



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 30 March 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 30 March 2017

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

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Announcements

FIRST COUNCIL RECORDS DIGITISATION

The PRESIDENT (10:02): In 2014-15 the Parliament was successful in gaining capital funding to digitise documents and records of the Parliament from 1824 to 1901 and to build a digital library to enable these important historical records, which have never been available outside Parliament before, to be available online to members of the public, historians and researchers. All documents of the colonial Legislature between 1824 and 1856, which includes correspondence with the Imperial Parliament, documents of important historical figures, and records from the establishment of responsible government in 1856 until the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901 have been digitised. I am pleased to advise that the documents are now available on the Parliament's website.

As a package, these documents form a unique record of our nation's transition from a penal colony to responsible government and on to Federation. They are an irreplaceable record of the early history of the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland, and document the relationship between leading historical figures in early Australian history as they petitioned, negotiated and corresponded with the Legislative Council in relation to personal, business and political matters. The original documents have been transferred to the State Records Authority under the memorandum of understanding between the Parliament and State Records. Under the agreement the Parliament will retain custody of the records while State Records will manage the records in appropriate environmental conditions, making them available to the public and researchers on request.

I acknowledge the work of staff from all three departments who have managed this important project through to its conclusion. The completed project is being launched in the Macquarie Room at 10.30 this morning. All members are welcome to attend.

Motions

NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the 2017 New South Wales Women of the Year Awards were announced on Wednesday 8 March 2017 by the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, and the Minister for Women, the Hon. Tanya Davies, MP; and
 - (b) the Women of the Year Awards recognise the many inspirational women leading the way in their fields across New South Wales.
- (2) That this House congratulates:
 - (a) Associate Professor Catherine Birman on receiving the Premier's Award for Woman of the Year;
 - (b) Ms Debbie Higgison on receiving the Community Hero Award;
 - (c) Dr Nicole Seebacher on receiving the Harvey Norman Young Woman of the Year Award;
 - (d) Mrs Julia Harpham on receiving the Rex Airlines Regional Woman of the Year Award;
 - (e) Ms Gina Field on receiving the New South Wales Business Woman of the Year Award; and
 - (f) Kristal Kinsela on receiving the New South Wales Aboriginal Woman of the Year Award.

Motion agreed to.

WORLD BIPOLAR DAY 2017

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Thursday 30 March 2017 is World Bipolar Day; and

- (b) World Bipolar Day is an annually recognised event, which is an opportunity to spread the news of recovery to those with the condition and to educate the broader community.
- (2) That this House recognises:
 - (a) the 568,000 Australians affected by bipolar disorder and their value to society; and
 - (b) Bipolar Australia's contribution to society, and its continuous efforts to improve the lives of Australians with bipolar disorder, ranging from its ability to raise community awareness, and to create a more positive outlook within society towards the disorder.
- (3) That this House notes the Government's commitment towards mental health, and supporting those who suffer it, which can be seen in the various programs initiated, as outlined in the NSW Mental Health Reform 2014-2024.
- (4) That this House congratulates the devoted organisers of World Bipolar Day, particularly Executive Director, Susana Bluwol, and those working with Bipolar Australia, on their tireless efforts to organise such a positive event raising awareness of this important issue.

Motion agreed to.

COOMA RELAY FOR LIFE

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Relay for Life was held in Cooma on Saturday 25 March 2017;
 - (b) Relays for Life are held around Australia to recognise and celebrate local cancer survivors, patients and their carers, to honour and remember loved ones lost to cancer, and to raise money to help save more lives; and
 - (c) in the past five years, Relay for Life across Australia has raised over \$108 million for the Cancer Council.
- (2) That this House recognises the Cancer Council for organising these events, and for the wide range of prevention, information, support and advocacy programs it runs across New South Wales.
- (3) That this House congratulates all those involved with the Cooma Relay For Life including survivors, carers and the broader community.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: According to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of a report of the Auditor-General entitled "2016—An Overview", dated March 2017, received out of session and authorised to be printed this day.

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. 743 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Penny Sharpe relating to the Summary Offences Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 5 in the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Pearson relating to the Roman Catholic Church in Australia.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 1211 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Paul Green relating to the Bible Society.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 539 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Jeremy Buckingham relating to the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016.
- (5) Private Members' Business item No. 889 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Peter Primrose relating to the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill.

- (6) Private Members' Business item No. 968 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Bronnie Taylor relating to Dementia Awareness Month.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

**SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (SAFE ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINICS)
BILL 2017**

First Reading

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

Second Reading

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (10:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with great hope and anticipation that I introduce the Summary Offences Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2017. I bring this bill to the Parliament because every day in New South Wales women are subjected to harassment and intimidation as they attempt to enter reproductive health clinics where abortions are provided. The staff of reproductive health clinics are also subjected to unacceptable harassment. Harassment and intimidation of anyone is always unacceptable. The type of harassment and intimidation that women and staff of reproductive health clinics endure should not be seen differently. There is no place for it in our communities. It is unacceptable that women trying to enter reproductive health clinics have to run the gauntlet of people who try to stop them with physical harassment and verbal abuse. It is unacceptable that women are jostled and filmed.

It is unacceptable that women are forced to look at distorted graphic images and told that they are murderers and that they are going to hell. It is unacceptable that the dedicated staff are often followed and harassed on the way into and out of work. For women who have the legal right to make choices about when and if they will have children, the harassment and intimidation they are forced to endure outside clinics is not just unacceptable: It has to stop. The sad reality is that our current laws are not adequate to stop the harassment and intimidation. This bill, if passed, will make it stop. That is why I introduce this bill today. If passed this bill will protect the safety, wellbeing, privacy and dignity of women accessing reproductive health services across New South Wales. It also will protect the employees of reproductive health services.

This second reading debate is not a debate about whether women are able to access abortion and other reproductive health services—by law they can. What this bill does is protect the right of a person to attend a reproductive health clinic without fear of intimidation or harassment or with their privacy being invaded or their dignity attacked or diminished. There is no other health service where patients are subject to this kind of harassment. That is why women in New South Wales need this bill to become law. I acknowledge that some members of the community have deeply held views about abortion. The bill does not seek to prevent people from holding or expressing their views, or protesting about their views, on abortion. However, this bill does not allow deeply held views to be an excuse for intimidation and harassment outside clinics.

The bill prohibits certain behaviour and creates certain offences within what will be known as safe access zones. A safe access zone is defined as an area within a radius of 150 metres of a reproductive health clinic at which medical or surgical abortions are provided, or a pedestrian access point to a building that houses a reproductive health clinic at which abortions are provided. Legislation for safe access zones has now been passed and implemented in four Australian States and Territories—the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Victoria have implemented the zones—and just last week I was pleased to see that the Northern Territory has also passed a safe access zone bill. The use of 150 metres in this bill is consistent with other jurisdictions and is working well in those locations. The bill before the House will insert a division into the Summary Offences Act 1988 to include certain objects to make clear the intentions of the Parliament in making these laws. The objects of the bill state that by passing this law the Parliament intends that:

- (a) the fact that the public is entitled to access health services, including abortions, should be respected, and
- (b) the public should be able to enter and leave reproductive health clinics at which abortions are provided without interference, and in a manner that protects their safety and well-being and respects their privacy and dignity, as should employees and other persons who need to access such clinics in the course of their duties and responsibilities.

This is the simple but important premise of this bill. I turn to the detail of the bill. The bill creates a number of offences for what is defined as prohibited behaviour. The penalty for these offences is 150 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months. The penalties in this bill are consistent with what is in place in Victoria, and

recognise the seriousness of the offences in question. The penalties respond to the impact these activities have on women wanting to safely and privately access these services.

Proposed section 11K makes it an offence for anyone within a safe access zone to harass, intimidate, interfere with, threaten, hinder, obstruct or impede, by any means, any person accessing, leaving, or attempting to access or leave, any reproductive health clinic at which abortions are provided. This section addresses both the physically intimidating and sometimes verbally abusive behaviour directed at women accessing reproductive health services. The reality for clinics in New South Wales is that on a regular basis there are either individuals or organised groups who describe themselves as "sidewalk counsellors" and who stand in front of people trying to enter or leave clinics. These individuals and groups block the entrance with their bodies and sometimes A-frames or other signage.

There is almost not a week that goes past when someone in Surry Hills does not contact me to tell me about what they have witnessed and their concern about what can be done to stop the behaviour towards those trying to leave or enter the clinic on Devonshire Street. Most recently this has been a recurring problem in Albury. Those who have witnessed the behaviour report physical scuffles, verbal abuse and threats made towards those going in. They also report the distress this harassment causes to patients trying to enter. This clause also seeks to pick up activities that are regularly undertaken by those outside clinics, including handing out upsetting leaflets, displaying distressing and sometimes graphic images and using props to upset and dissuade women from obtaining abortions.

Proposed section 11L of the bill makes it an offence without reasonable excuse to obstruct or block a footpath or road leading to any reproductive health clinic at which abortions are provided. It should not be the case that women or clinic employees are physically forced to cross the road, find a path around, or run a gauntlet of intimidating and abusive groups of people. Proposed section 11M makes it an offence to cause actual or potential distress or anxiety to persons in a safe access zone. Proposed section 11M of the bill states:

A person who is in a safe access zone must not make a communication that relates to abortions, by any means, in a manner:

- (a) that is able to be seen or heard by a person accessing, leaving, attempting to access or leave, or inside, a reproductive health clinic at which abortions are provided, and
- (b) that is reasonably likely to cause distress or anxiety to any such person.

For clarity, it is also provided that this section does not apply to an employee or other person who provides services at the reproductive health clinic. This clause attempts to ban activities, which have been reported by health services elsewhere, such as displaying dolls in prams spattered with fake blood or standing silently with their mouths taped shut very close to those trying to enter. It is clear that people engaging in prohibited activities may have a variety of different motives for their actions. They may be seeking to protest about abortion, or may genuinely believe that they are helping women in need, saving lives, providing alternatives to abortion or educating people about abortion and its impacts, among other reasons. However, when this conduct takes place directly outside health services providing abortions, it has the effect of intimidating, and causing anxiety to, many patients and health service staff and should not occur.

Finally, proposed section 11N of the bill prohibits the intentional capturing of visual data of another person, by any means, without their consent, if that person is in a safe access zone and is accessing, leaving, or attempting to access or leave, or is inside, a reproductive health clinic at which abortions are provided. It also prohibits the publishing or distribution of a recording of another person without their consent in a safe access zone, and if the recording contains particulars likely to lead to the identification of that other person.

The bill defines capturing visual data to include recording or any sort of live streaming or being capable of distribution, and it also precludes attempting to distribute captured visual data. The need for this section arises because the filming and recording of women by some so-called "sidewalk counsellors" is used as yet another way to try to shame women for accessing these services. This is the issue that has caused the most distress to the people who have contacted me. They do not know who is filming them as they seek to leave or enter a clinic, and what is happening to that material.

There are provisions in the bill where there is a reasonable excuse defence, so that recordings by security cameras installed by a company contracted by a health service or legitimate recordings undertaken by police in gathering evidence for enforcement purposes would not be captured by these provisions. This offence is also limited to circumstances where the recording could identify an individual and which identifies a person as a person accessing premises at which abortions are performed. Importantly, a final clause of the bill makes it clear that there is no restriction on the right of those who wish to protest about laws regarding abortion.

The bill makes it clear that conduct occurring in the forecourt of or on the footpath or road outside Parliament House here in Macquarie Street, the carrying out of any survey or opinion poll by or with the authority

of a candidate, or the distribution of any handbill or leaflet by or with the authority of a candidate during the course of a Commonwealth, State or local government election, referendum or plebiscite are not subject to these offences. The laws will not interfere with the right to public assembly or protest relating to abortion when it comes to the Parliament or elections. This bill is aimed squarely at providing safety to women accessing a health service to which they are entitled, while preserving their privacy and dignity, as well as for those people who face the same mistreatment simply due to their workplace at a clinic. There should be no green light for those who seek to intimidate and harass women as they seek access to reproductive health clinics.

In Victoria, a 2011 study in relation to just one clinic where abortions are performed found that 85 per cent of women surveyed reported seeing protesters outside the clinic, 74 per cent reported seeing anti-abortion displays such as posters and props, 55 per cent reported that protesters had said things to them, 60 per cent reported that protesters had tried to hand them anti-abortion information and 20 per cent had someone attempt to block their entry to the clinic. If applied to New South Wales—and particularly the two clinics that I am aware of in Surry Hills and Albury—the figures would be very similar.

Since announcing my intention to bring this bill to the Parliament I have had many people send me emails, pull me aside at functions or send me private Facebook messages where they have told their story and explained to me why this bill is so important to them. This harassment occurring in New South Wales is not isolated nor is it benign. I will share just three scenarios that have been told to me by many different people—different occasions but the same types of unacceptable behaviour. A woman related the story of how when she attended a clinic with her partner she was jostled and, as her partner tried to shield her and push the people back to get her through the door of the clinic, a woman who was blocking the door fell to the ground screaming that the man had physically abused her.

Another woman, who was accompanying her daughter to the clinic, was horrified at the intimidation and threats that they endured but she also realised that the people out the front of the clinic had been filming her daughter as she entered the clinic. I have heard from men who have accompanied their partners to a clinic to find themselves harassed and pushed and their partners verbally abused. All of them say that that experience is far worse than the difficult reproductive choices they have had to make with their partners. If this bill is passed it will put a stop to this type of unacceptable behaviour.

This is not a bill that seeks to change the current laws in relation to abortion in New South Wales but, as a pro-choice member of Parliament and a proud member of Emily's List, I cannot ignore that safe access zones touch on the issue of abortion. I believe that the laws governing abortion in New South Wales should be changed. I believe that abortion offences should not be included in the Crimes Act and I believe that women should be able to access abortion on demand. I look forward to another bill that will come before this House later this year that will seek progress on these issues. I will continue to work with all the women and men who support abortion law reform in New South Wales.

Bills like these do not come before our parliaments without a huge amount of work from people in our communities. I place on record my thanks to the staff who work in reproductive health clinics every day. These workers are champions for women. They truly understand that for women to be free they must have the right to decide whether to become a parent and, if they choose to do so, the number and timing of the children they will have. The workers in these clinics work under difficult circumstances. I hope that this bill is passed to give them the support they need to carry on this vital work.

I also thank the many women who have provided advice, support and suggestions as I have drafted this bill. To my friends south of the border in Victoria I say your work has paved the way for this bill in New South Wales and I thank you for your wise counsel. To my friends in unions, to those working as lawyers and to those working to advance equality for women in a variety of amazing organisations, I thank you for your guidance, support and patience as this bill has been put together. To the creative people behind the scenes who will work to gain support for this bill, thank you for your time and effort to bring the online campaign and real life campaign to life.

To the many women and men in the Labor Party who have been champions for abortion law reform and for the rights of women to live free from harassment, violence and intimidation, I thank you for your tenacity and continued support as we progress these issues together. Finally, I say to every woman who has ever been the subject of harassment and intimidation as they have tried to enter an abortion clinic, the behaviour you have had to contend with has no place in our community. It is wrong and it is shameful that our laws have not been able to give you the protection that you needed when you were at one of your most vulnerable points. Today with this bill we seek to ensure that no women in the future are subject to such unacceptable and harmful behaviour. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

*Motions***ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE****Debate called on and adjourned.****BIBLE SOCIETY 200TH ANNIVERSARY****The Hon. PAUL GREEN (10:36):** I move:

This House notes that:

- (a) the Bible Society was established on 7 March 1817 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife, Lady Macquarie, 200 years ago and one month before the first bank was established, the Bank of New South Wales, today known as Westpac;
- (b) the first patron of the Bible Society was Governor Lachlan Macquarie and to date the patron remains the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd);
- (c) on Sunday 5 March 2017, a National Celebration of the Bible was held to mark this special occasion, and:
 - (i) the event was hosted by Hillsong Church and Senior Pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston, with Dr Greg Clarke, CEO, of the Bible Society Australia, and Archbishop Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney;
 - (ii) the service was streamed online at www.bible.com.au, could be watched live on Australian Christian Channel or people could attend one of 47 church services around Australia;
 - (iii) Dr Greg Clarke, CEO of the Bible Society reflected on reaching this milestone, "We are honoured at the Bible Society Australia to be custodians and champions of the Word on behalf of all Christian Churches and organisations. It is wonderful to celebrate together across denominations, across the country around His Word today"; and
 - (iv) Dr Clarke also reflected, "We recognise that not everyone has had a good experience at the hands of people who have come to them carrying a Bible. We want to reverse that."
- (d) during the week commencing Sunday 5 March 2017, to mark its 200th anniversary in Australia, the Bible Society is giving a free copy of the Good Book to anyone in Australia who needs one and copies are available by visiting www.bible.com.au. I am pleased to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Bible Society earlier this month. In the early days of Australia—on Tuesday 7 March 1817—passionate community leaders like Governor Lachlan Macquarie and Lady Elizabeth Henrietta Macquarie created the Bible Society Australia. Governor and Lady Macquarie knew that building a nation required more than just a government; it would need people of hope and people who live the light. Governor Macquarie became the first patron of the society, and today the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), is the patron of the Bible Society. The Bible Society Australia is the oldest operational society in Australia, and the *Bible* has done Australians a lot of good. In his article commemorating the anniversary of the Bible Society Dr Clarke reflected on how the establishment of the Bible Society Australia has contributed to the strong foundations on which many of our bedrock institutions are built. He said:

We might not have seen the rapid rise of schools, places where children would be given a chance to flourish, where the task was to form them around the knowledge of God, so that they would also know themselves and learn to think thoughts after him.

In churches across this nation we would not have heard these words spoken week after week across the sprawling New Holland, just about to become 'Australia'.

It may be hard to believe, but without the Bible, we wouldn't have an Australian insurance industry. Or, better put, an assurance industry, because that is the Christian word that drove the founding of the AMP. This great institution's acronym stands for Australian Mutual Provident, a biblical term for what Galatians 6 describes as bearing one another's burdens, the assurance of comfort and support when everything is falling apart.

And Alfred Deakin couldn't have desired "a Christlike citizenship", nor could Sir Henry Parkes, drafting our constitution, have remarked that our whole system of jurisprudence is "interwoven with our Christian belief".

Nor could Governor-General Sir Isaac Isaacs have written of the Bible that "individuals and nations alike proclaim their own character and mould their own destiny by their attitude to its sublime teachings".

The history and heritage of our nation are embedded in our Judaeo-Christian values. Sadly, this is becoming an inconvenient truth but it is the truth. While the history of Australia has dark moments and actions that today we are still working on and are committed to reconciling, I am grateful for the solid foundation and constructive influence this book has had in shaping our State. The *Bible* is the world's most read book with more than five billion copies in print. Over the last 200 years the *Bible* has done Australia a lot of good. The *Bible* expresses a belief in human dignity, which I know is one of your core passions, Mr Deputy President. It is a foundation to

our human rights and our legal system. The *Bible* inspires a passion for community service. Of the 30 largest charities in Australia, 26 are faith based. The *Bible* teaches the values we cherish.

People of goodwill cherish these values, even if they choose not to believe the word of God. These values are most common in the Anzac statement, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." It is a *Bible* verse that captures our national vision for humility, sacrifice and friendship between equals. The *Bible* presents a vision of eternity. If there is one word in the *Bible* most Australians, and more specifically Sydneysiders, would recognise it is "eternity". It is the message of God's love for us in Jesus Christ, a love that will last forever. The Bible Society Australia is committed to giving access to the *Bible* across the world. Alongside this the society advocates for and engages Australians here at home and people around the world with the *Bible*. There is a lot more good work to be done; the work of the Bible Society Australia is not yet finished.

The Bible Society will continue to create new ways to advocate for the *Bible*, to promote it and to offer people new ways to engage with it. To pursue this mission, the Bible Society Australia undertakes a range of activities including translation, provision of free *Bibles* and running local *Bible* engagement programs. In many "post-Christian" countries, the Bible Society Australia advocates for the beauty, truth and goodness of the *Bible*. The Bible Society champions the *Bible* by engaging the media, universities, schools and prominent think tanks with high-quality and well-researched print, video and audio material about the relevance of Christianity in the twenty-first century. The Bible Society has active projects around the world including in Africa, Arab-Israel, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Iraqi, Laos, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, South Pacific, South Sudan, Syria and Vietnam.

On Sunday 5 March 2017 a national celebration of the *Bible* was held to mark the 200th anniversary of the Bible Society. The event was hosted by Hillsong Church and senior pastors Brian and Bobby Houston, Dr Greg Clarke, Chief Executive Officer of the Bible Society Australia, and Archbishop Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney. The service was streamed online and could be watched live on the Australian Christian Channel, or people could attend one of the 47 church services around Australia at which there was a live feed of the celebration. At the service Dr Clarke reflected:

We are honoured at the Bible Society Australia to be custodians and champions of the Word on behalf of all Christian Churches and organisations. It is wonderful to celebrate together across denominations, across the country around His Word today.

He also acknowledged something that the broader church is well aware of:

We recognise that not everyone has had a good experience at the hands of people who have come to them carrying a Bible. We want to reverse that.

The Prime Minister recently said, in connection with the terrorist event in London, that not all Muslims are terrorists. Unfortunately, some people within the church have done the wrong thing, and they need to be held to account for their actions. Mahatma Gandhi said something like "if you throw a bit of dirt in the ocean, it does not make the ocean dirty". I state today that the church in all its glory is a very sound, humane, generous, merciful and compassionate organisation. There are many different denominations, and many of us have probably frequented churches of different denominations. When I go out to speak on behalf of the Christian community I make it very clear that there is one church in many locations—that is, the church of Jesus Christ. We bring his humanity, his message of forgiveness and his message of hope to many in the churches. I am really proud of this motion. Many people probably have a fond memory of the hospital that they were born in.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: I was born at Gunnedah hospital.

The Hon. Walt Secord: I was born at Hamilton public hospital in Hamilton, Ontario.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Everyone remembers the hospital they were born in.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: I was born at St Margaret's.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: St Margaret's is a great hospital.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Do you remember your birth?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I do not remember that, but I remember my first kiss.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Tell us about that.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I will tell everyone—it was from my mum. I am sure she kissed me on the head and said, "You beauty." Apparently she then stuffed my fist into my mouth because I would not stop talking.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: And that hasn't stopped.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It has not stopped. Right from the beginning I was destined to become a politician! I am pretty sure that I was born at Liverpool.

The Hon. Walt Secord: In Sydney?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Yes, in Sydney. I want to make a comparison here because there was another time I was born—it was when I was born again spiritually. It was at what was then called the Hills Christian Life Centre, which is what we now know as Hillsong. We have heard lots of different things said about Hillsong but I always defend Hillsong because of its role in my life when I was heading in the wrong direction. Many of us have been in relationships that have been devastating, and we often wish that we could re-run the reel of the film of our lives and get it right. The good Lord interceded in my life and I did learn the word of God—the *Bible*. When I was nursing I put time aside every day to make sure I read the *Bible* because I knew that my life was not on the right track. The word was life and it taught me how to treat people differently, how to respond to negativity and gossip and how not to be part of a world that is constantly bringing people down but instead to react in a way that will lift people up.

Nelson Mandela says that the only time we should be looking down at people is when we are giving them a hand up. I responded to that call because someone from Hillsong who was working in the medical profession invited me to go with them to church. It changed my life. I was carrying a lot of heavy baggage and many burdens. Basically it equated to a lot of sin. Life had not gone how I had planned it. I thought I would be a really good, clean living, nice man by the time I was 21 and I was far from that in many ways. Certainly I was not meeting my expectations for the human being I would be by then. I responded to that word of God. It was life and it was real.

Today I continue to live many of those principles, in particular those from Proverbs. It is one of my favourite books. It is the book of wisdom and the book of Solomon basically. I would encourage anyone who does not know the way forward to take a look at Proverbs. There are 31 proverbs, one for each day of the month. I encourage anyone who wants to become wiser—and the *Bible* says to ask God, obviously—to read Proverbs. Reading a proverb a day will change a person's leadership and will change who they are in their relationships. It will make them a better person, a better leader and a better community member. So the *Bible* to me is very personal.

I appreciate that there are people all over the world who have different views about the *Bible*, but we must not take away from the core message and the reason that it is so important. I have been reflecting upon this coming up to Easter. The core message of the *Bible*, which is all the way through the *Bible*, comes from the question: Why did Jesus go to the cross? It was because he loves us so much. He did not need to. There was another way. But the *Bible* is very clear on the weight of the love of God himself—he put his son on the cross to respond to our sins, and to allow us to seek forgiveness and to be restored to all things that God would hope for us. It is much like a parent hopes for their child. Parents just want their children to win, to thrive, to prosper and to be all that they can be. We enjoy watching them as they grow. I think that is the heart of God's love for humanity. He made a way for that through Christ dying on the cross.

For me personally the message is that we do not have to perish and we can have eternal life, and that is what is different about this book. It does not stop on this side of eternity; it carries those who respond to it into the next level. Through prayer we get an insight into what life will be like on the other side with a God who is totally loving—where there are no tears, where there is no abuse and where there is no selfishness. There is no self-driven political agenda there. There is none of that. There is a place called heaven which is full of love, full of light and full of people who want to do the right thing by each other and by their God. It is a pretty significant story, and the *Bible* tells us that from chapter 1 of Genesis to chapter 22 of Revelations. It is a powerful book. It is a bit like a relationship—any relationship is only as good as what you put in. What you put in, you get back.

There are people who clinically excise the *Bible* and the word of God according to their education and according to their worldview. But the *Bible* says God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and his ways are different from our ways. As far as the heavens are from the earth so are his thoughts from our thoughts. So we might be hoping for a car parking space whereas he is hoping for the world for us. It is pretty special to think that God has so much love for each one of us and he wants to express that, and he has expressed that through the love, hope and forgiveness of Christ. I thank Pastor Brian Houston, because it is thanks to his ministry that I stand before the Chamber today a far better man, a far better husband, a far better brother and a far better son. Hopefully I am a far better citizen and representative of the people of New South Wales. I give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. For the rest of my life I will be forever thankful that he picked me up, through people, and gave me hope for the future.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (10:56): I speak in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Paul Green, and I thank him for bringing this motion to the House today. We can think of the *Bible* from time immemorial, but it is interesting to think about it over the last 200 years and what the Bible Society has seen. Even in my lifetime the *Bible* has gone from being this little red book that I got upon my confirmation to the version that now exists on an iPad or a smartphone. It can be referred to at any time. I also think back to the family bibles that my family has had.

My first *Bible* was one from the Bible Society. I remember getting it in scripture at school. It really was the first place that I came to find Christ. It was my first introduction, and it is a very powerful thing that the Bible Society does. I remember that being the *Good News New Testament*. Over the years I have had many other engagements with the work of the Bible Society in advocacy and spreading the *Bible*. Other organisations like Gideons International also do good work providing the *Bible* to people to help bring them to Christ. I refer back to my maiden speech where I said:

I enter this place a Christian and wish to acknowledge in this Chamber Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, the King of Kings. I bring my Christian values to this place, as much as they are the values that define me. It is set out in the Synoptic Gospels that the Lord said:

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

The place for God's laws is in the Bible; His statutes are written in the hearts of his followers. While I believe in Christian values and I seek to uphold them, I do not believe it is my place to legislate them. God gave us free will to choose what is right and wrong, whether we would follow him or repudiate him. I do not believe that government by power or coercion can change the hearts of mankind. In coming to this House with an abiding faith, I also come to this place with a respect for the divergent faiths and cultures that exist within our community. I respect and will uphold the rights of individuals to practise any faith or no faith free from government interference or tyranny. I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of my good friend Vic Alhadeff. I also respect and encourage the political role of the church and religious organisations. While I do not believe the *Bible*, *Torah*, *Quran* or any religious text should be used as the yardstick for determining public policy, I do believe that religious institutions play an important role in our political discourse and debate. I welcome that role. It is a role I welcome. My view has not changed since I entered this place. I still believe while we should not be in this place to legislate on behalf of churches, we should listen to their views and those of churchgoers just as we listen to the views of anyone else in our community. We should listen freely and we should allow people to practise their beliefs freely. People should be able to espouse their views freely, whatever they may be and whether or not we agree with them. Unfortunately, while the 200-year anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Bible Society have attracted good free media, the attacks on the society and the institutions that support it are concerning. It is worrying that people cannot express themselves freely and engage in discourse.

The Bible Society developed the "Keeping it Light" series of debates as part of its anniversary celebrations. I do not believe corporations should involve themselves in this field. However, Coopers Brewery sponsored a small debate between politicians who put opposing views on same-sex marriage. It did not involve two politicians putting a view in support of or opposing same-sex marriage. It was an open, courteous, polite debate in which two opposing views were put by two members of the Coalition who are mates but who hold different views. The uproar in response to Coopers Brewery being associated with the debate was very sad for political discourse and expression of opinion in this country.

In response to that and in an attempt to protect its corporate brand, Coopers Brewery then chose to come out in support of Australian Marriage Equality. I have no problem with the company doing that, but it also renounced its support for the debates. That is extremely sad. I have nothing against anyone who supports marriage equality, and they should be free to express their opinions, as Tim Wilson did in the debate. However, for those with an opposing view to be shot down and attacked, as Coopers Brewery was, is disgraceful. The Hon. Paul Green states in his motion:

... the Bible Society was established on 7 March 1817 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife, Lady Macquarie, two hundred years ago and one month before the first bank was established, the Bank of New South Wales, today known as Westpac ...

Members of the Lachlan Macquarie Institute are now being hounded out of their jobs and are having to resign from their positions at the institute because their views are incompatible with their employers' support for marriage equality. Mark Allaby at IBM has had to resign from his position at the institute, and PricewaterhouseCoopers has come under similar pressure. The same thing is now happening with Steve Chavura at Macquarie University. It is one thing for an organisations to support Australian Marriage Equality or a certain position, but for the social justice warriors and the Twitterati to require that every employee comply with and espouse those views is very dangerous. I am glad that I can express my opinions freely in this place, with the privileges and protections that it affords. We all know that freedom of speech carries with it the need to be responsible and to be able to defend what we say. Sometimes the things we say are not popular and do not enjoy majority support, but we should be able to say them.

Those who espouse Christian views or any other views, but particularly about a religious faith, should be able to observe that faith free from the fear of persecution. I worry more and more about what is happening in our society: people are no longer able to express their views and religious beliefs freely for fear of the consequences and the corporate ramifications. In recent days both the Lachlan Macquarie Institute and the Australian Christian Lobby have sought from the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission the right to keep their lists of directors private because of fears of reprisals against their members. That is a very concerning development. The Hon. Paul Green's motion refers to the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Glenn Davies. I declare that Anglicanism is my faith. The Archbishop was recently reported in the *Australian* as saying:

"It's a very sad day in an Australian society which honours free speech and freedom of religion that one can be attacked because one holds to a particular faith ...

"If religion is worth its salt, it is other-person centred.

"These social media attackers, they are all 'me'-centred—it's all about me and protecting my point of view and anyone who disagrees with me has to be vilified or ostracised or marginalised in such a way that the whole society goes against them.

"That is an appalling, un-Australian aspect which we need to address and needs to be knocked on the head by government. Multinational companies need to take a stand on this and show a little steel in their backbones; not be so weak-kneed in regard to addressing the issue and standing firm for their values."

I could not agree more with Archbishop Davies on that point. It is not only the followers of the Christian faith who should prosecute this case; politicians should do so also, whatever our views may be. People who support marriage equality should be free to do so.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I understand the intent of the motion. Debates such as this are wideranging in nature, but I encourage members not to be distracted by other issues and to confine their remarks to the leave of the motion.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. Those who support the Bible Society should also be able to express their opinions.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Absolutely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Bible Society has been a wonderful charity, and it has a firm place in Australian culture and society. As the Hon. Paul Green states in his motion, it also enjoys the support of many Christian churches. The motion refers to the event being held at the Hillsong Church. Of course, it did not exist 200 years ago when the Bible Society was established.

The Hon. Paul Green: There were plenty of Christians around then.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I acknowledge that interjection. However, I do not believe they would have had the same music. Of course, the Anglican Church was very strong in those early days. Archbishop Glenn Davies attended the event at the Hillsong Church. The Bible Society is embraced by many different organisations. The "Keeping it Light" campaign was launched to mark the anniversary, and the society explained it by stating:

Keeping it Light is a short series of videos showing that it is possible to have a light discussion on the heaviest topics. It's one of the ways we're celebrating 200 years of the Bible and Bible Society in Australia.

If there's one thing we've learnt in recent days, it's that we, as a nation, need to learn how to talk, and how to listen, to people we disagree with.

It's much more interesting to talk and listen to people who see things differently to us. Sure it's not easy or comfortable at times. But then, it's probably why so much of the Bible is about how to have conversations with each other and with God. It then refers to James 1:9, "Everyone should be slow to speak and quick to listen". I think they are words that all of us, whatever our faith, should heed. We all should consider those words when we engage in public discourse, whether it be in this place or in the community, because we need more of that sort of discourse, not less. Today in this country we need the type of discourse that was encouraged 200 years ago by the establishment of the Bible Society—discourse that respects people's religious views but one that is free and that allows advocacy of the *Bible* and the work of Christian faith organisations as well as that of other faiths.

I am glad that, like the originator of the organisation, Governor Lachlan Macquarie, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley was also in attendance at the event to mark 200 years of the Bible Society. That is most fitting. Of course, as the motion mentions, the church is a very imperfect body. The church, like humans, is not perfect. People have done dreadful things in the name of the church and no-one in this Chamber would or could ever support those actions. But the *Bible* is not just the word of God, but God's word. It is important for all those of the Christian faith to remember that it is part of God's compact with us. I wish the Bible Society all the best for the future. No doubt it will go on to celebrate its 300th year, its 400th year and beyond, and will continue to be an important part of Australian culture. While it has been a testing time for the Bible Society recently, its 200th anniversary celebrations have brought the society to prominence and shown people that the organisation remains relevant and will continue to be at the forefront of Australian society. I commend the Hon. Paul Green for his motion.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (11:11): I am pleased to support the motion moved by the Hon. Paul Green. The motion states:

This House notes that:

- (a) the Bible Society was established on 7 March 1817 by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife, Lady Macquarie, 200 years ago and one month before the first bank was established, the Bank of New South Wales, today known as Westpac;
- (b) the first patron of the Bible Society was Governor Lachlan Macquarie and to date the patron remains the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General the Hon. David Hurley, AC, DSC, (Ret'd);
- (c) on Sunday 5 March 2007, a National Celebration of the Bible was held to mark this special occasion, and:

- (i) the event was hosted by Hillsong Church and Senior Pastors, Brian and Bobbie Houston; with Dr Greg Clarke, CEO of the Bible Society Australia; and Archbishop Glenn Davies, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney;
 - (ii) the service was streamed online at www.bible.com.au, could be watched live on Australian Christian Channel or people could attend one of 47 church services around Australia;
 - (iii) Dr Greg Clarke, CEO, of the Bible Society reflected on reaching this milestone: "We are honoured at the Bible Society Australia to be custodians and champions of the Word on behalf of all Christian Churches and organisations. It is wonderful to celebrate together across denominations, across the country around His Word today"; and
 - (iv) Dr Clarke also reflected: "We recognise that not everyone has had a good experience at the hands of people who have come to them carrying a Bible. We want to reverse that."
- (d) during the week commencing Sunday 5 March 2017, to mark its 200th anniversary in Australia, the Bible Society is giving a free copy of the Good Book to anyone in Australia who needs one and copies are available by visiting bible.com.au.

I am pleased to join other members in supporting the motion. The *Bible*, of course, is very close to the Christian Democratic Party. As a Christian party, we endeavour to base our policies on the *Bible*. Our party is unusual in that its constitution and national charter contain a statement of faith. I do not think any other political party has had a statement of faith. I designed it when I formed the party way back in 1974. Our statement of belief states:

- (a) **GOD**: We believe there is one creator God, eternal, manifested as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- (b) **THE BIBLE**: We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, inerrant, written Word of God and the final authority above all man's laws and government.
- (c) **CIVIL GOVERNMENT**: We believe civil government to be under the authority of God. (Romans 13:4).
- (d) **THREE GOD-ORDAINED INSTITUTIONS**: We believe that God has ordained three institutions—1. The family, 2. The church, 3. The civil government, each with their own special responsibilities, duties and authority.

Many members are involved in those three institutions: our families, our church and as members of this House in civil government. We believe it is a legitimate activity of all citizens to participate in government, whether as candidates or as voters on election day. The final point in our National Charter refers to the prayer that we say at the beginning of each day in this place:

Almighty God, we humbly beseech thee to vouchsafe thy blessing upon this Parliament, direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of our State and Australia, Amen.

That is a wonderful prayer, which I understand we inherited from the British Parliament back in the 1600s. The prayer refers to the "advancement of Thy glory". The question is, how do we do that? The proposition I put to the House is that to advance the glory of God we need to know the will of God. How do we know the will of God? God has revealed his will through the inspired written word of God, which we call the *Holy Bible*, and of course also through the living word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, by studying the word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can discern the will of God. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished in all good works. That is the foundation of our Christian Democratic Party and, with God's help, we endeavour with our every effort to uphold and to live in accordance with those words. As has been stated already, this year the Bible Society is celebrating its 200th anniversary—March 1817 to March 2017. It was established in Sydney in 1817. The Bible Society of Australia was inaugurated at the instigation of Governor Lachlan Macquarie in Sydney on 7 March 1817. The first Australasian translation was a selection of scriptures in the Maori language and was printed in 1827. Over the centuries Christian missionaries desired to translate the *Bible* not only into English but into other languages around the world. The *Bible* often was the first book that for many tribes and races was translated into their own language.

The Bible Society is an Australian non-profit organisation involved in the translation, publishing and distribution of the Christian *Bible*. It engages people with the *Bible* and provides literacy support. The Bible Society's activities take place as part of the United Bible Societies, which is a global network operating across 200 countries and territories. The society is one of the most extensive mission groups in the world and works in partnership with churches providing resources and *Bible* focus campaigns and community programs. In return, the Bible Society enjoys the support of all churches across all denominations, and partners with other organisations and areas of publishing and literacy development, including UNESCO and Youth Bible engagement.

In 2010 the Bible societies in each Australian State merged into a new single organisation with the title Bible Society Australia. The Bible Society is the oldest continuing operating organisation in Australia and has always been closely tied to the leadership of the nation, with governors, business leaders and senior clergy featuring in the society's history. Its main role is to ensure that the *Bible* is available in Australia in Aboriginal languages as well as other world languages. The *Bible* has been translated into the largest number of languages of

any publication. The production and distribution of copies of the *Bible* have engaged the attention of Christian leaders for centuries.

According to my information, in a letter dated 331 AD, Emperor Constantine—who was the first Christian Roman emperor—requested Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, to provide him with 50 copies of the Old and New Testaments for use in the principal churches in Constantinople. As we know, when Constantine became a Christian, he and his wife played a major role in strengthening the church and also in helping to restore churches that had fallen into disrepair under the earlier emperors, who were anti-Christian. Christians were persecuted and many churches were destroyed. Emperor Constantine restored the *Bible* to its place of importance and rebuilt churches all the way to Jerusalem, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In 797, Charlemagne commissioned Alcuin to prepare an amended text of the Vulgate. Multiple copies of this text were created in the famous writing schools at Tours. The Latin *Bible* was the first book to be printed in Europe. Copinger estimates that 124 editions of the Vulgate had been issued by the end of the century. The Italian *Bible* was printed a dozen times before 1500 AD and 18 editions of the German *Bible* had been published before Martin Luther's version appeared. From medieval times and then accompanying the Protestant Reformation, there was a marked increase in copies of the scriptures. Notwithstanding the oppositional attitude adopted by the Roman Catholic Church at and after the Council of Trent in 1545 to 1563, translation and circulation of the *Bible* were undertaken with greater zeal and in a more systemic fashion.

In 1710 the Canstein Bible Institute was founded in Halle, Brandenburg-Prussia, by Karl Hildebrand, Count of Canstein, for the mass production of affordable copies of the *Bible*. The first organisation called the Bible Society was formed in 1779 to distribute the Bibles to soldiers and seamen. The modern Bible Society movement dates back to the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804, when a group of Christians sought to address the problem of a lack of affordable Bibles in Welsh for Welsh-speaking Christians. Although perceived as Protestant, from the early days the British and Foreign Bible Society was officially ecumenical, working with Protestant and Catholic churches. It allowed inclusion of the Apocrypha, which was part of the *Bible* approved by the Catholic Church.

As a reaction to the occasional inclusion of those books and other issues, the Trinitarian Bible Society was founded in 1831. Pope Gregory XVI, in his 1844 encyclical letter, condemned both Bible societies and "the publication, dissemination, reading and possession of vernacular translations of sacred scriptures". Subsequently, the Catholic Church did not officially participate in the Bible Society. There was a fear in the Catholic Church that if the *Bible* was put in the language of the common people, it could lead to controversy, misunderstandings and misinterpretations. I do not believe that fear was justified and it has not been proven correct. It is important that the *Bible* is provided to all people in society, not just the upper class. The working class obviously had problems learning to read, but we thank God that, with the introduction of schools, everybody had the opportunity to learn to read and were then able to read the *Bible*.

The British and Foreign Bible Society extended its work to England, India, Europe and beyond. Auxiliary branches were set up all over the world and later became Bible societies in their own right. Today, the United Bible Societies coordinate the work of the separate Bible societies. Each Bible Society is a non-denominational Christian network that works to translate, revise, print and distribute affordable Bibles in their own lands according to the demands of all the churches in that land. I am pleased to support the motion moved by the Hon. Paul Green. I move that this debate be adjourned to the next sitting day.

Debate adjourned.

Bills

MOTOR ACCIDENT INJURIES BILL 2017

Messages

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments to the abovementioned bill.

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

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 9 March 2017.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (11:28): On behalf of the Christian Democratic Party, I speak in debate on Mr Jeremy Buckingham's private member's bill, the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. The objective of this bill is to expressly prohibit the granting of new authorisations to prospect for or mine coal in New South Wales under the Mining Act 1992. NSW Mining states on its website: Mining has

been part of NSW for more than 200 years, providing jobs, independence and wealth. No state has played a more prominent role in the history of Australian mining than NSW. Coal mining in Australia began near Nobbys Head in Newcastle in the 1790s, with the first coal shipment leaving Newcastle in 1799.

Mr Justin Field: Clean coal?

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: It might have been a bit dirtier back then but it is much cleaner now. This was Australia's first commodity export. Newcastle and Wollongong, and their bustling ports, as well as towns like Broken Hill, drove the New South Wales economy from the late 1800s onwards. Now Newcastle is the largest coal export port. South of Sydney the Illawarra has flourished on the back of the region's high-grade coking coal, supporting major industries such as steel production and manufacturing. Since the first mining operation began at Mount Keira in 1848 the Illawarra has remained one of the leading producers of steel and steel products in the South-East Asian region, with Port Kembla facilitating coal and steel exports. Mining, especially coalmining, has been occurring since settlement. Mining has established regional centres across New South Wales including at Newcastle, Broken Hill, Wollongong, Cessnock, Muswellbrook, Lithgow, Orange, Gunnedah and Cobar. Today, hundreds of businesses rely on mining.

I applaud Mr Buckingham's understanding of the importance of regional jobs in New South Wales, as he stated that the bill will not cancel the 175 existing coal exploration licences, or the 333 existing coalmining licences. The Christian Democratic Party believes that we must let the government of the day govern. This includes providing first-class jobs-growth opportunities and a thriving economy. Given my six years in this place, I really do not believe that this State would be the State it is if we had left it to The Greens to govern. The Christian Democratic Party has always supported doing the right thing in the right way and in the right order.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times, and that responding to them is also disorderly.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The Christian Democratic Party [CDP] honestly believes that future opportunities in this field could be sterilised by this bill. It does not provide fair and just processes for businesses. I make it very clear: we must apply the precautionary principle to various forms of uncertainty, as noted by Professor Mary O'Kane, the New South Wales Chief Scientist and Engineer. We cannot go blindly into developing resource industries without considering the risk to water supply, prime agricultural land and the overall long-term wellbeing of our environment. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution, but I believe this bill tries to provide that.

One of the Christian Democratic Party principles is to favour a totally integrated environment for sustainability—that is, a social, economic and physical approach. The CDP believes that environmental issues are important because, as far as we are concerned, the environment is God given and sustains life. We have been charged with being great stewards of the environment. Humans have an obligation to manage the environment responsibly and to mitigate, where feasible, environmental change and pollution. It should be remembered that the Earth was made for humankind. The environment should be kept in perspective as the servant to humankind. The CDP acknowledges that NSW Mining has a responsibility to ensure mining does not adversely affect the environment. NSW Mining's website states:

While mining only uses around 0.1% of the land in NSW, our mining operations must be planned, operated and completed to minimise potential impacts on land and biodiversity, water, air quality and noise. Plans for mining projects go through rigorous independent scientific assessments to make sure environmental impact are minimised and managed, and we invest huge resources in new and innovative ways to reduce our footprint. ... Mining is a temporary land use and when mining is complete, we restore the land to valuable post-mining uses that are determined by the government. We put a lot of effort and resources into making sure that the land can be used for agriculture, biodiversity conservation or other uses.

The Christian Democratic Party encourage renewable energies. We do not think that coal is the answer to all things. We are very open to renewable energy. This morning a member of this place spoke about batteries. One of the great advances in technology has occurred in that area.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Nuclear power.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: My colleague Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile mentions nuclear power. We have heard that option discussed more frequently. The use of nuclear power could drive Australia's economy into the future if generators were built in South Australia where a lot of jobs have been lost. It is reasonable to investigate technological advances in that area. Just about every roof in Australia should have solar panels to take advantage of the 20 million degree sun, which shines on most days. We should harvest the sun's energy. The use of tesla batteries could complement that—we have seen one sample of them—by storing solar energy. One of the challenges has been in minimising the loss of energy because, although we can capture it, we cannot transport it or store it for long enough.

Switching to renewable power can help businesses to achieve their carbon emission reduction goals and manage fluctuating energy costs, whilst providing better energy security. However, we look to other States where

renewable energies have not delivered or have been found to be short on delivery. We should continue cautiously to embrace renewable energies, but also continue to ensure supply and affordability to families. We understand we need to use a mix of energy sources as we work towards caring for God's creation. One of the biggest challenges is affordable energy. That is where nuclear energy comes into play. It is a cheaper, cleaner energy. That is an inconvenient truth. Energy costs are going to go up, creating a perfect storm.

At the moment there are probably three million people across Australia who are over the age of 65, but by 2050 that number could rise to 7.1 million. I know a lot of pensioners who use their electricity very wisely. They turn off fans on hot days and turn down heaters on cold nights. They have only a couple of lights on and they use a couple of blankets rather than flicking a switch. In their day, certainly during the Great Depression, people learnt how to live on very little. They learnt to switch off the lights and do whatever they could to remain comfortable but also to pay the power bills at the end of the day. Every penny was valuable to them.

We live in a culture that is blessed and prosperous. We can leave the taps running a little longer and have extra long showers, if we want. I do not do that but some of my generation do that. People leave fans and lights on because they did not experience a time when people had to be frugal to save every single penny because their lives depended on it. As we grow older, money is not as easy to come by as it was when we were younger, and people have to ensure that they can pay the bills. A number of elderly people become stressed if they believe they may not be able to pay their energy bills. In the real world it is a great concern for a lot of people.

One way that members in this place can play a part is by ensuring that we take every opportunity to provide affordable, cheap energy. Energy must be affordable for the elderly and for families that are struggling to pay for their two cars, their mortgages and their school fees, even when both parents are working. It is a real challenge. The continuing increase in energy prices reduces its affordability and is not very helpful to a lot of families. The mix of energy sources is a good and necessary part of basic systems—I think it is 40 per cent that is promoted. New developments must be able to show savings in, for example, water, energy, recycling, re-storing or harvesting water for better uses. For example, water going from the tank to the sink then to the toilet and then out rather than straight from the basin, down the sink and out. In many correctional centres the wastewater from washing hands goes through to the toilet for flushing, so it uses greywater.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Wash your hands in the toilet.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: The sink is above the toilet. The person washes their hands at the sink and the water goes into the settling tank so that when it is flushed later the water has already been used twice. It is incredible.

The PRESIDENT: I ask members not to interject, regardless of how tempting it might be to do so.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Smarter use of our resources is very important and, as I noted earlier, so is smarter use of the energy mix, but one thing is for certain: Coal is a large part of that mix. Tens of thousands of people are paying their mortgages, paying off their cars, educating their children, putting food on the table and trying to get the most out of life with their loved ones and in their communities. But they cannot do that without jobs. Creating the wonderful utopia without coal and moving to renewables will be an incredible transition, but we must ensure that people are able to make that transition. It could put a lot of pressure on marriages and families because dad or mum suddenly has to move to a different sector that may not pay as much or be as secure—the job might last for only a couple of years.

The coal industry has lasted hundreds of years. It has shown itself to be faithful and very prosperous for the economies of New South Wales and Australia. One cannot simply slam this type of a bill on the table without considering its impact on every man, woman and child in Australia. The coal industry also has benefits overseas. I am led to believe that millions of households around the globe continue to use manure and wood to light household fires, and that as a result millions of people die of respiratory disease.

Mr Scot MacDonald: It is about three million.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I acknowledge that interjection. People are burning manure and wood in their huts because it is too cold to be outside. They cook with it. A lot of people develop lung disease and die. Coal is actually a real blessing to many people because it is a cleaner fuel than manure or wood, and it will not kill their family. It enables them to access electricity and provides some amazing results. As I have said, the member did not talk about shutting what already exists; he talked about what might exist, but he should be mindful of its true cost. To conclude, we do not want to rip the foundations away from businesses that are trying to build, grow, deliver jobs and investment, provide ethically sustainable products and do the right thing by the environment. We have never had a problem when the right thing is done the right way and in the right order—the right boxes have been ticked through the investigation and planning stages; the right thing has been done by the community; consultation has been done correctly; and the environment is being looked after.

We have no problem with that. What we do have a problem with is those companies that think they can take shortcuts and leave our environment worse off, make our waterways vulnerable and destroying our prime agricultural land. So much so that some time ago Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and I agreed with the moratorium on coal seam gas and fracking over a five-year period. We are committed to working with those opposite against the destruction of waterways, the environment and prime agricultural land. We need to be measured in our actions. We do not have a problem with Mr Jeremy Buckingham introducing this bill because raising these types of issues helps keep the Government accountable and enables it to see the true impacts of its actions. On this occasion we will not be supporting this bill, but we will continue to watch this with great interest.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (11:44): I also indicate my non-support for the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. This is not a bill or legislation—this is a tweet. It is designed to be put out there in social media. It is designed to get video footage of various speeches for and against. It is designed to shore up preselection. It is designed to shore up The Greens numbers. It is part of a Left-Right renewal war within The Greens. This is not a serious bill. It was never meant as a serious bill. Something similar to this bill was put forward in the lead-up to the last State election and was rejected, rightly, by the public. It has no foundation in reality for New South Wales.

When this bill or its sister policy was put in 2015, I went down the mines of Myuna on the Central Coast to talk to the miners about it. I asked them, "Do you know what The Greens are proposing?" At that stage it was a little bit more radical. From memory, it was to close all coalmines within three years. They were horrified, of course. I later spoke to some miners at Maitland, who were also horrified. They told me this community and the Myuna mine has been feeding the coal-fired generators around the area since the 1960s. They were proud people and they were very proud of their work. They were very proud about keeping the lights on. They work in a very dangerous environment. Underground mining is a difficult occupation. I take my hat off to the people who do such dangerous work so that we may live a comfortable, secure and affordable lifestyle.

Most of us take for granted that when we walk into a room at night the light comes on, or when we open the refrigerator door in the morning the light comes on. I have been to parts of the world where these things cannot be taken for granted. I have been to places in Africa where people do not have refrigeration. I particularly remember that in the city of Dar es Salaam the power goes out for approximately six or eight hours of the day. They do not know when the power will go out, so it is always a bit of a lottery. We visited a hospital that had to be very finely attuned to it: As soon as the power went out they would hit the diesel generator and hope that the surgeons were able to continue their work. The reality of variable, inconsistent, unaffordable power is an eye-opener.

This is not a bill—this is a tweet and it is designed to be a political wedge. I remind the House that on 10 February this year, peak usage in New South Wales was 14,087 megawatts at 5 o'clock. And where did our power come from? The Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] has a very good website and a very good record of where and when we get our power, which I urge all members to look at. Of course, usage changes during the day. I refer to a graph that shows a brown column, which represents the black coal of New South Wales, which is a consistent part of the graph. The line hardly moves. It sits at approximately 6,500 megawatts. Then there is gas, which comes in at the peak times, mainly in the middle of the day. It made a good contribution, particularly around 4.00 p.m.

On the graph the blue line represents hydro's contribution, which looks really good. It kicks in when the system is under stress at about 4:30 p.m. Finding other sources of power on the graph needs a magnifying glass. Their contribution is hardly discernible and is made up of wind generation—good luck to anybody trying to discern how much wind energy was generated in New South Wales—and its contribution finishes at 6.30 p.m. Then there are net imports, represented by the dark-yellow line, which indicates when New South Wales was drawing energy from the National Energy Market [NEM]. I urge people to note the contribution of rooftop solar. Its contribution finishes around 5.00 p.m. It makes a reasonable contribution starting at about 7.00 a.m. and peaks at around 11.00 a.m. until noon. The point to watch in the graph is where New South Wales draws its power at around 5.00 p.m. The State comfortably pulls its power from coal generation, with gas making a significant contribution and hydro doing a lot of heavy lifting. As I said, wind goes to bed and solar packs up for the day, so we draw some energy from the NEM.

This bill advocating for no new coalmines is essentially a tweet. If we were to have no new coalmines in New South Wales, in about 20 years we probably would have a very different graph for our sources of energy generation. People would get home and switch on their stove, switch on their lights and open the refrigerator only to find not a lot happening. If they looked at their mobile phone Mr Jeremy Buckingham may have sent them a tweet saying, "How is it going, guys? Are you enjoying your caveman existence?" The voters will see through this bill. It is disrespectful and not cognisant of the 2020 target for renewable energy in New South Wales. I think

20 per cent is a sensible target, and it is probably largely reflected, at least during certain parts of the day, in the graph.

We also have the 2050 no net carbon emissions target. New South Wales is treading a manageable and affordable path that is cognisant of our responsibilities to the environment and even the Paris agreement. We are headed in the right direction. We do not need tweets instead of policy from The Greens and the sovereign risk that accompanies this bill. New South Wales is enjoying a great reputation at the moment as an infrastructure builder, a place to invest and to do business. New South Wales offers everything from education for international students to agricultural and mining opportunities. This legislation says that New South Wales is closed for business—anywhere a business chooses to invest could be affected by The Greens saying, "No compensation is payable on behalf of the State".

New South Wales is currently the most successful economy in Australia and it is strongly pulling along the rest of the country. Our unemployment figures are good, our economy is growing strongly, and our businesses and residents are confident. We lead the nation on all those indicators. This bill would be the death knell for our State. I remind members opposite that legislation such as this affects families. I well remember having a chat with school captains at Lochinvar, asking them how things were going and what their fathers did. One school captain said, "He's a miner". I asked if he worked nearby. He answered, "He used to work nearby. Now he flies up to Queensland to try to keep a roof over our heads and the mortgage paid." That meant the family was apart for something like 10 days out of 14.

I have seen the effects of movements in the coal price, which affects the Hunter because at times it is doing well and at other times it is doing not so well. The Hunter in particular has a strong, proud history of both power generation and coalmining for the domestic market and the international market. We do not determine how other countries generate their electricity. I cannot come to grips with the ethos of The Greens, particularly those in New South Wales, that suggests they know what is best for the people of Asia or sub-Asia, "We will tell you how we think you should run your lives, when you should electrify your villages, where you should keep the power going in the more industrial parts of the world." These countries are working through their mix of energy sources and they are changing—there is no question about that.

It is the height of elitism for us to say such things to people in India, China, Korea, Taiwan, Japan or wherever else that members on the other side know best about power generation. The Greens want to dictate to others that they should not use a product that is integral to New South Wales. Some members of Labor Party in the Hunter, such as the member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr, are very clear and transparent when they speak to members of their communities. I have a lot of admiration for Clayton and I admire the Federal member for Hunter, Joel Fitzgibbons. They back industries in their communities and they are upfront about this. However, Labor Party members in Macquarie Street become another beast. I have seen media reports of left-wing members of the Labor Party attending sit-ins and protests—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Name them.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Name them.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: The Hon. Penny Sharpe is one who comes to mind. There is a dishonesty in the Labor Party that is unfortunate because members in the Hunter are not backed by their colleagues. That means that members of the Labor Party are at sixes and sevens over future debates about gas. They do not know where they stand, while members on this side appreciate how important power is to the economy. The \$1 billion per year royalty makes a difference to our communities and our ability to service our communities. Members on this side are consistent and we have realistic goals. We are cognisant of our obligations to find an energy mix that communities want moving forward and that will be backed by communities.

Members on this side of the House have a deep understanding of how to find that mix. Members on the other side of the House put out tweets dressed up as legislation. The Labor Party is deeply divided about where it stands on power generation. It often comes down to what members of the Labor Party last read in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. It is good that The Greens bring forward legislation such as this bill, which enables the public to see what The Greens stand for. If this legislation were to be passed, it would be devastating for the New South Wales economy, particularly regions such as the Hunter and the Central Coast. It would lead to the loss of thousands of jobs and social disruption on a scale I cannot even begin to imagine.

I believe New South Wales has found the right trajectory on power generation. I am proud that the State has proven that it can manage energy generation to meet demand. I believe that we have got it about right, and that is why people are moving to this State. That is why South Australia is the mendicant State and it will continue to be so for years to come. South Australia is an industrial wasteland that is experiencing some of the highest unemployment in this country, whereas New South Wales can look people in the eye and say we have a good

energy mix. We are on the right pathway to meeting our 20 per cent renewable target. I believe we are following the right policy. I cannot support this tweet bill and I look forward to it being voted down.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (11:59): I speak on behalf of The Greens on the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. I apologise to the Chamber that I am a little croaky today, but I will speak, yell and chant until I am hoarse on this issue. This is the most important thing we will discuss in this Chamber today, this month and this year—that is, taking action to deal with climate change. The object of this bill is to prohibit the granting of new authorisations to prospect or mine for coal. It is an important time to be having this conversation in our Parliament. In the last 12 months, coral bleaching on a scale that has not been seen before in modern history has occurred on the Great Barrier Reef, and we have seen the first ever coral bleaching in Sydney Harbour.

Thousands of hectares of mangrove forest just curled up and died in North Queensland. The loss of this essential habitat is having an impact on the fishing industry and the marine environment. What will happen to the tourism industry as a result of coral bleaching? Cyclone Debbie, which had the highest wind speeds ever recorded in Queensland, crossed the coast this week and continued its destructive path south. What will happen to industry and jobs if we do not get a handle on climate change? The heatwave in February was the worst ever in terms of maximum temperatures and sustained periods of heat, and it has been linked to increased deaths. Climate change is having an impact right now. It is not something off in the future; it is here now and it is appropriate that we take urgent action.

I acknowledge the tireless work, the activism and the campaigning of Mr Jeremy Buckingham, who has raised these issues in the community. He is not afraid to go to the Hunter and to have honest conversations with the people there about the future. I have been up there with him. We are not afraid to take this message to the people because it is absolutely essential that we talk about it. Those opposite are stuck in the past. We saw Mr Scot MacDonald parading a chart before the Chamber. Of course that is the investment strategy that those opposite have created for us—a system of energy creation and distribution that does not meet the needs of a changing climate. It is time that we corrected that.

Coal mining and burning is the biggest single contributor to New South Wales carbon emissions, with almost 80 per cent of the State's emissions coming from the extraction, processing and burning of fossil fuels. It is the single biggest contributor to the destruction of our climate. The single biggest contribution that we can make to fixing that is to phase out coal, and we should start by ruling out new coalmines. Let us be clear: this bill is not about shutting down existing coalmines and power stations; it is about stopping new coalmines. It gives certainty to industry. It sets a timeline for putting in place renewable energy to replace coal. It signals a clear intention from government that it takes climate change seriously.

The Christian Democratic Party gave us a history lesson on coal. I and everybody in The Greens acknowledge the role coal has played in our economy, in providing jobs and in providing power. My brother worked in coalmines in Queensland. My father burns coal for a living. So do not talk to me about jobs and the families working in this industry; I understand what this means. I am prepared to stand up here and talk about what we need to do. There are no jobs on a dead planet, and that is the direction in which we are heading.

The Government's own climate change policy is to get to net zero emissions by 2050. How can the Government possibly reach its own target if it does not draw a line under fossil fuel mining and burning in this State? At the time of the announcement of the Government's policy, Fairfax media reported that it understood the new framework, despite not having any direction or targets over that time to meet the overall goal, was about elevating the issue of climate change and carbon emissions within Cabinet and providing a prism through which other policies would be assessed. Coal policy is exactly what needs to be looked at when it comes to action to reduce emissions and respond to the risks of climate change. Based on what Mr Scot MacDonald has just said, the reality is that the Government's policy is a sham. What do we think will happen in 20 years time? It is clear that the Government's intention is to continue the mining and burning of coal in this State, and that is just not feasible when we look at the science of climate change.

The reality is that the Government is blowing half the money it is putting aside under that plan to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam. While the Government was announcing this policy, it was making it easier to clear land—and that makes the task of reaching climate emission reduction targets even harder. The Greens recognise that failing to deal with climate change is the single biggest risk to communities, to the environment and to the economy. There is a lot that we need to do, but we must start with action to reduce emissions from burning fossil fuels. In New South Wales those emissions come predominantly from coal.

I cannot conclude my speech today without casting an eye over what is going on in my home State of Queensland at the moment. We are facing the very real possibility that construction of the largest coalmine in the world will start before the end of the year. This mine would extract 2.3 billion tonnes of coal over its lifetime and

be responsible for 4.7 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, which is nine times Australia's average annual greenhouse gas emissions. It would be an environmental and climatic disaster. If the New South Wales Government really wants to reach zero net emissions by 2050 then it should show some leadership now. Supporting this legislation to ensure no new coalmines in the State will challenge Labor's abysmal policy of support for the Adani coalmine in Queensland and position New South Wales as a national leader in this debate. From that position of leadership we can attract and build the new industries that will not only deal with this problem but also set us on a path to deal with climate change in the future.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (12:04): The Whip tells me that we are going to rock and roll on this debate on the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016 until it is finished, so I thought I would come into the Chamber and have my say. I was sitting in my office listening to this debate. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party does not support this bill for one very simple reason—that is, if the bill were to pass through both Houses then it could seriously impact on the plan to build two new two-megawatt generators in the Hunter Valley. Yes, there may be sufficient coal in the existing mines to make that work. My party does not subscribe to the CO2 mantra. The Greens may believe it, and obviously a lot of people do, but we do not.

If we were to support this bill, it could seriously impact on the Government of New South Wales, whichever government it is, when it comes to being capable of installing more coal-fired capacity to try to pull the whole of the country out of the you-know-what. New South Wales should take the lead, and I acknowledge the contribution of Mr Justin Field on that point, but the lead comes in keeping the lights on in this country. I do not know whether anyone heard Mr Alan Jones on the radio this morning. I know he is a friend of Mr Jeremy Buckingham. Mr Alan Jones was quick to point out that right now there are 2,500 new coal-fired generators being built worldwide today. I decry this legislation.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (12:06): I speak for the Labor Opposition on the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016. I do so as the Leader of the Opposition in this place and as the shadow Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. Labor's position on this bill is very clear: we do not support the bill before the House. We think that this is too blunt an instrument and it will be highly destructive for the industry, the economy of New South Wales and indeed all of those who depend upon the industry for economic support. But that should not be confused with being an uncritical urger or booster of mining or coalmining generally.

The Labor Party, given its history rooted in coalmining communities and other working communities over more than a century, has historically been very supportive of the development of the resources industry, including coalmining. We remain supportive of coalminers and their communities. We are very conscious of the important economic activity that comes from coalmining in this State. For example, we know that New South Wales mines produced 260 million tonnes of raw coal and 196 million tonnes of saleable coal in 2013. We know that the mining industry was worth over \$21 billion, including nearly \$18 billion worth of coal. We know that around 85 per cent of the coal dug out of the ground in New South Wales is exported, and the rest is used to generate electricity. Even the Government's most recent Renewable Energy Action Plan, which was 18 months late—and I will come back to that—says that about 79 per cent of the electricity upon which we depend daily still comes from coal-fired power.

The 136 million tonnes of coal exported was worth about \$15.2 billion. Coal accounted for about 31 per cent of all merchandise leaving New South Wales, making it the State's single most valuable export commodity. The minerals industry pays about \$1.6 billion to the New South Wales Government. About \$1.3 billion of that is paid in royalties, the overwhelming majority of which comes from the coal industry. Nearly \$135 million has been paid in payroll tax and nearly \$146 million in land tax. The mining industry also pays nearly \$1.5 billion to the Commonwealth Government, and that is overwhelmingly paid by the coal industry.

In 2013, the value of employment and other value-added aspects of investment in the coal industry was nearly \$10 billion. It contributes \$1.4 billion to the Central West economy, nearly \$1 billion to the Illawarra economy, \$6.3 billion to the Hunter economy, and more than \$300 million to the New England and north-west economies. The mining sector, and predominantly the coalmining sector, generates about 20 per cent of the economic activity and 10 per cent of the jobs in the Central West and 7 per cent of jobs in the Hunter region. The coal industry historically has been, and it remains, very significant in this State. It pays \$1.3 billion in royalties, although the New South Wales Treasury can never get the royalty figure right—it always overestimates it. That money provides more than 11,000 teachers for our schools. More than 30,000 people work in this State's mining industry, but that figure fluctuates between 30,000 and 44,000. Of course, it has other impacts across supply chains; it impacts not only mining directly—

The Hon. Robert Brown: It has impacts across whole industries.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection. The Labor Party is extremely conscious of the economic importance of the industry. It is also conscious of the importance of employment to people; it gives them a sense of purpose and economic security, which enables them to raise their families and to go about their lives. However, the Labor Party is also aware of the reality of climate change. I disagree with the previous speaker. People on my side of politics understand that climate change is real and that it is being accelerated by human activity. We do not shy away from that. We also acknowledge that Australia's carbon emissions are led by coal-fired power. We know that fossil fuel, primarily coal, comprises up to 80 per cent of our emissions. We also know that more needs to be done because we have only one planet on which to live. It sustains all of us, and if we destroy it we have nowhere else to go.

The Labor Party understands the scale of the challenge facing New South Wales, the nation and, indeed, the world, in grappling with these issues. We must transition to a low-emissions future and away from dependence on coal-fired power to cleaner, renewable sources of energy. We are also aware that there are consequences of that transition for those communities involved in coalmining and the industries that support it. We understand that we are facing a very complex set of issues for which there is no immediate or straightforward answer. However, we do not believe that this bill is the appropriate vehicle with which to engage in that transition.

Members should make no mistake; a transition is happening whether or not we want it to happen. I take issue with the contributions of Government members. The problem with this space is that it is becoming increasingly polarised. There are the historical uncritical urgers and boosters who say that the industry can do no wrong. They say it could be a little more efficient and cleaner, but essentially there is no problem. On the other hand, there are people—not necessarily in this Chamber—who think the industry can do no right and must be ended forthwith. Life is complicated and the truth is at neither of those extremes. The reality in New South Wales is that about 83 per cent of our coal is thermal coal, which is used to produce power, but we also use coking coal. Of course, we cannot make products like steel without using coking coal; as yet, no-one has discovered a method of doing that.

As I indicated, coal is used to generate up to 80 per cent of our electricity. We should also be aware that our coal-fired power stations all have a limited lifespan. Munmorah power station, which had the capacity to generate 1,400 megawatts of electricity, was closed in 2012. Wallerawang power station, which was bought by EnergyAustralia, formerly Macquarie Generation, was sold by Mike Baird and was closed immediately upon sale, taking 1,000 megawatts of electricity out of the New South Wales economy, thereby jeopardising our economic and energy security. That was a result of the negligence of members opposite and their former Premier and Treasurer. No guarantee was sought or obtained that the 1,000 megawatts of energy would stay in New South Wales when EnergyAustralia bought the power station. The ink was barely dry on the contract before EnergyAustralia shut it down; presumably to increase the value of its generation assets elsewhere. That extra 1,000 megawatts would have been very handy on 10 February this year.

I was distressed to learn that some of Liddell power station's four turbines are offline at any given moment. Given the history of the power station, that is no surprise. It was built to last 30 years and it is now 46 years old. It will not last forever. Over the next two decades, almost all of the coal-fired power stations in New South Wales, which, as I said, provide 80 per cent of our electricity, will close. That will not happen because of the renewable energy target, The Greens' schemes or government policy, but simply because of old age. It will catch up with us all. What will replace the capacity we lose? In the olden days, governments built power stations and provided power. We now live in a privatised national electricity market in which we are all dependent on private economic actors to invest in new energy supplies.

The Abbott Government did its best to destroy the renewables industry. We had a huge pipeline of investment that would generate thousands of megawatts of new capacity across Australia and New South Wales. However, because members opposite launched an ideological war against renewable energy, much of that investment has been scared off. Of course, the second problem is that the renewable energy target that did survive—tattered, bruised and battered—has only a 2020 frame of reference. The State Government's target for renewable energy, which is allegedly the same as the national target and which is about 23 per cent or 23.5 per cent by 2020, will take 30 years to achieve at current rates. Why? It is because renewable energy in this State went significantly backwards before making a modest recovery. Over the past three years there has been a net increase in renewable energy in this State of only 1 per cent. Some members cannot decide whether they are for or against it.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I have a very clear idea of where I stand.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge that interjection, and I know the honourable member's position. We cannot afford to take an ideological approach to this issue because it is all about security of power for our economy and our society.

The Hon. Robert Brown: And our hospitals.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Yes, also for our hospitals, schools and other activities. We must put our shoulders to the wheel to create new generation capacity. The mining industry will tell us—and the finance industry will definitely tell us—that new coal-fired power stations are not bankable and will not attract investment in this country.

The Hon. Robert Brown: Because of government interference.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: It is not because of government interference.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Because of threat.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: It is not because of any of those things; it is simply because the economics do not stack up.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Point of order: Government members are interjecting and I ask that they be directed to desist.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I uphold the point of order, but I make the point that all sides were involved in that debate—or "brawl" might be a better term. I ask the speaker not to respond to interjections, which are disorderly. I ask members to listen to the speech in silence.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: The issue here is that this ideological approach has undermined our capacity to invest in new power sources. The front page of today's *Australian* very clearly depicts the closure of Hazelwood—not a decision of government, a decision made by a private company because the asset is at the end of its life. This is the fallout when there is no planned transition. I indicate my respect for the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the energy division, and its identification of the need for a just transition; not just any transition, but a just transition, because it is not fair that working people, their families and communities should bear the brunt of people's desire for a cleaner, low carbon future. But, it is also the case that we have a choice before us of either having a planned transition or an unplanned transition.

In its submission to a recent Senate inquiry, a distinction is drawn between the unplanned transition—the closure of coalmines and its consequences in the United States and the United Kingdom—versus the much more beneficial social and economic outcomes of more orderly planned transition in places such as the Federal Republic of Germany, but it requires private companies to collaborate. It requires government to make long-term plans and it requires the investment of significant amounts of money so that as coal-fired power stations, for example, close—and that has an ongoing consequence for the mines that support them—workers can be relocated to other economic activities where mining is ongoing or be transitioned to other parts of the economy.

But platitudes and good sentiments alone will not deliver that outcome. It requires a significant financial commitment by governments, nationally and by jurisdiction. It also requires straight talking because in the thermal coal industry—and the Adani mine in Queensland is a good example of this—there are people who continue to hope that the downturn that we have been experiencing in the thermal coal industry over the last few years is merely cyclical. Australian history is full of booms and busts, particularly in the resources sector, and there are some people who hope and believe that the current downturn is cyclical and it will come good again. But there are other economic observers, such as Tim Buckley and others who look at the hard data, who say, no, something more profound is at work here. There is a structural decline in the demand for thermal coal.

China, for example, is reducing its imports of thermal coal each year by a magnitude greater than the whole of our mining industry. India, another objective of coal exports, is also reducing its foreign imports of thermal coal in an attempt to become more self-sufficient domestically. At the same time, both China and India are reducing their reliance on domestic supplies of thermal coal as they seek to diversify the sources of energy they derive. This is not a matter of belief or government policy, it either is happening or it is not, but the reality is that we need to make plans for a lower carbon future. We need to increase our generation of energy from other sources because at the moment we are held hostage to the decision of private investors as to whether they will invest in new power supplies and where. We are held hostage to the private operators who decide when and where they will close existing generation assets, leaving the States and people exposed to shortages and skyrocketing prices, which will negatively impact, not just households, but businesses and all forms of economic activity.

We need to create a situation where there is greater energy independence for us all, but we cannot be ignorant of the fact that it will not occur overnight and crucial to this transition is storage technology because we need to deal with the issue of intermittency. It is a truism that the sun does not shine at night and the wind does not always blow. There are storage technologies and they are affordable to a certain degree, but they are not affordable at the level of household or individual businesses for most people and the technology is still evolving.

People in the industry expect prices to decline by 40 per cent over the next two years, but storage technology is the game changer and there can be no transition without a greater focus on and investment in that.

All of that will take time and this bill does not allow for a just, sensible, balanced or smooth transition, which is why we do not support it. We do not support this bill but we are conscious of the need to address climate change. We are conscious of the need to address emissions from the coal industry and more generally and we are conscious of the need to wean ourselves off coal-fired power because whether we like it or not, the sun will set on those power sources and we need to have alternatives in place sooner rather than later.

There is a lot more I can say, but make no mistake, we support coalminers and their communities. We will not give them false hope. We know that significant investment is needed to enable those communities to thrive when the private operators of these mines make their decisions, because capital has no conscience. If they can no longer make a buck from it, they will up stumps and move somewhere else and leave the community stranded. We will not stand idly by and allow that to happen; just as we will not stand idly by and let the negligence of those opposite leave New South Wales exposed to power shortages and skyrocketing power prices simply because so many of them are ideologically opposed to renewable energy because that is not the future. That is being every bit as destructive of the common good and our shared economic and social futures as they accused the authors of this bill of being, and we will have no part of it. We will provide a sensible alternative as we head towards the next State election.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (12:26): In reply: I thank all honourable members who have made a contribution—good and bad—to the Mining Amendment (Climate Protection—No New Coal Mines) Bill 2016.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: Name them.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I will. The critical issue facing New South Wales, Australia and the globe is where we source our energy into the future. What guides me in all my deliberations here is a deep ecological philosophy that is based on the works of Ken Wilber: all organisms on Earth seek out the cheapest, cleanest forms of energy. It is the one thing that unites all life—the cheapest, cleanest and most sustainable form of energy—and that is really at the heart of this debate. It is a deep philosophical transition where we are merging energy into the heart of our economic and environmental debate. It is all about energy, everything we do. I will respond to the contributions from best to worst, and of course start with the contribution of my colleague Mr Justin Field.

Mr Scot MacDonald: Is that the worst or the best?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: That is certainly the best contribution; it is in descending order, top to bottom. It is clear that as a Queenslander he knows what is going on. As a man who grew up in Gladstone, he has seen the boom and bust of the resources sector. Like Mr Field, my family has been embedded in the resources sector and worked there for generations, and we have seen how incredibly important it has been over time to our economic development; but it transitions, it changes. We do not ride on the sheep's back anymore. We are not built on a whale oil economy and we are transitioning our economy. Mr Field recognises that, and we have to do it because we are entering an age of consequences. As Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons in 1936 when considering the gathering storm of fascism in Europe:

The era of procrastination ... of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

The consequences and the gathering storm is Cyclone Debbie. Watch the news. Those storms are terrifying. They are record breaking, and we will reap the whirlwind—literally. Follow the science; I am not an alarmist. Winston Churchill was called an alarmist in 1936. We have been ringing the bell for a generation. Wake up and watch the news. Climate change is real and it is costing people their lives. People die in heatwaves in Western Sydney. If we went to Fiji and told its people that Cyclone Winston had nothing to do with climate change, we would be lucky to get out of there with our lives. If we went to Kiribati and told its people that rising sea levels that destroyed its communities has nothing to do with climate change, we would be fools. Mr Justin Field knows that the largest organism on Earth, the Great Barrier Reef, is dying as we speak. Hopefully, the cyclone will help to circulate the waters and stop the bleaching, but we are seeing coral bleaching from climate change all over the planet. Mr Field is right: we have to deal with it. Agriculture is being smashed globally by droughts and floods. The feedback is that the consequences are coming.

[Interruption]

The Hon. Robert Brown: Point of order: I am interested in hearing what Mr Jeremy Buckingham has to say in reply but I cannot hear him because of the constant interjections and baiting.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: Members should be reminded that they are not in this place to deliberately mislead the House. On two instances Mr Jeremy Buckingham has deliberately misled the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! Mr Jeremy Buckingham will be more civil in the Chamber. I uphold the point of order. Mr Jeremy Buckingham is a passionate speaker and he will be heard in silence.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It is costing our economy in the global market because governments are siloing our economy and their policies. They are unable to do a proper, comprehensive cost-benefit analysis. I welcome some of the points that the Hon. Adam Searle made regarding Labor's position, but I lament the fact that too often in this place we hear only the benefits of coalmining. Sure, coalmining has kept the lights on. People in Singleton, Muswellbrook, Helensburgh and Gunnedah are employed in coalmining, but where is the cost analysis? How much is coalmining costing us? By exporting it around the globe, we are contributing significantly to climate change. When that coal burns in Tokyo, Beijing or wherever—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: India.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: —India, we are contributing to climate change. But at what cost? We are not looking at the cost in respect of water and air pollution and the adverse effects on human health. All we say is that it contributes to the gross State product. That is not a fair indicator of economic development because it is on the ledger of a foreign multinational. Most of them are not mining companies anymore; they are commodity traders, getting what they can while they can. They are getting what they can out of the ground before the line is drawn under coalmining. That time will come; it is absolutely coming and those companies know it. We have only to look at Munmorah. It is gone. Hazelwood is gone. Wallerawang is gone. Liddell will be gone soon. The world is moving on. Coal-fired power stations are being replaced with newer ones in China, but the net effect is that we are moving away from coal. It is inexorable and it is coming, and we need to transition. The Government knows it. The damp squib policy is that we will have no net carbon emissions by 2050. How we will get there? Where is the plan? Where is the plan for Liddell?

The Hon. Robert Brown: I have got one.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The plan of the Hon. Robert Brown is to build another coal-fired power station, which is ridiculous, irresponsible and farcical because coal is now more expensive than solar and wind, by any measure. It is unsubsidised by any measure. Government members are stuck in the past. They cannot accept they got the science of climate change wrong and they got energy economics wrong. Only members on this side of the House have the courage to develop a plan to go to those communities and say, "We need to transition."

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: "You're sacked"—that is what you are saying.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, it is not. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps does not understand the bill. The bill says that there should be no new coal. It takes the heat out of the land use conflicts in New South Wales. It says no Shenhua, no Bylong, no Berrima—no new coalmines. The vast majority of our coal is exported; it is going overseas. We can transition our domestic energy economy in a matter of years, if only we have the courage to do it.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: How many years?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: We could do it by 2030. We could do it in a decade if we wanted to and if we had governments that were prepared to lead. I note that the Australian Capital Territory Government is committed to 100 per cent renewable energy. What has it done?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the first time. I have extended some latitude to him in the debate, but he will cease interjecting.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Look at the Australian Capital Territory. The biggest economic development is happening in New England in the Northern Tablelands electorate. The Hon. Ben Franklin just sat up; he knows what is going on. The area is receiving \$1 billion worth of economic development through the White Rock and Sapphire wind farms, which is generating jobs. The only reason the Sapphire wind farm is being built in this State is that the Australian Capital Territory has the courage to deal with climate change and is willing to support the Territory's transition to 100 per cent renewable energy. It also has a 20-year electricity supply contract.

What did Barnaby Joyce do? What did the Deputy Prime Minister do? The man who opened the White Rock wind farm bagged the Australian Capital Territory, which is building the biggest project in his electorate. It is absolute stupidity. History will show this Government to have been a farce. Members opposite are like those

who were frightened of the steam train and who wanted people running down the road with flags in front of cars. Innovation is what drives economic development everywhere.

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

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Paul Keating knew it in the 1970s. He knew that we had to be innovative and accept the future by transitioning from a "dig it up, ship it out" economy to a more robust, flexible economy that will integrate into Asia and build on the jobs of the future, such as tourism, education, services, high-tech manufacturing and medicine. Those areas will drive the knowledge economy and economic development in future. We have to grasp the knowledge, the wisdom and the innovation that is coming out of our universities on renewable energy and use it to replace the hundreds of thousands of megawatts of electricity that we need to replace coal as the industry comes to its end. We stopped cutting down our forests to heat Melbourne. For 150 years Melbourne was heated by wood from the Mallee; we do not do that anymore. We do not burn penguins, seals and whales to power Hobart. We will move on from coal.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Penguins?

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Penguins. They used to throw them in. We will move on because we have entered an age of consequence. I lament seeing the Minister for Energy and Utilities, the Hon. Don Harwin, enter the House. He cannot quite say that he is a big fan of renewable energy, and that he accepts it. If members look at the submission of the Government—the one for which the Minister has been pilloried by Channel 7 and shock jock Jason Morrison—they will see that it accepts we have to integrate climate and energy policy into the heart of all Government decisions. The submission accepts that we have to move to 100 per cent renewable energy and that, in doing so, we can innovate and create jobs. The best signal that we can send is to draw a line in the sand on new coal. I think it was Mr Scot MacDonald who said in this debate that enough coal leases have been approved to power New South Wales for another 20 years.

The Greens accept that those coal-fired power stations will operate for the next 10 or 15 years or so. But we need to get away from the idea that the only way New South Wales will prosper is by continuing to sell coal overseas. It contributes to the economy but it is not the heart and soul of our economy. It provides a fraction of the employment, a fraction of the economic development and a fraction of the budget. I acknowledge that it is not insignificant, but take Cessnock as an example of a coalmining community. I cannot be convinced that that is a powerhouse—a thriving community. The coalminers in that town say, "We were ruined. We have buggered lungs and we do not know what is next for Cessnock." What is next for Singleton, Helensburgh or Gunnedah? What is next for those communities is not new coal; it is agriculture, tourism and the services economy—servicing our people through the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the like. That is the future for our economy.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: It is baristas serving cappuccinos to inner-city lefties.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps bags baristas. He does not like the fact that a big part of our economy is built on services and tourism. It is complex and diverse; it is not based on a "dig it up, ship it out" mentality. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps has this archaic view of the world that if one cares about the environment one cannot care about people and the economy. In his contribution—which was mainly based on cutting and pasting someone else's views—he made the most abysmal and redundant comments about how everybody hates environmentalists, like everybody hates feminists.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: They do!

The Hon. Adam Searle: I don't.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: He is your ideological polar star—the standard bearer for the Tories in the hard Right of the Liberal Party that so many people gather around.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Stop it! You are just boosting his preselection chances.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Exactly. He needs a boost.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: I make several points. I start by suggesting that Mr Jeremy Buckingham should direct his remarks through the Chair. I add that interjections are disorderly, and I include the Leader of the Opposition in that. Just to round it out, I will throw in my favourite point: it is impossible for Hansard to record the debate while there is a continuous barrage of interjections coming from around the Chamber. I suggest that the member direct his comments through the Chair and that all honourable members respect the rules of debate and allow the member to be heard in silence.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I uphold all three points of order. Mr Jeremy Buckingham has almost concluded his speech in reply and he will be heard in silence. Members will treat each other with respect.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: The choice is before us. Do we grasp the nettle with respect to the innovation of renewable energy and transition our economy? Do we create a plan for the people of the Hunter, the Illawarra and the Central West? People in those communities know that coalmining will end. Mining communities—I am from one—have seen the booms and the busts. Mr Justin Field has seen that. The Greens members are embedded in the community and we have seen that cycle of boom and bust in places like Zeehan, Orange and the Hunter Valley. The same thing has happened with respect to the coal seam gas industry in Chinchilla, which will have a great big party for one night and then the worst hangover that has ever been seen. Those communities want governments to get involved. The Greens reject completely the notion that there is no role for government, that capital is a moral-free zone. If that is how the private sector is operating, then it is incumbent on governments to intervene.

We are seeing the market fail. The National Electricity Market is failing and governments are intervening. The Premier of South Australia, Mr Weatherill, has come out with a plan to inject public money into energy security in that State. That is great vision; he is leading the way. But from Malcolm Turnbull we get a back of the beer coaster proposal. In a moment that seemed to come from the script of *The Hollowmen*, he proposed Snowy Hydro 2.0. He has dusted off a plan from the 1980s because he wants to be seen to be doing something. There will be an energy issue in the next three months but the Prime Minister has come up with a plan to have a feasibility study for a proposal that might cost God knows how much and be built in 15 years time. That proposal might have merit, but it is no way to lead a nation. It shows that there is a role for government in supporting innovation. We need to support innovation—the thinkers, the creators—and to have a knowledge nation that is leading economic development and the transition to renewable energy.

We went from the days of the horse and cart, to steam and then the internal combustion engine. Now we are moving to electric vehicles and driverless cars. It is exciting. The Greens members are not misanthropes. We love humanity. We love our society. We completely reject the view of members on the other side of the Chamber. We are not the lackeys of the corporate raiders, the crypto-anarchists in the Liberal Party, the Tories; we are grassroots members. We are embedded. We are optimistic about the future, and the future means no new coal; it means renewable energy. We need to grasp the nettle and look to the innovation of renewable energy. The Greens welcome the challenge before us. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes6
Noes32
Majority.....26

AYES

Buckingham, Mr J
Pearson, Mr M (teller)

Faruqi, Dr M
Shoebridge, Mr D

Field, Mr J
Walker, Ms D (teller)

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Brown, Mr R
Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Green, Mr P
MacDonald, Mr S

Blair, Mr N
Clarke, Mr D
Donnelly, Mr G
Gay, Mr D
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)

Borsak, Mr R
Colless, Mr R
Farlow, Mr S
Graham, Mr J
Khan, Mr T
Mallard, Mr S

Mason-Cox, Mr M
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P
Voltz, Ms L

Mitchell, Ms S
Nile, Reverend F

Searle, Mr A
Taylor, Ms B
Wong, Mr E

Mookhey, Mr D
Phelps, Dr P

Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M

Motion negatived.

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

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

Questions Without Notice

2017 METROPOLITAN WATER PLAN

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:29): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities, representing the Minister for Planning. Given the Minister's answer to a question yesterday from the Hon. Lou Amato on the 2017 Metropolitan Water Plan that, "Highly treated wastewater will not"—I repeat "will not"—"be used as drinking water", why then does the same plan propose "heavily treated recycled water" for regional families? Is the Minister proposing a two-tier water supply system: one for Sydney and the other for regional centres?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:30): That is not my understanding of the 2017 Metropolitan Water Plan, but I will check the honourable member's suggestions and get back to him with an answer by the end of question time.

HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN RIVER

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (14:30): My question is addressed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister inform the House what is being done to improve the health of one of Western Sydney's most important natural assets, the Hawkesbury-Nepean River?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:30): I thank the Hon. David Clarke for his interest, and I believe all members of the Liberal Party would understand that he has had a longstanding association with and interest in issues in that area. As many in this House will be aware, a fortnight ago I released the 2017 Metropolitan Water Plan for Greater Sydney. This plan ensures that the Greater Sydney region, which includes the Illawarra and the Blue Mountains, has sufficient water to meet the needs of the people and the environment, now and for the future. This plan meets the projected population growth in the region, whilst ensuring we can withstand a prolonged drought, all whilst saving an average of \$20 million per year.

Another element that will be of great benefit to the people of Western Sydney is the promise of additional environmental flows into the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system. I am sure all members of the House would understand environmental flows are variable releases of water from the dam storage that mimic the natural flow regime. Dams have a significant impact on the health of rivers. These environmental flows, as outlined in the plan, will directly improve the flow, the water quality and the ecology of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River below the dam. The additional flows will help provide the community and businesses of Western Sydney with a river that can support fishing, swimming, boating, recreation, tourism and agriculture.

Warragamba Dam supplies more than 80 per cent of Greater Sydney's drinking water, so we need a balance. The plan achieves this balance by scaling back environmental flow releases as dam storage levels drop. One major benefit of environmental flows will be for our fishers. Australian bass are a popular angling species, and increased flows could improve the bass population by one-third. This is because bass spend part of their life in freshwater and part in saltwater, and need to migrate over natural barriers in the Nepean River. The environmental flows from Warragamba Dam are predicted to increase the frequency, duration and depth of inundation of those barriers, helping the bass to migrate when flow and temperature cues are right.

Floating water weeds can also affect part of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River. Environmental flows will help to break up weed and move it out of the river channels, improving opportunities for recreation and reducing impacts on irrigators. Over the next few years we will be working to put in place the infrastructure necessary to enable variable environmental flows. These investigations will also assess the benefits of installing a new hydroelectric plant to generate power from Warragamba. This new environmental flow regime will be welcomed by everyone who uses the river and will help the Hawkesbury-Nepean to remain the jewel in the crown of Sydney's greater west.

REGIONAL WATER TREATMENT SERVICES

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:34): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given that there have been three separate official NSW Health-issued boil alerts for residents on the Brogo-Bermagui water supply system in the

past 15 months, with the most recent on 6 March, and that Bega Valley Shire Council's water and sewerage services manager, Jim Collins, on that day said, "a water filtration plant remains the long-term solution" to water contamination issues in the area, when will the Government fund the water filtration plants needed and respond to the community's request for help?

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Probably when you learn how to pronounce the name.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:35): I thank the honourable member for his question because it provides me with a fantastic opportunity—

The Hon. Duncan Gay: If you could spell—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Stop making fun of accents, Duncan. You do it to other members.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: It is Bermagui.

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: —to clearly highlight what this Government has been doing for regional water treatment and wastewater treatment services right across this State. There is a stark contrast between what we have done since 2011 and what we were left with when we came into government. We have implemented a number of programs providing record amounts of funds to regional councils so that they can address some of the infrastructure backlog left behind when those opposite decided to not back regional communities but to walk away from the essential services those communities needed.

We have provided programs such as the Water and Waste Water Backlog program, which we funded in the last budget, to make sure that some key infrastructure programs, including some that dated back to the 1990s, that were left unfunded by those opposite when they were in government actually got the resources to build the essential infrastructure these communities need. Regional communities, including those in the Bega shire, Boggabri and right across New South Wales, deserve the same infrastructure that is enjoyed by people in Blacktown and Bondi. This Government has been ensuring that regional communities get the necessary infrastructure they deserve. We have been working closely with communities. And as Minister for this area, I hosted a recent meeting of local government, utilities and Infrastructure NSW at the new International Convention Centre on this very topic. We want those councils to know as soon as we hand down our next budget that this Government is supporting those communities.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Just say yes.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: We funded the backlog program, we funded the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program, we are working with councils and the private sector—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Just not Bega.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: —to make sure that they are shovel ready when this Government is able to—

The Hon. Walt Secord: They boil their water three times.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the second time. I am sure he does not want an early mark.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: One thing that we remind those councils when they come to talk to us about those infrastructure projects is that we are in a position to fund these projects because of some of the asset recycling programs that members opposite stood against. We are making sure that we put record amounts of money into regional water infrastructure. Those opposite stood against that. We will continue to do that. We have done more since 2011 than those opposite did in 16 years in government, and we will continue to do so.

ETHICAL GOODS AND SERVICES

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (14:39): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, and the Minister for Energy and Utilities, representing the Premier. Given that on Tuesday the Archbishop of Sydney made a historic commitment to the Legislative Council Select Committee on Human Trafficking in New South Wales, and the broader public, when he informed us that the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney will implement a program to slave-proof its supply chains and procurement practices—in that the archdiocese will seek to ensure that the goods and services it purchases have been ethically obtained—will the New South Wales Government give immediate consideration to implementing such a program to ensure similar protections for

New South Wales Government supply chains and procurement practices? If so, will the Minister report back to the House at a later date on the Government's proposed plan of action?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:40): I thank the Hon. Paul Green for his question. The Select Committee on Human Trafficking in New South Wales is doing excellent work and I congratulate all of its members on their efforts so far. I am pleased to hear that Archbishop Anthony Fisher is working with that committee as well and has given that undertaking on behalf of the church. No doubt it was of great interest to committee members and it will help to progress the work of that particular committee. I imagine there would be a number of members of Cabinet who would like to have some input on the matters that the Hon. Paul Green has raised, so the appropriate thing for me to do is to start with the Premier, as the Hon. Paul Green has requested. I will refer that question to the Premier and seek to come back with a response as soon as possible.

QUAD BIKE SAFETY

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (14:41): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. In light of another quad bike death in New South Wales last night, will the Minister update the House on what measures the Government is taking to improve quad bike safety?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:41): I thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack for her question. I am not someone who simply pays lip-service to workplace health and safety. For 10 years prior to my entry to this place I specialised in this area, attaining a masters in occupational health and safety from the University of Newcastle. I will never turn a blind eye to workplace safety. This was my vocation for more than a decade. It is front of mind for me. I take this opportunity to offer my deepest sympathies to the families of those who have lost loved ones through quad bike accidents.

This Government is not sitting back and simply hoping another quad bike accident will not happen. Even before the State Coroner released the 2015 report into quad bike deaths, this Government was taking action. In March 2013 the Government announced the first stage of a \$1 million research project aimed at reducing quad bike accidents on farms. In July last year we went further, with a \$2 million quad bike safety improvement program. Earlier this month my colleague in the other place the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, the Hon. Matt Kean, doubled the safety rebates under that program. That offer also now extends to a second quad bike, in recognition of the fact that many properties have more than one.

In addition, we have established the New South Wales Quad Bike Safety Industry Action group, made up of key industry experts. The Department of Primary Industries [DPI] has a strong presence at industry field days throughout the State, including at the Tocal field days where quad bike safety was a feature in 2016. I cannot emphasise enough that this Government has been acting on quad bike safety, even before the Coroner's findings in November 2015. In the past five years, through Tocal, we have delivered 71 quad bike safety courses to 375 participants across 19 locations. And since September 2016 Tocal has partnered with SafeWork NSW to bolster participation. In addition to that, my department has provided quad bike training to 335 students in the full-time youth and traineeship programs offered through Tocal.

I have spent a large part of my life working in workplace safety. For me it is an article of faith. But the term "workplace safety" is complex when we talk about farms. While the property is a productive workplace, it is also a place where people live, where people relax and where people sometimes seek to use farm machinery for recreational purposes. There is a limit to what any of us can humanly do, and I assure the Chamber that if there was some simple ready-made answer then I would have implemented it a long time ago. Quad bikes need to be operated within manufacturers' guidelines, which stipulate the relevant age of riders, restrictions on passengers and recommendations on speed limits, especially when used for recreational purposes.

Last year 18 people died on farms in New South Wales, and that is 18 deaths too many. We need to do better. This Government is working every day to reduce that number—whether the accident involves a quad bike or something else. I know that many members of this place share my concerns about this area. There is no simple solution that could come from changes to legislation alone; there is a culture that needs to be changed. It is difficult when the workplace, the family farm and recreational activities are blurred. We need to continue to be vigilant in this area in educating everyone involved. I have consulted on this matter for more than a decade. I have heard the pros and cons of both sides of the argument. If it was simple to solve then we would have done so. We continue to work on this issue. It is the number one priority for my agencies, and I will work with any members to make sure we get a better result.

WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (14:46): My question is directed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities. Does the New South Wales Government support a change in the wholesale electricity market rules to a five-minute settlement period rather than the current 30-minute settlement period, which analysts have said will stop the gaming of prices on the wholesale market and create a level playing field for fast-response technologies such as battery storage? If so, will the New South Wales Government make a submission to the Australian Energy Market Commission in support of this change before it reaches a position on 11 April this year?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:46): I thank Mr Justin Field for his question. The Government supports a market structure that is open to new technologies and allows them to compete on a level playing field. The Government has conveyed this position in its submission to the Independent Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market, otherwise known as the Finkel review. As we move forward, the electricity market design should be welcoming of new technology and provide financial signals to any combination of services that support a secure and reliable energy supply. Storage technologies are an important part of our future energy mix, as they can both supply electricity and provide important technical support services to keep the grid operating smoothly. Our submission highlights that market structure must be capable of embracing these new technologies.

The Australian Energy Market Commission is examining whether the current rules for wholesale market settlement and dispatch discriminate against such technologies. I have met with the Chair of the commission, Mr John Pierce, and conveyed the Government's support for a transition to a market that better accommodates all types of services and technologies. We need a market that sends the right price signals to the private sector to invest. The rule change proposal is considering allowing some market participants to be settled using the five-minute dispatch price rather than a price averaged over 30 minutes. Theoretically, this allows for demand to be met faster, with clearer price signals. This would be better for batteries, which can dispatch faster than other generators. This would, however, be a significant change for the market and the commission will need to address the implications for the contract market, information technology systems and metering, among other matters.

Some judgment is needed about how to achieve timely implementation while supporting a smooth transition that avoids unintended consequences. I note that this issue is being worked through at a time of rapid changes in the wider energy industry. Already we are seeing rapid reductions in the price of batteries. Concurrently, the East Coast gas market is connected to the global market, which will impact on price and supply. In this climate, market liberalisation becomes all the more important to meet our electricity supply needs into the future, and that includes the five-minute rule. The Government is very conscious of this issue, and I assure the Chamber that it is working to set long-term market certainty to encourage new investment in the electricity market. That is an absolute guarantee.

WESTERN SYDNEY WASTE INCINERATOR PROPOSAL

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (14:50): I direct my question to the Leader of the House, representing the Minister for Planning. Given the public statements made by Dial a Dump Industries owner Mr Ian Malouf, who is the proponent of the Eastern Creek energy from waste incinerator, that the project will go ahead, what undertaking has the Government given to Mr Malouf's consortium about the plan?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:50): This is obviously an issue of interest to a number of members because this is not the first question that I have fielded on the proposal. I make it clear that the next-generation development proposal at Eastern Creek is being assessed under the planning regime set out in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which obviously falls within the portfolio responsibilities of my colleague and predecessor the Minister for Planning. As I alluded to in an earlier answer, the proposal will undergo a rigorous merit-based assessment in accordance with the requirements of that legislation and having regard to its social, economic and environmental implications.

I make it clear that the Government actively supports the development of alternative energy sources in New South Wales. However, I am advised that the energy sources proposed to be used under the Eastern Creek proposal would not be accredited as renewable energy under the Federal Government's renewable energy target. While, according to the Federal Clean Energy Regulator, electricity generated from biomass-based components derived from solid municipal waste can be accredited as a renewable energy source under the renewable energy target, it is not the sole generation source proposed in the Eastern Creek energy from waste facility. The Department of Planning and Environment is conducting a comprehensive assessment of the potential impact of the proposal. That includes, jointly with the Environment Protection Authority, commissioning independent experts in the field of human health risk and best practice waste-to-energy technology to assist in that assessment.

As part of the assessment, the applicant will be required to respond to public and agency concerns raised during the extended public exhibition period and the findings of the independent experts. I am advised that no undertakings have been given. The matter will be considered during the merit-based assessment of the process. Of course, any further questions about this issue are a matter for the planning portfolio. If the honourable member would like me to pursue any other aspects of the proposal with the Minister for Planning, I would be happy to do so.

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (14:53): I address my question the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Will the Minister update the House on the efforts being made in New South Wales schools to engage and to support female Aboriginal students?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (14:54): I thank the honourable member for his question and his keen interest in what the Government is doing to support the aspirations of Aboriginal young people across the State. Earlier this week the Department of Education held the eleventh Nanga Mai Awards. "Nanga mai" is an Eora term meaning to dream. The awards recognise the outstanding achievements of Aboriginal students in New South Wales public schools, and the achievements of community members and other stakeholders who have made significant contributions to Aboriginal education in their communities.

The awards recognise students such as Teliyah Hickey from Walgett Community College, who is the only student in her cohort preparing for the Higher School Certificate mathematics exam, and who is also excelling in hospitality and early childhood studies. She also finds time to mentor and to support her fellow students. Emily Backhouse, from Mount Annan High School, received a student leadership award for her role on the student council, her participation as a youth ambassador for the Camp to Belong Program, which reunites siblings who are in separate out-of-home care, and as a youth leader for the Murama Gathering, a two-day camp for students to learn more about their culture. In addition, Emily is an active member of her Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. She does all of this while concentrating on her own educational pathway.

I am sure that the Hon. Ben Franklin will be happy to hear that Mia Thom from Byron Bay High School won an academic excellence award for being a straight-A student, and for being a passionate advocate of human rights. She has also won the principal's award for academic excellence and the Lighthouse Award for positive behaviour and civic mindedness. Mia is an all-rounder because she is also a State level basketball player. To ensure that similar opportunities are available to all young Aboriginal women so that they, too, may achieve success and fulfilment as these talented young Aboriginal women have done, the Government has committed to engage in strategies and programs that are determined to make a difference. Up to \$6 million has been allocated between 2017 and 2019 for the provision of mentoring services for Aboriginal female students who may be or who are at risk of disengaging from school or who are not attending school.

Role Models and Leaders Australia Limited is being contracted by the Department of Education to provide a school-based girls academy program for up to 800 female Aboriginal students enrolled in public schools in years 7 to 12. The academies, in collaboration with the participating schools, will work to drive community-led solutions aimed at reducing the barriers that prevent Aboriginal female students from completing their education and reaching their full potential. Girls' academies will initially be established in 12 schools in remote and rural regions in 2017. I am pleased to advise the House that this includes my former high school, Gunnedah High School. On 20 March, I had the pleasure of attending the launch of the academy and to meet with representatives of Role Models and Leaders Australia Limited. As a proud Gunnedah girl, born and raised, and as a former school captain at Gunnedah High, it was a real honour to attend the launch and to see the fantastic work being done to support female Aboriginal—

The Hon. Walt Secord: I was never a school captain.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That does not surprise me. Academies will also be established at Canobolas Rural Technology High School in Orange, Chatham High School, Coonamble High School, three campuses of Dubbo College, Kempsey High School, Melville High School, Muswellbrook High School, Oxley High School and Tamworth High School. More schools may be added to reach a maximum of 800 students. Academies provide re-engagement activities through relationship-based mentoring and wellbeing support. Targets to monitor the effectiveness of this re-engagement include increasing school attendance rates, improved school retention rates, improved year 12 graduation and attainment rates, and engaging enrolled students to improve health, nutrition and wellbeing, to develop life skills, to support their cultural identity, and to build self-esteem. The girls' academies are an excellent program and I am looking forward to seeing them spread across the State.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (14:58): I direct my question to the Leader of the House, representing the Premier. Is it a fact that Lendlease Pty Limited has been required to provide affordable housing in return for its development approval at Barangaroo? Will the Government therefore negotiate with Lendlease to restore the Sirius affordable housing complex to provide accommodation for elderly tenants at Millers Point, Sydney, who are being evicted from their terrace units by the Government?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:59): I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for that question. I cannot say that I know all the details of the contractual arrangements between Lendlease and the State Government in relation to the Barangaroo project. They are, of course, not within my portfolio responsibilities, but I imagine that the Premier will be able to give the honourable member a response on that. In relation to the Sirius Building, obviously that is the subject of a decision that has been taken by Government and is part of an overall strategy of increasing the amount of social housing that is available. It has been a very successful program.

There are more people who are in need in social housing now as a result of the work undertaken by a series of housing Ministers with the support of the Department of Family and Community Services and its senior leadership to provide extra social housing for the people of New South Wales. Frankly, the Government can be very proud of what it has done with innovative new thinking about the way it provides social housing. Announcements have been made about the Sirius Building in the past and where that fits into that strategy. Of course, the State Government has announced its decision in relation to that building. In any case, because this is a matter which is obviously of particular interest to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, I think it would be appropriate that I take the question on notice and I ask the Premier for a full response on the particular aspects that he has raised.

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the public gallery a delegation from the New Zealand Parliament's Justice and Electoral Committee, led by its Chair, Sarah Dowie, MP, and Deputy Chair, Jono Naylor, MP. I welcome also Louisa Wall, member for Auckland and captain of the New Zealand Parliamentary Women's Netball Team, guests of the Hon. Lynda Voltz. I also welcome Mr Jefri Rahman, Assistant Managing Director of the Brunei Investment Agency, accompanied by an officer from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On behalf of all honourable members I welcome you all to the Legislative Council. We are in question time. I hope you not only enjoy your time here but also find it very informative.

CENTRAL COAST WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (15:02): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for Arts. Has the Central Coast Water Corporation or any other water entity within the Minister's portfolio made submissions in relation to impact on regional water supply on the Central Coast as a result of the Wallarah 2 coal project, in particular, the Department of Planning conditions that state there must be compensatory water supply provisions to private landowners, as well as a Central Coast water supply compensatory arrangement?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:03): That is a very detailed question. I will take it on notice and get the honourable member a full answer.

The Hon. Walt Secord: It is in your portfolio. Why don't you try to answer it?

The PRESIDENT: I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that he is on two calls to order. I know the Leader of the Opposition does not want the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to have an early mark.

MINING INDUSTRY WORK, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (15:04): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Resources. What is the Government doing to ensure that work, health and safety risks are being effectively managed in mining?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:04): I thank the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones for her question and her interest in this important matter.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Natasha is interested.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane to order for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Indeed, she is interested; the honourable member is quite right. Improving safety and ensuring the mining and petroleum industries adhere to work health and safety regulations are an absolute priority for me as the Minister and, of course, for the whole New South Wales Government. This Government has implemented reforms which are aimed at ensuring that the work health and safety regulator is modelling best practice and deploying resources to where they are most needed. The Resources Regulator for New South Wales, which this Government introduced, is responsible for regulating mine and petroleum safety in New South Wales.

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The Resources Regulator has been implementing an incident prevention strategy following a spate of fatalities in the mining industry that led to a review undertaken by the Noetic Group's Peter Wilkinson. The Wilkinson review identified opportunities for developing and refocusing the role of the regulator. It recommended the regulator consider how information on the implementation of risk controls for significant risks could be used to support a data-led incident prevention strategy. It also recommended focusing explicitly on critical controls for significant risks as part of that strategy and drawing on human and organisational factors expertise when considering those critical controls. The regulator's strategy is focusing on targeted assessments and interventions, critical controls, centralised industry reporting and the role human and organisational factors play in the success or failure of control measures.

Nine months into the reform process, the Resources Regulator engaged the Noetic Group to review its progress and it has given a positive report card for the reforms it has implemented so far. The review involved the Noetic Group engaging with the Resources Regulator, including reviewing systems and processes, meeting with staff and attending key team meetings. The Noetic Group found that the regulatory reforms undertaken were substantial and the Resources Regulator had a sound and comprehensive strategy which is being effectively implemented. The Noetic Group was particularly impressed by the range, depth and quality of the reforms already achieved and those still underway. There is still more work to be done, but the Noetic Group believes the Resources Regulator has adopted a clear plan for changing the way it works to improve safety and has an excellent foundation for being a modern risk-based regulator.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (15:08): My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Primary Industries. The recently published recommendation 5.1 of the Productivity Commission final report into Australian agriculture strongly endorsed the establishment of an independent statutory agency which would meet community expectations of accountability, transparency and high animal welfare standards. In light of this recommendation and given the Minister's often stated confidence in the robustness of New South Wales' animal cruelty laws and enforcement authorities, as well as the Government's commitment to deliver on community expectations, will the Government establish an independent statutory body for animal welfare in New South Wales, and if not, why not?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:09): I thank the Hon. Mark Pearson for his question. As Minister for Primary Industries, I have stated on many occasions in this House that we take animal welfare seriously. We believe that most of the participants within our industries take animal welfare seriously as well, which is why, quite often, we have allowed most of the system improvements and animal welfare improvements in New South Wales to be led by the industries that know them best. Good animal welfare practice is good farming practice when it comes to our primary industries. The Hon. Mark Pearson made mention of the Productivity Commission's report. The Productivity Commission made a number of recommendations in areas concerning primary industries.

The New South Wales Government takes note of the Productivity Commission's recommendations but at times we can look at those recommendations and see that we have a system that is better suited to New South Wales. One has only to look at the recent decision of the Government to continue rice vesting in New South Wales, although it was contrary to the Productivity Commission's recommendation when it looked at that issue. Likewise, when it comes to animal welfare we believe the systems and the agencies in New South Wales are adequate. At the moment they are serving their purpose. Because the Productivity Commission has looked at it and said one thing does not mean we have to go down that path. We always look at what is best for business and industry in New South Wales. We have the ability to take the recommendations of the Productivity Commission on board but we also have the ability to review our systems and current measures, and if they are adequate we will continue with those.

I have faith in our systems in New South Wales. I have faith in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. I also have faith in the agencies under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act that are responsible for the

enforcement of animal welfare. I thank the Hon. Mark Pearson for his question. I know he is extremely interested in this area and I know he has a different view from me. He does not have the same faith in those agencies because he has been influenced by his past interactions with them. As I said, we look at what others research and find, and then we look at those issues through the lens of what is best for New South Wales. We did it with rice vesting, and it is what we are doing with animal welfare.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (15:12): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister please elucidate how the New South Wales approach to this report is either the same as or an improvement on the recommendations of the Productivity Commission?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:13): The New South Wales approach is the best approach for New South Wales.

COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (15:13): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities. Given his three separate responses on coal seam gas and unconventional gas exploration, what are the reasons he did not address the possible reopening of exploration on the Central Coast, and will he do so now?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:13): The Opposition is well and truly leading with its chin, asking a question about exploration licences. It has not escaped the attention of Government members that we are talking about exploration licences that covered areas on the Central Coast that were previously issued by the Labor Government, specifically by those people who are in the news today. We will not go there. Members on this side of the Chamber know that through licence buybacks we have reduced the footprint of coal seam gas titles in more than 60 per cent of the State to less than 7 per cent of the State. So 93 per cent of the State has no coal seam gas exploration licences, and that includes the Central Coast. This Government has no intention to issue any exploration licences on the Central Coast.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Just say, "I rule it out."

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I rule it out. It will not be happening on the Central Coast. I am happy to do that, as I was happy yesterday to highlight where it is explicitly ruled out in the North Coast strategy of the Department of Planning and Environment. I will resist the temptation to make personal remarks.

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. Lynda Voltz to order for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We have a gas plan.

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the second time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is based on the recommendations of the Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Mary O'Kane, who conducted an extensive review of this issue. She looked at all of the processes and made recommendations and, of course, we come back to the whole issue of the strategic release framework. We remember why we had to have a strategic release framework for coal and petroleum—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We know why the Hon. Walt Secord is taking a point of order now.

The Hon. Walt Secord: The Minister and former President is well aware that all remarks have to be addressed through the Chair. He was clearly playing to his backbench members.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind members that some of them are on two calls to order. Previous Presidents have ruled that members should address all comments through the Chair. Previous Presidents also have ruled that this does not mean that the speaker must be looking at the President when addressing comments through the Chair. It is permissible for speakers to be looking in other directions. The Minister was in order. The Minister's time has expired.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (15:18): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by confirming that his ruling out of exploration extends to the period after the Gosford by-election?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:18): Yes.

ABALONE TRAFFICKING

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (15:18): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is combating the illegal fishing of abalone?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:19): I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for his question on this important issue. It is something that the New South Wales Government is taking very seriously. The New South Wales Government supports sustainable and shared access to the State's abalone resource. Abalone stocks are managed through strict access arrangements, including a total allowable commercial catch, size limits, daily bag and possession limits for recreational fishers, and specific Aboriginal cultural fishing arrangements. However, we all know that illegal fishing occurs from time to time. Regardless of who the perpetrators are, they are dealt with according to the rules.

Only appropriately endorsed, licensed commercial fishers are able to take abalone for sale in New South Wales. Anyone else who takes and sells abalone is treated as an illegal fisher and dealt with accordingly. New South Wales Department of Primary Industries [DPI] fisheries officers work hard to manage illegal fishing when it occurs, and do so in joint operations with the NSW Police Force. Last financial year fisheries officers detected over 6,000 illegal fishing offences and seized over 60,000 fish and invertebrates from people on the State's waterways. A total of 5,621 abalone have so far been seized by fisheries officers this financial year. As a result, a number of individuals are facing charges in the courts for serious offences relating to illegal abalone fishing and sale.

Earlier this year Operation Symmetry, led by the Department of Primary Industries fisheries officers, resulted in the biggest seizure of abalone in more than two decades. They investigated the trafficking of commercial quantities of abalone on the New South Wales South Coast to unlicensed Sydney-based abalone receivers. More than 3,300 illegal abalone—645 of which were allegedly undersized—along with shark fin were seized in Western Sydney, with a market value of more than \$57,000. As a result, two men, including a restaurant owner, will face court soon on a range of charges including trafficking in fish. Individuals convicted of trafficking can receive a maximum of 10 years jail and a fine up to 10 times the market value of the abalone. Last month a Western Sydney man was convicted of trafficking in abalone and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

During the operation a total of 557 black-lip abalone were seized, along with the man's vehicle. The authorities had tracked the man and had found that he was illegally acquiring the abalone from the South Coast of New South Wales. The man also had to pay \$5,000 and was ordered to pay the department's costs of more than \$7,500. This should send a clear message to those who choose to trade illegally in the State's precious fisheries resources. We will stop them in their tracks. If people are offered cheap abalone or abalone from an unlicensed commercial fisher they could be involved in illegal trafficking. The only way to guarantee the quality of abalone is to buy from a reputable seafood retailer. DPI takes its management of fisheries resources very seriously and will continue to enforce the rules. People can lose their vehicle or boat on the spot; they can get a criminal conviction, receive significant fines, have costs awarded against them and risk going to jail—all on a first offence. As always, anyone with information on suspected illegal fishing activity is urged to call the Fishers Watch line or report it online.

MURWILLUMBAH TAFE

Ms DAWN WALKER (15:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, representing the Minister for Skills. Does the Government still plan to sell off the Murwillumbah TAFE campus, as was revealed in 2015. If so, what is the date for enrolments to cease at the campus ahead of the sale?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:23): I thank the honourable member for her question and note that this is her second question this week on TAFE NSW. That reflects her genuine interest in our fantastic public training provider. I share this interest, being a product of the TAFE system myself. I was a former student and a former part-time teacher at TAFE. I know that they are not watching, but I will give a shout out to anyone who used to attend the Griffith TAFE garden design class on Thursday evenings from 6.30 to 9.30. In fact, as it is a Thursday I wish I was there right now, rather than here.

The Hon. John Graham: You are right; they are not watching.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: They are definitely not watching. They are all out designing gardens because I was such a successful teacher! Some people chose my course in order to change their careers. That was one of the most satisfying things I experienced when I was a TAFE teacher. I have been advised that where there is a TAFE today there will be a TAFE tomorrow. TAFE is not leaving any town where it has a presence. I am further

advised that TAFE NSW has identified a number of surplus assets, most of which are empty blocks of land or old, unused buildings—not campuses. Where vacant land or underused facilities are sold, every dollar will be reinvested into modernising and improving TAFE NSW facilities and learning platforms for the benefit of students.

It makes no sense to hold on to vacant land or unused facilities. If these assets are sold the proceeds will be reinvested to modernise and improve TAFE facilities for the benefit of students. I emphasise that any proceeds of assets sales will stay within our TAFE system and will be reinvested into new TAFE assets. I note that Murwillumbah has been given a flood evacuation notice, and our thoughts are with everyone in that community as that storm moves across that area. Given this question relates to a specific matter about Murwillumbah TAFE and given that the member has a genuine interest in this, I will take that part of the question on notice, refer it to my colleague in the other place and come back to the member with any specific information that my colleague has in relation to Murwillumbah TAFE.

PARKLANDS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (15:25): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Given the Central Coast Regional Development Corporation has recently informed the Parklands Community Preschool in Kariong that its rent will change from \$1 a year to \$65,000 a year, what steps is she taking to help keep the centre open?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:26): I thank the honourable member for his question. As he indicated, the Parklands Community Preschool is located in Mount Penang Parklands, which are Crown lands under the responsibility of the Central Coast Regional Development Corporation. The preschool has been leasing a building on the site since 2002 at a nominal fee. The Central Coast Regional Development Corporation is a State Government self-funded entity that does not rely on annual allocations from the State budget to fund operations. Therefore, it is a matter for the corporation to decide on the amount of rent that it charges.

Parklands Community Preschool is currently implementing changes consistent with the Government's Start Strong reforms. Start Strong will be investing a further \$85 million in community preschools from 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2018. The majority of new funding for community preschools is being used to provide increased support to children who enrol for 600 hours in the year before school. I have spoken many times about the importance of Start Strong and how well it is working in the community.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Lynda Voltz to order for the second time.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: For the children and the families of Parklands Community Preschool, Start Strong is delivering. This is evidenced by the extended hours offered and the significant increase in enrolments for those 600 hours, which is a key milestone that we need to hit to ensure that our children get the best start in life. Having made these changes through Start Strong, Parklands Community Preschool will see an increase in funding. This funding increase will allow the preschool to reduce fees to families and provide financial sustainability for the preschool to operate. The sector support program is also available to those at Parklands Community Preschool if they require further assistance as to their financial sustainability with the Start Strong implementation or any other local changes that they may be facing.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (15:29): My question is addressed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government has done to increase the participation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in community preschools in New South Wales?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:29): I am conscious of the time, so I will give a brief update to the House and continue my answer later. I thank the honourable member for his continued interest in this matter. The Liberal-Nationals Government understands the importance of quality early childhood education, ensuring that children in New South Wales get the best start in life. As I mentioned in the House on Tuesday, I recently visited the Central West. I was fortunate to visit West Bathurst Preschool and see firsthand how the centre is using Start Strong funding effectively to improve services and access for disadvantaged children in the region. It is a very popular service. On the day I was there it was buzzing and full of very happy preschoolers. It boasts valuable, quality early childhood education under the guidance of experienced, long-serving and dedicated teachers. Some of the teachers had been at the preschool for well over a decade, which shows their commitment to the students.

As a Government, we are not afraid to put our money where our mouth is when it comes to supporting disadvantaged families. At West Bathurst Preschool the majority of enrolled children are from a disadvantaged background. I am pleased to report that, thanks to Start Strong funding, the centre has reduced its fees from \$32 a day to \$22 a day. A \$10 saving per day can make a massive difference at the end of each week, particularly for those families who are struggling a little. I am proud to be a part of a Government that continues to do all it can to support those who need it most.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Hon. Lynda Voltz that she is on two calls to order. If she is called to order for the third time, the person most upset will be the Hon. Walt Secord.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I would also like to talk about the importance of research into quality early education in schools, particularly the work that is being done by the Mitchell Institute. But, in the interests of time, I will save that for an answer next week. I am sure that all honourable members will be happy to hear about it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: If members have further questions, I suggest they put them on notice.

Deferred Answers

NURSING HOMES

In reply to **the Hon. ROBERT BORSACK** (22 February 2017).

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry)—The Minister provided the following response:

Since 2014, when the distinction of high and low care facilities was removed from the Commonwealth Aged Care Act, 1997, aged care facilities are no longer classified according to the level of care provided.

SHOALHAVEN HOSPITAL

In reply to **the Hon. PAUL GREEN** (22 February 2017).

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry)—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

Shoalhaven Hospital's stringent and ongoing inspections to ensure appropriate clinical standards identified a potential issue with sterilisation of theatre equipment, and in the interests of patient safety, a decision was taken to postpone some elective surgery.

Following a full and comprehensive review, which included the equipment, procedures and handling processes, specialist and independent advice has confirmed that sterilisation can resume as normal, and that theatre packs processed at Shoalhaven are safe for use in surgical procedures. All sterilisation services have now returned to normal at Shoalhaven Hospital.

Please find attached a statement from Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District for your information:

TAB A

Media Statement

NSW Government

Health

Illawarra Shoalhaven

Local Health District

TO: Daily Telegraph

DATE: Tuesday, 7 March 2017

SUBJECT: Elective Surgery—Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital

Please attribute to Carolyn Cooper, Executive Director Clinical Operations—Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

All sterilisation services have returned to normal at Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital following a full and comprehensive review which has included the equipment, procedures and handling processes.

Specialist and independent advice has confirmed that sterilisation can resume as normal, and that theatre packs processed at Shoalhaven are safe for use in surgical procedures.

Stringent checks of theatre equipment identified a potential issue last month and comprehensive testing has since determined that the sterilisation process at Shoalhaven is within clinically appropriate standards.

The decision to postpone some elective surgery last month was not taken lightly. We acknowledge that some elective patients have not received their surgery within clinically recommended timeframes and

postponement of surgery is less than ideal for all involved, but patient safety is our highest priority and we again reassure the community that there has been no risk to surgical safety.

Individual plans are being developed for patients whose surgery has been postponed to ensure they receive their procedure as soon as possible.

The hospital will move ahead with ordering new sterilising machinery as part of our equipment renewal schedule and will continue to use Wollongong Hospital's sterilisation services as a back-up, if the need arises.

We reiterate that patient safety is paramount and that all processes around sterilisation of equipment are extremely robust. Our teams are now working to bring elective surgery levels at Shoalhaven back to normal as quickly as possible.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Media contact: Communications Unit on 4221 6859 or 0422 003 764

healthdirect AUSTRALIA—providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents.
Tel. 1800 022 222

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

In reply to **the Hon. ADAM SEARLE** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts)—The Minister provided the following response:

I refer you to the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] *System Event Report New South Wales, 10 February 2017* at www.aemo.com.au

The Australian Energy Regulator [AER] is reviewing compliance in the wholesale electricity market. The AER will publish a report at the conclusion of its investigation.

I have also announced the formation of the NSW Energy Security Taskforce, which will:

- Assess the risks to and resilience of the New South Wales electricity system from extreme weather events;
- Evaluate the adequacy of the State's management of electricity system security events including prevention, preparedness, response and recovery; and
- Make recommendations on actions to address any vulnerabilities identified and/or opportunities for improvements to current practices.

GORDON WOOD

In reply to **Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts)—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised this question would be more appropriately addressed to the Attorney General.

RSPCA STAFFING LEVELS

In reply to **the Hon. MARK PEARSON** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry)—The Minister provided the following response:

RSPCA NSW is an independent charitable organisation operating its own constitution and governance structure and is independent of government.

POCTA is enforced not just by RSPCA NSW, but also by Animal Welfare League NSW and NSW Police.

I am advised that RSPCA NSW responds to cruelty complaints 365 days a year and receives about 15,000 complaints a year. It prioritises complaint investigation and ensures a timely response to urgent complaints. It does this either by dealing with the complaint directly or referring it to one of the other POCTA enforcement agencies, including the NSW Police Force if required.

NSW POLICE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

In reply to **the Hon. ROBERT BORSACK** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry)—The Minister provided the following response:

The NSW Police Force has advised me that its community engagement survey, Let Us Know What You Think, has been conducted for a number of years using brochures distributed at community events and online via Local Area Command Facebook pages. The survey focuses on local concerns and does not make reference to the Firearms Registry. There are no plans to release the survey results.

SYDNEY WATER CATCHMENT AREAS

In reply to **the Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry)—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised that WaterNSW uses pesticides to help manage pest and weed species around Sydney's dams as this helps keep the natural bushland intact, which is important for water quality.

WaterNSW has not and will not make compromises when it comes to meeting its legislated obligations to protect the Sydney drinking water catchments and the quality of water supplied from them.

Specifically in relation to use of pesticides around Sydney's dams, WaterNSW has undertaken a risk assessment of pesticides/herbicides. From that assessment WaterNSW has determined that their controlled use of both the quantity and application of pesticides and herbicides does not pose a risk to the quality of the raw water that WaterNSW supplies for treatment by Sydney Water and other drinking water distributors.

Chemicals are only used in strict compliance with NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] regulatory requirements. These requirements ensure safety, protection of the environment and water quality. WaterNSW monitors water quality for a range of pesticides and there have been no exceedances of Australian Drinking Water Guideline thresholds for these substances.

The measures WaterNSW has in place ensure that pesticides and herbicides do not constitute a health risk to Sydney's drinking water supplies.

ENERGY COMPANIES PAPER BILLS

In reply to **the Hon. GREG DONNELLY** (23 February 2017).

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts)—The Minister provided the following response:

Following my answer outlining that the matter would be raised with retailers, my department has continued to work with retailers on this matter and will continue to engage on issues such as these that affect hardship and vulnerable customers.

In many instances, retailers exempt certain customers, such as those who receive the New South Wales Government's low income household rebate or are experiencing hardship, from fees and charges.

Due to the different billing options provided by retailers in a competitive market, the best course of action for consumers is take up the opportunities provided by competition to seek an alternative arrangement.

I would encourage customers who are concerned about these charges to contact their retailer to discuss their options. Alternatively, customers can shop around for an offer, including exemptions from fees or charges, that best meets their requirements.

I look forward to further engaging with retailers in relation to this matter.

Committees

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - LEGAL AFFAIRS

Extension of Reporting Date

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: I inform the House that on this day Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Legal Affairs resolved to extend the reporting date for its inquiry into museums and galleries to 15 June 2017.

Personal Explanation

REGIONAL PLACE NAMES

The Hon. WALT SECORD (15:33): By leave: I wish to make a personal explanation. During question time there was an exchange involving my pronunciation of the far South Coast town of Bermagui. Regrettably, several other members of this Chamber have been subjected to similar exchanges over the past six years. This has happened to the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane and the Hon. Ernest Wong. The Hon. Duncan Gay should apologise.

The Hon. Don Harwin: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Walt Secord will resume his seat.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Do your homework, Walt.

The PRESIDENT: Is leave being withdrawn?

The Hon. Don Harwin: I do not seek to withdraw leave at this stage. I simply point out that when one is making a personal explanation one should confine one's remarks to how it is claimed one has been misrepresented. To then canvass how other members have been misrepresented, let alone to start debating the issue and then start reflecting on another member of the House is clearly completely contrary to the standing orders. The member should be called to order.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: He does his homework.

The Hon. Walt Secord: I have done my homework. Covering up for a racist.

The Hon. Don Harwin: In that case, leave is withdrawn.

Leave withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: I will rule first on the point of order. I uphold the point of order. Personal explanations are within the standing orders to allow a member to submit an explanation that affects them personally, not in relation to any other member or to canvass any previous actions that have occurred in the Chamber involving other members. As leave has been withdrawn, we do not need to take the matter any further.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: Point of order: I request that the honourable member withdraw his comment—

The Hon. Walt Secord: If the shoe fits, wear it.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: —about "covering up for a racist". That is totally inappropriate—

The Hon. Walt Secord: You said it. For the last six years you have been doing this; for the last six years you have been speaking to us in our accents.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I have not finished.

The PRESIDENT: I know that, but I do not want the two of you debating it.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: I wasn't; I was speaking to you.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Duncan Gay will not quibble with what I have said. The Hon. Duncan Gay may complete his point of order.

The Hon. Duncan Gay: My only comment was about pronunciation. I would have thought a frontbench member should have done his homework on pronunciation.

The Hon. Walt Secord: That is not what you did.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. The Hon. Duncan Gay has now entered into a debating point. In any event, I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the third time. In accordance with Standing Order 192 I direct the Usher of the Black Rod to remove the Hon. Walt Secord from the Chamber. The member is excluded from the Chamber until the termination of today's sitting.

[Pursuant to standing order the Hon. Walt Secord left the Chamber, accompanied by the Usher of the Black Rod.]

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order: To clarify, there was a request for the statement that was made to be withdrawn. Now that the member has been removed from the House, I am unsure as to what happens about the point of order when the member took offence and asked for the statement to be withdrawn.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: To the point of order: *Hansard* may reflect this—the member actually did not take offence at the comment that was made and ask for the comment to be withdrawn.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: He did.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: He did not, and I think *Hansard* will reflect that.

The Hon. Niall Blair: To the point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I am happy to continue to listen to debate on this point of order from one member at a time, but not while conversations are taking place across the Chamber.

The Hon. Niall Blair: I am happy to wait if you want to confer with the Clerk.

The PRESIDENT: I am happy to hear your point of order.

The Hon. Niall Blair: I withdraw.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let me make it clear to members. First, sitting in the chair I had difficulty trying to hear the points of order being made, the discussions in relation to points of order and the actual words used by some members that may or may not have given offence. It was extremely difficult. The fact was members were screaming across the Chamber to one another and I was trying to take it in. But clearly the Hon. Walt Secord crossed the line and on that basis I called him to order for the third time and on that basis the Usher of the Black Rod removed him from the Chamber.

It is open for me to examine *Hansard* and when we return on Tuesday to carefully note what was said and who said it and to give a further ruling on that occasion. That is what I had intended to do. If members take offence at words being stated, I assure them that members screaming across the Chamber does not assist anyone's

cause. I cannot guarantee that Hansard has been able to record every word because of the continual screaming across the Chamber. I have made my ruling, and that is the ruling.

The Hon. Don Harwin: Point of order: Mr President, I waited to raise this point of order until you had finished dealing with the Hon. Duncan Gay's point of order about the comments he found offensive. I have to say that I found the comments, which I believe were also directed at me, offensive as well. No doubt the Hon. Duncan Gay took issue with the label that was used in the remarks. But the remarks were also directed at me in terms of me covering up for the particular label that was used. I also found those remarks offensive and I ask you to reflect upon those as well.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: To the point of order: I listened intently to the Leader of the House when he was responding to the Hon. Walt Secord. I do not recall him saying that he took offence at the comments made by the Hon. Walt Secord. This is new—

The Hon. Don Harwin: Me?

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Yes.

The Hon. Don Harwin: Absolutely, because I was waiting until the President ruled on the previous point of order.

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: He did not take offence and it was only after the second interjection by the Hon. Walt Secord that he withdrew leave for him to speak.

The Hon. Niall Blair: To the point of order: The honourable member may not have heard, but there are two instances now where members have taken offence at the comments made by the Hon. Walt Secord. One was in relation to the Hon. Duncan Gay and the other was in relation to the Leader of the Government. This is about the mispronunciation of a place name in a regional community, and that was labelled racist. I mispronounced "Murwillumbah" during question time. Last week I mispronounced "Cassilis".

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: That is the point—no-one took offence.

The Hon. Niall Blair: No-one accused me of being racist when I was corrected. Since I have been in this place many members of this House have mispronounced the name of a community in New South Wales, which is something that those communities are passionate about. Some have mispronounced Canowindra. My point is that to label that as racist—

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to wait until the Minister has finished.

The Hon. Niall Blair: —for the member to be corrected about the pronunciation—

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: What is the standing order?

The Hon. Niall Blair: If the Hon. Lynda Voltz wants to participate and take a point of order she should stand up and do so. She should let me finish my point of order.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Government will resume his seat. The Hon. Adam Searle will resume his seat.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the Opposition does not have the call. He will resume his seat. This is starting to get out of hand. We have only 15 minutes left for debate. I do not want to have to call members to order for the third time and remove them from the Chamber. As I indicated in my earlier ruling, I will look carefully at the *Hansard* of what has transpired today. With due respect to all members, these further points of order are not assisting me in any way whatsoever because, irrespective of what a member now says about what they think was said or what they may have heard, I intend to operate from what the transcript shows. I will put these points of order to bed now.

Bills

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (DISQUALIFICATION FROM CIVIC OFFICE) BILL 2016

First Reading

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

Second Reading

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (15:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Local Government Amendment (Disqualification from Civic Office) Bill 2017 is simple. It is to disqualify property developers and real estate agents from holding the office of councillor or mayor of a local council or, in the case of a county council, the office of chairperson or member. This bill is an opportunity for the Parliament to draw a line under the corruption and perceptions of corruption that have bedevilled local government in this State for decades. No political party has been immune. But now the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have a choice. They can join with the New South Wales Labor Opposition, show that they have learned the same hard lessons that we have learned, and put an end to this corruption in local councils once and for all. Or they can choose to close their eyes until it happens again, because it will happen again—and again, and again.

If this bill fails, then no amount of posturing by the Government about integrity and reform in local government will hide the fact that those opposite had the choice to fix it and were found wanting. This is a watershed issue on which the community will judge Premier Berejiklian. I urge her to make the right choice. What is crystal clear is that throughout this State, in every locality and community one visits, it is the wish of the people of New South Wales that real estate agents and developers not sit on local councils. The message this bill will send is clear: No more; the jig is up. The current legislation does not prevent developers and real estate agents from seeking election to councils. The most recent and much hyped crackdown by the Government on property developers sitting on councils consisted of simply requiring them to declare whether they were a developer on their nomination form.

Recent media reports have confirmed that some candidates seeking election to council who would fall within the existing definition of "property developer" have not always made that declaration. In any case, this declaration is not publicly available after the period of the election, thus nullifying the claims of transparency. This was promoted as a key part of the Government's so-called reforms to "restore community confidence" in local government, along with measures requiring developer councillors to disclose their income sources. But no government agency was given responsibility for checking such statements, and the Office of Local Government has stated lamely that members of the public and other councillors were best placed to do this monitoring.

In this bill, the existing enforcement provisions in the Local Government Act will apply. It was incredible that it took the surreal wedding of a developer councillor to finally embarrass the Government enough for it to even bring its measures to Parliament last year. The elephant in the room of course—which is obvious to everyone except the Government—is that the real problem is not simply having a mechanism to self-identify if a councillor is a property developer; the real problem is allowing them to be councillors in the first place. The Opposition has no problem with people being developers or real estate agents. These are both perfectly legitimate professions in our community. We need the experience and advice of real estate agents when buying and selling real property, and we need developers to bring together the investment required for the construction of housing estates, shopping centres and other developments of all sizes in our communities.

However, there is just too much of a conflict of interest in being either a developer or a real estate agent and also sitting on a local council. This is stunningly obvious to everyone in New South Wales except members of the New South Wales Government. When someone is involved in a property development business or a real estate business, the conflicts of interest are just too great to overcome when they sit as local councillors. The common sense of the people of New South Wales, born of experience, demands that we sever that link once and for all. How many more local government scandals do we need to have before we, as members of Parliament, decide that a person can be either a property developer or a local councillor, but not both; or that a person can be a real estate agent or a local councillor but not both?

The long title of the bill is "An Act to amend the Local Government Act 1993 to disqualify property developers and real estate agents from holding civic office". New section 275 (10) defines a "property developer" as having the same meaning as it has in section 96GB of the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosure Act 1981. This section provides that "property developer" includes a person who is a close associate of a property developer. The precise definition in the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosure Act 1981 is:

- (1) Each of the following persons is a *property developer* for the purposes of this Division:
 - (a) a corporation engaged in a business that regularly involves the making of relevant planning applications by or on behalf of the corporation in connection with the residential or commercial development of land, with the ultimate purpose of the sale or lease of the land for profit,
 - (b) a person who is a close associate of a corporation referred to in paragraph (a).
- (2) Any activity engaged in by a corporation for the dominant purpose of providing commercial premises at which the corporation or a related body corporate of the corporation will carry on business is to be disregarded for the purpose of

determining whether the corporation is a property developer unless that business involves the sale or leasing of a substantial part of the premises.

...

(3) In this section:

close associate of a corporation means each of the following:

- (a) a director or officer of the corporation or the spouse of such a director or officer,
- (b) a related body corporate of the corporation,
- (c) a person whose voting power in the corporation or a related body corporate of the corporation is greater than 20% or the spouse of such a person,
- (d) if the corporation or a related body corporate of the corporation is a stapled entity in relation to a stapled security—the other stapled entity in relation to that stapled security,
- (e) if the corporation is a trustee, manager or responsible entity in relation to a trust—a person who holds more than 20% of the units in the trust (in the case of a unit trust) or is a beneficiary of the trust (in the case of a discretionary trust).

"Real estate agent" is defined as having the same meaning as it has in the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act 2002. In that Act, the definition is as follows:

"**real estate agent**" means a person (whether or not the person carries on any other business) who, for reward (whether monetary or otherwise), carries on business as an auctioneer of land or as an agent:

- (a) for a real estate transaction, or
- (b) for inducing or attempting to induce or negotiating with a view to inducing any person to enter into, or to make or accept an offer to enter into, a real estate transaction or a contract for a real estate transaction, or
- (c) for the introduction, or arranging for the introduction, of a prospective purchaser, lessee or licensee of land to another licensed agent or to the owner, or the agent of the owner, of land, or
- (d) collecting rents payable in respect of any lease of land and otherwise providing property management services in respect of the leasing of any land, or
- (e) for any other activity in connection with land that is prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition,

but does not include a person who carries on business as an auctioneer or agent in respect of any parcel of rural land unless the regulations otherwise provide.

These definitions were chosen because they have been endorsed previously by this Parliament. They have been the subject of judicial review as a consequence of numerous legal actions, which have interpreted and defined their meaning in law. Should the Parliament at any time choose to refine or revise the meaning of these terms in their respective Acts, then their meaning in the Act proposed by this bill would consequently change also. New section 275 (8) specifies that if a real estate agent or property developer is an existing councillor or mayor, they are not disqualified from holding civic office as a consequence of the commencement of the proposed Act for the balance of their term of office or for the period of two years, whichever is the shorter period.

New section 275 (9) specifies that a real estate agent or property developer is not disqualified as a consequence of the commencement of the proposed Act from being nominated for election or being elected to a civic office. However, if they are elected they are disqualified from holding that civic office unless they cease being a real estate agent or property developer before the first meeting of the council after the election, or it is an election as mayor by the councillors during the period that the person is not disqualified by operation of proposed section 275 (8). In the High Court decision in *McCloy v New South Wales* in October 2015, it is worth noting the submission made by the New South Wales Government at page 19. I quote from the decision:

New South Wales submits that the degree of dependence of property developers on decisions of government about matters such as the zoning of land and development approvals distinguishes them from actors in other sectors of the economy. Property developers are sufficiently distinct to warrant specific regulation in light of the nature of their business activities and the nature of the public powers which they might seek to influence in their self-interest, as history in New South Wales shows.

These submissions of New South Wales should be accepted.

The Berejiklian Government should also accept the argument that the New South Wales Government's legal experts made in *McCloy*—that is, that property developers warrant specific regulation—and support this bill. Further, through its policy of forced council mergers, the Government has made this bill even more important. The Government has forcibly merged dozens of local councils throughout the State, making the honeypot even more enticing. A forcibly merged Canterbury and Bankstown council now covers a population the size of Tasmania. Surely the Government recognises that an elected position on such a mega council would be seen as a lucrative prize for anyone who wants to influence land use planning decisions in that local government area?

Despite promises by the former Premier that spending caps would be introduced for local government elections in time for the September 2016 elections, the Government has still not legislated them. With the next round of local government elections occurring in September 2017, time is running out for the Government to deliver on its promise. This bill provides the other necessary tranche of protections expected by the New South Wales community by disqualifying property developers and real estate agents from sitting in elected positions on local councils. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

AUSTRALIA21 REPORT

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (15:59): Last week I attended the launch of Australia21's report entitled, "Can Australia respond to drugs more effectively and safely?" Australia21 is an independent public policy-focused think tank that was established in 2001 with the aim of generating fresh debate, and consideration of vexed and complex problems of importance to Australia's future. The report focused on Australia's current national drug policy and addressed the question that, "If changes were to be made to our current illicit drugs policy, what options and processes would be most likely to reduce harm to users and increase the effectiveness of our policy?" The report was based on a roundtable discussion between 17 law enforcement experts, including retired judges, prosecutors, senior police officers, prison and parole administrators, drug law researchers, and advocates, and was held at the University of Sydney in September 2015. The launch included speeches from the former New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, the former Victorian Premier and founder of beyondblue, Jeff Kennett, the Chair of Australia21, Paul Barratt, and the convenor and Chair of the roundtable and deputy chair of Australia21, Mick Palmer.

A substantial agreement was reached by those who participated in the roundtable that Australia's current approach to illicit drugs is not working and is inadvertently exacerbating harm. Mick Palmer, who as members know is a former commissioner of both the Australian Federal Police and the Northern Territory Police, stated that our current drug policy is "badly broken, ineffective and counterproductive to its harm-minimisation aims and we must be courageous enough to consider a new and different approach". However, as we know, developing and implementing an effective illicit drugs policy is complex both for politicians and for the wider community.

Since 1985, Australia's national drugs policy has been, and still is, based on harm minimisation. The Howard Government intended its drug policy to focus law enforcement on the high end of the organised illicit drug marketplace, and to target demand and harm-reduction resources at the social and low-level user and addict level. Today, the core of Australian drug policy is deterrence, with a heavy reliance on strong law enforcement. The rationale for this is the widely held view that the existence of criminal penalties deters many people from using drugs, and thus reduces or controls levels of drug use through demand. However, one of the negatives of drug prohibition when we see everything through a criminal justice lens is that drug treatment suffers. That is because it is treated as an adjunct to law enforcement rather than primarily as a health and social problem.

Treatment must play a significant role in any drugs strategy, with a shift towards treating drug use as a public health issue rather than a criminal justice issue. While there is community concern that greater drug law liberalisation will lead to easier access to drugs and consequently more consumption, there is no convincing evidence that less restrictive drug laws increase drug use and more restrictive drug laws reduce it. In fact, the opposite is true. The report was launched at Parliament House and outlined 13 recommendations for illicit drug law reform. I may not agree with all of the recommendations in the report, but I will highlight two. Recommendation No. 11 proposes an expansion of medically supervised injecting rooms around Australia, such as the successful centre operating in Kings Cross. These injecting centres, which are staffed by professionals, help to minimise fatal and non-fatal overdoses, reduce HIV and other blood-borne diseases, and provide and encourage referral for health and social assistance.

Other recommendations include trialling a pill testing project and significant research into regulation and how a future regulatory system might work. The report emphasised that the journey towards drug policy reform in Australia will need to be slow and incremental, dealt with step-by-step, fully evaluated, and transparent. It is clear that reform cannot be too far in front of public opinion. I commend Australia21's report to members. They will find it on the organisation's website. I commend Australia21 and its members for the important broader work they do in social and economic policy.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (16:03): I draw the attention of the House to a survey recently conducted by Marriage Alliance dealing with same-sex marriage. The alliance, which I support, is a coalition of 40 or 50 church-related organisations and other family focused groups. The alliance commissioned a poll of 2,500 people, which was conducted by Sexton Market Research in December. The survey delivered some interesting results. Participants were asked whether they strongly supported legalising same-sex marriage. The survey revealed that only 33 per cent of Australians agree with that proposition, 25 per cent were undecided, 20 per cent strongly opposed it, and 3 per cent somewhat opposed it.

By digging deeper in focus groups, the researchers found that support declined significantly, especially among "soft" supporters, when same-sex marriage was linked to consequences such as sex education and gender politics, with 81 per cent afraid of losing terms like "mum" and "dad", and 75 per cent worried about unisex toilets. In addition, 81 per cent of participants were concerned about the gender of newborns being removed from birth certificates and about words in the English language such as "mum" and "dad" being replaced by "parent one" and "parent two". Further, 69 per cent were concerned that children were being taught in school that gender is flexible and that they can choose whether they are male or female.

When asked about their attitude to restrictions on freedom of speech in the workplace, 67 per cent of participants with strong beliefs that marriage should be between a man and a woman were concerned. Breaking the figures down further, most soft supporters of same-sex marriage said they were also concerned about the loss of freedom of speech. In response to being asked whether participants agreed that parents should have a right to know exactly what is taught in sex education classes and to say yes or no to any content beyond their family beliefs, 66 per cent of those who somewhat support same-sex marriage said that they agreed compared with 49 per cent of strong supporters. Of those who are undecided about same-sex marriage, 65 per cent agreed with the statement compared to 84 per cent of those who strongly opposed same-sex marriage. On the question of replacing male and female public toilets and school toilets with unisex toilets, 80 per cent of soft supporters of same-sex marriage were concerned about the idea, as were 60 per cent of strong supporters.

Based on the poll data, Marriage Alliance believes that over time support for same-sex marriage has eroded. The same-sex marriage lobby claims that 75 per cent of people in Australia support same-sex marriage, but that is not supported by this latest survey. Marriage Alliance states that the controversy around Safe Schools programs has helped its campaign as a result of revelations of harassment of Christians by the militant arm of the same-sex marriage lobby. Safe Schools, formerly known as Proud Schools, is a sexual indoctrination program designed by university gender study academics disguised as an anti-bullying program. However, the founder of the program, Roz Ward, says that it had nothing to do with bullying. Interestingly, the survey found that key ethnic communities are overwhelmingly against same-sex marriage, including 75 per cent of the Muslim community and 65 per cent of the Hindu community.

Support plummeted for same-sex marriage when it was linked to a social change agenda, including safe schools and when freedom of speech and religion are threatened. The irony, therefore, is that the people in favour of same-sex marriage, I believe, are aware of these figures, and that is why they have done all they can to prevent the plebiscite proceeding, because they believe that they would lose.

PARRAMATTA AND DISTRICT WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ (16:09): Under the New South Wales 2021 Plan, the Coalition Government put in place a target to increase participation in sport and physical activity by 10 per cent from 2010 to 2016. Yet, by its 2014-15 annual report, New South Wales participation rates fell from 65.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 61.4 per cent in 2013-14. To increase participation, as the Government claimed it wished to do under its New South Wales 2021 Plan, particularly in that crucial area of increased activity among children, a good place to start would be those sports with the highest participation rates. We know what those participation rates are, thanks to the work of the Australian Sports Commission in its recent AusPlay report that summarises the key national findings for participation in the sport sector.

The stand-out performer for out-of-school participation for children is swimming, with 30 per cent; therefore 1.4 million children are swimming regularly. For women, it is in the top three after walking and the gym with 1.5 million, and for men, it is in the top five with 1.3 million swimming. If the Government were serious in its glossy brochure promoting "New South Wales 2021" then swimming would be first and foremost in the mind of the sports Minister. Instead, tomorrow, 31 March, under the Berejiklian Government, the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool will be closed and demolished. Tomorrow night the residents of Parramatta will gather at the pool at 6.00 p.m. one last time.

Why? Because the New South Wales Government chose to ignore the existence of the Parramatta and District War Memorial Swimming Pool and the local community when it planned to build its stadium; because the New South Wales Government chose to demolish the pool without any plans to fully fund its replacement; and because it made absolutely no plans to replace the pool when it decided to build a new stadium. The old Parramatta Stadium is gone—demolished. After tomorrow the pool will be gone, too. Yet, there are no funds from this Government to rebuild the pool. A pool built to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the Second World War—gone without trace—and the Minister for Sport still refuses to fully fund its replacement.

Instead, the New South Wales Government sends out its self-appointed administrator for Parramatta council to handle the public backlash. We get lines such as "We are talking to the New South Wales Government about a replacement pool". Really? We have a State Government demolition and we are hearing from the Local Government administrator. We have State Government lands it is isolating and we are hearing from the local government administrator. We have a pool that should be fully funded by the New South Wales Government, yet we are hearing from the local government administrator.

This is the biggest hospital pass by the Minister for Sport in recent history—and trust me, he has had a few. Why can he get away with it? Because under forced council amalgamations there are no local voices to protect the public assets. Democracy is being sidelined while the New South Wales Government and its administrator carve up the Parramatta Park Trust Lands, "One of the world's oldest public parks", although that statement appears to have been removed from the Parramatta Park Trust website where it recently appeared.

On what site is the Government considering putting the pool? It is the Parramatta High School oval. The Government would not touch the Old Kings oval, but somehow the oval used by the public schoolchildren at the Parramatta High School is up for grabs. I would be interested to know how much consultation with the principal and the local Parents and Citizens Association occurred on this plan to build a pool on their school sports field, a sports field that sits on open space that has been protected due to its important heritage values and view corridors. Gone from all these plans are the important heritage view corridors for the Mays Hill precinct. Instead we will see these culturally significant lands holding an indoor sports complex, child-minding, gyms, massage services and cafés.

That is according to a survey that the administrator has sent out—not to the public. Apparently you only got a say on this important site of national significance if you happened to have registered on the Your City Your Say email before the survey was sent out. Try finding the information contained in the survey on the council website and you will not be able to. But as those of us on this side of the Chamber have become used to, getting any information from this Government, and now it appears also from their appointed administrators, is useless. Whilst the storm clouds gather over Sydney, tomorrow will be an even darker day at Parramatta, as the local residents bid farewell to their much-loved pool, which they paid for and which has served their community well for 60 years.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (16:14): This afternoon I speak on my favourite topic—renewable energy, and the hypocrisy, stupidity and short-sightedness of the National Party and its leader, Barnaby Joyce. In a long career of saying outrageously stupid things, that blustering beetroot, Barnaby Joyce, has surpassed even himself with his latest utterances about renewable energy. It is just so disappointing for the people of Australia to be afflicted by this fool who is leading us into an economic disaster and stuck in the 1950s when it comes to climate change, renewable energy and economic development in New South Wales. Recently "Barnyard" Joyce said this about the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] renewable energy target:

The ACT saying they want 100 per cent renewables is crazy. That might be a policy setting, but it's also completely insane. It just doesn't work.

He is an expert on crazy and insane. He looks in the mirror every morning and sees he is afflicted by that condition. The hypocrisy is outrageous because the Deputy Prime Minister of this country knows that the biggest economic development happening in his electorate is renewable energy. It is the wind farms at Glen Innes and the White Rock and Sapphire Ridge wind farms. The outrageous stupidity and hypocrisy is writ large when you consider that the \$500 million development at Sapphire Ridge is underpinned by a supply agreement with the ACT Government over 20 years. Without the Act policy, the biggest economic development in his electorate, the largest wind farm in New South Wales, 270 megawatts of power, 100 megawatts contracted to the ACT, 265 local jobs. It will supply the equivalent of 110,000 homes with clean energy.

The construction started in January and it is in the heart of his electorate. It would not be going ahead without the very policy, the principal progressive policy of the ACT Government led by The Greens Minister, Shane Rattenbury, of 100 per cent renewable electricity. Barnaby Joyce—how can he get out of bed and front the people of Australia and keep a straight face. Here he is, turning the sod on the White Rock wind farm, another

\$400 million renewable energy project in his electorate, which is driving economic growth. The biggest projects in his electorate and he is against the policy that actually delivers them. What a hypocrite. Some people describe it in the bush as just total bullshit. That is how they describe what Barnaby Joyce is putting forward.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Point of order: I think the use of the word that the honourable member just used is unparliamentary and I would ask that a ruling be made on it.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: To the point of order: I think previous rulings have said that "bullshit" is an accepted word.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: He just used it again.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I did not hear the word because I was consulting with the Clerk, so I cannot rule on it. Mr Jeremy Buckingham has the call.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: It is absolute garbage. It is crap. Barnaby put out a press release on 12 April 2016:

Clean energy is essential to meet our emissions reductions target.

It was not Senator Richard Di Natale. It was not a member of The Greens. It was Barnaby Joyce, the Deputy Prime Minister. He is an absolute fool. He knows full well that the future of energy development in this country is renewables. He knows full well it is delivering clean energy jobs and billions of dollars of development in his electorate. The people of Australia know that he turned the sod then bagged out the ACT. He is a fool and he is full of bullshit.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time. There is an expectation that a reasonable degree of decorum will be maintained in the Chamber. Using unparliamentary language is unnecessary. I implore the member to not do it again.

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (16:20): I draw the attention of the House to work-life balance and the inability of New South Wales law and the practice of the New South Wales health system to support family friendly work practices. Family friendly work and the need for flexible working hours are usually associated with the desire of working mothers to balance their careers with the ongoing obligations to their families. On 25 March, the *Sydney Morning Herald* drew the public's attention to a case involving two fathers, which arose because of a decision made by the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales last November. South Sydney Local Health District, which runs the Liverpool Hospital, employed a range of carpenters, including male twins, Mr Cameron Zammit and Mr Craig Zammit. For more than eight years the Zammits had been allowed to work from 6.00 a.m. until 2.30 p.m. Monday to Friday rather than the usual hours of their colleagues in the maintenance department, which ran from 7 o'clock to 3.30 p.m.

They were allowed that arrangement to enable them to collect their primary schoolchildren, for whom they had carer responsibilities, from school at 3 o'clock. Those arrangements had been in place for the better part of a decade, with no impact on efficiency or cost to the employer or the delivery of services. Without any explanation, the two men were required to reapply for their flexible working hours and then had the continuation of those arrangements discontinued. The human resources assistant director who was responsible for making this important decision did not appear to know the ages of the Zammit children, the personal circumstances of the Zammit families, or the impact of her decision or of the local health district on the families concerned. She also was blissfully unaware of information on the hospital website that extolled not only its virtues as a family-friendly employer but also of employees having a work-life balance which could be achieved through job sharing, part-time work or flexible working hours.

Evidence given on behalf of the hospital was that it was experiencing performance issues and needed to manage its resources as efficiently, effectively and responsibly as it could to overcome its accumulated deficit of \$8.2 million. None of this explained how the differential working hours of the two men concerned impacted on that deficit or in any way impeded the efficient work of the maintenance section. The only significant evidence was that the men could not participate in the end-of-shift discussion at 3.30 p.m. However, hospital staff did not think that communicating with the men by phone to tell them what to do the next morning or leaving them a list of instructions in writing or by email was satisfactory. Given the potential change to their working hours, the two men, who are on modest incomes, face significant changes to their lives. They have no immediate family members to assist them. The children are dropped at school by their mothers and picked up by their fathers.

If the fathers are not able to pick them up, it means the careers of their working wives will be impacted if they have to shorten their hours to pick up their children, or the family will have to endure the significant expense of paid child care. The limited means of the two families made it clear that that was not feasible. It appears

that the hospital has acted for no real reason, and raises the need to change the discrimination laws of this State to include a positive legal duty on employers to reasonably accommodate the needs of workers who have carer or family responsibilities and, importantly, who request or need the continuation of flexible working arrangements. Obviously the law in this State is not working fairly, justly, or effectively.

AGL VIEWING PLATFORM ART AND DESIGN COMPETITION

BROKEN HILL SOLAR PLANT

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (16:25): On the weekend I had the pleasure of attending the AGL Viewing Platform Art and Design Competition winner presentation in Broken Hill, which is home to one of Australia's largest solar plants. The 53-megawatt plant has been operational since 2015. The 660,000 film photovoltaic modules are truly a sight to see. Owned and operated by AGL Energy in conjunction with First Solar, the plant has brought great benefits to the Broken Hill community and our great State. Last year, AGL Energy and the Broken Hill Art Exchange, under the inspirational leadership of Susan Thomas, launched a competition for the design of the viewing platform for this solar plant. The competition called upon students and professionals in design and architecture to create a concept for the viewing platform. Many wonderful entries were received from all over the country. Those entries were a celebration of the unique community of Broken Hill and its history, the environment, flora and fauna, and indigenous culture and history. Earlier this month, AGL announced the four competition finalists: Ben Waters from Melbourne, Timothy Bauer from Queensland, Bryce Bessell from South Australia, and Shay Carthew and Tayah Lee-Traub from Broken Hill.

On Saturday afternoon, Timothy Bauer was announced as the winner of the AGL Viewing Platform Art and Design Competition at a ceremony at Broken Hill's Geocentre. Timothy's design is called "Earth and Sky". Incredibly evocative of the local landscape, it is based on the collaboration of the red earth of Broken Hill as a foundation and the reflective facade in recognition of Broken Hill as the Silver City. Timothy will receive a prize of \$10,000 for his fantastic design concept. It was a privilege to meet him. He is an impressive young man and will go a long way in his career. I congratulate him on his wonderful work.

Ben Waters received the Community Choice award for his unique design. Ben's design is called the "Silver Circle Viewing Platform". It is a celebration of the new relationship between landscape and technology. Ben will receive \$1,000 for his design. I also congratulate Ben on his work. All entries will remain on display until 23 April 2017 at the Desert Equinox Prelude event entitled "A prelude to a Broken Hill Biennale of art celebrating Solar—Sun and Earth". I strongly encourage all members to visit the display and acknowledge the hard work those designers have put into their concepts.

Broken Hill is the ideal location for such a solar plant. Its vast open spaces have one of the highest levels of solar radiation in New South Wales, which is why the Broken Hill solar plant is one of the largest in the country. The plant has a 53-megawatt capacity, which is the equivalent to producing enough clean renewable electricity for 17,000 average New South Wales homes each year. It will displace more than 109,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per year, which is equivalent to taking more than 29,000 cars off the road annually. The solar plant has also brought major economic benefits to the Broken Hill community. Construction on the plant commenced in 2014. During this time, \$15 million was injected into the local Broken Hill economy, including the creation of at least 150 local jobs during construction and many more will be created throughout the operation of the plant.

New South Wales leads the nation in large-scale solar plants with three significant plants, one each in Moree, Nyngan and Broken Hill. Collectively, those plants have created 580 construction jobs, which is a huge benefit to our regional communities. They also produce enough clean energy for up to 65,000 homes. This is a clear demonstration of renewable energy taking off in New South Wales, and there is more to come. This journey of solar is truly remarkable in New South Wales. A rapid transformation is unfolding across the energy sector. Forecasters did not predict just how quickly the cost of solar would decline and how fast the technology would be taken up. In New South Wales, around one in seven households has solar on their rooftops. It is a fascinating story involving immense shifts in technology, innovative finance, manufacturing efficiencies, and Government policy to address climate change. New South Wales is the nation's leader in large-scale solar, of which I am immensely proud.

But that is not all Broken Hill has to offer in the renewable energy space. Broken Hill will soon be home to the 200-megawatt Silverton wind farm, which will produce approximately 780,000 megawatts of renewable energy each year. I was privileged to visit the site on the weekend. This is enough energy to power more than 137,000 average Australian homes. The 58 turbines will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 655,000 tonnes each year, which is equivalent to taking 192,000 cars off the road annually. In addition, construction of the farm will create up to 150 jobs for the local economy, which is a huge benefit for the whole region. It was a delight to be part of the celebration of renewable energy in Broken Hill, and indeed for New South Wales. I look forward to

seeing the renewable energy sector continue to develop and thrive for many years to come under the leadership of this Government.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:30 until Tuesday 4 April 2017 at 14:30.