



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday, 12 September 2017

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, 12 September 2017

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. John George Ajaka) took the chair at 14:30.

The PRESIDENT read the prayers and acknowledged the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation and its elders and thanked them for their custodianship of this land.

Members

OATH OF AFFIRMATION

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that on Tuesday 22 August 2017 the Hon. Wesley Joseph Fang presented himself to His Excellency the Governor and took the oath of affirmation. I further report that the Governor has forwarded to the Clerk a message transmitting the oath of affirmation for the member.

The Hon. Wesley Joseph Fang signed the Roll of the House.

Bills

SYDNEY PUBLIC RESERVES (PUBLIC SAFETY) BILL 2017

CHARITABLE FUNDRAISING AMENDMENT (INQUIRIES) BILL 2017

COAL MINE SUBSIDENCE COMPENSATION BILL 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (STAGED DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS) BILL 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AND ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PLANNING PANELS AND ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2017

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED VEHICLE TRIALS AND INNOVATION) BILL 2017

Assent

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent to the abovementioned bills.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of the following message from the Hon. Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

T Bathurst
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Council that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General, the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Saturday, 26 August 2017.

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

David Hurley
GOVERNOR

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Council that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Sunday, 27 August 2017

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of the following message from the Hon. Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

T Bathurst
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

The Honourable Thomas Frederick Bathurst, AC, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New South Wales, has the honour to inform the Legislative Council that, consequent on the Governor of New South Wales, His Excellency General, the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), being absent from the State, he has assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Saturday, 2 September 2017

The PRESIDENT: I report the receipt of the following message from His Excellency the Governor:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

David Hurley
GOVERNOR

General David Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales has the honour to inform the Legislative Council that he has re-assumed the administration of the Government of the State.

Sunday, 3 September 2017

Announcements

SOUTH-EAST ASIA FLOODS

The PRESIDENT (14:32): I inform the House that on behalf of members of the Legislative Council and the people of New South Wales, I have sent a message of condolence to the Chairman of the Maharashtra Legislative Council of our sister State in India expressing sympathy to the relatives and friends of the people who have been killed, injured or made homeless by the current floods. I have sent a similar message to the Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, who is the Speaker of the Parliament in Bangladesh.

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

Documents

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The PRESIDENT: According to clause 6 of the terms of agreement made with the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, I table a letter from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser, dated 3 September 2017, enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Duncan Gay, dated 3 September 2017.

Commemorations

CENTENARY OF FIRST WORLD WAR

The PRESIDENT (14:34): During the months of the Gallipoli campaign it became increasingly common for young men to be shamed as "shirkers". Many were sent white feathers symbolising cowardice or stopped on the street by strangers and questioned as to why they were not in uniform. This wave of public humiliation was particularly hard to bear for the thousands of men who had volunteered, only to have been turned away on medical grounds. In the first year of the conflict, approximately one-third of volunteers in Australia were rejected as medically unfit for service. They were too old or too short, or had bad teeth, poor eyesight or some other condition. One such volunteer was Reginald George Henry Campbell, a 36-year-old Clerk in the Legislative Council. Campbell who volunteered in January 1917. He was assigned to a rifle regiment and underwent training as a gunner.

On 14 September, however, following a final pre-embarkation medical examination, he was discharged on account of medical grounds. He returned to his role in the Legislative Council, later serving as Usher of the Black Rod for many years. In New South Wales, the Rejected Volunteers' Association [RVA] was established to protect the rights and dignity of men turned away from duty. The RVA produced badges for rejected volunteers to wear in public and provided support to ensure they were not discriminated against in their workplaces. Unable to fight alongside their mates, many rejected volunteers sought out opportunities to support the war effort in other capacities, often in public service. Lest we forget.

Motions

TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY "DOT" LOCKWOOD

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (14:38): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) Mrs Dorothy (Dot) Lockwood, affectionately known as "Dot" or "Dotty", passed away on Tuesday 11 July 2017 at the age of 83;
 - (b) Mrs Lockwood was a prominent community leader in Tamworth and president of the Tamworth Netball Association since 1982, having been involved since the mid-1950s while working as a schoolteacher;
 - (c) Mrs Lockwood continued to teach in local primary schools until she was 71 years of age;
 - (d) Mrs Lockwood worked tirelessly for the Tamworth Netball Association, with key achievements including:
 - (i) securing funding to build a brand new clubhouse in the early 1980s;
 - (ii) overseeing Tamworth Netball Association's participation in the construction of the \$9 million Tamworth Sports Dome in 2010-11, including indoor courts, which are a regional asset;
 - (iii) playing, coaching and umpiring for many teams over the years;
 - (iv) running the NetSetGo skills sessions for five- to seven-year-olds, known as Dot's babies;
 - (v) running the Thursday night social ladies and mixed comp, including encouraging many males into playing her sport of choice;
 - (vi) being the chief supporter for the Tamworth Netball Association representative teams, travelling to many carnivals and always attending State Championships (17s, 21s and Opens) and Stage Age (12-15s) to support the players by watching every game courtside; and
 - (vii) implementing social inclusion programs, including the integration of a disabilities team into the Thursday competition and providing coaching sessions for players with disabilities.
 - (e) Mrs Lockwood's years of selfless dedication to netball resulted in her being honoured with many awards, including life membership of the Tamworth Netball Association in 1989; the NSW Premier's Community Service Award 2009; NSW Sports Federation Distinguished Long Service Award 2013; and the Anne Clark, BEM, Outstanding Service Award in 1986; and
 - (f) Mrs Lockwood's husband, Ken, was by her side throughout her time in netball, earning himself an honorary Life Membership of Tamworth Netball Association in 2009 for his outstanding service to netball.
- (2) That this House acknowledges and commends the outstanding service of Mrs Dorothy [Dot] Lockwood to the Tamworth community and extends its sympathy to Mrs Lockwood's family, husband, Ken, daughters, Sue and Robyn, and Tamworth netball community on the loss of a Tamworth icon.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

TABLED PAPERS NOT ORDERED TO BE PRINTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: According to Standing Order 59, I table a list of all papers tabled in the previous month and not ordered to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 42/56

The Hon. GREG PEARCE: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled "Legislation Review Digest No. 42/56", dated 8 August 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

PAPERS PRESENTED OUT OF SESSION

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the following reports presented since the last sitting of the House and authorised to be printed:

- (1) Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984—
 - (a) Report of Audit Office of New South Wales for year ended 30 June 2017; and

- (b) Report of Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust for year ended 28 February 2017.
- (2) Electricity Supply Act 1995—Report of Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled "NSW Energy Savings Scheme Compliance and Operation in 2016—Annual Report to the Minister", dated July 2017.
- (3) Passenger Transport Act 1990—Report of Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator entitled "Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the Final Report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Waterfall Rail Accident—Reporting period: April 2016-March 2017: Report 37", dated August 2017.
- (4) Restart NSW Fund Act 2011—Report of NSW Treasury entitled "Report on the review of the Restart NSW Fund Act 2011", dated July 2017.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: According to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of a Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled "Planning and evaluating palliative care services in NSW: NSW Health", dated August 2017, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 17 August 2017.

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

Report: First Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme

The CLERK: According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 61 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled "First Review of the Dust Diseases scheme", dated August 2017, together with transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, submissions, correspondence and answers to questions taken on notice, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 24 August 2017.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned.

Report: First Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Scheme

The CLERK: According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 62 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled "First review of the Lifetime Care and Support scheme", dated August 2017, together with transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, submissions, correspondence and answers to questions taken on notice, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 24 August 2017.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned.

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 – EDUCATION

Government Response: Inner City Public Primary School Enrolment Capacity and Redevelopment of Ultimo Public School

The CLERK: According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 36 of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 entitled "Inner city public primary school enrolment capacity and redevelopment of Ultimo Public School", tabled 13 February 2017, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 15 August 2017.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE

Government Response: First review of the workers compensation scheme

The CLERK: I table correspondence from the Hon. Victor Dominello, MP, Minister for Finance, Services and Property, dated 5 September 2017, advising that the Government's response to report No. 60 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled "First review of the workers compensation scheme" tabled on 9 March 2017, which was due on 11 September 2017, will be provided on 11 October 2017.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Report: 2017 Review of the Annual Reports of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian**

The CLERK: According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 3/56 of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled "2017 Review of the Annual Reports of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Children's Guardian", dated August 2017, received out of session and authorised to be printed on 14 August 2017.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I move:

That the House take note of the report.

Debate adjourned.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is very difficult for Hansard to hear with so many members making interjections.

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

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I move:

That Business of the House Notice of Motion No. 1 on the *Notice Paper* for today be postponed until the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

*Committees***SELECT COMMITTEE ON ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, DEMAND AND PRICES IN NEW SOUTH WALES****Membership**

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that, according to standing order, on 10 August 2017 and 17 August 2017 the Clerk received the following nominations from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Government for membership of the Select Committee on Electricity Supply, Demand and Prices in New South Wales:

Government members

Mr Franklin

Mr Martin

Opposition members

Mr Graham

Mr Searle

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**Reference**

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that, in accordance with the resolution appointing the Privileges Committee, on 8 August 2017 I referred to the Privileges Committee an inquiry into procedures to be observed by the Council committee to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants for inquiry and report.

*Business of the House***PRECEDENCE OF BUSINESS**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That Government business take precedence of debate on committee reports this day.

Motion agreed to.

*Ministerial Statement***WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT**

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:05): The New South Wales Government yesterday released Ken Matthews' interim report into water administration and compliance in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government takes the issue of water management seriously, and we are committed to improving management of our State's critical water resources. I commend Mr Matthews, AO, for his work in pulling together such a comprehensive interim report in a short space of time. I am motivated by the fact that the overwhelming

majority of water users respect, understand and follow the rules. This investigation was commissioned in July and commenced in August because I was concerned about the allegations aired in the *Four Corners* episode.

Mr Matthews is the former chair and chief executive officer of the National Water Commission and, as a former Commonwealth department head with a long and accomplished career in the Australian public service, he has significant experience in water management issues. Armed with his detailed understanding of water management issues in Australia, and supported by a team of dedicated experts with experience in law enforcement, Mr Matthews has delivered a comprehensive interim report for the New South Wales Government to consider. In a little over a month, as part of its fact-finding process Mr Matthews' team has conducted nearly 50 interviews with State and Federal agencies as well as stakeholders while reviewing thousands of reports, memos and items of correspondence related to water management in New South Wales.

The findings presented in the interim report are both confronting and significant for government. We now have a better understanding of what has happened as well as strong recommendations to address the issues identified. The central findings of the interim report are that aspects of water-related compliance and enforcement arrangements in New South Wales have been ineffective and are not up to the standard expected by the public or the Government. It finds that individual cases of alleged non-compliance in parts of New South Wales have remained unresolved for lengthy periods. The report notes that some public servants involved in water administration in New South Wales have not been effective in their duties and suggests there may be a case for the secretary of the Department of Industry to commence procedures under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 against such staff. I make no comment on individual cases while these processes are underway so as not to prejudice their proper conclusion.

Public confidence in water management in New South Wales has been undermined by these findings, and it is up to the Government to respond in a measured and effective manner. The interim report by Mr Matthews has recommended a comprehensive set of reforms in a water management compliance improvement package. It sets out strategic structural reforms and administrative and operational improvements for water management in New South Wales as well as recommendations for improved compliance across the Murray-Darling Basin. I have accepted the principles set out in the water management compliance improvement package, which will form the basis of a submission I will take to Cabinet. There is a robust Cabinet process in this State and some of the proposals I have outlined may evolve during that process. This is to be expected and welcomed.

We are exploring the creation of a new Natural Resource Asset Division and a new independent Natural Resource Access Regulator. The focus of this proposed new division would be to optimise the economic, social and environmental benefits for the community through regulated access to water via a transparent structure that separates investigation and enforcement from industry development and the distribution of water. A Natural Resource Access Regulator could sit within this division to oversee all investigation and enforcement functions for non-metropolitan water activities in New South Wales. The creation of a new division will give absolute clarity around roles and responsibilities between the three key organisations involved in water management in New South Wales.

The Department of Primary Industries could sharpen its focus on policy settings and protecting water rights with a Natural Resources Access Regulator enforcing the rules. WaterNSW will then be the one-stop shop for all customer interaction, including providing education and advice on water licensing and how rivers and dams across New South Wales are operated. With this clear structure the public can have confidence that the rules are being enforced efficiently and impartially. The New South Wales Government, including WaterNSW, has already taken action to address and review cases of potential breaches of water licence conditions that have remained unresolved. I expect to provide an update on the status of those briefs shortly. Suffice to say we are cognisant of the statute of limitations on these matters.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Better be.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I am happy to slow down. I believe there are other matters before the House that the Opposition would like to move on to.

The Hon. Walt Secord: This is pretty important, Minister.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I am happy to slow down.

The Hon. Ben Franklin: Point of order: Interjections are disorderly at all times.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times. I remind the Minister that he should not respond to interjections and he should address all comments through the Chair. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: The urgent installation of meters for all large volume water users is a top priority. Where they do not exist, the Government will move to have meters installed across the State within 12 months. It will incorporate new monitoring and compliance technologies such as: remote sensing of crop growth and water holdings; remote meter reading and telemetry; and targeted covert operations. Some of the measures will require additional consultation with stakeholders, other States and the Commonwealth. The introduction of a "no meter, no pump" policy for all large water users and a suite of transparency measures, as recommended in the interim report, and the publication of a detailed response to every recommendation therein are all actions the Government will pursue as soon as is practicable.

In this respect, progress has been made with the completion of the \$31.5 million southern metering project, which involved the installation of almost 700 new meters and telemetry at 16 existing meter sites. It is important for all water users, large or small, to have confidence in the monitoring and compliance system in New South Wales. The Government's response to the recommendations in the interim report by Mr Matthews is designed to instil that confidence. Five investigations have been completed, and the continuing inquiry led by Mr Matthews is scheduled to conclude later this year.

The New South Wales Government responded swiftly to establish this independent inquiry. I have outlined to the House the Government's response to Mr Matthews' interim report, which was released yesterday. All of these matters will affect and impact stakeholders in different ways. The Government will continue to work closely with stakeholders to ensure their views and needs are properly represented. This will include the development of a new stakeholder engagement and community consultation framework for application across all departmental activities and support to empower staff to conduct these activities to the highest ethical standards.

I commissioned this independent investigation because I, like many water users and other stakeholders across New South Wales, was deeply concerned about the seriousness and complexity of the allegations and issues aired on the ABC's *Four Corners* in July. I am pleased this investigation has given us a much better understanding of some of the historical shortcomings in this area while providing recommendations to ensure those mistakes are remedied in the future. I have great faith in the integrity and intentions of the vast majority of our primary producers, the public service and wider stakeholders. Together, we all have a stake in the ongoing success of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and in the equitable management of our precious natural resources.

This Government will play its part to execute proposals that are designed to create the best possible operational and regulatory framework. I also believe that we should neither forget nor ignore the progress that has been made to restore the basin while maintaining access to the production and community uses that are so important to our social and economic prosperity. The people of New South Wales deserve and expect the highest quality of service delivery, and it is government's responsibility and commitment to deliver that.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:13): The Opposition believes Mr Matthews has made a valiant effort to investigate this matter, but upon appointment he was hamstrung by what he could not investigate. Mr Matthews could not investigate the Minister, his office or the Minister's predecessors, former ministers Humphries and Hodgkinson. He could not guarantee the protection of whistleblowers. He could not investigate other examples of water theft that may have occurred; he could investigate only those instances mentioned in the *Four Corners* report. Mr Matthews did not—and still does not—have the required power to investigate what he sees as systemic failures within water management in this State.

The Opposition calls for a full judicial inquiry, backed with royal commission powers to subpoena witnesses and documents and to get to the truth. This is a Swiss cheese interim report, and I mean no slight against Mr Matthews. There are more questions than answers. Who was present at the four secret meetings with Mr Hanlon? When did the Minister know about the secret meetings, and what did he do? When did the Minister know about the goings-on of his predecessor, Mr Humphries? How much was known by the Director General of Primary Industries of Mr Hanlon's secret meetings? Why did the Minister move compliance staff out of the Department of Primary Industries—Water a little over 12 months ago, and who was behind the recommendation to do so?

In contrast, an element of focus in this interim report is finding out who taped these secret meetings. This Government does not seem worried about a "plan B" conspiracy to pull out of the national agreement on water or the state of the Darling River; it wants to know who blew the whistle and exposed the secret meetings where all the dirty little secrets were discussed. The Matthews interim report is a sober read, but what about the impact on the thousands of irrigators who have done the right thing? The dryland farmers, Aboriginal communities who rely on the Darling River and ordinary townsfolk in places such as Wilcannia and Menindee have been slighted by this.

The Nationals have presided over systemic failures within WaterNSW and overseen a cowboy culture. Mr Matthews stated this goes against the best traditions of the Australian public service, reveals scant regard for

due and proper process, and throws up many instances where staff were unwilling or unable to confront unethical behaviour. Most telling is his sheer disbelief at having to inform the secretary that his department contains staff who are clearly deficient in their understanding of the Westminster system. The Minister should lead by example and demonstrate his knowledge of a critical component of the Westminster system, that of ministerial accountability—that quaint notion that the buck stops with the Minister—and he should resign. The Opposition fears he will not. WaterNSW bureaucrats are trammelling the once good name of the New South Wales public service. As a long-serving public servant, Mr Matthews is aghast at the interim results. He has admonished the secretary, stating:

... many outside the division and department are deeply concerned about the impact of the Four Corners allegations on the reputation of the NSW public service as a whole.

The same bureaucrats are bringing into disrepute the majority of irrigators who follow the law and do the right thing. As Mr Matthews notes in his covering letter, "The industry's 'social licence to irrigate' is at stake." The people living alongside and relying upon the Darling River want action. The interim report by Mr Matthews is the first step towards correcting many wrongs in the management of water in the Darling River. However, nothing less than a judicial inquiry is required to answer the questions that Mr Matthews has not been allowed to ask.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I seek leave to make a contribution to debate on the ministerial statement.

Leave not granted.

Condolences

DEATH OF THE HON. JOHN RICHARD "JOHNO" JOHNSON, A FORMER PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Debate resumed from 9 August 2017.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call the Leader of the Government, I welcome into the President's gallery Mrs Pauline Johnson, wife of the former member and former President, the Hon. John Richard "Johnno" Johnson, KCSG. Mrs Johnson is accompanied by family members who are here with us today to hear the condolence debate to honour Mr Johnson's enormous contribution to this House and to the State of New South Wales. On behalf of all members I welcome them. I now call on the Leader of the Government, who has moved this motion.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:18): I moved the condolence motion for the Hon. John Richard Johnson on 9 August. I will resume my remarks today and I welcome members of the Johnson family to our Chamber this afternoon. I am one of only five members left in this Chamber who served with the Hon. John Johnson. I remember him well. He had an enormous presence in this House. For various reasons, and seeking the leave of members, I make an unusual request: I ask to make the balance of my remarks in my speech in reply to enable the Leader of the Opposition to make his contribution now, because he has a personal engagement which he must attend shortly. In doing so, in no way do I wish to offend the Johnson family. "Johnno", as we all know, was a titan of the Australian Labor Party and I look forward to hearing from the Hon. Adam Searle in his capacity as Leader of the Opposition. With that brief introduction, I foreshadow that I will make more fulsome remarks in my speech in reply.

Leave granted.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (15:20): I make a contribution to this condolence motion on behalf of the Labor Opposition, which the Hon. John Richard Johnson served all his life, and community members of the Labor Party more broadly. I first met Mr Johnson in this building in the chambers of the Office of the President sometime during 1987. I was a research officer for a backbencher of the Legislative Assembly, and I was charged with the responsibility of planning and conducting a fundraising event. Before I was allowed to embark on such a weighty undertaking, I was sent to see the President of the Legislative Council for some advice because he was well known for his skills and attributes in this area. Graciously, he gave me some of his time. In his office, I outlined what I thought was a good plan. He listened to me politely, looking at me over his spectacles. When I finished, he said, "Son, have you considered running a raffle instead?" I was not sure if this was a reflection on what I thought was a cunning plan or perhaps a reflection on the legendary raffles that the Hon. John Johnson was known to run for the Labor Party.

I was but one of many people of my generation, former generations and those to come who sought advice from the Hon. John Johnson on a range of matters because he was regarded, correctly, as a great tribal elder in the Australian Labor Party. In many countries royalty confers honours on those citizens who are regarded as outstanding, even knighthoods—but not in this country. Much more rarely, so does a Pope. Johnno Johnson was honoured by two popes, the latest being Pope Francis. Two years ago, Johnno received the highest civilian papal

award, the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great. While he was entitled to use that honorific, he never called himself Sir Johno. He was a widely respected politician—not only by members on our side but also by members across the Parliament—and a former trade union leader. That is important because he never forgot that he came from the wider social movement of the trade unions of New South Wales. He was also regarded and honoured for the three enduring passions in his life—his family, the Catholic Church and the Australian Labor Party.

A month before Christmas in 1976, not long after he was elected to the Legislative Council, Johno made a few important remarks in Parliament. He spoke of values, about the critical crisis that lingered even after President Nixon had resigned—Watergate—and how, in its aftermath, several countries were endeavouring to tackle the issue of election campaign donations. In some respects not a lot has changed. New South Wales was facing a brighter future as Neville Wran was elected Premier. The society he spoke to was, in many respects, a different one to the one in which we all live today. He ended that speech on a personal note, saying:

... Mr President and honourable members, I trust that my sojourn in this House will not at any future time be looked back upon in anger by anyone.

It was not long before Melbourne Cup Day 1978 that Johno Johnson was elected as the youngest President ever in this place, the Legislative Council of New South Wales, the first parliamentary Chamber in Australia. He thrived in that role for many years, even enjoying the support of the crossbench parties for a considerable period. He abandoned the use of ceremonial attire, preferring to preside in a suit rather than a wig or gown. During his presidency, the new Parliament House buildings were constructed and the original buildings restored. Again, Mr President, the more things change, the more they stay the same. This was not a man who set out to be liked. His convictions were immense on many things, particularly social justice.

Johno Johnson was a worker at every level. When he was first honoured by the Pope in 2006, former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was among his guests at the ceremony. Nearly a full decade later at the full knighthood ceremony at the Wolper Jewish Hospital at Woollahra, his guests included former Prime Minister Paul Keating and former Premiers Bob Carr and Barrie Unsworth. That was the mark of the man. Mr Keating made the point that Johno had been a mentor to many, and it was also the standard by which we measure fidelity to the Labor cause. Even his opponents, and there were some, gave him credit for being a conscientious person in a secular and spiritual sense.

Mr Carr recalled how, in his earlier political days, no task was too small for Johno Johnson. Johno had sustained and encouraged him when he was building his political career, as he did for many. He was always ready to roll up his sleeves and get to work. No task was too menial. He was never too grand to do the work that needed to be done. On polling days he would get a leg of lamb, a loaf of bread, tomatoes and mustard and set it out, feeding the army of volunteers, or run the canteen, the tea room or the pie shop at City Town Hall at innumerable State Labor Party conferences. Who can forget the International Roast Caterer's Blend beverage over many decades?

The Hon. Mick Veitch: So nice.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Custard tarts.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I acknowledge those interjections.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Top shelf.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Indeed, he was top shelf. Johno Johnson was born in Murwillumbah in 1930. He left school at 15 to become a grocer, work in the railway industry, manage a credit union and become a trade union official before entering politics and Parliament. In 1962 he married the greatest love of his life, Pauline Russell. They had two sons and two daughters. I acknowledge the family is in the Chamber today. The Hon. John Johnson was first elected to the Legislative Council in November 1975, taking his seat in April 1976. In his inaugural speech in November 1976, he spoke out against abortion and for Government-funded election campaigns. He was a product of a different age where differences were acceptable and cooperation in politics was often possible. I hope that those possibilities are not lost in today's world.

He had a commitment to justice throughout his business and political life. He served as the director of the Prince of Wales Hospital and was a board member for NSW Lotteries and Cancer Council Australia. As well as having a long and distinguished service as chairman of the board of the Catholic Press, which was a newspaper print company, he was publisher of the *Catholic Weekly*. He helped restore it to profitability without ever easing up on his work for a variety of Catholic charities. He was living the principles that won him respect as well as some opposition. In remembering him today, we are glad that he was given the gift of time. For a long time, those who knew him best will mourn his passing. May his God bless Johno Johnson and grant him eternal peace.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (15:29): I think there are only a few of us left in this House who took part in the farewell debate for John Richard "Johnno" Johnson on 3 July 2001. That was a valuable and insightful debate because the motion to record the warm appreciation of the House to Johnno was moved, at his request, by then Deputy Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Duncan Gay. He did so to indicate the high esteem with which Johnno was held by all members on all sides of the House. Duncan told the House that, as President, Johnno worked hard for the Labor Party outside this Chamber but when he was in the chair he was always impartial. My contribution to that debate was to read onto the record a number of personal letters from those who wished to praise Johnno. I also sought to correct the record that suggested no-one had ever actually won one of Johnno's famous raffles at our annual conferences. I said this:

As a member of the Left of the Labor Party in this State and as Government Whip in this place, I acknowledge Johnno as a deeply respected and wise friend, a guide and a trusted and hard-working colleague. However, as a member of the Left I would also like to correct the record. In fact, I did win one of Johnno's raffles, but I was then successfully persuaded to donate back the prize.

Like many people, I found Johnno a person of contradictions. One speaker in the 2001 debate said that he was both the most patient and the most impatient person he had ever met. Johnno was infinitely patient with individuals who were seeking to turn around their lives or trying to gain some insight into their circumstances. He would always offer ongoing mentoring, support and wise advice. But he also had little time for those who sought to misuse their office and he made his disdain very clear to those who sought to do so. Johnno and I disagreed on many policies, but I always found him to be courteous, thoughtful and dedicated to the things in which he believed. He was honest, sincere and genuinely cared for people regardless of their status or circumstances. I respected his hard work, his sincerity, his love for his family and for the labour movement. I would like to think that over time we became genuine friends. I will miss our conversations, Johnno.

The Hon. ERNEST WONG (15:32): I join my colleagues to contribute to the condolence motion to pay tribute to the Hon. John Richard "Johnno" Johnson. Johnno Johnson's personality and values won widespread respect and friendships across the customary political divide. A prolific fundraiser for the Labor Party, he was legendary for his raffles that helped fund numerous party activities and campaigns. Johnno was relentless and merciless when it came to selling a book of raffle tickets, and he never missed an opportunity to do so. I recall many occasions during my time working at the Labor Party head office where I assisted him with raffle ticket sales, and he would unashamedly "harass" me no end. If it was not to source raffle prizes, it was to sell more—or buy more—tickets. To me, it was an inspiring lesson by Johnno as to how we should give our best endeavours for what we believe in.

Johnno had a special way about him. Not only were people touched by him; they admired him and were inspired by him. None more so than me. He was a true Labor legend. I felt fortunate to work alongside him and witness firsthand his passion for fairness and social justice and his commitment to the ethical teachings of the Catholic Church, which he proudly and devoutly applied to every aspect of his life. He was a Labor icon and I was enamoured of his passion and loyalty to the party. He was a man of great principles, who practised what he preached and epitomised the ideals and principles on which the labour movement was built. In all the time I knew him and from all I ever heard about him I know Johnno Johnson never wavered from his working class roots. The words remarkable, compassionate, ethical, moral, principled and loyal always seem to accompany the name Johnno Johnson.

Johnno was respected by all sides of politics. He was awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party, served as honorary finance officer of the New South Wales branch and remained heavily involved in fundraising for the party up until recent years. Johnno also served as President of this great Chamber for 13 years and was the recipient of two papal awards in acknowledgement of his role as a forthright defender of Catholic social teaching, and commitment to justice and ethics throughout his political and business life. He was a fellow of Warrane College at the University of New South Wales and a recipient of a Centenary Medal. Johnno spent 10 years as chairman of the *Catholic Weekly* and served as a director of the Prince of Wales Hospital and a board member of both NSW Lotteries and the Cancer Council of Australia. Most importantly, Johnno was a devoted husband to Pauline, a loving father to Andrew, Michael, Monica and Naomi and a doting grandfather to his adoring grandchildren. I read some words recently that seemed to epitomise Johnno perfectly. Ironically, they were his own words, which were used to pay tribute to his great mate Lionel Bowen at the time of his passing. I will read his words and, with the greatest of respect, replace Lionel's name with those of Johnno's:

To know [Johnno] was to love him. He was able to do great things without engendering animosity. His Catholic faith, his family, his belief in Labor and his Irish heritage were his guiding lights, and they never let him down. And he never let us in the Labor Party down.

Except for the reference to the presiding archbishop, the concluding words of "Johnno" carry the same sense:

May his noble soul rest in peace. He was afforded a State Funeral from St Mary's Cathedral, presided over by his Eminence Cardinal George Pell—

In this case, the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher—

It was a great send-off, but the reception he would get at the other end would be something to behold!

As the Hon. Paul Keating once said of Johnno:

I think that he's provided a kind of standard, a standard by which you measure fidelity to the Labor cause and a standard by which you measure his faith and religious observance...and even John's opponents would always give him credit for being both a conscientious and good person, in both a secular and in a spiritual sense.

John Richard Johnson gave his all to every cause he embraced. His wife and family, along with the Catholic Church and the Australian Labor Party, were the leading beneficiaries of that devotion. I convey my heartfelt condolences to Pauline, Andrew, Michael, Monica, Naomi and all extended family and friends of Johnno. I thank them for sharing their husband, father and grandfather so selflessly with the people of New South Wales. Your work here is done now, Johnno. May you finally have rest.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (15:37): I support the condolence motion before the House, which states that this House express and place on record the deep sense of loss sustained to the State and this House by the death of the Hon. Richard "Johnno" Johnson, a member of the House from 1975 to 2001 and President of the House from 1978 to 1991. I am pleased that Mr Johnson's wife, Pauline, and members of his family are with us. I express my condolences to them. As members know, I am not a Catholic; I am a Christian and a Protestant. I am not a member of the Labor Party either; I am a member of the Christian Democratic Party. However, I strongly support this motion before the House. I spent 10 years in this House with Mr Johnson as President from 1981 to 1991. He served this House for 26 years from 1975 to 2001 and was President for 23 years from 1978 to 1991.

That great honour was bestowed on him to serve this Parliament and the people of this State as well as to serve God in the Catholic faith. Over the years I had many discussions with him, especially on bills coming before the House which raised controversial moral issues, and he was very thoughtful and fair in his consideration of those matters. He was a great Christian. He never betrayed his strong convictions on any moral issues that Christians uphold. He also had a strong social conscience in protecting the workers of New South Wales, which he expressed through his membership of the Australian Labor Party.

Mr Johnson was born in Murwillumbah, New South Wales. He left school at 15 years of age, as I did. Before entering politics he was a grocer and trade union official. He married Pauline Christina Russell, with whom he adopted two sons and two daughters. He served as a director of the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney and was chair of the Catholic Press Print Newspaper Company, publishers of the *Catholic Weekly*. He was also a member of the NSW Lotteries and Cancer Council of Australia boards. He spent a lot of time not only serving this Chamber but also serving the community. In 2001 he was awarded the Centenary Medal. He was also awarded life membership of the Labor Party.

In 2006 he was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great by Pope Francis. He was a fellow of Warrane College, University of New South Wales. He died aged 87 in Sydney on 9 August 2017 and was honoured with a State funeral, which is not offered to many people. I was pleased to represent the Christian Democratic Party at his funeral, which was held at St Mary's Cathedral. In his citation Archbishop Anthony Fisher said the elevation to Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great provided an appropriate acknowledgement of Mr Johnson's significant ongoing contributions to the Catholic and other churches, and in particular for his long and distinguished service as chairman of the board of the Catholic Press Print Newspaper Company, publisher of the *Catholic Weekly*. Archbishop Fisher also said:

... this man has shown a consistent and generous willingness to accept roles in raising funds for the different causes he supports, especially those which assist the delivery of important works of the Church through various charities.

He also made special mention of Johnno Johnson's strong commitment to his Catholic faith, and cited his work within the Right to Life movement—I had a lot of contact with Mr Johnson in this area—and his contributions to the St Vincent de Paul Society. He said Mr Johnson was an example of "faith in action". He also encouraged many young Catholics to become active in public life. I am pleased to support this condolence motion. I again express my condolences to Mr Johnson's wife and family.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (15:43): Anyone who joined the Labor Party circa 2001, as I did, and who thereafter made the valid and excellent choice to join the right wing of the party, would invariably encounter three rites of passage—you would either acquire or be given a copy of that wonderful tome *Mates*; you would be asked to hold a proxy at either the Labor Council of New South Wales or an Australian Labor Party committee to vote against some sensible motion moved by a well-meaning but begrudgingly wrong left winger.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: The only wrong would be right.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I note the interjection. Then, if you did the first two things well enough, whenever the Labor Party's annual conference was held someone would call and ask you to serve in

Johnno's kitchen. In 2011 that was how I spent my first Labor Party conference and I lasted all of two hours serving pies before Johnno fired me—I think my offence was incorrectly serving people too much tomato sauce. I thought that would be the end of my career—and arguably it was—but I was told by someone that I was in good company because 20 years or 30 years prior to that Johnno had fired Paul Keating from the same role. There was a rumour that Bob Carr may have been fired too. We were all subjected to the Johnno test but it was said that if you were fired from Johnno's kitchen you were destined for one of two things: high office or no office.

After that conference I felt my relationship with Johnno would be irretrievably interrupted and I would not have the opportunity to serve with him again. However, in 2002, one year later when I was at the university, I received a call from a nameless person in Sussex Street asking me to assist with a confidential mission and I rocked up wondering what tomfoolery I was going to be asked to undertake on behalf of the gay cause. I was told, in the hushed tones in which Sussex Street specialises, that I had one mission that day—to help Johnno move his library from level nine to level six and I could not leave until it was done. Johnno was a great collector of books and he had an amazing library.

Indeed, the breadth of his collection of Labor literature rivalled that of Bob Gould. One of the pamphlets that grabbed my attention in particular—and I am surprised it did not make the best sellers list when it was released—was by the Australian Fabians titled "Whitlam rammed the Labor tradition". It turned out that Johnno had one of the 10 remaining copies—Bob had the other nine but you could not find them. I asked Johnno whether the pamphlet was for sale but he said he did not sell his books. When I told him, I was disappointed to hear that he asked whether I would actually read it. I said, "Of course I will read it. I specialise in and have quite the taste for the Fabians' pamphlets." He then said, "If you are going to read it, I will give it to you." Johnno gave it to me and I still have it.

Johnno was really a steward of the Labor memory. Indeed, having read that pamphlet, it was fitting that in 2001 or 2002 I had the opportunity of hearing the great man himself, Gough Whitlam, pay tribute to Johnno at the very first dinner the Labor Party held to honour Johnno's service. Gough spoke vividly about when he was being hounded by some aspects of the Labor Party that were not to his liking and how Johnno was one of the people who made sure he was not expelled from the party. Johnno matters to people like me, to the Leader of the Opposition in the other place and to all members of the Labor Party because he was a connection to history. He was one of those who held the Labor Party together in this State when we faced the danger of splitting in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Labor had split in every other State and found itself condemned to generations of opposition, but in New South Wales we stayed united and continued to govern. Johnno played a big part in that.

Johnno Johnson and former Premier Unsworth were probably the last two enduring links to that other great figure of the Labor Party, John Ducker. John was equally responsible for sustaining Bob Hawke through his time at the Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU] and in his tilt towards the prime ministership. He kept his party very moderate in government, delivering for working people. He also kept the trade union movement of this State incredibly strong. Gough Whitlam was one who came to rely on John Ducker and John Ducker relied on Johnno Johnson. He was a senior official of that great union the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association—at that time it had a different name—through some epic clashes. That union was at the forefront of some tremendous industrial campaigns, such as equal pay for women amongst many others. Johnno was very much involved in those campaigns.

The reason Johnno's good name endures is that he was willing to share this history with anyone who asked him. Up until even quite recently, around Trades Hall you would see Johnno walking with his canes. You would walk past and ask him how he was doing and invariably he would tell you he was doing marvellously. If you stopped and asked him to share anecdotes or stories, he would—no matter what your position in the Labor Party or the labour movement was. It did not matter if you were the newest recruit to the cause or a veteran of many years, Johnno would make time for you. Other members have spoken eloquently about Johnno's contribution to his great faith. I cannot match any of those anecdotes other than to say that he held his faith most dear and he was very much grounded in that Catholic social movement tradition that has infused the character of the Labor Party in this State going back to the 1890s.

Johnno epitomised that strand of Catholic social justice, and he ensured that even if you were not a Catholic in the Labor Party you came to understand what that meant—what was expected of you and why it is that that creed can be universal, whether or not you are a Catholic, and how the principles are laid out which can unite and energise our movement. In the course of his very long service to the party and to this State, his time away from his family must have been an immense sacrifice for them. He served the party for decades—on the streets, manning booths, and fundraising for the two institutions that he so dearly loved. We send his family our condolences; we very much appreciate the sacrifices they made that meant that Johnno could equally belong to our institution, and we honour his memory.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (15:51): Michael Easson reported:

At one farewell after Johnson's retirement there were plenty of speeches, bonhomie and friendly jibes. Neville Wran looked around the room, surveyed the faces—Labor stalwarts, bishops, religious leaders and family and friends—expecting praise. He began: "I can't think of a single thing Johnno and I agree on" and proceeded to express deep-felt thanks for his courage, his convictions, his arresting presence.

There would not have been a State or national conference of the Labor Party since the late 1990s to which Johnno and I would not have turned up and voted on different sides. We agreed on many things though: his love of the labour movement, his disdain for the fly-by-nighters that are attracted to every political party, and, most importantly, his belief that politics was a place for ordinary people and that it was a collective and not an individual pursuit. Johnno Johnson was the ultimate political quartermaster: he organised the troops, the food and the raffles. As any political party activist knows, these are crucial endeavours, and they rarely go smoothly. At most elections this century and at the end of the last century, I worked with Johnno on what we called distribution day—that frantic day on the weekend of every election campaign when we would ship out the election material across the State.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: I've been there.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I acknowledge the interjection. There would not have been an election day though when some campaign would have turned up, having driven the wrong way down the one-way street, or arrived on a motorbike to pick up a pallet load of election material, or got the roof of the truck wedged against the roof of the garage, holding up proceedings for a chaotic hour as other campaigns arrived in their allotted time slot. Johnno dealt with it all with humour—some of it good. He kept the troops going with industrial supplies of soft drink and Peking duck pancakes. It was the Labor Party, after all.

Most of the time I spent with Johnno, he had the gentleness that comes with age, but you had only to hear him answer the phone to get a sense of Johnno at his organisational peak. The whip crack of his greeting down the phone line was simply, "Johnson". You knew he meant business. I regard Johnno as the single greatest small-donor fundraiser in Australian political history. I was first exposed to that on my first visit to Sussex Street—I was not too long out of school—when I had an appointment to see the assistant secretary.

All the while I could hear Johnno, who I did not know, explaining to some hapless young volunteer how to run a raffle: the pre-stapling of tickets into lots, the assembling of the prizes, and common pitfalls, such as the raffle where someone had sold both the tickets and the stubs. They had collected good money, but it was pretty hard to draw the winning ticket. I waited for 20 minutes, and he was still going, conducting this rolling, raffling masterclass. You could see his best work at the end of the evening of the annual Labour Day dinner. Happy raffle winners would wander off into the night, their prizes tucked under one arm, or often under both arms—prizes that included throat lozenges, deodorant and loaves of sliced white bread. In 1976 he devoted the largest section of his inaugural speech to calling for reform of political party funding, saying:

I believe the electoral laws of our State should, as they pertain to electioneering, be amended to provide from Treasury funds amounts of money for just and equitable campaigns and, indeed, for the efficient running of democratic political parties.

He also said:

I look forward to the day when the bagmen of the political parties are put out of business and a more reasoned approach to election funding is forthcoming.

As the leader of the Labor Party in this place recognised, he watched closely developments in the United States of America during and since Watergate. On this issue in Australia he was ahead of his time. At his State funeral, former Premier Bob Carr recalled Johnno's preselection and said:

But in an expression of Labor mateship at its most authentic, his friends from Young Labor, John Patrick Ducker and Barrie Unsworth, insisted Johnno—the boy from the butter factory, the keeper of the conference canteen—go on that Upper House ticket.

As I have said, Johnno always believed politics was a collective rather than an individualist endeavour. He was never one for the chancers, the fly-by-nighters or the individualists, no matter how senior in the party or in the Parliament they were. That was much to his credit. Johnno kept giving back to Labor after leaving this place. He was a volunteer in the office, coming in each day, unless he called in sick. He was a significant support to me in playing my role as a party officer at a very difficult time. In a political office populated by people in a hurry, he would often stop in for a chat. He would stop in to recollect some story, or to compare notes and agree about some recent political event. Still, we would be chatting, and he would look up and a shadow would pass over his face. He would have looked to the picture that hung behind me. It was a large black-and-white portrait of two Labor figures conferring—Ben Chifley and Doc Evatt. A fan of Chifley, he could not stomach Evatt.

The shadow of 1954 and 1955 still hangs over the Labor Party. In New South Wales it is the story of a split avoided. It is the story of the Catholic Church choosing to stay in Labor, and the Labor Party choosing to be a broader church. It is still a period that is divisive and it still provokes strong emotions. It is still a reminder of the fragility of these human institutions that are our political parties. It has been a reminder that weighed heavily

with me during recent years rebuilding New South Wales Labor. Johnno finished his inaugural speech with these words:

We have been given a duty of care in the strictest application for the common good that will be pursued with all vigour.

He stayed true to those words. I might have chosen the words more plainly than Johnno did in 1976. I think later on Johnno perhaps might have chosen the words more plainly, but I could not agree more with the sentiment. When I think of Johnno, I am reminded of one phrase that was used by Graham Freudenberg at the 2005 Australian Labor Party [ALP] conference at Town Hall, when he delivered the life members' address on behalf of all life members. He used the phrase, "the servant of the servants".

Freudenberg was describing his own role as a speechwriter to leaders of the Labor Party since Arthur Calwell. I think he credited Johnno with putting the term in his mind, but it is a term used by popes to describe their own role. I always associated it with Johnno and the role he played. His commitment to public service and to that Catholic social justice sense of service was fundamental to his being. That idea of public service is not as fashionable as it once was, but it should be and I think Johnno's life and Johnno's service is a reminder to us all of that idea. I also acknowledge his family here today. Johnno will be missed. In many ways he is irreplaceable to the State, to the Parliament and to the Labor Party.

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

Questions Without Notice

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

The Hon. WALT SECORD (16:01): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Why did the terms of reference for the Matthews inquiry, established by the Government, fail to ensure that the decisions and actions of the Minister and the two National Party water ministerial predecessors were included or examined?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:01): I thank the honourable member for his question. The terms of reference were something that I asked Mr Matthews to look at because I was concerned about some of the allegations raised in the *Four Corners* program. Those terms of reference were drafted to clearly look at the allegations that were made in that program. I think members of the media, members of this House and other States' Ministers have clearly acknowledged that what we have seen in the interim report is not a whitewash; it is a thorough report that has been provided by Mr Matthews. He will continue with his investigation but I remind the member—and he will see clearly throughout Mr Matthews' report—that there are five other investigations that are going on. Other agencies are looking at some of the issues raised by Mr Matthews and I am sure that those agencies are looking at some of those serious allegations that were raised during that program as well.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (16:02): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer in regard to the terms of reference under which his discussions with Mr Matthews were undertaken? Did the Minister instruct Mr Matthews to exclude the Minister and his colleagues from the investigation?

The Hon. Don Harwin: Point of order: The Hon. Walt Secord has just been hoist by his own petard. He said the words that he used were in his question; in fact, when he is asking a supplementary question he is required to seek an elucidation of an aspect of the answer, which he has not done.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: To the point of order: I think this is clearly a supplementary question. The Minister, in his answer, talked about the terms of reference and what was in or out. It is in order for us to ask him to elucidate an aspect of that.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The original question is irrelevant to supplementary questions. A supplementary question is required to elucidate further information from part of an answer given by the Minister. I listened to the Minister carefully. I did not hear the Minister refer to the matters being raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the supplementary question. I rule that the supplementary question is a new question and is therefore out of order.

ENERGY PRICES

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (16:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is assisting vulnerable customers with the cost of energy?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (16:04): I thank the Hon. Taylor Martin for his question. I spent a large part of the winter recess visiting regional communities across New South Wales. I met with households and businesses that are feeling the

pinch from rising energy prices. Whilst many would appreciate that there are no easy fixes, it requires sensible and credible national reform to unlock new generation. The stress is being felt now. I listened, the Government listened, and we have acted. On Sunday 3 September 2017 the Premier of New South Wales, together with the Minister for the Environment and me, announced a new energy bill relief package for households and small businesses. We are determined to support and help households and small businesses save energy and money. At the heart of this package is a boost to all energy rebates by at least 20 per cent. This is on top of the significant increases we have made to those rebates over the last few years. It will mean about \$1.2 billion in assistance over four years to 900,000 households.

The new rates will be effective from 1 July 2017. An eligible low-income customer, such as a pensioner, will receive \$285 this year from the low-income household rebate. This is up from \$235 previously. If they also receive a gas rebate they could receive \$395 across the two bills. That is \$70 more in their pocket this year, which will be a real help. In addition, the family energy rebate has increased from \$150 per year to \$180. People with acute medical needs are also better off as the medical energy rebate and the life support rebate also have increased by around 20 per cent. Finally, I want to make note of the changes to the emergency voucher scheme for energy bills, the Energy Accounts Payment Assistance [EAPA] Scheme. This provides vital help to keep the lights on for customers with financial hardship. Following the Premier's announcement, eligible customers can receive 20 per cent more vouchers per year, which means 12 vouchers worth \$50 each.

We have made it easier to access by allowing EAPA vouchers to be recouped digitally for faster peace of mind and to avoid long journeys for regional households. The total budget for rebates this year has risen from approximately \$257 million to more than \$310 million. I urge customers to call their retailer or Service NSW on 137 788 to check if they are eligible for an energy rebate. The Government takes very seriously the need to do no harm on energy. This compares to Labor's record of stinging pensioners to pay for the gold plating of the networks or the blow-up of the Solar Bonus Scheme. We have ended those practices and built a comprehensive suite of rebates.

The Hon. Ben Franklin: Point of order: There are so many interjections in the Chamber that I do not think Hansard can hear.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It is way too early for me to be calling members to order. I could not hear the Minister because of all the interjections. I do not know how Hansard is able to hear. I ask honourable members to cease interjecting.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As I was about to conclude, I just make this point: We have listened and we have now provided real assistance to the 900,000 households that are most in need.

[Business interrupted.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome members of the South Coast Labor State Electoral Council, guests of the Hon. Penny Sharpe. I had the pleasure and the honour of meeting the guests earlier today in my office and I am sure that all members welcome you to the Chamber today. I hope you enjoy question time.

Questions Without Notice

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

[Business resumed.]

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:09): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given the failure of the Matthews inquiry to properly investigate all issues associated with the industrial scale of water theft in New South Wales, and the "failure to confront unethical behaviour" in his department, will the Minister now support a judicial inquiry with the powers of a royal commission to compel witnesses and subpoena documents?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:10): I thank the honourable member for her question. As I have already indicated to the House, Mr Matthews has provided an interim report. His investigation will continue to look at those matters that were alleged during the *Four Corners* program. However, there are also five other investigations that are being carried out. If the member takes the time to read Mr Matthews' interim report, she will see which matters have been referred to or are being looked at by other agencies. I will not be providing a running commentary on individual cases because it may prejudice those other investigations.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:11): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer? He talked about what is being covered by the other investigations. Is he satisfied that the conduct of himself and previous Ministers will be covered by those investigations?

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order: Quite clearly, that is a new question. The Minister may have referred to things in his answer, but the supplementary question does not seek elucidation of those matters which he referred to.

The PRESIDENT: There is a link between part of the Minister's answer to which the Hon. Penny Sharpe was seeking elucidation. I will allow the supplementary question.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:12): I thank the honourable member. I will not provide a running commentary on individual cases, but in relation to my conduct, I am absolutely comfortable. I am absolutely comfortable with the decisions that I have made and if those opposite have anything that they would like to offer up to Mr Matthews or any other agency in relation to my conduct, then please go ahead and do so.

LOCAL AREA COMMAND AMALGAMATIONS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (16:12): My question is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, representing the Minister for Police. I refer to the Minister's "re-engineering" of rural police resources that includes the forced amalgamation of police local area commands. Will the Minister make a 100 per cent guarantee that there will be no police job losses among middle management, inspectors, superintendents and unsworn officers in rural areas, particularly in the electorates of Orange, Cootamundra and Murray?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:13): I thank the honourable member for his question that is directed to the Minister for Police, who I represent in this House. At the outset I commend the Minister for Police for investigating police resourcing in regional New South Wales to ensure that the boots that are needed on the front line throughout our regional communities are a top priority of the New South Wales Police Force. I also commend the new commissioner and deputy commissioner responsible for regional police for having a look at this issue and taking the time to travel around those regional communities to have a conversation about what resources are needed in those areas.

It needs those who have been there before and policed in regional New South Wales to understand what resources are required in those areas. Not only do we have an outstanding Minister for Police in New South Wales, who was a police officer based in our regional communities and commended for his service, but we now have a vastly experienced deputy commissioner who is responsible solely for regional police officers. I am sure that what they are working through with those communities and the associated police will result in an outstanding outcome for those regional communities. As the member asked about some specific areas throughout regional New South Wales—and I am sure they are random areas he has plucked out about communities that he is interested in because of the policing outcomes that are required—I will take the details of the question on notice. I will refer it to the Minister for Police and I am sure he will come back with a timely response for the member.

CHINESE TRADE MISSION

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (16:15): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water and Minister for Trade and Industry. How is the New South Wales Government promoting the New South Wales economy to the world's largest emerging market?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:16): I thank the honourable member for his question. Members may be—and it sounds like they are—aware that I have just returned from a four-day trade mission to China on behalf of the New South Wales Government, during which I visited the country's leading commercial centres in Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Shanghai. The mission provided valuable exposure for New South Wales with one of this State's most important foreign trading partners. We met business and government leaders, promoted our industries and skills and helped realise new opportunities for economic cooperation. In 2016 the value of two-way trade between New South Wales and China was over \$34 billion, but as China continues to grow and diversify, there is plenty of room for growth in this trade relationship as China's booming middle class demands more of the things New South Wales does best.

There is a rapidly growing appetite for our agricultural products, which was a key focus of the mission. I was able to highlight New South Wales produce during a visit to a high-end supermarket where it is being sold. The produce included products from Nongfu Springs, a major Chinese beverage company that is importing quality oranges from the Riverina. I also attended the Asia Fruit Logistica exhibition in Hong Kong, where we were able

to help promote New South Wales horticultural producers, like our blueberry and cherry growers, to Chinese buyers. Asia Fruit Logistica attracts over 11,000 visitors from 74 countries, providing Australian growers with great exposure to the Asian market.

New South Wales horticultural exports have skyrocketed 36 per cent in the past year and are now valued at around \$327 million per annum. In Shanghai, I oversaw the signing of four memorandums of understanding between New South Wales businesses and Chinese investors. We know that China is hungry for quality Australian products and the recent free trade agreement has only increased our ability to satisfy that appetite. The mission also highlighted potential for greater collaboration on innovation. In Hong Kong I visited the Commonwealth Bank's innovation lab where we met New South Wales tech start-ups pursuing opportunities in Hong Kong. I also visited the Cyberport facility, funded by the Hong Kong Government, to discuss potential collaboration with New South Wales start-up incubators and hubs. I attended a Shanghai fintech showcase, where I had the opportunity to promote New South Wales' leadership in innovation, especially our impressive fintech sector.

Of course, the visit was not just about trade; it was also about attracting valuable Chinese investment that our State needs to drive growth, build our infrastructure and develop our industries. To promote investment, I met with leaders from Chinese businesses across a wide range of sectors, from financial services and innovation, to resources, health care and food and beverage. I am passionate about what New South Wales has to offer the rest of the world. When it comes to produce, innovation and infrastructure, you would be hard-pressed to find better than what our State has to offer.

I thank everyone involved, specifically those who took the time to meet with me and the delegation and to teach me about their own practices. Unfortunately, time precludes me from mentioning them by name. I give a special thankyou to the Australian and New South Wales government staff in those cities. They are doing an outstanding job on behalf of the people of New South Wales and our country. I take the time to acknowledge the New South Wales special envoy Mr Jim Harrowell, who accompanied us on the trip. He is a New South Welshman with extensive contacts in China that added value to the trip. I will bring further information about the trip to the House at another time.

ESSENTIAL ENERGY DEPOT CLOSURES

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (16:20): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities. The Minister is no doubt aware of the Syerston project at Fifield, New South Wales. It is one of the largest greenfield mining developments in Australia and injects billions of dollars of new investment into regional New South Wales. It is building a 66 kVA power line from the Trundle substation to the Syerston project site. Given that this critical power line will have a substantial electric footprint that will require maintenance, will the Minister consider maintaining the depots at Trundle and Peak Hill, the closure of which would result in the displacement or termination of skilled employees? Presently, those skilled employees respond quickly to outages such as occurred during last year's floods.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (16:21): I thank the Hon. Robert Brown for his question. The background encompasses the decision of Essential Energy to close a number of small rural depots within reasonable travel distance from nearby larger towns. The staff will be transferred to these larger depots. The closure of Trundle and Peak Hill depots is part of that decision. The decision was made by Essential Energy to achieve cost savings and keep power prices down. I am advised that there will be no impact on the provision of emergency services. The local emergency call-out arrangements will continue with the same staff on after hours call-out from their homes with their vehicles.

Essential Energy advises that for an emergency during working hours the nearest available staff will be dispatched, and in the event that staff cannot be dispatched in sufficient time Essential Energy can interrupt the local power supply remotely from its control room if requested by emergency agencies. That is the general advice I have received regarding those two depots of interest to the honourable member. I note in the question he asked for specifics in relation to a planned resource project and whether there would be any impact on that resource project from the closure of the depots. I will take that part of his question on notice and ask for a specific response from Essential Energy. In relation to the general service, I have provided the information I received from Essential Energy. Given the member's particular interest in a particular project I will take that part of the question on notice and provide information at a subsequent time.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (16:24): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Regional Water. Given the Matthews report revealed a profound lack of "understanding of the Westminster conventions", will the Minister accept responsibility and resign his commission as the Minister for Regional Water?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:24): I thank the honourable member for his question. No.

REGIONAL EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. WES FANG (16:24): My question is addressed to the fabulous Minister for Early Childhood Education. Will the Minister update the House as to how the New South Wales Government is investing in education infrastructure in Cootamundra?

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: The member introduced argument into that question by using the word "fabulous" and I ask that the question be ruled out of order.

The PRESIDENT: The word "fabulous" was argumentative and should not have been introduced into the question. I remind honourable members that such adjectives are not necessary when putting a question to a Minister. It is clear that the Minister is more than able to answer the rest of the question once that adjective has been removed. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:25): I thank the honourable member for his first question in this House. I am sure the second time will go better. It is an important question about regional education. As a father of young children in a regional area the member will be interested in the information. Right across country New South Wales this Government is investing in regional education. This Government places regional kids and their education at the forefront of decision-making.

Last month I had the great pleasure to officially open the refurbished Sacred Heart Central School in Cootamundra. I could not have been more impressed by the work that has occurred. I was proud of the Government investment of \$600,000 through the Building Grants Assistance Scheme, which already has benefitted many schools. This year alone, the Government is investing \$1.2 billion in non-government schools. This is part of a wider investment by the Government to support non-government schools to build new schools and renovate existing facilities to provide modern, state-of-the-art education and learning spaces because it understands the importance of investing in a child's future.

I commend the effort of the Catholic Education Commission for its work ensuring funding through the Building Grants Assistance Scheme is distributed to those schools with the greatest need. I was joined at the opening by the former member for Cootamundra and long-serving Nationals member of Parliament, Ms Katrina Hodgkinson. It was her last official duty as the local member. She spoke fondly of, and had a clear rapport with, the local community. This Government is not afraid to put its money where its mouth is. The students at Sacred Heart will benefit from this investment for years to come. Sacred Heart caters for students from kindergarten to year 10, and staff and students alike were thrilled at the opportunity to host the opening in a building that could fit the entire school of 300 students.

It was encouraging to witness firsthand the engagement between children and teachers in the infants building and to hear how beneficial it is to the school community. The principal of the school, Mrs Janet Cartwright, spoke passionately about the refurbishment of the building as well as the collaboration that had occurred between staff, the Catholic Education Office, the Cootamundra community, parents and the New South Wales Government. The old building featured classrooms and corridors. It has been gutted and replaced with an open-plan modern facility. The new building design allows access to computers and a library that will encourage interactive learning and allow staff to cater to different student needs. The new state-of-the-art facility will provide a stimulating learning environment for the infant students and ensure the school is equipped to provide the best possible start for their formative education.

We know the success of a child's education on their last day of school is determined by their very first day of school. By providing the children of Cootamundra, and particularly the infants, with enhanced learning facilities, this Government is investing in their futures. When I attended the school it was hosting its annual Book Week event and many of the students were dressed up. I am sure that many members in the Chamber have experienced designing costumes for this exciting event on the calendar.

We are always trying to think of costumes for our kids. It was encouraging to see the students engaging with lots of different types of literature, which was reflected by their various outfits. These exciting new facilities would not have been possible without the cooperation of the entire community, students, contractors and particularly parents. I congratulate all of those involved on bringing this building to life. I am confident that these students and teachers will enjoy and benefit from it for many years to come.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (16:29): My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, Minister for Regional Water. The Matthews report has deemed the judgement in creating meetings with select irrigation stakeholders, as secretly recorded and played on *Four Corners*, to be poor. Mr Hanlon claims the existence of the group was known by the director general of the Minister's department. If this is the case, does the Minister retain confidence in the Director General, Scott Hansen? If not, will action be taken to remove him?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:30): It is appropriate for any government department making decisions or acting on behalf of stakeholders to be able to consult with those stakeholders, and targeted consultation should be used by Government. However, that consultation must be done in accordance with Government policies and procedures that are available to guide public servants. This issue was under investigation by Mr Matthews. He has made some recommendations about that matter. As I said earlier, I will not provide a running commentary on matters that we know from the report of Mr Matthews are being looked at by other jurisdictions. Targeted consultation is important for Government agencies. However, it must always be done in accordance with the parameters and the rules provided to those who engage in that consultation.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (16:31): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by informing the House of the recommendations that Mr Matthews has made about Mr Scott Hansen and his conduct in these matters?

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. It was an appropriate supplementary question.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:31): I ask Mr Jeremy Buckingham to look at all the matters in the report of Mr Matthews. I will not provide a running commentary. I support Director General Mr Hansen. If the member wants to know about those specific matters, look at the report. The information is quite clearly there.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (16:32): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. What action was taken when the Minister became aware of allegations that the member for Barwon and former Minister for Natural Resources, Land and Water told irrigators to pump, regardless of the embargo?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:33): The actions that I took about the allegations that were made on the *Four Corners* program were to ensure that those allegations were investigated, which is why we had the Matthews inquiry. Mr Matthews has provided an interim report. I have told the House that Mr Matthews has reported in his findings that those matters about individual cases are being looked at by other agencies. I will not provide a running commentary.

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: It was clear in budget estimates that members opposite were insinuating that the report of Mr Matthews was going to be a whitewash. They were expecting that the Government was not going to be able to provide Mr Matthews with the resources for an independent investigation. Members opposite spent more than two hours in budget estimates—

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: The Minister is entitled to answer the question without the uproarious interjections by members on the other side. I ask that those members be called to order.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I uphold the point of order. I have been incredibly patient with Opposition members, but I will call them to order if they continue to interject. I remind all honourable members that interjections are disorderly at all times. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Mr Matthews conducted a thorough investigation and provided a number of recommendations for the Government to implement immediately. The report also contains recommendations for more long-term structural reform in New South Wales. As the report says, matters are being looked at by other State agencies or other jurisdictions. It is prudent that I do not provide a running commentary that may put those investigations in jeopardy. The Matthews report has shown that this Government is committed to ensuring that when people are doing the wrong thing or when the system is not working as it should be, to underpin the confidence of all New South Wales irrigators who are doing the right thing we will create the right systems or undertake the right approach to address those issues.

I said yesterday that the report handed down by Mr Matthews was sober reading for the Government. It was. It exposed systemic failures that have let down the people who rely on those systems. My job is to ensure that we address those issues for the people who are doing the right thing—the good mum and dad irrigators across regional New South Wales who are doing the right thing. It is not a crime to be an irrigator in New South Wales. Those opposite are trying to paint a picture that all irrigators are doing the wrong thing.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time. I remind the Hon. Penny Sharpe that she is on one call to order. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition would not like to see her leave the Chamber in her capacity as the Acting Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Mr Matthews has provided a number of recommendations. More investigations and inquiries are being conducted. I will not provide a running commentary on those individual cases.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (16:38): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by informing us which agencies are examining the allegations against the member for Barwon?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:38): It is quite clear when we read the report of Mr Matthews that referrals to other agencies such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption have been made. So far as other agencies concerning other individuals are concerned, I do not know.

REGIONAL ENERGY PRICES

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (16:38): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to assist regional seniors with energy costs?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (16:39): Much of what shaped the Government's package is based on feedback I obtained while travelling across regional New South Wales and my experience talking to seniors in a wide variety of locations, including at St Vincent de Paul offices in Lismore, Taree and Orange, at Lifeline, and at community centres in Armidale and The Entrance. What I heard in the regions was twofold: some people are struggling, and regional people face unique challenges and frustrations.

The first issue was gas. In the south of the State, as in Victoria, gas is a critical winter fuel. The price of gas has risen and is also setting the higher price for electricity. This is due to the export of liquid natural gas [LNG] from Queensland. Gas rebates will go up 20 per cent, and not just for mains gas. Bottled liquefied petroleum gas [LPG] is important for many regional energy users further afield than the south and Central West. That is why the LPG rebates will go up too. This means that the rebate of a regional pensioner with LPG and electricity could rise from \$334 to \$406, a \$72 boost. This will most benefit customers on the North Coast and in Walgett, Bourke, the Central Darling, Tumut and the Eurobodalla.

Regional seniors also raised fees and charges with me. I know some pensioners can be disadvantaged by fees for things such as receiving paper bills or paying their bills at the post office. We are abolishing those fees. I particularly thank the Hon. Bronnie Taylor and other parliamentary colleagues for raising the issue with my office. I have looked into the fees and decided they have to go. Many older people do not use the internet, and paying bills over the counter is part of their trip to town. They get used to accessing these services for free.

We also are putting the onus on retailers through the retailer code to move people receiving rebates off costly standing offers. Many older customers in regional areas like to remain loyal to a certain supplier, but that should not mean that they miss out on better deals. We are making the retailers help them find better deals. This is especially important in country areas where there may be fewer providers or a legacy provider. Our Government has been listening to our constituents in the regions. Unlike Labor that sent bills sky-high by gold plating the networks, we are reducing network costs and boosting assistance. We have heard the unique plight of those in our regional communities and we have taken action. The issues we face need sensible national market reform to get investment going again, but families need help now. We have listened and we are helping them.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (16:42): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Regional Water. As the Minister knows, the Murray-Darling Basin is not confined by State boundaries and other States have repeatedly expressed concern about compliance failures in New South Wales impacting on the health of the river. One recommendation of the Matthews inquiry is for New South Wales to commit to periodic third party auditing of New South Wales compliance and enforcement systems by other basin States. Will the Government implement this recommendation?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:43): As I said earlier today, the Government agrees in principle with all of the recommendations by Mr Matthews and will consult with the other jurisdictions throughout the Murray-Darling Basin. I am glad that at the beginning of her question the member reiterated another important fact: Our State is unique because the northern and southern parts of the basin are in New South Wales. Unlike Queensland, which is just concerned about the northern basin, and South Australia and Victoria, which might just be concerned about the southern basin, New South Wales has skin in both games. That is why it is absolutely essential that we address as quickly as possible the shortcomings that Mr Matthews identified.

We must do that not just for the sake of the environment as a whole or for other States but for the sake of New South Wales. For the good irrigators in the north and the south who have been doing the right thing it is important that the allegations relating to the northern part of the basin are addressed. We have skin in both games. We must make sure that we provide confidence to everyone who is associated with the Murray-Darling Basin and relies upon the true triple bottom line. Whether the interests are the environmental, social or economic impacts water can have on a community, we must get the balance right. That is part of the challenge five years into a 14-year plan. It is about a triple bottom line. We cannot cherry-pick and just say that we are going to stand up for the environment.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: When have you ever said that?

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: We cannot sit there like The Greens and say that we are just going to stand up for the environment because we understand there has to be a true triple bottom line. When other States or even the Opposition water spokesperson in Canberra say that the extra 450 gigalitres of upwater has to be delivered and we should not worry about the rest of the legislation or the third party social or productive impacts, that is when New South Wales says, "No, that is not what the plan says." New South Wales is committed to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, but it is not a plan at all costs. It has to have a true triple-bottom-line approach. This plan has hurt some of our regional communities when productive water has come out. When you travel across parts of this State those communities encourage you to walk away now. Parts of this State want New South Wales to walk away because communities have been hurt by an approach that takes out productive water without looking at any of the costs.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: They were paid for it.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I hear the member opposite saying that they were paid for it. It is not just about the dollar value of the water. That leaves out the social impact of the water and its flow-on effect. That misses the point. We did not hear boo about water from Opposition members until they saw a political gain out of it. The Opposition must stand up for New South Wales and the triple bottom line approach. Members opposite should say what they are going to do. New South Wales needs to get this right and we need the Opposition's support when it comes to it.

[Business interrupted.]

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the President's Gallery a former Leader of the Government, the Hon. Michael Egan.

Questions Without Notice

WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

[Business resumed.]

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (16:48): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Regional Water. Will the Minister guarantee that the whistleblower who revealed the infamous phone conversation between irrigator lobbyists and Gavin Hanlon will be protected?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:48): I know that matters in relation to whistleblower protections were specifically provided for anyone who wanted to come forward and give evidence to Mr Matthews. Rather than guessing what people were provided with, I am happy to take the question on notice and provide the member with the exact opportunities, wordings or policies that were presented to witnesses as they came forward and whether

or not they chose to take up those protections. I am happy to take that on notice and come back to the member with a detailed response.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (16:49): I address my question to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister update the House on the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:50): I thank the honourable member for his question. As I have said before in this House, for 20 years Labor's unjust native vegetation laws pitted farmers against environmentalists while failing to protect our biodiversity, but on 25 August those laws finally came to an end. I will address a few misconceptions about what landholders can and cannot do under this new framework as we transition into the new framework.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are far too many interjections and loud conversations between members. If members want to have private conversations they should do so outside the Chamber. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: These reforms will not allow landholders to conduct unrestricted, broadscale land clearing. There are two caps on the amount of regulated land that can be cleared—a 25 per cent limit over three years and no more than 625 hectares in total over three years. No clearing can be undertaken without first notifying Local Land Services [LLS], then obtaining approved certification of that clearing. Landholders cannot clear on sensitive land such as core koala habitat, vulnerable land such as steep erodible terrain, and protected riparian land, rainforest and old growth forest, and threatened or critically endangered ecological communities. Landholders who wish to clear land must set aside and manage an area for biodiversity.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order: I ask that the member be reminded that interjections are disorderly at all times.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind the Hon. Penny Sharpe that she is one call to order. I was about to call her to order for a second time but the Parliamentary Secretary took a point of order. I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time for interjecting while I was speaking. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Landholders who wish to clear must set aside and manage an area for biodiversity with an average two to four hectares set aside for every hectare cleared. Landholders cannot clear the areas set aside in perpetuity. Landholders also are required to maintain buffer distances away from wetlands and streams. This Government is not allowing landholders who have grossly and wilfully flouted the former laws to get off scot-free. We expect the Office of Environment and Heritage to prosecute anyone who has committed serious breaches of the law.

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Farmers oppose these cowboys too. It is disingenuous to rural communities for some to break the law for their own benefit when everyone else is doing the right thing.

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The new framework is about biodiversity and productivity. One of the key problems with the former regime was that it failed to focus on the quality of conservation. Instead, it locked up vast tracts of land irrespective of its conservation value. Locking up and leaving this land does not work. It created a loss of ground cover and increased habitat for pests and weeds. The purpose of these reforms is to help farmers optimise their farm so they can produce the food and fibre this State relies upon. The new system provides farmers with options on managing set-asides that were otherwise untouchable under the old regime. In certain cases, set-asides can be grazed and thinned sustainably. Invasive native species can be managed and paddock trees can be removed. None of this was possible under Labor's native vegetation laws.

Importantly, activities farmers are doing now, provided it was allowed under the Native Vegetation Act in the first place, can continue under our new system. LLS, bolstered with record funding and 65 staff dedicated just to this system, is already working with farmers on the ground, helping them to devise new farm management plans. LLS is holding information sessions around the State—starting in Deniliquin yesterday, heading to Hay tomorrow, and finishing in Tenterfield in November; in other words, 25 towns in nine weeks. I am confident these reforms will provide an added boost to farm productivity, regional economies and biodiversity across New South Wales.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (16:54): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Regional Water. Given that the Matthews report notes that the Department of Primary Industries' "years of delay in compliance and enforcement" creates a danger that prosecutions will not be possible because of the three-year statute of limitations, will the Government act to extend the statute under the New South Wales Water Management Act so that those who have broken the law will face justice?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:54): I thank the honourable member for his question. The member may not have been in the Chamber earlier today when I made a ministerial statement in which I clearly acknowledged that the Government is particularly concerned about these cases not being brought to conclusion as quickly as possible, which was a finding in the Matthews report. I clearly said in my ministerial statement that we were concerned about the statute of limitations.

If the member takes the time to read Mr Matthews report or my press release from yesterday he will see that a team of experienced investigators has been pulled together for the specific purpose of bringing those cases to conclusion as quickly as possible. The Government is making sure that is done as quickly as possible. We have committed to it as a matter of priority off the back of the recommendations of Mr Matthews. It is my expectation—I acknowledged this in my ministerial statement earlier today—that Water NSW has had an active role in those briefs and I hope this matter will come to conclusion as a matter of urgency.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE INTERIM REPORT

The Hon. WALT SECORD (16:56): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water and Minister for Trade and Industry. Has the Minister ever received, discussed or solicited donations from the irrigators mentioned in the *Four Corners* report and in the Matthews interim report?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (16:56): I thank the honourable member for his question. The long and the short answer is no. Some of the donations to which the member may be referring date back to before my becoming a member of Parliament. I believe that one of them may have been towards a Federal campaign and another may have been later in 2014. I do not handle political donations; I do not take political donations. I repeat, the long and the short answer is no.

ABORIGINAL CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (16:57): 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 how the New South Wales Government is delivering for the people of Western Sydney as part of its \$20 million investment to deliver the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (16:57): I thank the honourable member for her question. Western Sydney is home to the largest population of Aboriginal people in New South Wales. The Government knows how important it is to invest in these communities to ensure that every individual thrives and prospers. However, Aboriginal adults in Western Sydney have a lower median wage than have non-Aboriginal adults, are less likely to be employed full-time and are more likely to be unemployed. In 2014, Aboriginal people had higher participation rates in vocational education and training than had non-Aboriginal people. The 2013 data identified that high school retention for young Aboriginal people was increasing but still remained lower than for young non-Aboriginal people. That is why in 2015 the New South Wales Government committed to investing \$20 million to establish an Aboriginal Centre for Excellence in Western Sydney.

If we are serious about improving the life outcomes of our Aboriginal population, as a government we must focus our attention on Western Sydney. The Aboriginal Centre for Excellence will provide young people the environment, resources and networks to support their aspirations and goals as they strive to achieve excellence in their chosen field. The centre aims to harness the talents of Aboriginal young people from Western Sydney as they successfully transition from the school environment into either further education and training or sustainable and fulfilling employment. All the while, the centre will be instilling a strong sense of cultural pride. The community has told us that Aboriginal culture must be at the core of the centre's operations.

Last month, I visited the decommissioned Whalan High School, which will be repurposed to become the home of the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence in the heart of Western Sydney. While at Whalan I met three young women from the nearby Plumpton High School—Taliah, Tamika and Shylah—who shared their aspirations for

the future with me. From memory, one of them wanted to be a teacher, one is going into banking and the other one wants to play for the Rugby Women's Sevens, which I am sure the Hon. Lynda Voltz will be pleased to hear. The girls also talked about how important it was for them to affirm links with their cultural heritage.

The Government has engaged with local Aboriginal community stakeholders in conceptualising and scoping the Aboriginal Centre for Excellence. The exact details of how the Whalan site will be renovated and what will be on offer will be determined under the guidance of an Aboriginal-led project advisory committee. We will shortly appoint an Aboriginal strategic director to lead the establishment phase and champion the centre in the community and with the business and government sectors. This strategic director will reach out to young people and elders alike to ensure that Aboriginal people are at the centre of the decision-making and can feel a genuine sense of ownership over the centre.

The Government is committed to building more prosperous and resilient Aboriginal communities and particularly to ensuring that Aboriginal people in Western Sydney share in the economic benefits stemming from the region's significant growth. The centre will use innovative approaches to create a sustainable funding model including government, non-government and private sector investment. It will include world-class information and communications technology facilities as part of our plan to provide Aboriginal young people of the region with access to facilities that support them in being competitive in a contemporary labour market.

Our aim is to establish the centre as a hub for young Aboriginal people in Western Sydney to support their transition post-school, to encourage them to pursue tertiary education and to open their eyes to the exciting career opportunities that will be available in the region. The centre is currently on track to be established and operating by November 2018. It is an exciting project. When I visited the community and spoke about the plans for the centre, I could see the hope and optimism in the young people there about what we want to do. It will be great to see it come to fruition. I look forward to providing the House with further updates on the development of this initiative at a later date.

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

Deferred Answers

WHALE WATCHING

In reply to **the Hon. MARK PEARSON** (8 August 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:

1. The new Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 prescribes approach distances for marine mammals. The regulations can be found at <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/regulations/2017-432.pdf>.

Mechanisms to ensure compliance with the regulation include education, patrols, investigations into reports from the public, covert and overt compliance operations on whale-watching vessels, issuing warnings, official cautions, penalty notices, and prosecutions.

Six penalty notices were issued between 2011 and August 2017.

CROWN LAND OCCUPATION

In reply to **Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE** (8 August 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 exercise of police powers under the Sydney Public Reserves (Public Safety) Act 2017 only applies to Martin Place and, if proclaimed, additional public reserves within the City of Sydney.

Police officers cannot exercise these powers in relation to industrial disputes or an authorised demonstration, protest, procession or assembly under Part 4 of the Summary Offences Act 1988.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

In reply to **the Hon. ROBERT BROWN** (9 August 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 Working with Children Check is applicable to a wide range of people working with children in both the public and private sectors.

*Condolences***DEATH OF THE HON. JOHN RICHARD "JOHNO" JOHNSON, A FORMER PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (17:02): I make a brief contribution to the motion of condolence in relation to the Hon. John Richard Johnson, or "Johnno", as we all knew him. I begin by offering my sincerest condolences to Johnno's family—his wife Pauline, their four children and their grandchildren. I do not think any of us today will be able to rival the beautiful eulogy that Bob Carr provided at Johnno's State funeral. It truly encapsulated the man, the love for his family and the faith that drove his life's work: the Labor Party and the Catholic Church. It is hard to imagine a better Labor tale than one of a young man growing up in country New South Wales with but nine weeks of high school education who rose to become the youngest President of the nation's oldest parliamentary Chamber. But simply hearing that tale would lose its most important aspect: the character of the man who made the incredible journey and his dedication to the Labor cause, which did not end when he left Parliament.

Everyone in the Labor Party had a Johnno story, with many going back to their Young Labor days—perhaps they served instant coffee, custard tarts and sausage rolls in his infamous kitchen at our annual conference or helped in one of his office moves after he had left Parliament. Invariably, they sold raffle tickets with him. Despite rising to such a position of power and influence in the Parliament and the party, Johnno remains its most humble volunteer. I too came to know "Johnno" when I was in Young Labor, but it was in my 10 years at the New South Wales party office that I saw firsthand his dedication to the dual faiths of his life: the Labor Party and the Catholic Church. He was in our office every day without fail, and on the rare occasion he was not—perhaps he was sick or, more likely, detained with other responsibilities—he would phone in to let us know we could call him on his mobile, if needed. Many would assume that he was on our staff, not our most dedicated volunteer.

It came as no surprise to me, reading through the many different tributes to "Johnno", that his ability to fundraise incredible amounts, often through his infamous raffles, was directed to both of those causes. Long before the Obama campaign showed the incredible power of small donations from supporters, "Johnno" was running raffles with incredible networks right across New South Wales, and perhaps beyond. But to focus on the raffles or on his kitchen belies the other side of "Johnno"—the mentoring and advice that he gave to so many. Quiet, considered and thoughtful, "Johnno" provided advice to party leaders and volunteers alike. It came from a shrewd understanding that was shaped by his incredible life story: a young man in the country, as a grocer and later as a union official representing workers from right around New South Wales. He maintained that elusive common touch that is so important to us in political life.

Both the Labor Party and the Catholic Church bestowed its highest honours upon "Johnno": life membership of the party and the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great, the highest civilian papal honour. But I do not know if we can ever honour a man who genuinely lived his life in the service of others. "Johnno", may you rest in peace—or at least perhaps pause for a while.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (17:06): It is a rare thing indeed to have a long life, both private and political, and not find that you have accumulated a number of people who would consider themselves not only your opponents but also your foes. If you have been fortunate to assume high public office, that number is likely to be larger and the ill will held by some towards you may well be strong. Generally, the rule of thumb is that the higher you rise the more intense the feelings and opinions often become. With respect to those feelings and opinions, it is not uncommon for one's opponents or foes to let others around them know exactly their views, both privately and publicly.

I make these observations because in the few weeks since the passing of John Richard Johnson I have observed what can be best described as an outpouring of warmth and affection towards him that some may find surprising for a person who was a long-serving politician. That has come from all sides in politics, the church, the wealthy and the poor, the young and the old, the fortunate and the less fortunate, believers and atheists—I could go on. Much has been written and spoken about "Johnno", as he was known to many of us, since his passing to eternal life on 9 August. There is so much to reflect on.

For those looking for what I believe are some of the best insights regarding the man, I can do no better than recommend they read Archbishop Anthony Fisher's homily and the Hon. Bob Carr's eulogy, given at Johnno's State funeral and Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial, held at St Mary's Cathedral on 18 August. I also recommend the thoughtful piece written by Mike Bailey that appeared in the *Catholic Weekly* on 20 August. For the record of this House, I will read into *Hansard* a short reflection on Johnno's life that was given at the Australian Labor Party

New South Wales branch administrative committee meeting held on 8 September—a committee he sat on for some years:

Vale John Richard "Johnno" Johnson KCSG.

The Honourable John Richard "Johnno" Johnson KCSG passed away on 9 August 2017, aged 87. Born in Murwillumbah, he joined the local branch in 1950. He became a grocer and then a trade union official with the Shop Assistants and Warehouse Employees Federation, later becoming its Assistant Secretary.

Johnno became a member of the Legislative Council on 23 April 1976, and served until 2001. In 1978 he was elected President of the Legislative Council, which made him the youngest member ever elected President. Johnno was the first to abandon the use of ceremonial attire, preferring to preside in a suit without wig or gown. He served the Council as its President for over 12 years, holding the position until 1991.

Johnno was also dedicated to the Catholic Church where he was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great, the highest civilian papal honour.

He served many community organisations including as director of the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, was chair of the Catholic Weekly, board member and director of the Randwick Labor Club and chair of the Advisory Committee, Foodbank New South Wales. He was also a member of the New South Wales Board of Lotteries and the Federal Cancer Council.

Johnno's service to the Australian Labor Party included his time as Treasurer of the party, member of the Administrative Committee, Youth Council President in 1961 and his various roles in the Maroubra branch of the Australian Labor Party. Even in retirement, Johnno continued working for the party, coming in to the party office every day to assist with fundraising. Many will remember Johnno for his raffles, for his love of Father Mac's puddings, and his canteen, tea room and pie shop at the New South Wales Labor Annual State Conference.

And for his well-known raffling campaigns and techniques.

For his extensive service, Johnno was awarded Life Membership of the party at the 2002 Annual Conference.

Johnno mentored generations of Labor leaders and key New South Wales Labor figures and was well respected across the political spectrum.

A State Funeral was held on Friday 18 August 2017 by way of a Pontifical Mass of Christian Burial at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. The mass was administered by Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney. The large attendance was testament to the enormous impact Johnno's life had on so many.

Johnno was a passionate stalwart of the Labor Party and the Labor movement. Our party is unimaginable without him. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Pauline, and their children Andrew, Michael, Monica and Naomi.

They have joined us here today. Before concluding, I will make a few personal observations about Johnno. We all have our stories and anecdotes, which give a sense of the man, his warmth and friendliness. Johnno was an individual who, at different times in his life, had a number of responsibilities and indeed held significant office but he would always make time to stop and talk. These days we are often so busy running around and trying to get to the end of the job in front of us that we sometimes forget that, at the end of the day, we are working with and for people. When Johnno spoke to people who were contemplating getting involved in politics and political life, he would stress that the work is all about people and that one needed to remember to make oneself available for people.

He was genuinely liked by young people. He took the time to encourage and mentor them. Others have spoken about that and I do not need to speak further on it. I never saw Johnno pass up the opportunity to talk to and engage with young people and my observation was that he relished that. He saw in young people the future of the faith, of the industrial or political wing of the Labor Party or of the other interests he had. When dealing with young people he saw the future and he wanted to pass onto them whatever he could in order to enable them to do their best in whatever endeavour they decided to follow.

Johnno's world view was certainly motivated by his faith but also by reason. It is an important point to make: that his Catholic faith was significant in the animation of who he was as the man, Johnno Johnson; that faith and reason were as one. It was not faith without reason or reason without faith; it was both faith and reason. Those two components of Catholic thinking and the Catholic mind were important to him. He had the ability to reason and to look at issues but also to rely on and draw strength from his faith.

He also had a great affection for working people and their families. His work in the union movement, particularly with the shop assistants union, was a testimony to that. I remember him many years ago telling me an extraordinary anecdote. He told me that he was an organiser. I said, "Johnno, you were an organiser for the union. Tell me about it. What was the territory you covered? What was the area?" He said, "It was a relatively small area." I asked him to describe it for me and he said, "It started at the other side of the Hawkesbury River and extended up to the Queensland border." His organising area went from north of the Hawkesbury up to the border and out west for as far as you could go.

His time working as a union organiser—and indeed, in the rest of his life—had him away from his dear wife and family, not just for days but for weeks and, in some instances, months at a time. On behalf of all of us

I thank his dear wife and family for the releasing of this man and the giving of this man to public life in New South Wales. Without that support at home—that knowledge that he could return home to wife and family, that stability, that rock—he could never have made the contribution that he did to the public life of New South Wales. We have all benefited from knowing him and from our association with him.

Johnno also had a strong belief in the importance of respecting conscience. Conscience is an interesting thing. When we discuss what conscience means we often get to the point where people say, "This is the way I feel. This is my feeling towards something." Johnno was always keen to distinguish between that sense of subjectivity or feeling and conscience. He had the traditional understanding of conscience: attempting to assess and judge a matter according to what he understood was the truth and deciding accordingly. It was his measurement against what he understood as truth—which was significantly animated by his Catholic faith—that led him to his position on various matters. That measurement against what he understood and believed as the truth was the way he formed his conscience, and he encouraged others to do the same. Johnno was generous with his advice and counsel and would take time to talk with you and give advice. You only had to ask. He was not someone who would impose; rather, he would always be open and available.

Faith, family and the Australian Labor Party were the great dimensions to his life. One cannot define the man or understand him without understanding how those powerful forces so profoundly influenced him. They will define the memory that we have of him now and into the future. "Johnno" had a special place in his heart for the poor, disabled and underprivileged. He believed in the inviolability of human life and encouraged others in the belief that it must be respected by all. For all those who knew, respected and loved him, there is no doubt that he fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Thank you, "Johnno", for who you were, what you stood for and how much you gave. May your soul rest in peace.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (17:19): I extend my condolences to Pauline and family on the sad passing of Johnno. There have been a lot of anecdotes today about Johnno and there are a couple that I will join in with. What I should say from the outset is: Did I ever buy a raffle ticket from Johnno? Yes, I did. Did I ever win one of Johnno's raffles? No, I did not. Did I ever buy a bingo ticket from Johnno? Yes, I did. Did I ever win a prize? No, I did not. Did I ever partake of a wonderful International Roast coffee at the State conference canteen? Yes, I did. Did I enjoy it? On some days better than others. The Hon. John Graham spoke about distribution day. Those in political spheres know and understand what distribution day is like. Having worked in the campaign bunker for a while for the Labor Party, the logistics of distribution day are huge.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos was part of that at the time I was there with the Hon. John Graham. I remember when the van got stuck in the driveway to the basement where we were distributing the material, which meant for about an hour everyone else was backed up trying to get in. At one point I walked past Johnno as we were trying to work out how we would get the van out, and he looked at me and said, "Brother, some people have common sense." He was right. I do not think the driver of the vehicle had any common sense because the van was too tall for the driveway. Johnno had a wonderful way of engaging with those who turned up on a motorbike or in a very small Hyundai sedan to pick up a pallet-load of material. He never ridiculed them because they were working as volunteers for the Labor Party, but he did provide advice that next time they should bring a larger vehicle. He was always in good humour and good spirits.

Johnno always referred to me as "brother". Our greeting was, "Brother, how are you?" When I was elected to this place in 2007 one of the first people through my door was Johnno. Johnno is from the Right and I am from the Left of the Labor Party. Until that point we had had significant conversations around policy matters that were exercising the minds of many in the Labor Party, so to have Johnno walk through my door was a bit surprising, but he conveyed some advice which sticks with me to this day. It is advice I pass on to new members on all sides of politics when they enter this place because it is quite pertinent.

Johnno told me this job is particularly difficult for those of us in regional New South Wales because you are away from home so much. If you have young kids, it is hard on the kids. You should ring your children every day and, as Johnno said, "If you can do it once every day, do it twice. Ring them morning and night." I still do that, even though my kids have grown up with their dad in public life and are moving on. I still ring my kids every day. Johnno was right: This is a very hard gig on your family. He also gave me some nice advice: Stay true to yourself in this job. Stay true to the party because it got you here. Never, ever forget where you come from, and hold the faith. These are some nice points about political life, some things that you should never forget in the hurly-burly of what we do in this place. We should all think about what that means for us, but they are very important pieces of advice for new members from a stalwart of this Chamber.

My party anecdote is one I know others would have heard. In every conversation I had with "Johnno" I would say, "See you later, brother, thanks", and walk away. One particular day, I said, "See you, Johnno, take care." He looked at me with a stony face, and I thought I had upset him. He said, "Why would I take Care? That's a household cleaner in the United States", at which point I realised that was his sense of humour. He was a

wonderful bloke to test things with. You did not have to agree with Johnno, but he certainly helped formulate debating points and your position on matters. I think the Labor Party is the lesser for Johnno's passing. We did come from different parts of the Labor Party but he had a true sense of who we were and what we should be. I will miss Johnno's conversations. I will miss that humour because he always walked through my door, and I appreciated that. My condolences to the family. He was a nice man.

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (17:24): I give my support to the condolence motion for John Richard Johnson—or "Johnno", as we all knew him—a member of this House from 1976 to 2001 and, as the plaque on the wall up there tells us, President of this place from 1978 to 1991. When "Johnno" retired in 2001, I had been a member of this place for less than 12 months. I clearly remember that "Johnno" was the first person in the Carr Labor Government to come up and congratulate me on my election to this House. That is something I have never forgotten, and I spoke about this when he retired in 2001. I had heard a lot about Johnno Johnson from many different people, and I had only ever heard good things about him. Before I became a member of this House, people would say to me, "You'll meet Johnno Johnson, one of the Labor greats." I was very pleased that he introduced himself to me because I had heard so much about this wonderful bloke, and it really meant a lot to me. I clearly remember what he said to me. He walked up to me, shook my hand and said, "Welcome, mate." That was the way that Johnno approached everybody he interacted with.

As the Hon. Mick Veitch said, everyone has an anecdote about Johnno, and I have one too. On my first day in this place, when he introduced himself to me, he said, "Rick, do you know when the Country Party was first formed?" At that stage we had just celebrated the eightieth anniversary of the Country/National Party, and I said, "Yeah, I probably do, Johnno. I think it was about 1920." He said, "No, it was much earlier than that." I said, "What makes you think that?" He said, "Come here and I'll show you." He led me out of the Chamber and to the painting of Arthur Phillip unfurling a flag in Sydney Harbour. He said, "Look at all these trees that have been chopped down. The National Party has been here for years cutting down trees!" That really showed me what Johnno was like.

Johnno was a bloke of wit, humour and friendship. I have never forgotten that interaction, and to this day I can remember the glint in his eye as he said those words to me. It was a very important moment for a new member to have somebody of his experience and longevity in this place offer their friendship. He was like that with everyone he interacted with. As the Hon. Mick Veitch said, he was a bloke who was often seen around the halls of Parliament House after his retirement. Whenever I bumped into him, we would always shake hands and greet each other like old mates. I would always say, "G'day, Johnno, how are you?" and—as another speaker mentioned earlier—he would always say "Marvellous." Johnno had a positive outlook on life, and he would always ask me how my life was going. He was genuinely interested in people, no matter what walk of life or what side of politics they came from.

He was a great guy, a really good bloke, a wonderful man, a friend across politics, and a true Labor man with his roots in regional New South Wales. This world is a better place as Johnno Johnson's footprints have been placed upon it. I held him in the highest esteem from the day that we met and I was sad to hear of his passing. I extend my condolences to Mrs Johnson and her family and support the motion of condolence for Johnno Johnson.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (17:30): In reply: As other members have said, not every former President receives a State funeral. I dare say, Mr President, that you and I will not receive State funerals. Together with His Excellency the Governor, five former Premiers, two former Prime Ministers, current Ministers and members of Parliament, former parliamentary colleagues, Ministers and members, the Premier was delighted to ensure that the Hon. John Richard Johnson had an appropriate send-off—with a State funeral. It was a privilege, along with my colleague the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the other place, Dominic Perrottet, to represent Government members at that funeral. Mr President was present to represent the members of this House.

Contributions from other members have detailed the Hon. John Richard Johnson's life story. He was born in Murwillumbah on 26 July 1930. He left school at the age of 15 to work in retail. Prior to leaving school he passed out how-to-vote cards in support of John Curtin at the 1943 election. He gave lifelong service to the political cause in which he believed. The Hon. John Richard Johnson was elected to serve in this place in 1975 and took up office the following year with the Wran Government. He saw service under five Premiers—Wran, Unsworth, Greiner, Fahey and Carr. The Hon. John Richard Johnson was a significant presence in this place.

When Sir Harry Budd resigned from the House in 1978 the Hon. John Richard Johnson was elected to take his place as President. I ask members to reflect on the fact that he had only two years experience as a member at the time he was elected President, which speaks volumes about his political force, shows how much he meant to members of his party and how he was respected in this place. The Hon. John Richard Johnson held the office of President for almost 13 years. He was the youngest President to be elected but he no longer holds that record.

I suspect that I will soon cease to hold that record as the average age of members of this place continues to plummet.

The Hon. John Richard Johnson was the third-longest-serving President; only two Presidents have had longer terms in office. I doubt anyone will match the service of Sir John Hayes, CMG—at 19 years. As someone who served for 13 years I suspect that term will be unequalled for many years. The Leader of the Opposition stated that his first interaction with the Hon. John Richard Johnson was in 1987 when he came to this place as the staff member of a member in the other place. We are on a unity ticket there because my first interaction was 30 years ago in 1987 when I came here as a staff member to a member in the other place. I got to know the Hon. John Richard Johnson fairly early in his career.

It is widely known that the Hon. John Richard Johnson was President of the Young Labor Association in New South Wales. Whenever he heard that a Young Liberal President had come to work in the building he sought out that person. Within a year of coming here I took office as President of the Young Liberal Movement and we got to know each other. I am reliably informed by other Young Liberal presidents—the Federal defence Minister, Senator Marise Payne, John Brogden, the Premier and Leader of the Liberal Party, with whom he was close, Trent Zimmerman and the Hon. Shayne Mallard, who worked for his successor the Hon. Max Willis—that this was his practice. He enjoyed mentoring people and interacting with members in opposition. He made voluminous notes of the titbits he was told and they would end up in his extensive filing cabinet system. Information technology and "Johnno" were strangers for most of the time that he was present in this place.

Staff members have reminded me that when Johnno left the President's office and moved up to level 11 his office made Jenny Gardiner's office look tidy. I saw him in action as the President. A number of presidents were role models for me and he was one of them. I said when I was elected President that I intended to be the "House's master" and the "House's servant". Those were Johnno's words and that was how he saw his role. He profoundly influenced me. The Hon. John Richard Johnson was one of three presidents from Murwillumbah—Sir Harry Budd his predecessor, and Max Willis his successor, were also from Murwillumbah. When the Hon. Virginia Chadwick became President in 1998 "Johnno" made a point of saying that Murwillumbah's 32-year stranglehold on the chair had been broken with Max's demise and Virginia's election. The Clerk at that time was from Murwillumbah, as was the Hon. Ann Symonds. It seemed there was a Murwillumbah faction in the House. Johnno's approach was as the master of the House and as a servant of the House. From 1987 to 1995 I observed three things while Johnno fulfilled his role as President.

He believed in three things that were important and those things influenced me profoundly. I hope I brought them to the chair as well. He believed in civility between members, in the decorum of the House and in the dignity of the Parliament. Those three things are essential for a President. We have heard about the interactions that he had with members in the Chamber, such as the Hon. Rick Colless, and I also drew that perspective. Heaven help any Labor staffers who came into this Chamber and were not wearing a coat or tie. They received a shellacking from Johnno because he was determined to maintain standards. He might have taken off the wig and the gown, but he was not prepared to see this place treated with disrespect by anyone, particularly staff.

On the dignity of the Parliament and decorum of the House, one of his rulings, which is on pages 48 and 49 of the *Selected Rulings of the President*, is possibly one of the most influential rulings ever made by a President. I am sure, Mr President, the Clerk has drawn it to your attention as he drew it to my attention on many occasions. It is the classic ruling on offensive words and the way that the standing orders should be applied. It goes through the circumstances of how points of order should be taken and how the President should analyse the point being made and what ruling to make. I reflect on one part of that ruling that we frequently hear:

Allegations of a personal nature against Members can only be made upon a direct and substantive motion.

That is a critical procedural pointer for members. He goes on to say:

Members must exercise their privilege of free speech with good sense and good taste, so as to maintain courtesy of language toward other Members in debate. Personal references not only reduce the standard of debate, provoke retaliation and lead to disorder in the House, but degrade the Parliament in the estimation of the people.

It is a beautiful ruling that I used and have heard Mr President use, and one on which all members should reflect. A number of members have reflected on how his huge personality impacted on the way he did his job. He did it in a particularly fine way because he was always able, as the Constitution Act said he must, be impartial and independent, but his great personality allowed him to project an enormous sense of personal charm through the chair and add to how well the Parliament worked under his stewardship. We all know he was a character. In the course of preparing my remarks, I asked my staffer Sam Tedeschi to ring two of my predecessors as Leader of the Government and also one of my predecessors as Opposition Whip to ask them for their recollections of how Johnno's presence was projected through the chair. I share them with the House.

Former Leader of the Government the Hon. Ted Pickering let my staff know about an occasion which I will record for posterity. Ted's story was about Johnno in 1990, which was two years after Ted tried to remove "Johnno" from the presidency. After a police incident and discussions with the then NSW Ombudsman, Parliament was recalled for the purpose of discussing a no confidence motion in Ted. To his credit, Ted made the commitment that if the motion against him was successful, he would resign. It was a brave thing to do, given the numbers in the Chamber. While debate on the motion proceeded, President Johnson called Ted to the chair and told him that he could get him another vote to save his job, which grabbed Ted's attention.

One member with whom Ted did not have a particularly good relationship was the Hon. Marie Bignold, who went a little too far in debate and used some colourful descriptions when referring to Ted, as Johnno thought she might. She was asked to withdraw some unparliamentary language and refused and was subsequently removed from the Chamber. "Johnno" called Ted back to the chair and said, "There is one for you." While Ted succeeded on that motion and was cleared on that issue he never forgot what Johnno did for him; and Johnno was a gentleman and never reminded him. He was an impartial chair, nevertheless, and a good man.

Johnno Johnson was also a man of great humour and warmth. The Hon. John Jobling tells me of his experience on the Judicial Officers Amendment Bill, which had been rushed through the Legislative Assembly by the Carr Government and, as a tactic, the Coalition Opposition was to filibuster in this Chamber. President Johnson was in the chair and the Hon. John Jobling was prepared to break the record for the longest speech ever to delay the passage of the bill. He had Queens Counsel and barristers lined up near the Chamber passing him folder after folder. With notes piling up on the benches, he was ready to talk forever in debate on the bill. After seeing the amount of material that the Hon. John Jobling was receiving, Johnno pulled out a white handkerchief from his pocket, waved it at the Hon. John Jobling and said, "Enough, enough. You win." Debate on the bill was adjourned until the following Tuesday.

Earlier we heard a great contribution from the Hon. Greg Donnelly. In many respects—and I am sure he would not mind my saying it—he is the inheritor of Johnno's seat. He is from the same union as Johnno, as was the Hon. Tony Burke. The Hon. Greg Donnelly gave a thoughtful contribution today about the values and outlook of the Hon. "Johnno" Johnson while he was a member of this place. He was an unusual President because he is the only President of all the twentieth century Presidents who exercised the President's prerogative to step down from the chair and speak in debate.

Now is not the time to go through what he said—and it is certainly not the time for me to say whether or not I agreed with him—but I am sure the Hon. Greg Donnelly and other Opposition members would join me in saying that he was a faithful and loyal servant of his party. He stood up for the values and views of the people who faithfully supported him over a lifetime in politics. He will be remembered for the contribution he made in that respect.

I will mention just one other personal anecdote, which the Hon. John Hannaford brought to my attention. A number of members have talked about Johnno's charitable work and his compassion. One former Young Liberals President who Johnno got to know well was Robert Nestdale. One night Robert brought a special guest to Parliament. Johnno and Robert had become friendly and Robert was the director of UNICEF in Australia at the time. The person brought to dinner was Audrey Hepburn. While Johnno was normally a humble man, he took immense delight in showing her around the whole Parliament and introducing her to everyone. I am told it was a great night.

Later, when Robert became terminally ill at a very young age, Johnno would visit him almost daily in his last days and would keep people around the Parliament informed of how he was. That is only one of many examples of Johnno being a man who lived his faith. He showed kindness and warmth to everyone. John Hannaford has asked me to pass on that he has never heard anyone described so consistently as a gentleman as Johnno Johnson. In drawing this debate to a close I thank the Johnson family for giving Johnno to the House, the State, and Australia. To this House, this State and to Australia he has made a great contribution. We thank them for that. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

SOCIAL MEDIA DATA SHARING

The Hon. LOU AMATO (17:52): Nothing is for free. Everything comes at a price. There are currently two billion active users on Facebook. Many of us have personal Facebook accounts. Those who do may recall that when they established their account a final question was asked before activation was successful. It was, "Do you accept the terms and conditions?" or words to that effect. We think: What harm could possibly come of accepting those terms and conditions? Everyone has a Facebook account, there is no need to read the terms and conditions—which, by the way, are conveniently placed in a less conspicuous location and in a much smaller font than the "I accept" button. Besides, Facebook is free. There never will be a charge against my credit card for using the service. What harm could come of it?

To effectively facilitate the transfer of data between almost two billion active users worldwide the cost of the Facebook information technology [IT] infrastructure would be substantial. Facebook chief executive officer Mark Zuckerberg is currently worth \$62.3 billion. Someone is paying for Zuckerberg's extravagant annual salary, and also for the continual IT upgrades and countless staff members who work for Facebook. Yet, as stated previously, Facebook users never see a charge against their credit card for using this apparently free service. Facebook is certainly not a benevolent society providing a social network free of charge. It is a business that makes substantial profits by selling information. That information is about the private lives of people who have Facebook accounts.

Most people are unaware that Facebook IT infrastructure uses the latest software programs to form a complete profile of a person that is then sold to numerous undisclosed marketing companies and other organisations that may be unscrupulous in the handling of private information. The following list, which is by no means exhaustive, outlines some of the private data taken from Facebook users who use their mobile phones to log in to their account. Facebook will record the time and the users geographical location when they logged in, the device type used to log in including the phone model, serial number and CPU number and record how long they were logged in and who they communicated with whilst the session was active. Any photographs taken will have the exact geographical location obtained by satellite. The device type used to take the photograph, the shutter speed, lens focal length and the ISO sensitivity also will be recorded. A person's private phone contacts will be uploaded without his or her knowledge, stored by Facebook and on sold to whoever is willing to pay for the information.

To illustrate the severity of this, my staff member, who has since closed his Facebook account after becoming aware of the privacy breaches, requested a list of what information Facebook had collected from his mobile phone. To his surprise, the personal mobile phone numbers of three members of this Parliament, including one member from the other place, one Federal Minister and one Federal senator had been uploaded to Facebook. Based on the types of conversations conducted, places visited, likes and other posts, Facebook is able to use sophisticated software to form a very accurate profile of a person. All a person's interactions and private data are then sold to interested parties based on the computed profile.

What does this invasion of privacy mean for the safety and wellbeing of our citizens? A lady who changed her Facebook status to "widow" after the death of her husband had no idea of the ramifications. In January this year at her daughter's wedding she received a Facebook message on her phone from an unknown person. This person, who was obviously using a fake Facebook account, made comments about the wedding and was descriptive of the clothes she was wearing. They were also able to tell her exactly where the wedding was taking place. This was rather alarming to her because she had not taken any photographs, nor had she uploaded any comments or otherwise to Facebook. However, friends at the wedding were in fact taking mobile phone pictures and uploading them in real time to their Facebook accounts. The predator was viewing her account in real time and observing the posts of her friends who were at the wedding.

The predator continued to contact the lady and revealed how much they knew about her. They were able to tell her actual address and knew that she lived alone with two young children. They knew from her posts that she was suffering from depression. They knew the places she liked to shop and the friends she liked to visit, including their home addresses and places of employment. How could this be possible? The lady asked an IT professional to look at her account. It was revealed that geographical locations are contained in the photographs we take on our mobile phones. That information is uploaded to Facebook and easily accessible to a hacker or predator.

Most alarming about Facebook is that many single mothers who are living alone with limited protection in the home post numerous pictures of their children on Facebook. Paedophiles are known to use Facebook as a means to target children. It is estimated that approximately 40 per cent of Facebook profiles are fake, meaning users are sharing personal data with non-existent individuals they have befriended just to increase their friend count. Many children and young people have hundreds of friends on Facebook and the reality is they have never met many of them. Two hundred friends is a conservative number based on current trends. Protecting our citizens'

privacy and safety is a major consideration. Protecting children and young people from predators and paedophiles must be of the highest priority. It is time that as a Government we take a closer look at the dangers of multibillion dollar corporations. [*Time expired.*]

LIVE MUSIC VENUES

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (17:58): Live music in New South Wales is in crisis. The number of live music venues in the city of Sydney has decreased by 61 per cent over the past 10 years. Sydney and New South Wales are expensive places in which to live and work, and that means they are expensive places to run a venue or devote one's life to playing music. The fact remains that in Sydney it is harder than it should be to listen to music, play in a band or run a venue. But it is not too late to save this city as a vibrant hub of music and the arts.

But this is not just about Sydney. I have spoken to people in country pubs and they are struggling with the same issues. Two recent developments are aimed at directing the powers of this place to improve that situation. The first is that, on a bipartisan level, I was pleased to co-found the Parliamentary Friends of Music and I recognise the work of the President of the Parliamentary Friends, the Hon. Ben Franklin. I note that in October we will hold an event in the Speaker's Garden in conjunction with the music industry and with venues to show our support as a Parliament for the industry across the State. The second is that in April Labor held a music roundtable with local, State and Federal politicians in dialogue with venue operators, musicians, promoters and others to canvass a wide range of issues, including venue closures, the handling of noise complaints, new laws for low-impact entertainment, ticket scalping, visas for touring artists, and the impact of New South Wales Government planning and lockout laws. In November further roundtables are planned for the Blue Mountains and elsewhere.

Last weekend robust live music and arts policies tailored to the local area also were put forward by successful Labor council candidates in the Inner West, Ryde, Newcastle and elsewhere. The fight to promote and support music has many other fronts, and community radio is a crucial one. The community radio sector continues to be an essential way for our young artists to be heard. I call on the Federal Government, which is legislating for media reform, to look after the small end of the media spectrum and increase funding to community radio. I am hopeful they will; they certainly should. New South Wales should also act. During budget estimates I welcomed Minister Kean's recognition of ticket scalping. I call on Minister Kean to act on this issue sooner rather than later, and to crack down on unfair scalping and shonky ticket reselling sites that deliberately mislead music fans. I also recognise the work that Federal shadow Minister Tony Burke is doing to raise awareness of this issue.

During budget estimates I raised two issues with Minister Roberts. The first concerned the fate of the Sydney Fringe Festival, which is one of our most exciting festivals and which narrowly escaped having a condition placed on it that events could not involve DJs or dancing. I repeat: no DJs or dancing! I am unsure how that was to be policed. Sense was seen in the end and the condition was not imposed. What sort of signal does that send? The next issue I have proposed, if councils cannot act sensibly, is that they be stripped of powers to create development controls that unfairly stifle low-impact entertainment at venues. A pub can freely have hundreds of people screaming at big screen televisions during big sporting matches, but getting permission to play the acoustic guitar in the corner can be prohibitively expensive and time consuming—and it has been shut down, in at least one instance, with a single vexatious complaint. I welcome Minister Robert's willingness to engage and to deal with these issues. The fun police are alive and well. As a city and as a State we can do better, but as a Parliament we must send a signal that we want a diverse, safe and vibrant Sydney and New South Wales nightlife.

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (18:02): Tonight I speak about the mental health of young people and special religious education [SRE] in schools. Research data shows the deteriorating mental health of our youth and young people: one in four youth in New South Wales is living with some type of mental health disorder; one in 10 children under five is experiencing emotional or behavioural disturbances; and the rate of suicide has reached a 10-year high, accounting for nearly 34 per cent of deaths in 15 to 24 year olds nationwide. Suicide is the leading cause of death in those aged five to 17 years. Children from disadvantaged families experience mental health rates three times higher than those from well-off families.

Other factors such as coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and households in which English is a second language create inequality and increase a child or young person's vulnerability to a mental health disorder. This issue is not going away. For example, the treatment of mental health issues in males aged 12 to 25 years is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$3.27 billion annually. It is also impacting our crime rates, with 45 per cent of school-aged children who display conduct problems going on to commit half of all crimes. Members have heard me say:

Harm eradication is always preferable to harm minimisation.

The same applies to the mental health of our youth and young people. It is better for government to spend less now to prevent a problem rather than to deal with massive costs later on. The Christian Democratic Party believes that keeping SRE in schools will help to support the whole development and wellbeing of our young people. We are not implying that SRE is the complete answer to the mental health of our young people or that it will single-handedly reduce suicide rates, but we agree with the commitment of the Wellbeing Framework for Schools of the New South Wales Department of Education, which states:

... to create quality learning opportunities for children and young people. This includes strengthening their cognitive, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Special religious education is an example of how a student's "... wellbeing is enhanced when schools connect with and draw on the expertise, contributions and support of their own communities." It is also an example of how government and non-government agencies can develop partnerships to enhance the collective wellbeing of students, their schools and communities. The Christian Democratic Party agrees with the Wellbeing Framework for Schools and the importance of students being connected to their cultural, religious or spiritual backgrounds. SRE can facilitate this goal as it allows school-aged children to connect with religious providers from various faith groups and it helps to provide a well-rounded education for our students. It also helps to create schools that promote and respect multiculturalism and different faith groups. We agree with the World Health Organization mental health action plan 2013-2020, which lists the proposed actions for members should include:

Effective implementation of the global health action plan will require actions by international, regional and national partners. These partners include but are not limited to ... faith based organisations.

We support SRE providers representing a wide range of faith groups and SRE teachers completing the working with children checks to ensure the safety of our students. We also support parents being able to access their rights to nominate an alternate religious persuasion and being able to withdraw their child from SRE if they choose to. The more support we give our youth and young people, the better equipped they will be to handle stress, particularly for children who are at greater risk of poor mental health. We contend that those in the educational field are best placed to recognise the early warning signs because of the relationships they have with school-aged children. At a time when suicide and mental health disorders are at their highest, why would we want to reduce the support systems to which our children have access, particularly when we know that seeking help reduces the rates of suicide and that early intervention works? Why would we not want students to learn and show the same example to others as Jesus showed us?

ABORTION LAW REFORM

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (18:07): On 11 May this year the Abortion Law Reform (Miscellaneous Acts Amendment) Bill 2016 was debated and defeated. The bill sought to repeal various sections of the Crimes Act and to abolish any rule of common law for an offence related to abortion. On 14 August the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a Sydney woman had been prosecuted for self-administering an abortifacient to cause a miscarriage. The article detailed that at about 19 weeks the woman's boyfriend informed her that he did not want her to continue with the pregnancy. She took no steps as a result of that request. At about 26 weeks into the pregnancy her boyfriend again urged her to terminate the pregnancy. She contacted a number of abortion clinics, all of which quite properly refused her on the basis that her pregnancy was past 20 weeks.

Let us be clear: This termination was not sought because of any serious problems affecting the wellbeing of the woman or the fetus. Then, when the fetus was at 28 weeks, the woman bought misoprostol and self-administered it on 2 September 2015. She was rushed to hospital, an emergency caesarean section was performed, and the child was born. It is an appalling and tragic state of affairs. On 5 July this year the case was dealt with summarily following a plea of not guilty at the Blacktown Local Court before Magistrate Geoffrey Hiatt. She was convicted and given a three-year good behaviour bond. I know how long it takes for matters to wind their way through the courts. I am concerned that this matter did not come to light during the briefings and debate on Dr Mehreen Faruqi's bill. Never did I imagine at that time that such a circumstance could arise.

I note that from my own research this is one of the only cases in which a woman, as opposed to a doctor or other procurer, has been prosecuted. At the time of the debate of the abortion bill, I said that I opposed the bill as it was deficient. Reform in this area must include an ongoing regulatory regime as merely removing abortion offences from the Crimes Act is inconsistent with community expectations. Women who access abortion services ought to be protected appropriately, as should doctors who provide abortion services. I am a firm believer in the need for safe abortion services, and proper support services and facilities for women. Dr Mehreen Faruqi's Abortion Law Reform Bill would not have achieved those objectives.

If Dr Mehreen Faruqi's bill had passed the law would have been silent on the situation presented in the *Sydney Morning Herald* article, with no regulatory regime in place to pre-emptively protect the woman and the medical profession, or the late-term foetus that was subject to this terrible ordeal. I understand that a foetus is

considered viable once the 20-week mark is reached. That is why any reform, when done properly, must establish a regime that balances the competing interests that arise, particularly after the 20-week mark. That is consistent with other jurisdictions in Australia that have reformed the law. I continue to believe that law reform is needed in this area. I believe that women are entitled to access reproductive health services and have the right to access abortion services, irrespective of location. Women in rural and regional areas are largely denied easy access to reproductive health services and that must be corrected. I continue to support appropriate reform, irrespective of who introduces those reforms.

SYDNEY SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ (18:11): Nearly three years on from the grand announcement of the Minister for Sports that the Coalition Government would invest in stadiums, the public, and sport in particular, are none the wiser as to what are the Berejiklian Government's precise plans. It is not just the mismanagement by the Minister for Sport that is particularly concerning, but also his obstinate refusal to consider the best options for sport and taxpayers as he pursues his pet project. While former Premier Mike Baird publicly had to put the Minister back in his box, it appears the current Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, has allowed him out again.

It would be pointless to revisit stadiums, given the Government appears to change its mind every week, and most people weep if the stadium strategy is mentioned. But on the indoor sports stadium the Minister has consistently held onto his crusade that he should build it in the central business district [CBD]. That sport needed a smaller more affordable arena in which to compete, particularly for netball and basketball, is undeniable. That it is needed in the CBD has always been highly questionable, and with Wentworth Park off the table—a little issue of greyhound racing still operating—sites for an indoor sports stadium in the CBD were growing thin. Certainly there was no clear site that could accommodate 12 tennis courts and a stadium.

The reality that the Minister for Sport has to accept is that sports requiring more indoor arena capacity are centred around Sydney Olympic Park. Our two professional women's netball teams have their home there, as do the Kings following its purchase by AEG Ogden. Likewise, the Sydney Apia International, which requires 12 courts, has its home at the NSW Tennis Centre at Sydney Olympic Park. None of these would be likely to move to the city. However, sports such as netball are being priced out by the cost of opening the Qudos Bank Arena at Sydney Olympic Park, particularly when forced to compete with music concerts, festivals and overseas events. Essentially, another indoor sport arena in the CBD would be an entertainment venue only, due to the cost of opening such venues. It would have plenty of concerts and maybe the occasional cage fight or boxing event.

That is why, for the past three years, the Labor Opposition has asked the Government to consider the more sensible solution to expand our indoor sports arenas; that is, cover the 10,000-seat NSW Tennis Centre arena at Sydney Olympic Park to deliver a venue that sports can really use and that would be just that—a sports venue. It fits the bill, it is affordable and it creates a venue for our women's and emerging sports—it ticks all the boxes. It would create an affordable venue for netball, which is a growing market and is desperate for more venues for future expansion. That is, of course, if the Government is really interested in women's sport. It also makes a sensible alternative venue for basketball events for both the Kings and Sydney Uni Flames, last year's grand finalists, and could also be used for mixed martial arts such as cage fighting and boxing.

A couple of weeks ago I was pleased when the term "CBD" started to slip from any comments made by the Minister for Sport. Instead, he began referring only to an indoor sports stadium at Sydney Olympic Park. Was the Minister going to do the sensible thing and cover the NSW Tennis Centre and fix its surrounds? Apparently not. Instead, the Minister has come up with a plan to purchase the lease of the Qudos Bank Arena at Sydney Olympic Park and build a second arena stadium adjoining the existing Qudos Bank Arena. Why do we know this? Because anyone who has seen the draft master plan of this proposal is up in arms at the extravagant expense and lack of foresight by the Minister for Sport. The cost of this project would come in at \$250 million rather than the \$70 million to \$90 million that it would cost to upgrade the NSW Tennis Centre.

Sports are not holding back in their criticism. Another arena that will, in all likelihood, end up a music venue, which sports such as netball and basketball cannot open due to cost and which does not solve the needs of Tennis NSW, is the last thing we need. But the fact that Stuart Ayres, the Minister for Sport, has come up with this plan is a good indication that former Premier Mike Baird's edict that Infrastructure NSW take over the planning of the stadium strategy has been thrown in the bin by the current Premier and that the Office of Sport and Stuart Ayres are back in charge—the same Minister for Sport who does not know if he spent \$300 million or \$360 million on the Parramatta Stadium. His reckless use of taxpayers' money would put a drunken sailor to shame. It is time for the Minister for Sport to come clean and release his draft business case for the indoor sports stadium rather than try to keep the public in the dark. After three years of talking about venues, the public is not in the mood for any more surprises.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (18:16): My adjournment speech will cover the malicious attacks on freedom of religion. Members may be aware of reports in the United States of America that President Trump has ordered the United States Department of Justice to file a brief in support of Jack Phillips, the owner of the Masterpiece Bakery. The case has become world-famous. It involved two homosexuals who attempted to coerce the bakery, which is owned by Jack Phillips, a Christian, into baking a cake commemorating their union. The bakery's owner felt that complying with the request to bake the cake would have involved him implicitly in supporting their activity, which is inconsistent with his honestly held religious beliefs.

Following an instruction from President Trump, the United States Department of Justice filed a brief in support of the baker, which has now been criticised by the so-called American Civil Liberties Union. I say "so-called" because many of these champions of civil liberties seem to have forgotten the civil liberties of those being harassed by the militant homosexual lobby. It should be noted that there were plenty of other bakeries that the two activists could have visited, but they deliberately decided to force their morality on this one small business, driving it into the ground. I understand it has now closed.

The Department of Justice's involvement in the case shows three important things: first, there are serious civil rights implications connected to the passing of same-sex marriage legislation; secondly, the lobby campaigning for the legislation is driven by a strong desire to force their views on all of society, whether people want it or not; and, thirdly, President Trump's administration is dedicated to opposing this erosion of civil liberties in the United States of America. I can only hope that we have the same kind of leadership in Australia, but I believe I will be waiting a long time to see that leadership from the current Prime Minister or the Leader of the Federal Opposition.

As the debate over so-called same sex marriage continues to rage on, we too have witnessed similar forms of totalitarian tactics from the Left. Coopers Brewery was boycotted for sponsoring an organisation, the Bible Society, that facilitated a debate on the issue. Google Maps has removed the name of Margaret Court—one of our most famous Australian female tennis players—for speaking out in favour of traditional marriage. Large corporations such as Qantas have been pushing the message of the Yes campaign onto staff and customers. We have seen the same thing happen with the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore, using the Sydney City Council to promote her views by flying the rainbow flag all over the Sydney streets. Other local councils have been using ratepayers' money to fund one side of the campaign. I do not believe either side should be funded by local councils.

Campaigners on the No side of the debate have had a very difficult time getting fair air play in the media. All opposition to same-sex marriage has been denounced automatically as bigoted and hateful. Fake reports of harassment also have been made. This week there was a report of an alleged car attack last Thursday outside a Catholic church. Investigations have shown that there was no such attack, but the media played it up on the news. At the same time, real examples of violence from Yes campaigners have been felt by ordinary Australians. I experienced that a few weeks ago when there was at an open-air rally in Civic Square in Canberra, where groups of protestors interfered with the program, knocked over the lectern and prevented the speakers from speaking to the audience, while about 12 Australian Capital Territory police stood by watching with their arms folded. These examples illustrate an atmosphere of fear perpetrated by those who claim to seek tolerance. Many on the opposing side are simply not interested in facts or honest, open debate. Last week I sent a copy of a press release dated 31 August talking about fake news to the media boxes. It came back vandalised. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Dr Mehreen Faruqi): The question is that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 18:22 until Wednesday 13 September 2017 at 11:00.