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Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 8 March 2018

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

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Motions

TRIBUTE TO ASMA JAHANGIR

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (10:01): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Pakistani lawyer and eminent human rights activist, Asma Jahangir, passed away in Lahore on Sunday 11 February 2018, at the age of 66;
 - (b) Asma Jahangir was a stalwart of human rights and was one of the founding members of Women's Action Forum Pakistan and the fiercely independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, she was never afraid to take on the most formidable opponents and speak truth to power in a way that truly exemplifies this phrase, with many human rights activists in Pakistan often describing her as their moral compass;
 - (c) Asma established the first ever all-women legal firm in Pakistan and was a world-renowned brave defender of women's rights from an early age; and
 - (d) Asma defended the human rights of oppressed people far and wide, from brick kiln workers in Pakistan to the Rohingya of Myanmar.
- (2) That this House recognises the powerful legacy of Asma Jahangir and acknowledges her struggle against all forms of suppression of women and minorities all over the world.

Motion agreed to.

WOMEN'S MARCH SYDNEY

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (10:02): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 21 January 2018, hundreds of people gathered in Sydney's Hyde Park to join the Women's March, marking the anniversary of last year's historic march;
 - (b) the Women's March in Sydney is part of a broader movement across Australia and the world, demanding respect and equal rights for women and all people, against the normalisation of far right bigotry and sexism; and
 - (c) the #metoo movement was a prominent theme in the Women's March and highlights the critical need to address sexual assault and harassment, which is one of the most urgent problems facing women.
- (2) That this House commends the organisers of, and participants in, the 2018 Women's March in Sydney.
- (3) That this House declares its continued commitment to progress women's rights, both legally and socially.
- (4) That this House stands in solidarity with all victims of sexual abuse and will commit to enhancing preventative measures in the fight against sexual violence.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN MARONITE PROFESSIONALS COUNCIL BOOK LAUNCH

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Tuesday 13 February 2018 the Australia Maronite Professionals Council hosted the book launch of *An Introduction to the Maronite Faith* by Dr Joseph Azize and *Aramaic Catholicism, Maronite History and Identity* by Peter J. El Khouri; and
 - (b) attendees at the event included;
 - (i) His Excellency, Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia;
 - (ii) the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP, Premier;
 - (iii) Mr Luke Foley, Opposition leader;

- (iv) the Hon. John Ajaka, MLC, President of the Legislative Council, who hosted the event;
 - (v) the Hon. Ray Williams, MP, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Disability Services;
 - (vi) Mr Jihad Dib, shadow education Minister, acting shadow Minister for Multiculturalism;
 - (vii) the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC;
 - (viii) Dr Geoff Lee, MP, member for Parramatta;
 - (ix) the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC;
 - (x) Mr Mark Coure, MP, member for Oatley;
 - (xi) Ms Julia Finn, member for Granville;
 - (xii) Mr Hugh McDermott, member for Prospect;
 - (xiii) Mr Edmond Atalla, member for Mount Druitt;
 - (xiv) the Hon. Greg Donnelly, MLC;
 - (xv) the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, MLC;
 - (xvi) the Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC;
 - (xvii) Monsignor Marcelino Youssef, Vicar General, Maronite Eparchy of Australia;
 - (xviii) Professor Carole Cusack, Department of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney; and
 - (xix) Emeritus Professor Garry Trompf, Department of Studies in Religion, University of Sydney.
- (2) That this House congratulates Dr Joseph Azize and Mr Peter El Khouri on the publication and launch of their books and acknowledges their hard work and diligence to the Maronite faith.
- (3) That this House acknowledges the important work of the Australian Maronite Professionals Council for uniting members of the Maronite Catholic Church, working towards a prosperous Australia, and particularly His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay for his tireless contribution.

Motion agreed to.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) Thursday 8 March is International Women's Day;
 - (b) this year's theme is "Press for Progress", acknowledging that gender parity is an estimated 217 years away, which is unacceptable;
 - (c) this year the United Nations also draws attention to the rights and activism of rural women, who make up more than a quarter of the world's population but fare worse than rural men or urban women on almost every measure of development, because of deep-seated gender inequalities and discrimination;
 - (d) this year International Women's Day comes on the heels of unprecedented global movements for women's rights, equality and justice, such as the #metoo and #timesup movements; and
 - (e) we must do everything possible to build on this momentum and close the gender gap at a much faster pace.
- (2) That this House declares its continued commitment to the progress of women's rights, both legally and socially.

Motion agreed to.

LIONS YOUTH OF THE YEAR QUESTS

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) Lions clubs on the North Coast recently held their local Lions Youth of the Year Quests; and
 - (b) the quests encourage, foster and develop leadership skills for young people.
- (2) That this House congratulates:
- (a) Ballina Lions Club entrants:
 - (i) Mary-Rose MacDonald, Richmond River High School;
 - (ii) Kate Goodman, Ballina Coast High School; and
 - (iii) Erica Truman, Emmanuel Anglican College.
 - (b) Alstonville Lions Club entrants:
 - (i) Emily Wiltshire, Emmanuel College;

- (ii) Aaran Hughes, Emmanuel College;
- (iii) Kate Utting, Emmanuel College; and
- (iv) Lillian Law, Alstonville High School.
- (c) Lennox Heads Lions Club entrants:
 - (i) Jasmin Maxwell, Alstonville High School;
 - (ii) Juliette McDonald, Emmanuel College;
 - (iii) Amber Bayley, Xavier Catholic College; and
 - (iv) Zachary Heard, Ballina Coast High School.
- (d) the local winners of the quests:
 - (i) Ballina—Finn Ball, Alstonville High School;
 - (ii) East Ballina—Eli McLean, Alstonville High School;
 - (iii) Alstonville—Chelsea McCosker, Woodlawn College; and
 - (iv) Lennox Head—Niva Ewald, Emmanuel College.
- (3) That this House wishes Finn, Eli, Chelsea and Niva the best of luck in the zone finals.
- (4) That this House thanks Ballina Lions Club, East Ballina Lions Club, Alstonville Lions Club and Lennox Head Lions Club for hosting this wonderful event to promote leadership skills for youth from the Ballina region.

Motion agreed to.

AMP ADVICE SUMMIT

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that AMP's annual Advice Summit was recently held in Sydney to recognise outstanding financial advisers and advice practices.
- (2) That this House congratulates Les McGuire from Future Proof Financial in Ballina on winning Financial Adviser of the Year for the third time.
- (3) That this House acknowledges that this award recognises Mr McGuire for demonstrating the highest standards of professionalism and operational excellence in client service, advice delivery and implementation.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

TABLING OF PAPERS

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I seek the leave of the House to table a photograph taken on 5 March 2018 of third-generation graziers Bill and Chrissie Ashby standing on the dry bed of the Darling River at Trevallyn Station, 75 kilometres north-east of Wilcannia.

Leave not granted.

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

TABLING OF PAPERS

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI: I seek the leave of the House to table a document containing six demands relating to transport in New South Wales, endorsed by various community groups.

Leave not granted.

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT

Extension of Reporting Date

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: I inform the House that on 7 March 2018 the Standing Committee on State Development resolved to extend the reporting date for its inquiry into regional development and a global Sydney to 7 June 2018.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 1922 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Adam Searle relating to the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2018.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 1872 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Paul Green relating to the Modern Slavery Bill 2018.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 1599 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Borsak relating to the Animal Protection and Crimes Legislation Amendment (Reporting Animal Cruelty and Protection of Animal Enterprises) Bill 2017.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 1674 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Scott Farlow relating to the Wellness Walk for Mental Health.
- (5) Private Members' Business item No. 1705 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Walt Secord relating to the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017.
- (6) Private Members' Business item No. 1267 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Mr Jeremy Buckingham relating to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Waste Incinerator Facilities—Residential Exclusion Zones) Bill 2017.

Motion agreed to.

Personal Explanation

CHILD PROTECTION

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (10:17): By leave: Yesterday in the other place Ms Tania Mihailuk, the member for Bankstown, noted in relation to a debate on vulnerable children that the former Premier Mike Baird had commissioned David Tune to undertake a report into out-of-home care. The member for Bankstown went on to state that I was in Cabinet at the time the Tune report was presented to the Government and that I had finally leaked that document. I wish to correct the record by refuting these baseless assertions by the member for Bankstown. I was not in Cabinet when the former Premier commissioned the Tune report in November 2015, nor when this report was apparently presented to Cabinet in 2016. I call on the member for Bankstown to retract immediately the false statements that she made in the other place.

Bills

WYONG SPECIAL AREA (PROTECTION) BILL 2018

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (10:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Wyong Special Area (Protection) Bill 2018, which keeps an election promise made by the New South Wales Labor Opposition and Mr David Harris, MP, during the 2015 State election campaign. In a twist of historical irony, it also keeps a promise made by the Liberal Party during the 2007 and 2011 election campaigns—a promise that to this day the Liberal Party has not honoured. I will speak more about that later. This is a bill for an Act to prohibit the granting, renewal or modification of exploration, prospecting and mining authorities and titles for minerals and petroleum, and certain planning approvals, that relate to land at Wyong that is the site of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project, and for other purposes.

The proposed Act defines the Wyong special area in clause 3 as the area defined to mean the land subject to certain exploration licences and an authorisation granted under the Mining Act 1992, namely EL6514, EL4911 and A405. Clause 4 prohibits the grant or renewal of any mining authorisation in relation to land in the Wyong special area and the making of any changes to the conditions to which such an authorisation is subject. Clause 5 prohibits the grant or renewal of any petroleum title defined in the Act and the making of any changes to the conditions to which such title is subject. Clause 6 provides that a planning approval is not to be given under the

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 in relation to development for the purposes of prospecting and mining activities on land in the Wyong special area and cancels any such planning approval already given.

The bill seeks to protect the Wyong water catchment area from destructive mining, thereby protecting the important water supply, which serves more than 300,000 people. Further, the bill is required to fulfil an allegedly ironclad election commitment made by the Liberal Party in 2007 and 2011, and of course by my party, the Labor Opposition, in 2015. The South Korean Government owned mining company Korea Resources Corporation [KORES], submitted, under the Wallarah 2 Coal Project, a new application to build a longwall coalmine beneath the Wyong water catchment valleys affecting the Dooralong and Yarramalong valleys. These valleys are the major drinking water resource for more than 350,000 people.

Wyong Shire Council, Gosford City Council and the Joint Water Authority engaged Professor Philip Pells to prepare the water section of their submission against the Wallarah 2 Coal Project. Professor Pells demonstrated, using the mining company's own data, that there would be a catastrophic loss of water in the catchment if the proposal proceeded. In 1999, when BHP Billiton owned the lease under its subsidiary Coal Operations Australia Limited, its well-credentialed and respected hydrology consultant, Mitchell McCotter, found in its report produced in 1999 that there were transient pathways in the geology that would enable surface water and aquifer water to travel to the mine workings if mining occurred. These facts were presented at the Chikarovski inquiry in 2008 and were ignored by the panel members. In March 2011, prior to the State election that year, the then Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, rejected the mine proposal. In a letter to the community group fighting against the mine, the Australian Coal Alliance, he said:

The project does not adequately address potential surface water quality impacts, resulting in uncertainty around the ability of the project to meet acceptable water quality outcomes.

The Minister, in rejecting the mine application, further stated:

The project is not considered consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, including the precautionary principle, and as a consequence is not considered to be in the public interest.

Leading up to this decision the Liberal Party in opposition championed the community's cause against the mining project, and the two particular proponents were Chris Hartcher and Barry O'Farrell. The Liberal Party committed itself in writing twice that if elected it would not allow the coalmine proposal in the water catchment valleys. Barry O'Farrell stood before a crowd of more than 300 people at a rally in January 2009 and said:

The next Liberal-National government will not allow mining to occur here, will not allow mining to occur in any water catchment. Mining leases and mining permits will reflect that common sense. No ifs, no buts, a guarantee.

Barry O'Farrell, in an email to community leader Alan Hayes the day after the rally, said:

I especially appreciate the opportunity to reiterate the Liberal Party's opposition to the coal mining proposal and our determination, in office, to prevent it going ahead.

Prior to the March 2011 election the Liberal Party said, again in writing, that it was now Liberal Party policy that there would be no coalmining in the Wyong water catchment valleys. Liberal Party members ran their election campaign on the Central Coast on the back of the anti-coalmine campaign, engaged the community's assistance through the Australian Coal Alliance, proudly wore their "Water Not Coal" T-shirts and waved the "Water Not Coal" placards throughout the four State seats of the Central Coast—which of course they won largely on the back of that campaign. Ironically, one of the casualties at that election was David Harris, the then member for Wyong and now again the member for Wyong. Despite ensuring that the Labor Government had rejected the application, he was tagged with the allegation that somehow he and Labor supported the mining proposal, which they did not. Therefore, the Liberal Party won those four seats on the promise to legislate to stop the mine. After the 2011 election Chris Hartcher said on ABC Radio:

No candidate would have been elected [on the Central Coast] had they not opposed the coalmine.

In a press release sent to Alan Hayes in April 2011 and published in the local community newspaper he also said:

Having attended a number of public meetings and having been fully briefed by the Australian Coal Alliance, in 2007, the Liberal Party (through its leader Barry O'Farrell) declared support for the community campaign against the coal mine and pledged to ban the coal mine (with legislation in the Parliament if necessary) if elected in 2011.

In the same press release Chris Hartcher further said:

On the 4th March, the last day at law that they could make a decision, the Labor Party caved in to community pressure and the ACA's campaign and promised what the Liberals had promised 4 years earlier. Well ... not exactly. The Liberals promised to introduce legislation to ban mining beneath the water catchment area around Wyong.

Barry O'Farrell confirmed to local residents at the Community Cabinet meeting held at Gosford in December 2012 that the mine would not proceed. Despite these supposedly repeated and ironclad promises in writing and in public, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government has repeatedly failed to deliver on those commitments and

has allowed the South Korean mining company KORES to pursue this project. The Liberal-Nationals Government has said that New South Wales could be subject to legal proceedings if it does not allow the planning process in connection with the project to proceed. That is not correct. Section 127 (1) of the Mining Act states:

The holder of an authority is not entitled to compensation merely because the authority is cancelled.

The term "authority" includes both exploration licences and mining leases. The current Government could and should have acted on this, but it has not and once again the community on the Central Coast is at risk. I will develop that theme. Professor Pells was again retained by local government and the Joint Water Authority to provide a report on their opposition to the Wallarah 2 Coal Project when a second environmental impact statement [EIS] was submitted. He proved, once again using the proponent's own data in its new environmental impact statement, that there would be an unacceptable loss of the Central Coast's major drinking water resource if the project proceeded.

Pages 9 to 17 of the EIS health assessment risks contain a full analysis of the possible increased deaths and sickness from the dust generated by the mine. The mine surface facility is adjacent to the largest urban growth area in the region and the mortality figures in the EIS are, as cited by the proponent, "conservative" and do not take into account the growing population of the area or the large volume of traffic travelling along the F3 expressway or the link road past it. Perhaps honourable members in this Chamber would like to turn their minds to this question: Which Central Coast families would want to sacrifice any of their loved ones or put at risk their water resources so that a South Korean mining company can extract coal to meet the needs of South Korea or to generate profits for the company? The risks embodied in this proposal are not acceptable. The Central Coast region already has the highest rate of avoidable respiratory-related deaths in the country. Dr Peter Lewis, Director of Public Health for the Central Coast and North Sydney, in a report prepared for the Wallarah 2 submission stated:

Increased particulate exposure (from the Wallarah 2 coal surface facilities) could cause deaths, require hospital admissions, and make children have more chest colds, night-time coughs and trips to the doctor.

He further stated that the mortality and morbidity figures would be seven-fold those estimated by the mine proponent. His report became public only after being uncovered by the Australian Coal Alliance, but it was still ignored by the State Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] for the previous Wallarah 2 submission. Wallarah 2 further admitted in appendix H of the EIS that 245 homes would be subsided by up to one metre, and in some cases up to two metres. It states:

The overall movement predicted for the houses within the study area are greater than those predicted to have occurred for the houses at Tahmoor, Teralba, West Cliff and West Wallsend Collieries. It is expected that impacts would be greater (for these houses in the Study area).

In addition, 755 rural structures and 420 rural dams will be subsided to varying degrees. Dooralong/Jilliby Road is predicted to fall 1.75 metres in places, and there will be subsidence in Dickson, Durren and Smith roads. Many farms are predicted to subside 1.6 metres or more. This would make it worse than any other mine in the country, as far as I am aware. In 2012, Sam Haddad, then Director-General of Planning, made it a requirement that the mining company individually consult with all subsidence-affected landholders during the preparation of the EIS. It is a matter of record that that was not done.

During the 10 years that the KORES has held the exploration lease, as far as I am aware it has never consulted directly with any of the 245 affected landholders. Professor Philip Pells, after spending many hours trying to work out the subsidence damage, concluded that the EIS, and in particular the Mine Subsidence Engineering Consultants Pty Limited [MSEC] subsidence impact prediction on houses, has been presented in such a way that it is impossible to determine the likely damage to any particular house. That means it is impossible for a particular landowner to work out what is predicted for his or her home. Professor Pells said in an email to Alan Hayes:

There is a list of 245 houses, numbered 1 to 245 but without location defined, and there are plans showing each house, but without being numbered. So one cannot relate the list and the damage details in that list to the houses on the maps.

I thought I could work out the numbering system by carefully studying the subsidence prediction contours in relation to the house positions. My conclusion from this is that the numbering of the houses has been made "chaotic" so that it is impossible to know in what damage category a particular house will fall.

It is as if the mining company is trying to cover its tracks and make unknowable the damage it will wreak upon the community. In a further email to Alan Hayes, Professor Pells said:

So the focus of the report at this stage of the approval process was to provide an indication of overall spread of subsidence predictions and potential impacts for houses rather than predictions and assessments at an individual level.

If landowners independently looked up our report to find what the predictions are based on the mine plan right now, they would be forgiven for thinking that these were the numbers that will apply to their house if the mine was approved.

They may not realise that mine plans can change in the future. This might create extra angst in the future if the predictions from the final layout were higher than those shown at the moment because the longwalls have shifted or changed orientation or something.

Again, the information presented in the EIS is presented in such a way that the community is not able to ascertain what is predicted for their home. That is shocking and scandalous. Even more shocking and scandalous is the inaction of the Government around this issue. Even if it had not made commitments—which it has—how can it not keep faith with the community of the Central Coast? It is beyond understanding. In stage one of the proposed mine 150 brick homes in the modern rural Hue Hue subdivision sit directly above Awaba Tuff material, which is described as unstable and unpredictable and casts doubt on the validity of the mine's subsidence figures. Awaba Tuff is described in all mining manuals as being particularly difficult material to stabilise. This puts the Wallarah 2 proposal into the realms of a dangerous experiment and risking the fabric of many family homes. From 2002 until 2012, the Mine Subsidence Board has accepted only 45 per cent of subsidence claims, many of which still remain unpaid as people have to slug it out in the Mining Warden's Court.

In 2014, the PAC accepted that the economic analysis in the EIS was "grossly flawed" and that there will be little economic value flowing to the Government and the Central Coast region. It was further found that the royalties and other miscellaneous income streams back to the Government from the mine would be far less than the subsidised benefits the miners would receive from the Government, leaving New South Wales shelling out more than it would receive from the project. The damage to public infrastructure, in particular from the 39 high-voltage electricity transmission towers and rail upgrades, has never being fully assessed or addressed to determine who will cover the cost. A conservative estimate has it running into many millions of dollars. This project is both economically and socially irrational.

Approval of the Wallarah 2 Coal Project was dependent upon consent from the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council to allow the mining company to build a rail spur through their land. This consent was refused and the matter was taken to the Land and Environment Court, which ruled that the development application was defective and could not be approved without the land council's consent. The Government has accepted the court's decision. Forced mediation between the land council and the mining company has also failed, with access consent still being withheld.

Operation Spicer—well known to all of us in this place and which saw the demise of the careers of a number of Liberal Party members of Parliament—revealed secret meetings between the mining company and senior Ministers of the O'Farrell Government. Those meetings included a trip to South Korea to the mining company's head office and dinner parties attended by senior Ministers and executives of the mining company held at one of the executive's home. I ask rhetorically: Is there a causal nexus between this association and the inaction of the Government? The community and local government have soundly rejected this project since its inception because the risks are so great to the water supply of the Central Coast region. Some members of this House live in that region. It is dangerous to the health outcomes of residents.

The Dooralong and Yarramalong water catchment is the major water resource for more than 350,000 people and the growing housing development in the northern area of Wyong Shire, which sits beside the proposed coalmine loading and transport facility. It should be noted that in September 1950 the New South Wales *Government Gazette No. 153* proclaimed the Wyong Water Supply Catchment District to be preserved in connection with the Wyong water supply under the control of the Council of the Shire of Wyong. It is of direct interest to them as end users and as local regulators. Another issue of great concern affecting Central Coast communities is the legacy issues.

In June 2016, the *Korean Times* reported that the project's parent company, the South Korean government-owned Korea Resources Corporation, is to quit its overseas development operations. The company's debt ratio stands at a staggering 6,905 per cent. According to the Korean Board of Audit and Inspection, a total of 35.8 trillion Korean won was invested in overseas resource development, with little gain so far and leading KORES to slash 118 international jobs. The announcement that the company is withdrawing is and should be of great concern to the people of the Central Coast and to others opposing this mine. The problem is that the remedial and rehabilitation work that the mine company undertook to do in its original application could well be unrealised because the proponent, Wyong Coal Pty Limited, has paid-up capital of only \$400. The total liability of this company is limited to the total amount of its paid-up capital. It could simply walk away and leave the Central Coast community and the State Government bearing the burden of the cost.

Given the reported financial woes of the parent company and its move to withdraw from overseas resource developments, it is highly unlikely that the current proponent would want to develop the mine and would wish merely to on-sell an approved licence. That raises the question of who will pick up the tab. Any sound purchaser would not want to foot the bill for liabilities of the past. In addressing the requirements for the amended development application, the proponent must take into account other community interests. In its proposal the

proponent mentions nothing about the development that is currently being examined for Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Council land where, through a building proposal, it intends, initially, to subdivide 500 building lots on land directly adjacent to the mine project boundary.

The Australian Coal Alliance received legal advice that the department is bound to take into account the proposed development of this land, given that it has progressed to a stage where the department has determined that the planning proposal should proceed and has directed Central Coast Council to make the local environmental plan. That legal advice further states that the requirement to consider the planning proposal falls within section 79C (1) (e) of the Environmental, Planning and Assessment Act 1979, which requires the department to consider the public interest when assessing applications. Likewise, the department is required to consider the planning proposal under section 79C (1) (b), which requires the department to consider the social and economic impacts in the locality of the development.

In both cases, it is necessary to show that the impact of the coal project on the development proposed under the planning proposal is relevant and that the department is bound to take that into account because of its relevance—although it has so far failed to do so. There are 500 houses on the boundary of the coal loader that have not been taken into account. Moreover, the new proposed coal loader, which is nine-storeys high, is approximately 300 metres from the suburb of Blue Haven in the Wyong State electorate. The people who live in those areas knew nothing about this proposal. The impact on them will be significant, not only in relation to dust but also in relation to noise. The mining company has failed to address those issues.

The Government members in this House now have a further opportunity to support Labor's private member's bill—which has twice been passed in the Legislative Assembly—and to fulfil the promise that was made to the community in both 2007 and, importantly, 2011, which is the year this Government took office. Now is the chance to support the legislation that would block this mine once and for all. There is no case now for approving a mine under water catchments when the area is experiencing massive urban population growth. As we all know, across this State there is significant pressure on scarce land for the provision of homes for an increasing population and a need to address the issue of affordable housing. Coalmines that potentially, and in this case probably, will affect water supplies are not consistent with meeting those needs. Imagine a whole community whose water is put at risk. It is and should be unthinkable.

This bill is an opportunity for every member of the House not only to protect the water supply of the Central Coast but also to put the interests of the community first—instead of putting first the interests of overseas big business and big money, which may withdraw from the project and leave the Central Coast community and the State of New South Wales with a liability that will never be met. As I reach the conclusion of my second reading speech, I pay tribute to the hard work of Mr David Harris, MP. He has fought hard since 2006 to have this project stopped. He paid the price when he lost his seat in 2011 on the back of, frankly, a dishonest campaign by his opponents. Rather than give up, he returned to the fight. He won back the Wyong electorate and has since continued to represent his community on this and many other struggles. I recognise his hard work and the work of all those who over the years have sought to protect valuable water from this inappropriate mining proposal. I include Alan Hayes and all those involved in the Australian Coal Alliance in this connection. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the President's Gallery Archbishop Glen Davies. I also welcome the family of the Hon. Paul Green, his wife, Mrs Michelle Green, and son Ben Green, and his friends Charles and Kaylee. I acknowledge in the President's Gallery Mrs Silvana Nile, the spouse of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I also welcome people in the public gallery who have assisted and contributed to the Modern Slavery Bill 2018.

Bills

MODERN SLAVERY BILL 2018

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. PAUL GREEN (10:45): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Before I start, I acknowledge Our Lord Jesus Christ and how good he has been to me. I acknowledge also my wife, Michelle, and my son Ben, who are here today. I acknowledge my mentor and colleague Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and, finally, all members of the Christian Democratic Party and the people across New South Wales who have made it possible for me to be here today to introduce this very important bill.

I am honoured and humbled today to introduce the Modern Slavery Bill 2018. The bill addresses the findings and recommendations in the report on the inquiry into human trafficking in New South Wales, which was completed last year. The bill has been developed by the New South Wales Parliamentary Working Group on Modern Slavery, a cross-party group of members who came together to develop the bill and to deal with this scourge against innocent people in New South Wales and beyond. The members of the working group included Liberal Party member the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, The Nationals member the Hon. Trevor Khan, and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party member the Hon. Robert Brown, and we were given much encouragement by our colleagues and members across parties.

Slavery and human trafficking has been around since the beginning of time. Many good men and women have spent their lives committed to the abolition of slavery. They include Louis X, St Patrick, William Wilberforce and Abraham Lincoln, just to name a few. In that spirit, first and foremost, I welcome those in the gallery who have come here to support this bill. There are too many to mention individually but they are phenomenal in everything they do for this cause. I thank those who made submissions to the inquiry and those who gave evidence at the hearings. In April 2017, I undertook a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study tour to the United States of America and Canada to investigate how governments, churches, non-government organisations and other groups address and tackle human trafficking and homelessness.

I wanted to contribute to policy debate with the knowledge of the legislative frameworks, initiatives, programs, support services, policies and opportunities for collaboration on a global scale from these organisations. I extend my sincerest thanks to the people and organisations in the United States of America and Canada with whom I met, including Sergeant Gentle Winter from the Los Angeles Police Department; the New York Police Department; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Human Trafficking Unit in Washington; Homeland Security in Washington; the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department; the Canadian Royal Mounted Police in Ottawa, the International Justice Mission in Washington; and A21 Los Angeles. I thank the many other people I met with on my study tour who gave up their valuable time to share evidence, research, and experience.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It is a transnational crime that preys on society's most vulnerable. Human trafficking includes slavery and slavery-like practices such as servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, organ trafficking, deceptive recruiting, and child cybersex trafficking, as well as forced marriage and childhood brides. Unfortunately, the data does not reflect the true levels of modern slavery due to its very nature of being a clandestine activity that hides in the shadow of our communities on a daily basis. However, according to the Global Slavery Index 2016, it is estimated that 45.8 million people worldwide, and more than 4,000 people in Australia, are victims of some form of slavery. Drugs are sold once and used, but people can be sold time and time again. Members may have seen the recent *Four Corners* episode called "Behind Closed Doors" by Louise Mulligan. If they have not, I encourage them to watch it.

The story tells of three people—from Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines—who were employed to work for embassies in Canberra. They were subjected to extreme working conditions such as low or no pay, excessively long hours and no recreation days. Their living conditions were unacceptable; they were not allowed to practise their faith; threats were made to their life and their families' lives; and their passports were removed. Those are basic human rights that every man, woman and child is entitled to. The Salvation Army found at least 20 cases of that type of modern slavery in embassies in Canberra. It is modern slavery, sadly, alive and well in our own backyard, our nation's capital. I have heard stories of women being promised work as cleaners only to be forced into sexual exploitation. They were forced to work long hours with no pay and their basic freedoms and rights were removed from them in order to pay off their pimp or trafficker.

Some may ask: Why do we need a Modern Slavery Bill in New South Wales? Just over a week ago, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that girls as young as 12 were being kept as sex slaves and used as prostitutes in Sydney's west. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that vulnerable girls were pimped out to older men in seedy motels after being recruited through Facebook. In the course of a three-year investigation, News Corp has learnt that an Australian man bought a kidney off a 26-year-old Pakistani woman as part of a transplant costing \$116,000. The investigation found that unregulated organ trafficking is leading to prisoners being shot on demand to supply human organs. In July last year, a Unions NSW audit of job advertisements for foreign workers in Australia found almost 80 per cent of advertised positions were offered below the minimum wage. Union secretary Mr Mark Morey said that foreign workers were often scared to speak out about being paid too little, telling SBS News:

Some people are just fearful of coming forward to complain about employers for the ramifications that may occur from that, such as having their visa cancelled.

ABC News reported that in New South Wales alone the Fair Work Ombudsman has recovered more than \$20 million for 9,000 exploited workers over the past three years. Again, there is a common misconception among foreign workers that making a complaint to the Ombudsman, or even asking for help, could lead to their visas being revoked and the loss of their jobs. There is a genuine fear out there that this will happen. When I chaired the inquiry into human trafficking in New South Wales, former NSW Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione gave the committee horrific evidence relating to the growth of child cybersex trafficking. Mr Scipione said:

Cyber-sex trafficking paints a very worrying scenario for the future [because] you don't necessarily need to move people across borders if you can move the images ... in real-time.

Child sex trafficking is a much bigger problem than most people realise. Catherine Sheehan recently reported in the *Catholic Weekly* that she met with a former New South Wales detective who stated:

It's a billion-dollar industry. The profits are enormous. It's a commodity that can be used over and over again with little to no punishment.

Bodies are not commodities. Law enforcement should be granted the powers needed to locate perpetrators who are hiding their identity on the internet and committing these crimes. Yesterday the *Australian* published a story regarding the surge in paedophile live streaming. I warn that the content is not appropriate for any children who may be watching this debate on the Parliament's website. Amanda Hodge reported:

Pedophiles are paying as little as \$40 to watch a child abused and tortured live online ... Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Debbie Platz says ... the volume of Australians who are uploading, sharing and downloading child pornography is actually skyrocketing ...

The Assistant Commissioner went on to say:

In some instances, it costs \$40 to watch a child in a Southeast Asian country be raped online. But that \$40 can feed a family in Indonesia or the Philippines for maybe a month, so for them it is a lucrative market where they can basically sell children as a commodity ...

The Assistant Commissioner explained the distressing arrangement as follows:

Australians can get online and order a child, and order what they would like happen to that child, and that could mean anything from undressing of a child and seeing them naked, right through to torture, rape and in the most extreme cases ... the murder of a child.

It is deeply disturbing and heartbreaking. It shakes one to the core to contemplate that happening to any child. It is even more excruciating to imagine that sometimes long after the abuse has ceased the images and videos continue to be distributed on the dark web like a double-edged sword causing additional pain and suffering for the victim. The depravity of mankind knows no bounds. According to the United Nations 2016 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 79 per cent of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation and the victims are predominantly women and girls. Children account for 20 per cent of trafficked victims worldwide. That is approximately 9.16 million children, or the equivalent of 16,838 A380 plane loads of children. I have heard of the increase in young girls forced into illegal marriage, exposing them to long-term abuse and rape with the consent of their families. It is important to note under-age forced marriage is not limited to any particular culture, religion or ethnicity. Regardless of religious or cultural background, it is unacceptable and reprehensible to expose children to a forced marriage whether it happens in Australia or through taking the child overseas.

I am sure members recall a story last year when a man allegedly abducted, raped and forced a teenage girl to marry him against her will in an Islamic ceremony. Police allege the girl was sexually assaulted before being taken to a private home in Lakemba in Sydney's west where an imam is then claimed to have married the couple under sharia law. This is only the tip of the iceberg. I could be here all day telling horrific stories of modern slavery and slavery-like practices in New South Wales alone. They are not isolated events. Between 2004 and 2007 the Australian Federal Police looked into more than 900 allegations of human trafficking and slavery. We cannot continue to ignore modern slavery in New South Wales or Australia or, for that matter, across the world. I, along with many stakeholders in the gallery, are here today to be a voice for the voiceless.

I will now address the provisions of the Modern Slavery Bill 2018. First and foremost, the Modern Slavery Bill contains provisions in respect of slavery, slavery-like practices and human trafficking and provides for the appointment and functions of an anti-slavery commissioner as well as some other purposes. The bill comprises five parts. Part 1 deals with preliminary matters. Part 2 covers the appointment of an independent anti-slavery commissioner and the staff and facilities necessary to enable the commissioner to exercise his or her functions. I will address the pertinent elements of that later in my contribution. Part 3 governs modern slavery supply chains and the requirements of certain organisations in reporting identified risks of modern slavery. Part 4 deals with modern slavery risk orders. Part 5 deals with miscellaneous components of the bill and the introduction of new crimes specific to New South Wales, namely, child forced marriage and cybersex trafficking.

Part 2 of the bill provides for the appointment of an anti-slavery commissioner. The commissioner's role will be to prepare a strategic plan to combat human trafficking and slavery-like practices in New South Wales. The commissioner will be responsible for educating and informing New South Wales residents, young people and children about the warning signs of modern slavery. The commissioner will assist and work cooperatively on suspected cases of modern slavery. The role does not include investigating or dealing directly with individual cases. Finally, part 2 outlines the delegation of the commissioner's powers and the responsibility for preparing and publishing an annual report to the Houses of Parliament. By comparison, the commissioner in the United Kingdom has a United Kingdom-wide remit to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences.

In order to achieve his aims, the commissioner works directly with statutory agencies and they have a duty to cooperate with the commissioner as set out in the Modern Slavery Act. Part 3 of bill makes provisions in regard to slavery-proofing supply chains. Let us make no mistake, we have all unintentionally benefited from modern slavery in supply chains—for example, the clothing we wear, the technology we use and the food we eat. Consumers need to be educated to actively look at what they are wearing, eating and using to ensure that supply chains are slave-proof. Luke 12:48 says:

To whom much is given, from him much is expected.

I acknowledge the work of Mr Andrew "Twiggy" Forrest, Chairman of Fortescue Metals Group and the Walk Free Foundation, and Archbishop Anthony Fisher, OP, assisted by John McCarthy, QC, and Katherine Moloney. They are leading the way in what should be expected of corporates and faith groups in slavery-proofing supply chains. Clause 22 of the bill requires commercial organisations and organisations with a turnover threshold of \$50 million operating in New South Wales to publish an annual modern slavery statement. The statement is to contain such information as to the steps taken by the organisation during the financial year to ensure that goods and services are not a product of supply chains in which modern slavery is taking place. There is a maximum penalty of up to 10,000 penalty units or \$1.1 million for failing to do so. We need to be mindful that some companies have global reporting requirements at different times of the year, but it is important that they do report during the reporting period.

Clause 23 requires the commissioner to keep a publicly available electronic register that identifies organisations in which goods and services are, or may be, products of supply chains where modern slavery is taking place. The public register will identify any government agency failing to comply with directions of the NSW Procurement Board under section 175 of the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 concerning procurement, within the meaning of part 11 of that Act, of goods and services that are the product of modern slavery and whether the government agency has taken steps to ensure compliance in the future. The New South Wales Government will report annually with the commissioner and will play a key leadership role in relation to procurement and slavery-proofing supply lines.

Clause 24 of the bill enables the commissioner to develop and to make publicly available codes of practice that can be used to remediate or to monitor identified risks of modern slavery. Clause 25 enables the commissioner to promote public awareness of, and give advice on, steps to be taken to remediate or to monitor risks of modern slavery in supply chains. A person must not provide information in his or her statement that the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, is false or misleading. The maximum penalty for false or misleading information will be up to 10,000 penalty units or \$1.1 million. The proposed reporting requirements will be used as a means to combat the human trafficking, forced labour and slavery-like practices which exist in business supply chains.

Part 4 of the bill explains court orders, particularly modern slavery risk orders. Clause 26 enables a court that convicts a person of certain modern slavery offences to make orders prohibiting the person from engaging in conduct described in the order if it is satisfied as to certain matters. A person who is the subject of a modern slavery risk order is guilty of an offence if the person contravenes the order without reasonable excuse. The maximum penalty for such an offence is 500 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or both. A person convicted of a modern slavery offence may also be subject to orders under the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1989 or the Crimes Assets Recovery Act 1990. The Director of Public Prosecutions or another appropriate officer may seek the making of a pecuniary penalty under the Confiscation of Proceeds of Crime Act 1990 against the person in respect of benefits derived by the person from the commission of the offence. This is an important part of the bill in recognising that money laundering does occur in human trafficking and the proceeds should be returned to look after the victims.

Part 5 deals with miscellaneous components of the bill. Importantly, Schedule 4 addresses the amendment of the Crimes Act 1900 No 40 regarding cyber-sex trafficking and child forced marriage. The introduction of new crimes specific to New South Wales in section 91G, and in proposed sections 91HAA to 91HAC, address cyber-sex trafficking and include crimes relating to: children not to be used for production of child abuse material;

administering a digital platform used to deal with child abuse material; encouraging use of a digital platform to deal with child abuse material; and providing information about avoiding detection. Section 93 deals with crimes relating to slavery, servitude and child forced labour, and child forced marriage.

I note that we have already received feedback from various stakeholders, including the Sydney Archdiocesan Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Fighting for Justice Foundation and St James Hall Chambers. We will also look into a dedicated non-government hotline to encourage victims and to aid them in reporting. We also note there is room for further debate for enhancing human rights due diligence in public procurement. The working group will continue to seek stakeholder feedback in the coming weeks throughout New South Wales. I extend my sincere thanks to the NSW Parliamentary Counsel's Office for its invaluable assistance in preparing the draft bill, particularly Ms Marion Pascoe, Consultant Deputy Parliamentary Counsel. They patiently worked with us—even through the Christmas period, an amazing commitment—and they have done a phenomenal task in very limited time.

I thank also my colleague the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, MLC, and his senior advisor Andrew O'Sullivan, for their instrumental assistance in preparing the draft bill. I could not have presented this bill without them. I am very grateful for their encouragement and assistance. I extend my sincerest gratitude to my advisors. Marie Mirza has done a plethora of work and has been faithful to my office since I commenced here in 2011. I thank Danielle Dieckmann. With all that Danielle has been going through, being part of this is why we do what we do, even when life can be tough outside Parliament. I also acknowledge Dr Alex Burton, Yvette Ellias, Michelle Ryan, Luke Cubis, Emily Van Esch, Hannah Green, Dom Cutrupi and Bec Gallagher who have all played a part in my office over the past seven years.

I thank the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, and the Opposition Leader, Mr Luke Foley, for their provisional support for this bill. We look forward to working together on this important bill to ensure that it passes through both Houses prior to the July winter break. I acknowledge the work of the Parliament of Australia, particularly the members on the Federal inquiry into human trafficking and the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, for the report entitled, "Hidden in plain sight". We are encouraged that the Federal Government has put into place visa stabilisation for up to 200 days whilst cases are being investigated and victims are seeking legal pathways to find justice. In conclusion, Proverbs 31:8 says:

Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.

Today I am doing just that—on International Women's Day. I thank those who have invested so much in defending those who are captive in slavery and slavery-like practices. Like them, I am committed to being a voice for the voiceless. Let today be a milestone in eradicating modern slavery here in New South Wales. Let us deal with our own house first and then look to others to help them. Let today be a stepping stone to stamping out modern slavery, not only in Australia but also worldwide. Finally, I leave the members of this Chamber with the wise words of William Wilberforce, who said:

You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ANIMAL PROTECTION AND CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REPORTING ANIMAL CRUELTY AND PROTECTION OF ANIMAL ENTERPRISES) BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill introduced, and read a second time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Robert Borsak.

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (11:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Animal Protection and Crimes Legislation Amendment (Reporting Animal Cruelty and Protection of Animal Enterprises) Bill 2018. I believe such a bill is long overdue. The community has no tolerance for malicious cruelty directed at animals. Equally, the community has no tolerance towards acts of threats, vandalism, harassment and intimidation of others. The object of the bill is to minimise unnecessary delays in reporting malicious cruelty to animals. When there is a delay in the reporting of such events, there are serious implications for the animals involved, as well as the risk of significant threats to animal enterprise industries.

The bill's first priority is to ensure that animals are protected against further unnecessary cruelty caused by a delay in reporting. It does this by amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to require a person or persons who are aware of and record serious acts of cruelty to animals to report the act within one business day to police or other relevant officers under that Act, including an RSPCA inspector, and provide any recording of cruelty to animals within five business days. The bill would also prevent illegal interference in the lawful operation of animal enterprises by amending the Crimes Act 1900 to create an offence for destroying or damaging property used in connection with lawful animal enterprises or with the intention of interfering with the carrying on of the enterprise, as well as engaging in conduct involving threats, vandalism, damage to property, trespass, harassment or intimidation against or in relation to persons who are carrying on or connected with a lawful animal enterprise.

The bill provides for the following: Schedule 1 amends the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, requiring a person to report serious animal cruelty after recording it. If a person knowingly records an act involving an animal being injured or killed, and the person knows or ought to reasonably have known that the act was committed with the intention of inflicting unnecessary pain on the animal, then there can be no justification for that person not to report the act to an officer within one business day after recording the act, and to provide the recording or a copy of the recording to an officer within five business days. Failure to do so would attract a penalty, and as far as I am concerned, they are then equally complicit in the act of animal cruelty after this period. If their true intention is to protect against animal cruelty, there can be no delay in alerting the appropriate authorities.

Schedule 2 amends the Crimes Act 1900, which criminalises destruction and damage to a lawful animal enterprise. This would ensure lawful animal enterprises, and particularly farmers, are protected from intentional acts of interference including threats, vandalism, damage to property, trespass, harassment or intimidation against the people working in this industry. The bill confirms commonly accepted definitions of animal enterprise, economic damage, serious bodily injury and substantial bodily injury in the context of protection of these animal enterprises. We protect ourselves against such threats and harassment in the halls of Parliament, so the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party believes that it is only fair and just that a lawful animal enterprise—an industry which feeds us and injects thousands of millions into our New South Wales economy—is equally protected.

This bill should be supported by those who campaign for animal welfare and who seek to expose gross animal cruelty. If their true intention is to uncover said cruelty and wrongdoing, they should have no problem with reporting and handing the evidence over in such circumstances. The bill is not designed to limit the lawful conduct of any person engaged in peaceful picketing, or who is acting in good faith in an industrial matter. We do not deny nor are ignorant of the existence of animal cruelty and misconduct. However, where such conduct has been exposed or identified, it should be reported and handed over to the authorities immediately, rather than collated illegally by quasi animal rights extremist groups and their subcontractors, and then flogged off to the media or the highest bidder in an effort to damage beyond repair such businesses—and indeed, in the case of the greyhounds, a whole industry. Lawful animal enterprises and farmers deserve the security and backing of government, knowing they can carry on with what they do best—putting food on our plates and clothes on our back.

Sadly, the law in this State has been found to be lagging when it comes to affording lawful animal enterprises and farmers the security and peace of mind to conduct their businesses free of unwarranted trespass and attacks. I suspect that many of these attacks are not driven by a conviction to protect animals, but rather for the sole purpose of sending these businesses broke and breaking all connection of humans with animals. Equally, the law has been soft on prosecuting those who intentionally threaten, abuse or trespass onto lawful animal enterprises. The people who do this are criminals and thugs, and should be treated as such.

Whether it is an animal enterprise or a farmer, they do not have the time or resources to defend their industry and educate decision-makers on the realities of animal production, for the simple reason that they are busy working and carrying on with their lawful business. Meanwhile, the animal rights extremist groups and other professional protesters, who have all the time in the world, continue to campaign and seek to destroy industries they deem inappropriate. They are well funded and organised from the inner-city enclaves of Sydney and Melbourne, a long way from these animal enterprises and farmers in regional Australia. It speaks volumes about the disconnection between city and country, consumer and farmer, worker and non-worker.

Farmers have lost the appreciation and respect that they deserve. The need for such protection has never been more relevant or necessary. Animal industries are being bullied and attacked almost on a daily basis. The law-abiding greyhound racing industry was subject to this on an unprecedented scale—regrettably aided by the Baird Government, which nearly shut down the whole industry in New South Wales and have yet to prove that they do truly support a growing, vibrant, profitable and ethical industry. In the same regard, those trainers and breeders who were doing the wrong thing could have been prosecuted sooner.

The practice of sheep mulesing, piggeries, and caged-hen egg farming are just some of the lawful practices that are being unjustly targeted and attacked by animal rights groups. I believe that we are in lock step with the Christian Democratic Party and The Nationals on this issue, and I implore The Nationals to lobby their

Liberal colleagues to have this important bill passed as soon as possible. I invite any member to argue why lawful animal enterprises should not be afforded these protections against threats and harassment, and why individuals who uncover wrongdoing should not report it as soon as possible to police or the RSPCA. That is exactly what this bill is trying to achieve.

I thank the Parliamentary counsel for their work. They do a fantastic job that makes our work that much easier. I believe we are on the same side with the Government on this issue. Animal cruelty is unacceptable. Every legal animal enterprise industry across the State needs certainty. The horse racing industry needs certainty; piggeries need certainty; poultry farms need certainty; feedlots need certainty—the list is very, very long and I will not read them all out. This Government cannot allow another greyhound fiasco. I thank members of The Nationals and the Liberal Party for their input into this matter—I will not name them, but they know who they are. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

WELLNESS WALK FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Debate resumed from 19 October 2017.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (11:21): It was my great pleasure last year to begin my contribution to this motion regarding the Wellness Walk for Mental Health. As a registered nurse for more than 20 years I know that we are constantly aware of and are faced with the issues of mental health. I was very proud to mention previously that we have started a pilot of a school nurse in Young. We have recently recruited to that position a very high-calibre nurse to work within the wellbeing hub at Young High School and in both of the Young primary schools. I am very proud to stand here today as part of that program. The school principals are looking for solutions to problems; we cannot keep doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome.

I am very excited to see the start of that trial of a school nurse and I am very hopeful that we can make more announcements of further exciting things in that space because we know the enormous contribution that school nurses make to the wellbeing of children in our schools. I mentioned last time that the Hon. Scott Farlow does an enormous amount of work in this place in relation to mental health. As I said, he does not just talk the talk, he walks the walk, and he does that with his family, raising awareness of mental health. I love seeing his social media posts of him doing that around the State. We have an issue with mental health within our society and yesterday we spoke a lot about it during debate on the Saint John's College Bill 2017. Mental health is a really big issue for our community. We have to look at how we are doing things. We have to try different things and we have to be brave, honest and transparent in saying that this is an issue and there is so much more that we can do. I commend the motion.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (11:24): I speak in support of this very important motion and I commend my colleague the Hon. Scott Farlow for bringing forward this motion and for his work as chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health. As the previous speaker on this motion just said, he has done a lot of work not only here in the Parliament to raise awareness but also to engage with community leaders and health professionals to ensure that members in this Chamber and members across New South Wales are aware of this very important issue. Bringing forward this motion to the House reinforces not only Mental Health Awareness Month and the work that is being done and the significant work that has been done in this space, but also the need for more work to be done.

As a society we are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of an individual's psychological and emotional wellbeing, otherwise known as their mental health. Mental Health is a term that is frequently misunderstood. Mental health is about wellness, not illness. Picture an individual's mental wellbeing on a spectrum with mental health on the one end and mental health conditions on the other. Someone who has good mental health can be characterised as feeling positive and functioning well, while those who have mental health conditions exhibit symptoms that affect their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, such as depression or anxiety. Research has shown that healthy levels of mental health correlate with increased learning, creativity and productivity, more pro-social behaviour, positive social relationships, and with improved physical health and life expectancy.

Conversely, mental health conditions can cause distress, can impact on day-to-day functioning and relationships, are associated with poor physical health and can even lead to premature death from suicide. To raise awareness of mental wellbeing and mental health, every October we recognise and celebrate Mental Health Month in New South Wales. The Mental Health Month campaign coincides with the World Health Organization's recognition of World Mental Health Day on 10 October and aims to promote the importance of early intervention practices for positive mental health and wellbeing, while also helping to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

Another highly commendable initiative is the annual Wellness Walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Not only does walking have health benefits, such as decreasing stress and anxiety, but also the significance of walking across the Sydney Harbour Bridge is symbolic of bridging the stigma associated with mental health. Importantly, by gathering together, the event fosters greater understanding of mental wellbeing, demonstrates community support, and reinforces important social connections. In 2017 the Wellness Walk was held on Sunday 15 October and the theme of the walk was "Share the Journey". "Share the Journey" emphasised the importance of social connections. Research has shown that connecting with people is important for our health, but in today's fast-paced world that is often easier said than done.

Feeling connected, valued and loved helps people feel security, support, purpose and an overall sense of happiness. Sadly, a Lifeline loneliness survey of 3,100 people conducted in 2016 found that 82.5 per cent of respondents believed that society was becoming lonelier. Sixty per cent of respondents said that they often felt lonely and 33.65 per cent said that they did not have someone to confide in when they felt lonely. Those are concerning statistics. Humans are social beings, and a sense of loneliness can often be the precursor to mental health problems. To redress this seemingly growing social isolation, each year R U OK? Day seeks to promote conversations, connectedness, and interpersonal relationships by encouraging people to ask each other the simple question, "Are you ok?" Each year we have here in Parliament House an R U OK? morning tea, which is a wonderful opportunity to connect with our fellow members of Parliament.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Dr Mehreen Faruqi): Order! Members will take their conversations outside the Chamber. The noise is distracting. I cannot hear the member with the call.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: It is also an opportunity for us to connect with members of the community, to learn more about what they are doing and how we as members of Parliament can assist them. As effective as events such as the Wellness Walk and R U OK? Day are, we would all do well to remember that we are always able to check in on the people around us. Simply put, thoughtfulness is not exclusive to a particular day or month. Of course, loneliness is not the only cause of mental health problems and mental health conditions can have a wide range of causes. Individuals are often affected by a complex combination of factors. Trauma, abuse, neglect, bereavement, social isolation and bullying can all adversely affect an individual's mental health. The New South Wales Government recognises that, just as with physical health, the mental wellbeing of our community is vitally important.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians experiences a mental health condition in any given year, and almost one in two will experience a mental health condition at some point in their lifetime. These statistics also tell us that an average of eight Australians take their lives every day. The prevalence and reach of mental health conditions cannot be understated. In recognition of this, the New South Wales Government has reaffirmed its strong commitment to further improving mental health services across the State. In the 2017-18 budget, the Government announced a \$1.9 billion investment in mental health care, an increase of \$87 million over the previous year. This investment includes \$23 million to increase admitted and non-admitted mental health patient services, \$10.6 million to continue the Port Macquarie Hospital Mental Health expansion, \$3 million for social investment initiatives for mental health to provide non-government organisations support in the community to prevent rehospitalisation and the development of a plan for a statewide mental health capital works program.

In addition to the \$1.9 billion, \$20 million is being invested to support further implementation of New South Wales mental health reform, by shifting the balance from hospital care to the community. This extra \$20 million will provide an \$8.2 million increase to specialist community mental health teams, \$5.4 million to fund other mental health initiatives—such as the development of a strategic framework for the mental health system—and \$4.8 million to enhance psychosocial supports in the community.

I am a former nurse. I started my training in the psychiatric unit at Royal North Shore Hospital. Although it was one of the most challenging areas of health that I worked in, it was also in many ways the most rewarding. In the past 20 years there have been a lot of changes, such as investment of funds by governments into mental health. It is significant that we are now seeing a focus not only on prevention but also on ensuring that support and money is going into the community. For example, people who are no longer staying in psychiatric facilities have support within the community—such as with community nurses—and from other extended organisations to ensure that they have a support network to prevent rehospitalisation. I commend the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving this important motion and for the work he is doing, particularly with the friendship group.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (11:33): I speak about the 2016 Wellness Walk that was held on Sunday 15 October in Sydney. It involved participants walking five kilometres from Government House, across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and returning to Government House. The Wellness Walk raises money for several charities to deliver innovative and much-needed mental health services for people living with mental illness and

their families throughout New South Wales. Now in its fourth year, the Wellness Walk was held across several New South Wales locations, including Port Macquarie, Ulladulla and Wagga Wagga.

It is a great event that aims to raise awareness of mental health issues and to encourage walking as a way to improve our State's mental wellness. The walk across the Harbour Bridge is symbolic of bridging the gap between stigma and understanding of mental illness and mental wellness. Furthermore, gathering together shows community support and care to anyone who is suffering from a mental illness in our State. The act of walking reflects that living with mental illness is a step-by-step process and to resolve it we also need to approach it one step at a time. In addition to boosting the circulation and lowering blood pressure of participants, walking has been proven to provide many health benefits, including reducing depression, stress and anxiety. I am sure many members in this House can appreciate the kind of exercise that is needed to reduce levels of stress and anxiety in day-to-day life.

By taking better care of our own mental health, we can automatically engage in a practice of self-care, which in turn leads us to take better care of those around us. October is Mental Health Month. Every year it is an opportunity to promote mental health for New South Wales residents. R U OK? Day is another great example of a day we can all participate in each year. It is a national event to inspire all citizens to help reduce suicide and depression by reaching out and making contact with people around us and asking, "Are you okay?"

Suicide and attempted suicide are human tragedies with many contributing factors. More than 2,500 Australians die by suicide each year—there are almost seven deaths by suicide in Australia each day. The New South Wales Government recognises the need for an integrated approach to suicide prevention and has invested in a range of initiatives to ensure that people at risk of suicide—as well as their families, friends, carers and co-workers—are connected with the treatment and support that they need. Our Government is committed to improving the wellbeing of people in New South Wales, especially in the area of mental health, and to improving outcomes for people more broadly.

In Australia one in five people will experience a mental health problem within a 12-month period. With this in mind, it is important that we have a focus on strengthening prevention and early intervention for mental health issues. In the 2016-17 budget, our Government committed \$1.8 billion to mental health services in New South Wales, an increase of \$106 million over the previous year. The New South Wales Government is integrating community mental health services into mainstream services, training youth workers in mental health first aid, implementing a community living support program for young people—something I am passionate about—and promoting wellbeing in schools, which I have spoken about previously. This is something that the Government is improving year on year.

Some measures include \$8 million over four years to establish a new Suicide Prevention Fund to support mental health non-government organisations to prevent suicide in the community and \$3 million in continued support for the Lifeline 13 11 14 crisis telephone service on a 24/7 basis and to provide mental health training and supervision for the telephone crisis workforce that Lifeline maintains. In addition, \$500,000 has been allocated for specialist suicide prevention training for NSW Health's non-mental health clinicians in frontline roles to strengthen their skills in identifying and responding effectively to individuals at risk of suicide.

Some \$1.2 million has been allocated to continue the rollout of the Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders across New South Wales. This involves training clinicians to respond to people who have self-harmed and to develop local follow-up support services. The annual Wellness Walk is important to the people who partake in it and to the people affected by mental health issues. It is a great opportunity to promote mental health issues. I encourage the public to support future Wellness Walks and other initiatives throughout the year that raise awareness of and support for mental health issues.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (11:39): I speak to the motion about the Wellness Walk—Bridge Walk for Mental Health. I acknowledge my colleague and friend the Hon. Scott Farlow, who moved this motion as he has a genuine and personal interest in this matter. He has proven that from the day he stepped into this place; he has shown it once again through moving this motion. I acknowledge him and thank him for it. The Wellness Walk is a wonderful event aimed at raising awareness of mental health in the community. The term "mental health" is used on a daily basis. However, it is a term that is often misunderstood and sometimes used as a substitute for mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.

It should be noted that mental health is a state of wellbeing. It is not about, "What is the problem?" It is about, "What's going well?" That is why events such as the Wellness Walk are so important. This event promotes wellness and what is going well in each and every one of our lives. Research shows that high levels of mental health are associated with increased learning, creativity and productivity, more pro-social behaviour and positive social relationships, and with improved physical health and life expectancy. High levels of mental health are something we want every single person in our community to have.

However, in contrast, mental health conditions can cause distress, impact on day-to-day functioning and relationships, and are associated with poor physical health. As previous members have stated, they can result in suicide and self-harm. Every year one in four young Australians aged 16 to 24 are affected by mental illness. Mental health is complex. The fact that someone is not experiencing a mental health condition does not necessarily mean that their mental health is flourishing. It is possible to be diagnosed with a mental health condition while feeling well in many other aspects of one's life.

Ultimately, mental health is about being cognitively, emotionally and socially healthy in the way we think, feel and develop relationships, and not merely the absence of a mental health condition. Organisations and programs to raise awareness and promote mental health are so important. On the North Coast we have some wonderful programs promoting high levels of mental health and wellness, as well as supporting mental health conditions. I will highlight just two. In the Clarence region the North Coast Primary Health Network and Northern NSW Local Health District have worked alongside community members, Clarence Valley Council, and community service and health professionals to develop a plan to support the community in their mental health and wellbeing.

The community came together to establish the Our Healthy Clarence committee and plan, with key objectives of increasing awareness of mental health and bringing services and training to the community. Since the establishment of Our Healthy Clarence, the community has seen funding for the establishment of headspace in Grafton, improved access to psychiatry, particularly for children and adolescents, suicide prevention training, including mental health first aid, Aboriginal mental health, suicide prevention training, and post-suicide support for families and communities in the Clarence Valley.

I cannot emphasise enough how incredibly important this program is for the Clarence community. I acknowledge the local member, Chris Gulaptis, for his work in bringing the community together and supporting the establishment of Our Healthy Clarence. I acknowledge also Clarence Youth Action, an inclusive and diverse group that makes decisions relating to young people, works on community projects, organises events and participates in forums. The group provides a platform that encourages greater participation by young people in a range of community initiatives. I am delighted to advise the House that in the Mental Health Matters Awards in 2017 the NSW Mental Health Commissioner's Community Champion Award was awarded to Clarence Youth Action, a wonderful organisation.

In Lismore another terrific organisation, Social Futures, is providing outstanding support to communities on the North Coast. The Social Futures team works to improve the lives of people on the North Coast with its focus of ensuring that people are equally valued and included. It is a regional leader in providing support for individuals, families and communities in the areas of homelessness and housing, youth and family services, and disability services. I note the Social Futures StandBy Service, which provides support and information to people bereaved by suicide. A wide range of people are affected by suicide—individuals, families, friends, associates, witnesses, communities, schools and workplaces. Supporting these people is of the utmost importance, and that is why this program is an invaluable service on the North Coast. The support provided by a StandBy Coordinator can be as simple as talking over the phone through to assisting a person to access other services. StandBy is a free and confidential service and I encourage those at risk to take advantage of it.

It has been a pleasure visiting the facility and working with Social Futures Chief Executive Officer, Tony Davies, to ensure the best support for our North Coast communities. Programs and organisations like the Wellness Walk, Our Healthy Clarence, Clarence Youth Action and Social Futures are so important for our communities. I look forward to the 2018 Wellness Walk, which will be held in and around Government House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Opera House and the beautiful Botanic Gardens on Saturday 21 October. It is such a symbolic day—bridging the gap of the stigma of mental health to awareness of its impact and causes by walking across the Sydney Harbour Bridge with people whose lives have been impacted by a mental health condition. It is an event for all fitness levels, with two and 5.9 kilometre options available to participants. The day will be filled with entertainment, including live music, a photo booth and face painting. The day will also host an on-site fitness centre for walkers to get a real update on their health and wellbeing status.

All money raised before and on the day of the event will go to three charities, including One Door Mental Health, Flourish Australia and Mental Health Carers NSW. Flourish Australia has more than 50 years of experience in providing support to mental health sufferers. Over half of Flourish Australia's employees have been affected by mental health conditions, which assists their ability and understanding to be able to provide these critical services. Mental Health Carers NSW provides advocacy and support for families, relatives and friends of people who experience mental health conditions living in New South Wales.

One Door is the organising charity of the Wellness Walk. For more than 30 years it has provided specialised mental health services, which has recently been made accessible through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I strongly encourage everyone to get involved and participate in the walk. Everyone's wellness

is valued. As I said at the beginning, it is important to acknowledge the importance of wellness and not to focus on the harm that can be caused by a lack of wellness, although we must always ensure that we have programs and resources in place to be able to do that, but we must ensure that our focus is the wellness of our whole community. I thank the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving the motion. It is an excellent motion that I am very proud to support.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:47): I speak on the Wellness Walk and mental health in this State and country. The Wellness Walk and festival, now in its sixth year, is a five-kilometre walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to support the one in five Australians who suffer from mental illness and to raise money for mental health charities. The Wellness Walk is the creation of Larry Smith, who started the walk after seeing a similar movement in New York that made meaningful strides in community support for those suffering from mental illness.

Why have a walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge? The significance of the Sydney Harbour Bridge for this walk is more than it being just a landmark. Crossing the bridge signifies bridging the gap by moving from stigma to understanding. The ethos behind the walk and festival is a public expression of a gathered community in support of anyone who is suffering from mental illness. By bringing people together to walk for mental wellbeing, the Sydney Wellness Walk shows that living with mental illness is a step by step, one step at a time, process. Fundraising is always important and it is a key part of the Wellness Walk. The festival aims to make more than \$30,000 in 2018. Raising money means the walk does more than just express community support; it funds essential mental health services and supports people living with mental illness and their families. The Wellness Walk raises money for three charities—One Door Mental Health, Flourish Australia and Mental Health Carers NSW.

One Door Mental Health is a leading mental health service provider specialising in severe and persistent mental illnesses. Through One Door, people living with mental illness and their families can find an inclusive community, innovative services and advocacy support. The second charity is Flourish Australia, which has more than 50 years experience providing comprehensive, holistic support for people affected by mental health issues. They are a people-focused organisation that celebrates people's differences and helps them to find solutions to what they are facing that are individualised and lasting. Flourish provides worthwhile mentoring to assist in goal setting and guiding people through their mental health journey.

The third charity is Mental Health Carers NSW. It is a non-government organisation that provides advocacy and support for families, relatives and friends of people who experience mental illness, living in New South Wales. Mental Health Carers NSW provides support and advocacy for families and friends of people living with a mental illness or disorder. It reaches out with friendship and understanding to all whose lives are touched by a mental health problem. It aims to improve existing levels of support services to all relatives and friends of people with a mental illness. Funds are used for outreach support calls to isolated people living with a mental illness, smoking reduction programs, supporting the Clubhouse Recovery Program, the Mental Health Sports Network, the New Moves Healthy Lifestyle program, the Manly Sanctuary Respite Centre, the Burwood Respite Centre and the On Fire Weekend Support Group program, as well as training community advocates for mental health awareness.

Who walks the walk? The participants in the Wellness Walk are always diverse—there is a place for everyone. Each year participants are made up of family groups, secondary and tertiary students, grandparents with their grandchildren, and people living with mental illness and their carers. There are corporate teams driven by a social coordinator within a business, sponsors and their employees. Anyone who wants to pursue a healthy outdoor lifestyle who regularly participates in walks—and those who do not—is welcome.

It is important to note that the New South Wales Government has a number of mental health initiatives. It will invest \$1.9 billion into mental health in the 2017-18 budget, which is an increase of \$87 million from last year. Key initiatives of the budget include an extra \$20 million to support further implementation of the New South Wales mental health reform. That is a total of \$95 million this financial year to shift the balance from hospital care to the community. Key initiatives include: \$23 million to increase admitted and non-admitted mental health patient services, \$10.6 million to continue the Port Macquarie mental health hospital expansion, \$3 million for social investment initiatives in mental health to provide non-government organisations support in the community to prevent rehospitalisation and \$1.1 million to recruit an additional 10 mental health community health teams.

In a personal capacity, I draw attention to a good friend and former member of this place, John Brogden. As chairman of Lifeline Australia he called for the regular release of national suicide statistics, along the lines of the national road toll, as a way to reduce incidents of self-harm. He noted that we should be brave enough to call out those statistics the same as we do for the road toll. I commend his work in this area. In 2013, 2,522 Australians died by suicide—more than double the 1,187 road deaths in that year. Attention should be drawn to this because suicide is the most common cause of death for Australians between the ages of 15 and 44, with people of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background twice as likely to commit suicide as non-Indigenous people. Men represent three-quarters of suicide deaths in Australia.

Unfortunately, suicide is on the rise for women. Enough is enough. We need to deal with this. This initiative is heading in that direction. I draw attention to the wonderful work of Dr Vijay Roach and Cathy Knox, his wife, who support the emotional wellbeing of new parents through the Gidget Foundation. The foundation supports new parents, particularly mothers, with mental health issues by providing family and community education for what was previously known as post-natal depression. Anxiety and depression during pregnancy and early parenthood affects 100,000 people each year.

The Gidget Foundation provides support for perinatal depression through Gidget House, where free professional psychological support services are available for pregnant women and new parents suffering anxiety and depression. They are located in North Sydney and Randwick. The facilities are easily accessible and provide compassionate holistic care for patients and their families. Gidget House provides an initial assessment and meets with clients to explore their needs, individual therapy and counselling, psychiatric support and free Skype appointments utilising innovation.

Mental health continues to be a significant concern in our community and accounts for a substantial proportion of health service delivery in New South Wales. Around one in five—or 20 per cent—of Australian adults is affected by some form of mental disorder every year. Nearly half—or 45 per cent—of the population will experience a mental disorder at some stage in their lives. That is almost half the members in this Chamber. Making mental health a priority means people practising self-care, an important part of daily living, to ensure the maintenance of good wellbeing. The Wellness Walk does exactly that. Events such as the Wellness Walk are a significant opportunity to encourage the public to improve their own physical and mental health—we can all do with a bit of that—as well as promote mental health awareness in the process. It provides an opportunity for people to fundraise as an individual or as a corporate or family team.

The Wellness Walk ends with the Wellness Festival at the finish line to celebrate the event. The public are encouraged to join in and enjoy music, face painting and the Instagram photo booth. I will be signing up for that. Participants are also encouraged to have fun and dress up. Prizes are offered for the best dressed team and individual, and the highest fundraiser individual and team. Events such as the Wellness Walk, Mental Health Month, World Mental Health Day and R U OK? Day are important in bringing individuals and communities together to acknowledge and promote awareness of mental health issues. I commend all mental health initiatives to my colleagues in this place.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (11:56): I associate myself with this motion and commend the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving it. It is a fantastic opportunity for us to acknowledge the organisers of the Wellness Walk for Mental Health and to reflect upon the symbolism of the bridge as a link. The iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge is used as a symbol of bridging stigma to awareness. It has raised awareness about an important issue in our community: mental health. I congratulate the organisers of that event. I shall also talk about other initiatives that are occurring to remove the stigma of mental health and improve mental health outcomes for, particularly, males in our community. The initiative is now being rolled out across the country.

I will expand on a program I have previously spoken about. It is an activity covered by my portfolio but also an activity I participate in for relaxation: fly fishing. I have spoken about the Fly Program in this House previously. I will speak in more detail about how the Fly Program came about, what it seeks to achieve and some of the results it has achieved since inception. The Fly Program was started by Matt and Amelia Tripit. In 2013 Amelia lost her brother, who was also Matt's best mate, to suicide. Matt told me that when he heard the news he went to one of his favourite fishing spots on the Thredbo River in the Snowy Mountains and basically collapsed to his knees. He sat in the middle of the river for many hours, devastated by the fact that he had lost a close mate and family member to suicide. Matt decided he had to do something to ensure that other people do not have to go through the same harrowing experience.

Matt is one of Australia's best fly fishermen and a fly fishing instructor. He was in charge of the Crackenback outdoor education program. Originally from the Tamworth area, he is a former physical education teacher. He was also quite an accomplished rugby player in his day. Matt and Amelia devised The Fly Program, which has the objectives and motto, "Explore, Cast, Discover, Recover". They are blessed to live in the Snowy Mountains, and getting out into the High Country to explore that beautiful part of the world will greatly benefit everyone. Anyone who has gone fly fishing knows that casting a fly line is a challenge—to say the least—and an art. The rhythm, patience and skill needed to cast a line and put a weightless fly, using the line as weight, into an exact spot on a river or a lake can also be therapeutic. The discovery part of the program is about discovering the environment in which we live and ourselves. Recovery is for those who have experienced some trauma or come

through trying times and who require assistance to get their lives back on track and be productive and happy members of our society.

Matt and Amelia also devised the Men in Flight Program as part of The Fly Program. Community or family members who identify someone who may benefit from this program can refer them to The Fly Program, where they go through a screening process. Mental health professionals engaged by the program consider the person's suitability and whether he requires early or post-clinical intervention through the Mental Wellness Program. Following the screening process, the men are sent on a four-day retreat in the Snowy Mountains—this may be expanded to coastal areas of New South Wales and hopefully to other States. The participants travel, in sun, rain or snow, on mountain bikes into remote parts of the Snowy Mountains where they set up camp for four days. They explore, learn to fly fish and, more importantly, are not interrupted by day-to-day distractions—such as technology vibrating in their pockets. They sit around a campfire, talk and learn more about themselves and how to look after themselves.

After the four-day retreat participants undertake a seven-week program that focuses on their physical and mental health, which we know are linked. I know that when I exercise I feel better and perform better than when I do not exercise. Participants have a gym membership and fill in a journal every day. They attend forums on electronic media and must undergo a weekly mental fitness assessment. At the end of the seven-week program they return for a final conclave and are given additional tools to enable them to continue their journey. They also meet with previous program participants. The program is new to this country but, anecdotally, the results are amazing. I suggest that members follow Matt and The Fly Program on social media. Matt has on his fishing pack an Australian flag from the uniform of a former Special Air Service soldier who suffered post-traumatic stress syndrome following service in Afghanistan. He attributes his participation in the program as having turned his life around. He now has the necessary tools to once again be a productive member of society and is happy to continue with his life.

The Wellness Walk is a new initiative. It is a new way for us to talk about the taboo of mental illness and to work out how to bring programs and interventions into everyday life using means and mechanisms that are less confrontational, particularly for men. That is why I love The Fly Program. I was captivated by it when I listened to Matt speak at a National Gone Fishing Day event that I attended on Sydney Harbour. Matt has submitted an application to the Recreational Fishing Trust, which has recommended that the program receive funding assistance. Money raised from recreational fishing licences in New South Wales will be allocated to programs that help men to use fishing as a way of addressing mental illness.

I congratulate Matt and Amelia not only on having the courage to share their personal story but also on taking a tragedy in their lives and turning it into something that is changing the lives of others. I encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with the program. If anyone knows someone in their family or community who requires a community referral to the program they should follow The Fly Program on social media and refer them to it. The Fly Program web page, T-shirts and journals carry the inscription "JV 08.03.75". These are the initials and birth date of Amelia's brother and Matt's mate, who unfortunately did not have a program like this to turn to.

Unfortunately, it sometimes takes a tragedy for something good to happen. I have seen firsthand how this program is changing lives. The Wellness Walk—Bridge Walk also changes lives. Each and every one of us who have spoken in this debate thank the Hon. Scott Farlow for putting this motion on the *Notice Paper* and giving us the chance to talk about mental health. We should talk about it with our friends and family to banish the stigma and the taboo associated with this issue so that people can continue to meet the challenges of their busy and sometimes stressful lives.

The programs do not need to be overly sophisticated. Sometimes the best thing to do is to get back to basics—go outdoors, visit the Snowy Mountains, get some fresh air in the lungs and see some of the most beautiful places this nation has to offer. There people can learn a new skill that maybe they have spent a little too much money on and that maybe gets in the way of chores at home. However, mastering the skill of fly fishing is one of the most satisfying things a person can do. It is a rhythmic and therapeutic activity. It is a primal skill that goes back to the basics.

I love The Fly Program, which is centred on something I enjoy. I love to go fly fishing where I do not have mobile phone reception, because it is just about me in the outdoors and the fish that I am trying to catch. The challenge is good for the mind and the soul. The program is run by professionals and other support mechanisms are in place. I think that is why it has been successful in its early stages and will continue to be so. I thank the Hon. Scott Farlow for moving this motion and congratulate everyone associated with the Wellness Walk. I encourage members to look into The Fly Program, watch the video and tell anyone who may need assistance how to get involved. I thank the House for considering this motion.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (12:11): The Wellness Walk, which was held in October last year, continues to go from strength to strength. In his contribution the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry, the Hon. Niall Blair, alluded to mental health in rural and agricultural areas. A couple of weeks ago the Minister visited Dungog, Seaham and some other places around Maitland in the Hunter. The area has been in drought for about 12 months, with rainfall about 300 millimetres below the annual average.

During the trip the member for Upper Hunter, Michael Johnsen, Minister Blair and I met with farmers and people in the community and talked to government agency staff who are trying to help them. Media representatives were also present. To me, it was a stark reminder of the pressure that our agricultural families and workers feel in time of drought. The Hunter area is not used to drought. Many of the people we met remarked that their part of the world usually experiences east coast lows, flooding and storms and that is what they are used to dealing with. Residents at one place we visited said that most years we would be up to our knees in water. They are just not used to sustained dry conditions.

About a week before our trip I visited some areas of the Lower Hunter. Time and again, I encountered dry dams and river courses. The residents mainly rely on surface water from river pumping and those sorts of things because they do not have groundwater. I could feel the stress that the people are under, and which they communicated in different ways. Some were more direct than others, but I think the Minister will agree with me when I say that it is easy to see the stress of drought on people's faces. I am not just talking about the men in farming families; all the family members work together as a unit.

Husbands and wives sometimes feel stress differently and might express it differently. We often hear of partners trying to support the enterprise through outside work. Nevertheless, the whole family feels the strain of uncertainty about when the next rains will come and how quickly conditions can deteriorate. But there is not much you can do about water sources. When rain is not falling from the skies people rely on surface water from dams and the local river, and they can quickly be backed into a corner. Agencies including Hunter Local Land Services, the Department of Primary Industries and Hunter Water are doing their best to help.

In this debate it is important to note that the suicide rate among agricultural workers is difficult to pin down but is generally accepted to be about 1.6 times the rate for other workers, no matter where they are in the world. In Queensland the male farmer suicide rate is 37 per 100,000. In the general population it is around 10 per 100,000. The female farmer suicide rate is 10 per 100,000 and the combined suicide rate of males and females is about 29. These detailed figures from Queensland were obtained by the University of Newcastle and Griffith University, so it seems they have some weight.

The fact that the suicide rate among agricultural workers is 1.6 times the average is a reminder of the challenges we face. I love the Wellness Walk, but it is important to highlight that many people in rural and regional communities feel isolated. Rural and regional areas generally do not have the necessary networks and facilities. Practitioners and the community in general lack the skills and awareness necessary to recognise mental illness and do something about it. In addition, at times there is still a little bravado that we are tough country people and do not need to access services.

I have lived through two fairly serious droughts in Guyra, one in 1995 and the other in 2002-03. During times of drought you see the community at its best and its worst. The worst is seeing people struggling with financial and mental challenges. They become concerned about the welfare of their stock and they feel backed into a corner. In 1995 there were not many places that people could send their stock on agistment. During droughts farmers can usually move their stock elsewhere to take the pressure off, but in 1995 those avenues were not available and the situation was very difficult. The 2003 drought was nearly as bad, although I think there was a little more agistment around.

When an area has been in drought for some time people's normal responses start to wear down. The agistment options run out. The fodder options are more expensive. Fodder comes from further afield and farmers know that they are probably buying weeds from somewhere else. The bank manager starts to have some serious conversations with people and their equity starts falling away. Farmers become concerned about their livestock and their ability to do their job. In my experience as a person who served farmers by supplying them, it was interesting to see how people dealt with the situation. I saw both anger and bravado. Other clients committed suicide—using a gun in the bedroom or hanging themselves in a hayshed. It was an incredibly difficult time and caused a lot of devastation. All of the victims were men. I cannot recall one female from the farming sector in my area having committed suicide—although I might be wrong about that.

Country communities often do it tougher than others. Research has reminded me that it is not only farmers who commit suicide but also agricultural workers—the shearer, the hay carter or the fencer. Everyone in the community is affected by the difficulties of a struggling rural community. Some can deal with it but others cannot

and so they take another course of action. This is a great motion. All members in this place have a role to play in this area. The Wellness Walk—Bridge Walk for Mental Health has now been extended to places such as Port Macquarie, Ulladulla and Wagga Wagga. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (12:21): In reply: This debate started in October 2017. That seems a world away but it is great that so many members have spoken on this motion. I thank the following honourable members: the Hon. Wes Fang, who in speaking to the motion made one of his first contributions in this Chamber; the Hon. Mick Veitch; the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who made a contribution last year and again today; the Hon. Daniel Mookhey; the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones; the Hon. Taylor Martin; the Hon. Ben Franklin; the Hon. Natalie Ward; the Hon. Niall Blair—it was a great pleasure to have a Minister contribute to debate on this private member's motion, and particularly to hear his perspective on The Fly Program, which now has many more social media followers—and Mr Scot MacDonald. It is interesting to note the number of regional and rural members who contributed to the debate.

I concur with Mr Scot MacDonald that there is a disparity in suicide rates in the bush compared with the city. The statistics indicate that in the city the suicide rate is a little less than 10 per 100,000, while in the regions it is around 12 per 100,000, and in remote communities it is around 17 per 100,000. Between 2011 to 2015 there was a slight increase in suicide rates in the city and in regional areas but the figures vary quite significantly across the State. Mr Scot MacDonald suggested that this correlates with changes in the weather cycle—for example, droughts and floods—and the resulting challenges faced by our rural communities. I commend the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, which is based in Orange and part of the University of Newcastle, for its work in the regions. I also thank the Hon. Sarah Mitchell for putting me in touch with the centre when she was the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, and Western New South Wales.

Last year I was honoured to meet with that group and see some of the work it is doing. I note that the centre's forum will once again coincide with the Sydney Royal Easter Show, when so many travel from the bush to the city. Participants will talk about mental health and breaking down the associated stigma. Since moving this motion in October last year I have found some of the commentary quite interesting. In particular, many speakers in this debate, including the Hon. Ben Franklin, raised the issue of resilience. That is very important to mental health. Too often we are focused on the symptoms of mental health problems, not the root causes. The Minister for Education, Mr Rob Stokes, has announced that resilience will be part of the personal development, health and physical education [PDHPE] syllabus. Students in kindergarten and year 1 will talk about mental health issues as part of the PDHPE school curriculum. More importantly, they will talk about strategies that people can employ to build resilience and meet the challenges they face. I commend that initiative.

The Wellness Walk is also part of building resilience by tying together mental health and physical activity and health. Across the State many organisations are working in this space, and I acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Niall Blair in that regard. I have spoken about the Wellness Walk and Larry Smith's role in sharing his experience of what he witnessed in New York. Larry was able to turn a terrible family experience into a positive for our community by getting the Wellness Walk off the ground. Several members have shared personal experiences and referred to the wonderful people in our community who have taken the absolute worst situations in their lives and turned them into something positive for all people in New South Wales. I have found that that theme runs through my work as a member of the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health and the organisations I come into contact with—people keep giving back despite the dreadful things that are occurring in their lives. The ray of sunshine they see is being able to stop it happening to other families. That is a testament to their work and to that of mental health organisations in this State. Witnessing that work and meeting those contributors motivates me greatly.

In New South Wales the Government is not necessarily the leader in mental health. We have so many great organisations; the Government is a facilitator. Living Well, the New South Wales Mental Health Commission's 10-year strategy, looks at how we can facilitate those organisations working on the ground to promote better mental health in this State—for example, the Waratah group in Western Sydney does great work. It is not about the Department of Health or the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales administering all the programs; it is about equipping and strengthening organisations that are already meeting that need in our community.

The theme of Mental Health Month was "Share the Journey". The focus was on the importance of social connections in our journey towards better mental health and our ability to cope with life's challenges. Good social connections improve our overall mental health and wellbeing and improve resilience. As I said before, incorporating resilience in our PDHPE curriculum is very important. In this regard, I often reflect on the Government's commitment to delivering better mental health services across the State. In the 2017-18 budget that commitment was reaffirmed, with the Government investing \$1.9 billion in mental health care. I note that many, if not all, members who contributed to this debate also reflected on that.

As part of the budget, a further \$20 million is being put towards implementation of the New South Wales mental health reforms. That includes \$8.2 million to increase specialist community mental health teams; \$5.4 million to fund other mental health initiatives, including investing in the workforce, strengthening capacity to support people with intellectual disability and mental illness, and developing a strategic framework for the mental health system; \$4.8 million to enhance psychosocial supports in the community; and \$1.6 million to continue transitioning long-stay patients to appropriate community accommodation. The 2017-18 budget also includes \$3 million for social investment initiatives in mental health, which provides non-government organisations [NGOs] support in the community to prevent re-hospitalisation. That is so important.

The Government has developed strong ties and connections with NGOs across the mental health sector. It is through our partnership with the non-government and community sector that we will be able to provide effective, seamless, integrated care that ensures connected communities and puts people at the centre of our mental health system. That was a constant theme in all of the contributions from members across the Chamber. I thank all members who contributed to the debate. The contributions of members from all sides of the Chamber show this House's clear commitment to supporting those in our community with mental health issues and, more importantly, reducing the stigma related to mental health and treating mental health issues as we treat any health issue.

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

Motion agreed to.

Documents

TABLING OF PAPERS

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I table the following papers:

- (1) Crimes Act 1900—Report of the Department of Justice entitled "Statutory review of the Crimes Amendment (Cheating and Gambling) Act 2012", dated March 2018.
- (2) Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002—Report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled "Report under Section 242 (6) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002—Criminal Organisation Search Warrants—for the period from 7 August 2015 to 6 August 2017", dated October 2017.

I move:

That the reports be printed.

Motion agreed to.

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The PRESIDENT: According to the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table a report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled "Correcting the record: Investigations into water compliance and enforcement 2007-17", dated 8 March 2018.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I move:

That, according to Standing Order 57, the House take note of the document, and that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT (E-CIGARETTES) BILL 2017

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 23 November 2017.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (12:33): I oppose the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017. This private member's bill was brought on after the Opposition became aware that the New South Wales public health officials had convened a panel of public health experts in September last year.

Health professionals, public health advocates and researchers looked at the emerging evidence on health risk associated with the use of e-cigarettes. That panel advised that the Government should consider a ban on the use of electronic cigarettes in public areas covered by current tobacco laws. The Opposition has a record of using public health issues as its political football. This private member's bill seeks to amend the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 to extend the ban on smoking in smoke-free areas, such as indoor places and certain outdoor places, to e-cigarettes. However, that is all it does. The Government does support a ban on vaping in smoke-free areas. Such a ban on the use of e-cigarettes in smoke-free areas is in line with current evidence about the risks of e-cigarettes.

Evidence is emerging that there are potential health risks from e-cigarette vapours irrespective of whether there is nicotine in the e-liquids or not. The National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC]—our nation's pre-eminent health advisory body—advised last year that health authorities and policymakers should act to minimise harm to users and bystanders from e-cigarette use. The NHMRC stated that e-cigarettes expose both users and bystanders to particulate matter that may worsen existing illnesses or increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease or respiratory disease. A ban is also in line with community expectations. There is majority community support for a restriction on the use of e-cigarettes in public places.

The Cancer Council NSW—a wonderful organisation—has released data showing that 70 per cent of adults in New South Wales support protecting the community from potentially harmful emissions from e-cigarettes with stronger restrictions on their use in public places. Even people who had used e-cigarettes supported stronger restrictions. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Government to act. However, there needs to be a comprehensive approach to this issue. This means not just amending the Smoke-free Environment Act but also looking at other legislation where smoking is banned, as well as further regulation of the sale of e-cigarettes.

The private member's bill does not offer such a comprehensive approach and therefore will not be supported by the Government. However, I want to emphasise that the Government will be taking action and bringing a bill forward in the near future. This Government has a strong history of tobacco and e-cigarette regulation. It was this Government that extended smoking bans to outdoor public places that are 10 metres of children's playgrounds, swimming pool complexes, public transport stops and stations, spectator areas of grounds during organised sporting events, within four metres of a pedestrian access point to a public building—which is often thought of as the four metre law—and commercial outdoor dining areas.

On 6 July 2015, smoking bans commenced in commercial outdoor dining areas and within four metres of a pedestrian access point to or from cafes, licensed premises and restaurants. These areas have been made smoke free because they are where people congregate with limited opportunity to avoid second-hand smoke. Seated outdoor dining areas have been made smoke free because they are frequented by children and families and there is limited chance to avoid second-hand smoke. Smoke-free outdoor compliance is high. From July 2016 to June 2017, NSW Health inspectors conducted 2,060 inspections of outdoor smoke-free areas. The inspectors observed a 99 per cent compliance among people in smoke-free outdoor areas. That is terrific.

Most businesses comply with smoke-free dining laws. Since smoke-free outdoor dining began in July 2015 to June 2017, NSW Health inspectors have inspected over 2,280 venues with commercial outdoor dining areas and found a 96 per cent compliance rate. Not only is this a public health benefit, most importantly, it is what the community wants. This Government is also the government that banned the sale of e-cigarettes to minors and extended parts of the Public Health (Tobacco) Act to e-cigarettes. We have acted on the evidence, and we will continue to do so. The Government will oppose this private member's bill in favour of our more comprehensive bill which is to be introduced to the Parliament in the near future.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:38): I seek leave to speak for a second time under Standing Order 89.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I am advised by the Clerk that under Standing Order 89, which relates to an explanation of a matter that has been misquoted or misunderstood, if the member speaks to matters other than to an explanation he will close the second reading debate. The Hon. Walt Secord has the right of reply at the end of the second reading debate. If the member spoke now and a point of order were taken that he was straying from the explanation, he would risk closing the debate.

The Hon. Walt Secord: The contribution I will make relates directly to one point that was made in the Government's response. It is important that members contributing to the debate are made aware of it. I will not stray.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has the call.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (12:40): I make a contribution to the second reading debate on the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017, which has been introduced by the Hon. Walt Secord. I have a deep interest in any matter that affects people's health, particularly cigarette smoking and

e-cigarettes, and the Christian Democratic Party has a great deal of sympathy for this bill. However, since the Government has presented its proposal to introduce a bill that is more comprehensive than the bill before the House and is specific in seeking to ban the use of e-cigarettes in public places, the Christian Democrats agree with the Government's intention. We take on face value the Government's commitment to introduce a bill that will amend the Smoke-free Environment Act to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn products in public places.

Currently the Act bans smoking in indoor areas, commercial outdoor dining areas, public swimming pools, children's playgrounds and so on. The Government has advised that in its proposal to amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act, e-cigarette retailers will be required to notify the Secretary of Health that they are engaged in e-cigarette retailing in the same way that tobacco retailers must notify the Secretary of Health. In addition, the Government has advised that it will amend the Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017 to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn products in public transport areas where the regulation currently bans smoking. The Christian Democratic Party brought in the original bills to ban smoking in public places and we want to see the legislation followed through with the e-cigarette proposal. For those reasons, we do not support the private member's bill but indicate that we will support, in due course, the Government's bill. We ask the Government to provide a timetable of its intention in this regard and an assurance that it will act promptly on its proposed legislation.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (12:43): I commence my contribution to the second reading debate on the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017 with the observation that steam is not smoke. I invite those who are confused about the two concepts to take a trip to Camden to the Thirlmere Railway Museum where they can see for themselves that smoke coming out of the chimney of a steam train is completely different to steam coming out of the piston of the same steam train. Steam is not smoke. Indeed, if steam is such a threat to the life, wellbeing and livelihood of people in Australia, then hot showers should immediately be banned. If steam is such a threat to people, let us see the banning of showers, the banning of saunas and the banning of overheated jacuzzis.

This is a bad bill, and not merely because the Hon. Walt Secord has introduced it. It is a bad bill because it represents a bad principle. One would have to question the honesty and merits of the attitude to health in this State—especially in relation to the health of those who are trying to give up smoking—of anyone who comes into Parliament and produces a bill like this, or anything comparable to it. The Parliamentary Secretary told the House not to vote for this bill because the Government will be bringing in its own bill. That is very interesting because my understanding of the way the Coalition works is that no bill shall be introduced into this House without having gone through the party room beforehand.

For a member of the Executive to make the assertion that a bill will be coming into this place shows an arrogance, an insolence and a disregard for the Coalition party room. It is completely and utterly unseemly. It is an arrogant disregard for the proper processes of the Coalition party room to suggest that if the bill before the House goes down today the Government will introduce its own bill. I would have thought that the Executive should have played by the rules—which are clearly set down and have been in place for many years—and not introduce a bill without consultation with the party room beforehand. The party room may well not be in favour of such a ludicrous and nonsensical proposal and may well oppose it. Let us not forget that the last time the Executive was wise enough to introduce or to foreshadow the introduction of a bill without it first going through the party room was the Greyhound Racing Bill 2017—and we all know how good that was.

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: Point of order: Although members are allowed a wide latitude in second reading debates, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps is alluding to a bill that is being prepared. I ask that the member be drawn back to the long title of the bill.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Slapped down by your own Whip. What a divided Government.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): According to a previous ruling of the President, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not speak while another member is taking a point of order. I am sure the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps will focus on the substance of the bill. He will return to the leave of the bill.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I do indeed address the substance of the bill, but I also address the comments of the Parliamentary Secretary that the Government will be introducing its own bill, without the apparent need to deal with the internal consequences of such a proposal. Today we face a situation where we have the ability to provide a reasonable and much healthier response to those who want to give up cigarette smoking, and that is by vaping. It is often said that people take up smoking for the nicotine but that they die from the tar and the ash that the burning of tobacco causes. That is absolutely true. People do not die from nicotine addiction; they die because the consequence of obtaining that nicotine through the burning of tobacco produces carcinogenic by-products.

By taking the burning tobacco out of the equation, a person still has a nicotine addiction and the minor consequences that come from that, but it is manifestly much, much safer. If it is not safer, why do we allow nicotine patches, nicotine gum and nicotine aerosol sprays? The answer is that there is a gross hypocrisy and inconsistency in the way we deal with nicotine and tobacco and turning people away from tobacco use. Generally in Australia tobacco use is on the decline. But amongst Australia's Indigenous population tobacco use is still around 40 per cent, and 57 per cent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children live in households where there is a daily smoker.

At the current time the Canadian parliament is looking to a bill that will legalise and regularise vaping because 57 per cent of Canadian First Nations people over the age of 18 smoke. Amongst the Inuit, 75 per cent of people over the age of 15 smoke. What has the Canadian Government done? It has not said, "Let them continue smoking tobacco products until they die." It has said, after looking at the issue through a parliamentary committee, that vaping is a viable alternative and it should be regulated. No-one there is suggesting that vaping should not be regulated; rather that it is an effective way to get people off burnt tobacco products. A bill has gone through the Canadian Senate and currently the Canadian bill finds itself in a committee of the Canadian House of Commons, the lower House. It is likely that the Canadian House of Commons will pass the bill in its unamended form, given that the bill is largely a recommendation of one of the committees of the Canadian House of Commons.

Canada understands the problems of burnt tobacco and has done something about it. New Zealand also has done something about it by legalising vaping. The United Kingdom [UK] also has legalised vaping. These countries have taken a sensible approach to tobacco harm reduction. In Australia we have occasional voices in the public health community crying out for something similar here. Dr Colin Mendelsohn, Dr Attila Danko and Dr Alex Wodak have considered this issue and as responsible public health officials have said this is the way we should be going. However, they are up against the nanny State lobby—people like Simon Chapman, ruthless prohibitionists, who have no real concern about the health of people in Australia and, like various other non-government organisations in this country, are very happy to be wedded to the teat of government support to back their own little research projects.

These extreme prohibitionists say there is no way that one can engage in harm reduction other than through outright prohibition. That makes an interesting point of distinction. If there is no better way than outright prohibition, then presumably there will be a bill approaching this House shortly to close down the heroin injecting room in Kings Cross. If outright prohibition is the only way to go, then I look forward to that same principle being extended across a wide range of things that are being done currently. Let us go through some of the myths and furbies. The first is that e-cigarette vapor has a detrimental effect on indoor air quality.

In 2012, McAuley, Hopke, Zhao and Babaian had a look at this and their results were simple. Comparisons of pollutant concentrations were made between e-cigarette vapor and tobacco smoke samples. Pollutants included volatile organic compounds [VOCs]—which I will return to later—carbonyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs], nicotines, and a range of other things. From these results, risk analyses were conducted based on dilution into a 40-cubic metre room and standard toxicological data. Non-cancer risk analysis revealed no significant risk of harm to human health for vapor samples from e-liquids. In contrast, for tobacco smoke most findings markedly exceeded risk limits, indicating a condition of significant risk of harm to human health. With regard to cancer risk analysis, no vapor sample from e-liquids A to D exceeded the risk limit for either children or adults. The tobacco smoke sample approached the risk limits for adult exposure.

Their conclusion is quite simple: there is no cancer risk and there is no significant risk of other harm to health from e-cigarette vapors. Members do not have to listen to me. As I said, Britain is far ahead in this area. The Royal College of Physicians in the United Kingdom made the point that e-cigarettes appear to be effective when used by smokers as an aid to quitting smoking. The hazard to health arising from long-term vapor inhalation from the e-cigarettes that are available today is unlikely to exceed 5 per cent of the harm from smoking tobacco. It is at least 20 times safer to move from smoking to vaping. I repeat, it is at least 20 times safer. The Royal College of Physicians further states:

... the available evidence to date indicates that e-cigarettes are being used almost exclusively as safer alternatives to smoke tobacco, by confirmed smokers who are trying to reduce harm to themselves or others from smoking, or to quit smoking completely.

In conclusion, the college states:

... in the interests of public health it is important to promote the use of e-cigarettes, NRT [nicotine replacement therapy] and other non-tobacco nicotine products as widely as possible as a substitute for smoking in the UK.

The Royal College of General Practitioners and Cancer Research UK make the point that there are now more former smokers in Great Britain using electronic cigarettes than there are dual users of both cigarettes and e-cigarettes. The evidence so far shows that e-cigarettes have significantly reduced levels of key toxicants compared to cigarettes, with average levels of exposure falling well below the threshold for concern. Use among

children is rare and the small number who do use e-cigarettes most currently smoke or are ex-smokers. In other words, children who should not be getting cigarettes in the first place are transitioning to a safer alternative.

They say in relation to safety that, based on the evidence to date, it is accepted that vaping is a far safer alternative to smoking tobacco. As a cessation aid, they say that since late 2013 electronic cigarettes have become England's most popular quitting aid. There is no reason why they would not be. Another survey indicates that e-cigarettes are 60 per cent more effective than patches or gum in getting people off smoking. As to passive vaping—ostensibly the purpose for this bill—they make this comment: "There is no good evidence to suggest that passively breathing vapor from e-cigarettes is likely to be harmful."

[Interruption]

I am going to continue as I still have 7½ minutes. If others in the Government will not listen to me, then at least they can read my speech in *Hansard*. Action on Smoking and Health UK makes the point that electronic cigarettes deliver nicotine in a vapor rather than in smoke. Compared to tobacco products, electronic cigarettes are significantly safer. In the United Kingdom the devices are used primarily as an aid to cutting down or quitting smoking and evidence suggests they compare favourably with other stop-smoking aids. In the UK there is no evidence that the use of electronic cigarettes lead to a take-up of smoking. I have quoted statements from medical research and a non-government organisation. I shall turn now to a government authority. Public Health England in February of this very year undertook a review of e-cigarettes and I highlight the main findings. It found:

- vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking and switching completely from smoking to vaping conveys substantial health benefits
- e-cigarettes could be contributing to at least 20,000 successful new quits per year and possibly many more
- e-cigarette use is associated with improved quit success rates over the last year and an accelerated drop in smoking rates across the country
- many thousands of smokers incorrectly believe that vaping is as harmful as smoking; around 40% of smokers have not even tried an e-cigarette
- there is much public misunderstanding about nicotine ...
- the use of e-cigarettes in the UK has plateaued over the last few years at just under 3 million
- the evidence does not support the concern that e-cigarettes are a route into smoking among young people ...

That is the United Kingdom Government's report. I turn now to the final issue raised, that is, volatile chemical products, the so-called VOCs. A report in *Science* magazine dated 16 February 2018 referred to the relative changes in the level of VOCs in today's society. Are VOCs produced by some vaping in products? Yes, they are. But, Mr Deputy-President, this morning you may have had a shower, used soap, could have even used detergent, and probably used aftershave and some deodorant. I presume all members have done the same, although I cannot speak for the personal grooming of The Greens.

I would say that most people generally would at least have gone through those processes, and each of those processes has produced volatile organic compounds. The scare campaign that has been unleashed by some people about VOCs completely denies the fact that VOCs are present around us in many different forms. Anyone waiting for a bus will be exposed to VOCs. They are an inescapable part of life. Something that is repeatedly forgotten is that it is not the compound itself but the dose that indicates lethality. I repeat, it is not the compound, it is the dose.

Lithium is useful in the treatment of mental illnesses but an overdose of lithium will kill you. Indeed, oxygen is useful to sustaining life but in a purely oxygen-rich environment eventually your lungs will shut down because the carbon dioxide receptors do not indicate that you have to keep breathing. There are those who say there are heavy metals ingested through vaping. They are conveniently forgetting that the nickel ingested when using a nicotine atomiser is 2½ times the level ingested from using a vaping device. Even in that instance the level of dosage is so minuscule that the benefits that accrue to the person by removing themselves from smoking and using a nicotine replacement device far outweighs any potential health effects you could have from heavy metals. I strongly oppose the bill before the House, and I strongly oppose any comparable bill that may come before us in the future from whatever source that seeks to deny the ability of people to use vaping devices.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

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

*Questions Without Notice***WATER COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:30): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Water and Industry. On Tuesday the Minister implied in his ministerial statement that he did not become aware of WaterNSW providing incorrect data to the New South Wales Ombudsman until 12 February 2018. Today's report of the Ombudsman reveals that WaterNSW knew and told the Ombudsman's office of the error in December 2017. When did the Minister or his office first become aware of his department misleading the Ombudsman and, as a consequence, the Minister misleading the House?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:31): Everyone in this House was aware that the Ombudsman was involved in an ongoing investigation into water compliance. The Ombudsman had completed two reports, one in 2009 and the other in 2013, which were not intended by the Ombudsman to be tabled in Parliament. The progress report into this current investigation, tabled in November 2017, led to an extensive debate in this place. We know that the report included erroneous figures submitted by WaterNSW, which is detailed on page seven of the latest report. How those incorrect figures came to be submitted is extensively covered in the report which has been tabled today at pages five to eight.

The Chief Executive Officer of WaterNSW has accepted the Ombudsman's recommendation and has apologised unreservedly, as well he should, and that is covered on page seven. This morning I met with the chair of WaterNSW and indicated that the process had been unacceptable. The first I became aware of the errors was in a meeting on 12 February 2018, the details of which I described in my ministerial statement on Tuesday. Anyone who has read the Ombudsman's report that was released today will understand that there has been quite a process within WaterNSW to confirm the figures it provided were wrong and then seek to correct them. Those opposite can search all they like for some conspiracy in all of this. I take them to the Ombudsman's findings that showed there was no wilful deception on the part of WaterNSW, which is covered on page 16 of the report. Irrespective of that, I was not prepared to do or say anything while the Ombudsman's report was on foot, and until the correct figures on compliance actions could be verified. That has happened today.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:33): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of his answer where he stated that he first became aware on 12 February, and inform the House when his office became aware? Will the Minister explain to the House why his agency kept him in the dark from December 2017 until February 2018?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:33): I clearly outlined the time frame in which I became aware, which was part of my ministerial statement earlier this week. The second part of the member's question seeking elucidation is on something that is ongoing.

WOMEN IN ARTS, SCREEN AND CULTURE

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (14:33): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Arts. Can the Minister update the House on women in the arts, screen and culture sector?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:34): I thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack for her question. In my last 14 months as Minister for the Arts I have met a huge number of inspiring women who, I do not think it is controversial to suggest, are the backbone of arts, screen and culture in New South Wales. I am very proud to be in a government lead by a woman with a commitment to promoting women to positions of leadership, and I am even happy to have the tag "Jobs for the Girls' Minister" thrown at me by the *Australian*. First of all, I will start with the three women that helm our State's cultural institutions: Louise Herron at the Sydney Opera House, Kim McKay at the Australian Museum and Dolla Merrilees at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. All three are leaders in their industries and New South Wales is lucky to have them.

Next we have the two indefatigable women leading our State-significant organisations: Lisa Havilah at Carriageworks and Liz-Ann McGregor at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Those two incredible professionals have been an unbeatable source of inspiration, counsel and delight, and there are no two better women in this State who speak to the pivotal strength of women in leadership positions and the value of the arts. Jo Dyer, Chief Executive Officer of Sydney Writers Festival, and Leigh Small, Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Film Festival, have acted as extraordinary ambassadors for their organisations.

Some of our major performing arts groups, lead by the impossibly capable Bethwyn Serow, are managed by fiercely capable arts advocates: Mary-Jo Capps at Musica Viva, Libby Christie at the Australian Ballet, Sue

Donnelly at Belvoir, Emma Dunch at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Anne Dunn at Sydney Dance Company. Without exception I am proud to work with all of these people to deliver arts and culture to the people of New South Wales and we are lucky to have them. We also have Elizabeth Rogers, Chief Executive Officer of Regional Arts NSW, who fights for and promotes arts and culture outside of our three major cities. She is doing great work in such an important priority area for the State Government.

Outside of these key institutions I can think of countless examples of women delivering arts, screen and culture for the people of New South Wales. Just a small number of inspiring people who come to mind are: Rosie Dennis at Urban Theatre Projects; Brigitte Uren at Maitland Regional Art Gallery; Hania Radvan from the Penrith City Council, who is working on arts and culture there; Julie Baird at the Newcastle Museum; Danielle Micich from Force Majeure; and Victoria Wildie from Hayes Theatre.

Then there are the extraordinarily generous women who personally support arts and culture by putting their own hands in their pockets such as Sam Meers, Gretel Packer, Catriona Mordant, Carla Zampatti, Karen Moses and Gene Sherman, among many others in a list too long to mention. Like all things though, leadership and representation starts at the top. We have been able to succeed as much as we have because of two women who are central to the growth and success of arts, screen and culture in New South Wales: our departmental secretary Carolyn McNally, and our deputy secretary Alex O'Mara. Every single one of those people have inspired me and have helped to excite the people of New South Wales.

WATER COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:37): I direct my question to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given the Minister's earlier answer to a question without notice from the Leader of the Opposition today, is the Minister now investigating his own office and when it was told?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:37): I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his question. I clearly outlined the timeline in my ministerial statement and in my earlier answer on this matter.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Mr Mislead.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: Point of order: the interjections by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are clearly inappropriate. This week he seems to have embarked upon a course of irreverent conduct. I ask that you call him to order, Mr President.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: I do not see how calling the Deputy Leader of the Government "Mr Mislead" does not go to the conduct of public affairs under his administration. He is Mr Mislead.

The Hon. Don Harwin: To the point of order: For the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to use a point of order to repeat an earlier reflection on a member is an outrage. It is not one but two examples of disorderly behaviour. Mr President, I invite you to consider that.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: While we acknowledge that all interjections are disorderly, in his ministerial statement earlier this week the Minister conceded that he had misled this House on the basis of advice he had received from that agency.

The Hon. Don Harwin: Further to the point of order: The Leader of the Opposition is also making a reflection by way of a point of order. He is being disorderly.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: To the point of order: I find not only the interjection but also the debating points made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition during their points of order to be offensive. I take offence and ask them to withdraw those comments and apologise unreservedly.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I have made it clear that using points of order to make imputations against members is unacceptable and I will not tolerate it. It is also unacceptable when a Minister concludes an answer to a question asked by a member for that member to interject while it is another member's opportunity to ask a question. Question time is limited to one hour. Continual frivolous points of order and continuous interjections that force me to take up valuable time making rulings are unfair on members who are waiting to ask questions. I uphold the point of order taken by the Hon. Trevor Khan. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time because I have previously warned him about this. I will not call the Leader of the Opposition to order because this exchange commenced with the point of order relating to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Point of order: I took exception to the comments and said that I found them to be offensive and unparliamentary. I seek your ruling as to whether members opposite should withdraw them.

The PRESIDENT: I will reserve on that and come back to the Chamber with my ruling.

MEDICAL CANNABIS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (14:42): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, representing the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. Is the Minister aware of any risks associated with the prescription of medical cannabis? Will the Minister inform the House where the medical cannabis that is being used in New South Wales is grown and manufactured? Will the Minister describe the oversight processes involved in the prescription of medical cannabis to ensure safe use by New South Wales patients?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:43): I thank Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his question directed to me representing the Minister for Health, and Minister for Medical Research. It is a timely question because over the past week the approvals process has changed in New South Wales. Doctors are now able to go through the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA] process only rather than also going through the New South Wales approvals process to prescribe medicinal cannabis. The process still includes notification but has been sped up for people who are seeking this relief.

There was previous criticism of the red tape and unnecessary delays in the dual process that required patients and their families to go through the New South Wales process as well as the Federal process. I commend the Minister for Health and the Federal Minister for Health for their work in this area. It is hoped that New South Wales taking the lead will cause other States to introduce a more streamlined process that will retain the necessary rigour but allow patients to access medical cannabis through only the Federal TGA process when their medical practitioners deem it necessary and safe. More research is being undertaken in this area.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile asked about where the product is grown. New South Wales has committed to studying the agronomics of medical cannabis for any potential commercial industry in this country. The Department of Primary Industries has led the project by investing \$2 million in a facility to look at the agronomics as well as the most suitable growing conditions for different varieties of this type of pharmaceutical product. However, we do not openly talk about where the facility is located. It is under strict security provisions, as are all processes associated with the product and any licensing provisions that now rest with the Commonwealth for the growing of medicinal cannabis.

The member may be aware that New South Wales had its own licensing regime prior to the Federal Government taking over. Our Department of Primary Industries was one of the first cabs off the rank to get a licence under the new Federal regime so that we can continue our research into this product. I am happy to refer the specifics of the question to the Minister. I am sure he will provide a detailed response. I know that anyone who is interested in this topic will join me in congratulating the Minister and Federal Minister on speeding up the process, removing red tape and implementing a rigorous Federal system so that those who need and want medicinal cannabis can access it more quickly.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (14:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is providing support to local steel producers?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:47): The steel industry is a topic of conversation around the world today—from the Oval Office to the New South Wales Legislative Council. The New South Wales Government is committed to supporting this State's producers in their efforts to supply quality Australian steel to the Australian Defence Force. We are backing our New South Wales based defence industries as they plug into the supply chains of both domestic and international defence customers. In fact, our steel producers in the Illawarra have already gained notable success in this.

For example, steel from BlueScope in Port Kembla has been shipped to the Ferrol shipyard of Spanish shipbuilder Navantia. Our steel will then be incorporated into the construction of the Royal Australian Navy new supply ships, the future HMAS *Supply* and HMAS *Stalwart*. Similarly, steel from the Bisalloy Steel Group Unanderra facility will provide protection for Australian diggers when it is incorporated into 110 new Hawkei lightweight protected mobility vehicles that will replace the Army's ageing Land Rovers. The same Bisalloy steel features in the Bushmaster protected mobility vehicle, which has been used by the Australian Army in East Timor, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and exported to the Netherlands, Japan, the United Kingdom, Fiji and Jamaica. But that's not all, we are also looking to the future. Competition is hotting up for who will supply the Australian Army's next generation of combat reconnaissance vehicles.

Bisalloy Steel has entered into an agreement with Rheinmetall to supply steel for their proposed answer to the Army's requirements, with the Boxer CRV. Should the Boxer be chosen, Rheinmetall has proposed exporting this vehicle to our allies throughout our region, potentially increasing the market for Illawarra steel. BlueScope and Bisalloy are also both well positioned to supply the steel needed for the significant vessel replacement programs underway for the Royal Australian Navy. In the decades to come 12 submarines, nine frigates and 12 offshore patrol vessels are to be built for the Navy, providing ample opportunity for the inclusion of New South Wales steel. The New South Wales Government's support for our steel industries includes helping to promote their defence capabilities to domestic and international markets.

Bisalloy exhibited at the Defence NSW stand at the Pacific 2017 maritime defence exposition here in Sydney and it will co-exhibit with Team Defence Australia at Defence Services Asia in Kuala Lumpur in April. It is important to note that this Government does not stop there when it comes to steel. Others may talk the talk; we walk the walk. We are shipping steel around the State. We have specified the use of New South Wales steel for major projects such as the \$500 million water supply pipeline supplying water to Broken Hill. That 270 kilometre pipeline will connect Wentworth on the Murray River with Broken Hill and deliver increased water security. The Government committed to delivering this project using New South Wales steel and we have done just that—using 25,000 tonnes of BlueScope Steel from Port Kembla.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order: I am finding it difficult to hear the Minister because of the level of interjections. I am sure Hansard will also be finding it difficult to hear.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I uphold the point of order. I had counted five members interjecting prior to the point of order being taken. It is ridiculous to think that Hansard is able to record what is being said by the member speaking.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: That New South Wales steel will be transformed into 20,000 individual pipe sections up to 13.5 metres long. This is good news for our steel industry.

ABORIGINAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (14:52): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The Minister would know that for many Aboriginal families and communities sorry business keeps coming and coming with the pain, sorrow and financial hardship that it entails. Given how much sorry business Aboriginal communities have to deal with as a result of the systemic disadvantage they suffer in our society, and that the cost of even a modest funeral generally ranges from \$10,000 to \$20,000, will the Government consider reintroducing meaningful financial support for First Nations peoples to alleviate this ongoing financial burden?

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: A preselection speech.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (14:53): Mr President—

Mr David Shoebridge: Point of order: After I asked the question, the interjection of "preselection" came from the Government benches. I find that interjection offensive. I ask that it be withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Mr Shoebridge, I apologise. I did not hear the comment because the Clerk had just approached me. I will reserve my ruling on the point of order.

Mr David Shoebridge: I can identify the member. I wish he would identify himself.

The PRESIDENT: That will not be necessary, Hansard will do that. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I thank the honourable member for his question. I know the very genuine nature in which the question has been asked. I would like to take some time to give a more considered response. I will take the question on notice and come back to the member with an answer as soon as I can.

WATER COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (14:54): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given that the Minister stated on 14 February to this Parliament, in relation to water theft from the Barwon-Darling, that "a decision on whether to commence prosecutions should be able to be made by the Board of WaterNSW by late February 2018", and given today's revelation by the Ombudsman in tabling his report that he has "confirmed with Revenue NSW that no penalty infringement notices were issued by WaterNSW", how many prosecutions have since been initiated?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:55): I thank the honourable member for his question. He may not have been following, but there was an announcement today of two prosecutions that are proceeding into these matters in relation to water compliance. As those matters are now before the courts I will not be commenting on them. I said that WaterNSW would bring these matters to the board by the end of February, and that is the case. On 28 February the board of WaterNSW met and agreed to proceed with the prosecutions. I repeat, as those matters are now before the courts it is inappropriate for me to comment any further.

ABORIGINAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (14:56): 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 this year's New South Wales Aboriginal Woman of the Year?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (14:56): I thank the honourable member for his question. This morning I had the great honour of joining the Premier and the Minister for Women, Tanya Davies, at the seventh annual New South Wales Women of the Year Awards. This important event aims to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution women across New South Wales make to industry, community and society. I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to participate in this morning's event in my capacity as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

As I mentioned in the House yesterday, this year's National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee [NAIDOC] Week theme is "Because of her, we can". I am acutely aware of the incredible contribution that Aboriginal women make to their communities and to the Australian community as a whole. I am pleased to inform the House that the 2018 New South Wales Aboriginal Woman of the Year is Julie Shelley. Julie is a proud Kamilaroi woman who has lived and worked in the Western Sydney Aboriginal community for more than 48 years. She has been married for 31 years, has four children and four grandchildren.

Julie started as a volunteer phone counsellor and has worked in liaison, counselling and support worker roles for many years to provide support and care for some of the most vulnerable members of the community. In addition to her tireless contributions in her professional life, Julie also generously volunteers her time and expertise to many national, State and community working groups, committees and organisations. She is also an accredited clinical counsellor for the NSW Child Sex Offender Counsellors Accreditation Scheme. Her story not only is inspiring but is one of many stories that highlight the amazing things Aboriginal women in New South Wales are achieving locally and in the broader community.

The other finalists for this year's award were: Associate Professor Faye McMillan, a Wiradjuri woman from Trangie in the central west of New South Wales; and Selena Archibald, a much admired educator who has been supporting students at Morisset High School since 1999. Yesterday I spent time with these three finalists. They were the most remarkable and humble women I have had the pleasure of meeting in a very long time. They are all doing great things for their communities. Each of them said they did not know what they had done to be nominated. That shows how important these awards are in recognising these champions in the Aboriginal community and their achievements. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge Norma Ingram who was awarded the First State Super Lifetime Award at this morning's celebrations.

This is a new award in 2018 and recognises an outstanding woman who has dedicated her life to the advancement of women in New South Wales. Norma was the first Aboriginal person to graduate from Harvard University. She has dedicated her life to sharing her culture and educating non-Aboriginal people on its importance in today's society. I heartily congratulate Julie, Norma and all the finalists for the valuable contribution they make to their communities.

I would like to mention an extremely impressive young Aboriginal woman I had the pleasure of meeting this morning, Jada Mathysen-Whyman from the Western Sydney Wanderers Football Club. When the Female Football Week National Awards winners were announced at a breakfast function held in Melbourne this morning, Jada was named the inaugural recipient of the Role Model Award. She is a role model on and off the field and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and work with her again.

I am proud of the work that the Government has done in putting together the 2018 NSW Women of the Year event and coordinating these awards. It was wonderful to see members from both Houses and from all sides of politics there to celebrate these incredible women at this morning's event. The Government played a vital role in supporting Aboriginal Woman of the Year as a category. As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, it was a privilege for me to have played a role in acknowledging the significant contribution of these women. Congratulations to

everybody nominated today, and particularly to Julie on being named NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year for 2018. [*Time expired.*]

GLADSTONE STATE FOREST AND KOALA HABITAT

Ms DAWN WALKER (15:00): My question is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, representing the Minister for Lands and Forestry. Last week I received reports of fresh koala scat only 100 metres away from logging activity in Gladstone State Forest. Given this danger to a threatened species, will the Minister immediately halt logging and commit to an investigation into the Gladstone State Forest?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:01): I thank the honourable member for her question directed to the Minister for Lands and Forestry, who I represent in this place. Gladstone State Forest is a regrowth forest, which has been harvested multiple times before. Koalas have co-existed with forestry activities in this forest for 100 years. That they are still there is clear evidence of the care taken by Forestry Corporation and its predecessors to preserve their habitat and those of other species. For that purpose, in the areas of Gladstone State Forest currently planned for harvesting, 60 per cent of the area is set aside for conservation—such as wildlife corridors, rainforest protections and to protect soil and water values. Forestry Corporation has also identified an area to be set aside as a koala high-use area, based on historic and recent records.

It is not just in Gladstone State Forest where koalas are found. Surveys have shown that they appear at equal rates in forest areas that have been harvested both recently and historically and in areas that have never seen timber harvesting. The vast majority of forested lands in this State do not see timber harvesting. There are 23 million hectares of forest in New South Wales. Only 4 per cent of those forests are State forest areas that are zoned as available for harvesting. Of the areas available for harvest, only 1 to 2 per cent are harvested each year. Forestry Corporation works to a 100-year plan for sustainably managing our forests and providing renewable timber for local industry, and we have already been harvesting timber in these same forests for more than 100 years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the first time. I remind Ms Dawn Walker that she asked the question in silence and she should allow the Minister to answer the question without interjection.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: In the areas where Forestry Corporation harvests trees, it identifies and protects trees that must be retained for their habitat value—such as hollow-bearing trees, koala feed trees, and trees to provide seed for the forest to regenerate. Gladstone State Forest is subject to selective timber harvesting, not clear-felling, and this occurs routinely every 20 years or so. After timber harvesting, Forestry Corporation ensures that the forest quickly regenerates to provide a renewable timber resource for future generations as well as ongoing habitat for koalas, which thrive in forests with young, healthy regrowth trees. The fact that New South Wales production forests continue to support robust koala populations demonstrates that the measures that are in place provide effective protection for this important native species.

Working forests are worksites, and forests are often closed to the public during timber harvesting operations to ensure these worksites can operate safely. Safety is always the first priority for Forestry Corporation and the timber industry. While there have been a small number of individuals present at the edge of the forest in recent weeks, the forest is closed to avoid a situation where protestors and machinery could come into contact. Of course, the views and concerns of the community are important and this Government has many processes and forums in place to hear those views and engage in robust discussions. But in this instance, blockading a legal operation in Gladstone State Forest is not a proper way to raise issues and have a commonsense discussion. The operation is being conducted in accordance with the regulations, and a solid and comprehensive planning process has ensured that threatened species are being protected. [*Time expired.*]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I remind members that I am working on two reserved decisions that I have to give after question time. The continued interjections make that very difficult. I want to ensure that question time is not delayed, so I again ask that members from all sides of the Chamber cease interjecting.

WATER COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:06): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given the Minister's previous answers yesterday and today to questions on incorrect information about water compliance and enforcement action, and his inability to confirm whether the information provided by WaterNSW to the Matthews inquiry was inaccurate, will he take responsibility for misleading the Parliament and resign?

The PRESIDENT: I am glad I asked members not to interject. I hate to think what would have happened if I had not.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:07): I thank the honourable member for his question—a very similar question to the one he asked me yesterday. I said then that I will not be resigning, and my answer now is the same. As stated in the NSW Ombudsman's report—I encourage members to read it—the figures that were provided to me and to the Ombudsman were clearly a result of an error, one that was not intentional or malicious. The Ombudsman has highlighted that in its report, which will be followed by a further report from the Ombudsman in April or May.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: It has taken document after document. Someone has to be held to account. It is unacceptable.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: It is unacceptable. That is why I met with the chair of WaterNSW today, to explain—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: You also misled us on lands.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Yes, that was unacceptable as well.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Point of order: Mr President, while it is wonderful to hear a conversation across the table, it is question time and the Minister is directing his answer to you. I ask that you ask other members to stop interjecting and allow the Minister to complete his answer.

The PRESIDENT: Stop the clock. I uphold the point of order. I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the second time. With all the interjections, I cannot keep track of the members I have called to order.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I did meet with the chair of WaterNSW today. The board of WaterNSW is taking this matter seriously. With direct oversight of the board, the Audit and Risk Committee of WaterNSW will ensure that the recommendations from the Ombudsman's report today will be implemented. But I stand up again today and say what I said yesterday. I am not going anywhere, because that is what those opposite want. On the issue of water compliance, I have stood here and answered every question thrown at me by those opposite. We have acted in a way that has been prompt and responsible. We got Ken Matthews to carry out an investigation, and we have not tried to whitewash anything. We have taken this issue seriously and we put the legislation through this Parliament to set up an independent regulator to ensure water compliance in New South Wales. We will also bring forward further changes to the way that we administer water in this State in another piece of legislation. I will stand up at every opportunity and answer any question those opposite have got.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. John Graham to order for the first time.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: If any one of those opposite, including the mumblers at the back, have any evidence that they want to submit, they should put it to the authorities or stand up here under parliamentary privilege and give me their best shot. There has been no conspiracy here. Those opposite should read the Ombudsman's report and stand up and tell us what they know about water, what their policies are for the future and if they even believe in an irrigation industry in this State. It is clear that they do not. They do not know Arthur from Martha when it comes to this policy area. Those opposite should stand up and make their accusations or sit down and allow the good people of New South Wales to get on and do what they do best to ensure that we have confidence in the system. Until they have got that evidence, those opposite should keep quiet and allow us to get on with our job.

MINING INDUSTRY FEMALE PARTICIPATION

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (15:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts. Will the Minister update the House on women in the mining sector?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:12): As I am sure all members know, mining has been an integral part of New South Wales for more than 200 years and we continue to be the beneficiaries of the economic contribution that mining makes to the State. Royalties alone contributed \$1.6 billion to our State budget last financial year. These funds are being used to support essential health, education and infrastructure projects. Mining is also the largest industry in New South Wales, contributing around \$25 billion to the State's economy. To put that in perspective, that is almost 50 per cent of total merchandised export revenue. Clearly, the importance of the industry and suppliers to New South Wales cannot be overstated.

In 2014 women made up 10.3 per cent of the mining workforce in New South Wales. The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that in 2017 that figure has grown by 58.3 per cent to 16.3 per cent. I truly believe that diversity creates a more productive workforce and I wish to see more women in senior management in mining. For too long there has been a misconception that mining is primarily a male domain. More needs to be done to promote the contribution of women to this sector in every aspect, from operations to engineering and everything in between.

Across the many mines I have visited, I have seen the contributions that many women make in a whole range of jobs across the sector, particularly young women in regional areas who have chosen the mining industry as their career. On International Women's Day in 2012, the NSW Minerals Council established the Women in Mining Network to create a sustainable and productive network of women across the resources sector in New South Wales. This network hosts events to bring together its members with events in Sydney, the Hunter, the Illawarra and the Central West, and it acts as an advocacy body to represent the interests of women in mining.

I congratulate the NSW Minerals Council on promoting the great contribution of women in the resources sector through the NSW Women in Mining Awards, which will be held next week. I particularly look forward to hearing from Stefanie Loader, a mining industry executive with international experience, who also served as chair of the NSW Minerals Council from 2015 to 2017. I had the privilege to visit that mine when she was the general manager of Northparkes copper and gold mine in the Central West—in fact, it was the first mine I visited as Minister.

Last year's winner of the Exceptional Woman in NSW Mining Award was Kristen Molloy, Chief Executive Officer of Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator. She leads an industry-funded organisation that works across the Hunter Valley Coal Chain to ensure more efficient and effective outcomes for the industry. She attributes her passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] as the reason for her interest in taking on board the complex problems within the mining and commodity business. I thank all women working in the industry for the important role they play in mining in New South Wales. Let us see that role grow even further into the future.

NURSES AND MIDWIVES AWARD NEGOTIATIONS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (15:16): My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Niall Blair, representing the Minister for Health. My question relates to the thousands of hardworking nurses and midwives in metropolitan and rural public hospitals, whose pay and entitlements will be up for negotiation with the Minister shortly. Will the Minister provide a 100 per cent guarantee that he, his department and its representatives will not seek any reduction in penalty rates or other benefits in negotiations for the next Public Health System Nurses' and Midwives' (State) Award?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:16): I thank the Hon. Robert Borsak for his question. The question asks not only for some detail but also for a guarantee from the Minister for Health, who I represent in this Chamber. Not only do I not have the detail but I certainly cannot give a guarantee on behalf of the Minister. I will refer the question to the Minister and allow him to provide the answer in detail. I will come back to the member in due course.

TANDOU WATER ENTITLEMENT

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (15:17): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Given that yesterday the Minister told this House that "at no stage did the New South Wales Government intervene in that transaction" to pay \$78 million for Lake Tandou's water entitlements, in light of multiple media reports that the Minister's department commissioned the valuation that the Commonwealth Government relied on for the purchase of the Tandou property, and that former top WaterNSW official Gavin Hanlon personally made representations to the Federal Government regarding the transaction, has the Minister now misled the House for a third time?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:17): I have not misled this House in relation to the deal that was done by the Commonwealth Government. New South Wales did not intervene in the decision-making process in relation to that transaction. I would like the member to stand up and say whether he disagrees with that productive water coming out of that part of the system. We have been very clear in New South Wales that we do not support non-strategic buybacks when it comes to water. This was deemed to be a strategic buyback by the Commonwealth Government and that is why it pursued it and made that purchase. New South Wales believed that that was a win-win when the facts about that water and how it would be able to restructure that area were on the table. We did not oppose it because we believed that it was strategic. I remind the member what I said in my answer

yesterday. This very issue was subjected to hours and hours of questioning and scrutiny during the Senate estimates process, a Senate estimates process that looked at this very deal. Nothing came out of that questioning or process that would suggest anything was wrong with that.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Yes, there was. You paid twice the money.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: The Greens cannot talk about the Senate estimates because the same group that stood in the way of the Northern Basin Review failed to even turn up to the Senate budget estimates in Canberra. That is how much they care about water. They did not even turn up for the latest estimates. They played politics with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and then failed to turn up to the estimates to ask any of the officials from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority or the Minister anything to do with water. They squibbed it. They were too busy back in South Australia playing politics with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan that had been agreed to by every State and the Commonwealth. That is how The Greens go. To hear them squawking in here about water when their mates in Canberra cannot even be bothered to turn up to estimates and ask the questions that should be asked, removes their entitlement to have a say when it comes to deals such as this.

It was done by the Federal Government. We provided information but we did not intervene. It was Canberra's money. Canberra made the decision. They should go to Senate estimates and ask as many questions as they want. Dr Mehreen Faruqi, who turns up to question time with five minutes to go, is off to Canberra. Maybe she will turn up to Senate estimates because the others from South Australia cannot be bothered to turn up. They do not care about the Murray-Darling Basin Authority. They should write their questions, give them to Dr Mehreen Faruqi, who is off to Canberra because of a deal that Mr Jeremy Buckingham did. She is off down there as the Steven Bradbury of The Greens, coming across the line at the end when no-one else wanted it—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Point of order: My point of order is relevance. The Minister has strayed from the leave of the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Minister should be generally relevant.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: If members have a problem with the water coming out of that area, they should tell us what the problem is. It was a strategic purchase. I am sure that many of those questions were put during Senate estimates and if members read Federal *Hansard* they might find what they are looking for.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (15:22): I ask a supplementary question. Could the Minister please elucidate that part of his answer in which he said that he or his department provided information to the Commonwealth? What information did the Minister's department provide and was it the valuation that his department commissioned?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:22): I thank the member for his elucidation. He just answered his own question.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION INITIATIVES

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX (15:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government is helping to develop advanced industries in our State?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:22): I thank the honourable member for his question. The New South Wales Government is supporting innovation to help develop new and advanced industries and create the high-quality jobs of the future. Medical technology is just one of those areas where New South Wales leads the nation. We have Australia's largest medical technology industry, employing 7,000 people and contributing \$2 billion to the New South Wales economy. Cochlear is one of many New South Wales companies producing world-beating technology.

Indeed, 35 years ago Cochlear began its pioneering work implanting hearing aids that allow profoundly deaf people to hear for the first time. From its headquarters on the campus of Macquarie University, Cochlear has blazed a trail for Australian medical innovators. In 2011 *Forbes* magazine named Cochlear the world's most innovative company. Cochlear has a direct presence in 20 countries and sells to a further 80, employing 3,000 people around the globe. On 22 February I toured the Cochlear Training and Experience Centre in Jakarta and spoke directly to its staff and management team. I saw some of the remarkable work it performs and heard firsthand how the business evolves.

The centre, a partnership between Cochlear and local company PT Kasoem, not only offers cochlear implants but also trains audiologists and speech therapists from across South-East Asia. The work of Cochlear in

Indonesia and across South-East Asia also demonstrates the benefit that free trade can deliver to people from all walks of life. Cochlear's products have the power to change lives and it is wonderful they have been able to expand their business and share their technology outside Australia. It is also a great example of the strengthening relationship between Australia and Indonesia; indeed, the strengthening relationship between Australia and all Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] nations—a warm relationship that benefits all parties. Here in New South Wales, we are doing all we can to foster the next Cochlear.

In January the Premier opened the Sydney Startup Hub, putting the city firmly on the map as a world-leading centre of innovation. The hub brings the talents of 2,500 people under one roof, providing a single access point to networks, skills, funding and leadership. Through the Boosting Business Innovation Program, we have also provided \$1.5 million to every university in the State and the CSIRO to encourage collaboration between the university and commercial sectors. Last year we opened also the Sydney School of Entrepreneurship, which is teaching high-performing students from all over New South Wales how to start their own enterprise. Of course we have our offshore trade and investment network. These are things this responsible Coalition Government can afford to do and has done. We are looking to grow the economy and fostering new industry. I look forward to the day when I can say we supported the next Cochlear as they take the world by storm.

I was proud to represent all members and everyone in New South Wales at the clinic in Jakarta. I met two people whom I will remember probably for the rest of my life—one young man in his early twenties who is studying business at university and whose family brought him to Australia to get his implant 20 years ago and a little girl two years of age who has just received her implant in Jakarta. It is great that we can now take this technology directly to the people where it is needed. That little girl's mother crowd funded for her implant through Facebook. Her mother studied here in Australia and returned to Malaysia. It is because of her connections with Indonesia that her daughter's life is now changed. It was a moving moment for me and we should all be very proud of Cochlear.

BARWON-DARLING WATER SHARING PLAN

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (15:27): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Water. Given the significant rainfall that has occurred in Queensland within the Darling River catchment within recent days and given that a section of the lower Darling is on blue-green algae red alert and other areas have run dry, will the Minister exercise his powers under the Barwon-Darling Unregulated and Alluvial Sources Water Sharing Plan 2012 to protect the expected flows by urgently implementing an embargo on extractions to ensure that all downstream water users have healthy stock and domestic water supplies?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:27): I thank the honourable member for his important question. We know there have been weather systems, particularly in Queensland and northern New South Wales, that have produced some rainfall. I have received some advice from my agencies about what events may eventuate into flows down through the river system. In order to be fully across the details and to ensure that such decisions are made and communicated in the appropriate way, I have sought advice from my department before today about those matters. That process is being considered and the information is being gathered. We must remember that parts of the State and communities rely upon such events. From early information, some of the weather reports and some of the data I have seen, it is suggested that such events may make their way down to the lower part of the Darling. I know that the member gave notice of a motion in this regard this morning.

I do not believe the upper catchments will benefit from the event in North Queensland as the resulting flows will not make it all the way down the Darling. I have sought the information requested. We must follow the correct procedures and processes to gather the information in the first instance and then a decision will be made based on that. Communities such as Bourke and Walgett are under water restrictions. All those matters, including the public interest and critical human needs, are taken into consideration when making decisions such as this. We must have all the information available before making such a decision. That is the only update I have for the member at this stage. There is no point taking the question on notice because by the time I return with an answer any window for making a decision will be closed. That is the latest information I have. I am waiting on advice from my agencies before a decision is made.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (15:30): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer by informing the House when the decision may be made regarding his powers to create an embargo on the Barwon Darling unregulated and alluvial water sources water sharing plan?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:30): The decision will be made at the appropriate time in the appropriate manner and will be communicated appropriately.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: If honourable members have further questions, I invite them to place them on notice.

The PRESIDENT: Earlier in question time I reserved my rulings on two points of order. As question time was particularly robust, members will appreciate that I have not had the opportunity to consider the matters carefully. Therefore, I regret that I am not in a position to rule on them today. I will rule on both matters when the House returns on Tuesday 13 March.

WOMEN IN ARTS, SCREEN AND CULTURE

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:31): In relation to the Hon. Catherine Cusack's earlier question, I omitted to mention one important fact. It is that in the six State cultural institutions—three of which are led by women—more than 50 per cent of trustees, and all but one of the trustees newly appointed at the beginning of the year, are women. They are all doing an incredible job.

MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES CENTRE FOR FASHION BALL

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:31): I have a response to a question asked yesterday by the Hon. Robert Borsak. I am advised that the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has not finalised the finance report from the MAAS ball as it is finalising a number of invoices and donations. However, the event is budgeted for as part of the annual MAAS budget and is supplemented by sponsorship funding. The inaugural MAAS ball was a strategic event to raise awareness of the Australian fashion industry, promote the museum's world-class fashion collection and launch the Australian Fashion Fund. As I informed the House yesterday, the event raised more than \$70,000 in seed funding for the Australian Fashion Fund, which will be used to acquire Australian fashion for the museum.

The event achieved its five main objectives: first, to raise awareness of the significant MAAS fashion collection, which was achieved in the showcasing of rarely seen garments throughout the evening; secondly, to build the MAAS fashion collection, which was achieved by the significant and notable donation of the Akira Isogawa archive; thirdly, to build MAAS' reputation as the leading public centre for fashion in Australia, which was evidenced through considerable positive media coverage around the event valued at the equivalent of \$1.2 million; fourthly, to further its relationships across the sector, which was evidenced by new corporate partnerships and donors that were secured as a result of the event; and, fifthly, to build strong industry support and raise awareness of the importance of fashion as a contributor to the Australian economy.

The success of the evening speaks to the museum's commitment and strong relationships with designers, industry, government and education operators from across the fashion sector. Feedback from attendees across the sector was overwhelmingly positive and revealed strong support for the museum and the Centre for Fashion. It is disappointing that the success of the event has been overshadowed by allegations that are unsubstantiated.

BARWON-DARLING WATER SHARING PLAN

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:34): Further to a question asked of me today by Mr Jeremy Buckingham, I refer the House to a media release that was just issued. It states:

The NSW Department of Industry - Lands and Water today announced temporary restrictions on A, B and C class water access licences in the Barwon-Darling Unregulated River to protect valuable low flows entering the river.

The restrictions have been deemed necessary as during the last two months multiple locations along the Barwon-Darling River such as Bourke, Louth and Wilcannia, have experienced no flow conditions with water in pools and weirs rapidly depleting.

These measures are required to ensure access to water for towns, domestic and stock uses remains available, as well as licence holders requiring water for permanent plantings.

The restriction on the taking of flows for A, B and C class water licences in the Barwon-Darling will provide protection of small within-channel flows—flows that are required by communities and individual landholders up and down the river for basic human needs.

The temporary water restrictions have been enacted on the back of recent widespread rainfall across Queensland catchments of the Barwon-Darling River system.

While it is too early to tell the exact magnitude of inflows at this stage, estimates suggest flows should at least be re-established to Bourke, and potentially sufficient to refill the Bourke Weir pool.

Unfortunately this event is expected to be too small to assist communities in the Lower Darling and may not reach Wilcannia.

Any lower priority access to these flows would ultimately further reduce the extent of these flows along this parched river system.

The placement of temporary water restrictions in this instance is in the public interest—and the NSW Government has acted quickly and appropriately to protect those interests.

WaterNSW will continue to closely monitor the situation so that these restrictions can be removed once appropriate to do so.

I conclude by saying that the appropriate communications and enactments of this legal instrument are progressing with haste, and this will be communicated to all stakeholders this afternoon.

Bills

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENT (E-CIGARETTES) BILL 2017

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (15:38): In the three minutes remaining to me I am going to turn it down a notch. As members of Parliament, we should believe in evidence-based policy as the core of legislative enactment. Over the lunch break it was brought to my attention that just today a report was released by Public Health England, which was reported in the Melbourne *Herald Sun*. The article states:

Not only did the report conclude that vaping poses only a small fraction of the risks of smoking and switching completely from smoking to vaping conveys substantial health benefits, but it found that "there have been no identified health risks of passive vaping to bystanders". That report was just released by Public Health England. So I ask all members to consider the following: As evidence-based policy, 15,000 people a year in Australia die prematurely due to smoking; nobody dies because of vaping. On the one hand, you have 15,000 people; on the other hand, zero. Given that about a third of Australia's population live in New South Wales, it means about 5,000 people in this State die prematurely every year because of smoking. If those people could move from the burning and ingestion of tobacco smoke and tar to a different system that allowed them to feed their nicotine addiction in relative safety—and by that I mean 20 times greater safety—with no detrimental effects to the people around them, why would we not allow them to do that?

Mr Deputy President, you and I both come from rural and regional New South Wales. We both know that it is difficult to find a doctor, especially in remote areas, and even harder to find one who will bulk-bill. Even now you can get a prescription for nicotine-based fluid. It saves time but it has cost implications for many people in rural and regional New South Wales. How much harder is it then for the Indigenous population of rural and remote Australia? As opposed to allowing people to access e-cigarettes themselves—to self-medicate, get off tobacco and still be able to satisfy their craving for nicotine—the current situation actively disadvantages poor, Indigenous and socially disadvantaged people in the community.

If I am rich, I can go to New Zealand and bring back nicotine fluid. I can go to New Caledonia—where the French have legalised it—and do the same thing. Those people who claim to care about social justice in this country but who suggest that vaping should be made illegal, or restricted further, are letting down exactly the people they claim to be helping. I recommend that we move ahead with evidence-based policy and towards a system of vaping in New South Wales, and Australia more generally.

Ms DAWN WALKER (15:41): I lead for The Greens in debate on the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017. This bill proposes important amendments to the Smoke-free Environment Act that will see e-cigarettes treated in the same way as tobacco under the Act, so that e-cigarettes cannot be used in areas that are deemed to be smoke free. The Greens have supported changes like this in the past. But after consulting extensively with experts in heart health, lung health, tobacco-related disease and the science of addiction, we feel that the most appropriate step to take is to refer the bill for inquiry and report. Australia is a recognised world leader in tobacco regulation. These regulations are an important part of protecting the health of our community. The World Health Organization notes that tobacco kills seven million people each year. In Australia, there are 19,000 tobacco-related deaths a year. That means if vaping is a safer alternative to smoking it has the potential to save many lives.

On the other hand, vaping is a relatively new technology and there is a lot of conflicting information about it. What this Parliament needs is clarity on this issue—a deeply serious issue related to the health and wellbeing of our community. Let us not forget that we are politicians. Most of us are not scientists, we are not medical doctors, and we are not experts in this field. The stakes are too high for us to make a decision like this, which has the potential to save many lives, without being fully informed of the facts. There are several key questions we need to consider. Is vaping a gateway to smoking?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: No.

Ms DAWN WALKER: Can vaping help people to quit smoking?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Yes.

Ms DAWN WALKER: What are the short- and long-term risks associated with vaping?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Negligible.

Ms DAWN WALKER: It is only when we have the answers to these questions, and not just the opinion of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps—

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: I am happy to show you the scientific reports from the UK and the US which back up my statements.

Ms DAWN WALKER: This is going to be a good opportunity to have people come to us. The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps is very welcome to join the committee and make an informed decision about how we should regulate these products. Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting "That this bill be now read a second time" and inserting instead "That the bill be referred to Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health and Community Services for inquiry and report".

The Hon. WALT SECORD (15:45): In reply: As shadow health Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I thank honourable members for their contributions to debate on the Smoke-free Environment Amendment (E-cigarettes) Bill 2017. Members will be aware that I introduced the bill in Parliament last year and it was second read on 23 November 2017. It has been the subject of widespread community consultation and discussion, including by 25 professional bodies and health organisations, such as the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council NSW, Australian Medical Association (NSW), Asthma Australia and the Australian Dental Association. There has been a conga line of unwavering support. All those organisations want to see the spirit of the bill put into law and see a ban on the use of e-cigarettes in smoke-free areas as soon as possible. They do not want to see the Government continuing to dillydally and play politics.

In May 2015, the Liberal-Nationals State Government passed laws to restrict e-cigarettes in relation to minors, which came into effect on 1 December 2015. It became an offence to vape in a car carrying a child, and this carries an on-the-spot fine of \$250. Vaping is banned on plane flights at the moment, but is allowed in schools, offices, cafes, shopping centres, restaurants, at swimming pools and sporting events, and on public transport in New South Wales. This legislation will remedy that. The legislation will also bring New South Wales into line with Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, which treat e-cigarettes similarly to cigarettes. Rather than reinventing the wheel later this year, the Berejiklian Government should just adopt Labor's bill and take it forward in a bipartisan manner.

Basically, we have the current ludicrous situation where you can legally buy and use an e-cigarette in a hospital, shopping centre or almost any enclosed space in New South Wales. The rules that apply to cigarettes should also apply to e-cigarettes. While there is still debate—and I take on board the concerns expressed by Ms Dawn Walker—about the effectiveness of e-cigarettes and whether they are a gateway to smoking or stopping people smoking, they should at least have similar restrictions to cigarettes.

I thank the honourable members for their contributions to the debate, specifically Parliamentary Secretary and former nurse the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, Christian Democratic Party leader Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, former Liberal Party Whip the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps and The Greens health spokesperson, Ms Dawn Walker. I also thank the Government Whip, the Hon. Natasha McLaren-Jones, who made history during the debate by taking a point of order on her Government colleague the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps—her predecessor—who dared to speak out about the lack of consultation from his own Government on this important public health matter. You are very brave, Natasha.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Taking a point of order on Dr Phelps is not making history.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I acknowledge the interjection. While I do not share the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps' views on many public policy matters, admittedly he is able to mount and execute a very effective argument.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Very kind, Walt.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I acknowledge the interjection. The Government has indicated that it will oppose the bill. Admittedly, I am very disappointed that the Berejiklian Government has taken such a partisan and hostile approach to such an important public policy matter. For the past three and a half years as shadow health Minister, I have taken nothing but a constructive approach in attempting to improve our beleaguered health and hospital system.

It has been very difficult to be constructive when the health and hospital system lurches from crisis to crisis, with record waiting times for elective surgery and in emergency departments as well as the recent spate of public health incidents. I refer to the recent tragedy of the rockmelon Listeria crisis, which has resulted in four deaths—two in Victoria and two in New South Wales—as well as 17 confirmed cases nationally. In relation to The Greens amendment to refer the bill to a committee, I will support that move and urge the cross benches to do the same.

Finally, I will assist the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. He expressed dismay that the Government's bill from the health Minister has not been to the joint party room, gave the history and said the previous decision that did not go to the party room was the greyhound decision. I remind him that the stadiums decision also did not go to the joint party room. But luckily for the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, I have a copy of the briefing paper on the Government's plans for e-cigarettes. It was shared with the House by the Government's twenty-fourth member of the Cabinet, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile.

Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile: News to me.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You had a copy of the extra briefing note from the Minister, which was provided to you before the Liberal and National parties caucus.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! The Hon. Walt Secord will direct his comments through the Chair.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I advise members of the Liberal Party and The Nationals that legislation is coming from their health Minister and that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has received a briefing, before others in the party room, on what the bill will contain. The bill that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile said the health Minister will introduce will amend the Smoke-Free Environment Act to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn tobacco products in public places. The Smoke-Free Environment Act currently bans smoking in indoor areas, in commercial outdoor dining areas, at public swimming pools, at children's playgrounds, at transport stops and stations, in spectator areas of sportsgrounds and within four metres of the entrance to a public building.

The bill will also amend the Public Health (Tobacco) Act to require e-cigarette retailers to notify the health secretary that they are engaged in e-cigarette retailing in the same way tobacco retailers must notify the health secretary; and amend the Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017 to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and heat-not-burn products in public transport areas where the regulation currently bans smoking. This includes in passenger transport vehicles. I urge members to vote for this bill. If they will not, I urge them to vote for the bill to be referred to a committee. I thank the House for its consideration.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The Hon. Walt Secord has moved that this bill be now read a second time, to which Ms Dawn Walker has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes16
Noes19
Majority.....3

AYES

Borsak, Mr R
Faruqi, Dr M
Houssos, Ms C

Buckingham, Mr J
Field, Mr J
Mookhey, Mr D

Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Sharpe, Ms P
Walker, Ms D

Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D
Wong, Mr E

Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M

NOES

Blair, Mr N
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Green, Mr P
MacDonald, Mr S

Colless, Mr R
Farlow, Mr S
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)
Mason-Cox, Mr M
Phelps, Dr P

Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Khan, Mr T
Mallard, Mr S
Mitchell, Ms S
Taylor, Ms B

Martin, Mr T
Nile, Reverend F
Ward, Ms P

PAIRS

Primrose, Mr P

Amato, Mr L

PAIRS

Voltz, Ms L

Clarke, Mr D

Amendment negatived.**The PRESIDENT:** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.**The House divided.**

Ayes 11

Noes 19

Majority..... 8

AYES

Borsak, Mr R
Houssos, Ms CDonnelly, Mr G (teller)
Mookhey, Mr DGraham, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Sharpe, Ms PSearle, Mr A
Veitch, Mr MSecord, Mr W
Wong, Mr E

NOES

Blair, Mr N
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Green, Mr P
MacDonald, Mr SColless, Mr R
Farlow, Mr S
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
Khan, Mr T
Mallard, Mr SMartin, Mr T
Nile, Reverend F
Ward, Ms PMason-Cox, Mr M
Phelps, Dr PMitchell, Ms S
Taylor, Ms B

PAIRS

Primrose, Mr P
Voltz, Ms LAmato, Mr L
Clarke, Mr D**Motion negatived.***Adjournment Debate***ADJOURNMENT****The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

DROUGHT RELIEF FUNDING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (16:09): Today I update the House on the state of the current drought in New South Wales and the lack of adequate support by this Government for affected farmers. There are seven Government members in this House and 16 in the other place who claim to represent the interests of rural people. However, the only people willing to acknowledge the drought are representatives of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. This week when members of The Nationals were reaching for their umbrellas while moonlighting in Sydney, the situation in the bush could not have been a greater contrast. On 8 March the Bureau of Meteorology released its latest monthly drought report. The report details the worsening of the drought with below average rainfall in the western two-thirds of the State, rainfall deficiencies increasing on the east coast of New South Wales between the Manning and Illawarra districts, particularly in the Hunter region, and the worsening of long-term rainfall deficiencies in eastern Australia for both the nine month and 11 month indicators.

Farmers across the State deserve better than the treatment they are getting from the Liberal-Nationals Government. Whilst this Government cuts funding to rural services so that it can fund new stadiums in Sydney,

The Nationals have quietly signed away a generous drought relief program that once supported farmers. Previously, farmers in drought-declared regions had access to government grants for fodder, water and transport that did not require repayment. That is an appropriate measure because by the time the worst of a drought hits, the debt burden from low crop yields and stock losses is often crippling. With this in mind, it beggars belief that The Nationals response to drought-stricken farmers is to offer them more debt in the form of government loans. Whenever The Nationals have referred to the drought in recent times, it has been only in response to questions from my Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party colleagues.

On Friday 16 February, the Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair, was forced to make a morning drive from Sydney to three farms in the Hunter region to assure supporters of Michael Johnsen, The Nationals Upper Hunter member of Parliament, that the Government is doing something about drought relief assistance. Sadly, it is not; there has been no change in policy. There is no reason why drought grants could not supersede the current loan system, especially when John Barilaro, leader of The Nationals, has been trumpeting \$4.154 billion in new funding for the bush. That funding will come from the transfer of the State's share of the Snowy Mountains Hydro Scheme to the Commonwealth. As an accountant with more than 45 years' experience, I know full well the risk of a high debt to equity ratio in an uncertain climate, where income is compromised by a natural disaster of uncertain duration, such as drought. It is a recipe for bankruptcy and liquidation.

All too often I have heard stories of farming families being forced to abandon their livelihoods—on farms that have stood the test of time for generations—including the families of my own staff. The trauma never leaves those affected, and it is undeserved. Enough is enough. No other private business enterprise is subjected to the treatment that farmers receive from the Government when times are tough. Farmers need our help when drought strikes. On 8 February this year John Barilaro tried to bamboozle farmers with billion dollar figures in the Government's lacklustre drought assistance. Mr Barilaro said, "I wish I could do a rain dance and make it rain." Mr Barilaro can do a dance to make it rain for our State's farmers, and he can do it today, by restoring drought relief funding grants so that our farmers are spared from increasing debt when they are at their most vulnerable.

BADGERYS CREEK MEMORIAL CEMETERY

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (16:12): Today I inform the House of a lost community and a small but important event that celebrated its history. A few decades ago if one mentioned Badgerys Creek one had to say it was between Liverpool and Camden. Hardly anyone had heard of Badgerys Creek until the early 1980s when the area was earmarked for Sydney's second airport—but I am getting ahead of myself. Badgerys Creek was a small, proud and vibrant rural village community. My family, the Farrars and the Nevilles, were second-generation pioneering families in the area. In 1809, James Badgery was granted 804 acres in the area to establish a large rural estate to contribute crops and livestock to the new colony. John Blaxland, whose bust is usually in this Chamber, was granted more than 6,000 acres of land nearby, which he called Luddenham Estate. These large estates, resourced by convict labour, were highly successful. However, we acknowledge that success was at the price of the dispossession of the traditional custodians of the land, the Darug peoples, who maintain a strong and continuing connection to this land today.

My ancestors, the Nevilles and later the Farrars, arrived from England in the late 1800s. Grandfather Neville was the sole teacher at the newly opened Badgerys Creek Public School. He later purchased the teacher's residence across the road which became our family's small farm. The two churches across from the school, built by local subscription, included the local Anglican and Methodist Uniting cemeteries. During my youth these institutions, along with the post office, general store and butcher, were important centres of the community and are part of my fond memories of Badgerys Creek. For more than three decades, from the 1980s until 2014, Australian governments put the Badgerys Creek community through tremendous and unnecessary stress as the politicians procrastinated on the location of Sydney's second airport. Over and over again they ruled the site in and then out again, for short-term political advantage.

Many of us can recall the strong community and political resistance over those years. All the while the ever-diligent bureaucracy beavered away in the background acquiring the land, closing cemeteries, demolishing farm properties, fencing off roads and closing the school. The community started to drift away. My relatives saw the writing on the wall and sold our little farm in the late 1980s. But we, like many others, left behind memories and some loved ones in the local cemeteries. My grandparents a few times removed, Samuel and Esther Farrar, arrived from England in the late 1800s. I obviously never met them but by all accounts they were stern, religious people who worked hard as local farmers and shopkeepers. On their deaths, they were buried at Badgerys Creek in the 1920s at the respective ages of 80 and 88 years. They lived long lives. On 9 December 2017, more than 100 descendants of the families from Badgerys Creek, including my parents, Max and Margaret Mallard, and me, gathered at the newly created Badgerys Creek Memorial Cemetery within the Forrest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery at Leppington to rededicate our loved ones to rest in peace.

The project to relocate the family graves from Badgerys creek to an impressive and faithfully laid-out reproduction of the old Anglican and Uniting Church cemeteries was initiated by the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and fulfilled by its contractor InvoCare. I acknowledge the Hon. Paul Fletcher, the Federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, for his stewardship of this final and most important chapter in the development of the Western Sydney Airport. I place on record the very professional manner in which Ms Angela Vysniauskas of InvoCare managed the sensitive liaison with families during this whole process. Her compassion and communication was highly commendable and a credit to her profession and employer. The Government has produced an excellent hardcover book recording the stories of Badgerys Creek, the families and the historic cemeteries. I have a copy here. It is an important historic record of the community. The event was not one for politicians or government departments, who respectfully stayed away.

The service was one of laughs and some tears as former local retired Anglican Minister Nigel Webb shared many stories about the families and the community and we all shared memories of the characters that made up Badgerys Creek. What I did not expect from the service, more important than the respectful relocation of the cemeteries, was the opportunity it became for the now dispersed and aging community to come together after so many years to share memories and to discover new family connections, as my mother did. In a real sense, we came together to grieve and to achieve some closure of that community. Progress marches on. Relocating cemeteries is nothing new. Sydney Town Hall was built on a colonial cemetery which was relocated to Devonshire Street, only to be again relocated to Rookwood. As our cities and State continue to grow there will be acquisitions of properties, relocation of loved ones and dislocation of communities. We see it happening today. My only hope is that it can be done in a compassionate and caring way, as was the case for those living and who died at Badgerys Creek.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:17): I am happy to wear a ribbon but I do not particularly want to go to a breakfast. I try not to eat the brownies at the morning teas and I definitely do not want to buy a handbag or a shirt. Whilst I have done some of those things today for International Women's Day, tonight these are the things I really want to talk about when it comes to women. I want to talk about women's autonomy, whether it is the one in four young women and girls women who are married before they are 18; the 68,000 women worldwide who die from unsafe abortions; or the seven million women each year who are admitted to hospital as a result of unsafe abortions. Until women can decide when and if they will have sex, when and if they will marry, and when and if they will have children, they cannot be free. I want to talk about the education of women and girls. I want to talk about the 16 million girls between the ages of six and 11 who will never go to primary school, and the 500 million women in the world who cannot read or write.

Closer to home I want to talk about the cuts to TAFE that have had a significant impact on women seeking to reskill themselves or return to the workforce. I want to talk about women's work and why childcare workers and hairdressers earn less than motor mechanics and plumbers, why women are clustered in lower paid and insecure work, and why domestic violence leave is not automatic in all workplaces. I want to talk about why a survey released this week found that one in 10 women in Australian workplaces have experienced sexual harassment, more than two-thirds of women are worried that they will not have enough retirement income to retire comfortably, and only 31 per cent of women said they thought men and women were treated equally at work.

I want to talk about women and power. Unless and until women are able to fully participate in decision-making at all levels of government and in the community and the world of work, women will never be equal. I want to acknowledge Labor's success as a result of our affirmative action rules and urge conservative parties to stop hiding behind bogus merit arguments as an excuse for excluding women. It is time to ensure that our parliaments look like our people.

I want to talk about why the majority of the world's poor are women. I want to recognise single mothers as heroes who should be supported, not penalised. I want to shout from the rooftops about the growing number of older women who are becoming homeless. I want to talk about women not in work and how the tax system makes it harder for them to work. I have to talk about violence. One woman a week in Australia is murdered by her current or former partner. One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence and one in five Australian women have experienced sexual violence. Why is this still not a national emergency? Finally, I want to talk about equality for women being a project that seeks equality for all women. With the advances we have made, we are still leaving too many women behind.

More women chief executive officers and members of Parliament is a step forward. But let us not make that the central focus which diverts attention from our Aboriginal sisters who still do not have land rights or the autonomy and support they need to overcome generations of trauma; young women being thrown out of home because they tell their parents they are gay; our trans-sisters harming themselves and suffering horrendous discrimination every day; women with disabilities being ignored altogether while the Government de-funds their

advocacy organisations; and the number of women in our prison system who themselves are victims of the most hideous neglect and abuse and who need a hand up rather than incarceration, which leaves them without their children or their housing.

On International Women's Day, let us not just wear the ribbon and eat the brownies. Let us all commit to taking concrete action to improve the lives of all women. This year, my commitment as a member of Parliament [MP] is to put in place safe access zones for women outside reproductive health clinics and to keep working with supportive MPs and the incredible feminist women in our community who are working to get abortion out of the New South Wales Crimes Act. I also commit to encouraging every woman I know to join her union. The journey to equality will be faster if they do so.

NSW NATIONALS CENTRAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (16:21): This evening I advise the House of a fabulous event that occurred in Orange on 10 February 2018, the inaugural Central Regional Conference of the NSW Nationals. I was delighted to convene this conference in Orange, which provided an opportunity to showcase the extraordinary attributes of the central western region of New South Wales. There is an incredible air of optimism in regional New South Wales at present, following the announcement of the inland rail project, a substantial project that was secured by The Nationals in Canberra. The agenda for the conference was developed with the many issues facing the Central West in mind. All The Nationals members of Parliament, both State and Federal, representing this huge proportion of New South Wales are committed to ensuring that the communities in the central western part of the State remain productive, viable and exciting places to live, not only for today's residents but also for their children and all generations to come.

The conference commenced with a very warm and personal welcome from the Mayor of Orange City Council, Councillor Reg Kidd. The conference was straight down to business, with motions addressing issues such as transfer incentives for remote school teachers, arrangements for grid contributions for rooftop solar installations, hydro-electric installations on irrigation dams, and voting arrangements for local government elections. The Deputy Premier, Mr John Barilaro, MP, addressed the meeting mid-morning. His address was followed by a State parliamentary question time—a unique event where 13 Government MPs faced questions from the 140 delegates registered for the day. Three concurrent breakout sessions followed question time. The Mayor of Parkes, Councillor Ken Keith, moderated a session on building the Central West through infrastructure; the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry moderated a session on water; and Mr Greg Dezman, Chief of Staff to Minister Troy Grant, moderated a session on internal party matters. All three sessions were exceptionally well received, with attendees contributing on an interactive basis to each session.

Just prior to lunch was the highlight of the conference with the keynote speaker, Dr Emmanuel Ndayisaba—better known as Manu—delivering the keynote address. Manu came to Australia as a Rwandan refugee while still a very young person. His stories about his family's escape from a murderous regime in Rwanda and the trauma they went through before arriving in Australia had the whole conference spellbound. You could have heard a pin drop. Manu is now a postgraduate medical student at the University of Notre Dame, based in Wagga Wagga, and he has spent some time during his initial training in Orange. He has come to love regional New South Wales and has developed a passion for rural medicine. He brought a fresh and unique perspective to the challenges facing rural health.

Following a delightful lunch provided by the Orange Ex-Services Club, Leslie Williams, MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health, moderated a panel session on rural health. The panellists were Manu Ndayisaba, Dr Ros Bullock from Canowindra, Dr Austin Curtin from Lismore, and Dr David Gillespie, MP, from Port Macquarie. A second breakout session followed with three concurrent sessions: the first moderated by Professor Andy Vann from Charles Sturt University looking at the proposed Murray Darling Medical School; the second moderated by Steph Cooke, MP, on successful political campaigning; and the third moderated by Jarrod Powell from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation discussing the future of nuclear energy. Again, all sessions were interactive and there was great attendee participation.

A Federal parliamentary report and question time followed before the final tranche of motions were debated and the conference was closed by the member for Calare, the Hon. Andrew Gee, MP. With the official part of the day completed, delegates and guests retired to the magnificent Duntryleague Golf Course for a wonderful dinner and fellowship. The dining room was packed with approximately 200 people attending. After dinner we were treated to an unbelievable address by one of the principals of Printhie Wines, Mr Ed Swift. He gave a stirring account of the events that led to his family moving to the Orange district on a farm near Molong and planting their first wine grapes and how their business have developed into one of the most successful vineyards and winemakers in the region. The conference was a huge success. The attendance of 140 delegates at

the conference and 200 delegates and guests at the dinner shows the underlying strength and support for The Nationals in regional New South Wales and, in particular, the central western region of New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MRS JAWAHER MOHAMED MOUHANA MOUSSLIMANI

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (16:26): On this day, International Women's Day 2018, I want to say a few words about my mum, the late Mrs Jawaher Mohamed Mouhana Mousslimani. She was born on 15 February 1936 and on 20 February 2018 she passed away, five days after her eighty-second birthday. On Friday 23 February 2018, mum returned home for burial, about 100 metres from her place of birth. Mum's life was one of hardship, poverty and hard work. She was a wonderful woman. Like all mothers, she was dedicated to her family. She and her lifelong partner, my now frail eighty-one year old Dad, dedicated their lives to raising 11 children—eight boys and three girls.

Two of our siblings died after being hit by vehicles. My immediate older sister, Shahira Mousslimani, died in Konin, South Lebanon, around 50 years ago. Sadly, we have no photo of her. The other sibling, Ahmed Mousslimani, our seven-year-old younger brother, was killed while crossing West Botany Street, Rockdale, not more than a few months after our arrival in Australia in 1977. Ahmad rests in Rookwood Cemetery. Mum and Dad were devastated and never recovered. Without fail, we have visited his grave twice every year for the past 40 years. Every time, mum would cry as if Ahmad had died only yesterday.

Mum was a housewife. She lived in a poor village in a forgotten part of Lebanon. She was deprived of a childhood, an education and a decent standard of living. She was illiterate and she hated it. She was a very proud woman, embarrassed by her inability to read and write. She was a tower of strength, full of love and affection, a generous woman, always giving. She had a herculean heart overflowing with emotion and love. She loved us all. We were forever her children, her young kids, no matter our age. Death never can and never will sever the bond we have with mum. Our bond will last until memory fades. Mum, you are our heart and soul. Your kindness, your love and your affection is forever imprinted on our hearts. We will never stop loving you. Your memories will always occupy our hearts. We all tried in our different ways to look after you, to love you and to care for you. You did not deserve to suffer.

Mum suffered for around 10 years. It all began with a backbone operation by a specialist at St George Private Hospital. Mum had osteoporosis and her bones were crumbling. She needed support. We encouraged her to undergo an operation, assuring her she was in very good hands. We were told the specialist was of good repute and he was recommended by a colleague here in Parliament. He was paid handsomely, upfront, as he requested. But he botched the operation. One of the several pins he inserted into her backbone went into her nervous system, crippling her right leg and causing severe pain and suffering. From then on, it was downhill as she endured untold pain and suffering, requiring constant admission and readmission to hospital. On a number of those visits she would enter with one problem and exit with a multitude of others.

At hospital she contracted sepsis, which weakened her heart and damaged her kidneys, causing renal failure. Over time she would have more and more complications, too numerous to recount. All in all, she continued to suffer until around eight months ago when she was hit with a debilitating stroke, leaving her completely paralysed. Yet she tried to fight back and she kept her spirits up. On her back she laid almost motionless, requiring all of the family's support. Never for one moment was she alone throughout this time. Family were always by her bedside every moment of the day or night, whether at home or in hospital. My dad, brothers and sisters never failed to be there, especially Ibtisam, my youngest sister, who provided mum with a decade of care.

It was hard watching mum fade away. It was gut-wrenching, it was painful, it was mentally draining and it was emotionally destructive to all in the family, but, of course, especially to mum. More laid ahead as she survived for more than three weeks before her death, on nothing but hydromorphone and the care of Dr Frank Brennan and his kind palliative care team—no food, no water. Her slow death was horrifying to all of us, leaving a lasting mental scar. It was a tragedy beyond our control. She willed that she be buried in her place of birth. Her body was transported to Konin, South Lebanon, and she was buried a few hundred metres from her place of birth. My shoulders bowed as I helped carry her coffin. My heart suffered silently as she was lowered into the earth, then I heard myself like never before, taking long uncontrollable, involuntary gasping cries.

For mum our hearts bleed. She rests now. She is free from pain, though her suffering will forever be with us. We agonise over our helplessness; our inadequacy to help her was a crushing feeling. We were unable to return even a fraction of mum's lifelong care. We failed her and we ask for her forgiveness. Mum is no longer home. At home the lights are now switched off, with doors closed and curtains drawn. She leaves a huge void in our hearts. We will miss her dearly.

OPERATION JASPER AND OPERATION ACACIA

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (16:32): Once again I discuss Operation Jasper, Operation Acacia and the Doyles Creek mining licence allocation. Last week Mr Geoffrey Watson suggested that I was misleading the House and that he had never taken part in Operation Acacia. I have in front of me a document, the title page of which is "Jasper PVT 02761", and the headline, "Jasper Compulsory Examination". I find in it the compulsory examination of Kristina Keneally. The questioner in that compulsory examination is Geoffrey Watson. Misleading the Parliament is a very serious offence. Misleading journalists is, in many ways, a comparably serious offence, and Mr Watson should certainly give some thought as to whether he would like to reconsider his statement to Mr Merritt about his involvement in Operation Acacia.

The Hon. Kristina Keneally's testimony is interesting if only for one thing: it confirms in her private examination exactly what Nathan Rees said in his private examination. The interesting feature of Mr Rees' private examination is that it differed 180 degrees from what he said in his public testimony. This is what the interaction between Mr Watson and Ms Keneally was:

WATSON: In respect of Macdonald's work in the Cabinet you would have been aware that during the time that, the whole time that you were there, that he was the Minister for Primary Industries?

KENEALLY: Yes.

WATSON: And within that general umbrella he carried on the portfolio historically given to the Minister for Mineral Resources?

KENEALLY: Yes.

WATSON: And can you recall now the circumstances which led up to the allocation of the Exploration Licence for Doyles Creek, can you remember that?

KENEALLY: No, I played no part in that.

WATSON: Can you remember Doyles Creek, for example, the circumstances behind the granting of an Exploration Licence being raised in Cabinet?

KENEALLY: No.

WATSON: Would you think that you would recall had it been raised?

KENEALLY: Possibly although it is a matter that would not usually come before Cabinet.

WATSON: Well, do matters where there is a potential large revenue stream to be generated, do they come before Cabinet?

KENEALLY: Not always.

WATSON: Well, what would be the circumstances when a decision which had the potential to deliver or to deny a large revenue stream would not be put before the Cabinet?

KENEALLY: There'd be many circumstances, a matter that might be directly within a Minister's remit—

for example, the discretionary allocation of an exploration licence—

a matter that is not a change of government policy for example.

The discretionary allocation of an exploration licence is a matter—or was at that stage—that was within the Minister's remit. We know that it was within the Minister's remit because the draft ministerial brief that he received from his department indicated as the first available option that he had the ability to grant the exploration licence on his own recognisance. It was not the preferred option of the department, but it was the first thing that was pointed out to him that he could do.

What this does is two things. First, it confirms that Macdonald did not necessarily need to take the matter to Cabinet. Secondly, it corroborates what was said by Nathan Rees in his private testimony—and this is private testimony. Thirdly, it is interesting to note that this was not called upon at the actual public hearings. Fourthly, it gives lie to the assertion that was made in one of the final chapters of the Acacia report that they refused to release the private testimony to people involved in Acacia because they said "that any exculpatory evidence would already have been adduced by them". We now know that that is a lie—it is a lie in the case of Rees and it is a lie in the case of Keneally. It is yet another example of the ICAC doing absolutely the wrong thing and it should be reinvestigated as a matter of importance and priority.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:38 until Tuesday 13 March 2018 at 14:30.