time becoming a nation in its own right. There were 16,175 Australians who served in South Africa and perhaps another 10,000 enlisted as individuals in imperial units. In the Boer War 251 people were killed in action, 267 died of disease and 43 went missing, while a further 735 were wounded. The Boer War also marked the death of the first Australian woman in war—Frances Hines. In an attempt to recognise the sacrifice made by these men and women, a committee formed in Nowra in 1900 to raise funds for a memorial that was originally intended to mark just one aspect of the Boer War. In January 1902, the memorial was dedicated to all people from the district who had fallen in the war with the simple words, "To our soldiers in South Africa 1899-1902".

Throughout what was often a brutal guerrilla war, the Australian soldiers used their bushcraft, riding and shooting skills to produce formidable fighting units. Six Australians were awarded the Victoria Cross during the Boer War as evidence of their hard work and loyalty. We should also acknowledge and pay tribute to the service of the 60 Australian nurses who went to the Boer War and were awarded three Royal Red Cross medals, serving to aid the sick and wounded under those very harsh conditions. Overall, it is vital that we recognise the Boer War and all those who participated and made the ultimate sacrifice to fight or to support in any way they could. The

proud traditions of Australian service men and women have their origins in the Boer War, with our combat troops, support and medical staff displaying the enduring characteristics we recognise in the Australian Defence Force today: good humour, resilience and compassion. But when the day is done, we must also remember that war is a terrible thing. Lest we forget.

BANKSTOWN CITY COUNCIL LOCAL AREA PLANS

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (16:26): For some time now the Labor Party has been arguing that reform of donations and expenditure caps for local government elections are long overdue. More importantly, the decision of the Liberal Government in 2012 to change the law to allow councillors with a pecuniary interest to vote on planning controls that affect all or a substantial part of a local government area as long as they declare an interest also requires reform. So far this has not happened. But time and again we see councillors, on behalf of themselves or their mates, passing local government motions and amendments without declaring an interest. The Baird Government has failed to give any time frame on when it will act and reform local government donations or expenditure at the local government level or prohibit councillors from acting in their own interest.

A case in point is the extraordinary meeting called by Bankstown City Council, coincidentally the night before the Baird Government announced the sacking of councils under forced amalgamation. Is this a coincidence? I do not think so. At this meeting, lo and behold, rafts of amendments were moved to the draft local area plans to increase density and height. These amendments conflicted with the recommendations of council officers or what had been on display to the public and were to the significant advantage of developers. A good example is the amendment to increase the height limit in Swan Street, Revesby. This amendment was put forward by Councillor Jim Daniel in a raft of amendments to the draft local area plan.

The draft local area plan that the public saw recommended that on Swan Street, Revesby, there be a four-storey height limit with a 1:1 floor space ratio. Councillor Daniel's amendment recommended a six-storey limit with an increased floor space ratio to match. This amendment passed with the support of Councillor Daniel's Liberal mates on Bankstown City Council and against the opposition of other councillors. Councillor Daniel wrote to Bankstown councillors stating that he was providing documents that had helped shape his views on amendments. I have had a look through the documents that Councillor Daniel provided to see what information brought about this amendment to "increase" the height limit on Swan Street. There was nothing. What is more, two adjoining areas closer to the rail line which were recommended for four storeys did not seem to pique Councillor Daniel's interest as needing any amendments.

I am naturally suspicious. Swan Street, Revesby, is a street with which I am familiar; 16 Swan Street is the address where the Australian Multicultural Society, owned by convicted money launderer Carl Trad, is registered. That would be the Australian Multicultural Society that was invoiced for the water bottles promoting Glenn Brookes, the member for East Hills, during his election campaign, and the same Australian Multicultural Society that was the recipient of a couple of community partnership grants, courtesy of the member for East Hills, which have never made it to the schools for which they were intended.

Carl Trad and Jim Daniel are old mates who previously ran a ticket together in an attempt to take over the Bankstown Trotting Recreational Club. Well known to Jim Daniel is that Carl Trad and his family own three adjoining properties at 16-20 Swan Street. I have been able to locate the only submission regarding Swan Street, submission 83, that did not make it into the correspondence that Councillor Daniel circulated to other councillors. That submission neglected to name Carl Trad or his family and was submitted by ABC Planning on behalf of the Bayswater Property Group for—surprise, surprise—16-20 Swan Street, Revesby. The submission was lodged in December 2014, at roughly the same time that Carl Trad was being invoiced for water bottles for the campaign of Glenn Brookes. It sought to increase the recommended floor space ratio from 1:1 to 2.5:1 and to increase the height of the building from four storeys to six.

That is right; the only submission for Swan Street came from a property group acting on behalf of Carl Trad and his family. Not only did the group send a submission, its representatives addressed the extraordinary meeting of council held on 11 May 2015. Jim Daniel seems to have neglected to inform the council that the properties belong to his close associate Carl Trad and his family. He also neglected to stand aside during discussions or votes on the matter. Indeed, it was he who moved the amendments. We should not hold our breath waiting for the Baird Government to take action on this matter now that it has placed the councils under administration.

There is a presumption that without constant scrutiny government will misbehave. Jim Daniel is doing his best to prove that old adage true. One can only assume that Councillor Daniel believed that somehow his actions would escape scrutiny, as the council was sacked by the Baird Government the next day. I will of course forward this documentation to the Independent Commission Against Corruption, to add to the weighty tome

already before it, and to the Electoral Commission in relation to the actions of Jim Daniel and Glenn Brookes during the 2015 State election. I hope the commissioners appreciate a good read.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (16:31): Only a few days ago in this Parliament I attended, by invitation, a conference of leaders or representatives of a number of major Christian churches in Australia, including four bishops and archbishops. Additionally, in recent weeks I have had the opportunity to meet with many other religious leaders representing not only Christian but also other faith traditions. One issue was common to them all: the escalating attack on religious liberty and freedom in this country by aggressive secularism. It is an attack that is manifesting itself across a broad front. For example, former Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson expressed concern that the debate on same-sex marriage "does not become a Trojan Horse for legally enforced anti-religious secularism". But that is precisely what is happening.

In the political sphere, this attack on religious freedom is already well advanced. For example, The Greens, a pivotal force within the Federal Parliament, are committed to removing all religious protections and exemptions from anti-discrimination laws. This would mean that a church bookshop could not refuse employment to a person on the grounds that he or she was vehemently opposed to the values of that church. It would mean that if same-sex marriage were legalised ministers of religion would be required by law to perform such marriages. Photographers and others providing services to weddings could be criminally convicted for refusing on religious grounds to provide their services. Additionally, The Greens would remove all tax exemptions and stop all government aid to religiously based non-government schools. The truth is that they do not want any religiously based private schools at all. Such is the anti-religion mindset of the majority of The Greens leadership that a few years ago then member of this House Lee Rhiannon sought to axe the prayer that opens each sitting day. It was not just that The Greens did not want to say the prayer, they did not want any other member to say it.

It is troubling that within the Labor Party nationwide there are powerful elements who sympathise with the majority, if not all, of The Greens' anti-religion agenda. No less a figure than the alternative Prime Minister Bill Shorten has been equivocal and even sympathetic to the view of The Greens on the issue of removing religious exemptions from anti-discrimination laws. In recent times, however, sensing that it would be a vote loser, he has sought to distance himself from The Greens policy by muddying the waters as to where he stands until the coming election is out of the way. Nevertheless, Federal Labor, with Bill Shorten's support, has adopted a policy to undermine religious freedom by saying that from 2019 all Federal Labor parliamentarians will be required to vote for same-sex marriage even if it conflicts with their religious convictions. Powerful interests in Federal Labor, including Deputy Leader Tanya Plibersek and Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Penny Wong, wanted to go even further by axing immediately the right to a conscience vote on questions of religion.

Another example of religious freedom being trampled upon by the secular Left in Australia is the saga that unfolded in Tasmania over a booklet called *Don't Mess With Marriage*. Produced and published by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Australia and distributed to Catholic schools in Tasmania at the direction of the Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, it states the Catholic Church's well-known position in support of traditional marriage and its opposition to same-sex marriage. Following a complaint against Archbishop Porteous filed with the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner by The Greens candidate for the Federal Parliament Martine Delaney, the commissioner found that there was a case to answer not only by the Archbishop of Hobart but also by all Australia's Catholic bishops with respect to "sexual orientation discrimination".

The authority to haul the archbishop and other bishops before the commissioner on such an outrageous complaint was made possible by additional powers given to the commissioner when the Labor-Greens Coalition Government was in power in Tasmania. While the complaint was subsequently withdrawn, the matter provoked worldwide outrage that the church was found to have a case to answer in the first place. The church was simply restating its well-known views on the issue and doing so in respectful and moderate language. That is another example of how toxic and dangerous it can be for religious liberty when the secular, anti-religious elements of Labor and The Greens team up. Australians of religious conviction—and that is the majority—are becoming increasingly alarmed by the attacks on their religious freedoms from the secular Left. They have good reason to be alarmed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): The question is that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:36 until Tuesday 21 June 2016 at 14:30.