



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 11 August 2016

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 11 August 2016

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

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Motions

WOMEN OF THE FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (10:02): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the *Australian Women's Weekly* conducts a yearly Women of the Future Scholarship;
 - (b) the Women of the Future Scholarship recognises women aged between 18 and 30 years old with a great business idea, charity, creative venture or innovation that will transform the lives of others; and
 - (c) the winner of the scholarship is announced in October.
- (2) That this House acknowledges Miss Liberty Thomas of Cooma as a semi-finalist in the scholarship for her organisation "The Liberty Foundation".
- (3) That this House congratulates Miss Thomas for her commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence and to changing the perception of it within the community.
- (4) That this House wishes all Women of the Future Scholarship semi-finalists luck with their community proposals.

Motion agreed to.

NEWCASTLE UNITY IN DIVERSITY FESTIVAL

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 10 July 2016, the second annual Newcastle Unity in Diversity Festival took place in the Newcastle central business district;
 - (b) the festival is an initiative of the Newcastle Unity in Diversity group, which comprises members of Refugee Action Network Newcastle, Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture And Trauma Survivors [STARTTS] Newcastle, multicultural community groups, various religious organisations and other passionate activists; and
 - (c) the festival is a celebration of Newcastle's rich cultural diversity and of the intrinsic value of our multicultural society.
- (2) That this House congratulates the organisers of the Newcastle Unity in Diversity Festival on another successful and positive event.
- (3) That this House reiterates its support for multicultural and religious diversity in the Hunter and across New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN BULLDOGS DONATION TO WHITE RIBBON AUSTRALIA

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS (10:04): I move:

That this House congratulates the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs on their donation of \$30,000 in July 2016 to White Ribbon Australia to support education programs to end violence against women and children.

Motion agreed to.

COOKS HILL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB REDEVELOPMENT

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club started with approximately 150 members in 1911;
 - (b) today, over 100 years later, Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club has more than 1,400 male and female members;
 - (c) to continue to serve its members and the Newcastle community, the club is constructing a new clubhouse to the north of the existing building;

- (d) the first sod of the new clubhouse was turned on 29 July 2016 by Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter, Mr Scot MacDonald, MLC, representing the Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird, MP;
 - (e) member for Ku-ring-gai and former Newcastle resident Mr Alister Henskens, SC, MP; member for Newcastle Mr Tim Crakanthorp, MP; and Lord Mayor of Newcastle Councillor Nuatali Nelmes joined Mr MacDonald at the sod turning; and
 - (f) the new clubhouse will include new changing rooms, storage and training rooms as well as a large multi-purpose club room on the top level.
- (2) That this House congratulates club President Mr Richard Hermes, past President Mr Andrew Howard and the club's executive for their work to make this upgrade possible.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:12): I move:

That Business of the House 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 (10:12): 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 (10:13:0): I move:

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

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 916 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile relating to the establishment of a joint select oversight committee to inquire into and report on the future of the New South Wales greyhound racing industry.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 904 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Peter Primrose relating to an order for papers concerning the Government's advertising campaign relating to the greyhound racing industry.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 1 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Dr Mehreen Faruqi relating to the Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2015.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 7 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Lou Amato relating to Fairfield's Youth off the Streets program.
- (5) Private Members' Business item No. 894 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Walt Secord relating to the appointment of a special commission of inquiry into the off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy treatment in New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF THE NSW GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY

Establishment

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (10:14): I move:

- (1) That a joint oversight select committee be established to inquire into and report on the future of the New South Wales greyhound racing industry, and in particular:
 - (a) the recommendations of the McHugh Special Commission of Inquiry report;
 - (b) any progress the greyhound racing industry has taken towards compliance with the Special Commission of Inquiry's recommendations;
 - (c) the impact of any future ban on the New South Wales greyhound racing industry, including transition arrangements and compensation; and
 - (d) any other related matter.

- (2) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders of either House, the committee consist of seven members comprising:
- (a) three members of the Legislative Council, of whom:
 - (i) one is a Government member;
 - (ii) one is an Opposition member; and
 - (iii) one is Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile.
 - (b) four members of the Legislative Assembly, of whom:
 - (i) two must be Government members;
 - (ii) one must be an Opposition member; and
 - (iii) one must be an Independent member.
- (3) That the Chair of the committee be the Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Deputy Chair be elected at the first meeting.
- (4) That, notwithstanding anything in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the committee, any four members of the committee will constitute a quorum, provided that at least one member of each House is present at all times.
- (5) That members may be appointed to the committee as substitute members for any matter before the committee by providing notice in writing to the Committee Clerk, with nominations made as follows:
- (a) nominations for substitute Government or Opposition members are to be made by the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Opposition, Government or Opposition Whip or Deputy Whip, as applicable; and
 - (b) nominations for substitute crossbench members are to be made by the substantive member or another crossbench member.
- (6) That a committee member who is unable to attend a deliberative meeting in person may participate by electronic communication and may move any motion and be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division, provided that:
- (a) the Chair is present in the meeting room;
 - (b) all members are able to speak and hear each other at all times; and
 - (c) members may not participate by electronic communication in a meeting to consider a draft report.
- (7) That, unless the committee decides otherwise:
- (a) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
 - (b) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
 - (c) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each;
 - (d) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
 - (e) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the Committee Clerk within two days, excluding Saturday and Sunday, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness; and
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration.
- (8) That the committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) That the committee provide an initial report by 15 November 2016, a progress report by 3 May 2017, and a subsequent report every six months for as long as the greyhound industry in New South Wales is operating.
- (10) That this House requests the Legislative Assembly to agree to a similar resolution and name the time and place for the committee's first meeting. The motion is quite detailed, as members understand. I believe that irrespective of the debate and the bill that was passed last night there is still a need for this committee to be established. In a number of places the McHugh report refers to the Parliament. Its first recommendation, which the Government adopted, was:

Given the findings of the Commission concerning the management and governance of the greyhound racing industry, the Parliament of New South Wales should consider whether the industry has lost its social licence and should no longer be permitted to operate in NSW.

That was one of 80 recommendations. The Government accepted the first recommendation and drafted legislation that was passed through this House last night and will pass through the other place in due course, but the Justice McHugh report made many positive recommendations that this House should still consider. The way to do that would be for this committee to be established and follow up on the recommendations of Justice McHugh because a number of them will apply whether or not the industry is shut down. The 80 recommendations cover a wide spectrum and overlap into other areas of racing and sport in New South Wales. The committee that I hope to establish should consider all of them and bring its report and recommendations to this House. The House can then decide whether the additional recommendations of Justice McHugh should be adopted and become part of new legislation in due course.

As I said, the recommendations in the report are very extensive and I believe Justice McHugh expected this House to consider all of them. Many of them still have importance in New South Wales irrespective of the bill that was passed last night. Obviously, some of them will have restrictions because of that bill, but a consideration of all recommendations will make the attitude of the Parliament on a number of issues such as live baiting absolutely black and white. Even though I assume that as a result of the bill the industry will be closed down in July next year, what happens in the meantime?

No indication has been given as to which of these recommendations will be adopted, so what restrictions will be placed on the greyhound industry? The passing of the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill will result in the closure of the greyhound industry but what is to happen in the meantime? Is it possible that live baiting will continue in some form but not under the supervision of Greyhound Racing NSW or the Government? It is well-known that illegal activities involving animals often occur; most are covered by the RSPCA. I believe that all of these recommendations should be adopted. Let us take, for example, recommendations Nos 3, 6 and 8. Recommendation No. 3 states:

Section 21 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 (NSW) should be amended to strengthen the offences of live baiting. The recommended amendments are detailed in Chapter 8.

Recommendation No. 6:

Rule 86B (1) (c) of the Rules of Racing should be amended to extend the disciplinary offence to advertising, promoting or organising live baiting.

Recommendation No. 8:

Greyhounds should be registered on the NSW Register of Companion Animals throughout their lifecycle.

When will that happen? As I said, all of the 80 recommendations of the McHugh special commission of inquiry report and other matters should be considered by this joint oversight select committee. The committee will then decide which recommendations are relevant and should be enacted in other legislation. Even though the bill has passed this Chamber, and assuming that the process proposed by the Government continues, what is to happen between now and next July? I trust that members will not have a closed mind and that they will see the need for this joint oversight select committee. Who will have the ongoing oversight role—a bit like the ICAC Committee—in monitoring the greyhound industry and bringing recommendations to this Parliament? It could be said that the passing of this legislation will shut the door and that the Parliament will no longer have a role. That is not correct; the Parliament does have a role. In fact, from the way in which Justice McHugh drafted his recommendations I believe that he expected us to do what I am proposing in this inquiry. I commend the motion to the House and call on members to support it.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (10:28): The Government does not support the motion for the establishment of a joint parliamentary inquiry into the future of greyhound racing in New South Wales. I do think I need to remind the Parliament that it already held its own extensive inquiry into this industry in 2013-14. The Legislative Council Select Committee on Greyhound Racing in NSW was chaired by the Hon. Robert Borsak, and its membership included members from The Greens, the Liberal Party, The Nationals and the Labor Party. The committee received more than 1,000 submissions from a broad range of interested parties: industry representatives, animal welfare groups, qualified veterinarians and individual members of the community.

Whilst the committee did not recommend the closure of greyhound racing in New South Wales, it directly identified wastage as a critical issue in 2014. In its report the committee quoted evidence from the Australian Veterinary Association that "the biggest problem with greyhound racing in Australia is that significantly more animals are born than will have a long, healthy career in racing leading to unacceptable wastage levels". Later in its report the committee noted that many submissions made reference to the ethical issues of euthanasing such a large number of greyhounds every year. The report referred specifically to the Barristers Animal Welfare Panel submission, which argued:

Civilised society cannot countenance the widespread slaughter of greyhounds for no other reason than their inability to run as fast as other dogs.

Whilst the committee did not recommend shutting down the industry, it heard evidence that cast serious doubt about its viability into the future. In evidence to the committee, Greyhound Racing NSW stated:

... the view of the industry is that the New South Wales greyhound racing industry is not viable in the short to medium term and certainly not sustainable in the longer term.

Other industry participants advised the committee that the New South Wales industry was already in a state of decline. Over 2015-16 the special commission of inquiry headed by Justice McHugh considered governance, integrity and animal welfare standards in the industry in New South Wales, as well as its ongoing viability. The commission received more than 151,000 pages of evidence, 115 hours of videos, 804 wide-ranging submissions and 59 responses to issues papers. It found evidence of significant and systemic overbreeding and the killing of healthy dogs, widespread live baiting, large numbers of greyhounds being killed and seriously injured during races, and an industry culture of cover-up, deceit and disregard for the law.

The commission also heard from Greyhound Racing NSW that the industry should focus solely on TAB racing in New South Wales. Seventeen of the 19 non-TAB tracks earmarked for closure by Greyhound Racing NSW are in regional New South Wales; that is, the industry's own plan would leave many of those regional communities resisting the racing ban out in the cold. The evidence before the special commission clearly showed that the industry would experience a substantial contraction regardless of the action taken by the Government.

Since 2014 New South Wales has had two major inquiries into the greyhound racing industry. Do we need another one? My feeling is, and the Government's feeling at this stage is, no, we do not need another inquiry because both of the previous comprehensive inquiries found that the long-term viability of the greyhound racing industry is highly questionable. Both inquiries noted that the industry is founded upon the large-scale killing of healthy greyhounds because they are surplus to requirements. The Government cannot support asking a parliamentary committee to take on the governance of an industry that is in such a parlous state. We believe it would be neither a proper use of the Parliament's time or resources nor the proper function of the people's elected representatives.

It should be borne in mind that Dr Keniry is currently undertaking extensive work in the area, and I gave an undertaking yesterday on behalf of the Deputy Premier that when that transition package is put together within three months there will be a report back to Parliament. We are covering all those bases. To track over the same things once again so soon after the inquiries have been undertaken when we are working in so many areas currently would not be a proper use of our resources. There may well be a reason to hold another inquiry later on, but not at this time. At the moment we need to work with the industry to ensure that we look after the welfare of the animals and the welfare of the owners during the period of change. That should be our focus at the moment, not trying to second-guess for a third time in the same area.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:35): The Opposition will support the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for the reasons which he has outlined and which were canvassed extensively in the debate last night on the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016. We think this is a proper and appropriate use of the mechanisms of this Parliament. Notwithstanding the decisions reached by this House on the prohibition legislation, there is a plethora of issues associated with the winding down of the industry that can properly be addressed by the committee process as proposed. We urge all members to join with us in supporting this motion.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (10:36): I oppose the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for the establishment of a joint parliamentary inquiry into the future of greyhound racing in New South Wales. With the greatest respect, the motion is flawed for a number of reasons. The first and most obvious reason is that plainly the view of the Parliament was expressed last night as to the future of this industry. As far as greyhound racing itself is concerned, that future essentially ends in the middle of next year. That conclusion made by this House is soundly based upon the evidence that has been made available by Justice McHugh in his special commission of inquiry report, and it is assisted by the evidence given to this House by the earlier inquiry undertaken into the greyhound racing industry.

It is clear that the reality is that the greyhound racing industry is a sick industry; that is, it was and is based on a broken model, both from an animal welfare perspective and from an economic or business perspective. Whilst industry lobbyists claim to have modelling that shows a way forward with country racing, the numbers do not stack up—they did not stack up in 2013, they did not stack up in 2014, and they did not stack up when Justice McHugh examined them. International accounting firm KPMG suggests that an ideal commercial model would involve six to 11 tracks being maintained across the State—not 34, but six to 11—and it was far from the only group to model a significant reduction in tracks. PricewaterhouseCoopers' financial analysis suggests that the industry can afford to upgrade only 12 existing tracks. Greyhound Racing NSW itself has advocated a reduction

to eight to 14 tracks under what it describes as a centre of excellence model. Urbis modelled options for as few as four tracks to operate state-wide. All of those conclusions point to the fact that across most of the State greyhound racing must come to its natural and inevitable end.

I do not see how the proposed joint standing committee could reach any other conclusion. I emphasise in respect of the previous inquiry, diligently undertaken by this House, that in fact there were two reports. One report was delivered in March 2014 and the other was delivered in October 2014. The reason for the delay was that the committee sought the cooperation of the then Treasurer, the Hon. Andrew Constance, who went about further modelling to provide some financial relief to the industry. Indeed, it should be remembered that the second report issued in October 2014 found that the industry would be viable only with significant government intervention through reduced taxation. In the second report the committee stated:

The committee was convinced ... of the funding challenges faced by the greyhound racing industry in New South Wales ... and found that the industry may be unsustainable under current funding arrangements.

That conclusion was reinforced by Justice McHugh. The committee's observation was only two years ago. To be frank, left to its own devices this industry would largely wither on the vine. Indeed, that was the evidence from industry participants. It would be to the detriment of the lives and welfare of many greyhounds in coming years if the industry were to continue. To be frank, if left to its own devices it would be to the detriment of the participants because the only way forward is the implementation of the financial assistance package that the Government is proceeding with at the present time. The proposed joint committee would also be tasked with achieving something clearly counter to strong international trends. Australia remains one of only eight countries where commercial greyhound racing is still permitted. As was observed in the 2013-14 upper House inquiry, even in the United States, with its somewhat laissez-faire culture, 38 States at that stage had banned greyhound racing. My understanding that is now up to 40.

I will reiterate the observation which I made last night and which has been made in other quarters: The way forward for this industry is now clearly mapped out. While some participants still cling to the hope that by approaching members in this place and the other Chamber the industry will somehow be resurrected, the reality is that people need to start looking forward. They need to begin to engage with Dr Keniry and look to the financial assistance package. They need to engage in a way that ensures that their welfare is appropriately addressed.

I conclude by emphasising that the alternative proposals put forward would have seen the closure of almost all, if not all, of the country tracks, with no financial assistance being provided to the owners, breeders and trainers. The only way forward that ensures reasonable financial relief to the participants in this industry is through the adoption of the proposals that the Government is pursuing through this House and through the other House. For those reasons, I oppose the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (10:43): On behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party I speak in support of the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I support it because the views put by the Hon. Trevor Khan have firmed up my opinion that an inquiry is required. This false premise that the Government keeps trotting out that inquiry after inquiry has found that the greyhound industry is unviable is absolute garbage. About \$35 million a year is shovelled out of the coffers of this industry into the coffers of the thoroughbred racing industry. The problems for the greyhound racing industry started in 1999 with the intercode agreement, which is the most ridiculous commercial agreement I have ever seen any government negotiate. If the greyhound industry had been left to its own devices and not had its money stolen, we may not have been in the situation where the Premier was encouraged to drop the guillotine on it. If an industry is properly funded, looks to itself, agrees to abide by recommendations made in several inquiries, not least being the McHugh inquiry, surely that industry should be given the opportunity to prove itself.

I know that the history is bad. I have heard all the statements and contributions made by different members of this House, and when they talk about historical facts I must agree. However, I do not agree that the McHugh report was a robust report. I agree with the comments and assertions made that it was full of holes and misrepresentations, including the fact that it did not consider the viability of the greyhound industry if the unfortunately impossible were to happen and the 99 year agreement be scrubbed. Of course, I know that is a legislative impossibility.

In moving for the establishment of this inquiry, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has been completely honest and open. These proposals were put to the Premier, not as a proposal for an inquiry but as reasons for the inquiry. I am sure that were an inquiry to be established it would be able to examine the evidence given to and reported by McHugh, including assertions made by others that that evidence was wrong, as well as financial models that perhaps looked at the industry as a standalone entity rather than it being raped by the Government to fund another parallel industry—how the hell that could happen, I do not know. It would try to shine a bright light on the efficacy,

honesty and integrity of some of these inquiries by a joint select oversight committee. I cannot agree that the people in this industry do not deserve to have their say.

The Hon. Trevor Khan stated that this House made the decision, and I have no doubt that it will be endorsed by the other place today. He must know that it hinges on the numbers on the night. I do not know that The Greens would actually support the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, but they may do so. That will be tested this morning obviously. I do not know what agreements The Greens have reached with the Government over their support for the legislation last night.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Oh, Robert!

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Well, The Greens are always accusing others in this House of cutting deals with the Government, and quite correctly so, so I do not see why the opposite assertion cannot be made. In any case, the Hon. Robert Borsak and I support the attempts of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile to try to shine the light on some of these issues. I have said in this House before and I will say it again: The Government's faith in some of these gurus should surely be starting to wear thin. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party supports the motion.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (10:49): This motion calls for an inquiry into an inquiry that followed a previous parliamentary inquiry into the greyhound racing industry. It is yet another desperate ploy to delay the inevitable. Now is the time for planning the transition, for rolling out just and fair compensation wherever it is appropriate, and for protecting the greyhounds. The facts have been made clear by the special commission of inquiry, an inquiry which had vastly more capacity than this proposed parliamentary inquiry ever could. Justice McHugh's report was based on 13 months of investigation. The commission considered 151,000 pages of evidence, 115 hours of video evidence, 804 new submissions and 69 individual testimonies. This is as far-reaching and comprehensive as we can get. The Greens will not be supporting this motion.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (10:51): In reply: I thank all the members who have contributed to this debate—the Hon. Duncan Gay, the Hon. Adam Searle, the Hon. Trevor Khan, the Hon. Robert Brown, and Dr Mehreen Faruqi. I have only one final comment to make, and it relates to a government document I have just been given. It is a three-page document titled *Transition to the closure of the NSW greyhound racing industry: questions and answers*. I have been spending some time going through that paper. There is one question and answer that I think is relevant to this debate about creating a joint select oversight committee—relevant because it makes it clear that the Government is setting up its own machinery to perform that function. The paper states:

How will the shut-down occur?

A transition plan has been developed and a taskforce established. The taskforce is led by the NSW Department of Justice—the staff of which I assume are experts in greyhound racing—

and includes representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury, the Department of Primary Industries, the Office [of] Local Government and the RSPCA NSW. The taskforce will develop a detailed industry shutdown plan during the second half of 2016 following consultation with the greyhound industry and animal welfare organisations.

For this debate about whether or not we establish a committee, the question is whether we allow all these matters to be handled by a group of bureaucrats—public servants—or whether Parliament exercises its role and provides supervision of this whole process. I believe it should be done under the watchful eye of members of Parliament. That, as I understand it, is our responsibility. Having a joint select oversight committee would ensure open government. What the Government is proposing is closed government. I prefer open government.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes 14
Noes 21
Majority..... 7

AYES

Borsak, Mr R
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Moselmann, Mr S (teller)
Searle, Mr A
Veitch, Mr M

Brown, Mr R
Green, Mr P
Nile, Reverend F
Secord, Mr W
Voltz, Ms L

Cotsis, Ms S
Houssos, Ms C
Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P

NOES

Ajaka, Mr J	Amato, Mr L	Blair, Mr N
Buckingham, Mr J	Clarke, Mr D	Colless, Mr R
Cusack, Ms C	Farlow, Mr S	Faruqi, Dr M
Franklin, Mr B (teller)	Gallacher, Mr M	Gay, Mr D
Khan, Mr T	MacDonald, Mr S	Maclaren-Jones, Ms N (teller)
Mallard, Mr S	Mitchell, Ms S	Pearson, Mr M
Phelps, Dr P	Shoebridge, Mr D	Taylor, Ms B

PAIRS

Mookhey, Mr D	Mason-Cox, Mr M
Wong, Mr E	Pearce, Mr G

Motion negatived.

*Documents***GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY****Production of Documents: Order**

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (11:01): I seek leave to amend Private Members' Business Notice of Motion No. 904 outside the Order of Precedence by omitting "21 days" and inserting instead "28 days".

Leave granted.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 28 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 January 2016 in the possession, custody or control of the Office of the Premier, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Office of the Minister for Racing and the Department of Justice related to the Government's advertising campaign relating to the greyhound racing industry:

- (a) all documents, including emails and other electronic documents, relating to the initiation, creation, development and approval of the advertising campaign, including the budget, strategy and objective of the campaign; 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.

Last night this House passed the Greyhound Racing Prohibition Bill 2016. I will not use debate on this motion to canvass again the various arguments that were put during that debate. This motion is not about the greyhound industry per se; rather, it is about government advertising. Over the past month or so a number of sometimes quirky advertisements appeared on Facebook, and on radio, advocating the Government's position on the abolition of the greyhound industry in New South Wales. I am advised that advertisements also appeared in other media, including newspapers, although I have not personally seen or heard them. To the bemusement of some, the advertisements were tagged as coming from the Department of Justice. It is only when one appreciates the surreal proclivity of the Baird Government to constantly restructure and move agencies and place them for a time in unlikely parts of the State bureaucracy, that one understands why Justice would be involved.

The Premier's policy was first announced by his social media guru on Facebook. It is perhaps not too difficult to understand why paid social media has played such a role in seeking to prosecute the Government's case to destroy the industry. My motion is modest. It simply seeks information on behalf of the people of New South Wales that, to date, has not been made public. The motion makes no value judgements on the Government's position on the greyhound racing industry. It advocates no rescinding of any decision of this House and reflects on no person. Using the forms of the House, my motion merely seeks information relating to the government advertising campaign: how it was initiated, how it was run and what it sought to achieve. I ask members to support the motion.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (11:03): The Government will support this call for papers under Standing Order 52. The Government supports the motion because it has nothing to hide and because it wants to make the information available to the public. The inquiry into the greyhound racing industry was extensive. The report of that inquiry is more than 800 pages long. It contains paragraphs and paragraphs of detail. The Government needed the community to understand the content of the report rather than getting a selective, distorted view from people with

vested interests. It is important, when a detailed report of a lengthy inquiry is published, that that information gets out to the community.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (11:05): The Government's advertising about the ban on greyhound racing was a useful and well-made intervention in a debate that was plagued by misinformation peddled by the Labor Party and gambling interests. The gambling industry and the greyhound racing industry have spent millions of dollars in trying to overturn the ban. I only wish that they had paid as much attention to animal welfare as they have to trying to overturn the ban. The Government's advertising was aimed at getting the facts of the McHugh report out to the public—and chilling facts they were. The Greens have a particular interest in transparency and accountability. The Government should be up-front about how much it spent on the campaign. Taxpayers have a right to know. That is why the Greens will support this motion.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (11:06): There is probably no need for me to speak in this debate, given that the Government will support the fairly benign motion moved by the Hon. Peter Primrose calling for papers under Standing Order 52. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party is interested in part (a) of the motion, which states:

... all documents, including emails and other electronic documents, relating to the initiation, creation, development and approval of the advertising campaign ...

I want to find out what clown of a public servant in the Department of Justice approved a newspaper advertisement that included a picture of a greyhound with a set of crosshairs on it. That was stupidity writ large. I support the motion.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (11:07): In reply: I thank all honourable members for their support and I thank the Government for its acquiescence.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

ABORTION LAW REFORM (MISCELLANEOUS ACTS AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (11:09): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

At the turn of the twentieth century, in the year 1900, the New South Wales Crimes Act was passed in this Parliament. The Crimes Act codified the common law crimes of our State. Nineteenth century crimes of the English legal system were brought together in statute and set out as the amalgamated criminal laws of the then colony of New South Wales. Division 12 of the Crimes Act, or sections 82, 83 and 84, related to a woman's "attempts to procure abortion", and criminalised such attempts with jail sentences of up to 10 years. It also criminalised doctors who attempted to provide an abortion with 10 years in prison. Sixteen years into the twenty-first century, these offences remain, stubbornly, within the Act.

The abortion law reform bill that I am introducing today is about bringing these 116-year-old archaic and now irrelevant provisions in line with modern medical practice, modern expectations of reproductive health and the right of women to our bodily autonomy—the rights of a patient to make their own healthcare choices with full certainty of the law and unambiguously, without the shadow of criminality. While positioning abortion law reform as a feminist campaign, responding to historical and entrenched sexism and attacks on the bodies of women, this bill is deliberately gender neutral because we know that a range of people need to access reproductive health care, including non-binary people and transgender men.

For the first seven decades of the last century, division 12 of the Crimes Act was more or less the formal be-all and end-all of abortion law. Until the 1970s, the criminality of abortion meant that people seeking to procure pregnancy termination had to go behind closed doors, and risk often highly dangerous illegal procedures. Operating in the shadow of the law, women and their doctors suffered heavily to undergo and perform what should have been readily available procedures. Maternal mortality remained high. This changed with the 1971 District Court ruling of Levine J in the *R v Wald* case.

The now-famous Levine ruling established that abortions would be lawful if there was "any economic, social or medical ground or reason" upon which a doctor could base an honest and reasonable belief that an abortion was required to avoid a "serious danger to the pregnant woman's life or to her physical or mental health." The Levine ruling was reinterpreted restrictively in the Supreme Court judgment of the 1995 super clinics case, but then reaffirmed and somewhat expanded when the case went to the New South Wales Court of Appeal. The then President of the Court of Appeal, Justice Kirby, extended Levine's consideration of "serious danger" to dangers that may be relevant after the birth of a child, specifically referring to social and economic factors affecting the mother's physical and psychological health.

Sydney health lawyer Julie Hamblin, whom I must acknowledge today as having provided such fantastic legal guidance to me through the process of drafting the bill, has so clearly summarised the unsatisfactory nature of the current situation in the sentiment: "There is a clear disconnect between what the law says, what most people think it says, and what happens in practice." We know that many in New South Wales do not know that abortion is a criminal offence till they or someone they know needs to access one, but there is strong support for its being removed from the Act and decriminalised. Approximately 73 per cent of New South Wales people surveyed support decriminalisation.

Despite the District Court ruling that provides exceptions for when abortion can be "lawfully" performed, the undeniable reality is that it remains a crime under sections 82, 83 and 84 of the Crimes Act. People accessing abortions in New South Wales, and their doctors, remain vulnerable to the full force of the criminal law, including up to a decade in jail, for attempting to procure one of the most common medical procedures performed in our State. We know that many doctors do not perform this procedure due to fear of persecution and prosecution. Some estimates suggest that approximately one in three Australian women have undergone the procedure. At the moment, we effectively consider them criminals unless they can prove otherwise. We also need to place abortions, and the circumstances in which they are currently performed, into perspective. Caroline de Costa, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and Heather Douglas, Professor of Criminal Law, explain:

... the overwhelming majority of abortions (94%) take place in the first 14 weeks of the pregnancy, and 5% between 14 and 20 weeks. The small number of women who choose termination after 20 weeks usually do so in circumstances where there is severe maternal physical or mental illness, late diagnosis of severe foetal abnormality, sexual assault or other exacerbating circumstances.

While incredibly common, abortion remains in a grey zone in the law and is not fully mainstream like other medical procedures. It is not routinely provided by public hospitals. Relatively few committed doctors perform these procedures, and mainly in the private sector. This uncertainty results in difficulties with access and cost, especially in regional and rural New South Wales. I would be very surprised if there were a single person in this Chamber without a close family member or friend who has had an abortion—whether they know about it or not.

That, of course, is part of the problem. The criminalisation of abortion leads to its ongoing stigmatisation. People do not like to talk about it. There is a deep shame in the procedure. This should not be the case. Stigmatising people leads inevitably to social divisions. We see this again and again in New South Wales with the ongoing harassment, abuse and intimidation of patients outside reproductive health clinics. As part of our reforms to abortion law, we must deal with this ongoing risk to the safety and wellbeing of patients who only want medical privacy. I will discuss this in more detail later. It is time to move on and reform our laws to reflect what the community wants and what is actually taking place. As laws across much of the Australia have been brought in line with current practice and social expectations, New South Wales still lags behind. That is why today I am introducing the Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2016. This is the first time an abortion decriminalisation bill has been introduced in the New South Wales Parliament. This bill is about access. It is about making access unambiguous but also removing the barriers that keep abortion services privatised and expensive, especially for rural and regional women.

New South Wales and Queensland remain the only States in Australia where the criminal laws from last century have not been amended. Let me say that again: New South Wales and Queensland remain the only States where the abortion offences remain unchanged in the Crimes Act. Members will be no doubt be aware that the Queensland private member's bill for abortion decriminalisation by Independent member of Parliament for Cairns, Mr Rob Pyne, is currently being examined by a parliamentary committee. Now it is time for New South Wales to confront this issue. The bill before us today is the culmination of months of intense consultations with doctors, lawyers, health and legal professionals, academics and women's groups before the exposure draft state. Further feedback after an exposure draft consultation period has been incorporated in the final bill. I am confident that we have crafted a bill that is comprehensive and careful, and meets public expectations in the twenty-first century.

The Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2016 does three things. It repeals existing abortion offences, requires doctors to disclose a conscientious objection, and provides for safe access zones around reproductive health clinics. Going into more detail about the specific provisions of the bill, schedule 1.1 repeals all existing criminal offences relating specifically to abortion—that is, division 12 and

sections 82, 83 and 84 of the Crimes Act 1900. In doing this, the bill follows the Australian Capital Territory model of repealing abortion offences. It is my intent in this bill for Parliament to signal that abortion ought not to be criminalised, but rather left up to the policies and decision-making of patients and their health practitioners, as occurs with other medical procedures. We do not have laws governing other parts of routine medical practice. We ordinarily leave it up to the profession to provide the best possible treatment and advice, and up to the patient to make the final decision. In practice, much of this is already happening in New South Wales. NSW Health, for instance, provides a Policy Directive for a Framework for Terminations in New South Wales Public Health Organisations. This contains information about the appropriate level of medical oversight for terminations that may be requested in a range of circumstances.

Schedule 1.3 modifies the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) to specify that it constitutes unsatisfactory professional conduct for a medical practitioner who has a conscientious objection to abortion to fail to advise a person requesting an abortion of the objection and to fail to refer the person to another health practitioner who does not have such a conscientious objection or to a local women's health centre. This schedule does not force any health practitioner to perform a pregnancy termination, nor does it vilify them for not performing one. In fact, it clarifies the action that must be taken by registered health practitioners who have a conscientious objection to abortion. This provision is to prevent a situation where a doctor who has an objection to abortion fails to inform a patient about all of their options, including termination. Patients rely on their health practitioners for knowledge and expertise. This ensures that patients get timely advice and access. However, this schedule also makes clear that in the case of an emergency a medical practitioner must treat a patient regardless of an objection to abortion. Again, this is no different from what medical professionals already undertake in other medical emergencies.

Schedule 2 makes amendments to the Summary Offences Act 1998 No 25 to enact 150-metre radius exclusion zones, also known as safe access zones, around premises at which abortions are provided with the purpose of prohibiting behaviour that is detrimental to health, safety and wellbeing or that compromises the privacy and dignity of those seeking to access reproductive health services, or doctors and employees of those services. New section 11AC makes it an offence for a person who is in an exclusion zone to bother, beset, harass, intimidate, interfere with, impede, obstruct or threaten by any means a person who is accessing, leaving or attempting to access or leave premises at which abortions are provided. New section 11AE protects patient and staff privacy by making it an offence to photograph, film or record or otherwise capture visual or audio data of people entering or leaving clinics.

The maximum penalty for breaching prohibitions defined in new sections 11AD and 11AE is 150 penalty units or imprisonment of six months. These provisions are largely modelled on the provisions in the Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (Safe Access Zones) Act 2015, which was passed in Victoria last year. Similar laws exist in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. I have been to clinics in Surry Hills and Albury and witnessed the behaviour of some so-called protesters outside those clinics. Earlier this year as I stood with the community in Albury I thought, "Why does a woman on one side of the Murray River in Wodonga have the right to be free from harassment but a woman living on the other side in Albury is denied that right? This just makes no sense." We know that the 81 per cent of New South Wales residents who support exclusion zones around abortion clinics and service providers agree.

Let us be clear: Enacting exclusion zones is not about stopping people from having different views or expressing them. These are measures solely designed to prevent the harassment and intimidation of people accessing specific medical premises—reproductive health clinics. It is about medical privacy, safety and peace of mind for patients walking into and out of a clinic. In this spirit, I draw the attention of members to new section 11AG, which provides that the proposed restrictions do not apply so as to prohibit conduct near Parliament House to ensure that people who wish to protest against abortion can do so outside this people's House. This bill does not make a moral case for or against any behaviour or any procedure. It is, more than anything, an acknowledgment that abortions take place every day and that they are and have been accessed by our sisters, mothers, friends, family and so many other people we know. It provides a clear legislative commitment to not criminalising that behaviour.

To those in this Chamber who will be granted a conscience vote on this bill, some of whom may have some lingering discomfort with the idea of legalising the procedure, I urge them to consider both that abortions are already happening in New South Wales and that the right to choose abortion has overwhelming support in the community. In a poll conducted by Lonergan in September 2015 some 87 per cent of surveyed New South Wales residents supported the right to choose, and the backing is particularly strong in rural and regional areas where services are less accessible. There was majority support for decriminalising abortion regardless of party affiliation, including Liberal-Nationals at 75 per cent, Labor at 77 per cent and The Greens at 86 per cent. There was clear majority support amongst men and women and across all age groups.

Many members from rural and regional New South Wales may be thinking of what their constituents might think of how they will vote on this bill. They should be aware that people living in regional and rural New South Wales were more likely to have a view that abortion should be decriminalised, with 77 per cent of people in rural and regional New South Wales compared with people 70 per cent in Sydney. They are also overwhelmingly in support of safe access zones, with 93 per cent of people in rural and regional New South Wales strongly agreeing or agreeing to these zones compared with 87 per cent in Sydney. This is, of course, no surprise because it is regional and rural women who in many cases have to travel long distances to procure this procedure, and at great financial cost.

Finally, I will detail the process that has taken place to bring this bill to Parliament today. I first gave notice of a bill like this in 2014 and I reintroduced it in the current Parliament in May 2015, before launching the End12 campaign to repeal division 12 of the Crimes Act in September. During that time I have held many meetings, roundtables, discussions and consultations with professionals, stakeholders and members of the public who all want to see this done. I have hosted a number of public meetings in regional areas and filled a packed-out Glebe Town Hall a couple of months ago. I have another public meeting planned in Newcastle next month.

I acknowledge the invaluable help of my staff, volunteers, the NSW Greens Women's Group and convenor Darelle Duncan in the campaign so far. I must also mention the advice and support from people such as Leslie Cannold, Caroline de Costa, Philippa Ramsay, Kirsten Black and Pieter Mourik and Bethany Sheehan and Anna Grothe from My Body, My Right. In our consultation process to date we have met or had discussions with representatives from numerous organisations that strongly support the bill, including the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, NSW Council for Civil Liberties, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, National Tertiary Education Unit NSW, Women's Legal Service, Community Legal Centres and Family Planning NSW to name a few.

We have come this far not just as the result of the work of a group of stakeholders and abortion reform advocates over the past three years; it is the end result of many decades of campaigning by generations of feminist activists, doctors, lawyers, and people in the community who have been working towards the repeal of criminal laws governing abortion for decades. I acknowledge the incredible role of the women's movement in fighting for abortion rights, including the Women's Abortion Action Campaign. I also acknowledge that over the decades many people—particularly women—have suffered as a result of the criminalisation and stigmatisation of abortion. Many of these wounds are irreversible, and I hope that one day this Parliament will perhaps reflect on and acknowledge this in a more meaningful and sustained way. But for now I hope we can work together to pass what I believe is a comprehensive and carefully crafted bill. In June this year Dean of Law at the University of New South Wales George Williams stated in an opinion piece in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that this bill is "far from radical". He is right. Provisions similar to this bill have been operating effectively for a number of years in many other jurisdictions of this country his bill does not do anything that has not been done before. It does not impinge on anyone's rights and it does not force anyone to do anything they do not want to do. It is not about encouraging or discouraging abortions. It is not about any compulsion but about the right to a choice. It grants the same rights that people in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania already enjoy to people in need of reproductive health in New South Wales. It says to women and all people who choose to have an abortion that they are not criminals and that we are going to remove the stigma and shame they currently face, and that anyone in need of a pregnancy termination service has affordable access to it with dignity and privacy.

The law must be brought into line with reality and with modern medical practice. There must be watertight protections for patients and their doctors so they can be absolutely confident that they are on the right side of the law. We must make sure that patients are able to easily afford and access one of the most common medical procedures in privacy, safety and dignity. The people of New South Wales, the most populous State in Australia, will accept nothing less. It is way past time to make the changes proposed in the Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2016. I look forward to working with members from all political parties to make this a reality. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

FAIRFIELD YOUTH OFF THE STREETS

The Hon. LOU AMATO (11:31): I move:

- (1) That this House notes the important work conducted by Fairfield's Youth Off The Streets program, which helps young people to find their footing in the community and equips them with essential skills to overcome any challenges they may face in the future.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:

- (a) the dedication of youth workers Mr Tommy Poto and Ms Sonia Giwargis who regularly devote their time towards developing a rapport with local Fairfield youths, offering much-needed support, assistance, and even free food; and
 - (b) the success of Bonnyrigg resident Ms Jessika Wrage who, at 20 years of age, has been able to overcome a range of challenges in her life, is now studying nursing, as well as being an invaluable asset to the volunteer team at Fairfield's Youth Off The Streets, and has recently adopted a role in the organisation's Youth Advisory Committee, which aims to identify and help address challenges for local youth.
- (3) That this House acknowledges the importance of youth outreach programs across our State and the enormous impact they have upon helping the next generation of community members to be safe, productive and fulfilled.

It is hard to believe but in Australia at present more than 47,000 people under the age of 25 are homeless. Many of these youths have parents who are suffering from mental illness, illicit drug use and domestic violence issues. It is estimated that at any one time more than one-third of people suffering homelessness are under the age of 25. Typically they do not attend school, are malnourished and are addicted to illicit substances such as methamphetamines. Many have suffered physical and sexual abuse; homelessness was the only means of escape. For many, the only means of survival is prostitution and illegal activities such as theft and distributing illicit drugs and, without help, escape from homelessness is almost impossible.

The Youth Off The Streets Fairfield Outreach program, which was established in March 2014, is committed to connecting disadvantaged young people with community, education and employment. It is part of Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets program. This great community service empowers young people to participate in and transform their futures through the development of their skills, confidence and relationships with each other, their families and their communities. Since this program opened in 1991 it has grown from a single food van delivering meals to young homeless people on the streets of Kings Cross—I can recall Father Riley starting this when I was a young boy—to a major youth-specific agency offering a full continuum of care through delivery of a wide range of services.

The program acknowledges the varying challenges and issues that young people face. Each young person is seen as an individual and the program varies depending upon the individual's need. It addresses many challenges and issues faced by today's youth and provides services such as coping with drug use, counselling, helping with legal issues, family breakdown, problems at school, assistance in gaining employment, further education, financial and debt counselling and advice, providing a safe place for youth to meet, helping those who are marginalised and suffering from feelings of isolation and fear, assisting youth disconnected from their culture and community, especially those from Indigenous backgrounds, and crisis accommodation. The Youth Off The Streets Fairfield Outreach program gives young people the chance to meet youth workers. Indeed, it is often the first step in helping youth to access help. It helps to put young people in touch with the services they need.

The main focus of the program is on youth aged 12 to 25. Families are encouraged to get involved. Members know full well the importance of family unity to our youth. The program works with local services to develop partnerships in the local community. Many of these activities take place outside of work hours so there is no conflict with those who are actively employed. Many businesses take these youths on and this leads to them having productive and meaningful lives. I take this opportunity to make special mention of the following individuals who have been actively involved in the program: youth workers Mr Tommy Poto and Ms Sonia Giwargis, who regularly devote their time to developing rapport with local Fairfield youths; and Ms Jessika Wrage who, at 20 years of age, has overcome a range of challenges in her life and is now studying nursing. She has also become an invaluable asset to the volunteer team and has recently taken on a role in the organisation's Youth Advisory Committee. I congratulate Ms Wrage on her efforts.

Many organisations provide ongoing assistance to our youth such as Anglicare, the Salvation Army, Barnardos Australia and the St Vincent de Paul Society, to name but a few. It is important that we acknowledge the great works that many organisations do in assisting our youth to reach their full potential, but we must also be mindful of those individuals who volunteer their time and resources to help alleviate suffering in our communities. Many of these individuals have themselves suffered homelessness and through the help and kindness of others they have changed their lives, where they now make a significant contribution to the lives of others.

The Government has identified the need to provide funding for youth-driven support programs such as the Youth Opportunities program, which is a local community-driven program. The Department of Community Services has called for applications for funding for the Youth Opportunities program to be run in 2017. I hope all those organisations take advantage of that opportunity. The program provides one-off, time-limited grants of up to \$50,000 to organisations and local councils for youth-led and youth-driven community projects focused on youth development. The Government has allocated up to \$1.1 million for projects to be conducted between January and December 2017. Since the program was launched in 2012, more than \$6.8 million has been provided for 120 local projects throughout New South Wales.

We must also be mindful of adults who are homeless. Many of us in this place who travel by rail and disembark from St James station in particular would be well aware that the number of homeless people sleeping in train station tunnels seems to be increasing. Yesterday morning I walked through Hyde Park and saw an old gentleman lying on a bench with no blanket, nothing at all. I thought how any one of us here could end up just like that. Many homeless people unfortunately have mental illness and it is very hard to get help for them. We should be very thankful that we are not in that situation.

I have seen many people lying on the cold concrete floor of the station entry with only a flimsy blanket. I wonder if anyone here has imagined what it is like to be lying there in a cold and windy tunnel. Each and every one of us in this place should consider how fortunate we are. For those people, re-entry into mainstream Australia is difficult. Currently, one in 200 Australians is homeless and some of them will intentionally commit a crime because at least when they are incarcerated they will get bed and breakfast, lunch, dinner and warm clothing. For many of them, being incarcerated is better than being on a park bench or in a tunnel.

I take this opportunity to commend Father Chris Riley for his lifelong commitment of 40-odd years to alleviating the suffering of homeless people. For the third year in a row Father Riley has run an awareness program called Lace it Up. Homeless youths are forced to sleep with their shoes on mainly because they have to be ready to flee the dangers of sleeping on the streets; at any moment they could be assaulted and have to run for their life. This program raises awareness of youth homelessness by asking each and every one of us to reflect during a moment in our daily routine when we are tying up our shoe laces—or if we do not have laces, when putting on our shoes or boots—and letting it act as a symbol for the thousands of young people who battle cold streets every day. In conclusion, I urge all members in this place and people in the community to help and to play a part, however small—whether by donating, volunteering, supporting and promoting organisations and businesses that help those people in our communities who are most disadvantaged. The simple message is: Let's help.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (11:44): I strongly support this wonderful motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato. The motion shows a lot of sincerity and compassion for the area he comes from and represents so effectively. I begin by noting that one of the Premier's priorities is reducing youth homelessness. I think for the first time in this State we have a Premier, a Cabinet and a Government that has very clearly put youth homelessness front and centre of what the Government is about. The description of that priority is:

Reducing youth homelessness. Increase the proportion of young people who successfully move from Specialist Homelessness Services to long-term accommodation by 10%.

If we cannot measure it, we cannot manage it. As I say, we have that as a target over the next years to 2020. If that is at the forefront for our leaders, our Cabinet and all of us in this Government and it is resourced, it is top of my mind in developing priorities and it is top of my mind in developing where the programs are set. I believe that youth homelessness is a non-partisan issue, but we go a step beyond that and make it something that all of us in government focus on. I bring to the attention of the House what I believe is one of the best policies that makes a direct attack on youth homelessness. We can have roundtables, we can have meetings, we can have our desires about what we want to do about youth homelessness, but unless we attack it with resources and address some of the root-cause issues we will possibly be in the same position in the years to come. Very recently, Minister Brad Hazzard announced a youth rent subsidy, which addresses one of the real barriers for people getting off the streets and getting a home. Our youth have a lot of trouble just getting over the first barrier in terms of cost and rental accessibility.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Point of order: The member has the right to be heard. Conversations are happening in the House that ought not be.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Bronnie Taylor): Order! Members will refrain from talking in the House at audible levels.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: As I said, Minister Brad Hazzard has attacked this issue at one of the root causes: young people being able to go to rental providers and telling them they have the capacity to pay the rent. Landlords do consider whether people can pay the bond and the rent and whether they are in a position to continue paying the rent not just for a week, a month or a few months but to take a room or a house, whatever it might be, and to have a good relationship with the landlord and continue to be able to pay the rent. I was very proud to announce this program on the Central Coast with Mr Adam Crouch, MP, the member for Terrigal. He recognises that it is a serious problem. I will read a part of the Government's media release because it is very important. It stated:

The announcement of the Youth Private Rental Subsidy (YPRS) comes at the start of Homelessness Prevention Week—that was back at the beginning of August—

and is part of the NSW Government's ongoing commitment to reduce homelessness. Under the program, young people aged 16-24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are provided with a support worker and are required to engage in education, training and job seeking activities to be eligible for the subsidy.

It is a terrific Community in Partnership, taking Action to safeguard Australia's peaceful and harmonious way of life [COMPACT] grant. We are not just throwing money at this problem. We are saying to young people that we will come and help them. We have a program but they must pull their weight and engage in education, training and job seeking. The media release further stated:

Through this program young people will pay rent at 25 per cent of their income, with the NSW Government subsidising their remaining rent.

Some conditions are involved, including their willingness to engage in training and they must engage with a social worker or support worker. However, the support is not ongoing; there are limits to how long they can access the program. This program provides a solution to getting people off the streets, couches or moving around in short-term accommodation into something more substantial. People can then approach employers saying they have a fixed address. They are on that first step to getting a job, engaging with the community and being part of the workforce. The 16 to 24 age group is a difficult one. People might have difficulties in their latter years of schooling; we understand it might not have been a terrific experience for them. Indeed, some people are not suited to the way in which the High School Certificate is structured or there may have been difficulties at home such as drugs, making it difficult for them to finish school.

This program provides them with stability and confidence to be in rental accommodation; it helps with their self-esteem, life, training and jobs. That is so important for people who are trying to break the cycle of homelessness. I am privileged to make a short contribution in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato, who is sincere about this issue. People who are engaged in the community see these problems. I see it on the Central Coast and in the Hunter, as do agencies such as Police, Health, Mental Health and the Department of Family and Community Services [FACS]. If we can provide this sort of bridging assistance and encourage people to be no longer reliant on government by contributing 25 per cent of their income, that is a terrific initiative. I place on record my appreciation to Minister Brad Hazzard for this substantial proposal. It is not just another talkfest or well-meaning policy; it is something that actually addresses the problem. I commend him and all the FACS workers who developed the policy. I hope it works over the next couple of years. If there can be more such initiatives it will do us all a lot of good. I support the motion.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (11:53): I congratulate the Hon. Lou Amato on moving motion. I grew up in the neighbouring region to which the motion refers—Fairfield. I saw firsthand the difference that groups like Father Riley's Youth Off The Streets has made to that community. No matter how effective the programs to which Mr Scot MacDonald referred or those of previous Labor governments with respect to youth homelessness, every single one of those programs is made more effective when augmented by contributions of groups such as Youth Off The Street and others like it in civil society. It is when the State can partner with these groups that we can make the biggest difference.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:54): I speak in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato and congratulate him on doing so. He is a genuine and sincere member of this House. He supports Youth Off The Streets, particularly in Fairfield, as referred to in the motion. I have not had any involvement with Youth Off The Streets in Fairfield but I have no doubt that if the Hon. Lou Amato has such kind things to say about the program, I am sure they are very well deserved. I say generally that Father Riley's Youth Off The Streets is an incredible program that has done so much for so many kids over the years. It largely has a metropolitan footprint but I know it has outreach services in regional New South Wales such as Griffith and Narrandera in the Riverina and also out in Bourke. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health and Western NSW, I am very pleased that those outreach services are out in Bourke.

I understand that in Bourke the program focuses on 12- to 25-year-old kids and encourages family involvement. Those involved in the program also work with local services and develop partnerships with local communities to try to make a difference. Some of the outreach programs in Bourke include an after-school drop-in centre, Thursday afternoon art classes, a cultural development program and a wellbeing program. It is pleasing that such services are available in western New South Wales. I focus my comments more on paragraph (3) of the motion, which acknowledges the importance of youth outreach programs across our State and the enormous impact they have upon the next generation of community members to be safe, productive and fulfilled. I refer to two areas. The first is government funding through Minister Ajaka, who is in the Chamber, with the Youth Opportunities Program. In December last year 31 new Youth Opportunities grants programs were offered, totalling up to \$1 million. Some of the programs funded were in regional areas and western New South Wales.

Armidale Dumaresq Council received \$15,000 for its Learner Driver Mentor Program; Cobar Shire Council was successful in obtaining \$14,650 for upskilling youth to get involved; Coonamble Shire Council had

"Go Gular"; Dubbo City Council was successful in obtaining \$25,000 for its volunteer literacy resource kit; and Broken Hill and the Far West Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation received funding to help the Murdi Paaki young leaders program. Murdi Paaki Regional Rugby League Council was able to conduct the regional rugby league community youth forums. This was an opportunity to use sport to provide outreach services to kids in far western New South Wales. I congratulate the Minister on the work he is doing in that program.

I note that the current round of funding was announced in May this year and will provide \$1.1 million for the 2016-17 financial year for new Youth Opportunities projects to run through 2017. Applications for those funding rounds closed on 27 June. I am sure we are all looking forward to hearing in the coming months the results of the successful applicants for those programs. The other youth outreach program I wanted to devote most my contribution to relates to a program of which many members would be aware: Backtrack, up in Armidale. BackTrack is the brainchild of Bernie Shakeshaft. I have known Bernie for a few years. He spent some time in Gunnedah—I think from memory as the youth officer at council, but I am happy to be corrected on that.

For members who are not familiar with BackTrack, I recommend that if they are ever in the Armidale region they go to meet Bernie, have a look and meet the kids there. It is a program which has changed—I would almost say saved—the lives of hundreds of students. The program's aims are pretty simple. They want to help as many young people having a hard time as possible. As I said, it is the brainchild of Bernie Shakeshaft. Bernie had 20 years of youth work experience across Australia. He wanted to create a model of youth work which redefined what it was possible to achieve and which strengthened individuals and communities. It predominantly focuses on boys, but there are some girls involved in some aspects of the programs.

I met Bernie not long after I was elected to Parliament. I spent some time with some of the BackTrack kids at their school. These are kids for whom the system does not really work. A lot of them have had issues, have changed schools, have been suspended or have poor literacy and numeracy skills. Some of them have family members who have been incarcerated. Some of them have themselves had issues with juvenile detention. When you talk to the students, you hear a range of stories and understand that they come from a diverse range of backgrounds. For whatever reason, they are kids for whom conventional schooling has not been right. Often they have found themselves on the wrong side of the law and a bit ostracised by their communities.

BackTrack gives these kids a school environment—they still go every day—but it also provides other programs which help to improve their sense of self-worth, as well as their employment and educational opportunities. There has been quite a bit in the media about BackTrack. *The Australian* did a detailed story in 2014 about the work BackTrack is doing in Armidale. I also saw an article last week about some of the results of the program. BackTrack has been in operation since 2006. The kids go to school, they learn to build gates, they fabricate ute trays, they take care of sheepdogs—they have a really successful Paws Up program that I will speak about in a minute—and they spend time out in the shearing sheds. Some research done on the program has found that there has been a 40 per cent decline in suicidal thoughts among those the teenagers who attend, a 70 per cent decline in multiple suspensions at school, and a halving of the incidence of crimes such as break and enter, trespass and assault. That is not only in the Armidale area but also in the Tamworth region.

As I said, Bernie is the founder and the main manager there, but there are other staff who work with him in Armidale. I will mention a couple of them. There is Paul Dawson, who coordinates the AgLads program; Michelle Rottcher, who is also a coordinator; and Nathan Bliss, who is a youth worker. Nathan started with BackTrack when it began in 2006. He was then a young guy who was having a pretty tough time, but he has been able to grow into his youth worker role and become a mentor to the young people in the program. It is a nice success story: he was once one of the program participants but is now a program staff member and one of their leaders.

There is also an artist-in-residence and youth worker, Matt Pilkington, as well as Sarah Mills, who is a youth worker and a teacher. BackTrack is very highly respected—I would say loved—by the Armidale community and the people of the north west for what it has been able to do for these kids. In 2015, BackTrack won the New South Wales Youth Service of the Year award. That is a pretty impressive endorsement of what the team has been doing. Bernie Shakeshaft was awarded a Churchill fellowship, and the team has won business chamber awards, innovation awards, and excellence in Aboriginal education awards, so it is clearly at the pinnacle of what can be achieved in youth outreach services in regional New South Wales.

The team also run Paws Up. Some members may know what Paws Up is about, particularly if they have attended any regional shows. The program has developed a very successful dog high-jumping team. The team goes to shows and to international events and events across the State and the country. It holds the Australian record and it is very seldom beaten in its travels around the country. The Paws Up dogs do very well. The program began as a way to engage youth. Once the workers get the kids on board, each is given responsibility for a sheepdog. They build trust, they learn self-discipline while training the dogs, and they get self-confidence from the public performances. I think they will be in Sydney later next month. I suggest to any member that if they get

the opportunity to see what these boys can do with their dogs—the high jumping—they will find it very entertaining. It is a beautiful story.

Another program BackTrack offers is AgLads. It is designed to get boys involved to develop skills for future employment in areas where there is a demand for those skills. In that part of New South Wales there are trade and agricultural skills shortages, and the program was established in response to the interest shown by people the BackTrack team have met at shows. AgLads is an innovative industry-led program focused on creating local employment in rural communities. The participants are often out being trained on local properties under the guidance of industry mentors. As I said, it is about making sure that the work these kids are doing at BackTrack gives them the best opportunity of future employment in the region.

BackTrack also offers a program called Links 2 Learning. It is a mixed gender program that is again about supporting young people. The program focuses on students in grades six to 10. It is about getting students to re-engage with their education, and ensuring they have the resilience and social skills they need to get through their schooling. Two in-school programs are underway at the moment. One is onsite at Walcha and the other is at Guyra Central School, which I am sure Mr Scot MacDonald would be happy about. Another program supports young people from Armidale High School, Duval High School, Drummond Primary School and Uralla Central School at the BackTrack premises.

Clearly BackTrack is making a major contribution. When I visited there and was talking to some of the boys—that day all the students there were male—a lot of them told me that if they had not had that path, if they had not had the opportunities given to them by BackTrack, and if they had not met someone like Bernie Shakeshaft, who believed in them and taught them to believe in themselves, they did not know where they would have ended up. As I said, a lot of them have a family history of incarceration. Some of the kids going through BackTrack are the first in their families ever to have finished high school, to have had a trade or technical certificate or further qualification. It is a program that has changed the lives of many. I will share with members some figures on the students that have come through BackTrack.

The program has supported more than 532 people, and 87 per cent of the students who have been through BackTrack are, once they leave, engaged in education or employment. That is a positive statistic. There are 178 current participants and BackTrack is putting in a 100 per cent effort to ensure that it achieves the best possible outcomes for those kids. It is worth noting some work done by the University of New England to evaluate the program's effectiveness. As I said earlier, there have been some very sharp drops in crime rates for the types of offences those kids might otherwise have been likely to be involved in—break and enter, trespass, assault and malicious damage. Statistics on those crimes have dropped by 52 per cent. In Tamworth over the same period, the rates for the same crimes increased by about 90 per cent. So it is clear that BackTrack is working well in the Armidale community.

Bernie says that one of the reasons BackTrack runs the AgLads program and the dog jumping is that they want the boys out on the weekend. They want them doing physical work. They want them to be tired when they go home so that they do not feel like going out with their mates or running amok. It is about physical exercise and work. While the programs are mainly about building a work ethic and building up those skills that give the kids opportunities for further employment, it has an additional benefit. If the participants have been, say, at a local show on a Saturday—they might have travelled there on the bus with the dogs, they might have trained the dogs—when they get home they will not want to go out and run amok on the streets of Armidale. They are tired and they want to go to bed. It sounds simple, but it is effective. It works.

Last but not least, not only does BackTrack do things to help students improve their wellbeing and their job opportunities, it has also helped out a few times when there have been natural disasters. The participants have worked across the State when there have been floods. BackTrack has helped to instil a sense of community in those students. It has helped to make them feel they are part of something. The member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall, has mentioned, I think, that BackTrack will be in Sydney soon. I would be happy to let members know when the BackTrack lads and Bernie will be in Sydney, because I think it would be worthwhile for those who have not met them to take the opportunity to learn more about what they do. It is great to be able to mention them today in this debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato, because it is youth programs like BackTrack and people like Bernie Shakeshaft who are making a difference for kids in regional areas. I give a strong shout-out to BackTrack and the work it does. I strongly support the motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (12:08): As the Minister responsible for youth, I support the motion moved by the Hon. Lou Amato acknowledging the work of Youth Off The Streets. I confirm that the Government supports the vital work of Father Chris Riley and the team at Youth Off The Streets. I congratulate the Hon. Lou Amato for moving this motion. It has provided us with an opportunity to acknowledge the team at Youth Off The Streets. The organisation is a bastion of hope and support for our most vulnerable people. It is important for all of us to pause and to reflect

on how fortunate we are. Although the House sat late last night, I am sure all of us had a roof over our head as we slept. We were able to eat a warm meal and we were able to shower this morning. Unfortunately, some people in our community, and some of our youth in particular, are unable to do that. They do not have a place to go. That is why organisations such as Youth Off The Streets are so vital.

The Government supports and will continue to support the work of Youth Off The Streets while also funding a number of other programs aimed at helping, connecting and inspiring our youth. Research shows that with proper support and opportunities young people can address a range of risk factors in their lives and play a greater role in their communities. This includes young people living on society's margins and at risk of disengaging from their communities, who respond to mentoring, support and encouragement. We want to improve access to youth-led and youth-driven activities in locally based sport and recreation and cultural activities, and to improve access to events and facilities. Increasing young people's knowledge, skills and confidence also increases their opportunities to link with training and employment. Youth Opportunities is a government program that provides youth and community organisations and local government with funding for one-off, time-limited new projects. The projects use strategies to support young people's participation, engagement and inclusion in the community and to help them to lead and to participate in community development activities.

Since November 2012 the Government has provided \$6.8 million in Youth Opportunities funding to support 120 local projects. These youth-led initiatives have delivered innovative youth leadership and mentoring experiences. They have also empowered at-risk young people to develop the skills and self-confidence to participate more fully in their communities. More than 32,000 young people have already benefited from the program, which has supported more than 2,500 community events and activities. In May 2016 I was pleased to announce a fifth round of funding that will provide \$1.1 million in 2016-17 for new Youth Opportunities projects. In the near future I will announce the successful applicants. I know all members of this House will join me in supporting the continued good work of many of our youth service providers.

Youth need good mentors, and Father Riley is an inspiration to many. The help and guidance he has provided to countless children over many years has been invaluable. The Government recognises the importance of mentors for young people, which is why it invests more than \$2.6 million in the Youth Frontiers program. The program mentors 1,200 year 8 and 9 students. Youth Frontiers is carefully targeted at students who have the most to gain from a mentoring experience. The program uses mentoring as a tool to provide students with an opportunity to build life skills and self-confidence. Students spend at least 30 hours working with their mentors, including 10 hours of one-on-one mentoring. A key component of the Youth Frontiers program is a community project developed and managed by each student over the course of the program, with guidance from an individual mentor. Research shows that individual mentoring can have a positive impact on the lives of young people. It can inspire young people to stay engaged in school, to become leaders amongst their peers and to give back to the community.

The first New South Wales whole-of-government Strategic Plan for Children and Young People was launched on 26 July at the Sydney Opera House. It is the first legislated strategic plan for children and young people in Australia, and almost certainly the first such plan internationally. The plan is the culmination of more than 18 months work. More than 4,000 children and young people aged from four to 24, from all corners of the State and from all backgrounds, were asked what they wanted the New South Wales Government to prioritise. Throughout the consultations children and young people consistently told us that they want to live in a place where they are safe, respected, connected, healthy and well. They also want opportunities and a voice in the decisions that affect them. The Government has listened. Their voices have directly informed the goal, themes and objectives of the plan, which will guide the Government's activities for children and young people over the next three years.

The Community, in Partnership, taking Action to safeguard Australia's peaceful and harmonious way of life [COMPACT] grants, which help young people in a variety of ways, including by finding them a safe place to stay and helping to reduce violent extremism, have also been very well received by the community. I thank the Hon. Lou Amato for moving this motion, which allows the House to recognise the good work done by Father Chris Riley and his team at Youth Off The Streets, as well as the good work of so many other service providers across New South Wales. I have said on a number of occasions that government cannot do this work on its own. Government needs to work in partnership with non-government organisations, great community organisations like Youth Off The Streets and volunteers. That is what brings about the best results for our community and our youth.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (12:15): I congratulate the Hon. Lou Amato on bringing his important motion to the attention of the House. Issues affecting youth are, and ought to be, at the forefront of our policy initiatives. Youth Off The Streets is one of this nation's most important organisations delivering services to and supporting youth. Father Chris Riley is an institution. He has provided 40 years of service to the homeless. In particular, he gives children who are in crisis a chance to recover and heal. His work is phenomenal. I have had the opportunity to support his work and to see the work that he does in various communities.

My involvement in community work began when I became a community liaison youth officer at the St George Migrant Resource Centre. I found that some of the problems experienced by young people could seem so trivial yet could cause them to become caught up in serious trouble, as happened recently in the case of the 15-year-old boy in Don Dale Youth Detention Centre who took his own life. Today I recognise the work of not only Father Riley but also Mr Gerry Georgatos, a friend who has been at the forefront of suicide prevention. He is a true humanitarian, and a researcher in racism, identity and suicide prevention. He is the director of humanitarian projects at the Institute for Social Justice and Human Rights. He has also worked on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention evaluation projects. He published an article in *Neos Kosmos*, one of the longest-running Greek newspapers in Sydney.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: Hear, hear!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I acknowledge the interjection from the Hon. Courtney Houssos. She knows that *Neos Kosmos* and other Greek newspapers cover community issues that we do not see in the mainstream media. Those newspapers provide migrant communities with information on what is happening in their community, including the issues affecting homeless youth that we do not read about in the mainstream media. Mr Georgatos, a leading human rights campaigner in Western Australia, wrote:

At Don Dale juvenile detention centre, a 15-year-old orphaned Aboriginal boy took his life only days after being locked up for \$90 worth of 'crimes'. How many Australians know about Johnny Warramarrba? Johnny's mother died when he was a baby. His dad was killed in a car accident when he was eleven. When he committed his less than \$90 worth of 'crimes'—the stealing of pens and stationery—his grandmother was seriously ill in Darwin Hospital.

This young boy is one of many lives lost in and out of juvenile detention. In general our youth come out of juvenile detention in a worse state than they went in ...

Johnny Warramarrba was found hanging in his cell. This was February 9, 2000. He had been arrested in his community for stealing goods worth less than \$90. There was no counselling and he was not guided by any mentoring. Instead, he was journeyed 800 kilometres to Darwin and jailed.

Five days before his pending release, Johnny killed himself. Because he refused to wash up, a prison officer ordered him to his cell. He was found a little while later, hanging. He died nine hours later at Darwin Hospital ...

In 2009, an Aboriginal boy aged 12 was arrested and jailed for being in possession of a piece of chocolate—a Freddo frog. He was charged for shoplifting from a Coles supermarket. He was locked up for stealing an item that would have sold for 70 cents.

The kid had no prior convictions ...

Western Australia is the mother of jailers of the nation's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I will not go into the Western Australian crisis—

Australia has the world's highest rate of juvenile detention with the mother of all jailers, the United States of America, ranked second behind Australia.

We have so many hopeless people, particularly young people who suffer without the support they need from their families and the community, but then we have the good people like Father Chris Riley who has established a real institution that helps young kids to go back into society. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Lou Amato on moving this motion, which I hope will be supported.

Debate adjourned.

Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON OFF-PROTOCOL PRESCRIBING OF CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENT IN NSW

Establishment

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:23): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 23 March 2016, the Hon. Walt Secord, MLC, gave notice of a motion referring to allegations of under-dosing by Dr John Grygiel at St Vincent's Hospital, clinics at Bathurst and Orange and Macquarie University Hospital, and calling for there to be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the passing of the resolution:
 - (i) documents in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Health, NSW Health or Macquarie University Hospital relating to the under-dosing of patients undergoing chemotherapy at Macquarie University Hospital; and
 - (ii) documents in the possession, custody and control of the Minister for Health and NSW Health detailing dosages of carboplatin given to patients of Dr John Grygiel at clinics in the Bathurst and Orange regions from 1989 to 2013 and any investigations and complaints into these matters.

- (b) the report of the inquiry into off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy for head and neck cancer lead by Professor David Currow, Chief Cancer Officer and Chief Executive of the NSW Cancer Institute, was released on 31 July; and
 - (c) it has been reported that off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy treatment may have also occurred under the treatment regime of Dr Kiran Phadke.
- (2) That this House calls on the Government to appoint a Special Commission of Inquiry into the off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy treatment in New South Wales.

I speak in this debate as the shadow Minister for Health Minister. This Labor motion calls on the Baird Government to set-up a special commission of inquiry into the under-dosing chemotherapy scandal in New South Wales. Put simply, a special commission of inquiry will be an open and transparent way to get to the bottom of the chemotherapy under-dosing scandal that is currently gripping this State. The scandal relates to St Vincent's Hospital, Sutherland and St George hospitals, clinics at Bathurst and Orange, and Macquarie University Private Hospital, yet it affects public confidence in every hospital in our State. The proposed inquiry deals with the activities of Dr John Grygiel and Dr Kiran Phadke, who have worked in various roles and capacities across Sydney and the State's Central West. The Government will not provide details of the exact number of patients their actions have affected, the survival trends, the impact of the practices engaged in by the doctors involved, and the extent of the cover-up by health bureaucrats. That is why this House must act.

I believe there is a clear desire in the community for a special commission of inquiry. I also hope that there is a strong desire in this Chamber to support the motion. Each year more than 42,000 patients are diagnosed with cancer in New South Wales. They must be able to trust the health and hospital system and know that the treatment they are receiving is first-rate. They must also know that if there is an error they will be told promptly and truthfully. That confidence is vital to the integrity of our health and hospital system. It is vital for patients to have faith in our doctors and the medical system; it is vital to prevent a corruption of community confidence in medical science. A transparent audited and reviewed health and hospital system is critical to prevent these negative outcomes. Patients in New South Wales understand that even in the best hospitals human mistakes occur. That they can forgive, but they cannot forgive a cover-up. They cannot forgive a denial, especially when lives are at risk.

A special commission of inquiry will help to restore faith and confidence in the health and hospital system, which has been degraded by the Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner. It will restore the public trust that the Minister has so brazenly trashed. Members will be aware that I have three motions on the *Notice Paper* relating to the chemotherapy scandal. I have moved the motion relating to the establishment of a special commission of inquiry first. If it is not successful, I will move a motion to have General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 pursue its own inquiry. I believe a special commission of inquiry is the best course of action. It would be led by a serving or former judge, and would have the coercive powers of a royal commission. It would have the power to compel witnesses and extend protections to whistle-blowers. It would be able to subpoena documents and, in short, get to the bottom of this scandal. It would break the wall of silence and shed light where the community demands answers.

It is a pity that it falls to this House to initiate such an obvious response to the chemotherapy crisis. But unfortunately, the Minister for Health has repeatedly put the interests of health big-wigs and bureaucrats ahead of patients' interests. She refuses to conduct proper investigations into blunders within the health and hospital system. She ignores patients and their families. She did not tell cancer patients at St George and Sutherland hospitals that they have been under-dosed, even when the under-dosing scandal was expanded to a second doctor. Let us not forget, the Minister became aware of the under-dosing at St George and Sutherland hospitals in April, but she did not say anything until 2 August. We know about the under-dosing only because a brave nurse came forward. Disappointingly, the investigation into the St George and Sutherland hospitals is being conducted by the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. Yes, the Baird Government is allowing the health department to investigate itself once again. Perhaps that would have passed muster with the community had the Minister for Health not already trashed public confidence, but her actions have done that and fairly so.

When forced to come clean in February when the St Vincent's scandal came to light, the Minister first said it was only a handful of patients who were affected. Then it was 70, then 80, then 100 and then 103. The number continues to grow. No wonder the community feels that the St Vincent's Hospital investigation was a whitewash. I will say it: The department's investigation into that hospital was a whitewash. We know that young doctors have come forward who were too frightened to give evidence to the Health department's inquiry. We also know that Cancer Institute of NSW Chief Executive Officer Professor David Currow, who is conducting the inquiry, admitted in the *Australian* that he "toned down" his report. Such was the influence of NSW Health. Even more distressing, when the scandal was expanded to either 20 or 21 patients at Macquarie University Hospital the Minister shrugged and said they were private patients. She left them to fend for themselves because they were private patients.

I now turn to the situation in the Central West at the clinics in Orange and Bathurst. The Minister for Health simply refuses to state a figure. Is there one, 100 or 1,000 victims? Who knows? She has left the Central West in the dark. On my repeated recent visits to the Central West the community has spoken about the plight of local patients and the silence of the Minister. Patients have received no information at all and the local health district has resorted to putting notices in the paper calling for people to come forward. Sadly, lives are at risk while the Minister stonewalls. Earlier this week I was briefed by Professor David Currow, who conducted the inquiry into chemotherapy underdosing. He admitted that he had no idea about the scale of the number of patients in the Central West who were affected by Dr John Grygiel. But Professor Currow did admit that Dr Grygiel had seen at least 300 cancer patients a year since the 1990s when he began operating in the Central West until 2013.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Three hundred?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Three hundred a year, Jeremy. He also said that there are major gaps in the files and missing pieces. Furthermore, he admitted that he had not interviewed Dr Grygiel but expected to do so in the next couple of weeks. No wonder that even on the conservative side of politics—albeit at the Federal level—there has been some movement in support of a special commission of inquiry. I thank Mr Jeremy Buckingham for his support in calling for this inquiry. Earlier this week the newly elected Federal member for Calare, Andrew Gee—who previously served as the State member for Orange—added his voice to Labor's call for a special commission of inquiry into underdosing in the Central West. That is a surprise, because he was absolutely silent when he was the State member, despite representations from patients. But that aside, I welcome his support now. Meanwhile, families in the Central West will have to wait until 16 September—six weeks after people in Sydney—to get their report into the underdosing. It will be a long and agonising wait.

This motion is about transparency. We all know the mode of the Minister for Health is very different: It is one of silence and intimidation and of stifling patients and staff who dare to speak out. We know about the brave female patient who said on Ray Hadley's program that she was intimidated by a departmental bureaucrat when speaking out. Whenever there is a problem Mrs Skinner drops a cloak of secrecy over the health system and refuses to subject significant mistakes within it to external scrutiny. Her internal investigation into the chemotherapy underdosing at six hospitals has been woeful and a whitewash. She says that St Vincent's Hospital lied to her, but as the Minister for Health she has done nothing. I will say that again. The Minister said that St Vincent's Hospital staff lied to her. Despite that, the hospital has been subject to no negative impact or action from the Minister. She has done nothing.

The hospital said it had put the doctor in question under strict supervision. That is incorrect, but the Minister has still done nothing. She claims that her obligation is "first and foremost to patients", but her actions show otherwise because she does nothing. Remember, the only reason we know about the underdosing is due to whistleblowers, brave nurses, outrage from the community and Matt Peacock's explosive story on 7.30 in February. It had nothing to do with the Minister. Despite that television program, whistleblowing nurses and political pressure, Mrs Skinner still refuses to investigate this matter properly. Since mid-February the Minister has been refusing to establish a special commission of inquiry into the chemotherapy underdosing in New South Wales. With every day that goes by, the case for a special commission of inquiry grows. On 14 separate occasions in this House I have expanded my call for papers or called for an inquiry into chemotherapy underdosing. The Government has resisted those calls. The secrecy continues.

The community deserves better. It deserves a Minister for Health who is in their corner and who represents their needs, not one who covers up problems, blindly defends bureaucrats and denies grave errors in our health and hospital systems. The system is faulty because the Minister is faulty. A special commission of inquiry would get to the bottom of this scandal. I ask members from all parties to look this matter squarely in the eye and realise that, whatever our differences, we can agree that communities expect real oversight and transparency when the lives of patients are at stake. We all know that is true, and this is our duty. I commend the motion to the House.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (12:36): As members of the House know, this is a very serious issue and it must be examined fully. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting all words after "That" and inserting instead:

"a select committee be established to inquire into and report on the off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy, and in particular:

- (a) the efficacy of electronic prescribing systems, and their capacity to stop or limit off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy;
- (b) the value of a potential new patient information sheet on dose adjustment for patients and caregivers information;
- (c) the process and systems around informed consent for all medical interventions, including chemotherapy;

- (d) the capacity of the NSW Health system to have all notifiable cancer patients in New South Wales overseen by a Multidisciplinary Cancer Care Teams, and if this may prevent off-protocol prescribing;
 - (e) St Vincent's Hospital capability to comply with relevant NSW Health Policy Directives and Guidelines, particularly Open Disclosure Policy (PD2014_028) and Incident Management Policy (PD2014_004);
 - (f) the NSW Health Code of Conduct and specific program is within NSW Health and St Vincent's Hospital, in relation to staff raising concerns about the practice of clinicians, and other breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- (2) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, the committee consist of seven members comprising:
- (a) three Government members, being Mrs Taylor, Mrs Maclaren-Jones and Mr Khan;
 - (b) two Opposition members, being Mr Secord and Mr Wong; and
 - (c) two crossbench members, being Mr Green and Dr Faruqi.
- (3) That the Chair of the committee be Mr Green and the Deputy Chair be Mrs Taylor.
- (4) That members may be appointed to the committee as substitute members for any matter before the committee by providing notice in writing to the Committee Clerk, with nominations made as follows:
- (a) nominations for substitute Government or Opposition members are to be made by the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Opposition, Government or Opposition Whip or Deputy Whip, as applicable; and
 - (b) nominations for substitute crossbench members are to be made by the substantive member or another crossbench member.
- (5) That a committee member who is unable to attend a deliberative meeting in person may participate by electronic communication and may move any motion and be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division, provided that:
- (a) the Chair is present in the meeting room;
 - (b) all members are able to speak and hear each other at all times; and
 - (c) members may not participate by electronic communication in a meeting to consider a draft report.
- (6) That, unless the committee decides otherwise:
- (a) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
 - (b) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
 - (c) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each;
 - (d) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
 - (e) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the Committee Clerk within two days, excluding Saturday and Sunday, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness; and
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration.
7. That the committee:
- (a) commence its inquiry after the inquiry under Section 122 of the Health Service Act 1997 releases its findings in relation to the dosing of cancer patients at Western NSW Local Health District, due to occur on 16 September 2016; and
 - (b) report by March 2017."

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (12:40): I state at the outset that the Government does not support the motion of the Hon. Walt Secord but it does support the amendment moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. On that basis, if Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile's amendment fails then the Government will not support the original motion of the Hon. Walt Secord. Two concurrent investigations are being undertaken into this matter and the Government has full confidence in both. The report released recently was the final report arising from the inquiry being co-led by the Cancer Institute and the Clinical Excellence Commission. The next stage of the report in relation to patients in the Central West is due in September.

So far the New South Wales Government has supported an application by The Greens under Standing Order 52 during the last sitting of Parliament for the production of documents, which led to the release of thousands of documents from the Minister's office, Ministry of Health, Cancer Institute NSW and St Vincent's

Hospital; two inquiries—by the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission and an inquiry under section 122 of the Health Services Act—the public release, in full, of the interim and final report from the latter inquiry; an expansion of the terms of reference to include the Western NSW Local Health District; and briefings from Professor David Currow to crossbench and Opposition members. Every recommendation contained in the interim and final report is being dealt with.

The patients and their families rightly feel let down by the findings of the report of the State's Chief Cancer Officer, Professor David Currow. Every patient has the right to trust that their doctor is abiding by protocols, and the Government will strengthen clinical oversight to ensure that no doctor works in isolation again. The final report into St Vincent's Hospital found that the chemotherapy provided by a St Vincent's Hospital oncologist to some patients with head and neck cancers was off-protocol and not supported by clinical evidence. The report details a culture of conflict and mistrust that exists in the oncology department at St Vincent's Hospital. The recommendations contained in the report are clinical and cultural and, encouragingly, since its release many have been enacted by St Vincent's Hospital and NSW Health.

The New South Wales Government accepts all the recommendations in that report, including that the Government allocate \$6 million over three years to roll out new software to ensure that chemotherapy prescribed in electronic-prescribing systems is delivering evidence-based treatment; chief executives of local health districts and specialty networks will be required to confirm in writing that patients are being treated in accordance with the appropriate protocols; and chief executives will also be asked to confirm in writing that all patients are being provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions about their cancer therapies, which would entail their written informed consent, and the Cancer Institute NSW will independently review these reports. The NSW Health Care Complaints Commission is continuing its investigation into Dr John Grygiel's clinical practice and any patients with concerns about their treatment should immediately contact the commission.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (12:43): I speak in support of the motion of the Hon. Walt Secord regarding the highly concerning allegations of underdosing of patients undergoing chemotherapy at St Vincent's Hospital and more widely within Health NSW and the private health system in this State. This is an incredibly important issue. I state at the outset that this scandal may have led to the unnecessary deaths of potentially hundreds of people. This is not fearmongering; it is a rational and reasonable response to the evidence that has been put before the inquiries following reporting by ABC's *7.30* and other journalists, and pressure from the Opposition and The Greens. The final report of Professor David Currow states that between January 2006 and February 2016, 129 of 195 people were given flat doses—103 for head and neck and the rest for a range of cancers—by Dr John Grygiel at St Vincent's Hospital. That was an off-protocol prescription. We have been informed that there is no basis in science or medicine for that prescription and, alarmingly, since 2006 doctors working in this area have known that it was the wrong medicine. Those people who got the wrong dosage may well have died or had a reoccurrence of their cancer—and experts in this field are saying that cannot be ruled out.

This practice by at least one doctor is causing alarm across New South Wales. People were saying to this doctor, "I want to live. I want the strongest possible medicine." They were not given that medicine. Imagine people being told, "You are going to die. Do you want to die with your hair?" My mother-in-law was told that by this doctor, and so were scores of other patients. We cannot have any cover-up but at every juncture the Minister has been downplaying what was happening. For example, the Minister said there were fewer patients involved and it turned out that there were more; she said that there were fewer doctors involved and it turned out there were more, and so on. The final report of Professor David Currow states that people felt intimidated. Junior doctors felt they had all the accountability and no authority.

If there were ever a time when we needed to have a special commission of inquiry it is right now. I feel quite vexed at the moment because Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has put forward a proposal for a select committee, which at first blush seems quite reasonable, but I have had no consultation with the Reverend. I have been working on this matter for more than six months and the first I heard about the Reverend's proposal was when he read it onto the record in the Legislative Council 10 minutes ago. My instinct is not to support the motion because I believe this issue needs exactly the same treatment as when South Australia dealt with a similar crisis, but which was nowhere near the scope of that in New South Wales.

At every juncture the crisis has expanded. At first it involved 70 patients, then it involved 103; now another doctor is believed to be involved and other hospitals. We need independence because the first inquiry was an internal inquiry at St Vincent's Hospital. That is not good enough. The second interim report turned up a fraction of what we learned from the final report, and it has only raised more questions. We do not want doctors investigating doctors. We do not want NSW Health investigating NSW Health. To restore confidence in the community we need independence and transparency. The Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC] is holding an inquiry, but the HCCC is a black box: A complaint comes in, something happens and at the end of it—God knows when—a result is spat out. The HCCC may uphold standards in health care, it may make some

recommendations regarding prosecution and the like, but it does not restore the community's confidence that every element of an issue has been investigated.

A key part of a special commission of inquiry is the protection of witnesses, so the whistleblowers—those courageous nurses and junior doctors—can come forward and give evidence free from the fear that it will destroy their careers. They have worked hard to be the best of the best in the world's best health system and they have put their careers and lives on the line to challenge doctors, who have immense power in our health system. They, of all people, in a robust and fair democracy should be free from the fear of damaging their careers and prospects of employment. That is possible only through a special commission of inquiry. I have received advice from the Clerks that there is no precedent in this area. It is not a clear whether our select committees can subpoena evidence from third parties; the matter remains untested. That is key advice. I want to know that an inquiry can demand that St Vincent's provides all the documents and all the minutes of the meetings.

The Hon. Paul Green: You can.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, we cannot. I note the interjection by the Hon. Paul Green. Provide me with the evidence that we can subpoena.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Mr Jeremy Buckingham will direct his remarks through the Chair. He will not have a conversation across the Chamber.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: When the Standing Order 52 call for papers was passed by this House in relation to St Vincent's Hospital we got no documents directly from St Vincent's. The hospital was not compelled by our standing orders or the powers of this House to provide any of its documents.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: By the order of Standing Order 52; there is a big distinction from subpoena powers.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Is there?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It's in Lovelock and Evans. Read Lovelock and Evans; it's clear.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I would like to read Lovelock and Evans and get myself across that, but I have been given no opportunity.

The Hon. Paul Green: We'd love you to read it.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The Hon. Paul Green may laugh, but this is not a laughing matter. The inference in this—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Mr Jeremy Buckingham will direct his remarks through the Chair.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It is not a laughing matter because, at worst, this scandal has led to the unnecessary deaths of potentially hundreds of people in New South Wales and around Australia. That is the reality—and there is not a single skerrick of humour in it. We need a special commission of inquiry. We know already that more people have been affected and more cancers are involved. At this stage we have only Dr Currow's suggestion that hundreds of people a year were treated by this one doctor. We do not know how many other doctors may have been involved in this practice. We do not know what has happened at Bathurst, Orange and Macquarie hospitals—there are six hospitals involved. We need to know because when I asked Professor Currow whether the issue at St Vincent's Hospital exists in Bathurst and in Orange he told me that at this juncture there is a very strong signal that that is the case.

Professor Currow is the most eminent expert in this area in the State and he has said already that that is the implication. So political expediency, the reputation of St Vincent's Hospital and the reputation of any member of this House be damned. We must reveal absolutely everything about this matter immediately or as fast as we can. That is what the people of New South Wales demand and that is why my inclination is not to support the amended motion but to support a special commission of inquiry. That said, I move:

That paragraph 2 (c) of the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be amended by omitting "Dr Mehreen Faruqi" and inserting instead "Mr Jeremy Buckingham".

I urge members not to rush to establish a select committee that I believe could fall short in meeting the demands of a community that will be outraged by what is revealed.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (12:56): No-one is laughing about this matter; it is a very serious matter. I note that the amendment moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile states that I would chair the proposed select

committee inquiry. I assure the House of the calibre of the members who may serve on that committee. They are very qualified to deal with this issue. Several members have a history in palliative care—I note the great experience of the Hon. Bronnie Taylor in that area. I reassure the House that we are deeply concerned about every aspect of this matter. A select committee is the way to proceed because this is a House of review. Whether there are 100 inquiries conducted or 100 reports produced, the House has the right to establish a select committee inquiry to deal with this matter in a compassionate and deeply considered way. That is the weight that we will bring to a select committee inquiry. I commend Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile's amendment to the House.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:58): In reply: I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, Minister John Ajaka, representing the Minister for Health, and Mr Jeremy Buckingham—I know that this matter has touched him and his family personally and I understand his strong views. I understand why Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile moved his amendment but I would have appreciated more time to consider it, and not discovered it while on the floor of the Chamber.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: I apologise.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There was no consultation; it was a complete surprise. I still want a special commission of inquiry to be held and I will continue to campaign for that outcome. I do accept that as a first step and I do accept the sincerity of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile that a select committee on balance is a positive step forward, but we still need transparency and an independent examination. I still hold the strong view that Health should not investigate itself, especially when there are six hospitals involved. In fact, for St George and Sutherland hospitals, the local health district is investigating itself. A select committee will go nowhere near getting to the bottom of this as a special commission of inquiry would. However, on balance, I accept it. I shall move two small amendments to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile's amendment:

That the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be amended by:

- (1) inserting the words "in New South Wales, including at St Vincent's Hospital, St George Hospital, Sutherland Hospital, clinics at Orange and Bathurst and Macquarie University Hospital" after the word "chemotherapy" in paragraph 1.
- (2) omitting the words "Mr Wong" in paragraph 2 (b) and inserting instead "a member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition".

I spell out very specifically those hospitals so there is no wiggle room. The Labor caucus will determine the member.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: I accept that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I thank members for their attention. I am mindful of the time.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! In light of the confusion that arose last night when I accepted amendments on the run, I am not rejecting the amendments but I ask the Hon. Walt Secord to provide the amendments in writing so that we are all very clear. There are now three amendments to the original motion. I will put the amendments one after the other. I will start with the last amendment and then work through. For the benefit of members, I will spell it out. If any member has any doubt, please bring it to my attention. The Hon. Walt Secord has moved a motion with respect to the establishment of a special commission of inquiry into St Vincent's Hospital and other locations, to which Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has moved an amendment for the appointment of a select committee, to which Mr Jeremy Buckingham has moved an amendment to the amendment, and to which the Hon. Walt Secord has moved an amendment to the amendment. I will put the amendment No. 1 of the Hon. Walt Secord to the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile first.

The question is that amendment No 1 of the Hon. Walt Secord to the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be agreed to.

Amendment to amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the amendment No. 2 of the Hon. Walt Secord to the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be agreed to.

Amendment of amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the amendment moved by Mr Jeremy Buckingham to the amendment of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile be agreed to.

Amendment of amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the amendment moved by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, which is to amend the motion of the Hon. Walt Secord by the establishment of a select committee, as amended, be agreed to.

Amendment of amendment as amended agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the motion of the Hon. Walt Secord as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I will now leave the chair until 2.30 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: Order! According to sessional order business is now interrupted for questions.

*Questions Without Notice***PORTS PRIVATISATION**

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:30): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. What is the Government's response to community and business concerns expressed by Rod Sims, Chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, about the Government's privatisation of ports Botany, Kembla and Newcastle and his repudiation of this approach as a tax on consumers?

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Be careful.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:30): I am always careful. In large part I answered this question earlier in the week. I probably gave too much information. Being the generous man that I am, I thought it was appropriate. I will go back over that information. When the Government sought to lease the ports, the arrangements were properly examined by the then chair of the commission. Mr Sims was not the commissioner at that time. I think it was his predecessor, Mr Samuel. I am seeing nods around the Chamber. The Government went through all proper processes to ensure that everything received the appropriate approval. Mr Sims has made public comments and it is within his purview to do that. I can only reiterate my answer from earlier in the week, which is that the Government went through the proper processes at the time.

RETIREMENT OF PETER DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (14:32): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Would the Minister please inform the House of the retirement of long-serving Chief Executive of Roads and Maritime Services Peter Duncan?

The PRESIDENT: Before I call the Minister, I welcome staff from Roads and Maritime Services who are in the gallery today as guests of the Leader of the Government. I hope you find question time edifying.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Be nice.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:32): I am always nice to Roads and Maritime Services [RMS] staff because they are fabulous people.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Did you buy them lunch?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I do not even buy you lunch. Everyone knows how mean I am, because I am poor. It is with mixed emotions that I inform the House of the retirement of Peter Duncan as Chief Executive of Roads and Maritime Services. Most members would know and admire Peter and would have worked with him at some time in his career. Peter started his career as a road design officer and draughtsman with the Department of Main Roads [DMR] in 1975—he started in DMR, went to the Roads and Traffic Authority and is now in RMS. Peter worked on projects that ranged from the F3, the Pacific Highway, the Albury bypass and the Hume Highway. Peter then moved to positions in the Department of Public Works and local government. He was also Director of Estate Management for the Olympic Coordination Authority prior to the Sydney Olympic Games. That is where the Hon. Walt Secord would have got to know him.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Yes.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: From 2003 to 2006 Peter was Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Forests NSW, where he was responsible for three million hectares of native and plantation forest. In 2006 he joined the Department of Premier and Cabinet as Deputy Director General. Peter was appointed Chief Executive of the Roads and Traffic Authority and oversaw the creation of Roads and Maritime Services in 2011. Under Peter's strong leadership Roads and Maritime Services has become an agile and customer-focused agency, delivering and managing the major infrastructure wave of projects across the State's road and maritime networks. Peter's achievements as chief executive are many and varied.

A few notable achievements are the acceleration of the Pacific Highway duplication to the Queensland border, the completion of the Hume Highway duplication, and massive upgrades to the Princes, Great Western and Newell highways—not to mention completion of the Hunter Expressway. Programs like Bridges for the Bush and Fixing Country Roads have thrived under Peter's leadership. Peter's replacement as chief executive will be Ken Kanofski, the current Chief Operating Officer of Roads and Maritime Services. Ken has been responsible for the strategic management and operation of the State road network. Previously Ken served as chief executive officer in a number of statutory corporations. He is experienced in a range of infrastructure, utilities and services industries. I welcome Ken to the role and look forward to working with him closely on our historic delivery program.

Personally, I have appreciated Peter's professionalism, dedication, integrity and honest advice. He is a fine role model for those in the public service who want to achieve great things for the people of New South Wales. I wish Peter and his wife, Jo, all the best in their future endeavours. I am reluctant to say "retirement" because I do not believe that people like Peter Duncan retire. He is moving to his farm on the North Coast. We might see him playing a role there or perhaps maintaining a role in roads. Interestingly, I found out after employing Peter as chief executive that his father was a former member of the New South Wales Parliament. He was at one stage the Country Party member for Lismore. He finished his term as the Independent member for Lismore because he believed so strongly in the Country Party that he could not become a member of The Nationals. Anyone who knows Peter's father and family in that area respects them. Peter Duncan has earned our respect. It is well deserved. We wish him well.

WESTCONNEX AND ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:37): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. What will the Minister do about Roads and Maritime Services and WestConnex bureaucrats refusing to listen to the concerns of medical staff of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital who are alarmed by the potential impact of vibration, dust, dirt and noise from WestConnex on cancer patients and delicate cancer-fighting machinery?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:37): I thank the honourable member for his question. It is a pity he does not undertake more research. His question is based on an article he read in the paper.

The Hon. Walt Secord: This one?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Yes. That article was published because people from my organisation went to the hospital to talk about WestConnex. The Minister for Health and I and our executives continue to communicate with the hospital. When a road as complex as this is built, it is necessary to talk to all the people who will potentially be affected. At this very early stage we are looking at a range of options on the design for that area. The people who could be affected are being taken into consideration. We are working closely with local councils, government agencies, the Greater Sydney Commission, industry and other key stakeholders. Extensive stakeholder consultation and technical investigations are happening across a broad area to help shape the M4-M5 link design and alignment.

I am advised the Sydney Motorway Corporation [SMC] regularly meets with senior representatives of the Sydney Local Health District, which includes Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Camperdown, to discuss the project. There have been two meetings in the past month alone. As part of the ongoing interaction, the SMC provides the Sydney Local Health District with information on the design of the project as it develops. In addition, SMC is provided with details of the health area's own studies, including building specifications and development plans for the health precinct in Camperdown.

This exchange of information allows for sensitive hospital facilities, such as the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital medical cyclotron, to be factored into the design and construction activities of the motorway. The Sydney Local Health District advised in its most recent meeting with SMC that information will be provided into the M4-M5 link community consultation process, which is running over the next few months. We certainly welcome that input. The design of the M4-M5 link, including a potential connection at Camperdown, will continue to be refined as the project heads towards finalising a reference design in the environmental impact statement stage in 2017. The Hon. Walt Secord should have asked specifically about the cyclotron without sledging the good people of Roads and Maritime Services and the SMC, but he has a habit of doing that. When he was in government he would sell anyone out to save himself, and now that he is in opposition he sledges good public servants day after day.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:41): I ask a supplementary question.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I thought you were interrupting.

The PRESIDENT: I was asking the Minister to come to order, yes. I thought the Minister had concluded his answer.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Time!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Start the clock again. The Minister will conclude his answer, preferably without reflecting on other members.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: There is a problem with the clock because when the Hon. Walt Secord interrupted only 10 seconds was left. It appears that it has not been reset.

The PRESIDENT: The member is correct. It was not the full 45 seconds but it was about 25 seconds when there was confusion as to whether the Minister had finished his answer. I will give the Minister an extra 25 seconds.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I will make very good use of it. The operational requirements of the cyclotron based at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital are currently being considered by SMC in our design of the M4-M5 link, as they should be.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:42): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer and provide the exact date, prior to this month, when his department approached the hospital, as the matter was raised at the local health district by doctors who said the Roads and Maritime Services was ignoring them? Is the Minister misleading the House?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:43): I will obtain the exact dates. I am not misleading the House. Our people have been in consultation with the hospital. My first approach on this matter was through the Minister for Health, and a damn good Minister she is. There are people of integrity in this city—and there is Walt Secord.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: All week long Mr President has been warning the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. He is reflecting on me and I ask that you demand he retract.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight to order for the first time. The words were not offensive.

SOCIAL LICENCE

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (14:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Premier. Following the question asked by the Hon. Mark Pearson from the Animal Justice Party yesterday relating to animal wastage and the poultry industry, how do the social licence and animal wastage arguments used by the Government to ban greyhound racing affect animal-related primary industries? What guarantees has the Government given that farmers will be protected from the roll-out of this manufactured social licence doctrine?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:45): I certainly reject the inference in this question. I refer the Hon. Robert Borsak to the contribution of the Minister for Primary Industries yesterday in the debate on the greyhound racing industry and his answers to questions in this House. The Minister left no doubt that there is no problem in this area and proper process has been followed. The scare campaign being mounted by the Hon. Robert Borsak in his question is totally wrong.

GRANDPARENTS DAY

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (14:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government supports communities to celebrate Grandparents Day?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (14:46): As members of this House are aware, grandparents make an important contribution to their families and society at large. It is estimated that more than 200,000 grandparents—and I am proud to be one—across New South Wales provide almost 13 hours of unpaid informal care for children each week, and more than 17,000 grandparents care for their grandchildren full-time. I am proud that the Government was the first to formally recognise the contribution of grandparents with the first ever Grandparents Day in 2011. For years many the community lobbied for official recognition of the special contribution made by grandparents. I am pleased that this Government listened to those calls and put Grandparents Day on the calendar.

Since that time Grandparents Day has truly grown to become a state-wide community affair. I remind the Hon. Trevor Khan that Grandparents Day is held on the last Sunday in October. It recognises the diversity of grandparent relationships across age groups, cultural backgrounds and geographical locations. Many community groups, towns, schools and families celebrate Grandparents Day. Last year more than 30 community grants were provided to community organisations, local community groups and schools to assist with the cost of holding local events.

The PRESIDENT: Order! While I know the subject of grandchildren is the source of great delight to many members in the Chamber, I ask them to contain their ebullience so the Minister can be heard in relative silence.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Some of these events included: Grand friend in the Garden, which was held by Woodberry Public School, where the students and their grandparents spent the day together planting a herb and flower garden; group performances from students were held at North Parramatta Public School; special visits made by children of a preschool in the Illawarra to entertain local nursing home residents with a musical performance and playtime activities; and open classrooms, morning teas, special assemblies and so many more. I am pleased to say that more than 150 events were registered in total across the State. Involvement in these events is a testament to the community's appreciation of the role that grandparents and older Australians play and also shows how the community has embraced Grandparents Day. I am proud to announce that this year the pool of grants funding has been expanded from \$20,000 to \$100,000, which will go a long way to support more non-government organisations, community groups, councils and schools to host Grandparents Day celebrations.

The two funding categories available are category 1, with up to \$1,000 for small-scale local community events or activities targeted at community organisations and schools, and category 2, with \$1,001 to \$5,000 for large-scale regional events that are targeted at specific communities or targeted at local government and larger community organisations. Event organisers should seek to increase community involvement in their activities. Priority stakeholders include community organisations, schools, preschools and local government. We have even recommended that grandparents submit a photograph with their grandchildren. If anyone wants to see an example of a great photo, I am holding one. I indicate for the record that I will not be choosing myself as the winner of the competition; I think it would be inappropriate.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: Mr President, I remind you of rulings on the use of props in this House—unless I can bring in a photograph of my grandchildren.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I look forward to updating the House further about Grandparents Day.

IRRIGATION RIGHTS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (14:50): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. It refers to the "social licence" argument used by Premier Mike Baird and Deputy Premier Troy Grant to effect a ban on greyhound racing in New South Wales. Will the Minister protect irrigators from having their water entitlements stripped from them if interest groups attempt to argue that they have lost their social licence to use water for farming purposes because of debate on climate change?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:50): I have had many opportunities in this House to update members on what this Government is doing to stand-up for and protect irrigators in New South Wales. One thing we are doing is ensuring that we have strong advocacy when I represent New South Wales as the Minister for Lands and Water in the ongoing discussions on the Murray-Darling Basin. We are ensuring that we finalise the Murray-Darling Basin Plan as quickly as possible and provide certainty to our irrigators about the use of productive water in this State.

There has never before been a New South Wales Government that is so steadfast in protecting our irrigators. I am proud that I have been able to put on the table in Canberra a plan for New South Wales to get across the line on the carp eradication project. I have also tried to achieve a water saving equivalency if we are able. We want to make sure that the hurt felt in many of our irrigation communities does not continue and that those communities have certainty about irrigation. We also want to make sure that no more productive water is taken out of New South Wales. We want the communities that have the felt pain up until now to know that they have a strong future. This Government is standing up for them. I am certain that the actions the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is taking in our irrigation sector will secure the futures of those regional communities. One of the best examples I can point to is our announcement that we will spend up to \$500 million to secure the water supply for Broken Hill. That will have flow-on benefits throughout the Murray-Darling Basin system and to our irrigators. It will put water security at the forefront of our regional communities.

This Government is leading the way on this matter and is committed to it. All Australians know that our irrigators are some of the most efficient at what they do and are the most up to date with technology. Our irrigators are some of those most able to adopt and adapt to technology and innovation regarding the use of water. We are proud of that and we are proud to support those communities. We know the performance of some of our regional communities in taking the valuable natural resource of water and bringing life to an area. Our irrigation sector is the fundamental underpinning of some regional communities. We are proud of that. We are also proud of our strong regional and rural communities that are underpinned by agricultural production. We want that situation to continue in this State. Most of us on this side of the Chamber are in Parliament to stand-up for and to protect those communities and industries. As the Minister responsible for leading the charge on behalf of New South Wales, I am proud that we have done a very good job up to this point, and we will continue that at every opportunity.

PORTS PRIVATISATION

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (14:55): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. What is the Government's response to comments by Australian Competition and Consumer Commission chairman Rod Sims, who said of the New South Wales ports privatisation, "... there's no regulation on how they set the price of a monopoly. How dopey is that?"

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (14:55): Despite the temptation to add comment to Mr Sims' words, I point out that I am relying on the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane as to the accuracy of the quote. Sometimes in the past that accuracy has not quite been there. I believe I have answered that in large part in response to a previous question. In fact, I believe I have answered all of it.

REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (14:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on regional water supplies across New South Wales?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (14:56): I am pleased to inform the House that June 2016 delivered above average to highest on record rainfall across most of the Queensland and New South Wales catchments of the Murray-Darling Basin. Average rainfall of almost 90 millimetres was reported across the Murray-Darling Basin, which is well above the long-term monthly mean and the fourth-wettest June in nearly 120 years of records. Wet weather continued across most of the Murray-Darling Basin in July. Creeks and rivers are running full in response to further periodic rainfall and storages are continuing to rise.

Opening water-year allocations across the New South Wales regulated river valleys commenced with full or near full allocations to high-priority entitlements, including towns, domestic and stock, and high security entitlement, apart from the Lower Darling, where water shortages continue. General security allocations started the year very low; however, there has been a great improvement in allocations in recent weeks due to widespread rainfall and improved stream flows. Of course, with all of this rainfall some communities now need to prepare for flood conditions and spills from storages this season, especially in southern parts of the State. Both Wyangala and Burrinjuck storages are close to operating under air-space protocols in preparation for upcoming floods. Similarly, Burrendong Dam has risen from 10 per cent full in May to 71 per cent at the start of August. I am also aware that Hume Dam has been put on flood watch status.

Despite the improved water situation across most of New South Wales, ensuring that Lower Darling communities have access to water remains a government priority. We are doing everything possible to improve access and quality during this prolonged period of severe water shortage. That is why I am pleased to be able to inform the House that flows from Menindee Lakes into the Lower Darling River have commenced—the first release since mid-December 2015. These flows are the result of widespread rain across the northern catchments over winter, which has already contributed around 100,000 megalitres to the storage volume within Menindee Lakes. It is likely that even more water will make its way into the lakes over the next month or so, with rain events across the Bogan and Macintyre catchments in late June set to contribute to the storage level.

While these releases into the Lower Darling are welcomed, at this stage this water will provide only short-term relief for landholders. To monitor the quality of this water the New South Wales Government has deployed drones and state-of-the-art survey technology, coupled with in-river sampling at key locations. This is the first time these technologies have been used. Even with this temporary improvement in water security in the Lower Darling, the Government is getting on with building the 270 kilometre pipeline from Wentworth, which will secure water for Broken Hill for the long term.

We have commenced the detailed project planning work, including environmental assessment and approvals, technical investigations and tender preparation. The next step is to run an expression of interest process for the design and construction of the Murray River to Broken Hill pipeline, and this will be advertised over the coming months. Following the tender process, the appointment of a construction company is expected to take place in the first half of 2017. I am pleased to update the House on the improved water situation across New South Wales, but there is still a lot more work to be done in securing water for regional communities. The Government is getting on with the job.

AUSGRID LEASE

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (15:00): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Premier. In blocking the Ausgrid lease, has Treasurer Scott Morrison gutted the funding for the WestConnex motorway and other infrastructure? If so, where is the money coming from?

The Hon. Mick Veitch: That is almost a Dorothy Dixier.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:00): It is almost a Dorothy Dixier but it is a good question. One of the great disappointments for the Opposition must be that we had to wait for The Greens to ask an important economic question—that is one for the people writing the Opposition's questions to think about. The New South Wales Government respects the Federal Government's announcement—

The Hon. Peter Primrose: Especially when people are talking about Ausgrid today.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Do you want the answer?

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: How much do you love ScoMo right now?

The PRESIDENT: Order! Stop the clock. I note that the Hon. Penny Sharpe was just on her feet seeking the call to ask a question. I remind the member that it might be difficult for her to get the call if she is on a couple of calls to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: The New South Wales Government respects the Federal Government's announcement in relation to the Ausgrid lease, noting that Australia's foreign investment policy and its administration is a matter for the Federal Government and its agencies. We can assure the people of New South Wales, regardless of how the process plays out, that there will be no delays to our infrastructure program and that we remain well on track to deliver on our promise to transform this State. The State Government and all bidders who submitted binding bids have been engaging with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Australian Taxation Office and the Foreign Investment Review Board since December 2015. We will continue the transaction process for Ausgrid, and I note strong interest from investors in the asset. Our Rebuilding NSW plan will deliver new schools, hospitals, public transport and roads, which will make a real difference to the people of New South Wales. The 100 per cent lease of TransGrid, which was completed in November 2015, delivered gross proceeds of \$10.258 billion to New South Wales—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The Minister is almost halfway through his answer and he is yet to indicate where the funding for these projects will come from. The Minister is not being substantially relevant to the pertinent part of my question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister was being directly relevant.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Economic illiteracy springs to mind—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Spell it.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: As I was indicating, the 100 per cent lease of TransGrid, which was completed in November 2015, delivered gross proceeds of \$10.258 billion to New South Wales and attracted a Commonwealth Asset Recycling Initiative payment of around \$1 billion. A lazy \$11 billion plus is more than a drop in the bucket, as it happens.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: What will happen after ScoMo's announcement today? Are you going to pretend that it is not happening?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Had the former shadow Minister for Transport been listening properly she would have heard me say that there is not one bidder in this process; a number of bidders had their bids locked in. Rather than seeing the glass half full, those opposite should listen, digest and understand this. They will never get the chance to have their hands on the wheels, but they may learn something as we go.

WINDSOR BRIDGE ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:05): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Why was asbestos-contaminated landfill near the Windsor Bridge project left uncovered by Roads and Maritime Services, unwatered and blowing around, for close to a fortnight before any action was taken to remediate the impact of this dangerous landfill?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:05): I am unaware that this has happened. Indeed, in the event that the honourable member is correct, I would certainly be concerned. If this has happened then I will be seeking an answer as to why, because frankly it should not have.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:06:0): I ask a supplementary question. Would the Minister elucidate in his answer as to when the Environment Protection Authority was informed once Roads and Maritime Services became aware of the matter?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:06:1): I have answered that in my response—obviously they have told the Environment Protection Authority. But I have indicated that I was not aware of this and I have undertaken to find out more because I view this matter as gravely as does the Hon. Penny Sharpe.

RED-LIGHT SPEED CAMERAS

The Hon. LOU AMATO (15:06): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister please update the House on the New South Wales Government's red-light speed camera program?

The Hon. Walt Secord: Cha-ching!

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:06): I thank the member for his question. I know I should not acknowledge interjections, but I heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition say "cha-ching". I recently noticed a cartoon—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order relates to the use of props. The Minister was clearly waving a piece of paper around as a prop.

The Hon. John Ajaka: To the point of order: It was not a prop. The Minister merely picked up a piece of paper to read from it, which is permitted.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: There is a big difference between a piece of paper and a prop. The waving of a piece of paper about with a certain regard is a prop.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I was distracted at the time, but I am sure that the Minister was about to quote from the piece of paper. I am prepared to give the Minister the benefit of the doubt.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Mr President, I congratulate you on being absolutely accurate. On this piece of paper is a cartoon. It shows a couple seated in a car and a flash from a light. The driver—the male—says, "There must be some way to stop the State Government making millions from all their speed cameras." His wife quite wisely says, "You can always try not speeding." That is good advice for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I recently announced that the Government is installing nine new red-light speed cameras at high-risk intersections across Sydney to help save lives and to drive down the tragic rising road toll. The benefits of red-light speed cameras are clear. Our network of red-light speed cameras helps to reduce crashes, to save lives and to reduce injuries. I make absolutely no apologies for them.

Just to make sure they are doing what they are meant to be doing, we review speed cameras across New South Wales every year to ensure they are delivering road safety benefits, and each new camera location will be monitored as part of this process. If this review process shows that a camera is not preventing crashes, we pull it out. Interestingly, local communities are calling for these new cameras. For instance, the Government has received multiple submissions outlining the risks and calling for a camera at the busy intersection of Victoria Road and Lyons Road, Drummoyne, where there were 23 crashes and 15 injuries from 2011 to 2015.

It may also interest the House to know that the latest speed camera performance review found that, overall, red-light speed cameras reduce casualties by almost 40 per cent. Red-light speed cameras target the dangerous behaviour of running red lights, which can lead to serious T-bone crashes or vehicles crashing into innocent pedestrians. What is really astounding is that 80 per cent of speed camera fines are issued to people running red lights. There is absolutely no excuse for it. Stupid people insist on continuing to engage in this moronic behaviour, and all they are doing is putting innocent people risk.

As I am sure all members know, every cent from red-light speed camera fines is directed to the Community Road Safety Fund, which pays for important road safety initiatives such as flashing lights at schools, engineering improvements such as roadside barriers and education campaigns. If people do not speed or run a red light they will not get fined. I ask members of the Opposition a simple question: If they do not want these red light speed cameras, which ones do they want me to pull out? They should tell me where they want to make it legal for people to run red lights and run into innocent families. They should tell me which cameras they want pulled out. It is quiet, is it not? Those opposite play politics, but this is about saving lives. [*Time expired.*]

DOLPHIN MARINE MAGIC

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (15:11): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. I am going to try again today. Why has Pet Porpoise Pool Pty Limited, the operator of Dolphin Marine Magic, had its licence to display animals renewed given the obvious breaches of the standards for exhibiting bottle-nosed dolphins in New South Wales resulting in the death of the dolphin Ji-Ling?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:12): This issue has been going on for some time. I am advised that the department has been working with Dolphin Marine Magic to ensure full compliance with the prescribed standards for exhibiting seals. I am advised that the department has renewed Dolphin Marine Magic's authorities to exhibit animals after the operators committed to installing a new seal enclosure in the near future to ensure full compliance with seal housing standards. Both Dolphin Marine Magic and the Zoo and Aquarium Association [ZAA], the national zoo industry association, have provided the department with undertakings that the welfare of the seals will be satisfactory while the new facility is constructed. The department will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the seals' welfare and to ensure compliance.

WENTWORTH PARK SPORTING COMPLEX TRUST

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ (15:13): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Given that the Wentworth Park trust is already bound by the Crown Lands Act 1989 and aims to deliver sporting facilities for community benefit, why did the Minister override those existing provisions and appoint an administrator?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:14): I believe that I clearly answered that question earlier this week. An administrator was appointed as a result of uncertainty because the McHugh report was outstanding. The term of the existing board had expired and the decision was taken that a short-term appointment of an administrator was appropriate considering the uncertainty around what was happening at the time.

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (15:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. Will the Minister inform the House how the New South Wales Government is helping migrants and refugees to gain employment?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:15): We all know that one of the keys to settling in a new land is gaining employment, and I know that all members of this place support the Premier's commitment to welcome our share of Syrian and Iraqi refugees to our great State. As our State prepares to welcome more migrants and refugees, we need to help them to have their skills and qualifications recognised. As Minister for Multiculturalism, I am excited about the partnership between the New South Wales Government and community organisation Metro Assist to develop the Skill Me program to address the needs of new migrants and refugees.

Skill Me brings together in one package everything a job seeker needs to succeed—from English courses and numeracy classes to vocational skills and work experience in relevant industries. It is designed to help people understand what training and retraining options are available, how they can gain recognition for their qualifications, and how the Australian workforce operates. Skill Me runs three core programs to help migrants and refugees with different levels of skills and qualifications. After an initial assessment, each client is given a tailored case plan to monitor their progress towards employment. They attend industry briefings and learn vital skills in presentation, literacy, numeracy and how to write a resume. The project also runs a driving program to help people get mobile, and mentoring sessions to help keep people motivated. It also has a well-designed strategy to engage employers in various industries.

I was delighted recently to attend a graduation ceremony of the Skill Me vocational employment program for migrants and refugees. I met 10 new graduates of the program, which has helped more than 300 migrants and

refugees since June 2015. One of those graduates was Khaled Al Mgharbel, who came to Australia from Syria with his wife and five children. He undertook an English course combined with a Certificate II in Furniture Removal. This gave him the work-related vocabulary he needs and taught him how to write a resume and apply for a job. He is now working towards a Certificate II in Warehouse Operation and gaining his forklift licence. He has gained work experience with employers organised by the Australian Furniture Removers Association.

Thanks to this program, he now hopes to buy a truck and start his own furniture removal business. The Australian Furniture Removers Association was so impressed by the outcome, it would like the project to be expanded and to be more involved. Skill Me is also being applied to the aged care and disability sector, with a group of 20 women starting training in July 2016 to work in this important field. This will help people into training and employment pathways in the growing disability sector, which falls under one of my other responsibilities as Minister for Disability Services.

Navigating a new land, language and career is not easy. One of the key ways migrants can settle into a new society is by us helping them to obtain a job. The Skill Me program offers a pathway for migrants and refugees to feel valued and included while helping them into jobs, which in turn helps them to become productive members of our State. With nearly half of our population born overseas or having at least one parent born overseas, we are proud to have the world represented on our doorstep. This cultural and linguistic diversity gives us an economic, social and cultural advantage that is the envy of the world. The New South Wales Government will continue to work hard with organisations such as Metro Assist to engage, enrich and enable all communities in the State.

YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE INMATES TREATMENT

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (15:18): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, representing the Minister for Justice and Police. Given recent allegations of abuse in Northern Territory youth detention centres and the consequential establishment of a royal commission, will the Minister please update the House on the current standard procedures for dealing with disruptive youth inmates in New South Wales, and what assurances can the Minister give that similar treatment of youth inmates is not occurring in this State?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:19): I thank the honourable member for his question. I am sure that all honourable members share the concern expressed in his question. I missed which Minister I was representing. The question probably should be directed to my colleague but I am more than happy to take it on notice, refer it to the relevant Minister and obtain an answer.

WENTWORTH PARK SPORTING COMPLEX TRUST

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:20): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. When was the Minister and/or his office advised that the community trust managing the affairs of the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust was due to expire on 26 May 2016, and did he or his office have any conversations with the Premier, the Deputy Premier or their offices about the future management of Wentworth Park Sporting Complex?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:20): Obviously the member is talking about something that occurred more than two months ago. I will take the question on notice and come back to him.

DAIRY INDUSTRY SUPPORT PACKAGE

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (15:20): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water. Will the Minister update the House on what support is available for the State's dairy farmers?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:21): The New South Wales Government is committed to helping our State's dairy farmers, who are doing it tough because of the decision by Murray-Goulburn and Fonterra to reduce farm gate milk prices. Currently there is widespread uncertainty and likely future financial hardship across the dairy industry. That is why the New South Wales Government, through the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, will administer the Australian Government's Drought Recovery Concessional Loans Scheme.

The \$10 million support package will provide dairy recovery concessional loans to support dairy farm businesses. Since 1 August 2016 eligible farmers have been able to apply for loans of up to \$1 million that are payable over 10 years, with a variable concessional interest rate currently at 2.66 per cent. The loans will be available until Monday 31 October 2016 or when the funding is fully committed to help dairy farmers adjust to the current challenging price environment. The loans will ensure that the State's dairy farmers continue to manage

their businesses to account for a range of external risks in order to remain viable. Dairy farmers can apply for the loans to undertake debt restructuring, to cover operating expenses and to fund modifications to a farm business to help it recalibrate its operations to lower milk prices.

In addition to the dairy recovery concessional loans, the Government is also responding to the challenges facing the industry by developing programs and resources to help build resilient, sustainable dairy farms in rural communities. Current projects include running the Dairy Farm Monitor Project to provide accurate, reliable information on profitability and productivity, and collecting data from 30 farms; rolling out the DairyBase program across the New South Wales dairy industry; identifying factors affecting cost of production in New South Wales relative to other regions, and developing projects to help farmers manage costs and improve profit; and increasing awareness and adoption of technology, particularly robotic milking, on Australian farms.

Last year the New South Wales dairy industry contributed around \$612 million to the value of agricultural production. There are more than 700 dairy farm businesses in New South Wales, with an average production of 1.6 million litres per farm. These farms are spread from the State's northern to southern borders and inland to the Murray River irrigation areas. New South Wales is Australia's second-largest producer of dairy products, accounting for 13 per cent of the total value. Our State's milk production in 2015 was 1.16 billion litres—an increase of 5 per cent over the previous year and the highest level of production since 2002.

The New South Wales industry is based largely on the production of milk for domestic consumption, with almost 70 per cent of milk produced in the State used for drinking. The other 30 per cent is used for the manufacture of cheese, ice cream, yoghurt and other fresh products mostly consumed in the domestic market. I encourage any dairy farmers who are thinking about applying for a concessional loan to contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority or their local rural financial counsellor to find out more about their options. The Rural Financial Counselling Service can consider a farmer's current situation and use this information to determine the various options available so that they can make informed and conscious decisions. Additionally, they are familiar with the latest government assistance packages and schemes and understand the eligibility criteria, application process and requirements. Applications for funding will close on 31 October 2016 or when funding is fully committed. [*Time expired.*]

SATURDAY SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGES, RANDWICK CENTRE

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS (15:25): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism. As the Minister for Multiculturalism, why is he allowing the Government to close the Saturday School of Community Languages, Randwick centre, where students are taught Turkish, Serbian, Polish and Chinese languages; and what steps is he taking to ensure that the children can learn and retain a second language?

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA (Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism) (15:25): I am proud of this Government's record in encouraging the study of other languages. I am also proud of the work that Multicultural NSW undertakes with the funding it provides to a number of language schools and the fact that we continue to expend that funding. I am not aware of the specific case that the Hon. Sophie Cotsis mentions. I regard it as an important question so I will obtain the facts and come back with an answer.

SAFE SCHOOLS COALITION

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (15:26): I ask the Leader of the Government, the Hon. Duncan Gay, representing the Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird, a question without notice. Did the Minister for Education and the New South Wales Director General of Education fully examine the Safe Schools Coalition course and approve it for operation in New South Wales schools? If not, why is this controversial course—which is causing offence to many parents, who are withdrawing their children from the public school system—operating in New South Wales schools? How many New South Wales schools have the Safe Schools Coalition course and will the Minister table the list as it has been withdrawn from the Department of Education website?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:27): I thank the honourable member for his question—a question asking for considerable detail in a portfolio that is not mine. I will certainly put his request to the Premier to obtain the information that he seeks.

M4 EAST

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (15:27): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Will the Minister update the House on progress on the M4 East section of WestConnex?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:27): That is a very important question, and I thank the honourable member for asking it. It was a great moment last month to stand next to the Premier and watch the first road header go underground at Concord to start tunnelling for the M4 East. This was a moment a long time coming—too long—and quite frankly it should have happened a decade or two decades before.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Did you hug?

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: We felt like it. The road header will be one of four based at the Cintra Park site, working underground in both directions to create the twin tunnels that will provide an underground link from Homebush to Haberfield. There will also be three other main tunnelling sites for the M4 East and by early next year 18 road headers altogether will be working on constructing the tunnels. These tunnels, three lanes in each direction and 5.5 kilometres in length, will be amongst the widest in the Southern Hemisphere, allowing for a safer and quicker journey for motorists who currently get stuck at the end of the M4. Once completed in 2019, the M4 East will connect with the widened M4 at Homebush. It will enable motorists to bypass the notorious bottleneck they hit when they come off the end of the M4 and sit in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Parramatta Road. The M4 East will also have connections at Concord Road, as well as at Parramatta Road and the City West Link. The M4 East will allow motorists to travel from Haberfield to the Blue Mountains without stopping at a single traffic light.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Thanks, Dunc.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: It is a pleasure. WestConnex will not only be a great result for motorists; it will be a jobs bonanza during the construction phase. In all, 10,000 jobs will be created during construction of this critical piece of infrastructure. Opposition members are pretending they are not listening, because they are embarrassed that they never created these sorts of jobs in an area that some of them represent. Right now, more than 1,000 people are working on the M4 East alone. Construction will begin soon on the new M5, and planning is underway for the final stage of WestConnex, the M4-M5 Link. Once the M4 East is complete, most of Cintra Park at Concord will be landscaped and returned to the community. A new world-class hockey field has already been built at Concord to replace the previous field that was located at Cintra Park. It really is something to watch each stage of this city-changing motorway network start to come to life, proving that this Government—unlike members opposite—is about action and not just talk.

Sadly the time for questions is over. If members have further questions, I suggest they place them on the *Notice Paper*.

WINDSOR BRIDGE ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:31): Earlier in question time I was asked a question regarding asbestos at the Windsor Bridge. I am advised that a small piece of bonded asbestos, more commonly described as fibro, about four centimetres by two centimetres—about the size of a tea bag—was found on 11 July 2016 amongst recycled material being used to establish the vehicle area within the site compound. The recycled material was sourced from Fairfield City Council and was certified as "recovered aggregate" in accordance with Environment Protection Authority recovered aggregate order 2014.

When work crews identified the small amount of what they believed to be asbestos, the site was immediately shut down. The 160 tonnes of recycled spill in which the small piece of asbestos was found was removed from the site as part of a remedial action approved by SafeWork NSW. Roads and Maritime Services communicated with nearby properties, Hawkesbury City Council and the Department of Planning and Environment before the work started. Work started on 27 July 2016 and all material was removed by 1 August 2016. Air monitoring indicated that no asbestos fibres were released into the air. The asbestos contractor issued a clearance certificate declaring the site safe, and work continued.

WESTCONNEX AND ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:33): Earlier in question time, I was asked a supplementary question by the Hon. Walt Secord about when the area health board was briefed on the WestConnex M4-M5. I am advised that SMC staff presented to the monthly area health board meeting on Monday, 16 May 2016, and that follow-up meetings were held with area health staff on 15 June, 11 July and 3 August.

*Ministerial Statement***TOTAL COLLEGE STUDENT DEATH**

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:34): I regret to inform the House that a student of the NSW Department of Primary Industries Tocal College was found deceased this morning in their room. New South Wales police and ambulance services attended the scene, and I am advised that there are no suspicious circumstances. Unfortunately, at this stage I have no further details. Understandably, the Tocal College community is deeply saddened by the loss of a student. Staff and students are receiving support and assistance to help them through this very difficult and sad time. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I offer our sincere condolences and support to the family of the student.

I add a reminder that, if anyone needs help, they should call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:35): On behalf of the New South Wales Labor Opposition, I offer our sincere condolences and support to the family of the student. Our thoughts are also with the students and staff of the college and with the police and ambulance service personnel who attended the college this afternoon. I reiterate the Minister's statement that, if anyone needs help, they should call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: PRECEDENCE OF BUSINESS**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (15:36): I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

PRECEDENCE OF BUSINESS

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I move:

That Government business take precedence of general business for the remainder of the day.

Motion agreed to.

*Committees***STAYSAFE (JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY)****Membership**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I move:

That Mr MacDonald be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety and Mr Farlow be appointed as a member of the committee.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***POPPY INDUSTRY BILL 2016****First Reading**

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

Second Reading

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Lands and Water) (15:39): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The entry of New South Wales into the alkaloid poppy industry will support Australia's central role in safely and securely providing opiates for a range of important medicines. The Poppy Industry Bill 2016 establishes the legal framework for a poppy industry in New South Wales. It provides for alkaloid poppies to be grown in this State and to be supplied for the manufacture and production of therapeutic goods and for scientific research. Our focus is on doing this in a manner that ensures the safety and security of the New South Wales community. The Poppy Industry Bill 2016 supports an alkaloid poppy industry in New South Wales that is consistent with our national and international security and compliance obligations and exists within a robust framework to prohibit unlawful activities.

The long-term global demand for opiate-related medicine is likely to continue to increase as a result of the growth of developing economies and the global population. In 2015 the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board found that more than three-quarters of the world's population had no access to proper pain relief. At a national level, Australia's ageing population has increased the demand for opiate-based medications. Opiate-based medications are used for a wide range of conditions, including for pain relief, palliative care and anti-addiction medications. Opiate-based medicines are clinically important, and there are very few other pain relief medicines that can match their cost-effectiveness. As a member of the compassionate Liberal-Nationals Government I am proud to introduce this bill, knowing that it supports the production of medicines that are so important for the quality of life of people from the back of Bourke to our biggest cities.

Australia is a trusted and reputable source of alkaloid poppies because of the strength of its regulatory controls and its sound compliance history. This gives the United Nations confidence that the risk of alkaloid poppies being diverted for illicit purposes is well managed. By clearly tracking every step of the process, we ensure that the risks are minimised. I am aware that, unfortunately, there have been a small number of deaths in Tasmania associated with poppies over the past 40 years. The deaths have occurred as a result of individuals stealing poppy capsules, the seed head of the plant, to make tea. Thebaine is one of the key active ingredients in the poppy species that are grown for opiate-based medications. Thebaine compounds are highly toxic to humans.

Commercially grown poppies do not result in the psychoactive effect known as a "high". The poppies that are rich in the baine are not easily distinguishable from traditional opium poppies. We are acutely aware of these risks. I am confident that the strict regulatory regime in this bill mitigates the risks as far as possible. The regime restricts planting to isolated sites and requires fencing and clear signage stating that the crop is dangerous and has been known to cause death. The regulatory regime will be supported by education for communities where poppy cultivation licences are granted. The education and awareness campaign will include the NSW Police Force and health officials.

It is important to now put this bill in context and discuss the poppy industry in Australia more broadly. Over the past few years Tasmanian farmers have, on occasion, experienced challenges in maintaining an adequate supply of poppy straw. Tasmania has struggled with seasonal conditions, a continued growth in demand for the product and, more recently, crop losses from disease. As a consequence, the processing companies in this industry have been investigating opportunities for expansion of the industry to mainland States. There are only eight companies licensed globally to extract, export and sell opiates. Three of those eight companies operate in Australia. Geographic expansion will assist those companies in managing the risks of crop loss through disease and climate events. It will allow for an increase in supply, in accordance with our international obligations, and will spread the cultivation and harvest times, allowing Australia to meet its supply targets.

Victoria, the Northern Territory and South Australia have already passed legislation establishing frameworks for alkaloid poppies to be grown and processed in those jurisdictions. Victoria has issued licences to approximately 50 growers in the past two years. An alkaloid poppy industry in New South Wales has the potential to provide significant economic benefits for this State. It is true that there have been some recent reports that the global demand for opiates has plateaued. It will be up to the market to decide what investment in this industry will look like over the coming years. It is clear that it is not the role of this Government to perpetuate an unnecessary blanket ban on the cultivation of a product that we have the means to regulate effectively. Indeed, if global demand continues to increase there is potential for the alkaloid poppy industry in New South Wales to be worth up to \$100 million in 10 years, providing jobs, income and opportunities for the people of this State.

An alkaloid poppy industry in New South Wales also provides an opportunity to establish a new high-value rural industry with a well-established international reputation and strong prospects for future growth. The entry of New South Wales into the alkaloid poppy cultivation industry will support Australia's central role in producing opiates, which are critical to modern medicine. Bringing the bill forward now will enable the industry to move into New South Wales as commercial partnerships are identified. I will provide some background on the use of opiate medicines. Alkaloid poppies, the term used to describe poppies that produce opiates, are grown to provide medical-grade opiate compounds for the manufacture of pain-relief medicines such as morphine, codeine and oxycodone, as well as anti-addiction medicines such as naloxone—also known as Narcan—and naltrexone.

Opiate-based medicines are also used for a range of other purposes, including palliative care, as anaesthetics, sedatives, to reverse narcotic overdose, in anti-addiction medicines and to suppress coughs and diarrhoea.

The growth of opium poppies is strictly regulated by the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, to which Australia is a signatory. The manufacture of opiate-based medicines is also highly regulated. The three processing companies that operate in Australia contract farmers to grow alkaloid poppies. Poppies are harvested then converted into narcotic raw material, or concentrate of poppy straw, a powder precursor to opiate medicines. The powder is then processed into medications. Alkaloid poppies have been grown successfully in Australia since 1971, when the industry was initially established in Tasmania. Since then, the high quality and consistency of the product and the effectiveness of the strict controls and regulations has meant that Australia is now responsible for more than 50 per cent of the world's legal supply of poppy material for medicinal purposes.

Australia is highly regarded internationally for its well-managed and strictly regulated industry. Tasmania currently has about 800 farmers. While the production fluctuates annually, there have previously been up to 30,000 hectares of approved plantings. Those farmers supply to the three registered processing companies. In 2013 the industry was worth around \$290 million to the Tasmanian economy. Under the United Nations convention the Commonwealth of Australia has responsibility for overseeing all production of opium poppies and narcotic materials. This responsibility includes licensing manufacturers to produce narcotic materials and closely monitoring the volumes of material produced and corresponding areas of poppy crop planted.

This bill sets a strong regulatory framework for an alkaloid poppy industry in New South Wales. The regulatory framework has been based on those operating successfully in other States in Australia and incorporates learnings from those jurisdictions. This bill sets a stringent regulatory framework that will facilitate the establishment of the industry and implement clear and rigorous checks on all industry participants to ensure the safety and security of the people of New South Wales. It sets clear parameters around who can participate in the industry, what they can grow or handle, where they can operate and for what purpose they can participate. This will ensure transparency and reduce the risk that crops grown under this bill will be diverted to illicit uses.

The bill aims to manage the risks associated with the alkaloid poppy industry through the licensing of cultivators and processors. Prospective licensees will be required to have contracts and appropriate manufacturing approvals in place before licences are granted or poppies are planted. This will ensure that there is a clear chain of custody from growing and harvest, through transport and processing. There are between 70 to 100 poppy species in the world, only a few of which produce the alkaloids that are utilised for the production of opiates. The bill is not intended to regulate ornamental poppies commonly found in gardens, nor will it impact on the use of poppy seeds in food. In fact, the bill explicitly states that it does not cover poppy seeds, to ensure that this valuable food product remains available for the community to enjoy. I will now outline the provisions of the bill.

The bill is divided into five parts. Part 1 of the bill provides preliminary information. Clause 3 sets out the proposed objects, which are centred on facilitating and regulating the cultivation of alkaloid poppies. The objects also cover the supply of material derived from poppies to be used for producing therapeutic goods and in scientific research. The objectives provide a definitive basis on which the industry will operate. Clause 4 provides a clear definition of what poppies are covered by this Act, identifying the key species currently used in the industry, *Papaver somniferum*, also known as the opium poppy. It also provides definitions for key terms used in the bill. Clause 5 proposes a fit and proper person test, which will require the Secretary of the Department of Industry to determine whether applicants are suitable for licences under the bill.

Part 2 of the bill creates the offence to possess alkaloid poppy material unless it is authorised by a poppy licence or permit. It sets out the conditions licensees must comply with and processes for application, renewals, amendments and cancellation. Clause 7 sets out the types of licences and permits that will be available. A cultivation licence will allow for the cultivation and harvest of alkaloid poppies, and for the transport and storage of harvested alkaloid poppies. Cultivation licences also provide for the supply of material harvested to a holder of a New South Wales processing licence. Cultivation licences may also allow for research into alkaloid poppies. A processing licence will allow for receiving, storage and transport of poppy material harvested under a cultivation licence. A processing licence will allow supply of poppy material to a person who holds a poppy licence, interstate poppy licence or a licence to manufacture or export. A processing licence may also allow for scientific research.

Clauses 8, 9, 10 and 11 set out the conditions for licences and permits including: the classes of poppies that can be cultivated, transported or stored; the land or premises on which activities are authorised; the quantities authorised for cultivation, processing or research; requirements for assessing employees, and obligations to maintain security of the crop or related material. There is also a requirement that there can be no planting of a crop without the licensee having appropriate arrangements in place with a licenced processor or a researcher. Licence holders are required to advise the secretary of any changes to such arrangements so that a clear chain of custody of the poppy material can be maintained.

For processing licences, arrangements must be in place for the supply of the poppy material, either through approvals under a manufacturing licence or an export licence under the Customs Act 1912. All licence holders must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent unauthorised people from entering areas where there are alkaloid poppies or poppy material. Any suspected intrusion or theft must be immediately reported to the NSW Police Force. The bill also provides that licence applicants must submit a risk management plan as part of their application. These plans will detail the actions that applicants intend to undertake to ensure the security of properties where poppies are to be grown or processed.

The plans will also explain how licence holders will mitigate the risks to the community. All plans must be approved by the secretary before a licence can be granted. There will be regular audits to ensure compliance with the approved risk management plan. The conditions also oblige all licence holders to ensure that any poppy residues are destroyed and efforts are made to ensure that no self-seeded poppies are allowed to mature. Where licences are for research, this research must be undertaken by someone with appropriate scientific qualifications and experience. In addition to the conditions listed in the bill, the secretary has the power to set other conditions, including those relating to security and surveillance and records to be kept. There is also a requirement that certain changes to the circumstances of the licence holder or the licenced activity must be reported to the secretary within seven days.

Clause 12 makes it an offence to contravene a licence or permit, with a penalty of up to 100 penalty units for an individual and up to 500 penalties for a corporation. Clauses 13 to 17 relate to licence fees and the renewal, amendment and surrender of a licence or permit. Clause 18 outlines the information required to be submitted with applications, including a requirement that applicants provide details of relevant contracts or licences. Clause 19 sets out the criteria for determining applications and conditions. Clause 20 provides for the auditing of licence holders to ensure that operations are consistent with the conditions of the licence or permit, including the risk management plans.

Clause 21 provides for the suspension, cancellation or amendment of licences and permits. This clause also proposes that the secretary has the power to require licence holders who have not met licence conditions, to undertake activities to meet licence requirements. If these requirements are not undertaken, they can be undertaken at the cost of licence holders, provided advice has been given to the licence holder. The clause also makes it an offence if the holder of a cancelled or suspended licence or permit does not return it to the secretary within 14 days. Clause 22 allows the secretary to order former licensees to ensure the security of poppy material and minimise the risk of environmental harm or harm to humans. This includes being able to order holders of cancelled or suspended licences to continue to destroy any plants that might grow following harvest of a poppy crop.

Clause 23 provides that the secretary must refer each application to the Commissioner of Police for review. The secretary may rely on information provided by the commissioner to determine whether to approve an application or suspend, cancel or amend a licence or permit. Should the commissioner oppose the grant of a licence, the secretary must not grant a licence. Part 3 includes detail on the authorised officers and their role and powers. Clause 26 provides for the appointment of authorised officers. Clause 28 sets out the powers conferred on authorised officers, including the power to enter and inspect premises and vehicles, require people to take samples, produce documents and records, take photographs or recordings, and seize materials.

The bill proposes that authorised officers will also have the power to request the name and residential details of people they reasonably believe may have or are about to contravene a provision of the Act. A warrant must be obtained before an authorised officer enters and inspects residential premises. Part 4 of the bill covers offences and proceedings. Clauses 31, 32 and 33 deal with liability of directors. Clause 35 makes it an offence to provide false or misleading information under the bill. Clause 37 enables penalty notices to be issued by an authorised officer if it appears to that officer that a person has committed an offence against the bill. This part of the bill also covers details of proceedings for offences, the use of evidentiary certificates and continuing offences.

Finally, part 5 of the bill provides for miscellaneous provisions. These include a provision against self-incrimination and details covering the giving and service of documents. Clause 44 proposes an offence for disclosing information obtained in connection with the administration or enforcement of the Act, and exceptions to the offence. Clause 46 clearly states that the bill does not affect the use of alkaloid poppy seeds for purposes other than cultivation. Clause 47 provides for the making of regulations. Finally, clause 47 provides for a review of the Act by the Minister as soon as possible after five years.

Schedule 1 to the bill sets out amendments to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 to amend a definition of a prohibited plant and to set out the relationship between that Act and this bill, providing that anything authorised by the bill is not illegal under the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985. The schedule also provides for amendment to the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 to clarify the relationship between that Act and the Poppy Industry Bill. This bill provides a robust framework for regulating alkaloid poppies in New South

Wales. Nothing in this bill allows for, or reduces the controls around, illegal use of drugs. Targeted consultation has occurred with poppy processors, the NSW Farmers Association and several agricultural peak bodies.

New South Wales government officials have also been working with officials at the national and State level to develop the detail that is contained in this bill. Not only will the proposed legislative framework and associated licence conditions and guidelines provide clear and rigorous requirements for the industry; the processors themselves undertake comprehensive checks on potential growers before issuing contracts. The strict approval of Commonwealth manufacturing licences and the high value of the industry mean that processors are keenly aware of the need to ensure that their operations and the operations of those contracted to them are above reproach. The proposed penalties in the bill are consistent with the potential for illegal usage of poppies and the contravention of the administrative requirements of the bill. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is committed to supporting this valuable new industry and ensuring that the risks to the community are appropriately managed. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY (Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and Vice-President of the Executive Council) (16:00): I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION LEGISLATION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:00): A dreadful line has been crossed: there are now more than 1,000 types of plants and animals facing extinction in New South Wales. The most important action that can be taken to stop this wave of extinctions is to protect the bush from being cleared. If the bush is cleared, animals and plants will die. Some species will be lost forever. If the bush is protected, we give them a fighting chance. But the Baird Government is currently pushing to abolish the laws that protect our plants and animals. The extent and intensity of opposition to what the Government is proposing is unprecedented. The esteemed Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists has voiced its concern, saying:

These retrograde changes risk returning NSW to an era of unsustainable environmental damage by reinstating broad scale land clearing, resulting in more degraded land, more damage to river systems, increased carbon emissions and the loss of habitat critical to the survival of threatened species.

After two years, an expert panel and more than 5,000 submissions the Government's plans have been rejected by leading scientists and have split the farming community. Environmental groups have walked away from the process, describing the reforms as a disaster for our State's land, water, wildlife and trees. A group of farmers are running a campaign against the changes because they understand the damage that will be wrought. They have said:

As farmers, land managers and food suppliers, we are alarmed at the Baird Government's proposed changes to land management laws. The changes will lead to wide scale land clearing and land management practices that have no place in modern farming.

Like so many of the challenges facing New South Wales, what is missing is a big picture view and a commitment to the long-term public interest ahead of short-term quick fixes. Premier Baird has so far refused to listen. He and his Ministers refuse to acknowledge the gains made under the current native vegetation laws. In fact, some of his Ministers regularly subject us to lectures about what a failure they have been. We need to understand how successful they have been.

In the year 2000 Australia was guilty of being the fifth greatest land clearer in the world, and the worst offender of any developed nation. Land clearing was causing soil erosion, ruining rivers, driving up carbon emissions and was the prime contributor to biodiversity loss. The Carr Labor Government responded by engaging in an extensive two-year process with farmers, scientists and environmental groups that led to the Native Vegetation Act. When introduced it was endorsed by all of those groups.

Prior to the Native Vegetation Act 2003 more than 100,000 hectares of land—the equivalent of half of Sydney's urban area—was being cleared every year. Since then that has dropped to less than 12,000 hectares per year. By anyone's estimation that is a huge success. The laws have delivered a 20 per cent reduction in clearing of remnant bushland, saved 53,000 native mammals from death each year and saved approximately 300 koalas from a human caused death. The halt to broad-scale land clearing in New South Wales and Queensland is the only reason that Australia has been able to meet its commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

Premier Baird's plan to dismantle the laws will take us back to the bad old days of widespread clearing. With the bush gone and their homes destroyed, our native mammals, birds, reptiles and insects will die. What is being proposed will further damage our soil, land and water. The changes fail to adequately support and compensate farmers and other landholders who restore degraded land and conserve precious native vegetation for the future. After two centuries of policies that have supported land clearing less than 10 per cent of our State's landscape is in its natural condition. We can and must do better. What is left should be protected, not destroyed.

BRITAIN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (16:04): The recent vote by the British people to leave the European Union [EU] is a reclamation by them of the independence and sovereignty of their nation. It is a victory over political correctness and the dictatorship of the unelected and unaccountable Brussels bureaucracy. By their vote the people of Britain decided to cut themselves loose from the political, economic and social straitjacket that for many years has been increasingly tightened around them. It is now crystal clear that the purpose of the European Union was not just economic cooperation but also a political union to which Britain and the nations of Europe would surrender their sovereignty. But polls show that the British people—and increasingly the people of mainland Europe—are not prepared to pay the price that this entails.

A major catalyst for this has been the loss of control by Britain and European nations of their borders and the power to decide who can and cannot enter as migrants or refugees. There is increasing despair that the heritage and traditions of western Christian civilisation are at grave risk. Australia has restored control over its borders, largely through the efforts of Coalition governments, particularly those led by John Howard and Tony Abbott, and now the people of Britain seek to regain control of their borders. Brexit is one step in this process.

Last year 1.5 million people illegally entered Europe. It is claimed that most were refugees from conflicts in the Middle East, but the truth is that the great majority were economic migrants from places such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kosovo, Albania, Morocco and other parts of Africa where there is no civil war or insurgency. Represented amongst them have been a significant number of Islamists who have unleashed havoc, mayhem and murder. Virtually not a day goes by without a beheading, stabbing, shooting or bombing. Additionally, polls have established that amongst Islamic communities in Britain and Europe there is a certain percentage who sympathise with Islamist ideology that is totally at odds with European values.

Support for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union has not developed overnight; it has been growing for years, inflamed by the EU's overriding of British sovereignty, particularly in the area of immigration. In response to public opposition to escalating immigration then Prime Minister David Cameron promised to reduce it to "a few tens of thousands a year". Instead, it has blown out to more than 350,000 a year—a result not only of a lack of resolve but also a concern that such a reduction would conflict with EU policy relating to refugees and the policy of free movement between EU members of its citizens.

In addition, there was mounting anger with the European Court of Justice and its frequent overriding of British court decisions and British Government policy supposedly because of their conflict with EU law. For example, the British Government was ordered by the EU to desist in its policy of deporting convicted foreign Islamist terrorists on the grounds that it was an infringement of human rights. It is no wonder that the British people have had enough of the EU. And the feeling appears to be Europe wide, with Eurosceptic and anti-immigration growing rapidly.

In Germany 64 per cent of voters do not want Chancellor Angela Merkel to run for re-election, such is her decline in popularity resulting from her open invitation to refugee claimants to come to Germany and the consequential upsurge in Islamist activity and terrorism. A new party, the Alternative for Germany, has come from nowhere to be the third-most popular party in the country, gaining 15 per cent and up to 25 per cent in State elections after the German Socialist Party at 20 per cent and Merkel's Christian Democratic Union at 35 per cent within which its powerful Bavarian wing is in open disagreement with her refugee policy. In France 68 per cent of the electorate complains that the EU is going in the wrong direction and President François Hollande is polling at an historic low of 14 per cent. Currently Marine Le Pen is favoured to be the lead candidate in the first round of the next presidential election.

In Italy the Eurosceptic, anti-immigration Five Star Movement, which formed just prior to the last election, is polling equal first with the Democratic Party at 25 per cent. The anti-immigration Northern League is polling at 15 per cent. In Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the Baltic States and elsewhere it is a similar pattern. I congratulate the people of Britain on their historic Brexit vote. In these difficult and dangerous times they have risen to secure their future.

PROPERTY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (16:09): As Premier Baird and his Coalition Government continue to trash local democracy, remove planning powers from residents, supersize councils and prioritise developer need over community need, questions are rightly being asked about his agenda. Is this something that he fundamentally believes in or is he a puppet on a string? And if so, who is the puppet master? We thought we would take a look at the Property Council's document titled "NSW Priorities 2016". The Property Council is an industry lobbyist, also known as the shadow Government of New South Wales. Its primary role is to advocate not to councils, not for environment, and certainly not for communities, but for the big developers and the property industry. It proudly states that its primary focus is agitating "for policy outcomes that make New South Wales a better State to invest in the property industry" and for the "business interests" of its members.

What are some of the major wins that the Property Council has proudly championed in its NSW Priorities 2016 document—it looks awfully like the entire Baird Government agenda. The first thing it says is that it champions the results on amalgamations—"21st century councils", as it says. For more than a decade it has called on the Baird Government to undertake reform to modernise local government by creating stronger, larger councils. What did it get? The New South Wales Government announced proposals—just as the Property Council had asked it to—to reduce the number of councils from 109 to 87 in the regions and from 43 to 25 in Sydney. The Property Council asks and Mike Baird delivers.

It also wanted massive privatisation. The council campaigned "for New South Wales to undertake a long-term lease of residual energy assets". What did it get? The New South Wales Government is to lease 49 per cent of the electricity transmission network. The Property Council asks and Mike Baird delivers. It also wanted to centralise and have undemocratic planning—it wanted a Greater Sydney Commission. What did it do? It pushed for the creation of an agency called the Greater Sydney Commission. What did it get? The Greater Sydney Commission was born and it commenced work in the first quarter of 2016. Once again, the Property Council asks and Mike Baird delivers—and it proudly publishes it.

The Property Council also wanted reform of strata laws—also called pushing pensioners out of flats. It advocated for the reform of strata laws and the introduction of a fair and reasonable threshold for terminating strata schemes. What did it get? Strata laws have been amended to introduce a 75 per cent approval to terminate and renew a strata scheme. Who is the Government here? It does not look like it is Mike Baird. It looks like the puppet master is the Property Council because it gets what it wants. The Property Council also said that it wanted a review of planning regulation. It called for a review of all State Environmental Planning Policies [SEPPs] to unclog roadblocks at a development assessment stage and promote growth and density. What did it get? A full and comprehensive review of all 60 SEPPs commenced in 2015, with a review of 16 SEPPs now complete. The Property Council asks and Mike Baird delivers on a platter.

It also said that it wanted more priority precincts. What did it do? It called for the identification of a rolling schedule of priority precincts, formerly known as urban activation precincts, to help deliver the housing and employment that New South Wales needs and the profits that its members are desperately asking for. What did it get? The Government's "A Plan for Growing Sydney", which includes a goal to deliver more housing supply alongside urban renewal by rolling out additional precincts around train stations in the inner west, north-west and south-west. New priority precincts announced include Glenfield, Carter Street, Lidcombe, Arncliffe, Banksia, Showground station and Ingleside. Let us be clear, if people live in one of those communities it was not delivered because it is in the interests of local residents; it was delivered because the Property Council demanded it and its puppet on a string, Premier Baird, delivered it for them.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I withdraw the comment. It is exactly the same story in Newcastle. What did it do? It campaigned for transport reform in Newcastle, including utilising private sector experience and a regional governance structure to support a focus on door-to-door customer journeys through greater focus on interchange and multi-modal integration—if we pull that gobbledygook apart, the council said it wanted to shut the rail line and open it up for development. What did it get? The New South Wales Government is to establish Australia's first integrated, multi-modal public transport network operated by the private sector. It got the private sector taking over the transport and the shutting down of the rail corridor. The Property Council asks and Mike Baird delivers.

If that is not scary enough, wait until we hear the Property Council's plans for the future. It wants a major overhaul of the State's planning system, the enshrining of forced amalgamations, protecting the property sector from increased taxes, increasing commercial office space in Sydney and delivering intensive development in the Illawarra and Newcastle rail corridor. This is the secret shadow Government of New South Wales, printed on its own letterhead.

SAFE SCHOOLS COALITION

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (16:14): Today I speak on the anti-Christian Marxist takeover of New South Wales schools by the transgender so-called Safe Schools Coalition. There is nothing new or unusual about the controversy surrounding the allegations that the staff at Cheltenham Girls High School had banned gender specific terms such as "girls" or "boys" in favour of gender-neutral language. A second example of adopting a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender [LGBTI] agenda is Newtown High School of the Performing Arts allowing students to wear either girls or boys uniforms regardless of gender. The Safe Schools Coalition makes it clear that there is a concerted campaign by LGBTI advocates to force their Marxist radical agenda on schools.

Ms Roz Ward from the La Trobe University, who is responsible for the Safe Schools Coalition course, makes no secret of the ideology underpinning their long march through the education system. In a speech given at the Marxism 2015 Conference, she argued, "LGBTI oppression and heteronormativity are woven into the fabric of capitalism" and, "it will only be through a revitalised class struggle and revolutionary change that we can hope for the liberation of LGBTI people." She was trying to combine her Marxist agenda with the LGBTI campaign for equality recognition. In that same speech titled "The role of the Left and LGBTI Rights" she argued that "Marxism offers both the hope and the strategy needed to create a world where human sexuality, gender and how we relate to our bodies can blossom in extraordinary new and amazing ways that we can only try to imagine today."

In this new world of transgender theory, as argued by *The Gender Fairy* story, primary school children are told that they can choose the gender they want to be as "only you know whether you are a boy or a girl, no-one can tell you", and students are asked to sing, "You don't have to be a certain way just because you have a penis, you don't have to be a certain way just because you have a vagina". I refer to the news earlier this week of a female child who has been given approval to surgically remove her too large breasts.

As detailed in the 2004 book *Why Our Schools are Failing* by Dr Kevin Donnelly, it seems that the Australian Education Union [AEU] and the Australian Association for the Teaching of English [AATE] are long-term advocates of this agenda. The 1995 AATE journal is dedicated to promoting a cultural left view of gender and sexuality. One paper calls on English teachers to explore "alternative versions of masculinity", whilst another warns against "the various ways in which gender categories are tied to an oppressive binary structure for organising the social and cultural practices of adolescent boys and girls".

The 2001 AEU policy argues that either/or categories like male and female are no longer natural or normal and that "all curricula must be written in non-heterosexist language". This policy goes on to argue that any discussion about LGBTI issues must "be positive in its approach" and homosexuality and bisexuality need to be normalised". But what has ignored is that, according to one of the largest national surveys conducted of Australians, about 98 per cent of Australians self identify as heterosexual and babies, with the odd exception, are born with either male or female chromosomes. The NSW Teachers Federation LGBTI policies show little has changed. The federation supports the Safe Schools program and anyone arguing for the primacy of male-female relationships is guilty of "heterosexism". It says:

Anyone committed to the belief that there are two genders is guilty of promoting "fear and hatred of lesbians and gay men".

Obviously I do not believe that, and I am sure many members of the House do not either. I call on the Government to examine and to withdraw the Safe Schools program from State schools in New South Wales.

FEDERAL ELECTION

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (16:19): The Federal election on 2 July produced an overwhelmingly strong result for The Nationals across the country. Every Nationals member of Parliament in New South Wales was re-elected, both Nationals members of Parliament in Victoria were re-elected, and the seat of Murray was won by The Nationals. These results are testament to the connections our members of Parliament have with their communities, the State team's support for our Federal colleagues, and the extraordinary dedication of our party members and hardworking volunteers across the State.

The election also saw Andrew Gee, former State member for Orange, elected to the seat of Calare in his first run at a Federal level. Andrew was successful in his preselection bid following the retirement of 15 year veteran of the Federal Parliament, John Cobb. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the great contribution of "Cobby", as he is affectionately called by his community and his colleagues in The Nationals, for all the work he did representing the people of western New South Wales over the years. I also acknowledge Andrew for his work in representing the Orange electorate since 2011. He always had a strong vision for the Central West and was never afraid to ruffle a few feathers to ensure that Orange remained a top priority for the Government. I am sure he will take this same spirit into the Federal Parliament and fight for the people of Calare just as vigorously.

With Andrew throwing his hat into the ring for the people of Calare, I am very pleased to take up the mantle of duty member of the Legislative Council for Orange as part of my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Western NSW. With more than 200 eligible party voters, The Nationals turned out in force recently to preselect a new candidate for seat of Orange. In a tight contest, Scott Barrett was preselected to represent The Nationals in the upcoming by-election. Born in Orange, Scott grew up on a sheep farm near Mullion Creek before completing a Bachelor of Systems Agriculture at Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

After completing his studies, Scott moved back to the Central West where he worked in a variety of jobs in primary production. A stint as a rural reporter in Mount Isa gave Scott his first taste of politics, working as a media adviser for Independent Bob Katter before working for The Nationals in New South Wales. Most recently, Scott has been working as a senior agricultural policy adviser for the Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Niall Blair. Upon his preselection, Scott hit the ground running in the Orange electorate. He recently joined me, along with Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons, in officially handing over three new tankers to the Forbes Central, Jemalong and Lake Rural fire brigades, which each form part of the Mid Lachlan Valley Team. These crews have experienced major fires in the Goobang Ranges, Weddin Mountain, Alectown, Lake Cowal, Burcher, Tullamore and Bogan Gate. These new tankers will be vital for next summer and are a much needed replacement for their ageing equipment.

We also honoured the service of two members of the NSW Rural Fire Service, Robert Purnell and Neil Riedle, who each received the Long Service Medal for 10 years service as members of Forbes Central Brigade. While their core business is, of course, fighting bush and grass fires, all Rural Fire Service members do so much more than that. They are often the first to assist at motor vehicle accidents and structural fires and to lend a hand to other agencies. I congratulate those two gentlemen on their recognition.

I also had the pleasure of recently announcing \$1,200 in State Government funding for the Forbes Town Band to further develop their performance skills and musicianship. The band produces fantastic performances that are appreciated by the whole community. These funds will allow the band to travel to the Tottenham Rail Centenary event to conduct a workshop with the local town band and the local school band, which will culminate in a combined performance. I also met with Kathy Gott, president, and George Godkin, treasurer, of the City of Orange Town Band to announce that they will be receiving \$1,000 to go towards a regional tour over one weekend to towns and villages around the Orange area. They were very excited to be recipients of a community band development grant and I look forward to seeing how their performances go.

Also recently, Minister John Barilaro visited the Orange electorate to discuss changes to TAFE NSW at the TAFE Western campus in Orange. TAFE Western is an exceptional example of how partnerships can work effectively to deliver outcomes. For instance, one of its projects involved TAFE Western working with Roads and Maritime Services to create an exciting road safety pilot program. Hundreds of TAFE Western apprentices have already been provided with training that focuses on a number of key elements, including speed, driver fatigue, animals on rural roads, driver distraction, and alcohol and drugs. It was great to learn more about the initiative of TAFE Western with Minister Barilaro during his visit, and he was certainly well received in the Orange electorate.

I look forward to continuing my role as duty member of the Legislative Council for Orange until the by-election is held in November. I also look forward to working with Scott Barrett in the community to ensure that Orange continues to be represented by a strong Nationals member of Parliament in government following the by-election.

GENDERCIDE

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (16:24): The term "genocide" is used from time to time in notices of motion and in debates in the Parliament. It usually attracts significant attention and evokes strong feelings and opinions. On the other hand, the term "gendercide", and specifically female gendercide, never gets a mention, let alone serious consideration and reflection. I have never fully understood why this is the case. It is particularly so given that we live in a region of the world where if you draw a broad arc across the north of Australia you pass through some countries that still tolerate the practice, and in some cases overtly continue the practice. In other words, it is not happening somewhere over there; it is occurring in our own neck of the woods.

The extraordinary, indeed tragic, aspect of this matter is that the details of the issue are not new nor unknown. Members may be aware that in 1985 Mary Anne Warren published her seminal book on the subject, titled *Gendercide: The Implications of Sex Selection*. I cannot say that I agree with everything that Warren argues in her book, but nobody can doubt her role in bringing the issue of gendercide into the public domain for frank examination and debate. The sheer dimension of the number of unborn babies deliberately killed because they are girls is breathtaking. The 4 March 2010 edition of *The Economist* had both a leader and subject article on the issue. The newspaper cited the work of well-known economist Amartya Sen, who put the number of missing girls at 100 million. Far from being seen as an inflated number, many have argued that that figure is conservative.

Another approximation I have seen of 117 million to 130 million missing girls equates to roughly five times Australia's population. It is true that abortions do not account for the total number, and I accept that. Many girls have been, and continue to be, killed at birth—which is female infanticide—or neglected to the point where they die. Nonetheless, abortions account for the vast majority of missing girls and there is no question that access to relatively cheap ultrasound scanning technology, used with malfeasant intentions, has paved the way for this culling.

Members may ask what this has to do with New South Wales. I will be frank and get straight to the point. There is evidence that female gendercide is occurring to some extent in this State. Let me be clear: I am not claiming that it is a widespread practice, but it is taking place and it is about time the matter was brought out into the public domain, thoroughly examined and challenged. In terms of a balanced overview of the situation and evidence, I encourage members to look at the SBS radio programs on the issue that were broadcast last year on 31 July and on 1 to 6 and 17 August. I also invite members to have a very close look at the links and to examine the data and the analysis. Members should also examine closely the research undertaken by both Australian and international demographers on the issue who are interviewed in the radio programs.

I well appreciate the sensitivity around this issue. It touches the rawest of nerves, and so it should. I am raising the issue because I am disgusted and appalled by the practice. To the extent that it is going on in New South Wales—and it is—it must be strongly confronted and challenged. We cannot and must not behave in a wilfully blind way towards this matter. I would argue that that is what we have been collectively doing, both knowingly and unknowingly, in regard to this matter in this State. The practice is deeply sexist, brutal and utterly corrupts the moral fabric of our society.

The truth of the matter is that those to whom the practice is directed—female foetuses and newborns—are completely vulnerable and utterly defenceless. Moreover, they are literally voiceless. They have no capacity whatsoever, either as individuals or collectively, to speak up for themselves and advocate on their own behalf. This being the case, it falls to others to speak out—others who know that both the practice itself and the failure to call it out for what it is are morally repugnant. I invite any specialist, doctor, nurse, allied health worker, medical counsellor, health bureaucrat or any member of the general public who has knowledge, experience or information about the practice of gendercide or the related issues of foeticide or infanticide in this State to contact me directly. Any contact with me will be treated with strict confidentiality. Nothing discussed or provided to me will be passed on to anyone without the express consent of that person.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:29 until Tuesday 23 August 2016 at 14:30.