



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 9 March 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 9 March 2017

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. John George Ajaka) took the chair at 10:00.

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Motions

RIVERSTONE MEATWORKS WETLANDS

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Riverstone Meatworks Wetlands encompasses an area of one hectare and is the only wading bird habitat in Greater Sydney that is located outside a floodplain;
 - (b) Riverstone Meatworks closed in 1984 and the shallow wastewater ponds developed into a unique habitat for native and international migratory birds;
 - (c) more than 100 native bird species and 400 individual birds have been recorded at Riverstone Meatworks Wetlands; and
 - (d) endangered migratory species from as far as Russia and Japan arrive each year to the Riverstone Wetlands, and the uniquely nutrient-rich wetlands provide them with the sustenance needed to make their international migrations.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) acknowledges that conservation of New South Wales environment provides communities with opportunities to engage with nature and provides beneficial economic outcomes by creating tourism opportunities; and
 - (b) affirms the ecological value of the Riverstone Meatworks Wetlands and supports efforts to ensure that the habitat is maintained.

Motion agreed to.

POLICE SOUTH WEST METROPOLITAN REGION MEDALS AND AWARDS

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Tuesday 22 November 2016 the New South Wales Police South West Metropolitan Region Police Medals and Awards Presentation Ceremony was held at the Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club;
 - (b) those who comprised the official party were:
 - (i) Acting Deputy Commissioner Frank Mennilli, APM, Field Operations, NSW Police Force;
 - (ii) Acting Assistant Commissioner Mark Jones, APM, South West Metropolitan Region Commander, NSW Police Force;
 - (iii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice representing the Hon. Troy Grant, MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Racing;
 - (iv) Ms Joanna Haylen, MP, member for Summer Hill;
 - (v) Superintendent David Johnson, Ashfield Local Command;
 - (vi) Superintendent Dave Eardley, Bankstown Local Area Command;
 - (vii) Acting Superintendent David Miller, Burwood Local Area Command;
 - (viii) Superintendent Michael McLean, Campsie Local Area Command;
 - (ix) Superintendent Phillip Rogerson, APM, Flemington Local Area Command;
 - (x) Superintendent Scott Whyte, Rosehill Local Area Command; and
 - (xi) Father Paul O'Donoghue, Senior New South Wales Police Chaplain.
 - (c) those who received medals and awards in the category of National Police Service Medal comprised:
 - (i) Leading Senior Constable Michael Barnes;
 - (ii) Sergeant Anthony Carlile;

- (iii) Sergeant John Chapman;
 - (iv) Sergeant Paul Colreavy;
 - (v) Sergeant Stuart Cowin;
 - (vi) Detective Inspector Natasha Fairfax;
 - (vii) Detective Chief Inspector Glen Fitzgerald;
 - (viii) Senior Constable Stephen Flanagan;
 - (ix) Detective Sergeant Jeffrey Harkness;
 - (x) Sergeant Brian Keegan;
 - (xi) Sergeant Meryen Koksall;
 - (xii) Detective Sergeant Karl Leis;
 - (xiii) Detective Senior Constable Scott Lister;
 - (xiv) Sergeant Danny Mikati;
 - (xv) Sergeant Carol Ray;
 - (xvi) Detective Sergeant John Southgate;
 - (xvii) Sergeant Simon Tefler;
 - (xviii) Sergeant Scott Webber;
 - (xix) Inspector Emmanuela Watson;
 - (xx) Former Superintendent James Foster;
 - (xxi) Former Senior Constable Gregory Thane; and
 - (xxii) Late Former Senior Sergeant Barry Kline.
- (d) those who received medals and awards in the category of National Medal comprised:
- (i) Leading Senior Constable Michael Barnes;
 - (ii) Detective Senior Constable Suzanne Cooper;
 - (iii) Senior Constable Thomas Cooper;
 - (iv) Detective Sergeant Michelle Cragg;
 - (v) Detective Senior Constable Stephen Dodd;
 - (vi) Detective Sergeant Jeffrey Harkness;
 - (vii) Sergeant Meryen Koksall;
 - (viii) Sergeant David Laird;
 - (ix) Detective Senior Constable Scott Lister;
 - (x) Sergeant Danny Mikati;
 - (xi) Sergeant Carol Ray;
 - (xii) Detective Sergeant Matthew Smith;
 - (xiii) Detective Sergeant Matthew Taylor;
 - (xiv) Senior Constable Stephen Thompson; and
 - (xv) Senior Constable Colleen Beggs.
- (e) those who received medals and awards in the category of 1st Clasp to National Medal comprised:
- (i) Sergeant Anthony Carlile;
 - (ii) Detective Chief Inspector Glen Fitzgerald;
 - (iii) Inspector Craig Miller; and
 - (iv) Detective Sergeant Mark Portelli.
- (f) those who received medals and awards in the category of 2nd Clasp to National Medal comprised former Detective Sergeant Barry Hinton;
- (g) those who received medals and awards in the category of New South Wales Police Medal comprised:
- (i) Sergeant Santana Baskar;
 - (ii) Sergeant Mark Bazevski;

- (iii) Sergeant Andrew Burnell;
 - (iv) Detective Senior Sergeant Carey Mayne;
 - (v) Sergeant Michelle Morkos; and
 - (vi) Sergeant Benjamin Watson.
- (h) those who received medals and awards in the category of New South Wales Police Medal 1st Clasp—15 Years comprised:
 - (i) Detective Sergeant Michelle Cragg;
 - (ii) Detective Sergeant Karl Leis; and
 - (iii) Sergeant Carol Ray.
- (i) those who received medals and awards in the category of New South Wales Police Medal 2nd Clasp—20 Years comprised:
 - (i) Detective Inspector Paul Arnold;
 - (ii) Detective Senior Sergeant Robert Bagnall;
 - (iii) Sergeant John Chapman;
 - (iv) Detective Inspector Natasha Fairfax;
 - (v) Detective Sergeant Simon Fitzgerald;
 - (vi) Sergeant Kylie Hand;
 - (vii) Sergeant Brian Keegan;
 - (viii) Sergeant Justin McEvoy; and
 - (ix) Inspector Brett McKenna.
- (j) those who received medals and awards in the category of New South Wales Police Medal 5th Clasp—35 Years comprised former Detective Sergeant Barry Hinton;
- (k) those who received medals and awards in the category of Commissioner's Awards—Commissioner's Unit Citation comprised Detective Senior Constable Scott Lister;
- (l) those who received medals and awards in the category of Warrant of Appointment comprised:
 - (i) Sergeant Robert Grassi;
 - (ii) Sergeant Darryl Hawes;
 - (iii) Sergeant Kenneth Hayes;
 - (iv) Sergeant Ingrid Lewis;
 - (v) Sergeant Danny Mikati;
 - (vi) Sergeant Christopher Miller;
 - (vii) Sergeant Leanne Riley;
 - (viii) Sergeant Luke Thomson;
 - (ix) Sergeant Craig Unger; and
 - (x) Sergeant Benjamin Watson.
- (m) those who received medals and awards in the category of Commissioner's Long Service Award comprised:
 - (i) James Burke, Flemington Local Area Command, receiving the award for 10 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police;
 - (ii) Veronique Duval, Burwood Local Area Command, receiving the award for 15 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police;
 - (iii) Karen Soper, Bankstown Local Area Command, receiving the award for 20 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police;
 - (iv) Susana Correia, Marrickville Local Area Command, receiving the award for 20 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police;
 - (v) Mani Subar, Bankstown Local Area Command, receiving the award for 20 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police; and
 - (vi) Nevis Lakosh, Burwood Local Area Command, receiving the award for 25 years dedicated service to the New South Wales Police.
- (n) following the presentation of medals and awards Father Paul O'Donoghue conducted the investiture service for Father Fadi Nemme as Chaplain of the Bankstown Local Area Command.

- (2) That this House congratulates:
- (a) all medal and award recipients for their outstanding service to the NSW Police Force and to the people of New South Wales; and
 - (b) Father Fadi Nemme on his investiture as Chaplain of the Bankstown Local Area Command.

Motion agreed to.

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the Minister for Local Government announced the winners of the tenth annual Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government at Parliament House on 7 March 2017; and
 - (b) the awards were established to recognise the outstanding contributions and achievements of women in local government in New South Wales.
- (2) That this House congratulates all those who were nominated for, and those who received, an award on their contributions to their local communities.

Motion agreed to.

KATOOMBA RSL CLUB

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on 24 February 2017 the Katoomba RSL Club was nearly totally destroyed by a fire that is believed to have been caused by an electrical fault;
 - (b) no-one was seriously injured thanks to the efforts of staff, management and emergency services;
 - (c) important irreplaceable local veteran memorabilia was destroyed; and
 - (d) the fire has also impacted upon the Blue Mountains music festival and related regional tourism sector.
- (2) That this House calls on the Blue Mountains Council, Federal Government and Government along with the RSL club to work cooperatively and efficiently to support the rapid rebuilding of the RSL and the return of the important community and veteran services that the institution supported.

Motion agreed to.

RAPE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE AUSTRALIA

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (10:05): I move:

That this House:

- (a) recognises the extraordinary work undertaken at the Rape and Domestic Violence Service Australia, which provides specialist counselling and support to those who live with sexual assault and domestic violence;
- (b) notes that, because of the unique significance of this service and its international reputation for excellence, the Rape and Domestic Violence Service currently receives bipartisan support in New South Wales; and
- (c) calls on all levels of government to continue providing bipartisan support and sustainable funding in order to ensure that the life-saving work of the Rape and Domestic Violence Service Australia can continue into the future.

Motion agreed to.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA NATIONAL DAY

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Friday 25 November 2016 the National Day of Bosnia-Herzegovina was celebrated at a function held at the Australian Bosnian-Herzegovinian Cultural Centre Leppington, attended by several hundred members and friends of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Australian Community;
 - (b) the event was jointly organised by the Australian-Bosnian and Herzegovinian Cultural Association [ABHCA] and the Australian Union of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Associations and particularly the following persons:
 - (i) Mr Murat Ljukovac, President, Australian Islamic Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 - (ii) Mr Enes Topalovic, Secretary, Australian Islamic Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

- (iii) Mr Samed Sisic, committee member of the ABHCA Incorporated [the host organisation] and volunteer;
 - (iv) Mr Emir Basic, committee member of the ABHCA Incorporated and volunteer;
 - (v) Mr Sead Cardaklija, Treasurer, ABHCA Incorporated and volunteer;
 - (vi) Mr Senad Dulic, sound engineer and volunteer;
 - (vii) Mr Mirsad Garibovic, committee member of the ABHCA Incorporated and his wife, Mirela;
 - (viii) Mr Mirsad Maslic, columnist and community volunteer;
 - (ix) Mr Hasan Biscevic and Mrs Amira Bajric, Radio FM2000 in the Bosnian language;
 - (x) Mr Amir Bukic, SBS Radio in the Bosnian language; and
 - (xi) members of the dancing troupe "Zambak" and members of Bosnian Language School.
- (c) those who attended as guests included:
- (i) His Excellency Mr Makir Sadovic, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Australia;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (iii) the Mayor of Liverpool City Council, Councillor Wendy Waller;
 - (iv) Imam Salih Mujala representing the Australian Islamic Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 - (v) Imam Jasmin Bekric representing the Australian Islamic Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 - (vi) Honorary Consul for Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sydney, Mrs Demila Gabriel and Mr Chris Gabriel;
 - (vii) Mr Emin Serifovic, President, ABHCA;
 - (viii) Mr Safet Alispahic, Coordinator, ABHCA;
 - (ix) Mr Munib Ramovic, President of the Australian Bosniak Association;
 - (x) Mr Alija Ale Basic, Leader of the Bosnian Community in Cooma;
 - (xi) Mr Hasan Alijagic, Public Officer, ABHCA;
 - (xii) Mrs Zahida Cardaklija, Vice President and Event Manager, ABHCA;
 - (xiii) Mr Omer Ayan, Secretary, ABHCA;
 - (xiv) Mrs Dzenita Cengic-Karup, master of ceremonies for the event;
 - (xv) Mrs Sladana Hodzic, conductor of Blue River choir;
 - (xvi) Mr Fahir Zecevic, photographer and media, ABHCA;
 - (xvii) Mrs Azra Halilovic, Mrs Ajka Basic and Mrs Mirsada Sisic, leaders of the dancing troupe Zambak;
 - (xviii) Mr Ernest Kulauzovic, Director of Bosnian Language School Sydney; and
 - (xix) Mr Edin Omerika, Embassy assistant.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina on the occasion of the celebration of its National Day; and
 - (b) extends greetings and best wishes to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Australian community for its ongoing contribution to New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

JEWISH HOUSE CRISIS CENTRE DINNER

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the Jewish House Crisis Centre, established 33 years ago, is a help-in-crisis centre specialising in drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues and homelessness;
 - (b) on Wednesday 30 November 2016, the Jewish House Crisis Centre's annual gala fundraising dinner was held at the Westin Hotel Sydney, attended by more than 800 friends and supporters;
 - (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP, Attorney General;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services, and Minister for Multiculturalism;

- (iii) Mr Ron Hoenig, MP, member for Heffron;
 - (iv) Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, MP, member for Coogee;
 - (v) Professor Anne Brewer, Dean of the University of Newcastle, Sydney Campus;
 - (vi) the Reverend Bill Crews, CEO and founder of the Exodus Foundation;
 - (vii) Councillor Miriam Guttman Jones, Waverley Council;
 - (viii) Mr Jeremy Spinak, President, New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and Vice-President, Executive Council of Australian Jewry;
 - (ix) Ms Magda Szubanski;
 - (x) Kay Schubach;
 - (xi) Ms Katherine McKernan;
 - (xii) Nora Goodridge and family;
 - (xiii) Maurie and Vivien Stang and family;
 - (xiv) Clarence Bekker;
 - (xv) Lesli Berger;
 - (xvi) Vicky Gonda;
 - (xvii) Gary Cohen and family; and
 - (xviii) Roger Clifford and family.
- (d) those who assisted in making the event a success included:
- (i) Adrian Erdeli;
 - (ii) Danya Saltoon;
 - (iii) Heath Soper;
 - (iv) Andrea Banic;
 - (v) Jodie Kertesz;
 - (vi) Martine Buchter-Taylor;
 - (vii) Dr Kieran Le Plastrier, Clinical Director of the Jewish House;
 - (viii) Rabbi Mendel Kastel, Chief Executive Officer of the Jewish House;
 - (ix) Apples and Pears Events;
 - (x) John Mulligan and L'Amour Catering;
 - (xi) Richard Ernster and Helping Hand Group; and
 - (xii) Magda Szubanski who was the event's master of ceremonies.
- (2) That this House congratulates and commends the Jewish House Crisis Centre, its Chief Executive Officer, Rabbi Mendel Kastel, its Clinical Director, Dr Kieran Plastrier, and the centre's staff for their ongoing service to the people of New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL ANNUAL FEAST DAY

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Sunday 20 November 2016 the annual feast day of St Michael the Archangel was celebrated at St Michael's Russian Orthodox Church at Blacktown, with a special service and luncheon attended by members and friends of the Russian Orthodox community in Blacktown;
 - (b) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia and Ruling Bishop of the diocese of Australia and New Zealand;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (iii) Mr Naji Peter Najjar, advisor and former councillor, Canterbury-Bankstown City Council;
 - (iv) Mrs Ann Bali, Lady Mayoress of Blacktown City Council;
 - (v) Reverend Father Adrian Augustus; and
 - (vi) various members of the Russian Orthodox clergy.

- (c) those who organised the celebratory activities marking the 2016 annual feast day of St Michael the Archangel comprised:
 - (i) Val Smolonogov;
 - (ii) Olga Tonkhih;
 - (iii) Tanya Lester;
 - (iv) Olga Nazarenko;
 - (v) Zena Aksenov;
 - (vi) Victor Sadovoi; and
 - (vii) Vladimir D'Mirze.
 - (d) the first organised presence of the Russian Orthodox church community in Blacktown was in 1952 with the establishment of the Russian Orthodox church mission; and
 - (e) the first religious service held in St Michael the Archangel Church Blacktown was on 31 May 1959.
- (2) That this House extends greetings and best wishes to the Russian Orthodox Church community of Blacktown on the occasion of its celebration of the feast of St Michael the Archangel.

Motion agreed to.

POLISH CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:07): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Sunday 4 December 2016 the Annual Polish Christmas Festival organised by the Polish Community of New South Wales was held at Tumbalong Park, Darling Harbour, Sydney, attended by several thousand visitors;
 - (b) those who spoke at the official launch of the Festival comprised:
 - (i) the Vice Consul of the Republic of Poland, Ms Dorota Preda;
 - (ii) Mr Julian Leeser, MP, Federal member for Berowra;
 - (iii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (iv) Mr Leszek Wikarjusz, President of the Polish Community Council of Australia;
 - (v) Ms Moira Hay, Director, Events and Visitor Experience on behalf of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority.
 - (c) those who comprised the Festival Organising Committee were:
 - (i) Ms Boguslawa [Bobbie] Mokrzycka, President/Secretary;
 - (ii) Mr Darius Paczynski, Vice-President;
 - (iii) Mr Wieslaw Pazdzior, Treasurer;
 - (iv) Mrs Maria Koter-Rosiak, Stage Coordinator;
 - (v) Mrs Malgorzata Kwiatkowska, Project Manager;
 - (vi) Mrs Ela Chylewska, Media;
 - (vii) Mrs Jadwiga Kalbarczyk; and
 - (viii) Mr Jan Kalbarczyk.
 - (d) the Polish Christmas Festival at Tumbalong Park is now an annual event and is an occasion for the Polish-Australian Community to highlight the cultural and historical heritage of Poland and the achievements of the Polish Community in Australia.
- (2) That this House congratulates and commends the Polish Community's Festival Organising Committee for a successful Polish Christmas Festival 2016.
- (3) That this House extends its greetings and best wishes to the Polish-Australian Community.

Motion agreed to.

*Documents***OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: According to the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012, I table the report of the Ombudsman entitled "Review of Police Use of Powers Under the Crimes (Criminal Organisations Control) Act 2012", dated November 2016. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE****Report: Review of the Workers Compensation Scheme**

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I table report No. 60 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled "Review of the Workers Compensation Scheme", dated March 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (10:08:2): I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned. [*During the giving of notices of motions*]

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

The PRESIDENT: Order! Before I call the member I remind all members that members should be allowed to give their notice of motion without interjection. I also remind all members that it is open to them, with lengthy notices of motion, to indicate that a copy will be available with the Clerk, which I am sure would reduce much of the interjections.

[*Later,*]

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: If the Hon. Daniel Mookhey wishes to continue to use the term "unelected" for properly appointed administrators—

The Hon. Walt Secord: There is nothing wrong with this motion. Stop trying to block it. What is your point of order?

The Hon. Duncan Gay: My point of order is he is unelected as well.

The PRESIDENT: Order! That is not a point of order on so many levels. I indicate to members that if another point of order is taken simply to give a member an opportunity to make a lengthy debating point, I will call the member to order. The Hon. Daniel Mookhey has the call.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Start again, Daniel.

The PRESIDENT: The member will start from where he left off.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I have lost my place.

The PRESIDENT: I have made a ruling. The member will not flout my ruling. He will continue from where he left off.

*Business of the House***POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I move:

That Business of the House Notice of Motion No. 1 be postponed until Thursday 6 April 2017.

Motion agreed to.

*Presiding Officers***TEMPORARY CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES**

The PRESIDENT: According to standing order, the following members will continue to act as Temporary Chairs of Committees during the present session of Parliament:

The Hon. Paul Green

The Hon. Ernest Wong

The Hon. Shane Mallard

I further nominate Dr Mehreen Faruqi to also act as a Temporary Chair of Committees for the remainder of the present session of Parliament.

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

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 10 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr MacDonald relating to the Safer Pathway program.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 1171 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Ms Voltz relating to Parramatta War Memorial Pool.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 4 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Reverend Mr Nile relating to the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2017.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 539 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Buckingham relating to the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection No New Coalmines) Bill 2016.
- (5) Private Members' Business item No. 1211 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Green relating to the Bible Society.
- (6) Private Members' Business item No. 1213 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Mookhey relating to penalty rates.
- (7) Private Members' Business item No. 968 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Ms Taylor relating to Dementia Awareness Month.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***SAFER PATHWAY PROGRAM**

Debate resumed from 23 February 2017.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (10:19): I commend Mr Scot MacDonald for moving this motion. It gives members an opportunity to address domestic violence and the work that is being done across the State to support women, men, and children who are victims of this crime. No community is immune to domestic and family violence. It cuts across all socioeconomic and religious groups. Domestic and family violence in New South Wales costs the economy more than \$4.5 billion a year. One in four women have experienced violence from an intimate partner. Based on the bureau of crime statistics, in the 12-month period prior to December 2015 there were over 29,000 incidents of domestic violence in New South Wales, but less than half of those incidents were reported to police.

The evidence tells us that it is rarely a one-off incident but a pattern of controlling and abusive behaviour that occurs over a number of years. Government has a responsibility to improve this statistic by breaking the cycle of victim and perpetrator. Sadly, domestic violence has not always been thought of as a crime. Over the years there has been an effort to shine the light on what was regarded as a private, hidden and concealed crime. It is now spoken about. The Coalition Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence. Rather than a

patchwork of services, the Government has created a domestic and family violence system that responds in a consistent and effective way.

It is a system that is supporting the victims when they are in crisis and through recovery. It is a system that targets perpetrators, holds them to account and intervenes to ensure there is a change in their behaviour that will ultimately ensure that victims are kept safe. The Safer Pathway program is an integral part of the system. The 2016-17 budget allocated \$53 million to a statewide rollout over four years. In 2016, the State allocated \$7.8 million for 21 new sites and the expansion of two existing sites. The rollout ensures that the Government is addressing and tackling domestic violence in every corner of the State. The sites are located in New South Wales police local area commands including Newcastle City, Port Stephens, Hunter Valley and Central Hunter.

With the implementation of the Safer Pathway program victims no longer have to tell their story multiple times to different agencies. Individual agencies will not offer isolated support. A key reform is the introduction of safety action meetings [SAMs]. Following a domestic violence incident assessed as high-risk by the police the SAM team conducts a comprehensive assessment of what support is required. Victims are pro-actively offered support by the police who respond to an incident, with appropriate services offered in the aftermath. During critical periods such as court appearances victims will be offered support and assistance.

The SAMs are held fortnightly and consist of representatives from police, Health, Corrections, Family and Community Services, Education and Justice. This will ensure that there is a focus on the victim and their needs. Specialty non-government services who work with the victims and their families will also be present. The assistance offered to victims is varied and tailored by the SAM teams to support the victims and provide what they and their families require at the time. That may entail accommodation, changing the locks at the home, inquiring if the victim and their children are safe or asking where the offender is.

The support may focus on long-term goals such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol concerns, specialised trauma counselling and a long-term secure safe home. Feedback from police and the community states that this initiative is effective at providing rapid consistent multi-agency support. The Government announced a new \$60 million package to tackle domestic violence, target perpetrators and provide support for victims. For the first time in New South Wales—or, it is argued, anywhere in Australia—the perpetrator is now targeted for the crime. The police are able to focus on the perpetrator and disrupt the cycle of violence.

The Premier and this Government have made it a priority to reduce domestic violence and reoffending by changing the behaviour of perpetrators. Part of the package provides funding for the police domestic violence high-risk offender teams that will target perpetrators to reduce the risk of reoffending. Domestic violence suspect target management plans will allow the police to target, watch and deal with serious recidivism of domestic violence offenders. In February 2016, following a four-month trial, the police suspect management plans were implemented statewide. The Government has allocated \$19.5 million to mandated perpetrator behaviour change programs to provide treatment that teaches them to be accountable for their actions, attitude and behaviours. Crisis accommodation support has been increased.

As part of this package the domestic violence disclosure scheme was announced and launched in four police local area commands: Sutherland, Oxley, Shoalhaven and St George. The scheme will prevent people from being kept in the dark about a partner's behaviour and provides the opportunity to enter into a relationship fully informed. The package provides \$2.3 million over the next two years for a police and non-government organisation partnership that will provide an early intervention and crisis response as part of the domestic violence scheme. The Government is serious about holding perpetrators to account and providing the assistance needed for them to change their behaviour. It has invested \$5 million over three years to pilot a community-based men's behaviour change program.

The mandatory year 7 to 10 personal development, health and physical education syllabus will be updated from the start of term one to focus on domestic and family violence prevention. It is an important step to ensure that children and young people understand what domestic violence is about, what they can do and the impacts on them and their family. The Government is committed to addressing and eradicating domestic and family violence across the State. It is leading the nation in creating and funding a system that is responding to the needs of the victim and addressing one of the key social issues that face Australia. I am proud to be part of a Government that is leading and delivering reforms in domestic violence. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:28): I commend Mr Scot MacDonald for the excellent motion. Some private members' debates are political point scoring and of utter irrelevancy to the people of New South Wales. It is refreshing to be discussing an issue of significance to all people in the State, whether they are personally affected or not. Domestic violence is an insidious blight on this State. Anything that we can do in a bipartisan way to address it should be commended and supported. I note that in this debate some members have criticised what this Government is doing. That criticism is utterly unfounded.

This Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic violence. I will put on the record a number of actions that the Government is taking. We are investing record amounts of money in supporting victims, and we will continue to target perpetrators like never before. We make no apology for getting tough on offenders who commit this most heinous of crimes. The New South Wales Government recognises that the rates of domestic and family violence in this State are unacceptable. Domestic and family violence affects people from all backgrounds and age groups. While violence affects the whole community, it has a disproportionate impact on women and, by extension, their children.

The Government is committed to ensuring the safety of victims and their families across all communities. It is committed to ensuring that violent men recognise and change the attitudes and behaviours that sustain their violence so that domestic and family violence is prevented once and for all. When I say that the New South Wales Government is leading the nation in tackling domestic and family violence, it is more than just a generic statement. It is real and it is tangible. The 2016-17 budget doubles the investment in specialist domestic violence initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years, up from \$148.5 million in the 2015-16 budget. That is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness facilities.

For the first time in New South Wales, rather than using a patchwork of services, the Government is creating a domestic and family violence system that responds in a consistent and effective way. The Government has introduced a range of programs and reforms that support victims and their families to be safe and to recover. The Government is prioritising measures to prevent violence from occurring in the first place and to reduce reoffending. The central initiative to assist victims is the Safer Pathway program, which has been discussed and lauded by many members of this House. It is a new approach to victim safety assessment, referral and service coordination in this State. Safer Pathway ensures that domestic violence victims across New South Wales receive coordinated, consistent and effective responses, regardless of where they live. It does this by securing victim safety, reducing the risk of further violence and providing a single contact point for victims to access the support they need more easily without having to repeat their story multiple times—which can add enormous stress in an already very difficult situation. It also ensures that services share information and work together to create tailored support to meet the needs of victims and their children.

This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Every case is different. Every case requires a bespoke approach to ensure that each individual who has been affected can be dealt with appropriately, and that is exactly what this Government is doing. The Government has announced \$53 million over four years to expand Safer Pathway across New South Wales, with a total of 27 Safer Pathway Safety Action Meeting sites to be operational by the end of 2016-17. Currently, 18 Safety Action Meeting sites are in operation across the State, including at the much-discussed Wyong site. At Safer Pathway sites, victims assessed to be at a serious threat level are referred to local coordination points for coordinated support, through a Safety Action Meeting, to receive a response to secure their immediate safety and recovery. Safety Action Meetings are regular meetings of key government and non-government service providers aimed at reducing serious threats to a victim's life, health or safety through targeted information sharing. Through sharing relevant information, members develop a comprehensive picture of each victim's particular situation and develop a list of actions, or a safety action plan, designed to reduce the threat to their safety.

The focus of Safety Action Meetings is on reducing the immediate threat to a victim's safety. They are not case management meetings. Safety Action Meetings are chaired by a senior police officer and organised by the local coordination point. Meetings must be attended by senior representatives from each agency or service with the authority to make decisions at the table. The core members of Safety Action Meetings are the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Education, and Corrective Services NSW. The chair and the local coordination point decide on who will be the local non-government members. That is important. For consistency, the same local representatives from each service provider are expected to attend each Safety Action Meeting. They have the authority to make decisions, including applying for priority status with a social housing provider. This Government is devolving responsibility for key decision-making to local communities, where decisions should be made.

Between 17 September 2014, when Safer Pathway commenced, and 30 November 2016, a total of 26,121 referrals were received by the six Safety Action Meeting [SAM] sites that were operational at that time. The sites were jointly chosen by the government agencies involved in implementing Safer Pathway, including the NSW Police Force, the Department of Justice, Legal Aid NSW, the Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Health and the Department of Education. The sites were chosen based on the volume of domestic violence incidents in each police local area command and to maintain a geographical spread, with a mix of regional and metropolitan sites. That is also important, because in regional communities it is so often much more difficult to access genuine help, referral services and assistance at a time when women in particular are most in need. That is why this Government has addressed the issue in regional areas as well, and I commend it for doing so.

The staggered rollout of sites ensures that multiple sites in one geographical district or area are not rolled out at the same time so that government and non-government agencies can adequately plan and resource the services to support victims. It ensures that there is a mix of sites that require more preparation or specific strategies and sites that will be easier to implement. It further ensures that locations identified by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] as control sites for the Safer Pathway evaluation will be included in later phases of the sequence to avoid compromising the evaluation. BOCSAR conducted a process evaluation of Safer Pathway at the Orange and Waverley launch sites from October 2014 to August 2015. An outcomes evaluation is in progress, with final results expected by the end of 2017.

We will also continue our investment in programs that assist victims and their children who are escaping violence to stay safely in their own home or in a home of their choice. For that purpose, the Government is investing \$25 million over four years in the Staying Home Leaving Violence program. We know that victims of domestic violence would prefer to stay in their own homes, in a safe and comfortable environment with which they are familiar. But we need to ensure that the violence is taken away. The Government is also investing \$100 million over four years through the Start Safely housing program, which provides rental subsidies for people leaving domestic violence. Additionally, the Government is investing a record \$188 million in 2016-17 on specialist homelessness services, many of which offer services to women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Over the coming years the New South Wales Government will continue to strengthen our response to domestic and family violence and provide the vital support that victims and their children need to secure their safety and recovery. As I said at the beginning of my speech, it is clear that our record investment in 2016-17 strengthens our efforts to work innovatively, in partnership with the non-government sector and the wider community, to prevent domestic and family violence, to support victims and to hold perpetrators of violence to account. We are doing what we need to do. This problem will never be solved but we will do all that we can to minimise it. I congratulate the Government. In particular, I thank Minister Goward and congratulate her on her obviously genuine commitment to dealing with this issue, not only in her current and previous roles but also over her lifetime. She is a shining example of someone who believes in public service and who understands that we have to walk the talk. She is doing that with the programs that she has implemented. I commend the motion to the House.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (10:38): The Christian Democratic Party supports the motion moved by Mr Scot MacDonald, and the remarks of the Hon. Ben Franklin, in relation to the Safer Pathway program. The motion states in part:

- (a) on 27 July 2016, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Honourable Pru Goward MP, announced that the Government's Safer Pathway program will commence in the Tuggerah Lakes Local Area Command from November 2016;

We hope that that pilot program has been developed and expanded. Perhaps Mr Scot MacDonald can advise whether other commands and other States have adopted this important program. The Minister was joined by police officers who deal with domestic violence and members of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. The Safer Pathway program aims to ensure every domestic violence victim across New South Wales receives a consistent and effective response regardless of where they live. The priority must be prevention—that is, to reduce domestic violence events in the first place and if it occurs to then take care of victims.

That is one reason I am very concerned about the impact of alcohol in our society because evidence shows that some males who are calm and docile when sober become violent when under the influence of alcohol, which members of the family may not be aware of. In my extended family I have observed the effects of alcohol on a male who had a very good relationship with his wife and children when sober but became very violent when under the influence of alcohol. We must do all we can to care for victims of domestic violence and to reduce the its incidence. I believe this Government's lockout laws and other policies are helping to reduce the amount of alcohol-fuelled violence in our society, which should be of high priority.

The pilot program commenced in the Tuggerah Lakes area. I know that the Commissioner of Police, Andrew Scipione, would have supported this program. I congratulate the Hon. Pru Goward on her positive leadership as Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. I also congratulate her on the programs she instigated that dealt with the effects of drugs, especially on young people who become addicted, when she was Minister for Mental Health. I worked on some of those projects with the Minister and I hope they are still part of Government policy because they had positive effects and should be continued and expanded. I am pleased to support this motion before the House.

The Hon. LOU AMATO (10:44): I thank Mr Scot MacDonald for moving this very important motion regarding the expansion of the Government's Safer Pathway program. I also thank other members for their valuable contributions to this debate. It is vitally important that all members of the community speak publicly

about the issue of domestic violence, and it is our duty as elected representatives to continue that discussion in this place. It is no secret that domestic violence has been an insidious presence in our community for far too long, with the Australian Bureau of Statistics reporting in its 2015-16 findings that there were 22,910 perpetrators in New South Wales alone, with a disproportionate amount of victims being women. This represented an increase of 15 perpetrators of domestic violence per 100,000 criminal offenders since the 2014-15 report—a fact that the New South Wales Government has found to be unacceptable, which I am sure we all agree on.

One of the most unfortunate aspects of domestic violence is its often cyclical nature, whereby many victims are repeatedly abused by the same perpetrator, due to both a lack of insight on the part of the perpetrator into the damaging, heinous behaviours and attitudes they display, and an intense fear on the part of the victim of what will happen to them or their loved ones if they attempt to leave. I have heard it said by frontline service workers that the most dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence is often when they attempt to leave their abuser, as this loss of control can send a perpetrator into a tailspin, all too often with tragic consequences. These victims and their families need to be provided with adequate support to safely exit a domestic violence situation, and perpetrators must be dealt with swiftly and directed to avenues designed to change their behaviours in an attempt to lower rates of recidivism. I stress that it is with these factors in mind that this Government is leading the nation in tackling the multiple factors that contribute to domestic violence.

The Safer Pathway program implemented by the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Hon. Pru Goward, is the first truly holistic anti-domestic violence program to be implemented in New South Wales. It is bridging gaps and improving communication between services and vastly improving the speed at which victims can access the assistance they need. Following the 2016-17 budget, the New South Wales Government is utilising more than a \$151.5 million increase in specialist domestic violence initiative funding over four years to expand and improve existing services, as well as introducing programs and reforms to ensure that victims and their families can be safe from violence and move forward with their lives.

In addition to this direct allocation of resources, other areas that provide support to domestic violence will also see an increase in funding, including \$100 million over four years to housing through the Start Safely program, \$25 million over four years to aid the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, which removes the perpetrator, rather than the victim, from the home, and \$188 million to a variety of homelessness services. The Safer Pathway program represents this Government's commitment to assisting victims of domestic violence, with a focus on reducing the risk of violence upon the victim, providing a streamlined service that does not require victims to relive their trauma over and over by explaining their situation each time they need to access new services, and targeting offenders with both legal repercussions and comprehensive anti-recidivism programs to attempt to teach them that they are capable of breaking the cycle of violence.

The Safer Pathway program is acting to coordinate all the services necessary in moving victims and their families away from violence and is facilitating unprecedented cooperation between the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Education, Corrective Services NSW and local organisations. I take this opportunity to commend the work of the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, WILMA Women's Health Centre and the Macarthur Sexual Assault Service. They are but a few examples of the many invaluable frontline services in the community fighting to keep victims of domestic violence safe. I commend Minister Goward for championing this paradigm shift in service provision for victims of domestic violence through the Safer Pathway program. I am hopeful that with her dedication, and with the full support of the New South Wales Government, we will begin to see a significant reduction in domestic violence offences.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (10:50): I make a contribution to this important debate on the scourge of domestic violence. I commend Mr Scot MacDonald for moving this motion. I also concur with the Hon. Ben Franklin as to the importance of having this debate in this place. Domestic violence is a serious and widespread problem in Australia. Sadly, it has now reached epidemic proportions. For too long domestic violence was something that we did not speak about. It went on behind closed doors and was swept under the rug. Today, tragically, domestic violence is the leading cause of death of Australian women under the age of 45. It is the greatest threat a woman faces from someone she knows and it is usually committed in her own home.

I congratulate Minister Goward on the Safer Pathway program, which works to protect victims of domestic violence as a part of the Government's domestic and family violence reforms. These reforms employ an integrated approach to prevention and response to domestic and family violence across New South Wales, including new minimum practice standards, better availability of services where they are needed, and making it easier for victims to find help. The Safer Pathway program links government and non-government organisations in the provision of services to victims at risk of serious harm from domestic and family violence. The Government has committed \$53 million over four years for a statewide rollout of this program, including \$7.8 million in 2016-17 for the rollout of 19 new sites.

Domestic violence in Australia is not getting any better: It is getting worse and we need to confront it. But we should be careful not to stereotype domestic violence as occurring in only one corner of our society and with women as the predominant victims. Domestic violence affects women, men and families from different societal groups regardless of age, wealth, ethnicity or culture. In my time on the board of the ACON we also addressed the issue of domestic violence in same-sex couples. It permeates all corners of our society. However, statistics reveal that it is an overwhelmingly a male perpetrator-dominated crime, with women more than twice as likely to be victims of domestic and family violence than men.

The statistics on domestic and family violence in Australia are deeply disturbing. In a country with a population of 23 million people, it is alarming, tragic and unacceptable that on average more than one woman a week is killed at the hands of her partner. In 2016 alone 71 women were killed as a result of domestic violence. Domestic and family violence remains the leading contributor of death, disability, homelessness and ill health in Australian women aged 15 to 44, with one in four women experiencing violence by an intimate partner. It is a reoccurring issue, with more than one in five domestic violence offenders ending up in court after being convicted of another domestic violence offence within two years.

The New South Wales Government has recognised that domestic violence continues to be one of the most significant issues affecting the lives of women, men and children and it has worked to make domestic violence a priority. The Government continues to commit substantial resources, which demonstrates its commitment to this urgent issue. The 2016-17 budget doubled the investment in specialist domestic violence initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years—that is up from \$148.5 million in the 2015-16 budget. This increase is in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars the Government spends each year to combat domestic and family violence through mainstream services in justice, police, health, child protection, social housing and homelessness services.

The safety and protection of victims and their families lies at the heart of the Safer Pathway program. The launch of this \$53 million statewide commitment is designed to stop women falling through the cracks and returning to high-risk domestic violence situations. In September 2014 the program was launched in Orange and Waverley. It has 18 operational sites throughout New South Wales and nine new sites have been established at Campbelltown, Griffith, Northern Beaches, Lismore, Tamworth, Bourke, Queanbeyan, the Hunter Valley and the St George shire. It is also planned to roll the program out to many other locations. The Safer Pathway program is committed to a fundamental change in the way that government agencies and non-government organisations provide support to domestic violence victims in New South Wales and to ensure that victims are provided with the right services in a coordinated way. Previously there was a disconnect between government agencies and non-government organisations, which resulted in victims of domestic violence having to relive their experiences and repeat their stories to multiple service providers. That only serves to compound the harm already done.

Victims now have single contact points with a specialised domestic and family violence worker who can make direct referrals as to their needs, whether in the form of counselling, assistance with housing or income support programs. If a victim is identified as having a serious threat to their safety, they are referred to a Safety Action Meeting where both government and non-government organisations come together to discuss the circumstances of the victim, share information relating to the victim and the perpetrator, and establish a plan to keep the victim and their family safe. Another important aspect of the domestic and family violence reforms is the Government's commitment to improving the judicial and court systems and the way in which they respond to domestic and family violence cases. In order to achieve significant improvements in the court system it is important to apply the practices of specialist courts to all local courts in New South Wales. The Domestic Violence Justice Strategy will work to ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to the services and courts that meet their needs.

In 2017 domestic violence in Australia has reached epidemic proportions. It is a totally unacceptable tragedy that on average one woman a week dies at the hands of her partner. It is unacceptable, and urgent action must be taken. Whilst there are no short-term solutions to this problem, the Government is working hard to ensure that victims of domestic violence receive the support and services they need and deserve. However, this is not an issue that only the Government can solve. It is crucial that members of the community take action against domestic and family violence by speaking out. Indeed, that will play an important part in acknowledging the problem. I support White Ribbon Day, but it is not only about White Ribbon Day. This issue should be raised at all forums.

When I have the honour of addressing graduates of Fire and Rescue NSW on behalf of the Government I talk about domestic violence, because they are on the front line. All government and non-government people working at the front line of our community should be able to identify if domestic violence is occurring. For too long domestic violence was considered taboo; it was a private matter. We cannot allow it to be swept under the rug any longer. People must speak out. I commend the Safer Pathway program for providing accessible and

reliable support to the victims of domestic and family violence. Once again I commend Mr Scot MacDonald for drawing this matter to the attention of the House.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (10:58): In reply: I thank all members who made contributions to the debate on this motion: the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane, Dr Mehreen Faruqi, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, the Hon. Paul Green, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, the Hon. Ben Franklin, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, the Hon. Lou Amato and, last but not least, the Hon. Shayne Mallard. What impressed me about all the contributions was that they brought different perspectives to the issue from members' backgrounds, constituencies and life experiences. We heard regional, urban and ethnic perspectives, and we heard views about gender, same-sex marriage and domestic violence.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell made a good contribution from the difficult perspective of the Aboriginal experience with domestic violence. She noted that Aboriginal women are six times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to be the victims of domestic and family violence. That is very confronting for us all. Those of us who live in regional New South Wales encounter domestic and family violence in our roles as members of Parliament, and I thank the Hon. Sarah Mitchell for raising that very important point. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile asked about the number of Safer Pathway sites. I consulted the Minister's office, which confirmed that there are 18 Safer Pathway sites operating currently, with nine more to commence in March this year. I hope that answers the member's question.

As many speakers in the debate noted, \$53 million over four years will probably never be enough and is tackling only one part of a very difficult and confronting problem. I take issue with only one speaker in the debate. Dr Mehreen Faruqi said that the Government was "patting itself on the back". In moving this motion it certainly was not my intention to pat myself on the back, or for the Government to do so. I think we all agree that the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is doing a good job, and when people do a good job it should be acknowledged. But my intention was to bring the issue to light and to keep it at the forefront of our minds so that we ask ourselves: Are we taking the right approach to tackling the issue; are we resourcing it enough and can it be improved?

That is the thrust of the motion. It was not intended to be self-indulgent or self-congratulatory; it was intended to highlight a new program that had been piloted and had some runs on the board and to explain how we are backing it with more money and rolling it out. I sought to highlight what the Government is doing and to initiate debate about whether we can do it better by identifying an approach that is working and running with it. We want to keep improving what we are doing, and if we can achieve that by discussing the issue through motions such as this I will be very happy.

This issue is very difficult for all our frontline workers, particularly the first responders such as police. It is a very confronting, difficult issue for people to deal with in their daily lives. I acknowledge the non-government organisations and all those people who provide services in this space, particularly the Central Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. They do a wonderful job, and more power to them. I believe all members in this House wish them well. In years to come I hope that we can look back and see that the figures have come down and people are not being harmed or killed at the current rate of more than one a week. As parliamentarians, we should work harder and harder and do anything we can to address this problem. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

PARRAMATTA AND DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (11:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes:
 - (a) the comments by the Hon. Brad Hazzard, MP, Minister for Health, in the *Manly Daily* of 3 February 2017 that the Warringah Aquatic Centre should be retained and that "the decision to demolish the swim centre to make way for a new school should be made by an elected council"; and
 - (b) the comments by the Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, Minister for Education, in the *Manly Daily* of 3 February 2017 that "no matter what happens, it would not be acceptable to have a hiatus where we don't have a pool".
- (2) That this House notes that:
 - (a) in 2016, the Hon. Rob Stokes, MP, as Minister for Planning approved the demolition of Parramatta War Memorial Pool currently located on lands under the care and control of Parramatta Park Land Trust;
 - (b) at that time the Coalition Government neither made any plans to build a replacement pool nor made any commitment to fully fund a replacement pool;

- (c) the Coalition Government will begin demolition of the Parramatta War Memorial Pool after its forced closure in March 2017 and Parramatta residents will be without a pool; and
 - (d) prior to the elected representatives of Parramatta Council being sacked by the Coalition Government and administrators being appointed, councillors demanded the Baird Government either build the pool within the stadium site or provide funding for a new one.
- (3) That this House calls on the Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, to:
- (a) immediately agree to fully fund a replacement pool for the Parramatta War Memorial Pool which is being demolished; and
 - (b) remove the Minister for Sport as a member of her Cabinet for his incompetence in failing to notice that he was planning to build a football stadium on top of a public swimming pool, or inform the public that he intended to do so.

This motion reveals not only the complete contempt of the Minister for Sport for a local pool—a pool built by the local community as a memorial to those lost in war—but also the Government's disregard for the people of New South Wales and for its own local member, the member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee. It also shows the Government's contempt for what its own website acknowledges as one of the oldest public parks in the world—the hugely significant Parramatta Park, which encompasses some of our most vital sites of early European settlement and the important lands of the Dharug people of the Eora nation, in particular the Burrumattagal Band. No-one in Parramatta is opposed to the building of a new stadium on the site of the current Parramatta stadium. But the Government failed to tell the people of Parramatta that it was building the new stadium not on the current site but over the existing Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool.

I defy a single Government member to stand in this House and inform Parramatta residents of any statement made by the Government before February 2016—when the Government lodged a public document—that the pool would be built over. Not one statement was made; there was not one indication that the Government intended to remove the pool. Not one public meeting was held with residents to discuss closing the pool prior to the lodging of that public document—not one. Indeed, the Government's own local member, the member for Parramatta, had spent the previous 12 months reassuring the public that the pool would not close. In February 2015 the member for Parramatta said that the pool would not close. On 25 June 2015, in an article in the local newspaper, the member for Parramatta confirmed that there were no plans to remove or move the pool. He said:

There are no talks about getting rid of the pool. Our pool is a great pool and well-established, and it would cost too much. Locals felt reassured that their pool was safe and secure. Yet, just seven months later, in February 2016, a Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirement [SEARs] application by the Minister for Sport was lodged to demolish the Parramatta war memorial pool. The residents of Parramatta were shocked. Let us consider when the Liberal member for Parramatta and the local community were informed about the closure. The request for the SEARs was lodged in February 2016. The SEARs included the design for the stadium, which was to be built over the pool. The Minister informed the council that the Government intended to demolish the pool at the same time it lodged the SEARs application, which was to be a public document.

The elected council met with the Minister for Sport in February 2016 and was told that the pool would be problematic. The council then demanded that the Government rebuild the pool on site or fund the building of another pool elsewhere. When was the local member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee, told that the pool was to be closed—the same pool that he had spent a year saying would be too expensive to close and move when that had been mooted by UrbanGrowth? He was told two days before the local council was informed. It is appalling. As I said yesterday, with friends like the Minister for Sport helping you out in your electorate who needs enemies? The poor old member for Parramatta faced a large crowd of angry local residents only last week and apologised repeatedly. He said:

For six months I tried and I lost the battle. I'm sorry. No-one wanted to move it. If I could change the situation rest assured I would.

Of course, there was no opportunity to "change the situation" because the Minister for Sport kept the local member, the elected council and members of the public in the dark about the closure of the pool until the Government had lodged an application with the Department of Planning and Environment. Did the Minister for Sport just happen not to notice that he was building a stadium on top of a pool? When he was lodging his SEARs application in February 2016 did it suddenly occur to him: "Maybe I better tell someone I am planning to demolish the pool?" It is either complete incompetence or a deliberate attempt by the Minister to hide the fact the Government intended to demolish the local Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool and to make sure that nobody—including the local member, who for six months begged him to change the decision—had an opportunity to object.

That is consistent with how this Minister operates. We saw something similar happen with Moore Park and Centennial Parklands. Then Premier Mike Baird stood in Parliament and said that no stadium would be built there, but what was the Minister for Sport doing at the time? He was down at the Sydney Football Stadium telling the Waratahs, Cricket NSW and the Roosters, "It's all right, don't worry about what the Premier said; we will still whack it out there." It was only when they twigged that their own stadium might be pulled down that they decided to vote with their feet and leave. The Minister was dragged over the coals for that, but we see how well he learned

his lesson because he did exactly the same thing in Parramatta. In this case, he is whacking a stadium on the historic Parramatta parklands and he has acted in such a secretive way that, unlike at Moore Park—where they twigged early on and managed to beat him down—the people of Parramatta and their local member of Parliament had no opportunity to save their pool. Let us compare the treatment of the people of Parramatta with the residents of Warringah. According to the then Minister for Planning, who signed off on the demolition of the Parramatta war memorial pool, in Warringah "no matter what happens, it would not be acceptable to have a hiatus where we don't have a pool".

The same Minister, who signed off on documents when no-one in Parramatta had any idea that their pool was to be demolished, said it was unacceptable in Warringah to have a hiatus without a pool. But somehow in Parramatta that is okay. For the former Minister for Planning it is one rule in Western Sydney and another on the northern beaches. Indeed, Coalition members have gone even further. I note the comments of the Hon. Brad Hazzard, the Minister for Health, in the *Manly Daily* of 3 February 2017 that the Warringah Aquatic Centre should be retained. He said:

... the decision to demolish the swim centre to make way for a new school should be made by an elected council.

There should be transparency; there should be an opportunity for the local council to make that decision. But what happened in Parramatta? In May 2015, shortly before the elected Parramatta council was sacked by the Government, those elected representatives learnt from the Minister for Sport that their pool was at risk. So they passed the following motion, which states:

That council continue to lobby the State Government regarding Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool to either reinstate a new modern aquatic centre within the current site of the stadium precinct or provide funding and alternative locations within Parramatta CBD for a future swimming pool to be built for the people of New South Wales.

The elected council decided that the Government should either build a new pool on the site as part of the stadium reconfiguration or give them money for a new one—fully fund a new swimming pool to replace the one it was ripping up. But we have heard nothing about Parramatta from the former Minister for Planning or the Minister for Health. They were happy to complain about the removal of Warringah Aquatic Centre while the Government ignored the elected Parramatta council. Has any Government member walked into this Chamber or any other forum and said, "We are demolishing the pool. We are sorry. But we will fully fund a new pool."? Has anyone heard the Minister for Sport say—anywhere—"I will fully fund the pool that I am ripping out"?

Putting aside the fact that the Minister did not seem to notice that he was building over a pool, there was no plan in 2016 to build another pool and no funding available for the project. Has the Minister tried to rectify that by saying, "That is okay, I have listened to the local member; I have listened to Geoff Lee in Parramatta and I will fully fund a new pool"? No. The Minister said during estimates that the local council will run the pool so the local council should pay for it. The Minister was forced to come up with \$400,000 to help find a site, but has the Government contributed one cent to funding a new pool? No. Not only that, the Government is demanding that the ratepayers of Parramatta—the same ratepayers whose elected councillors it sacked—come up with the funds. It is not the Government that will pay for a new pool, but the people of Parramatta. They will essentially subsidise the Government's \$1.6 billion stadium build. That is what this Government is asking the people of Parramatta to do. I look forward to hearing from the member for Wakehurst on that issue.

Who does the Government send to defend its decision to demolish the pool? Does the Minister for Sport speak on radio in defence of that decision? No. The Government sends its appointed council administrator—the unelected council administrator—Amanda Chadwick to speak on radio and defend the Government's decision to demolish the pool. Indeed, I heard Amanda Chadwick say, "I have secured a site for the new pool at Mays Hill." I am surprised about that because Mays Hill is covered by legislation. Mays Hill is part of the important grasslands on Parramatta Park Trust lands. I do not know how Amanda Chadwick has secured a piece of land when to do so would require legislative changes in this Chamber. How has she secured a site on important Parramatta Park Trust lands when no legislation has been brought before Parliament to enable that to occur?

There was a golf course on Mays Hill because it is grasslands; lands that are not meant to be built on. But the Government says, "That's all right; do not mind about heritage, do not mind about Government House, do not mind about anything to do with Parramatta Park Trust, we will just whack a swimming pool there and we will let the council do a master plan." I ask: Where is the Parramatta Park Trust in all this? Who is the chair of the Parramatta Park Trust who is allowing this to happen to trust parklands? When Tom Uren chaired the Parramatta Park Trust he fought tooth and nail to defend those important parklands and the heritage and history of Parramatta for the people of Parramatta. Who has the Government appointed to look after those parklands now? Can any member opposite give me the name of the Parramatta Park Trust chairperson? Maybe they could tell me what bank he comes from. Maybe they could tell me his relationship with Parramatta. Those parklands are covered by legislation; the Government cannot just build a pool on them. But they are being carved up.

The Parramatta Park Trust is completely silent on this matter. Indeed, yesterday in this Chamber during debate on the stadia legislation Government members spoke about the importance of governance and having a system in place. Yet the Government does not seem to have noticed that the stadium is to be built on Crown land that belongs to the Parramatta Park Trust. The lands are not owned by Venues NSW; it does not have care and control of them. Those lands are owned by the Parramatta Park Trust. Parkland is being ripped up with no governance arrangements and little regard for ownership or the legislation. The Government sent out its appointed administrator, who, against the wishes of the elected council, said, "It's all right. We'll just rip up more of the parklands and whack a pool on it. Oh and, by the way, the ratepayers can pay for it."

When is the Government going to come to this House and say, "We are going to fully fund the pool. We are not going to let the people of Parramatta pay for our stadium build; we are going to put up the money, do the right thing and pay for the replacement pool"? The Government has already ripped up Parramatta stadium. We know that in March the Government will close the pool and that for the next five years, even if the Government makes the decision to fund a new pool, in the second biggest central business district there will be a hiatus—unlike in Warringah, where they are fighting for their pool. In Parramatta the pool is being ripped up and the Government might get around to replacing it eventually but the ratepayers can pay for it. It is a disgrace.

Quite frankly, the handling of the stadium site has been an absolute disaster. The Minister has left the poor old member for Parramatta swinging in the wind; he is certainly no friend to the people of Parramatta. The Government has an opportunity to do the right thing: It should step up to the plate and say that it will fund the pool and defend the Parramatta parklands. No-one has a problem with the new stadium. However, the Government should have gone to the community in the beginning and worked out the best configuration that would allow the pool and the stadium to remain on site. Instead, the Government kept the community in the dark, hid the information and made sure that even the local member of Parliament did not know. It is a disgrace.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (11:21): On behalf of The Greens I indicate our strong support for the motion that effectively exposes the hypocrisy of the Coalition Government with respect to the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool. The Parramatta war memorial pool is an extraordinary community asset. In 1956 at a town hall meeting in Parramatta there was a push to open it. If members cast their minds back to that time, they will realise there was a huge groundswell of support for pools all around the country. An Olympic Games was approaching, at which Australia enjoyed enormous success. A key point in the minds of people around the country was that their communities and their kids should have access to an Olympic pool so they could be part of that international success; they could have the community connections, fitness and safety awareness that comes from having an Olympic pool in their local area.

The first town hall meeting to kick it off occurred on 27 February 1956. Just three years later, in 1959, the pool opened and it was an amazing celebration for the people of Parramatta. They finally had an Olympic pool and were finally being recognised. The pool is pretty much in the heart of Parramatta, just a short five-minute walk from the central business district. It is a fabulous community asset. For three years I worked at the Family Court in Parramatta and it was sometimes a stressful job, watching the goings-on in that court. In summer it was an enormous relief to take the five-minute walk up the street, jump in the pool, swim 20 or 30 laps, get some of the Family Court anxiety out of my system and return to work. People from all over the Parramatta region used the pool. After work the pool was full of kids and families, and to this day it continues to be a key asset for the community of Parramatta.

The Government plans to demolish the memorial pool because it has not bothered to make a minor tweak to the design of its new stadium that would allow the pool to remain. In fact, the son of the architect who produced the original plans for the war memorial pool—an eminent architect himself, who has designed internationally significant pools—has presented the Government with a fresh set of plans for the stadium. He says that if one just slightly tweaks the plans—moves the stadium slightly, slightly changes its alignment and moves it slightly to the north—Parramatta can have its stadium and keep the pool. However, the Government's response—it is a common response—is that it committed to something well in advance, without talking to the community and the stakeholders. So even when there is a solution—as offered by the son of the original architect—the Government buries its head in the sand and pretends that there is no better proposal on the table. What is the Government offering the people of Parramatta? It says, "Come the end of March, we are going to blow up your only pool in the CBD."

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: We're shovel ready.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Shovel ready would be the description. The Government will bury the hopes of the people of Parramatta to have a pool for them and their kids to swim in. The Government is simply going to shut the pool. There is no solution. The Government says that Parramatta council might have a chat with the Parramatta Park Trust and the trust may be nobbled to deliver for the Government by opening up the Mays

Hill precinct—which is part of the traditional Parramatta parklands—to maybe whack an aquatics centre on it. How much money has the Government put on the table?

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Zero.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Zero—well, not quite zero. I think the Government said that it will put up a couple of hundred grand to work up some plans. That is the same kind of money—and the people of Parramatta will remember this—that Federal Labor and Coalition governments keep putting up to plan for a very fast train between Melbourne and Sydney. They drop that money every decade. They say, "We will have a plan and consultants; we will see about having a very fast train between Melbourne and Sydney". It happened in the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s and this century. In the same spirit of delivery, what has the Coalition done for the people of Parramatta? It will spend money on consultants for plans and maybe Parramatta will get a pool at the end of it. If the Government is serious about delivering for the residents of Parramatta it should put the money on the table; put the \$50 million on the table that it will cost to build a proper aquatics centre, not the \$400,000 with which it is seeking to pacify them in the hopes of a plan in the future.

The Government has obviously twisted the arm of the Parramatta Park Trust, which is meant to be an independent statutory body. The Parramatta Park Trust and the City of Parramatta Council have signed a memorandum of understanding—no doubt with Treasury sitting on top of them like a big, ugly squatter, forcing the two entities into some agreement. The memorandum of understanding makes clear that there has been no decision about relocating the pool. There is some kind of in-principle agreement—what the hell that means, I do not know—between the trust and Parramatta council. There is no mention of Treasury or the State Government, but there is an in-principle agreement between Parramatta council and the trust to relocate the pool to the Mays Hill precinct. Then we will find out who will spend the first 50 grand to do the initial study and work out whether the amazing Mays Hill heritage precinct is appropriate for a ruddy great aquatics centre.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: An amazing heritage golf course, which is just abandoned.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That extraordinary heritage precinct, which has Aboriginal and colonial heritage, and which anybody but the ignorant would realise was part of the original grant for Parramatta Park before the railway line went in, is a core part of Parramatta's green open space.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Governor Macquarie's four under par.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a core part of Parramatta's green open space and of Parramatta's heritage but it is treated with contempt by the likes of the former Government Whip, who thinks it is just a golf course and the Government can put whatever it bloody likes on it. The people of Parramatta have more respect for it than do Coalition members in this place. Who will decide? Who will hire the consultants and crystallise the in principle decision to say, "Yes, you can put a ruddy great aquatic centre on this part of Parramatta's heritage?" Is it the trust, whose responsibility it is to watch over the heritage and who owns the land? No, it is not. It is Parramatta council who will buy consultants, direct the reports and deliver them that will inform the decision to put a ruddy great aquatic centre on land it does not own, but on trust land. They have failed utterly in their obligation to protect the land. They have vacated the scene and given it to the City of Parramatta.

The memorandum of understanding of 19 October 2016 indicates that once that key decision is made then, and only then, will the trust have a role in working out how to avoid grossly damaging the heritage and green space in Mays Hill. Trust members should be ashamed of themselves and resign en masse. They have breached their statutory obligation to oversee the heritage of the Mays Hill precinct and handed it over to the City of Parramatta. Why is that a problem? It is a problem because the City of Parramatta wants free land on which to build the aquatic centre. The State Government has squashed them. Who is making the decision for the City of Parramatta?

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: The administrator.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is the administrator. The unelected administrator imposed on Parramatta by the Coalition against the democratic wishes of the community. If ever there were a con job of the first order this is it. The pretence heritage assessment that will occur over the next few weeks and months is a disgrace to the trust and due process. The trust has surrendered any moral authority to protect the heritage of the lands it is responsible for. The unelected administrator is making the decision. The administrator will contract consultants and make the decision. For the next two, three, four, five or 10 years the people of Parramatta will not have a council pool in their central business district.

Why is there an unholy rush? Why is the stadium badly designed? Who benefits from a \$330 million stadium that removes families, the elderly and swimming groups from the pool? Who wins? As always occurs with this Government it is corporate Australia that will win, it is the big players. And the mums and dads who

want to take their kids for a swim can whistle Dixie. The pool will be demolished, there is no funding for a replacement pool and the process with the City of Parramatta is a sham. This Government should be embarrassed.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (11:32): The hypocrisy of The Greens is never more apparent than when Mr David Shoebridge is speaking. He has left the Chamber. He hates the truth. The original pool was built on Parramatta Park Trust lands. If one were to use The Greens own logic, this pool, based on The Greens ideology, never would have been built in the first place. If members apply The Greens contemporary moral standards to 1956, this pool, which they tell us now is so vital and important, never would have been built. That is the nature of The Greens in this day and age. The Greens enter the Chamber and make a hue and cry to build up support for their negligible voter base in Western Sydney. Indeed, anywhere outside the latte curtain, which ends at Norton Street, the public treats The Greens with scepticism. That has been displayed in the Chamber. The simple fact is that Western Sydney's new 30,000 seat stadium is one step closer to the final plans that will make it one of the best sporting facilities in Australia.

The Hon. Paul Green: In the world.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Perhaps in the world. The new stadium has been designed to revolutionise the spectator experience for everyone from hardcore fans to families. Fans will be closer to the action than ever and the concourse will be completely open so that no-one misses a minute of the action. It is common knowledge that the Parramatta swimming centre will be relocated to make way for the new Western Sydney stadium. The venue requires a larger overall footprint that includes pedestrian and emergency vehicle access. Those who suggest that there should not be better walkways for pedestrians or emergency vehicle access should explain what would happen should an emergency occur and access be required but be impossible because of the pool.

The City of Parramatta's new aquatic centre is part of the Mays Hill master plan. That is the best outcome for the people of Western Sydney. Why? Because a new facility is proposed for the Mays Hill site. The precinct is 20 hectares of under-utilised public open space. It has limited walking and cycling paths, and includes the former Parramatta golf course, grassed areas used for sporting fields, and two gatehouses. Let us think about this: The Greens are opposed to touching these defunct Parramatta golf course lands, but the golf course has been defunct for the past two years. A small part of that golf course will house a new modern indoor aquatic centre and the remaining sections will be absorbed into the parklands.

The Greens will not acknowledge that this golf course never would have existed if its morality had been imposed in 1954 when the golf course was built. The Greens probably did not know this wonderful golf course has been closed for two years because they do not play golf. In 1954, the now defunct golf course would not have been built in Western Sydney if The Greens had imposed their morality on the decision to build it. The Greens do not care about people in Western Sydney. As much as I dislike the Labor Party, at least the Labor Party pretends to care about people in Western Sydney. The Greens do not bother. The Greens consider Strathfield far Western Sydney. That is the sum total of their knowledge base. The simple fact is that the Government has provided \$400,000 to study the issue.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Where is the rest?

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I acknowledge that interjection. The member lauded spending \$500 million on a light rail network that was never built. There was zero rolling stock, zero engines, zero track laying and zero power supply.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! The member will be heard in silence. I observe that the debate is robust and urge members to show decorum.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The judgement of the Government's bone fides can be attested to by the fact that it is spending \$400,000 on studying the issue. The Government would not do that if it were not genuinely committed to ensuring that appropriate sporting facilities are provided for the people of Western Sydney. Unlike the Opposition, we do not make promises we are not planning to keep.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: I have taken this point of order many times this week. It is impossible for Hansard to report the debate when there are constant interjections from Opposition members, and from the Hon. Lynda Voltz in particular, in whose name this motion stands. Her contribution was heard in relative silence and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps should be allowed the same courtesy.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: To the point of order: I ask that the Government member who is speaking be reminded that it is disorderly to respond to interjections.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I uphold the point of order and remind members that interjections are disorderly and make it difficult to hear the debate. I observe that the mover of the

motion was heard in relative silence. I ask that members extend the same courtesy to other speakers, and I ask the member currently speaking not to provoke interjections.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The simple fact is that the New South Wales Government has provided \$400,000 to continue planning the relocation of Parramatta pool, as part of master planning work already being undertaken by the City of Parramatta and Parramatta Park Trust. The work was already being undertaken, and we have contributed financially to that work.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! Members will come to order.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The purpose of the consultation is to investigate two potential sites for the future swimming centre and to communicate with pool users on interim arrangements at alternative facilities, to minimise disruption. I make this point: I live in Queanbeyan and my nearest pool is 9.5 kilometres away. Within 10 kilometres of Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool there are 28 public and private swimming facilities. I have one pool within 10 kilometres; the people of Parramatta have 28. There are full size, multilane, Olympic-size swimming pools at Wentworthville, Merrylands, Sydney Olympic Park and Ryde. All of them are available—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I do not want to call members to order. I have ruled that the member will be heard in silence. I call the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to order for the first time.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: All of those pools are available, along with 24 other public and private swimming facilities within 10 kilometres. It is a little indulgent for the Opposition to complain about the lack of swimming facilities when I have one pool within 10 kilometres and the people of Parramatta have 28. A community awareness campaign has been developed by Infrastructure NSW and the City of Parramatta to develop awareness of alternative facilities and to ensure the delivery of a replacement aquatic centre. The pool is on track to be demolished from early next month. I commend council for its work to ensure that the community is aware of alternative facilities, and for including transport and access in the planning. Stage two plans for the stadium are also now on display. It will be a great stadium for Western Sydney. Alternative designs were presented, with no consideration given to a perimeter circulation zone for emergency vehicles. Vehicle and pedestrian movements were not adequately considered. Alternative designs did not provide for vehicle drop-off to the western side of the stadium.

The Hon. Ben Franklin: Point of order: I am trying to listen to the member's contribution, but Opposition members continue to flout your ruling, Mr Deputy President—a ruling you have made a number of times—with the cacophony that is emitting from the melee on that side of the Chamber. I ask that the Opposition once again be called to order.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: To the point of order: It is very difficult when the member constantly misleads the House. The member should not mislead the House about plans that have been presented. He should return to the motion before the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I observe that the debate is robust. The Hon. Lynda Voltz will have the opportunity to respond in her speech in reply. I uphold the point of order. I have already called one member to order and will continue to call members to order if they do not cease interjecting. I remind members that we still have question time and the rest of the day to go. Members should remain silent and allow the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to complete his contribution.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. The master plan and stadium design that were originally proposed could have caused an unacceptable impact on the flying fox colony to the north-west of the stadium. Given my deep and abiding commitment to environmental issues, that is an important consideration for me. Western Sydney Stadium sets a new standard for sporting experience in Sydney. It will be a precinct of global significance that we can all be proud of, designed with the entire fan experience in mind. I encourage feedback on the project as it progresses. The project appears to me to be very good. The stadium will be a destination in its own right, even on non-event days. The new urban space along O'Connell Street will provide an area for the community to meet. We are also building a new river terrace that can be used by the community all year round for events such as market days and outdoor cinemas. We are making sure that the stadium is well connected to public transport, including the proposed Parramatta light rail and the existing Parramatta station.

The new Western Sydney Stadium is the centrepiece of an infrastructure boom occurring across Parramatta, thanks to the unprecedented work of the New South Wales Government and our investments in health, cultural, public transport and residential infrastructure in that region. The infrastructure design is meant to respect Parramatta's cultural heritage. The Western Sydney Stadium precinct will offer pedestrian and public transport links, and improved access to Parramatta Park, which members opposite are so keen to say they care about.

Apparently, it is all right to have a park so long as people cannot get to it in the first place. There are cranes as far as the eye can see, and the infrastructure to match. We strongly urge the community to have a say on this exciting new development before the end of the exhibition period. I commend the Parramatta stadium development and the work of the City of Parramatta and the State Government. I utterly oppose this motion.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (11:47): The speech we heard from the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps was the parliamentary equivalent of a belly flop. With great fanfare he said that the people of Parramatta should feel free to make use of the Wentworthville pool and the Merrylands pool. The one fact he omitted to mention is that the Wentworthville pool has been closed for two years, shut down under his Government. The coup de grace is that at the same time as he says that to the people of Parramatta—who have lost their pool through a decision of an unelected administrator—Cumberland Council, following another forced amalgamation and with another unelected administrator, is openly proclaiming that it will shut down the Merrylands pool.

Why? Early last year the unelected administrator said that it was because there is a pool in Parramatta. That is the position taken by two unelected administrators for the people of Western Sydney. Decisions are being made and pools are being shut down due to a deficit of democracy, by unelected administrators who are accountable to no-one. All the while, the Government misleads this House and the people of Parramatta. It adopts the position that the people of Parramatta should be grateful they are getting a new stadium, even if it costs them a pool that they have had for more than 60 years.

The second fallacy put forward by the member was that somehow in 1953 the Parramatta Park Trust agreed to establish a golf course and that, as a result of that decision, it should not make a difference whether we move a swimming pool to that golf course. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps also failed to point out that the Parramatta Park Trust was not set up until the 1970s. Because of the backlash of that decision this Parliament established the Parramatta Park Trust to put those parklands under permanent stewardship and to make sure that forever there would be a green space for an area with a surging population, and for the 300,000 to 400,000 people who are residents of that region. Both those statements made by the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps on which the Government relies are proven to be false.

The simple story is that Parramatta, a city of 300,000 people, surging in growth with an expected additional 21,000 apartments to be built over the next four years, with a population increase of 70,000, an explosion in the number of school-aged children, and construction of new high schools and primary schools throughout the region, because of a deliberate decision by this State Government made by the Minister with the connivance of an unelected administrator after ruling out the very possibility is shutting down a pool that has provided recreational space since 1950 to make way for a footpath. The pool has hosted countless school swimming carnivals and taught multiple generations of children how to swim. I learned how to swim at the Parramatta and Merrylands pools.

Such an important facility is being demolished at great cost because the Government has not been able to resolve the not particularly challenging question of how to get emergency access to a stadium. That is the reality that is confronting the people of Parramatta. All of this is avoidable because it is 100 per cent possible that a different design could have been chosen. Other members have referred to alternative designs that would have facilitated the expansion of the stadium while keeping the pool intact. A democratically elected council could have made that decision. The only reason it is proceeding now is that the Liberal Party is too gutless to face the people of Parramatta at a city council election standing on a platform that it would abolish the pool.

In addition, it is entirely possible that transitional support could have been organised, that is, at the same time the people of Parramatta are told that they are losing their pool the Government could have said, "Here is the new pool that we will pay for and we will make sure that transition support is in place so there is no three- to four-year infinite gap to access this basic facility." We know that each of these alternatives are in place because precisely this process is occurring in other councils that are affected. The motion moved by the Hon. Lynda Voltz referred to what is happening in Warringah and to statements of two Cabinet Ministers about how to handle pools in transition. In relation to a pool affecting people close to the electorate of the Hon. Brad Hazzard, the Minister said the decision about the Warringah Aquatic Centre should be retained and that the decision to demolish the swimming centre to make way for a new school should be made by an elected council.

The Hon. Rob Stokes, another senior Cabinet Minister of this Government, said, "No matter what happens, it would not be acceptable to have a hiatus where we do not have a pool." Those statements invoke the wonderful question: If it is good enough for the people of Warringah and for those in the north why shouldn't the people of Parramatta in the west have the exact same commitment that these two Cabinet Ministers have made to their electorates? We have not heard a single line of defence from this Government as to why one standard applies on the North Shore but a totally different standard applies in Western Sydney. We have heard a great deal about the Government's intent for Parramatta City and how wonderful this stadium will be, but no government member was prepared to defend the member for Parramatta who, prior to this decision being announced, said at multiple

public meetings and made multiple media statements throughout 2015 and the earlier part of 2016 that the Government had no plans to demolish Parramatta pool.

The first time the member for Parramatta said that there was to be no pool was at a public meeting in Dundas in front the North Parramatta Residents Action Group, which I had the pleasure of attending. I was with the Parramatta swimming club to ask the Minister whether all the rumours about the pool being shut down were true. I heard him say then that the pool is going. When asked whether another pool would be built, he said, "I can't give you that." Last week at another public meeting he was asked point blank, "What effect does the decision to close Parramatta pool have on your family?" In front of the 400-odd people in attendance, this political genius, the member for Parramatta, said, "Well, if it wasn't for this decision, I wouldn't have to come to meetings like this." When subject to public scrutiny by his own electors that is what he said on this issue. I look forward to hearing the Government defend that level of callousness, stupidity and lack of empathy shown by the member for Parramatta for his own constituents.

The Government has told us to rest assured that another site is coming. Has that site been paid for? Has money been set aside for this site? Is it legal for the trust to set it aside? No-one has a clue. Aquatic centres cost upwards of \$25 million to \$40 million and we are told that \$400,000 is the Government's commitment. That is what is called the equivalent of a pity payment or go-away money, and that is how the Government can say to the people of Parramatta that it cares. If the Government cared it would be prepared to fund a new aquatic centre, but because it is leaving it to a future democratically elected council to have to impose levies for it, it is absconding from its moral and fiscal responsibility to ensure this level of transitional assistance.

I conclude from this episode that the Minister for Sport is blind in relation to massive pools that impede his empire building of massive stadia. I conclude that this Government is more than happy to make such important decisions by way of ambush followed by a campaign of misleading and deceptive conduct. I conclude that the Government is prepared to do so with a deficit of democracy, making sure that unelected administrators make such decisions at the expense of local councils. I have got nowhere near the position of the former Liberal Lord Mayor of Parramatta, which is another story altogether. I also conclude that the member for Parramatta is not courageous enough to decry this decision and stand up for his constituency. He is putting the political interests of the Government ahead of the health interests of his constituents, and he does not deserve to hold the position he does.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:57): I will address some of the comments made by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey in his contribution to this debate. If anyone showed why he or she should not be a member of this place it is the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, who misled the House about the closure of Wentworthville pool. It takes a simple Google search to find out from the website of Holroyd City Council that Wentworthville Swimming Centre is still operational. It states:

Wentworthville Swimming Centre was opened in 1965. In 2005, the Swimming Centre was heated and open eight months of the year from mid-September until mid-May until 2010 when it reverted to six months. There are three pools: a seven lane 50m competition pool, a training pool and a babies pool. The Swimming Centre is a smoke-free venue and parking is available for over 200 cars for free in the adjacent car park. The centre is relatively close to public transport being approximately 500 meters from the local train station.

It has wonderful opening hours and is \$6 for an adult, \$4.50 for children under 16 and free for under four-year-olds. I encourage the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to take his young son to Wentworthville pool for a swim and see that it is still open and still servicing the people of Western Sydney, as the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps rightly claimed in his contribution to debate on the motion. I will turn now to this great opportunity for the people of Parramatta and the people of Western Sydney—new Western Sydney Stadium—which will be the first of a network of contemporary venues that will enable New South Wales to maintain competitiveness in the national and international sporting and event market. The project is a State Significant Development. Stage one approval for the demolition work and concept proposal was granted by the Minister for Planning in December 2016. Stage two planning consent will be sought soon.

The new stadium will replace the more than 30-year-old Parramatta Stadium. It will be able to cater for bigger crowds, provide an improved game day experience and bring major social and economic benefits to the Western Sydney economy. The people of Parramatta are embracing the stadium. They are excited about being able to see the Parramatta Eels playing at the stadium—hopefully the Eels will be beaten by the Wests Tigers when they play there—and they are excited about being able to see the Western Sydney Wanderers, as well as other events. As the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps said, this will be one of the best stadiums in the country, if not one of the best in the world—particularly for watching rugby league. The new stadium will have 30,000 seats and high-quality food and beverage facilities, improved corporate and function spaces, big screens, advanced technology, including wi-fi and broadcast facilities, and improved security and administration facilities with enhanced pedestrian and public plaza areas.

Those opposite seem to think that pedestrian access is some sort of luxury. They contend that pedestrian access is unnecessary with a 30,000 seat stadium. Are people going to be scaling the fences, wandering through the park or wading through the Parramatta River to get there? It is a fundamental requirement that people be allowed to enter and exit a stadium. It is also fundamental to have concourses. The Western Sydney Stadium will be revolutionary. It has been designed to create a real game day experience for fans both inside and outside the stadium. The dedicated Parramatta Eels and Western Sydney Wanderers fans will have one of the most vibrant places to watch sport in this country. The stadium and precinct will cater for a range of sporting and community uses, including rugby league, football and rugby union, as well as other events such as concerts, markets and fairs. It will be part of the community of Parramatta.

Lendlease has been awarded the contract to design and construct the new stadium, and demolition of the old stadium is currently underway. The stadium is expected to be completed in 2019 and we are all looking forward to getting out there to watch a game—whether it be the Parramatta Eels playing the Wests Tigers, which will be a loss for the Eels, no doubt, or a derby between the Western Sydney Wanderers and the Sydney Football Club. Venues NSW will continue to manage the stadium as part of its role in striking the balance between commercial, community and service delivery objectives in managing government-owned land, sport and entertainment infrastructure for the benefit of the people of New South Wales.

I turn now to the new aquatic centre. The Western Sydney Stadium requires a larger footprint to accommodate a greater seating capacity and security requirements. Unfortunately, the adjacent Parramatta Swimming Centre has to be demolished. When the preliminary business case was undertaken with a concept plan, the Government was advised the pool could remain at the current site. However, when the detailed design brief was developed, the advice to the Government changed. The Government did not hide this from the public, and when it was clear the pool could not remain on the current site with the new stadium the public was advised. Work has been undertaken since to find an alternative location for the pool.

Two sites on the former Parramatta golf course have been identified as a potential alternative location for aquatic facilities, following work between the New South Wales Government and the City of Parramatta. A feasibility study is being conducted to confirm the suitability of the former golf course site and a master plan is being developed to explore opportunities for the area to be upgraded and repurposed for public use. The master planning process is being led by the Parramatta Park Trust and it will involve public consultation. Currently the Parramatta Park Trust is asking for community feedback on the recreational and leisure facilities members of the community want in the Mays Hill precinct master plan. This is a thorough process where community members can plan now for the needs of future generations.

The Parramatta Swimming Centre will remain open during the 2016-17 summer season. An Interim Recreation Swimming Pool Management Plan has been developed in consultation with council, the operators of alternative swimming pool facilities, Parramatta Park Trust and existing users of the Parramatta Swimming Centre prior to demolition. There are a number of alternative swimming pools in the area that offer swim school, including MySwim, Bass Hill, which operates all year round.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Do you know where Bass Hill is?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I know where Bass Hill is and I know where Baulkham Hills is as well. There is also the Blue Bubbles Learn to Swim, Baulkham Hills, which operates all year round. Carlile Swimming is also located at Baulkham Hills. Others centres where kids can keep attending swim school in the local area include the Blacktown Aquatic Centre; Bankstown Swim School, Birrong; Stanford Swim School, Epping; Fairfield Leisure Centres Swim School; C2K Swimming, Castle Hill; Learn to Swim, Granville; Carlile Swimming, Cherrybrook; Cumberland Swim School and Jump! Swim Schools, Guildford; Dolphins Swim School, Epping; Shelly Swimming School, North Parramatta; Aquatic Safety Training Academy, Seven Hills; Aquatics Downunder, North Rocks; and a further 10 swimming schools in the local region.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: You've obviously never been to Birrong.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I have been to Birrong. I also know that you went to school at Birrong. We have just spoken to a very helpful customer service officer at Cumberland Council who has confirmed that Wentworthville Swimming Centre will be open today as usual, and it did not close two years ago as claimed by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey. Other pool users are also being catered for during interim arrangements. Seniors and Disability Pension cardholders who live in the Parramatta local government area will still be able to get free aquatic passes for the Epping Aquatic Centre and Granville Swimming Centre. Free aquatic passes are also available to New South Wales aged or disability pension cardholders at the Wentworthville, Merrylands and Guildford swimming centres. Recreational swimmers can go to Granville Swimming Centre, Lake Parramatta, Blacktown Aquatic Centre and Birrong Leisure Centre. Barbecue and/or picnic areas are available at these sites.

Lake Parramatta is a great location. It was officially opened by Scott Lloyd, when he was lord mayor. It has really opened up opportunities for the people of Parramatta. The Government, working hand in hand with the Parramatta City Council, has also produced a swim school directory and a location map to help the local community find other swimming facilities in the area. Those opposite, particularly members of The Greens, spoke about the impact of the stadium on the parklands, and the friend of the flying foxes, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, spoke about their protection. The Environmental Impact Statement, as part of stage one of the project, details possible impacts and mitigation measures of the stadium demolition concept proposal. Members will be pleased to note that the impact on views from the World Heritage-listed Old Government House and Government Domain in Parramatta Park have been contained.

The heritage and visual impact assessments detail at least 80 per cent of the development envelope is contained below the existing tree canopy when viewed from the key locations within Parramatta Park. Any Aboriginal artefacts uncovered will be managed in accordance with the management plan. The Government has taken extensive steps to ensure that swimming facilities are available for the people of Parramatta and, most importantly, we will be delivering a world-class facility for the people of Western Sydney. People will be able to enjoy sports such as rugby league, soccer—some call it football—and rugby union as well as concerts and other wonderful events at that facility. When the stadium is opened in 2019 it will be a big win for the people of Western Sydney and for the New South Wales economy.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (12:06): I make a short contribution to this debate. Having listened with great interest to the contribution of the Hon. Scott Farlow, I feel I must respond to a couple of the issues he raised. The idea that a swimming centre at Birrong, Bass Hill, Baulkham Hills or Blacktown is in any way helpful to the burgeoning population of Parramatta shows that he clearly needs to get a map and get out more. He needs to understand the traffic and the congestion that people in and around Parramatta and Greater Sydney experience on a Saturday. Indeed, it is a joke to suggest that it is a simple flit down the road from Parramatta to get one's kids to swimming lessons.

The Hon. Scott Farlow also needs to be honest about council. He suggested that the Government is working hand in hand with the council, but the council has been placed under the control of an unelected administrator—and we have had a lot to say about that today. He should also be honest about the heritage aspects in this proposal. What is being demolished is a pool that was established in 1959 in memory of those who died in our wars. It is called the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool, and its history is worth noting. We can build stadiums with all the technology and information that we now have but in doing so we should not destroy local heritage and valuable public assets that have been built up over a very long time. This Government has made that choice, but surely we can do better.

I put on record the history of the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool. I thank the former Parramatta City Council and its research services for providing some very important information on the building of the pool that is worth noting. I will quote briefly from the council archives:

Parramatta City Council rode this tide of community enthusiasm, opening its own Olympic pool for the district in 1959. Parramatta has a swimming tradition that predates the Olympic pool utilising both man made and natural swimming pools.

A Committee was subsequently elected to raise funds with The Parramatta Chamber of Commerce and the Parramatta City Amateur Swimming Club were very much involved in the creation of the funding committee and fund raising activities. The Swimming Club organised various events, including swimming carnivals at Granville pool with proceeds going towards the construction of the pool. Donations were received from local businesses and individuals. Art Union raffles were held as well as a Queens Competition. There was genuine public interest in the project. By 1957 £6000 was raised by the citizens pool committee with a commitment to raise £20,000. The remainder of the funds came from a loan raised by Council.

In 1956 the council approved the name of the committee being changed to the Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Centre Appeal Fund to help it raise more money. It took years to raise the money for this pool and the community got behind it to make it happen. The first stage, which cost £140,000, was opened in 1959 and 5,000 people attended the opening. A teaching pool and wading pool were completed and in late 1960 the pool was opened by Olympic swimming champion John Devitt, winner of the 100 metres at the Rome Olympics. It is important to note that the pool has not just been left untouched since 1960. In 2009, \$10 million was spent on a major facelift, which included a new 10-lane 50-metre pool, a new grandstand, shade structures, security fencing, a refurbished building entry, change rooms, a kiosk and a program room.

Some \$10 million was spent less than 10 years ago, and all for nothing. I believe we can do better. We should be able to accommodate both a stadium and the pool. Let us not forget what happened this summer. We have spent a lot of time in the past few weeks talking about the heatwave that hit this town. I saw social media posts from people living in Parramatta saying that it was 50 degrees outside their house and on the street. The need for swimming pools has never been greater. If people do not have air conditioning and they have small kids, it is very hard to keep the kids cool. Local pools—particularly outdoor pools, which are cheaper than aquatic centres—are vital for families to beat the heat and to get children into swimming lessons.

The second point I make is that we need to talk about the green space issue. I note the comment of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps in relation to the pool being originally built on parkland. I accept that. But a discussion that is taking place in New South Wales, particularly in Sydney, is what to do with the precious green spaces we have and how we keep a green grid that is not just nice to have, with trees and open parkland, but necessary for the sustainability of the city—for shade to deal with heat island effects and open space as we look towards 2.1 million extra people living in this city over the next 20 years. Every blade of grass is precious.

It is not good enough to simply say the golf course has closed down so therefore we can bung a giant aquatic centre on the top of it. We need to have a proper plan and a proper commitment that values the green space that we have for biodiversity, for dealing with climate change and for understanding that more people are going to be living in apartments and will need access to open green space. Planning should not simply be about building on top of whatever parkland we have, which is the current approach of this Government all over the city—except, of course, if you live on the North Shore. If you live on the North Shore you have to have less development and your pool gets the support of two senior Cabinet Ministers and somehow it is going to be fixed. But if you live in Western Sydney, your pool is gone. The Government says, "Don't worry, you'll get one someday in the future. We're going to close the pool down for two years but we have made no commitment to fund the aquatic centre in the future". That is what we are talking about here and that is why this motion is so important.

I am the shadow Minister for Heritage, and the final point I make is about heritage. We disregard our heritage at our peril. I again remind members of what is happening in Parramatta. Some of the best heritage items in the world are located in Parramatta. We already have the World Heritage-listed Government House, but let us not forget—and we have talked about it a lot in this House—the Female Factory. The Female Factory, which is just down the road from the Parramatta war memorial pool, is one of the best intact convict-related heritage items in Australia. It is better than Port Arthur. People travel to Tasmania to see Port Arthur and half of it is falling down. We have an intact building that should be World Heritage listed right there in Parramatta. The problem is that there is not enough support for getting a World Heritage listing for the Female Factory and, in the meantime, this Government has a master plan for the North Parramatta precinct and is pushing forward on it with no thought of a World Heritage listing.

No-one is suggesting that there does not need to be some development in North Parramatta, but a simple idea to treat the Female Factory as though it was World Heritage listed when planning development has escaped this Government and it has rushed to bung as much stuff as possible into the area, losing the huge opportunity that we have in Parramatta not only for tourism but also for the education of our young people. We disregard genuinely restoring and looking after our precious heritage at our peril, and it is a shame. I commend the Hon. Lynda Voltz for bringing this motion to the House. Public pools are precious public assets. The community raised funds for this pool and it has been very well loved; it is an important part of the community. I refuse to accept that this Government could not have made a better choice that kept the pool and allowed the stadium to be built. Instead, the Government is running roughshod over the people of Parramatta with some sort of promise in the never-never land that they are going to get a whacking great aquatic centre and how excellent that will be, while yet another bit of precious green space is lost in this city.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (12:16): I make a contribution to debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Lynda Voltz. We have heard from the Opposition proposing the motion and we have heard from the Government decrying the motion. I declare two interests. Firstly, I live in Parramatta. Secondly, my son, who plays in the Sydney water polo competition, used to play water polo at Parramatta. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps quite rightly points out that Queanbeyan, where he lives, has one pool within 10 kilometres. In the precinct of Parramatta, within the same radius of 10 kilometres there are 28 swimming pools. I point out to the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps that he could probably drive to his pool 10 kilometres away in about 10 minutes. From where I live at Rydalmere, for me to go to Ryde pool or to where Parramatta pool used to be, or to any others that the member mentioned, would take me 20 minutes to half an hour any day of the week except Saturday or Sunday, when it would take me 45 minutes.

There is a planning proposal—I am not sure whether it has been to the Department of Planning yet, but the member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee, confirmed to me that it was on the books—for 10,000 units to be built on the putt putt golf course at Melrose Park, which is halfway between West Ryde and Rydalmere. We all know what the Greater Parramatta plan involves in relation to the increase in the number of people living in the precinct within the next 10 to 15 years: Parramatta will rival Sydney in the number of people who live in the metropolitan area. Parramatta is genuinely a city. I can support parts of the motion. I obviously support paragraphs (1) and (2), because they pretty much seem to be, generally speaking, statements of fact, and I support paragraph (3) (a), "That this House calls on the Premier ... to immediately agree to fully fund a replacement pool for Parramatta War Memorial Pool which is being demolished". Unfortunately, I will not support paragraph (3) (b), which, to me, is just a political statement.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: I am happy to amend it.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Given the balance of what paragraph (3) (b) will mean to the Government, which is nothing, I will support the member's motion. A lot of the statements made to and fro in this House are just two sides of politics. Sydney, not just Parramatta, is going to undergo a metamorphosis over the next 10 to 15 years and I hope that I am not part of it. My first house was a two-bedroom fibro house on a quarter-acre in Putney, what used to be called "struggle town". My new house is a two-bedroom fibro house on one-eighth of an acre in Parramatta. I am quite happy living there but I note that the—

The Hon. Rick Colless: What is the pig shooting like there?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: It's good, mate.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: A few fruit bats around?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: Yes, there are. It does not matter whether there are 10 pools within 10 kilometres of Parramatta: The important issue is whether or not the Government was clever enough in planning the new stadium. I come down on the side of the Opposition and say that perhaps the Government could have been a bit smarter about this. I do not believe that the Government will not do all it can to assist the local council in making sure that that pool is replaced. The public transport is not bad, but it is not all that great. The pool was popular. It was a pool that, on any day of the week, would be as well attended as Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre, and a little bit cheaper. The Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre used to be a community pool, but that changed when it was handed over to private operators. The fact that it was a well-attended pool tells me it was a valuable part of the community in Parramatta.

The argument over whether or not the pool is built on the Parramatta golf course is neither here nor there. There are arguments about the heritage value but, when you are going to bung that many people into a new city, you will find strains at the edges on retaining open space. I know that is a matter for the planners but I do not think anybody believes that once those plans go ahead Parramatta will end up with as much open space as it has now. I have no truck with paragraph (3) (b), and I will support the motion for the reasons I stated: I am a resident of Parramatta, and I believe the pool was a well-thought-of public facility. Government—with all the horsepower, money and bureaucrats it has at its disposal, and hopefully the historical knowledge of how to do things properly in the planning stages—probably should have done better. For that reason I support the member's motion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (12:22): I oppose the Opposition's motion. Integrated with this debate concerning the swimming pool is the stadia strategy and the future of the stadium. I will talk about the stadium, because while this motion criticises the demolition of the pool at Parramatta, by implication it therefore opposes the expansion of the Western Sydney Stadium at Parramatta. I ask the Opposition why it opposes a world-class stadium for the people of Parramatta. That is the implication of this motion: The Australian Labor Party [ALP] is opposed to a world-class stadium for Parramatta. It is opposed to the stadia strategy. That was clear last night, when Labor members called for a division on the Sporting Venues Authorities Amendment Bill 2017 and opposed the restructure of the stadia and the development of the infrastructure for world-class supporting facilities for the people of New South Wales.

The pool is being relocated to develop the new Western Sydney Stadium. It will be the first of a network of contemporary venues that will enable New South Wales to maintain competitiveness in the national and international sporting venue market. This feels like déjà vu, as we had the same debate last night. Recycling assets and building new infrastructure is fundamental to stadia strategy in New South Wales. The project is a State Significant Development, and approval for the demolition was granted by the Minister for Planning in 2016. Stage 2 planning consent is currently being sought. The new stadium replaces a 30-year-old Parramatta Stadium. We have heard members' memories of Parramatta Stadium. I have been there for Rabbitohs games, of course. One memory I wish to share with members—who may not get this out of their minds afterwards—is of the photograph on the front page of *Good Weekend* of the number one Parramatta fan, Senator Bronwyn Bishop, in Parramatta gear, kicking a football in the middle of the stadium. This was in the 1990s when she held leadership ambitions. There are a lot of memories for all members of Parramatta Stadium.

Time moves on and infrastructure must be renewed. The renewal of Parramatta Stadium is necessary to comply with modern safety standards for crowds, evacuation and the expansion of the stadium. It does not meet contemporary standards. It is over 30 years old. I remind the Hon. Lynda Voltz, who may not have heard me say it last night, that the new stadium will have 30,000 seats, high-quality food and beverage facilities, improved corporate and function spaces—fundamental for obtaining sponsorship for the teams—big screens all around, advanced technology, including wi-fi, and broadcasting facilities. It will have improved security, which is fundamental today for big sporting venues. Administration facilities will be enhanced, pedestrian and public plazas will be created and disability access will be greatly enhanced.

The stadium and its precinct will cater for a range of sporting and community uses, including rugby league, football and rugby union as well as other community events, such as concerts, markets and fairs. We have heard from other members, including the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, on that front. Lendlease has been awarded the contract to design and construct the new stadium. The demolition of the old stadium is currently underway, as can be seen in the media. The Western Sydney Stadium is expected to be completed by 2019 for the people of Western Sydney. Venues NSW will continue to manage the stadium as part of its role in striking a balance between commercial, community and service delivery objectives in managing government-owned land, sport and entertainment infrastructure for the benefit of the people of New South Wales.

I now turn to the new aquatic centre, because this is the issue before us. The demolition of the current aquatic centre, which is more than 50 years old, is fundamental to the expansion of the Parramatta Stadium. The Western Sydney Stadium requires a larger footprint to accommodate a greater seating capacity and security requirements. Unfortunately the adjacent Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Pool needs to be demolished. When the preliminary business case was undertaken with a concept plan, the Government was advised that the pool could remain at the current site. However, when the detailed design brief was developed the advice to the Government changed. That is a fundamental point to note as the previous speaker was commenting on how we managed this.

The Government was advised the pool could stay on the current site. When detailed work was carried out, it was shown that could not be the case. This is not uncommon when building such complex infrastructure. The Government did not hide from the public, and when it was clear the pool could not remain on the current site with the new stadium the public was advised. Work has been undertaken since that time to find alternative locations for the pool. Two sites on the former Parramatta golf course have been identified as potential alternative locations for aquatic facilities following work between the New South Wales State Government and the City of Parramatta.

There has been some commentary concerning the administrator of the City of Parramatta. I think that has been unfair. My experience is that she is a fiercely independent administrator of that council and she is doing a great job for the City of Parramatta while the council restructures for the future election. A feasibility study has been conducted to confirm the suitability of the former golf course site and a master plan has been developed to explore opportunities for the area to upgrade for the purpose of public use. I commend the member for Parramatta, Mr Geoff Lee, who has been unfairly maligned. Just like any member of Parliament—Government or Opposition—he has defended and spoken up for the people of Parramatta. I quote from his speech in the lower House only two days ago where he talked about his lobbying to get the pool decision made. I note that the Minister for Sport responded to his comments in the debate around the stadia. The member for Parramatta said: Each week I lobby the Minister for a resolution of the Parramatta pool relocation ... The Minister is intimately aware of the need to confirm a site and to reach a funding agreement with the council. It is important for the Government to resolve the relocation and funding ... It is important to start building and to deliver the new pool as quickly as possible.

This is not a member who has been ignoring his local community; this is a member who has been representing his community effectively. I commend the member for Parramatta and defend him from the unfair attacks by Opposition members. With those few comments, I state that this is important infrastructure for Western Sydney. The Government is doing the right thing and I oppose the motion.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (12:29): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate. Obviously swimming pools are important infrastructure. Swimming is the number one sport in Australia. Indeed, 30 per cent of the population swim. As such, one would think swimming pool infrastructure would be a high priority. I can only assume that the Hon. Shayne Mallard did not listen to a word I said in my initial speech because I made two points. My opening point was that no-one opposes the building of a new stadium at Parramatta. Secondly, I referred to the comments of Mr Geoff Lee at a public meeting last week about his six-month struggle to try to get the decision on the pool overturned. The fundamental issue is that, like all members of the public, the member for Parramatta, Geoff Lee, was not informed about the closure of the pool.

I note the comments of at least two Government members, the Hon. Shayne Mallard and the Hon. Scott Farlow, that as soon as the Government made its decision the public was informed. That is fundamentally untrue. The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements [SEARs] application, which shows plans to build the stadium over the pool, did not materialise out of thin air. The Government did not whip it up in a week and then whack it in. The SEARs application was lodged in February, the council was informed in February and the local member, Geoff Lee, was informed in February.

The Government cannot claim that the SEARs application was made and the plans designed in a week in February and then lodged before all the people were informed. The Government obviously knew much earlier than that because that is not how stadiums are designed. Stadium designs are quite technical. The Hon. Scott

Farlow made the point about travelling to Bass Hill, Birrong and Bankstown pools. He is right; I do live in Birrong. My mother still lives on Blaxcell Street in Granville and my brother lives in The Avenue in Granville. From North Parramatta to Bankstown it is 18 kilometres, to Birrong it is 13 kilometres and to Bass Hill it is 14 kilometres. I live 15 kilometres from Parliament House and yesterday morning it took me an hour and 25 minutes to drive here.

The Hon. Robert Brown: That was quick.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: If only you had built the M5 properly.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: It will be worse once the M5 happens. The Government's own figures show that once it puts the tolls on there will be more motorists on the streets around my house than those using the M5. The Government was asked to promise that it would fully fund the pool. But it has not done that—not once. In fact, when I interjected on the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps about full funding for the pool, he said, "We don't make promises we won't keep". The Government will eventually be forced to chuck in \$20 million out of \$50 million required. The ratepayers of Parramatta will have to pay \$30 million for the pool, if that is the Government's final position. The Government will come up with some measly amount that will in no way pay for the replacement of the pool and then the ratepayers of Parramatta will have to pay the rest. I have played soccer for 37 years, 30 of those in the Granville district, on fields from Castle Hill to Granville, Toongabbie and Wentworthville.

I assure the House that that \$30 million will be an opportunity cost. It will mean that women and girls will not have change rooms at those sporting fields; they will not have equity in sport. This decision will be made not by an elected council but by a government-appointed administrator. Every time a council is asked to pay for something there is an opportunity cost somewhere else. The administrator will come up with the money and say, "Yes, we will get a funding agreement with the Government". The Government will chuck in some amount and then Parramatta will be forced to pay the rest. The sportspeople of Parramatta will pay the price. Our fields, our change rooms and our facilities will not be upgraded because the council will have to divert money from those facilities to pay for the Government's decision to rip out the pool without notifying the people of New South Wales. I commend the motion to the House and I thank members for their contributions to the debate.

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

The House divided.

Ayes17
Noes20
Majority.....3

AYES

Brown, Mr R
Faruqi, Dr M
Mookhey, Mr D

Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D
Walker, Ms D

Buckingham, Mr J
Field, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M
Wong, Mr E

Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Primrose, Mr P

Sharpe, Ms P
Voltz, Ms L

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Colless, Mr R
Franklin, Mr B (teller)
Green, Mr P
MacDonald, Mr S

Mason-Cox, Mr M
Phelps, Dr P

Blair, Mr N
Cusack, Ms C
Gallacher, Mr M
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)
Mitchell, Ms S
Taylor, Ms B

Clarke, Mr D
Farlow, Mr S
Gay, Mr D
Khan, Mr T
Mallard, Mr S
Nile, Reverend F

PAIRS

Houssos, Ms C

Pearce, Mr G

Motion negatived.*Bills***CRIMES AMENDMENT (ZOE'S LAW) BILL 2017****First Reading**

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

Second Reading

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (12:43): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The objects of the Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2017 seek to amend the Crimes Act 1900:

- (a) to establish a separate offence for conduct causing serious harm to or the destruction of a child in utero, and
- (b) to extend the offence of dangerous driving causing death or grievous bodily harm to dangerous driving causing the destruction of, or serious harm to, a child in utero.

The bill has been nicknamed "Zoe's law" but it could easily have been named for Byron, Margaret or Lars. The first baby brought to my attention as having died in utero was named Margaret, and that would have been my naming preference. I met Caroline Fraser when she was pregnant. The next time I saw her she was not pregnant and I asked, "How is your baby going?" She replied, "The baby is dead." She explained that a bus had hit her car from behind with great impact while she was driving and pushed her onto the steering wheel, which crushed the baby causing it to die. I said, "What happened?" And she said, "Nothing. They said the baby is not a person as it had not breathed." I said, "I do not understand how a baby can die and nothing happens."

That incident prompted my investigation into this area of law. I believe there is a gap in the law. Zoe's was another tragic death that I will speak about later in this second reading speech. There has been confusion about this bill previously as it was thought to be an anti-abortion bill. The bill makes it clear that there is an exemption for medical procedures, which is the terminology used for termination of a pregnancy or aborting of a foetus. This bill states specifically that it has nothing to do with termination of a pregnancy. I encourage members not raise that issue as a reason for opposing the bill. It is a red herring. The bill states clearly that there is an exemption for medical procedures.

In 2001-02 two incidents drew attention to the deficiency in the law with regard to the protections extended to women during pregnancy. In November 2001, Ms Renee Shields was involved in a road rage incident that led to the death of her unborn child, Byron. In August 2002, Ms Kylie Flick suffered a miscarriage after she was beaten and stood on by her 112-kilogram boyfriend, Phillip Nathan King. In both cases, the law failed to address directly the injustice and the grief suffered by those women as there was no existing offence for destruction of a child in utero. In response to community pressure, the then Attorney General, John Hatzistergos, commissioned the Hon. Mervyn Finlay, QC, to conduct an inquiry into the matter. In April 2003, the Finlay report recommended:

That New South Wales legislate to introduce the offence of killing an unborn child relating to a criminal act causing a child, capable of being born alive, to die before it has an existence independent of the mother.

The report mirrored the request of the women concerned. That is the basis of the bill before the House. The New South Wales Government decided against adopting Mr Finlay's recommendation to introduce a new offence, preferring to codify the court's ruling and provide for the remedial restitution of justice through the existing provision of "grievous bodily harm" found within the Crimes Act 1900. The Crimes Amendment (Grievous Bodily Harm) Bill 2008, known as "Byron's law", added the following clause to the existing definition of grievous bodily harm. The clause states:

- 4. (1a) the destruction (other than in the course of a medical procedure) of the foetus of a pregnant woman, whether or not the woman suffers any other harm.

On 22 March 2005, the bill passed through the Legislative Assembly. On 4 May 2005, the Legislative Council passed the bill but not without incident. Significant concerns were raised in the Legislative Council with regard to the scope and eventual implementation of the legislation. Amendments were moved by the Christian

Democratic Party, which were supported by the Coalition, but they failed to gain sufficient votes to take effect. On Christmas Day 2009, Ms Brodie Donegan, then eight months pregnant, decided to go for a short walk to stretch her legs. She had walked only a few metres before she was run down by a drug-affected driver. The impact killed Ms Donegan's unborn daughter, Zoe, and inflicted significant injuries upon Ms Donegan, who suffered a shattered pelvis and injuries to her lower spine, hip and right foot.

Pursuant to the Crimes Act 1900, the driver was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm, as Ms Donegan had sustained injury, but the death of her child in utero was rendered legally irrelevant. The failure of the law to specifically acknowledge Ms Donegan's loss demonstrated that concerns I had raised previously had not been adequately addressed. That is why I have introduced this bill. Several women were to suffer in like circumstances. Mrs Susan Harris had persevered with in-vitro fertilisation for three years before finally falling pregnant with her son, Lars. On 20 January 2010, a reckless driver crossed the road and hit the vehicle in which she was travelling. The impact caused the death of her child in utero, but the driver received only a suspended sentence and loss of licence for six months. This raises the question: What is the value of a human life?

When I first became concerned about this issue, one of my supporters, Mrs Caroline Fraser, whom I referred to earlier, was very close to giving birth to her child. While she was driving, her car she was hit from the rear by a bus. She was thrown forward onto the steering wheel. She did not sustain any substantive injury—no broken bones and so on—but the impact of the steering wheel caused the death of her unborn child. In my innocence I asked, "What happened about the death of your child?" She replied, "Nothing happened." I could not believe a baby almost ready to be born had died yet nothing had happened. That has been on my conscience since I entered Parliament, and it is why I have persevered with this legislation.

The Crimes Amendment (Zoe's Law) Bill 2017 seeks to provide an appropriate response to fill that gap. This bill is geared to address the anguish of women who are concerned and want something done; it is not being driven by men. If my first wife, Elaine Nile, were still alive and a member of this House, she would have carriage of this legislation. That is not possible, so I have to take carriage of it. I know it is an issue that concerns women; it is not being driven by men. The constant complaint made by those who suffer the loss, the death, of a child in utero as a result of a malicious or otherwise reckless act of another is that the law fails to provide for the remedial restitution of justice due to a failure to adequately acknowledge the loss directly. After 12 years and many injuries, this situation remains unchanged. We now have the opportunity to rectify what amounts to a serious gap in our legislation and an injustice. Often when I endeavour to do something on this issue it turns into a debate on abortion. The bill clearly exempts any medical procedures, including abortion. The bill achieves a solution by adopting a recommendation of the Finlay report and introduces a new standalone offence within the Crimes Act 1900.

For many years I have been corresponding with various Attorneys General and Ministers for Justice, in both Labor and Liberal governments, to try to rectify what I believe is a gap in legislation. The bill seeks to provide adequate protection for all pregnant women. With the passage of the Crimes Amendment (Grievous Bodily Harm) Bill in 2005, the current Crimes Act covers only cases involving a foetus, thereby ignoring the plight of any woman who happens to be less than 63 days into her pregnancy. This precludes expectant mothers who may have only recently heard the heartbeat of their child at the first medical check-up, which is usually around 35 days, or viewed their child on an ultrasound, which is usually around 42 to 56 days. Further, as demonstrated by the case of *R v King*, there is a strong correlation between pregnancy and domestic violence. This is particularly acute in the first 100 days of pregnancy. There has already been a debate on domestic violence in the House today. Domestic violence is another reason why this legislation is so important.

In 1994 the *Medical Journal of Australia* published a paper stating that one in 10 Australian women had experienced domestic violence during pregnancy. This should be of great concern to all members of this House. In 2008 the *Australian Journal of Primary Health* reported that domestic violence during pregnancy was experienced by one in every five women and that 40 per cent of those women were more likely to suffer a miscarriage as a result. The bill seeks to provide equal protection for all pregnant women by removing discrimination against women who do not fulfil the selective criteria currently defined within the Crimes Act 1900—the current law. The bill seeks to provide clarity in the application of the law. With the current protections to pregnant women being limited to a specific day, there is a great deal of needless ambiguity and uncertainty in the application of the law, as exact times of conception are impossible to prove.

The bill seeks to add clarity and certainty by removing the arbitrary limitations currently in force and broadening the scope of protection to include all stages of pregnancy. This allows medical experts and the judiciary better flexibility to make determinations based on their specific expertise and evidence, and any future advances in science and technology. The bill does not tie a judge's hands—a judge will make his or her judgment having heard the evidence—but it gives a judge the flexibility to consider the life of the baby in the womb during the period of pregnancy. The bill also seeks to ensure that any act committed against a pregnant woman, other than in the course of a medical procedure or with the consent of the mother, that results in the death or disability

of a child after birth will likewise constitute an offence. Schedule 1, item [2], proposed section 41AA (4) makes use of the term "child in utero" as a naming convention to cover all stages of pregnancy. It states:

(4) In this section:

child in utero means the prenatal offspring of a woman.

This term was found to be the most appropriate in relation to this legislation. The term "child" in a pre-birth context is nothing new; it is currently used within the Crimes Act 1900 and the criminal codes of all Australian States and Territories, with the exception of South Australia and Victoria. Further, both the Hon. Mervyn Finlay, QC, and the Hon. Michael Campbell, QC, acknowledged the term's utility and regularly made use of it in their reports. The term "child in utero" is also found in several jurisdictions overseas.

I have named the legislation "Zoe's law" in honour of the unborn child of Brodie Donegan, a Central Coast woman who was eight months pregnant on Christmas Day in 2009 when a drug-affected driver ran over her. The driver was not charged with Zoe's death because the law did not recognise her as a person. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote an article about that. To save time, I will not read the article now. I am pleased to have received an excellent supporting statement on the bill from the Archdiocese of Sydney, which was prepared and issued by project officer Mary Joseph. I will quote from that statement, and note that the words are from a woman, not a man. These are not my words. The article is headed "Call for Zoe's Law Welcomed". It states:

The Archdiocese of Sydney's Life Marriage and Family Centre has welcomed calls for Zoe's Law to be passed by NSW Parliament which would enable manslaughter charges to be brought against a driver involved in a motor accident who causes the death of an unborn child.

The document goes on to say that I have carriage of the bill. It further says:

The little girl Brodie and Nick named Zoe was stillborn. Delivered by caesarean she had died as a result of the injuries her mother suffered in the accident. Grief stricken, the young parents held their baby Zoe in their arms unable to believe she would have no future and that their much-loved, much-wanted child had not survived the crash. For Brodie and Nick though there was even worse to come when they learned not only that the driver had been on drugs at the time of the accident but that because their unborn child never took a breath she was not regarded legally as a person. Instead under existing law her death could only be counted as yet another of her mother's multiple injuries. Under today's laws, the driver whose recklessness had taken baby Zoe's life could not be charged with her death. Instead the only charges that could be brought were aggravated assault or grievous bodily harm to Zoe's mother. But Zoe as an individual and a person in her own right with a life and a future that had been cut short had no legal recognition.

From December 2009 when they lost Zoe, mother Brodie and father Nick have fought to change the law.

Obviously they campaigned independently of me. The article continues:

"It's about the victim feeling someone has taken responsibility for the baby losing its life. It's important for victims to feel their baby mattered and counted," Brodie said at the weekend on hearing about the private member's bill that if passed will become known as Zoe's Law.

They were pleased. The Catholic Church statement also states:

"It is heartbreaking and deeply unjust our laws still do not properly recognise the life and value of the unborn child," says Mary Joseph, Project Officer with the Life Marriage and Family Centre, and hopes the bill will be passed into law.

"The Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Australia is a signatory says the State must provide children with appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth", Mary says. "But baby Zoe was not recognised as a victim of manslaughter in this case because she was still inside her mother's womb and had not taken a breath. Zoe was a living person, a unique and irreplaceable baby girl with a wonderful future ahead of her, to love and be loved."

It is time for the Parliament to address this issue, which I have left in abeyance for a couple of years to give the Parliament time to give further consideration to this legislation. I hope that when the bill comes back into the House for debate all members will have had time to seriously consider and decide upon it according to their conscience, and that it will not be rushed through the House. All members will be advised when the bill is brought back into the House. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

The PRESIDENT: I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

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

Questions Without Notice

GAS EXTRACTION

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:30): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy, representing the Minister for the Environment. I refer to the Minister's answer yesterday on the implementation of recommendation No. 9 made by the Chief Scientist and Engineer. Given concerns expressed by farmers and other affected landowners that they are unable to obtain insurance from the private

sector insurance market to protect their land, water and crops from the risk posed by coal seam and other unconventional gas extraction, how will the Government ensure the availability to them of, to quote the words of the Chief Scientist and Engineer, "robust and comprehensive policies of appropriate insurance"?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:31): That is a very good question. I will talk to my colleague the Minister for the Environment and get a full response for the honourable member.

ENERGY BILLS

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (14:31): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. What is the Government doing to assist families who are struggling to pay their gas and electricity bills?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:31): I thank Mr Scot MacDonald for his question. This Government understands the need to help low-income households manage the burden of their energy bills. We have already boosted assistance for low-income and vulnerable households to more than \$1 billion over the next four years. This is a budget increase of more than 50 per cent from the 2010-11 financial year. That means that around 900,000 low-income households will be able to receive assistance with energy bills this financial year and the next.

The Government introduced the Low Income Household Rebate, which has higher payment than the rebate it replaced. We also expanded the range of low-income and vulnerable customers who can be eligible for this rebate. We introduced the Family Energy Rebate to help families with dependent children. More than 60,000 customers received the Family Energy Rebate in 2015-16. The Government also increased payments from the Life Support Rebate by 85 per cent from July 2015. This was done to ensure that around 40,000 of the most vulnerable customers were not left behind as a result of electricity price rises. We also increased the payments under the Medical Energy Rebate, which is targeted to other customers who have severe medical needs for more cooling and heating.

In July 2015, the Government introduced the Gas Rebate for customers using natural gas. This recognised the impact of changes in gas prices on New South Wales customers, with a rebate worth \$90 each year. From 1 July 2016, this rebate was extended to include low-income customers who rely on liquid petroleum gas [LPG] for their household energy needs. Up to 80,000 low-income households rely on LPG and many of these customers live in regional areas of New South Wales. Those customers have the same eligibility rules and get the same payment as customers using natural gas.

Finally, the Government has continued to strengthen emergency support for customers to keep them connected to energy during a financial crisis. The emergency voucher scheme, the energy accounts payment scheme, is able to help these customers pay their energy bills and to stay connected. Customers can be assisted by more than 350 separate community groups and charities around New South Wales. I am advised that the average amount of assistance can be between \$200 and \$250 per bill. In addition, my department is working on a new electronic form of vouchers that will be available from July this year.

MACARTHUR REGION BLUE-GREEN ALGAL BLOOMS

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:35): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts. Given blue-green algae can cause gastroenteritis, and skin and eye irritations, what advice has Sydney Water provided to the Government on when it will be safe for residents to come into contact with Harrington Park and Gregory Hills lakes, which were closed earlier this year due to high toxic levels? That is in New South Wales, Don.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:35): It certainly is in New South Wales. I am well aware of where Harrington Park is.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You have been there once.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have been there several times, as a matter of fact.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You flew over it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is possible I may have, but I have certainly driven there many times. Harrington Park, in the Camden area, is a lovely part of the world. In fact, I believe one of my cousins lives in Harrington Park.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You cannot go near the water though. You cannot touch the water.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is obviously an issue of great concern to the honourable member and, no doubt, to all the people who live in that area. I am sure Sydney Water is doing what it can to address the issue, but I will do what I can to ensure that there is some information available for the honourable member later in question time.

NATIONAL FIREARMS AGREEMENT

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (14:36): My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, representing the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. Given that the new National Firearms Agreement was quietly released online last month, can the Minister guarantee that no licensed, law-abiding firearms owner in New South Wales will be more restricted, have greater compliance requirements or be worse off under the changes to the National Firearms Agreement when they are ratified in this State?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:36): I thank the honourable member for his question. I was asked a very similar question by his colleague the Hon. Robert Brown yesterday. As I indicated yesterday, it is an area that is the responsibility of my colleague in the other place, the Hon. Troy Grant. The question seeks some quite specific information as to how those mooted changes may impact on firearm licence holders in New South Wales. I will do what I did yesterday in response to a very similar question from his colleague, and refer the question to my colleague the Minister for Police, and Minister for Emergency Services. I will obtain a detailed answer in the appropriate time and ensure that an answer comes back to the Hon. Robert Borsak, hopefully, with all the information he is looking for.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (14:38): My question addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Can the Minister please update the House on his visit to the Murray River to reinforce the Government's support for basin communities?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:38): I thank the honourable member for her question. Last week I met with my Victorian counterpart, Lisa Neville, on the Murray River to reinforce this Government's commitment to communities and the agricultural sector as we deliver the Basin Plan or the sake of the many different businesses in southern New South Wales it is very important that we get the balance right between environment and production. That is why I am putting politics aside and working with the Victorian Government. Together we have established an expert panel to review key components of the Basin Plan and to maximise the amount of water that is recovered other than through buybacks.

While I was in the Murray region the chair of the expert panel, Dr Don Blackmore, briefed Minister Neville and me on some of the panel's initial findings. Dr Blackmore and the other panel members have already identified a number of ways to improve the plan for the benefit of basin communities and businesses. I also met with New South Wales irrigators and farmers, along with other stakeholders, to talk about the parts of the plan that are having the most impact on the regional economy. As Minister for Regional Water, I value the voice and ideas of these stakeholders and thank them for their time and the robust discussion we had. During the visit I also toured some of the complementary measures being completed along Dights Creek, including revegetation works and improvements to native fish habitat. These works show how we can work with communities and landholders to deliver environmental outcomes without the need to take more water out of production. I mentioned how much I value open and honest discussion around the Basin Plan and how important this is for getting the reform right.

I acknowledge that some stakeholders are advocating for New South Wales to simply walk away from the plan. Can I be very clear: If it is in New South Wales' best interests to walk away from the plan, then we will walk away. However, we should be under no illusion how problematic this would be for basin communities. This would leave us with a 2,750 gigalitres Basin Plan with no ability to recover water through efficient watering of environmental assets. This would forego the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's proposal to reduce the recovery target by 70 gigalitres to 2,680 gigalitres off the back of their review of the northern basin. It would also leave the door wide open for a future Federal Labor Government to re-enter the water market and take more productive water out of communities. In all likelihood South Australia's 450 gigalitres of up-water would also still be on the table and we would lose the ability to make sure this is socioeconomic neutral or better for communities, which is currently the case in the plan.

Even more perversely, we will be left with two regulatory systems that would overlap but not speak to each other. New South Wales would likely have to repay billions of dollars in funding provided to implement the Basin Plan, which has been difficult for many regional New South Wales communities. It is a big reform and something that we are working to get through as quickly and as painlessly as possible. We need to provide

certainty to our regional communities and we know that it has been difficult. We are making sure that we are advocating for all of our New South Wales regional communities. We know the path forward, but we know there are difficult journeys along the way.

SOLAR ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Ms DAWN WALKER (14:42): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Why will Victorian solar households get paid 11.3 ¢ per kilowatt hour for the clean electricity they feed into the grid but New South Wales households get only between 5¢ to 6¢ for the solar electricity they feed into the grid? Are New South Wales solar households getting a fair price?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Because Victoria is run by socialists who have no control over money.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question was not being asked of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:44): I am sure the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps would make a very good fist of it if he were answering it, and he is making some very relevant points in terms of the Victorian Government.

The Hon. Walt Secord: You should have installed him in Cabinet.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is not my decision. Each year the New South Wales Government asks the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to establish a fair price for solar generation fed into the electricity network. This benchmark range is the recommended payment for all small-scale solar generation outside of the now closed Solar Bonus Scheme. The range helps customers to compare and negotiate energy deals with their retailer. On 9 June 2016, IPART released the final determination for the benchmark range for 2016-17. IPART found that a fair and reasonable value for solar electricity fed back into the electricity network is between 5.5¢ and 7.2¢ per kilowatt hour.

This was an increase on the 2015-16 range of 4.7¢ to 6.1¢ per kilowatt hour. The final decision for 2016-2017 is higher than last year due to higher expected wholesale electricity prices in 2016-17. The benchmark range is a recommended payment for generation only. This means it excludes the significant distribution costs of delivering a reliable and secure electricity supply, the retail costs of administering household accounts and the nominal cost of various green schemes that all contribute to make up the retail price of electricity. It is not mandatory for electricity retailers to offer a feed-in tariff. However the Government has called on retailers to offer a feed-in tariff within the benchmark range.

On 9 December 2016, IPART completed a special review and released a series of fact sheets to help scheme customers prepare for the closure of the scheme at the end of the year. According to the special review, the retailers operating in New South Wales currently offer unsubsidised feed-in tariffs of around 5¢ to 12¢ per kilowatt hour. They found that at the time of the review the highest unsubsidised feed-in tariff of 12.2¢ is not the best offer overall for the scheme customer and all costs associated with a retailer contract should be considered by customers. The main financial benefit to consumers from solar systems is through avoiding paying for electricity from the electricity network, not feed-in tariffs. I emphasise that this benefit does not appear as a line item on customers accounts but as reduced electricity consumption and therefore reduced electricity bills.

SYDNEY WATER PRIVATISATION

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (14:47): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts. Given the Minister's previous answers on Sydney Water and the proposed outsourcing of the civil delivery and wastewater treatment units affecting up to 400 workers, will the Minister now give a guarantee that community safety, including drinking water, will not be compromised under his plan?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:47:5): Let us be quite clear about what was said. I made it very clear that Sydney Water is not being privatised. It is not going to happen. It is not Government policy. The Opposition is trying to conflate practices they undertook when they were in government for Sydney Water, such as outsourcing with privatisation. I understand that not everyone uses the same nomenclature or the same terminology. This is a very relevant situation and it is something that has been discussed recently in the House. I can assure the House that there are no plans for the ownership of Sydney Water to change. It is staying in the hands of the State Government. There are no plans for that to change, at all. herefore, as to the guarantees the honourable member was seeking about the quality of water supply, in terms of the Government's future plans, I can absolutely give him that guarantee. At the end of the day nothing is happening at the moment other than a negotiation to do with an enterprise bargaining agreement that comes to the end in June.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Don, the camera is that way. You have to face that way to get on television.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am giving the honourable member the courtesy of an answer through the Chair. As I said, at the moment all that is under contemplation is the renegotiation of an enterprise bargaining agreement for the civil workforce. Those discussions are going on between Sydney Water and the trade union involved, representing those workers. Sydney Water has made it quite clear that its preference is that the workforce remain in-house, and I absolutely support its desire to continue that happening.

The question has arisen about outsourcing. I am not micromanaging the negotiations between Sydney Water and the trade union. I was not in the room; I do not know what was said. I do know that Sydney Water's preference is for its civil workforce to remain in-house and that it is discussing with the relevant union the best way of ensuring we have a workforce with work practices that ensure downward pressure on water prices for households and businesses. We want a Sydney Water workforce that is the benchmark for water utilities in Australia. That is entirely what is taking place at the moment—a negotiation to ensure that those workers have an ongoing role in Sydney Water and that those functions remain in-house. I will be very happy if that is the result of the end of the negotiation.

NAIDOC WEEK

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (14:51): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Will the Minister please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting NAIDOC [National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee] Week in 2017?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for his question. NAIDOC [National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee] Week is an important time for all people in New South Wales to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements, and to recognise the contributions Indigenous Australians make to our country and our community. This year NAIDOC Week will be held from 2 July to 9 July. The New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government is proud to support NAIDOC Week and this year we will provide \$200,000 to support grassroots celebrations across the State.

I am proud that this year we are providing even more funding than last year. We know the importance of supporting local communities in celebrating NAIDOC Week. Last year we provided \$120,000, and this year's \$200,000 will go even further to support even more events. Each year the National NAIDOC Committee announces a NAIDOC Week theme highlighting an historical event or unique aspect of Indigenous culture significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year's theme, "Our Languages Matter", will focus on the significant and unique role Indigenous languages play in Aboriginal culture and emphasises, and the value that it has for Aboriginal people in connecting to country, transferring spiritual and cultural knowledge through storytelling and song, and sustaining cultural identity.

"Our Languages Matter" emphasises the importance of recognising and promoting Aboriginal languages in New South Wales. This Government is proud to support the promotion of Aboriginal languages with our recent announcement to consult on draft legislation to protect Aboriginal languages. I am proud that the New South Wales Government will be the first State in the country to do so. This Government understands the importance of the revitalisation of Aboriginal language. That is why funding is available for the teaching of Aboriginal languages in New South Wales government schools through the utilisation of school budgets.

As at November 2016, an estimated 5,306 students were learning an Aboriginal language in one of five Aboriginal language and culture nests. From 2016, New South Wales high schools are now able to provide courses in Aboriginal languages for students in years 11 and 12 to count towards the Higher School Certificate. The Aboriginal Languages Content Endorsed Course Stage 6 Syllabus was trialled in 2016 at both Menindee Central School and Woolgoolga High School. From this year, schools have the opportunity of implementing this course. Aboriginal language learning will be further supported by the introduction of language apps being developed with selected language groups, and led by the NSW Education Standards Authority.

Language is important for identity and self-belief and so, too, are events that celebrate Aboriginal culture and the wider community. In 2016, the New South Wales Government supported the NAIDOC Blak Markets held at Barangaroo in Sydney. It was a highly successful day, attended by about 15,000 people. The event was also an opportunity to showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated businesses and, as a result, played an important role in promoting economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Past cultural celebrations and events that have received funding are community gatherings incorporating traditional

activities such a song, dance and storytelling, as well as smoking and flag raising ceremonies, and art exhibitions and workshops.

Last year the Government also provided funding for the Tamworth Regional Council's NAIDOC Family Day. It was attended by more than 1,000 people and included elders as guest speakers, entertainment and performances by young local musicians and dancers, cooking demonstrations and workshops, as well as interactive games. This Government recognises that by investing in events such as this we are supporting economic and social outcomes in the local community. In addition, these events promote greater community cohesion, giving all Australians an opportunity to learn about the culture and heritage of the First Australians and the contribution they have made and continue to make to our history and collective identity as a nation. As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I look forward to attending a number of regional events during NAIDOC Week.

ABORIGINAL FLAG

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (14:55): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry, representing Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. Given that more than 27,000 people have now signed an e-petition calling on the New South Wales Government to fly the Aboriginal flag on the Sydney Harbour Bridge permanently, will the Government make this a reality?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:56): I thank the honourable member for her question. It is quite interesting that we made a reference in this House to considering the role that e-petitions may play in this Chamber in the future. That was something the Leader of the Government was able to do in the last sitting week. Obviously it is something that the House should look at as a way of moving with the times. I know the member's question refers directly to an e-petition. I welcome that and look forward to this Chamber being part of a new way of dealing with such an issue.

As the member quite rightly stated, the question was directed to my colleague the Hon. Melinda Pavey, Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight. If I do not get as much information as I need to in question time I will take the question on notice, but I think I have enough information to answer it right now. I am advised and am aware of this morning's media coverage of a petition calling for the Aboriginal flag to be flown on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, along with the Australian and New South Wales flags—today I am wearing the official tartan of New South Wales, following on with the theme.

The presence of the Aboriginal flag would be an asset to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and confirm the importance and significance of Aboriginal people and culture to the State. The Aboriginal flag is currently raised in place of the New South Wales flag during NAIDOC Week. I understand the New South Wales Government has previously received representations from the community, including the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Northern Sydney Region Reconciliation Network, asking that the Aboriginal flag be flown on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. This issue has been raised with the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight and it is currently being investigated. The latest information available is that Roads and Maritime Services is currently investigating the issue.

THE HILLS SHIRE COUNCIL

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (14:59): I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. In light of the Minister's earlier comments, will she explain to the House what steps have been taken to ensure that Liberal councillors on The Hills Shire Council support long-established acknowledgement of country protocols for traditional owners at the start of a local council meeting or a council public event?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:00): I thank the member for her question. I am aware of the issue raised in media reports in relation to that specific council. The Aboriginal community has made it clear that it is important for the acknowledgement of country to be genuine. The person offering the acknowledgement of country must believe in it personally. I am conscious, as I am sure are other members, to have acknowledgement of country. At the beginning of the sitting week there is an acknowledgement of country by the President in this Chamber. As to the specifics, I will take it on notice and come back to the member with further information.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:00): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her position regarding those who do not support acknowledgement of country and whether it is then okay not to perform it?

The PRESIDENT: The supplementary question must seek an elucidation of part of the answer given by the Minister. That is a new question and therefore out of order.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: The member will not argue with my ruling.

WASTEWATER SYSTEM

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (15:01): I address my question without notice to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister update the House on Sydney Water's efforts to reduce the impact of wet wipes on the environment?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:01): I thank the member for the question. In recent years Sydney Water has identified an increase in the volume of hygiene-related wet wipes and similar material in the wastewater system. This has had dramatic consequences for the environment and public health. The build-up of wet wipes causes blockages in the wastewater system, forming large agglomerations colloquially known as "fatbergs" that can cause overflows into local waterways and customers' homes. Currently 75 per cent of wastewater blockages addressed by Sydney Water involved flushed wet wipes.

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It has severe financial consequences for the community. The cost of removing 500 tonnes of flushed wet wipes from the wastewater system is a staggering \$8 million every year, and growing. Sydney Water's research shows that community awareness could be improved. One in four people in Sydney are flushing wet wipes. The people who do so are not sure whether they are biodegradable or think they are biodegradable.

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. Greg Donnelly to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox to order for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The added pressure on the system and the environmental health and financial consequences of flushed wet wipes is simply unacceptable. It is this issue that must be addressed. In May 2015 Sydney Water launched its "Keep wipes out of the pipes" education program. It has so far reached over one million people on social media and over 16 million through traditional media.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Is there an app for it?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The consumer advocacy group Choice made a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission requesting that the wipes industry discontinue using "flushable" in the labelling and promotion of wet wipes. On 12 December 2016, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission instituted proceedings in the Federal Court against two major manufacturers, alleging that they made false or misleading representations in relation to so-called "flushable" wet wipes. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission alleged that consumers were led to believe that the products had similar characteristics to toilet paper, would break up or disintegrate in a time frame similar to that of toilet paper and were suitable to be flushed down the toilet, when this was not the case.

Sydney Water continues to work with its industry body, the Water Services Association of Australia, in the development of an agreed international standard and tests for flushable products that will better protect customers and pipes and save the community millions. I commend Sydney Water for its commitment to educate the community on this important issue. In answer to a previous interjection relating to social media, there is a campaign that Sydney Water is running. It has gained traction and hitting the mark.

LAND TAX AND SELF-FUNDED RETIREES

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (15:05): I direct my question without notice to the Minister for Resources, representing the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. It has been drawn to my attention by a retired couple that over three years their land tax increased from \$1,073 in 2014 to \$4,336 in 2016. They are vigilant self-funded retirees reliant on their investment properties to provide their annual income. Given the staggering increase, will the Minister advise the House what the Government is doing to ensure self-funded retirees are not hit with hefty land tax values? Further, what is the Government doing to give a fair go to self-funded retirees?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:06): It is a very serious issue. I am well aware of how hard land tax can hit self-funded retirees. The issue of how we finance government at every level in Australia is a vexed one. A great deal of work must be done to mitigate the impact on individual taxpayers. Land tax is a crucial revenue measure available to State

governments. State governments have a limited form of land tax compared to other jurisdictions such as the Australian Capital Territory, which has a broadly based land tax.

By having a broadly based land tax there are revenue opportunities. That is not the direction in which New South Wales is heading. The Premier, in her previous capacity as Treasurer, and the new Treasurer have remarked on the need to reform Commonwealth-State financial relations. The present situation is not satisfactory. It is possibly the largest single issue facing Australian public policy—the mismatch of taxing powers with constitutional responsibility. Many of the problems that State governments now face and will face in the future would be solved if States could be sovereign in their own sphere, which this State certainly is not. The particular example that the member has drawn to my attention puts me in mind of my parents, who, as self-funded retirees, had a sizeable land tax bill that caused them considerable grief in years gone by. I well and truly understand the stress that that tax bill would have caused the couple in question. Nevertheless—

The Hon. Walt Secord: But your parents just sold the servants' quarters.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Oh dear.

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I well and truly understand the stress experienced by the couple in the example given. Nevertheless, this is an issue that, sooner or later, Federal and State governments will have to address: How do we better structure the relationships between the two levels of government finances? I am very happy to follow up and provide an answer on the specific example the member asked about. The member asked me as the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. The Treasurer may have more to say on the matter. We will do our best to provide a full answer to the question asked by the member. I thank him for his interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:10): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. In light of the Minister's comments that the protocol for acknowledgement of country should be genuine, has the Minister just given a green light to racists who refuse to perform this important protocol?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:10): I thank the member for her question. When I answered her earlier question I said that the feedback I had received from members of the Aboriginal community was that they appreciate it when acknowledgement of country is genuinely offered. In terms of the issues relating to—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: The Liberals on The Hills Shire Council?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to order for the second time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In addressing acknowledgement of country in more general terms, I add to my earlier answer and say that a commitment to reconciliation and recognition takes many forms. We as a government have made a big commitment to recognising the unique position of Aboriginal people in our culture and history, as traditional custodians of the land. That is a bipartisan approach taken by all members in this place. It is undertaken by inviting traditional owners to deliver a welcome to country and/or by parliamentarians and government officials delivering an acknowledgement of country at public events. Through its actions, the New South Wales Government aims to increase awareness and understanding of culture and diversity, focusing on respectful engagement. This is reiterated in the Local Government NSW Aboriginal resource kit, available to all local councils, which includes advice on the value of recognising traditional custodians as an important mark of respect.

As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land and I encourage all publicly elected officials to focus on embedding that respectful protocol into their public duties. I am advised that there is nothing in either the Local Government Act 1993 or its regulation that requires councils to include an acknowledgement of country at meetings. The decision to include an acknowledgement of country is one that falls within the discretion of each council when determining the order of business for its meetings. There are no grounds for the Minister to intervene when a council decides not to have an acknowledgement of country at its meetings. However, many councils do include an acknowledgement of country at the start of their meetings. For more detail on the requirements of the Local Government Act, I suggest the member send the question to the Minister for Local Government or her representative in this Chamber.

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

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES SECTOR

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (15:13): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Would the Minister please update the House on the outlook for farmers in New South Wales?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:14): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for his very important question. There has never been a better time to be a primary producer in New South Wales. The Government is committed to growing the value of the primary industries sector by 30 per cent by 2020. Not only have we set ourselves this ambitious goal but we are also well on track to achieving it, with the value of primary production in New South Wales increasing by 17 per cent over the past two years. That is a testament to the resilience of our State's innovative primary producers. The primary industries sector is now valued at a record high of \$13.9 billion. After three years of strong growth, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences [ABARES] has forecast that the value of Australia's agricultural sector will peak at a record high of \$63.8 billion.

Record winter grain production is the driving force behind a more valuable farm sector this year, alongside soaring prices for beef cattle and good prices for lamb, wool and sheep. Last year's winter harvest across New South Wales increased by around 43 per cent, to a record volume of 16.3 million tonnes. This was driven by significant increases in wheat and barley production. Wheat production is estimated to have increased by 52 per cent, to around 11.4 million tonnes, reflecting an increase in the average yield to a record high of 3.3 tonnes a hectare. The total area planted to wheat also increased by 3 per cent to 3.5 million hectares. At the same time, barley production increased by around 43 per cent, to a record volume of 2.7 million tonnes. The average barley yield across the State is also estimated to have hit a new peak of 3.1 tonnes a hectare.

The farming boom looks set to continue, with export earnings in cotton projected to skyrocket by 56 per cent, wheat by 25 per cent and sugar by 23 per cent. The total value of Australia's farm exports is expected to hit a new record of \$48.7 billion in 2016-17. In spite of this good news across many sectors, I know that times remain tough for many of the State's dairy farmers, so I am pleased to say that ABARES also expects a recovering global dairy market, with local farm gate prices expected to improve by 2 per cent this year, to 43.8 cents per litre, off the back of higher exports. I must also acknowledge that the current industry environment has contributed to stresses within the meat processing industry, and I put on the record that the Department of Industry stands ready to assist in any way that it is able.

We are a government that backs our farmers and our industry in good times and in bad. That is why we continue to invest in world-class research and development to help our farmers prepare for future challenges. That is why we are focused on facilitating on-farm innovation, promoting resilience and productivity and providing for the sustainable management of natural resources. That is why we are determined to continue our work with industry to improve market access across the globe, so that our farmers and processors can capitalise on the high demand for our high-quality, clean, green and safe agricultural produce. Our primary industries sector supports more than 100,000 jobs in regional New South Wales. We will continue to deliver on our commitments to ensure the sector realises its enormous potential for growth and continues to play a huge role for this State and the communities that rely on our primary producers.

POKER MACHINES

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (15:17): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry, representing the Minister for Racing. Last year the New South Wales community lost approximately \$8 billion on poker machines. The Government's most recent budget forecasts predict an increase in profits from poker machine gambling that also represents a loss to the community of more than \$600 million over the next four years. How can the Government claim to support harm minimisation strategies to reduce the social and economic impact of gambling addiction when its own forecasts anticipate increased losses to the New South Wales community?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:18): I thank Mr Justin Field for his interest in gambling issues. I am informed by the relevant Minister that in New South Wales gaming machines are required to return at least 85 per cent, or a maximum of 15 per cent loss, over the payout of their full course of combinations. The average return of all gaming machines in the period to which the member referred was about 90 per cent. The Government is mindful of community impacts in a number of ways. We know that venues that want to increase their number of gaming machines must apply to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. In most cases they will be required to undertake a local impact assessment as part of that process. These assessments look at the impact on communities of an increase in gaming machines and ensure local councils, police and residents have a say in what happens in their community.

In 2016-17, the Government committed \$23 million to target problem gambling and promote responsible gambling. The most recent study, undertaken in 2011, found that 0.8 per cent of the community are problem gamblers. This rate has been steady for many years and is comparable to other States. This year the Government will undertake another study into the prevalence of gambling in the community. Understanding the prevalence of gambling and the extent of problem gambling helps guide policy and enhances responsible gambling measures. The \$23 million in support I mentioned includes education and awareness programs, counselling services for problem gamblers and their families and research to better understand the causes and harm reduction strategies.

We are already working with public health and community services organisations in the treatment of problem gambling through counselling services across the State. I am advised Liquor and Gaming NSW has been working with organisations such as the Black Dog Institute on initiatives to help health professionals identify and treat problem gamblers. As part of the \$23 million in support, the Government is also investing \$11 million in 55 face-to-face counselling and support services in 200 locations across New South Wales to help turn around the lives of problem gamblers. Around the clock, 24-hour telephone and web-based counselling is also available. This will ensure that people experiencing problem gambling can get the type of help most suited to them.

As a result of the success of the \$1.5 million 2015 major advertising campaign, "You're stronger than you think", which targeted young men at risk of becoming problem gamblers, a further \$2.4 million was invested on phase two which saw the campaign extended across television in 2016. A mid-campaign review of phase two found the campaign had succeeded in encouraging a third of male problem gamblers to think seriously about seeking help. I also note the role of the more than 1,300 registered clubs in the community which make an enormous social and economic contribution to the people of New South Wales and to the State's economy. Clubs are also one of the State's largest employers, providing jobs to 40,000 people, including more than 23,000 regional jobs, and contributing more than \$3.7 billion a year to the State's economy. In regional areas clubs provide a significant contribution not only to the economy but also as an important social hub as providers of high-quality facilities and services and financial support.

BOGAN BUSH MOBILE SERVICE

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (15:22): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education. Will the Minister step in and save the Bogan Bush Mobile service, which provides early educational services to rural and remote families?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:23): The Hon. Daniel Mookhey has asked me this question at a fortuitous time because just yesterday I attended the mobile conference of all mobile preschool operators from around regional New South Wales.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Did you see Daniel there?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, I did not see Daniel there.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: I was at the Parliament.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It was actually during the dinner break when Parliament had risen.

The Hon. Adam Searle: You should not respond to interjections.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I shouldn't respond to interjections. I am still learning.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will be heard in silence.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It was a great opportunity for me to talk to a range of providers about their work. We all acknowledge the importance of mobile preschools, particularly our regional members of Parliament. Mobile preschools deliver quality early childhood education services to the more isolated parts of the State to children who often do not get the opportunity to attend a bricks and mortar service. It is actually about taking vehicles on the road and making sure that those kids get the same opportunities as others. It is not just the children who get the same opportunity but also their parents, which is something we discussed last night. It is the acknowledgement of the socialisation aspects that come with having a mobile preschool. For some of these families times are tough, and mums might need an opportunity to get up in the morning, have a shower, put on their lipstick and talk to other mums about what they are doing.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The question clearly asked the Minister whether she would step in to save this important service. She has not come within a bull's roar to answering the question.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: To the point of order: President, as your predecessors, including the Hon. Peter Primrose, have ruled in the past, Ministers can answer questions as they see fit.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: Ministers must be generally relevant. There are two parts to that: One is general and the other is relevance. The question was whether the Minister would step in and save the service. The Minister has been more general than relevant.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members of part of a ruling I gave yesterday, in which I said:

I also remind members that a Minister should not debate the question, the Minister's answer should be generally relevant and the Minister may answer the question in the way the Minister sees fit.

Clearly in doing so the Minister must be generally relevant. The Minister was being generally relevant. There is no point of order.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In relation to the importance of mobile preschools and what they can mean to families, sometimes when mums or dads having a tough day it provides an opportunity to get out of the house and speak to other parents. There are mental health aspects and social importance to these mobile preschool services, not only to the children but also to parents.

The PRESIDENT: There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I cannot hear the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In relation to the future of some of the mobile preschools, an issue that was raised with me yesterday was about the budget-based funding model that some of them are affected by. I am advised that last Tuesday, prior to the mobile meeting, representatives from the Federal Department of Education talked to some of those services about what it will mean to them going forward. Yesterday I got advice from some of the providers that they felt much more confident after having those discussions with the Federal department about their future. Obviously this Government is waiting for that legislation to pass in Canberra. The importance of mobile preschools is very high on the Government's agenda. The Nationals, in particular, understand what we need to do to make sure that those schools and children get the opportunities that they deserve. I will continue to advocate for that as the Minister for Early Childhood Education.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (15:28): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer? Are the benefits the Minister listed in respect to mobile childcare services reason enough for the Government to step in and save the Bogan Bush Mobile service?

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order: It is obvious that the supplementary question was a new question. It did not seek an elucidation of any aspect of the Minister's answer but was an additional question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Having regard to the time, I will allow the supplementary question. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:29): As I said in my original answer, we are very committed to early childhood preschools in this State. They are important to reducing the barriers in accessing child care, particularly for disadvantaged or vulnerable families and their communities. We are talking to our Federal counterparts about their budget-based funding model and what it will mean for those services going forward. I repeat: Those on this side of the House will continue to be champions of regional early childhood education.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Mr President—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Catherine had a point of order; you cut her off.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is the Government's turn to ask a question. I would be grateful if honourable members would allow me to dictate who asks a question. The Hon. Catherine Cusack may ask her question or does the Leader of the House seek the call?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The time for questions has expired. If members have further questions I suggest they place them on notice.

LOCAL LAND SERVICES

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:30): Yesterday during question time I was asked a question by the Hon. Mark Pearson relating to animals caught up in bushfires. I can inform the House that personnel carrying out assessment and destruction of animals were highly qualified and experienced teams of veterinarians and biosecurity officers trained in livestock assessment and destruction, with animal welfare as their top priority. Staff skills in humane assessment and destruction of animals are maintained through regular training. Initial assessment on discovery of the animals was conducted to determine whether the animal could be treated. A veterinarian

conducted this assessment. Those assessed as being in extreme stress and pain were humanely euthanised immediately. Those assessed as being able to potentially recover from their injuries received immediate and appropriate treatment by a veterinarian, which included anti-inflammatories medication. The use of Tri-Solfen is not registered for this purpose.

Documents

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The PRESIDENT: According to the Public Interests Disclosures Act 1994 and the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table the report of the Ombudsman entitled "Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 Annual Report 2015-2016", dated February 2017, which has been authorised to be made public this day.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

Membership

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that this day the Clerk received advice of the following changes in crossbench membership of the Portfolio Committees:

Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health and Community Services

Ms Dawn Walker in place of Dr Mehreen Faruqi, resigned.

Portfolio Committee No. 5 - Industry and Transport

Dr Mehreen Faruqi in place of Mr Jeremy Buckingham, resigned.

Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Planning and Environment

Mr Jeremy Buckingham in place of Mr David Shoebridge, resigned.

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

Extension of Reporting Date

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: I inform the House that on this day General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 resolved to extend the reporting date for its inquiry into museums and galleries to 30 April 2017.

Bills

MINING AMENDMENT (CLIMATE PROTECTION—NO NEW COAL MINES) BILL 2016

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 October 2016.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:34): The Government strongly opposes the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016 because of the negative impact it would have on our economy, regional communities and hardworking families across New South Wales. The bill has one primary aim: to shut down the coal industry. By shutting down the coal industry the bill would lead to the loss of potentially tens of thousands of jobs, jeopardise local economies in many parts of regional New South Wales, turn away new investment, and deprive New South Wales households and businesses of an affordable and reliable energy supply.

The bill does not seem to consider the best interests of New South Wales. The contribution coal makes to this State's economy is genuinely significant. In 2015-16 we produced 191 million tonnes of saleable coal, worth \$14.6 billion. In that same year, coal was our number one export earner in value terms, worth \$13.2 billion—which was greater than the value of our tourism and education exports combined. Coal is the backbone of our State's electricity supply, still meeting around 79 per cent of our energy needs. The vast majority of energy users in New South Wales rely on coal in some form. It ensures that New South Wales residents and industry have access to cheap and reliable energy. It also ensures that New South Wales has access to coking coal, which enables

our local industries to flourish and to grow the economy. By decreasing the amount of coking coal produced in New South Wales—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: The short title of the bill is the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. The Minister may well be confusing it with another bill on the *Notice Paper*. This bill does not refer to ending coalmining; it says that there should no new coalmining. Existing mining may continue. The Minister may well be confused. His contribution is outside the leave of the bill.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order: My remarks are absolutely within the leave of the bill. In fact, I was going on to talk about the effect of having no new coalmines and the importance of coking coal. My remarks are in order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! That is a debating point, not a substantive point of order. There is no point of order.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: By decreasing the amount of coking coal produced in New South Wales in the future, the bill is likely to increase costs for industries that rely on steel, including construction, housing, transportation and agriculture. This is just another example of the blatant hypocrisy of the New South Wales Greens, calling for the Government to use 100 per cent Australian steel while at the same time wanting to ban the coking coal used in its production.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Not banning the coking coal.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: With no new coalmines, where is the coking coal going to come from for steel?

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Point of order: I am having difficulty hearing the Minister's contribution. I ask that you direct members to cease interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I encourage members on both sides of the Chamber to cease interjecting. It is the usual suspects.

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: Name them!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I will not name them but the debate will proceed with some degree of civility. I will name those members who continue to interject.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As I was saying, the bill goes even further and jeopardises local jobs. As of September 2016, the coal industry employed more than 19,000 workers directly and approximately 80,000 indirectly. These workers and their families rely on coal projects for their livelihoods. The local economies in our regional communities that benefit the most from coal projects are also at stake here. Coal enables those regional communities to flourish. Without the coal industry there would be doubts over the economic futures of many of our regional towns and cities, such as Singleton, Muswellbrook and Gunnedah.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Cessnock.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Indeed, Cessnock. The coal industry also gives back to the community through royalties. In 2015-16 the coal industry contributed more than \$1.1 billion in royalties, which was used to fund infrastructure and services for the benefit of all people in New South Wales. By banning the grant of any future mining leases in New South Wales—which is what the bill proposes to do—based on the maximum consented production, coal production will fall by one-third over the next 10 years to 2026. By 2041, coal production levels will have fallen to only 5 per cent of the current levels as only a few of the existing mines will remain operational. The bill would also mean rejecting 69 applications currently being assessed for coal exploration and production. It would effectively terminate the 172 existing coal exploration licences and five assessment leases, which would no longer be able to progress to production.

If this bill is really about considering environmental and social impacts then I am pleased to inform the House that we already have a strategic release framework. Unlike the bill being debated today, the strategic release framework is evidence based. It considers the social, environmental and economic factors before release of an area for coal exploration. We do not need extreme and rash measures, such as a ban on new coalmines, to ensure that the industry is operating in a safe and sustainable way. We have a robust regulatory system in place every step of the way. The coal industry is vital for our State's prosperity. It should be developed in a way that considers the economic, social and environmental impacts under this Government's strategic release framework. We should not jeopardise the future of the New South Wales economy, of regional communities and of our local industries by passing this rash and irresponsible bill.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I hope it is a relevant point of order.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: It certainly is. My point of order goes to relevance. Again, the short title of the bill is the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. The Minister is a long way through his contribution and he is yet to mention climate or climate protection—the key part of the bill. It concerns me that the Minister is not being relevant and is avoiding the substance of the bill, which is climate change and climate protection.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time. That was clearly a debating point, and as such is inappropriate. There is no point of order.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I note that the honourable member has a right of reply, at which time he will have the opportunity to dissect my comments rather than interrupting me and taking my time. Nevertheless, I conclude by saying that for those very strong reasons the Government opposes this bill.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (15:44): I speak in the strongest possible terms to oppose the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. The silence from members opposite who draw their political support from the CFMEU—the "M" in that title standing for "Mining", which the Labor Party once upon a time purported to support; an industry employing miners, whom the Labor Party once upon time purported to support—is very interesting. It is almost as if Labor has given up on trying to gain the support of blue-collar workers in a desperate and vicious attempt to control the bourgeois latte set of the inner city, where much of the contemporary Left now finds itself.

Members opposite may not be aware that, according to the most recent figures, electricity generation across Australia comes from these sources: 1 per cent from bioenergy; 2 per cent from rooftop solar; 4 per cent, when it is blowing, from wind; 7 per cent from hydro-electric power; 13 per cent from natural gas; and 73 per cent from coal. Seventy-three per cent of Australia's electricity generation comes from coal. That is what The Greens want to put at stake here: the ability to have cheap energy available for all households, not merely for those who can afford it. Members opposite also may not be aware that Australia's export industry is quite strongly dependent upon coal, particularly coal briquettes, which make up between 18 per cent and 20 per cent of the total value of all Australia's exports. Some 18 per cent to 20 per cent of Australia's exports come from coal—which The Greens, and, presumably by their silence, the Labor Party, seem to think would be quite reasonable to lose.

The argument employed by Mr Jeremy Buckingham and others of his ilk is that we do not need to worry about coal in the future because countries overseas will not be investing in coal. That is simply not the case. According to the most recent figures, proposed—not existing—coal-fired plants by installed capacity in megawatts in the future include: 557,938 megawatts, or more than half a million megawatts, in China alone; 519,396 megawatts in India; 34,725 megawatts in Vietnam; 8,800 megawatts in Taiwan; and further investments in Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Japan, Myanmar, Malaysia, South Korea, Laos, Thailand and Sri Lanka. That does not include anywhere on the African continent or in South America or North America.

These are our nearest and most direct neighbours and trading partners, all of whom have indicated that they will be building a substantial amount of coal-fired generation in the future. In relation to electricity generation costs, it is worthwhile mentioning the latest figures. Black coal electricity generation costs approximately \$30 per megawatt hour; natural gas is around \$40; hot dry rock is also around \$40; biomass and hydro are just over \$60 per megawatt hour; wind is in the order of something over \$80 per megawatt hour; and solar—which The Greens see as the bright and shining future—costs \$150 per megawatt hour. That is \$150 per megawatt hour as opposed to \$30 per megawatt hour.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! Mr Jeremy Buckingham will come to order. I remind him that he will have an opportunity to reply to the debate. The Hon. Dr Phelps has the call.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: What lies at the heart of this? Is it because The Greens hate people who work in the coal industry? I suggest it probably is not; they probably do not hate them. But what they do have is this environmental catastrophism that serves their political purposes quite nicely. That environmental catastrophism came out through the 1970s and the 1980s and flourished in the 1990s and into this century. It was French philosopher Pascal Bruckner who looked most closely at this when he spoke about ecologism as a new and insidious threat to Western society. This is what Bruckner had to say:

Ecologism, the sole truly original force of the past half-century, has challenged the goals of progress and raised the question of its limits. It has awakened our sensitivity to nature, emphasised the effects of climate change, pointed out the exhaustion of fossil fuels. Onto this collective credo has been grafted a whole apocalyptic scenography that has already been tried out with communism, and that borrows from Gnosticism as much as from medieval forms of messianism. Cataclysm is part of the basic tool-kit of Green critical analysis, and prophets of decay and decomposition abound. They beat the drums of panic and call upon us to expiate our sins before it is too late.

...

The environment is the new secular religion that is rising ... from the ruins of a disbelieving world. We have to subject it to critical evaluation in turn and unmask the infantile disease that is eroding and discrediting it: catastrophism.

There are at least two ecologies: one rational, the other nonsensical; one that broadens our outlook while the other narrows; one democratic, the other totalitarian. The first wants to tell us about the damage done by industrial civilisation; the second infers from this the human species' guilt. For the latter, nature is only a stick to be used to beat human beings. Just as third-worldism was the shame of colonial history and repentance was contrition with regard to the present, catastrophism constitutes the anticipated remorse of the future: The meaning of history having evaporated, every change is a potential collapse that augers nothing good.

...

Numerous authors tell us that humanity as a whole has gone off-course, and that it has to be understood as an illness that must be immediately treated: "Man is a cancer on the earth... a throwaway species, like the civilisation he invented," writes Yves Paccalet. And Nicolas Hulot, the French environmentalist, writes: "The enemy does not come from outside, it resides within our system and our consciousnesses."

For the past half-century we have, in fact, been witnessing a slide from one scapegoat to another: Marxism designated capitalism as responsible for human misery. Third-worldism, upset by the bourgeoisification of the working classes, substituted the West for capitalism as the great criminal in history and the "inventor" of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. With ecologism, we move up a notch: The guilty party is humanity itself, in its will to dominate the planet. Here there is a return to the fundamentals of Christianity: Evil is the pride of the creatures who are in revolt against their Creator and who exceed their prerogatives. The three scapegoats can be cumulated: Ecologism can reject the capitalism invented by a West that preys on peoples and destroys the earth. It is a system of Russian dolls that fit one inside the other until the final synthesis is reached. That is why so many old Bolsheviks are converting to ecologism in order to broaden their palette of accusations. This amounts to recycling anticapitalist clichés as one recycles wastewater: Ecologism adds a supplementary layer of reprobation, claiming to be the culmination of all earlier critiques.

...

The despondency is striking, given that our lives are still extraordinarily pleasant. Everywhere the culture of lament prevails. We have to wear a grave expression on our faces and wrinkle our brows: The perils are so numerous that we can hardly choose among them. Sound the death knell is our viaticum. Saving the world requires us to denigrate everything that has to do with the spirit of enterprise and the taste for discovery, especially in the field of science. We have ceased to admire; we know only how to denounce, decry, whine. The capacity for enthusiasm is dying out.

...

Ecologism has become a global ideology that covers all of existence. In it are found all the faults of Marxism applied to the environment: the omnipresent scientism, the appalling visions of reality, the admonishing of those who are guilty of not understanding those who wish them well.

All the foolishness of Bolshevism, Maoism, and Trotskyism are somehow reformulated exponentially in the name of saving the planet. Authors, journalists, politicians, scientists compete in announcing the abominable and lay claim to a hyperlucidity: They alone see things correctly, whereas others vegetate in the slumber from which they will someday awaken, terrified. They alone have emerged from the cave of ignorance in which the human herd mills around, deaf and blind to the obvious.

...

To change the world, change life. To this formula inherited from Rimbaud and the communist tradition, ecologism adds a fundamental corrective: We have to change our lives in order to preserve the world. For ecologism, the domestic becomes immediately political, and we can permanently deflect the course of societies by turning off lights, turning down the heat, and becoming economical and if possible vegetarian, which would reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Since our mode of production is destroying the planet's resources, the first thing we have to limit is our desires, and a sense of restriction must be inculcated in everyone. The home, where we enjoy ourselves with those close to us, is the epicentre of the crime. It is there, in the warmth of the family, that the conspiracy against the earth is fomented, in a mixture of negligence, greed, and dependency that constitutes the heart of civilised corruption. We are all potential killers who subsist only by destroying.

This amounts, as we have seen, to an enormous restoration of Original Sin under the auspices of the extinction of species, the collapse of marine ecosystems, and rising temperatures. The slightest act—eating meat, turning on a radiator, letting the water run while you brush your teeth—is heavy with unexpected consequences.

...

A marvellous acrobatic act: We have to voluntarily deprive ourselves in order to enrich ourselves spiritually.

...

You will need to get rid of your car, take showers instead of baths ... stop buying imported fruit and vegetables, practice "locavorism" (that is, eat only locally produced food), decrease or even halt your consumption of meat and fish, avoid the elevator and even the refrigerator.

Each of us has to kill the frenetic consumer within us, for he is a scruffy wretch who through his greed is causing the melting of the polar icecaps, the rise in sea level, tremors in the earth's crust, acid rain, and who knows what else.

Are you cold in winter? Put on a sweater, for heaven's sake, instead of turning up the heat, and go to bed early. Yves Cochet, a member of the European Parliament, tells us: "We have to manage to live with 50 percent less electricity... We have to take maximum advantage of daylight". And our friend of humanity further suggests a surtax on those who make excessive use of electricity and heating systems. Are we going to set up police brigades that are responsible for switching off electricity and enforcing a curfew?

What is worrisome about ecologism is that it energetically insinuates itself into the most intimate aspects of our lives—our eating habits and our clothing—the better to control them. The project here is authoritarian. On reading its recommendations, we can almost hear the heavy door of a dungeon closing behind us.

...

The ecology of disaster is primarily a disaster for ecology: it employs such an outrageous rhetoric that it discourages the best of wills. It tries so hard to avoid our ruin that it will hasten it if we follow its recommendations and wrap the planet in cellophane like a Christo sculpture...

...

If a generous defence of the environment is to develop in the course of the next century, it will exist only as a servant of humans and nature in their mutual interaction and not as an advocate speaking through an entity called "the planet."

The friends of the earth have for too long been enemies of humanity; it is time for an ecology of admiration to replace an ecology of accusation.

Save the world, we hear everywhere: Save it from capitalism, from science, from consumerism, from materialism. Above all, we have to save the world from its self-proclaimed saviours, who brandish the threat of great chaos in order to impose their lethal impulses. Behind their clamour we must hear the will to demoralise us the better to enslave us. What is at stake is the pleasure of living together on this planet that will survive us, whatever we do. We need trailblazers and stimulators, not killjoys disguised as prophets. Pascal Bruckner is absolutely right. He has found exactly the problem we have with contemporary Green ideology. It should come as no surprise, as *Salon*, in the 26 September 2013 edition, entitled "Everyone hates environmentalists and feminists" stated:

Why don't people behave in more environmentally friendly ways? New research presents one uncomfortable answer: They don't want to be associated with environmentalists.

That's the conclusion of troubling new research from Canada, which similarly finds support for feminist goals is hampered by a dislike of feminists.

Participants held strongly negative stereotypes about such activists—

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: The honourable member's contribution is clearly outside the leave of the motion. He is not being generally relevant to the matters before the House and in fact is being incredibly offensive.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: To the point of order: I am seeking a motivation as to why there would be a need to legislate against coal. What I am pointing out is that the advocacy that has been undertaken by those of the Green left has proved so toxic in the public sphere that they now rely upon the coercive power of the State to achieve their ends.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): There is no point of order.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: That is why everyone hates environmentalists; it is because they are catastrophic alarmists who provide no hope for the future other than a gradual descent into a pre-industrial slavery. Indeed, so bad has it become that we learn today from the *Guardian* that the Climate Institute is going to shut down, citing a lack of funds for its research. It states:

The Climate Institute will shut its doors after 12 years of providing independent advocacy and research towards climate change solutions, citing a lack of funding.

In other words, we have one of the premier left-wing Green institutions in Australia admitting the fact that it is so unpopular that it cannot even scrape together enough money to keep its propaganda campaigns going.

The DEPUTY-PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! According to sessional orders proceedings are interrupted to permit the Minister to move the adjournment motion if desired.

The House continued to sit.

Documents

GREYHOUND RACING INDUSTRY BAN

Tabling of Documents Reported to be Not Privileged

The CLERK: According to resolution of the House of 8 March 2017, I table the following documents identified as not privileged in the report of the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, QC, dated 8 August 2014, on the disputed claim of privilege on papers relating to a further order for papers regarding greyhound welfare:

- (a) those documents produced to the special commission of inquiry into the greyhound industry of New South Wales, category A; and
- (b) those documents subject to a claim of client legal privilege category C.

*Adjournment Debate***ADJOURNMENT**

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

NATIVE FORESTS

Ms DAWN WALKER (16:03): Our native forests are vital to the survival of the many species of plants, animals and micro-organisms that make up our unique ecosystems, but they are at risk. In 2015 the World Wildlife Fund identified the shameful fact that eastern Australian temperate forests as the only deforestation front in any developed country in the world. Logging is the major driver of that deforestation. The New South Wales Government made matters worse last year by replacing the Native Vegetation Act with land clearing laws that could see more trees removed on private land. But there are still opportunities to improve the situation and protect our forests on public lands.

After almost two decades under the New South Wales and regional forest agreements [RFAs] it is clear that governments have failed to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of protected areas, and that destructive logging practices have worsened the state of our forests and threatened species. Not only is native forest logging unsustainable, it is unprofitable. For most of the past decade the Forestry Corporation's native logging division has operated at a loss, while the plantation division has continued to operate profitably. It is time to recognise that the greatest values of our public native forests come from preserving them. Our national and State parks are the second most popular tourist attractions after the State's beaches. More than 150,000 people are directly employed in tourism across New South Wales and educational tourism is the fastest growing area in the tourism sector.

Protecting our forests and promoting these wild places to domestic and international tourists, including ecotourism and Aboriginal cultural tourism, can deliver new regional employment opportunities. Mature and growing forests play an ongoing role in storing carbon and limiting the rise of greenhouse gas emissions. The State Government has an opportunity to develop a framework to account for the impact of preserving public forests, and allowing them to grow and capture more carbon. The valuable contribution of growing the State's forests to climate action could then be realised through the Federal Emissions Reduction Fund. Vulnerable species, including the iconic koala, are at risk of extinction unless we reverse the loss and fragmentation of their habitat. Mature forests with hollow-forming trees provide crucial habitat to hundreds of species of native fauna, including the greater glider and the sooty owl.

I note that one of the first acts of the new Minister for Lands and Forestry, the Hon. Paul Toole, was to announce an expansion of the State's pine plantations. That is a welcome step. Responsibly managed plantation forestry, to grow both softwoods and hardwoods, can bring more forestry jobs to regions across the State and deliver the timber resources we need. But much more needs to be done. The key thing that the Minister and this Government must do is to ensure the future of the State's public native forests. It is time to expand the reserve system, including the establishment of the Great Koala National Park and Great Southern Forest, and it is time to recognise that the RFAs have failed. The logging of our public native forests has not been managed sustainably, and with a strong transition to the plantation industry it is in fact now unnecessary. I urge the Minister to acknowledge the evidence from the conservation and ecology experts, accept the importance of protecting biodiversity and bring an end to logging in public native forests.

BADGERYS CREEK AIRPORT

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (16:08): I alert the House to the political trickery occurring less than 100 kilometres from this Chamber in the Blue Mountains. As members may be aware I am now a resident of the Blue Mountains living near Katoomba, so I have taken a renewed interest in the happenings of the Blue Mountains, which was, of course, the political base of that rascal of New South Wales politics Sir Henry Parkes. Indeed, his grave is at Faulconbridge. In Henry Parkes' day he would get away with saying one thing to his electorate and behaving differently at Macquarie Street. With the modern media Sir Henry Parkes would not get away with that today—or would he? Certainly Labor hopes to get away with saying one thing in the Blue Mountains and supporting the opposite position in Macquarie Street. My attention was drawn to the local paper, the *Blue Mountains Gazette*, where residents were recently confronted with the staged angry faces of the State and Federal Labor members.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Point of order: Standing orders preclude members from reading newspapers during debate and the Hon. Shayne Mallard is clearly reading a newspaper. It may well be the *Blue Mountains Gazette*.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I do not think the member was reading the newspaper; he was using it as a prop.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Why are they staging an angry picture opportunity? They are pretending to be opposed to the new airport for Western Sydney at Badgerys Creek. They are campaigning against the airport in the local community, but the Labor Party at both State and Federal levels is fully behind the airport. I pat it on the back for that. In politics, telling the local community one thing but doing something different is called "virtue signalling" and is intended to soften the local political fallout of a controversial issue that is supported by the head office. The member for Blue Mountains and the Federal member signal to the local community that they oppose the airport, but on Macquarie Street or in Canberra have the opposite view, towing Labor's official policy. They hope, as did old Henry Parkes—fingers crossed—that they will not get caught out for their double standards. But they have been caught out today.

Adding to this local deceit, the Blue Mountains City Council Labor mayor has done his best to beat up a scare campaign on the Badgerys Creek airport in support of Labor's smoke and mirrors politics. This is a council that despite enormous debt has continued to pour ratepayer dollars into a faux political fight against a job- and investment-generating airport. The Labor-run Blue Mountains City Council is \$44 million in debt and continues to make questionable spending decisions. The council has spent \$130,000 organising opposition to an airport at Badgerys Creek, with a massive splurge in spending in the past 14 months coinciding with the council and Federal elections. This has included spending more than \$35,000 on flyers, signs and videos promoting its anti-airport stand and more than \$16,000 on a public meeting as a political platform to oppose the airport.

While this Labor-led council has continued to squander ratepayers' money, it has imposed a massive rate rise on residents. The standard rate rise for councils last year was 1.8 per cent, but the Blue Mountains City Council increased its rates by 9.6 per cent. In spite of the local Labor members opposing the airport, Labor has endorsed the selection of Badgerys Creek as the site of Sydney's second airport. That support began with the Hawke Government in 1986. Federal Opposition leader Bill Shorten, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure Anthony Albanese, and New South Wales Opposition leader Luke Foley all support a Badgerys Creek airport.

Mr Shorten has continually reaffirmed his support for a second Sydney airport stating, "I support Badgerys Creek airport ... I think it will generate the jobs". New South Wales Opposition leader Luke Foley has said that an airport at Badgerys Creek will be, "Western Sydney's greatest jobs generator". Blue Mountains Labor members have continually brushed aside the considerable benefits that this airport will bring to the region by falsely citing environmental impacts. The recent environmental impact statement specifically addressed impacts on the World Heritage status of the Blue Mountains and said it would not be compromised—nor should it be. We all agree on that.

Blue Mountains Labor members continue a scare campaign to oppose a substantial infrastructure project that will assist to alleviate the debt of the Blue Mountains City Council and bring economic growth, prosperity and jobs to the mountains region. This airport will enhance the tourism industry, and local arts and culture sectors in the Blue Mountains as it will bring plane loads of new tourists to the region, and create a hub for business travellers and tourists alike. Today I expose the double standards of Labor in the Blue Mountains at local, State and Federal level. I call upon the Labor Party in the Blue Mountains to be honest and open with the residents and for Labor in Macquarie Street to call a halt to the tricky politics. Labor must work openly and honestly with the local community to maximise the benefits and opportunities the new airport at Badgerys Creek will bring to the region, including the Blue Mountains.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:12): I bring to the attention of the House the importance of early childhood educators in the lives of children all over the State, particularly those children under five attending child care and other centres. Early childhood educators are people whose jobs involve the education of young children at a time when a child's brain is performing the most amazing leaps and bounds of growth and knowledge. It is a time when children are highly vulnerable and need reassurance and support. Early childhood educators care for them and their families each day. Early childhood educators draw up individualised, developmentally appropriate, play-based learning programs for dozens of children, keep them on track, evaluate their progress and help them through difficulty. These are the people to whom we entrust our children.

For this crucial and necessary work these people are paid a manifestly inadequate wage of just \$20 an hour—97 per cent of these people are women. They are early learning educators and they are being treated appallingly in the determination of their wages. Compared with their counterparts in primary and secondary education, they receive one-third less in wages. Are we to think they somehow provide one-third less in value, given their skills and experience? Thanks to the Big Steps campaign, the fight for change, equality and recognition is building strength and placing this unjust state of affairs firmly on the agenda. Yesterday more than 1,000 early

childhood educators walked off the job to campaign for higher wages. It was the biggest early education walk-off in Australian history.

To these women and men I give my full solidarity. If nothing can be more important than the development of a child, then nothing can be more important than the proper remuneration of the early learning professionals whom we entrust to instruct and encourage that development. The Turnbull Government has failed to adequately fund the necessary increase in pay for these educators, instead choosing to tinker with family payments and let international corporations off the hook for billions of dollars of unpaid Australian taxes. In addition to their low pay grade, early learning educators have come under attack from the likes of Senator David Leyonhjelm. In January Senator David Leyonhjelm claimed the jobs of these educators were nothing more than "wiping noses and stopping the kids from killing each other." While I can think of a few things to say in response to Senator Leyonhjelm, I will instead read a letter written by a childcare worker in Sydney named Chloe Chant, who wrote:

Three weeks ago I stopped everything and spent an entire day of my personal unpaid time creating documents to be used in court for a family in the middle of a child custody hearing ... The next day I went to work and wiped a lot of noses.

Two weeks ago I identified behaviours that indicated possible child sexual abuse. I talked to the child, I talked to parents, I consulted research and theory, I completed mandatory reporting requirements, I cried—a lot ... And I managed to stop the children killing each other.

This week I held a baby as he experienced febrile convulsions. I cooled him, reassured him, called an ambulance, called the mother, comforted the hysterical mother, evacuated the other children, kept airways open. I provided first aid that could have prevented brain damage or death. I spent four hours filling out legal documentation, paperwork, reflections, and analysis And I wiped some noses.

On Monday I completed a set of observations, learning summaries and analyses that culminated in a recommendation that a child be assessed for learning delay. I sat there sweating and feeling nauseated while waiting for the parents to arrive for a meeting to discuss this. I was yelled at, screamed at, accused of being an insensitive unprofessional bitch, and then they cried, and then I hugged them, and then I talked them through all the support and strategy I was going to offer to help them and their child And, to my knowledge, I managed to let zero paedophiles into my service.

On Wednesday I said goodbye to a family who were moving on from our service. They thanked me for the support, the documentation, the planning, the individual observations, the learning analyses, the patience, the help in times of crisis, the emotional investment and countless episodes of first aid treatments in times of emergency .. And, I wiped some noses.

Yesterday we celebrated International Women's Day and this overwhelmingly female profession took the last resort option of walking away from their work in a bid to force the Federal Government to take notice. And to anyone who is unsure, this is a women's issue. Yesterday's walk-offs took place at 3.20 p.m., which represents the time women in Australia effectively start working for free because of the persistent gender pay imbalance. I thank those who every day take up this fight, the union movement and in particular United Voice and the Big Steps campaign. I thank those who care for our children every day and who are standing up to say, "Enough, we deserve to be paid more". I call on the Government to fund equal pay in this year's budget and support the true value of early learning educators.

NATIONAL FIREARMS AGREEMENT

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (16:17): I will highlight an issue fundamental to the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party, one that The Nationals is hoping will simply go away—the new National Firearms Agreement resulting from last year's Council of Australian Governments meetings. Changes to the National Firearms Agreement were quietly released online late last month with no announcement from the Federal Government. These National Firearms Agreement changes need to be ratified in New South Wales legislation before they come into effect. That is because the Federal Government has no constitutional authority over firearms other than customs. This, by the way, is why former Prime Minister Tony Abbott banned the importation of the Adler A110 lever-action shotgun. It was part of a fear campaign against all lever-action firearms following the Lindt cafe siege.

Abbott had to be seen to be doing something. Rather than tackle the difficult issue of illegal firearms trafficking, he chose yet again to penalise the licensed, law-abiding firearms owners who were doing the right thing. It did not matter to him that the madman Man Haron Monis had not been deemed a fit and proper person to hold a firearms licence and was using an illegally sourced firearm or that the illegal firearm he was using was not a lever-action gun. The demonisation of licensed, law-abiding firearms owners—many of whom are farmers using firearms as a normal part of their business, recreation and culture—has been inherent in the National Firearms Agreement since 1996. The National Firearms Agreement assumes that every licensed firearm is waiting to become an illegal gun in the hands of a criminal and that every shooter is waiting to become a criminal or, worse, to run amok like that lunatic Martin Bryant. The reality could not be further from the truth.

Before the Orange by-election, Minister for Police Troy Grant did everything he could to pretend to be the friend of firearms owners and farmers by appearing to start a campaign against a ban of the Adler A110. While Mr Grant and The Nationals were trying to cover up their own failure to stand up to the Liberal Party, we knew

that they were pretending. The truth has come out now. Mr Grant was going to roll over for the Liberal Party as soon as the Orange by-election that elected Philip Donato was over. That pretend fight was hiding much bigger changes to the national firearms laws.

One change to the National Firearms Agreement noted by my office was a subtle alteration of the wording of requirements for people who obtain a firearms licence using the legislated genuine reason of recreational hunting and/or vermin control. Currently, applicants can obtain this licence either by seeking permission from a landowner when getting their licence or by being a member of a registered hunting organisation. People in the latter category seek a landowner's permission before hunting or carrying out pest control, using their licence to show they are of good character and have undergone firearms safety training and monitoring.

The change to the National Firearms Agreement mandates that all applicants will need a landowner's permission before obtaining a licence. Being a member of an approved hunting organisation will not be enough. My concern is that this will lead to farmers being inundated with people seeking permission to shoot on their land—people they do not know and can never possibly accommodate. This change may make Malcolm Turnbull and Troy Grant feel as though they are being tough on gun crime, but all they are doing is pretending while making it harder for people who are already doing the right thing.

I will be directly addressing more changes over the coming weeks. I noticed that the Government could not provide a straight answer to my colleague the Hon. Robert Brown's question yesterday on whether New South Wales will blindly follow the Council of Australian Governments recommendations on the National Firearms Agreement. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not sit idly by while the Liberal Party and The Nationals take out their anger on law-abiding firearms owners in another dummy spit because we have annoyed them. I know that firearms issues are not important to the Government and that it is hoping they will simply go away. I will not let that happen on my watch, Mr Grant.

MOREE SOLAR FARM

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (16:22): On Friday I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Moree Solar Farm. It was an honour to join my parliamentary colleagues, including local member the Hon. Adam Marshall, who has passionately supported this project every step of the way, and Mr Scot MacDonald, for the celebration. It was a truly exciting day for the Moree community and for New South Wales. As Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy and Northern NSW, I was especially excited to see this facility officially commissioned. The Moree Solar Farm is an incredible project. It is a 56-megawatt large-scale photovoltaic [PV] facility. It is the first facility in Australia to use a horizontal single axis tracking system to capture more energy from the sun as it moves across the sky. It is also the second-largest operational facility in Australia. The facility generates enough clean energy to power 24,000 Australian homes per year.

At a local level, the project created 150 jobs during construction and will involve the creation of many others for its ongoing operation. The project was developed by Fotowatio Renewable Ventures [FRV], whose hard work has seen the project lift off the ground and bring enormous benefits to the Moree community and to New South Wales. I commend Origin Energy for its commitment to buy electricity from the plant over the long term. That is critically important to supporting renewable energy projects that are being established. I note the important role played by the Australian Renewable Energy Agency [ARENA] and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation in making this solar farm a reality.

The journey of solar is a remarkable one. It is part of a rapid transformation unfolding across the energy sector. Forecasters did not predict how rapidly the cost of solar energy would decline and how quickly the technology would be taken up. It is a fascinating and international story that involves immense shifts in technology, innovative finance, manufacturing efficiencies and government policy to address climate change. Globally, solar PV module costs have fallen by 90 per cent since 2009. In New South Wales one in seven households has solar on its rooftop. With the Moree facility, as well as plants at Nyngan and Broken Hill, New South Wales has 210 megawatts of large-scale solar capacity feeding clean energy into the grid. That makes New South Wales the leader in large-scale solar. It is enough to power around 80,000 homes. But that is just the start.

The Moree Solar Farm project, through the hard work of FRV, has also helped to pave the way for future projects in this State. There are 13 solar farms with planning approval in New South Wales, producing around 575 megawatts and worth around \$1.1 billion. That includes five projects that have been awarded funding by ARENA, at Parkes, Dubbo, Manildra, Griffith and the White Rock Solar Farm in New England. Those five projects are expected to begin construction this year, and it is estimated that together they will deliver \$370 million in new investment and around 800 jobs during construction. There are 12 more solar farms seeking planning approval in New South Wales, a number of which entered the system only recently. That speaks to the growth in large-scale solar power generation that we can expect to see in New South Wales.

It is not just solar power generation that is increasing. Wind power is also making an important contribution to increasing renewable energy in New South Wales. I am pleased to say that northern New South Wales is leading the charge in that respect. In May last year Goldwind began construction of the first stage of its 340-megawatt White Rock Wind Farm. In January CWP Renewables turned the first sod on its 300-megawatt Sapphire Wind Farm. Both near Glen Innes, these projects will bring jobs, investment and business for the region, along with environmental advantages.

This Government is committed to a reliable, affordable and clean energy future for the State's businesses and households. Support for the Moree Solar Farm is a clear demonstration of that commitment. Last year the Government released the NSW Climate Change Policy Framework, which stated our aspirational objective to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The objective is critical because it will help to give the private sector the confidence and certainty to invest. It will drive low-carbon innovation across the New South Wales economy and will lower the cost of transitioning to a net zero emissions future. Projects like the Moree Solar Farm, the Broken Hill Solar Plant and the Nyngan Solar Plant are all pathways to achieving this objective. It was an honour to be part of the memorable opening of the Moree Solar Farm. I am sure I speak for everyone in the Chamber when I say that I look forward to seeing the renewable energy sector continue to develop in New South Wales.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Before I call the Hon. Greg Donnelly, I congratulate the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps on his restraint.

PALLIATIVE CARE

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (16:27): I have spoken previously in this House about palliative care. I have acknowledged and acknowledge again not only the genuine interest of the immediate past Minister for Health, the Hon. Jillian Skinner, but also the support she gave to increasing and expanding palliative care in New South Wales. She is entitled to be proud of the contribution that she has made to palliative care in New South Wales, and I thank her for it. It is my sincere hope that the new Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, maintains a strong focus on palliative care and builds on what has been achieved over the past six years.

To that end, I strongly encourage him and his staff to engage on a regular basis with Palliative Care New South Wales, the independent, peak not-for-profit organisation for palliative care. With the organisation's management committee, under executive officer Linda Hansen, and her team of well-qualified and highly motivated staff, there is no question in my mind that Palliative Care NSW is in a unique position to provide information, insight and measured and considered advice about how to continue to make New South Wales the number one State in the Commonwealth in providing citizens with palliative care. There is no reason why New South Wales should not strive enthusiastically to obtain this objective.

If the Government and the Minister for Health make palliative care the health priority that it deserves to be, that objective can and will be achieved. It is not possible in the time remaining to discuss in detail the range of issues and key priorities that Palliative Care NSW has articulated in two important documents: Palliative Care NSW Policy Statement and 2015 NSW State Election Call to Action. I strongly encourage the new Minister for Health and his staff to have a look at both of these documents when they get a chance, if they have not done so already.

Drawing on those documents and casting one's eyes across the State, palliative care priorities include: funding key specialist positions in the areas of greatest need which includes South West Sydney, Central Coast, Hunter region, regional, rural, coastal and remote New South Wales; work with Palliative Care NSW and other key agencies to develop a workforce strategy for palliative care to attract health professionals including allied health professionals to specialise in palliative care; funding a program of education on palliative care and communication skills, including the use of key triggers for referral to palliative care with a focus on those health professionals working with patients with chronic illness; increasing community awareness and capacity so that people know there are services available both for themselves and for their carers or families; and funding a community engagement program to raise awareness of end-of-life and specialist palliative care. This program will build community capacity in dealing with issues of dying, death, bereavement and to encourage people to discuss, clarify and document their advance care wishes.

Recognising that most people in New South Wales with a life-limiting illness currently die in a New South Wales acute public hospital, Palliative Care NSW calls for a commitment to improve the quality and safety of dying in these important facilities. To achieve this New South Wales A-1 hospitals require seven-day 24-hour access to palliative care consultations and advice, and five-day access to palliative care consultations and advice in all New South Wales B-hospitals is urgently required. Timely, free and equitable access to appropriate equipment to support end-of-life care and specialist palliative care is required urgently including electric beds, pressure relieving equipment and incontinence pads, regardless of place of care. A priority is also to continue to fund the Volunteer Support Program to ensure that volunteers across the State are fully supported and educated.

I appreciate that in every policy area there are always competing priorities; that is always the case. However, I strongly encourage the new Minister for Health to give serious consideration to the six priorities outlined above. Much more must be done to improve palliative care in this State but the good news is that we know it can be done. I encourage the new Minister for Health to make it the priority it deserves to be. I look forward to working with members from both Houses to help bring this about.

NATIVE FORESTS

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (16:31): I refer to the contribution of the Hon. Dawn Walker and her support for plantations. Given that it has traditionally been the view of many Greens organisations that, in fact, plantations are nothing more than disastrous monocultures that should not be endorsed by way of farming practices, one would have to ask what are The Greens actually up to? Do they support or oppose plantations? A very simple Google search of The Greens opposing plantations will lead literally to tens of thousands of hits. One would have to ask: What are The Greens on about? Do they oppose or support plantations?

I suspect the truth is that they are using this simply as a Trojan Horse. They are saying "lock up native forests" as they have done on the North Coast, around Deniliquin and on the South Coast of New South Wales because they will promote plantations. When everything is locked up and plantations are in existence The Greens will say, "Plantations are terrible so we have to close them down", and take all the trees out of the ground and replace them with natives forests at which time they have what they sought to achieve all along—that is, the destruction of timber industries and timber communities, and the unemployment of timber workers across this State. We should not countenance this green-washing from The Greens as they purport to support timber industries when, in fact, we know full well that they want to crush timber industries and timber workers across this State.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:33 until Tuesday 28 March at 14:30.