



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Sixth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 15 March 2018

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 15 March 2018

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

The PRESIDENT read the prayers.

Motions

INDIGENOUS SURF CLASSIC LONGBOARD CHAMPION TOM AVERY

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:02): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Wandiyali Indigenous Surf Classic was recently held as part of the Australian Boardriders Battle at Merewether Beach in Newcastle;
 - (b) the event is a celebration of surfing which brings together the Indigenous community;
 - (c) Tom Avery from Lismore won the longboard section of the battle, riding a 4.5 metre swell;
 - (d) Tom is the current Indigenous Longboard Champion and has won this title two years in a row; and
 - (e) Tom won the battle riding ESP Surfboards, which were shaped by Ed Sinnott, a Byron Bay surfer and surfboard manufacturer.
- (2) That this House congratulates Tom on winning the battle in cyclonic conditions.

Motion agreed to.

BALLINA RSL STAFF HEROISM

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on the night of Monday 5 March 2018 three extraordinary staff from the Ballina RSL saved a woman from drowning in the Richmond River;
 - (b) after hearing the woman scream for help, Ballina RSL staff member Jared Arundell dived into the water fully clothed to help the woman;
 - (c) Ballina RSL staff members Mark Gray and Steven Smith assisted Jared in pulling the woman from the water and providing first aid assistance until the ambulance arrived; and
 - (d) without the courageous actions of staff, the woman would likely have been swept down the river with the tide and out to sea.
- (2) That this House honours and thanks Jared Arundell, Mark Gray and Steven Smith for their quick thinking and action and recognises their selfless heroism in saving a life.

Motion agreed to.

SOUTH WEST SYDNEY LEGAL CENTRE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Thursday 23 November 2017 the South West Sydney Legal Centre celebrated its 30-year anniversary at a function held at Fairfield RSL Club, which was attended by over 100 staff and friends of the centre;
 - (b) those who attended as special guests included:
 - (i) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, representing the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, NSW Attorney General;
 - (ii) Councillor Nadia Saleh, Deputy Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown City Council;
 - (iii) Councillor Adrian Wong, Fairfield City Council;
 - (iv) Councillor Charishma Kalliyanda, Liverpool City Council;
 - (v) Acting Superintendent Paul Albury, NSW Police;
 - (vi) Detective Inspector Ben Hopper, NSW Police;

- (vii) Mr Harry Allie, Aboriginal Elder who gave the Acknowledgement to Country;
- (viii) pro bono solicitors and barristers; and
- (ix) community partners, court personnel and other stakeholders.
- (c) those who organised the celebratory function included the following management and staff of the South West Sydney Legal Centre:
 - (i) Professor Susan Armstrong, Chair;
 - (ii) Mia Zahra, Vice-Chair;
 - (iii) Tony Jose, Treasurer;
 - (iv) Naushee Rahman, Secretary;
 - (v) Mike Thomas, Executive Officer;
 - (vi) Peter Multari, Principal Solicitor;
 - (vii) Effie Vassiliadis, Office Manager;
 - (viii) Elly Raffo, Co-ordinator, Liverpool and Fairfield Staying Home Leaving Violence and Bankstown Domestic Violence Services;
 - (ix) Farah Assafiri, Co-ordinator, South West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services; and
 - (x) Viviana Ocares, Receptionist.
- (d) South West Sydney Legal Centre is a community legal centre comprising full-time staff and a team of pro bono solicitors and barristers and since its formation 30 years ago has assisted over 175,000 people.
- (2) That this House:
 - (a) congratulates South West Sydney Legal Centre on the occasion of its 30-year anniversary; and
 - (b) commends the centre together with its management, staff and volunteers for their ongoing and dedicated service in providing legal advice, assistance and representation to the disadvantaged in south west Sydney.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY DECORATIONS AND AWARDS CEREMONY

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Tuesday 6 March 2018, the Australian Bravery Decorations and Awards investiture ceremony was held at Government House in Brisbane;
 - (b) the awards recognised and honoured 20 people from Queensland and northern New South Wales for their selfless acts of bravery;
 - (c) Dr Peter Kerkenezov, a veterinarian and mariner, received the Australian Bravery Decorations medal for his courageous actions in rescuing a person from a capsized vessel near the port of Ballina in 1983;
 - (d) at the time, Dr Kerkenezov was working for the Coast Guard when his boat capsized, sweeping one man out to sea and trapping another under the vessel; and
 - (e) Dr Kerkenezov dived under the vessel, helped free the trapped man and ultimately saved his life.
- (2) That this House honours Dr Peter Kerkenezov for his heroic actions in saving the man's life during dangerous conditions at sea.
- (3) That this House acknowledges all the Australian Bravery Decorations recipients for their brave, selfless and noble actions in putting the lives of others before their own.

Motion agreed to.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS CONCERT

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Saturday 2 December 2017, at the Great Hall University of Sydney, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hosted a concert rendition of excerpts from Handel's *Messiah* performed by the Sydney Latter-day Saints Chamber Choir and Orchestra conducted by Mr David Meredith, followed by a Community Leaders Reception attended by several hundred members and friends of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;
 - (b) those who attended as special guests included:

- (i) Elder Johnny Leota, Area Seventy, Pacific Area, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS];
 - (ii) the Hon. Paul Green, MLC, and Mrs Michelle Green;
 - (iii) Mr Damien Tudehope, MP, member for Epping, and Mrs Diane Tudehope;
 - (iv) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Justice;
 - (v) Councillor Jeanette Wang, Inner West Council;
 - (vi) Professor Ruth Powell, National Christian Life Survey;
 - (vii) Dr Julie Mathews, Anglican Education Commission;
 - (viii) Ms Debra Porter, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly;
 - (ix) Mrs Katrine Van Dinklage, Universal Peace Federation;
 - (x) Mr Ahmet Orhan Polat, Affinity Intercultural Foundation;
 - (xi) President Braden Murrin, LDS Church;
 - (xii) President Philip Barton and Mrs Kiernyn Barton, LDS Church;
 - (xiii) Bishop Matthew Parsons and Mrs Jenni Parsons, LDS Church; and
 - (xiv) Bishop Leigh Dalman and Mrs Alexandra Dalman, LDS Church.
- (c) those who participated in the concert rendition of excerpts from the *Messiah* or otherwise assisted in organising the function included:
- (i) Mrs Octavia Oramituanai;
 - (ii) Mr Lachlan Mackie and Mrs Joslyn Mackie;
 - (iii) Mrs Crystal Hamstead;
 - (iv) Ms Alexis Karugu;
 - (v) Mr David Meredith;
 - (vi) Mrs Dianna Denley;
 - (vii) Ms Emily Tin Wun Kwok; and
 - (viii) members of the Sydney Latter-day Saints Chamber Choir and Orchestra.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) congratulates The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on its hosting of a concert rendition of excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*, held on Saturday 2 December 2017, which has now become an annual Christmas event in the cultural calendar of Sydney; and
 - (b) commends The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for their ongoing contribution to the social, religious and cultural life of our State.

Motion agreed to.

LYSICRATES PRIZE

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Sunday 11 March 2018 the Lysicrates Prize was held at the Sydney Opera House Drama Theatre;
 - (b) the Lysicrates Play Competition is a philanthropic initiative presented by The Lysicrates Foundation and produced by the Griffin Theatre Company;
 - (c) the award was presented by His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, AC, DCS (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales;
 - (d) the unique Lysicrates model is drawn from the Great Dionysia play competition held each year during the glory years of ancient Athens; and
 - (e) the winner of the play is democratically chosen by the audience on the night, as it was in ancient Athens.
- (2) That this House congratulates:
- (a) the winner of the 2018 Lysicrates Prize, playwright Travis Cotton, on his new play *Starfish*, noting that Travis will now receive a full commission to complete his play;
 - (b) the two other finalists, Christine Evans (*Galilee*) and H. Lawrence Sumner (*The Hollow Queen*);
 - (c) Griffin Theatre Company Artistic Director Ms Lee Lewis, Mr Will Harvey and the team from the Griffin Theatre Company on facilitating the prize; and

- (d) founders of the Lysicrates Foundation, Mr John and Patricia Azarias, on their vision in establishing the prize.

Motion agreed to.

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL LIGHTS OF CHRISTMAS

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Wednesday 6 December 2017, the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, OP, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, hosted a Community Reception at Cathedral House Sydney attended by several hundred civic, religious and community dignitaries to mark the opening night of the *Lights of Christmas* Presentation 2017;
 - (b) following the Community Reception, the *Lights of Christmas*, an animated light and sound display projected onto the front façade of St Mary's Catholic Cathedral Sydney, was officially "switched on" by Archbishop Anthony Fisher;
 - (c) the *Lights of Christmas* 2017, which was presented on the ten nights prior and up to Christmas Eve 2017 was attended by more than 750,000 visitors; and
 - (d) now in its ninth year of presentation, the *Lights of Christmas* is one of Sydney's most popular Christmas events.
- (2) That this House commends the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney for once again presenting the annual *Lights of Christmas* event.

Motion agreed to.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES NSW ATTESTATION CEREMONY

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

- (1) That this House notes:
- (a) on Friday 2 March 2018, an attestation ceremony for 21 graduating Trainee Correctional Officers was held at Tomago at the Corrective Services Academy;
 - (b) the graduates are diverse, with varying ages, cultural backgrounds and education, and have varying previous experiences in prior employments including tradespeople, retail workers, private corrections, Army and Navy officers, security officers and other public service workers;
 - (c) special guests at the ceremony included:
 - (i) Mr Scot MacDonald, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, the Central Coast and the Hunter, representing the Minister for Corrections, the Hon. David Elliott, MP, and Mrs Aileen MacDonald;
 - (ii) Ms Meryl Swanson, MP, Federal member for Patterson;
 - (iii) Councillor Ryan Palmer, Mayor of Port Stephens;
 - (iv) Mr Kevin Corcoran, Assistant Commissioner, Custodial Corrections, representing Mr Peter Severin, Commissioner;
 - (v) Mr James Koulouris, Assistant Commissioner, Governance and Continuous Improvement;
 - (vi) Senior Assistant Sheriff Ian Girkin, New South Wales Sheriff's Office;
 - (vii) Detective Superintendent Craig Jackson, Commander, Port Stephens/Hunter Police District;
 - (viii) Superintendent Belinda Lister, New South Wales Ambulance;
 - (ix) Superintendent Greg Symonds, Capability Manager Firefighting and Fire Rescue New South Wales;
 - (x) Superintendent Gemma Anderson, New South Wales Sheriff's Office; and
 - (xi) Mr Jeremy Leach, Acting Manager of Security, Custodial Training unit, Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy;
 - (d) the support of the students and efforts by Assistant Superintendent, Malcolm McCarlie; Senior Correctional Officer, Craig Reynolds; and First Class Correctional Officer, Danny Swindels; and
 - (e) participants will be placed primarily at Cessnock with others placed at Wellington.
- (2) That this House:
- (a) acknowledges the work of all those involved in facilitating the certificate III in Correctional Practice Program; and
 - (b) congratulates those officers who successfully completed their certificates in Correctional Practice and wishes them well in their careers in Corrective Services.

Motion agreed to.

ST MARGARET MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADUATION MASS

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

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on Thursday 7 December 2017, St Margaret Mary's Catholic Primary School Merrylands held its 2017 year 6 Graduation Mass and Awards Presentation Ceremony, attended by students of year 6 and family members and friends;
 - (b) the graduation mass was conducted by Reverend Father Janus Pawlicha and the award presentation officiated by school Principal Mr Kevin Mills; and
 - (c) those who attended as guests included:
 - (i) Mr Adam Gajkowski, member of the Polish Senate Advisory Committee for the Polish Diaspora and Vice President of the Federation of Polish Organisations in NSW, and Mrs Grazyna Gajkowski;
 - (ii) the Hon. David Clarke, MLC, NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Justice, and Mrs Marisa Clarke;
 - (iii) Mr Andrzej Rozplochowski, Senior Official of the Polish Solidarity Movement;
 - (iv) Mr Hubert Blaszczyk, President of the Association of Former Polish Political Prisoners, and Mrs Barbara Blaszczyk; and
 - (v) representatives of various Catholic community organisations.
- (2) That this House congratulates students of St Margaret Mary's Primary School year 6.

Motion agreed to.

NORTH STAR PUBLIC SCHOOL SPORTS STORAGE FACILITY

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) to mark the eminent service of Mrs Sue Nixon to North Star Public School over many years, on Thursday 12 October 2017 a new sports storage facility was officially unveiled and named in her honour;
 - (b) the ribbon was cut by Mrs Nixon, student Enzo Van Heerden, and Parents and Citizens Association President Karen Backus;
 - (c) Mrs Nixon has contributed outstanding service to the community through:
 - (i) coaching North Star children to win the Heferen Shield on numerous occasions;
 - (ii) spearheading the organisation of the Moree district cross-country;
 - (iii) organising the Macintyre athletics, swimming and cross-country carnivals over many years;
 - (iv) supervising events at the Heferen Shield and McKechnie Shield carnivals in Moree;
 - (v) organising the Premier's Sporting Challenge;
 - (vi) organising the Jump Rope for Heart Program for many years;
 - (vii) coaching athletics and swimming teams and individual North Star students for State championship carnivals;
 - (viii) coaching children in swimming to win the McKechnie Shield in Moree;
 - (ix) coaching relay teams in athletics and swimming to compete in the North West Team in Tamworth and Armidale;
 - (x) coordinating tennis coaching for students;
 - (xi) travelling around the State at her personal expense to support kids at carnivals;
 - (xii) donating her personal time to after-school coaching teams in relay and high jump; and
 - (xiii) teaching at Tulloona, Croppa, North Star and Goondi.
 - (d) GrainCorp awarded the Parents and Citizens Association a Community Fund Grant of \$16,000 for the storage facility and sporting equipment, with the North Western Asset Management Unit of the Department of Education also providing funding assistance; and
 - (e) the members of the Parents and Citizens Association are also acknowledged for their contribution to the facility: Lesa Dunn, Konrad Harvey, Philip Moulynox, Adam Phillips, Michael Grant and Rebecca Shaw.
- (2) That this House acknowledges and commends Mrs Sue Nixon for her eminent service over many years to the children of North Star Public School and the region.

Motion agreed to.

REDFERN WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMERGENCY CENTRE

Mr SCOT MacDONALD (10:07): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 14 November 2017, the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre [WAGEC] Redfern celebrated 40 years of outstanding service to the community;
 - (b) the late Mrs Jeannie Devine established the WAGEC in 1977 to help homeless women in inner Sydney;
 - (c) Mrs Devine experienced great hardship when her husband died leaving her with six children and later enduring an accident in which she broke her neck, rendering her hospitalised for nearly a year;
 - (d) when Mrs Devine finally recovered she was homeless, weighed just six stone, was unable to find a job or afford rent and lived in an inner Sydney hostel for women in crisis for 18 months, during which time she met a variety of women from different backgrounds who had experienced violence, substance abuse, mental health disorders and imprisonment;
 - (e) in her memoirs Mrs Devine described how much she had learnt from these women, how she had never realised these issues were confronting women and girls across Sydney and how she became acutely aware of the need for an emergency centre for women and girls; and
 - (f) speakers at the anniversary celebration included:
 - (i) Yvonne Weldon, Chair, Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council;
 - (ii) Moo Baulch, master of ceremonies;
 - (iii) Katie Young, long-term staff member and Client Service Manager;
 - (iv) Jeni Hughes; and
 - (v) Helen Silvia, Chief Executive Officer.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) entertainers at the event, Thelma Plum and "Isingonthe cake";
 - (b) hosts Table and Two Good, Lauren Eldridge and the caterers Two Good Kitchen;
 - (c) the board of WAGEC: Gabrielle Martinovich, President; David Allen, Vice President; Meera Iyer, Treasurer; Karen Elliff, Secretary and Public Officer; and general members: Jacinta O'Connell, Frances Atkins, Elizabeth Wilkins and Helen Deas;
 - (d) WAGEC staff: Helen Silvia, CEO; Katie Young, Client Services Manager; and Rebecca Wilschefski, Client Services Manager; and
 - (e) the enormous support of multiple community, corporate, non-government and government organisations that WAGEC has worked with over the last 40 years.
- (3) That this House:
 - (a) acknowledges and commends the WAGEC, its staff and volunteers on their outstanding work and commitment to delivering quality and innovative services to improve the lives of women and families experiencing homelessness and domestic violence; and
 - (b) extends its congratulations to the WAGEC on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

MULTICULTURAL NSW

Reports

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: According to the Multicultural NSW Act 2000, I table the following paper:

Multicultural NSW Act 2000—Report of Multicultural NSW entitled "The State of Community Relations in NSW 2016-17".

I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to. [*During the giving of notices of motions*]

Notices

PRESENTATION

The Hon. Niall Blair: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: It is disorderly for members to interject when a member is speaking, but I have acknowledged a member who is taking a point of order and members have continued to interject.

The Hon. Niall Blair: It is discourteous not just to the member but also to the community for whom the member is raising the issue for Opposition members to interject. If they do not care about the Lismore community and this notice of motion, they should sit quietly and allow the member to give his notice of motion without interruption.

The PRESIDENT: I remind all honourable members that interjections are disorderly at all times. As I have indicated on previous occasions, members giving notices of motions will be heard in silence. The House will show courtesy to all members during the giving of notices of motions.

[Later,]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the first time. My earlier ruling could not have made the position more clear.

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of all members, I welcome to the public gallery Graham and Margaret Shaw, who are guests of the Hon. Ben Franklin. I hope they enjoy their visit to Parliament.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I move:

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

- (1) Private Members' Business item No. 21 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile relating to the Summary Offences Amendment (Full-Face Coverings Prohibition) Bill.
- (2) Private Members' Business item No. 1980 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Brown relating to a Public Accountability Committee.
- (3) Private Members' Business item No. 1973 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Lynda Voltz relating to an order for papers regarding Sydney stadiums.
- (4) Private Members' Business item No. 1988 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Brown relating to a Public Works Committee.
- (5) Private Members' Business item No. 1996 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Bronnie Taylor relating to agricultural shows.
- (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.
- (7) Private Members' Business item No. 1970 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Mick Veitch to take note of the report of the Ombudsman entitled "Correcting the record: Investigations into water compliance and enforcement 2007-17", dated 8 March 2018.
- (8) Private Members' Business item No. 1757 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Taylor Martin relating to Kurri Kurri's 115th anniversary.
- (9) Private Members' Business item No. 1842 outside the Order of Precedence standing in the name of the Hon. Ernest Wong relating to a Select Committee on Homelessness.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (FULL-FACE COVERINGS PROHIBITION) BILL 2017

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 14 September 2017.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (10:28): As I have said in this House previously, we may disagree with something without seeking to use the coercive power of the State to ban it. Whether it is eyeball tattooing, the use of marijuana, abortion or protesting against abortion, or a whole range of other things, there is no reason to seek to use the coercive power of the State to have it banned because we disagree with it. I am not a fan of women wearing face coverings for religious purposes, but, then again, I am not a fan of a lot of things, and I am sure that members of the community would be outraged if I sought to apply my moral standards to their personal behaviour. This is a choice that we face in this House all too often. The powers of government should be limited to a narrow set of policy prescriptions and legislative enactments. The coercive power of the State should be limited to a narrow range of legitimate uses. I do not see how those who believe in a genuinely liberal government could possibly support a bill of this nature.

By the same token, I do not agree with people who say that wearing a facial covering for religious purposes is a wonderful, liberating experience and that wearing the garment is an un-coerced choice made by women in Australia and around the world. There are a couple of articles that discuss this issue, one of which was written by a Pakistani male Muslim and the other by a Muslim woman living in Canada. Noman Ansari courageously—considering he is living in Pakistan—wrote an article entitled, "If you think the niqab is a choice, think again." The article states:

In my recent article, "Our national dress is the shalwar kameez, not the niqab", while examining countries in and around the geographical vicinity of the Middle East, I lamented the loss of cultural riches such as art, music, various religious festivities, as well as heritage sites like ancient temples and monasteries to a single fast-spreading inflexible ideology. To drive the point home, between a dozen countries, I compared various cultural garments with the full single-colour veil called the niqab, also known as the abaya or the burqa.

The contrast was startling.

On one end were 12 aesthetically delightful national dresses varying from one to the next like 12 seasons designed by Mother Nature herself, and on the other was a single dark and restrictive attire, standing out like a uniform for the circumscribed.

...

Across dozens of countries; for every temple ransacked, for every monastery brought to its knees, for every language lost, for every painting vandalised, for every statue broken into a hundred pieces, for every book, essay, and piece of poetry declared illicit, there has been an austere binding rule.

Much like the niqab.

Unfortunately, the nuances of "Our national dress is the shalwar kameez, not the niqab" were lost on some of the local readership. In response, many argued that for women, much like a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, or an Indian sari, a niqab was as an outfit of choice.

Sure, they willingly put on the abaya before leaving home, but how much of a choice do they have when wearing anything else will mean being abused by their husbands, fathers, brothers, or the armed mutawas (religious government police) prowling the streets?

How much of a choice is the niqab, if whenever I fly to Saudi Arabia, I find the women on the flight, expatriate or Saudi, donning colourful western, Middle Eastern, or Asian clothes one second, and dark abayas the moment the airplane hits the runway in Saudi Arabia?

How much of a choice is the niqab, if Pakistani women who work as domestic helpers in big cities often wear shalwar kameez when in upscale neighbourhoods, but don the black cloth when going home to avoid catcalls, sexual harassment, rape, or worse? Is the niqab really a choice when so many Pakistani women wear it out of fear?

Moreover, why is the onus on women to protect themselves by wearing a mentally suffocating garment? Why can't those who force the niqab wear blindfolds?

A decade ago, while new in Pakistan, I was stunned when our family was dropping off a domestic helper to her home at night, and she quickly put on the niqab when close to her neighbourhood. When I later asked her why, she said,

...

(If I don't, men in the area will use it as an excuse to malign my character, and perhaps kidnap me [for sexual abuse])

If the niqab is a choice, why is ISIS 'encouraging' them to dress like this? Why aren't they wearing a kurta, a shalwar kameez, a sari, a skirt, or a pair of jeans and a t-shirt?

Yes, many women in western society freely wear the niqab, but is it really a choice when they consciously or subconsciously wear it out of fear of being ridiculed or ostracised by their community? Is it really a choice when they wear it for fear of facing eternal damnation in the afterlife because of a hard-line interpretation that, according to many scholars, contradicts passages of the very scripture they follow?

Let me put it this way: Is any garment really a choice when it is worn out of fear rather than respect? Does anyone truly wear any other outfit out of dread? When was the last time a woman was killed because she didn't wear a bikini? When was the last time a terrorist outfit made women wear jeans and t-shirts?

Consciously or subconsciously, how many other unified outfits in history have a large number of people been scared into wearing?

...

Some critics argue that the niqab is similarly frowned upon by western societies as are western outfits in portions of the Muslim world.

Well, not really.

First of all, some western societies may not welcome the niqab, but are happy to see just about any other outfit in the world, be it a sari or a skirt. On the other hand, parts of the Muslim world only enforce one outfit on women, and that's the niqab.

There is also a reason behind the burqa ban movement, and that's because the black veil stands as a symbol of oppression.

Brown shirts with swastikas and white hoods in front of a burning cross are not well received in Western societies either. The article continues:

Tellingly, the majority of outraged comments on my "Our national dress is the shalwar kameez, not the niqab" article came from men themselves. Once again, an outfit is forced upon by the powerful on the powerless, once again as a tool of suppression. Here, it is an instrument to further misogyny, convincing some of those who wear it that it is for their betterment.

It was quite a brave article to write in Pakistan. Canada faced a similar controversy over face coverings, and Canadian woman Aki Muthali said:

When it comes to attire, women and girls face a unique dilemma—to either conform or not conform to modesty—and that is all the choices we are "granted".

...

Yes—women must have the right to choose whether they want to wear any brand of attire that will reduce them to an object of modesty—no person has the right to deny her that right.

Is it always a choice though? No—in fact, it's rarely a choice. Practicing a "choice" is having the ability to assess the level of comfort in something through own experience or approval—but where is that ability when a female child is dictated from infancy to adulthood about the "necessity" of female modesty, especially when it's defined as a divine law of prevention to tackle sexual violence—a claim that is dangerously contrary to the rate of sexual violence faced by women and girls in Islamic nations.

In countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, wearing these attire that confirm female modesty is mandatory—not a choice. In any country where Sharia is heavily enforced—it's always an obligation to wear them, even where it's not mandatory—but choosing to not wear them comes at a great price of being ostracized by family and society. Islamic nations are infamous for charging women and girls with "moral crimes" after being sexually assaulted or fleeing forced marriage—and in such countries, where is the "choice" to not wear them? They are already guilty of "indecent" for being a victim of sexual violence and/or harassment—so what terror do these female populations face when they refuse to wear clothing romanticized under the fallacy of preserving modesty and honour?

...

So when it comes to "choice" to "dress modestly"—it's hardly a choice if it's based on some irrational fear of humiliation of one's own sexuality and/or body.

...

Pseudo feminism in the west has too much cultural and religious ignorance that grants them affinity towards sexism and misogyny in non-western cultures/religions in the race to appear friendly towards multiculturalism—which has continued to lower the standard of human rights for women and girls of colour who live in both eastern and western nations. And what's even more appalling is how leftists are using Prime Minister Harper's rejection of the niqab as an opportunity to score political points against the conservatives...His rejection of the niqab is logical and his reputation for being a far-rightist does not in any way absolve the niqab of its imposition of gender-segregation and sexism.

...

Women and girls' rights hang in a perilous realm of exploitation without ever a chance for independent choice free of shame, fear and manipulation for as long as our identities are denied. ... the claim that it empowers women and girls to "choose" niqab to express modesty is logically impossible. Even the statement of "being modest" is a declaration of embracing objectification of our bodies. How is a woman or girl exposing more skin than a woman in a niqab lacking modesty? The assertion of "being indecent" through a lack of clothing is an assault on every woman and girls' dignity. Integrating into Canadian society means your religion has no precedence over that nation's laws, which means sexism is unacceptable whether religiously or culturally sanctioned. What the niqab demands is gender segregation and prompts "discomfort" around the opposite sex which is discriminatory. Canadian men and boys are being collectively branded "indecent" if they ever glimpse at a niqabi's face. The casual interference to complicate the fight against sexism and misogyny will not be appreciated by genuine feminists. I will respect your "right" to wear it, but I will not sacrifice my right to call bull**** on your primitive sentiment of gender segregation.

It should be terrifying to the modern civilization when the niqab which is consistent with the abuse of women and girls as properties of their husbands and family is accommodated by violating the rights of others. Canadians too far gone in their western privilege produced hyperbolic conflation of the niqab to turbans, beards, medical masks and exposure of breasts and genitals, etc.—apparently, it makes total sense to assert that the exposure of a female face is equivalent to nudity, growing facial hair and using medical gear to prevent disease and viruses as if our faces are visually sickening. With such shameless stupidity—I feel desperation and horror for those women and girls forced to wear the hijab, niqab or burqa in both Canada and other parts of the world.

Choosing and conforming are not binary—they do not represent any commonality. One simply cannot be pro-women and girls' rights and simultaneously pander to modesty that is structural to gender-based discrimination and violence affecting billions of women and girls worldwide. You are either compelled to conform to the established patriarchal requirement of female modesty or you can choose to have your own identity—starting with your face.

What a niqab creates is an environment of isolation—annihilating any sense of integration into any non-Muslim society therefore always feeling disenfranchised. Also, does concealing your face in public create a frenzy of distrust and fear? Yes, it does. Is it because the person is "Muslim"? No—it's because it's a stranger who cannot be confirmed and has a mask on like a common criminal in the west.

Canadian pseudo feminists and liberals have happily shown how obtuse they are when it comes to registering gender segregation of great proportion—so I wish them luck in embracing Middle Eastern misogyny.

It's dubious that there's a World Hijab Day to romanticize the reduction of women and girls to objects of modesty yet no day to recognize solidarity for thousands of women and girls forced to wear a hijab (and niqab or burqa) and often face violence and confinement for rejecting it. Will hijabis and niqabis in Canada [and the rest of the world] who claim to wear them by choice ever remove their hijabs/niqabs to show a day of solidarity for their sisters who are forced to wear them? It's a choice for you after all and will not result in any injury. I look forward to seeing your support for your fellow Muslim sisters in peril.

Patriarchy has successfully set an embargo on female liberty by maliciously labeling gender-apartheid "religious" and "cultural" rights—and it seems every clown is ready to tout this bull**** to appear "tolerant". Embracing the concealment of the female face as "religion" is in correlation to maintaining male egotism in both religious and non-religious worlds of patriarchy. Both Eastern and Western worlds are exploiting women and girls, except they express it with two extreme opposites of modesty...

I can only hope education and secularism will empower women/girls to embrace independent choices that will not conform them to patriarchy's will and cooperate with judicial and public processes that require facial verification without the need of gender segregation. Women and girls have come a long way—especially in the Muslim world that is slowly embracing liberty and equality over iron-age practices and deviating course from theocratic oppression to modernization—so I'll embrace a modest smile to that.

We should not be afraid to say that patriarchal requirements for facial covering are wrong, but we should not use the coercive power of the State to enforce that view. We should be wary of the extension of such power as covered in section 20D of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act, so that we can do what we should do in a Western liberal society. We should refrain from legislating morality, but not be afraid to speak out on moral causes. We should not be held back. We should not be bound. We should not be tied down by a fear of saying that a cultural practice is wrong for fear of facing litigation for stating that fact.

I cannot support this bill and I will not support this bill because I believe it is an over-extension of the rightful and legitimate role of the State. But that does not in any way mean that I support the idea that facial covering is somehow a welcome development in Australian society and that our view can be covered over with a belief that facial covering is a useful and joyful expression of multiculturalism, when it manifestly is not.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (10:44): My contribution to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (Full-face Coverings Prohibition) Bill 2017 will be brief—certainly not as long or as erudite as the contribution of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. I note that the object of the bill is to make it an offence for a person without reasonable excuse to wear a face covering whilst in a public place. "Face covering" is defined in the bill as an article of clothing or other thing—including, it would seem, a helmet—that hides the face of a person in a way that conceals the person's identity. The bill provides that a person's religious or cultural belief does not constitute a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the proposed offence. This provision is dealt with in clause 11 (4) of the bill. The bill further provides that the prohibition does not extend to the wearing of face coverings in churches or other places of worship.

I come at this legislation from a slightly different position than that of the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. First, my grandfather, Fazzee Gulam Mohammed Khan, came to this country with a desire to achieve a better life for himself and for his family. He arrived in a different era and in different circumstances, but he had an earnest, almost passionate, desire to integrate—or in older terminology assimilate—into Australian society. In that pursuit of assimilation, he stripped away much of his upbringing and culture. His initials are "F.G.M. Khan" and one of his children had the same initials, but his son was named Frederick George Milton Khan. That was indicative of how my grandfather approached the matter: He stripped away his cultural identity in order to achieve the material success that he sought for himself and for his family.

The Hon. Robert Borsak: Dinky-di.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Absolutely. His children never had any connection with his language or anything else from his upbringing. You could say he underwent a transformation as he got off the boat. My father adopted the same position. My father never went to India.

The Hon. Robert Brown: And repeated 10,000 times.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Yes, repeated over and over again. Even when we went to Fiji, although my father identified as being part Indian, he was concerned when members of the Indian community sought to embrace him, because he saw himself as Australian. My perspective on this is important to me, in terms of my own identity, because I realise that this legislation does not recognise how our modern society works.

I understand the intention of this legislation. I grew up in Wollongong where Greek widows were dressed all in black and I thought, "Gosh, that's unusual." In the 1960s there were cultural practices with which we did not

feel comfortable, but today we would accept completely. That is the nature of how our society has changed. There were tensions between the cultures as I was growing up, both at home and in the broader community, and these tensions continue to play out in a variety of ways, particularly as the racial and cultural mix of people who come to this country has changed. But that is not where the tension ends. There is tension in how our society works and the fears that that tension creates play out in other ways. In the past two or three years we have seen this clash between secular society and religious expectations play out in the same-sex marriage debate.

I raise the issue in this context because I appeared, along with other people, before the Ruddock inquiry, which was established by the Federal Government to consider whether there are sufficient protections for religious freedoms. The inquiry was established because of fears that religious freedoms in Australia were not being adequately protected because of things such as the same-sex marriage bill. There was an interesting, perhaps Socratic, exchange between Mr Ruddock and the other inquiry members as they sought to deal with the complex issue of how differing expectations in communities—cultural and religious—are interwoven with the secular, and where the balance lies. I perceive this bill and the conundrum facing Mr Ruddock in light of that Socratic exchange. Those who pressed for the establishment of the Ruddock inquiry—and I accept their concerns and desires—look at the issue through their own focus and their perception of religious protections.

The perception of the vast majority of those who advocate for a bill for religious protections, for instance, is that the religious protections are for Christian churches. I do not think they understand that when we talk about religious protections, we are talking about protecting not just the Christian faith but also all faiths, including the Jewish, the Muslim, the Buddhist and the Hindu faiths. We need to understand how those faiths intersect in this country now, forming our complex web of faiths and secular beliefs and expectations. The bill contains a specific clause that states a religious or cultural belief does not constitute a reasonable excuse for wearing a face covering. Tell me how that sits with the cry, which is apparently broadly expressed in our community, that we need to protect religious beliefs. Tell me how what we are doing in this bill will achieve an effective outcome. What we are doing is entrenching fear; we are not protecting a belief.

I note the bill has an exemption for the wearing of a face covering in a church or other place of worship. That is protected. I say to all honourable members—but particularly we oldies who now have children and grandchildren—when I got married in 1985 more than two-thirds of people married in churches. I got all dressed up and my wife put on a white dress. We went for the interviews and I said all those things about how I would do various things; we do not need to look at my level of fulfilment of the things I said. That is how it was done back in the 1980s. It is not how it is done now. Today, more than two-thirds of marriages occur outside churches—indeed, they take place in parks and other public places.

The Hon. Adam Searle: In backyards.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Indeed, in backyards. Many marriages occur in public places. If one wanders through Hyde Park virtually every day one will see women wearing veils—a face covering. If they wear it in church, they will be fine. But if they wear it on the steps of St Mary's Cathedral as they have their photos taken, under this bill they will not have a reasonable excuse. I am sure that is not what Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile envisaged, but that it is the potential effect of this bill. As I have said in other forums when dealing with other legislation, it is not the desire, for instance, of a Minister that counts; it is what is written in legislation. We have only to look at various laws that have been passed by governments of both political persuasions—this is not directed at one side or the other. A Minister may say that a law is being introduced for a particular reason but in practice it applies not only to what was identified as being a harmful element in the community but also to other groups, particularly the disadvantaged.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Mission creep.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Indeed, I very much acknowledge the interjection. It is mission creep. This bill—however well intentioned it may be—is a perfect example. Its implications and impacts will be far wider and more detrimental than Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile may have anticipated. With the greatest respect to Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, I vigorously oppose the bill.

Debate adjourned.

Committees

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

Establishment and Membership

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (10:56): I move:

That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

Appointment

- (1) A Public Accountability Committee be appointed.

Functions

- (2) The functions of the committee are to inquire into and examine the public accountability; financial management, regulatory impact and service delivery of New South Wales government departments, statutory bodies or corporations.
- (3) In performing its functions under paragraph (2), the committee may:
- (a) examine the consolidated financial statements and general government sector financial statements transmitted to the Legislative Council by the Treasurer;
 - (b) examine the financial reports of authorities of the State, being financial reports that have been:
 - (i) audited by the Auditor-General or an auditor appointed under section 471 of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983; or
 - (ii) laid before the Legislative Council by a Minister of the Crown.
 - (c) examine the opinion or any report of the Auditor-General transmitted with the consolidated financial statements and general government sector financial statements or laid before the Legislative Council with the financial report of an authority of the State (including any documents annexed or appended to any such opinion or report);
 - (d) examine any report of the Auditor-General laid before the Legislative Council;
 - (e) report to the Legislative Council from time to time upon any item in, or any circumstances connected with, those financial reports, or reports or documents which the committee considers ought to be brought to the notice of the Legislative Council;
 - (f) report to the Legislative Council from time to time any alteration which the committee thinks desirable in the form of those financial reports or in the method of keeping them or in the method of receipt, expenditure or control of money relating to those financial reports; and
 - (g) inquire into expenditure by a Minister of the Crown made without parliamentary sanction or appropriation or otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 or any other Act and report to the Legislative Council from time to time upon any matter connected with that expenditure which the committee considers ought to be brought to the notice of the Legislative Council.
- (4) The committee is to inquire into future arrangements for the ongoing scrutiny by the Legislative Council of the matters set out in paragraphs (2) and (3).
- (5) The functions of the committee do not extend to an examination of, inquiry into or report upon the estimates of any proposed expenditure by the State or by an authority of the State.

Referral of inquiries

- (6) The committee is to inquire into and report on any matter referred to the committee by resolution of the House.
- (7) The committee may inquire into and report on the expenditure, performance or effectiveness of any government department, statutory body or corporation.
- (8) A committee meeting to consider a self-reference may be convened at the request of any three committee members in writing to the committee clerk.
- (9) The committee clerk must convene a meeting within seven days of the receipt of the request, providing that members are given at least 24 hours notice.
- (10) A majority of committee members is required to adopt the self-reference. The terms of reference are to be reported to the House on the next sitting day.

Membership

- (11) The committee is to consist of seven members comprising:
- (a) three Government members;
 - (b) two Opposition members; and
 - (c) two crossbench members.

Chair and Deputy Chair

- (12) That the Chair of the committee be Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile, MLC, and the Deputy Chair be the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox, MLC.

Substitute members

- (13) Members may be appointed to the committee as substitute members for any matter before the committee by providing notice in writing to the committee clerk, with nominations made as follows:
- (a) nominations for substitute Government or Opposition members are to be made by the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Opposition, Government or Opposition Whip or Deputy Whip, as applicable; and

- (b) nominations for substitute crossbench members are to be made by the substantive member or another crossbench member.

Electronic participation in deliberative meetings

- (14) A committee member who is unable to attend a deliberative meeting in person may participate by electronic communication and may move any motion and be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division, provided that:
 - (a) the Chair is present in the meeting room;
 - (b) all members are able to speak and hear each other at all times; and
 - (c) members may not participate by electronic communication in a meeting to consider a draft report.

Conduct of committee proceedings

- (15) Unless the committee decides otherwise:
 - (a) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
 - (b) the Chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the Chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
 - (c) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings is to alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each;
 - (d) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
 - (e) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the committee clerk within two days, excluding Saturday and Sunday, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness; and
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration.

Honourable members are well aware that this motion is a collaborative effort on the part of the crossbench. It is one of two similar motions on the *Notice Paper* that will be debated today. Having moved the motion, I will leave the presentation of the rationale behind it to my colleague Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. Members will note that the motion nominates Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile as the chair of the Public Accountability Committee. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile is a respected, senior member of this House and a noted legislator. I believe he will be able to convince members of this House of the merits of adopting this motion. I commend the motion to the House.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (10:57): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Robert Brown and, in doing so, I will give some background so that members fully understand its purposes and the reasons for establishing the Public Accountability Committee. The committee as proposed by the motion is modelled on the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee, which was established pursuant to the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983. However, the Public Accounts Committee comprises members of the Legislative Assembly only. I found it difficult to establish from my investigations whether that committee is currently functioning. The Legislative Council does not have a committee that is comparable to the Public Accounts Committee to oversee the important work of the Auditor-General.

This has long been a contentious matter between the two Houses. In 1978 a Joint Committee on the Public Accounts and Financial Accounts of Statutory Authorities was formed, with five members from the Legislative Assembly and three members from the Legislative Council. This committee recommended that the Public Accounts Committee be a joint committee comprising five members of the Legislative Assembly and three members of the Legislative Council. This recommendation was not adopted in subsequent Parliaments. In 2001 the Hon. Doug Moppett, MLC, revisited the issue by moving a motion seeking the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly to the appointment of three members of the Legislative Council to the Public Accounts Committee. In speaking to the motion, Mr Moppett observed:

... the reason that the Public Accounts Committee is a committee of the lower House only is based on the mistaken view that the budget papers presented each year are the province of the lower House only.

Mr Moppett continued:

If we are to scrutinise public administration more effectively ... it is vital to expand the composition of the Public Accounts Committee to include members of the LC. That is not a revolutionary brainwave that I had one night; the idea has grown steadily in areas of responsible administration ... it is all very well to have fond aspirations and pious hopes and to dwell in the land of easy platitudes, but ultimately, if we are to face the reality of governance, we must be responsible for funding programs and reporting in an informed, clear and transparent manner to the people whom we represent and who contribute to the public coffers.

Government opponents of the motion pointed to budgetary matters being the traditional purview of the lower House, as were reports of the Auditor-General, which at the time were tabled only in the Legislative Assembly. Today, the Auditor-General's reports are tabled in both Houses, but there is no ready mechanism for their review by the Legislative Council.

The establishment of the Public Accountability Committee will finally address this oversight and ensure proper accountability, which as members know is a key role of an upper house of review and which this House carries out thoroughly and zealously. Mr Moppett's motion was ultimately agreed to on division on 25 October 2001 and the result was reported to the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Assembly refused to act and the motion lapsed on the prorogation of Parliament. The issue of joint membership of the Public Accounts Committee has not been canvassed since.

Given the significant time lag in the preparation of a bill amending the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 to transform the Public Accounts Committee into a joint committee and the historical reluctance to support the passage of such a bill by the Government of the day—and probably by members in the other place—the establishment of the proposed Public Accountability Committee will fill this obvious gap in public accountability. The establishment of this committee is also critical to ensuring proper oversight of government administration and the many reports of the Auditor-General tabled in this House.

I note that the Premier yesterday welcomed scrutiny of the Government by the proposed Public Accountability Committee and the proposed Public Works Committee. Presumably Government members will comply with the Premier's sentiments and support the establishment of these committees in this House today. I very much look forward to seeing that happen. Finally, I reiterate: There is no more important issue to the Legislative Council as a House of review than the full accountability and transparency of the Government of the day. Accordingly, I strongly commend the Hon. Robert Brown's motion to the House.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (11:02): The Opposition supports the motion moved by the Hon. Robert Brown. This proposal represents an important step in the evolution of the Legislative Council committee system. It remains to be seen how effective it will be, and it is appropriate that we trial it this year. The arguments that have been mounted in favour of this proposal by the Hon. Robert Brown and Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile are compelling and worth at least investigating.

It is also worth noting briefly the circumstances in which this proposal has arisen. Of course, it is not a new development for oppositions or non-government parties to accuse the Government of the day of secrecy, cover-up and a lack of transparency. That is part and parcel of our form of democracy. Lack of transparency is a tendency of all governments, which increases the longer they are in office, but this Government has developed, further and faster, its desire to keep things secret and hidden from public view. That is evidenced by the zeal with which government agencies are battling Government Information (Public Access) Act applications, including in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and taking matters on appeal which, I think, are difficult to maintain and spurious.

This innovation with respect to transparency has been seen with regard to things like the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Based on any previous government activity, that entity should have been established as a statutory authority or a state-owned corporation. Instead, it is a private company owned by one or two Ministers. Why has the Government chosen that mechanism? It has done so to ensure that it is not subject to the ultimate regime of public accountabilities that would come with taking the usual and orthodox approach. This Government has taken secrecy and obfuscation to a new level.

Of course, that is evident in the stadiums splurge debacle, which is a matter of significant public record. That policy is unravelling before our eyes. We had a situation yesterday in which the Government's own Expenditure Review Committee was leaking like a sieve in real time. The stadium item was withdrawn from the committee's agenda at the last moment. That would not have happened without public pressure and pressure bought to bear by members of this place and the other place about the secrecy involved in the stadiums policy. That is just one indicator of the need for an innovation such as this and, indeed, the establishment of the other committee that we will debate this morning. I will say no more other than that the Opposition strongly supports this motion.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (11:05): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the courtesy of speaking first to give me the opportunity to address his perspective. I appreciate that. He indicated that the current discussion about stadiums is part of the Opposition's consideration of the establishment of this committee, and he made a number of statements in that regard. We will debate three motions this morning during which this issue could arise. They are the second, third and fourth orders of business today. I will respond to them once, when we deal with the next item of business, if that is acceptable to members. Obviously, I vigorously contest a number of the statements

made by the Leader of the Opposition, but, as I said, I will respond only once—that is, when the Hon. Lynda Voltz moves her motion later this morning.

The case in support of this motion has been laid out by the member who is proposed, in the motion, to be the committee chair—Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. His was a well-researched speech which presented a perspective put by a person for whom I have great respect—the late the Hon. Doug Moppett, with whom I served in this place. I do not think there has been a finer speaker in this Chamber in all of my time in politics than the Hon. Doug Moppett. I listened very carefully to what Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile said when he referred to the Hon. Doug Moppett's views on this issue.

Firstly, I make the point that the Hon. Doug Moppett's comments were made largely before the evolution of the general purpose standing committees, which are now known as portfolio committees. Secondly, I make the important point that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile was a member of the committee that inquired into the Legislative Council committee system. Given that, he would be well aware of the discussion on all of these issues. I also make the point that two members of the Opposition were members of that committee.

We had an inquiry set up in this Chamber on 24 June 2015. The Hon. Mick Veitch moved the motion but when the report of that committee was tabled in this place, and when it was discussed during debate on committee reports, he was kind enough to note that most of the impetus for the establishment of the inquiry into the Legislative Council committee system came from me when I was sitting in your chair, Mr President. Certainly there was no opposition at all from the Government to setting that up—there was strong support for it from my predecessor, the Hon. Duncan Gay. The Government members of that committee, led by its chair, the Hon. Scott Farlow, and including the Hon. Trevor Khan, the Hon. Greg Pearce and the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps—three of the finest members I have served with in the Chamber—also vigorously participated in that committee. It is a matter of record that on at least two occasions I was invited as President to address that committee, which I did, and I participated in it. I make this point: There was not one—

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Not one woman.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is a good point, but there was not one submission to that committee that suggested the formation of the committee in the motion that is before the Chamber now. The committee that was set up on 24 June 2015 carefully did its work over an 18-month period. It reported in November 2016. There was not one suggestion that this accountability committee should be established. I have checked with my colleagues and there was not one suggestion from Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile during the course of that 18-month process or from the two Opposition members of the committee that this was an option worth investigating. That is interesting, and that is—

The Hon. Walt Secord: There is new information before us now.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, there is not. There most certainly is not.

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We hear a member of the Opposition squealing because he is being called out. I make this point as well, because I invite honourable members to look at it, although I believe other committee members can go into it—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Just take it on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Oh, dear, they are really starting to hurt now, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Walt Secord will stop interjecting and I ask the Minister not to acknowledge those interjections or comment on them.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will be happy not to acknowledge them as long as they are not made. The recommendations make it quite clear that there was no such committee required. Are those two members of the Opposition now telling us that they did not do their job properly? Is Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile now telling us that he did not do his job properly as a member of that committee? Let us just consider that for a minute. It was not recommended. Why was it not recommended? It was not recommended for a very good reason. Let us look at the functions of this committee:

The functions of the committee are to inquire into and examine the public accountability, financial management, regulatory impact and service delivery of New South Wales government departments, statutory bodies or corporations.

If we look at the function of portfolio committees, this is what it says:

A committee may inquire into and report on the expenditure, performance or effectiveness of any government department, statutory body or corporation, relevant to the portfolios allocated to the committee.

There is a perfect overlap between the jurisdiction of the portfolio committees and what is being proposed. Moreover, what that committee did recommend was a trial establishment of the Regulation Committee, which the House agreed to at the end of the last calendar year. So we have a trial of that Regulation Committee right now. What can that committee do? The motion states it can:

... inquire into and report on:

- (a) any regulation, including the policy or substantive content of a regulation; and
- (b) trends or issues that relate to regulations.

The regulatory impact on a New South Wales government department, statutory body or corporation can already be investigated by the Regulation Committee, which we are trialling. There was reference made by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile to the Premier's comments. She also said this:

Those powers already exist. We welcome that scrutiny because we are absolutely committed to taking NSW forward ...

And that is why the Government will not be supporting the establishment of the Public Accountability Committee. We on this side can count. We know we are not going to win this particular vote, unless some people as a result of this debate have cause for reflection. But I have sat in your chair, Mr President. I have had to go through the management of the Department of the Legislative Council budget before. I have seen the pressures that are placed on you in managing how resources should be allocated in this Parliament. This is not the first time we have seen this sort of activity in the final year of a term. We had it before the 2014 election when I was in your chair: Five committees were established in the final year. We had it in 2010, with two committee inquiries from general purpose standing committees [GPSCs] and a select committee on recreational fishing—more on that later.

The idea that this House should resolve that you, Mr President, should resource committees that have the same jurisdiction as already established committees—committees that are, essentially, doing the same job—and that you will have to either ask for more resources or squeeze the lemon a bit harder is absolutely ridiculous. This is not an example of the House taking a decision to set up a committee in the interests of this House; this is something quite different. It is wrong, and the Government will oppose it as a matter of principle.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (11:17): I make a brief contribution on the motion of the Hon. Robert Brown and say from the outset The Greens will be wholeheartedly supporting this and further motions today. I listened closely to the contribution of the Minister, and what the Minister did not say in any way, shape or form in his contribution was that this was not in the public interest. He said it was not in the interests of the House, but not that it was not in the public interest. This motion and both of these committees are in the public interest. They take the work of the portfolio committees and go further. The functions as set out in subparagraphs (a) to (g) clearly detail important work in holding the executive to account—work the community demands, especially at this time of a government when we see major works, major concern in the community about expenditure, and calls for more accountability.

There is also a concern in the House and in the broader community as to whether or not the Government is really being held to account by the portfolio committees. There is very limited time for scrutiny of Ministers in budget estimates, and some Ministers disregard the portfolio committee process. The Greens believe the motion setting up this committee is an excellent way to make sure that the regulatory impacts and service delivery in New South Wales are properly accounted for. In terms of the Minister's contribution that we do not have the resources for this, this is a government that is crowing about surpluses.

The Hon. Adam Searle: And spending \$2.5 billion on stadiums.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Yes, it is spending \$2.5 billion on stadiums. The cost of running this committee may run to a few hundred thousand dollars or even \$1 million, but that would be money well spent. That is why the people of New South Wales pay for an Auditor-General and why we pay for this House—to make sure that the Government is held to account. That is why this committee is a good idea. The Greens support it wholeheartedly and will be participating in it. The Greens will also support the motion on the other committee, which will be put later.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:20): I note the comments made by the Leader of the Government in this debate. I concur with them. I greatly respect Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile and the Hon. Robert Brown and their intentions in putting this motion, but during the Select Committee on the Legislative Council Committee System inquiry there were no submissions that raised this issue, nor were there submissions that recommended the implementation of a committee such as this. The submissions were not only from academics and the like, but also from members of this House.

The Parliamentary Labor Party of New South Wales made a submission to the inquiry. Nowhere in that submission was there a recommendation to establish a committee such as this. The New South Wales Greens

made a submission to the committee. Nowhere in their submission did they recommend a committee such as this. Mr Jeremy Buckingham raises the public interest. The important point is that our committee system—it was canvassed ad nauseam in our committee on committees process—can already do what the proposed committee is supposed to do. The present system works in the public interest. It is not in the public interest to duplicate committees. That was one of the things that the committee on committees looked at.

The recommendations were not to create a whole range of new committees but to work within the present framework so committees can better look at things. That is why the Selection of Bills Committee was established; it can refer legislation to committees so we can better inquire into bills. That is why we have the Regulation Committee. Membership of those committees was largely restricted so that we do not impose on the precious resources of the Legislative Council's committee system. The Legislative Council committees do an excellent job but committees such as the one proposed would further stretch the system.

The Legislative Council committees already look at public accountability, as the Leader of the Government mentioned before. The items that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile mentioned in his speech to the House predated establishment of the portfolio committees. Those committees are not Government controlled. Those committees have a lot of power, and they give the Government a hard time. I am sure a lot of members would recognise that.

A public accountability committee would not do anything further; it stretch the precious resources of the Legislative Council's committee system even further, without benefiting the people of New South Wales. The creation of this committee is just a re-election strategy for some members opposite, although they did not think about this during hearings of the committee on committees. The Labor Party did not suggest anything like this during the committee on committees hearings. The Greens did not suggest anything like this in their submission to the committee on committees. Not one of The Greens members raised this in any of the discussions.

The creation of a public accountability committee was not raised at any time during the committee on committees deliberations or during the public hearings. This has been put forward, 12 months out from an election, by members wondering, "How can we run around the State and drum up opposition?" In answer to that, they came up with this committee. The Government is not supporting this because it is a duplication and it is not needed. It would further stretch our committee system and we need to ask: where will those resources come from? What other areas will those resources be stolen from? This motion is purely part of some members' re-election strategy. That is why the Government opposes this motion.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (11:24): As members would be aware, I am quite a fan of the committee system. I have been a fan for quite some time. I make my comments in this debate in the context of having seen our committee system work very effectively at times. I had a brief look at some of the inquiries, under the current structure, that I have been involved in since entering this place in 2007.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Mount Penny.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Indeed! I have been involved in budget estimates each year. I can remember the first year, with Premier Iemma at the hearing. It turned into a bit of a bun fight that I was not necessarily anticipating. I was involved in committees which dealt with overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in 2007.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: That would be the 15 minutes I get for sport.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Just be quiet, Lynda. In 2008 there were committees looking at: homelessness and low-cost rental accommodation; privatisation of prisons, which I think was chaired by Amanda Fazio; substitute decision-making for people lacking capacity; the taxi industry; and Macedonian Orthodox Church properties, which I think was chaired by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. I was involved in committees that looked at services provided by or funded by the department responsible for ageing, disability and human services; domestic violence trends; and transitional support for students with additional complex needs. There have been inquiries into the rights of reply, various privileges committee hearings and a review of the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act and election funding. I have been involved in the Parliamentary Budget Office inquiry and inquiries into local government elections, administrative funding for minor parties, administration of the New South Wales 2011 election, and another committee on the provisions of election funding. There was a select committee on Kooragang Island and inquiries into workers compensation schemes, medicinal cannabis, Uralla Estate and various ICAC inquiries.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I ask that members do not have a conversation across the Chamber.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: We have had the Currawong property inquiry and inquiries into greyhound racing; home schooling; fair trading amendment bills; ICAC annual reports; and a review of compulsory third party insurance. More recently I have been involved with further reviews of ICAC; human trafficking; off-protocol prescribing of chemotherapy; a review of workers compensation schemes; the adequacy and scope of special care offences; emergency services; fire and emergency services levies; and Parklea Correctional Centre.

These inquiries have demonstrated that, either through select committees looking at specific subjects, or through the various portfolio committees, there has been ample opportunity to investigate a whole range of matters. There was one broad-ranging committee which I have not yet referred to—the committee looking into ministerial responsibility. That committee was set up on a whim but turned into a bit of a fizzer. There is ample reason to have effective committees in this place—for transparency and the oversight of Government works and the like. There is no question about that. But the question is this: Do members actually need another committee to achieve that outcome? I think the answer is that we have demonstrated that the committee structure of this House is very strong.

I heard what was said by the Hon. Scott Farlow about The Greens' submissions. I was a member of the committee on committees. The late Dr John Kaye was also a member of that committee. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile also was a member of that committee. It was a committee membership that worked very effectively together; it was not combative. The committee strove to improve the committee structure. The portfolio committees are a perfect example of the way that was achieved. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile was quite a champion of a variety of changes. The committee was cooperative and collaborative. It sought through its report to achieve outcomes that created a better committee structure. I believe in many ways that committee's report provided a map of the way forward. In that sense, the committee was cooperative.

In many ways the only member of that committee causing trouble was the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps. As usual, the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps wanted to go a bit further than members on both sides of politics thought was practical or rational at that time. I am sorry about that, Peter. It seemed to other members of that committee that we had a way forward that was appropriate. Dr John Kay and the Hon. Mick Veitch could see that. I thought it was the Hon. Adam Searle but I was wrong; I think it was the Hon. Greg Donnelly who was a member. I apologise to the Hon. Adam Searle.

The Hon. Adam Searle: No. That is okay.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Apart from the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, members of the committee were striving to achieve consensus on improvement. I think the balance is about right. As the Premier has said, she does not ignore scrutiny.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Oh!

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: She does not object to scrutiny. There are plenty of opportunities to apply scrutiny now. As the Premier said, she welcomes scrutiny because she is absolutely committed to taking New South Wales forward and to making sure that the citizens of the State have the infrastructure they deserve.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Then you can ask her to drop the objections to my GIPAs.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I note that the Hon. Adam Searle interjects. One of the issues he raised related essentially to the M4. I was a member of an inquiry that ventilated that issue backwards and forwards as recently as last year or this year. It was a toll inquiry. There was no great limitation on its scope: The committee went down just about every possible rabbit burrow. A report was prepared. If the Hon. Adam Searle's issue relates to that inquiry I can inform him that the report has been done. Obviously the Hon. Adam Searle has not even read the report of a committee of which members of his own party were members. Therein lies the problem.

Let us have inquiries and let us do them properly, but let us commit time, effort and thought to ensuring the outcomes are effective rather than opting for simply adding another committee because it seems like a good idea at the time. I ask the Hon. Adam Searle to reflect upon the approach adopted by his party and whether that achieves a better outcome for the people of New South Wales, or whether it undermined the good work that was done by the committee on committees and members from all parties, who worked so constructively together on that committee. The motion represents a regressive step that, if agreed to, will detract from past efforts. I thank the House for its indulgence.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (11:30): I participate in this debate with eagerness to oppose the motion. As members previously indicated, I was a member of what is euphemistically described as the committee on committees for the Legislative Council. It is fair to say that as a member of that committee and in other aspects of my life as a member of the Legislative Council, I am no friend of the Executive Government. I do not think

there will be too much dissent from members of my own party, who will say that my scepticism of the Executive occasionally borders on the unhealthy but generally, I think, is rational. I thought back to the committee on committees. I remember my role as a member of that committee. I confirm what other members have said, which is that the two committees, which are the subject of motions to have them established today as potential committees of the Legislative Council, were not raised by anyone, either through formal submission or general discussion, who was a member of the committee on committees.

I support the committee system. I support a committee system that works. I am particularly concerned to point out that one of my motivations for being a member of the committee on committees was my belief that too many select committees were being created, essentially to replicate work that could have been done either by the three standing committees or the six portfolio committees. It was my view then, as it is now, that there is no need to establish select committees that simply replicate the work that could be done by the existing committees of the Legislative Council. Furthermore, we should have made better use of the existing committees. The final report of the committee on committees, the Government's response and the creation of the two new committees have been excellent.

However, I am opposed to a proliferation of both select committees and new committees that merely replicate the functions of committees that are already in existence. There is no need to create committees for committees' sake. Indeed, that was my concern as a member of the committee on committees. I thought that had been addressed through the new Selection of Bills Committee and the new Regulation Committee, which could allocate work within the committee system. Indeed, policy committees are still able to examine matters of importance within their portfolio areas. What will we be doing if this motion is agreed to? We will simply be replicating work that has been done and that has been made more efficient by changes that already have been made in relation to the referral of bills and regulations for inquiry.

I invite members to refer to the report of the committee on committees, which cites the minutes of the meeting. It shows that I often voted for Opposition and crossbench motions and against my own party because I believe in the importance of the Legislative Council and its committee structure. I do not believe an Executive should be afraid of having to answer questions within that structure. But there is a point at which we must ask: How many committees are necessary, especially when additional committees add no additional purview to what already exists? I refer to the record of the meeting that took place on 18 November 2016. At that meeting Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile—the man who comes to the Legislative Council purportedly to place greater scrutiny on the Executive through the creation of today's two committees—repeatedly voted against motions I moved that would have increased scrutiny on the Executive.

I am loath to use the word "hypocrisy", but there is no other word that adequately describes exactly what has happened in this instance. I refer to the motions. A motion I moved recommended an extension of time for the budget estimates process. It states, "The Committee divided. Ayes—Mr Donnelly, Dr Phelps, Mr Shoebridge, Mr Veitch; Noes—Mr Farlow, Mr Khan, Mrs Mitchell, Reverend Nile." The motion called for additional scrutiny of the Executive, which Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile voted against. Later I moved a motion that essentially meant the questioning time forgone by Government members would be given to Opposition and crossbench members so that they could ask questions, and that time would not simply fall into a black hole and result in a shortening of the very limited questioning period that members of the Executive face. It states, "The Committee divided: Ayes—Mr Shoebridge and Dr Phelps; Noes—Mr Donnelly, Mr Farlow, Mr Khan, Mrs Mitchell, Reverend Nile and Mr Veitch." What hubris, what temerity, what chutzpah, to come in here and say, "We believe in a strong system to overlook Executive decisions," and having voted against the measures that were put up.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: We voted for them.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: Mr Jeremy Buckingham is not moving this motion—other people are and other people are supporting it. Mr Jeremy Buckingham said that the committees are not doing a good job. The committees have non-Government majorities, so why are they not doing a better job? The Government cannot stop them. Those opposite say that they want greater scrutiny of the Executive, but Opposition members and crossbenchers did not vote for longer periods of scrutiny during the budget estimates procedures. My membership on the new Selection of Bills Committee has shown me that there are resource implications that have not been considered by this motion. The addition of the new committees has stretched the committee office of the Legislative Council to its limit. The addition of this proposed committees will require either new money from the budget or the chopping back of resources in this place. What are we chopping back? Maybe we should cut the staffing numbers of crossbenchers by 50 per cent—that may give us some money for these new committees.

The existing committee system—which we have augmented by generally following the recommendations of the Select Committee on the Legislative Council Committee System—has presented us with a wonderful opportunity to have an effective, useful, resilient and insightful committee system in this place. We do not need a make-work exercise that replicates the powers, relationships and inquiry processes of committees

that already exist and have non-Government majorities. We cannot proclaim that this is a virtuous new model and tool. It is a cynical exercise and it should be opposed.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (11:42): In reply: I will not say too much in reply—I do not need to. However, I will set the record straight. I suggest that the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps searches hard for a word other than "hypocrite" and instead thinks about the word "evolution". I recall that in 2011, when Parliament reconvened after the election, Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile amended the motion of the then Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council to expand the number of general purpose standing committees, as they were then known, from five to six to try to extend the ability to cross-examine Ministers. I accept that it was gracious of Government members to agree not to ask Government questions. However, the second part of that agreement—in other words, the codicil—was, "Yes, but we want to foreshorten the amount of time." The crossbenchers and the Opposition received no more time.

We then had a change of Government portfolios and all of sudden the continuity was broken. Yes, the general purpose standing committee system—now the portfolio committee system—was improved, but can Government members in this House honestly say to the people of New South Wales that they do not believe that we should try to improve ourselves? Government members have argued that they do not believe this change is an improvement. However, the crossbenchers, Opposition and I do believe it is an improvement. I would characterise the two proposed committees as being the Swedens of the committee system. In other words, the proposed committees will have the opportunity to act quickly and will augment the committees' ability to prosecute particular issues.

A committee cannot cross-examine a Minister's portfolio in 20 minutes—come on, it is a joke! Today the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps acknowledged that he was a driver behind the reforms of the committee system in this House to be more robust and—to use his words—more like the Senate. The Government can impute any motives it likes on this motion and foreshadowed motion to establish a Public Works Committee. We are trying to improve the system. In response to the question of the cost of the proposed committees, I say that this Government is wallowing in money. Do Government members think that the people of New South Wales will be happy to hear that it does not want to spend the resources and employ the staff to improve the oversight of government in this State? The Government should try saying that to the community and see what people say. I commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes21
Noes18
Majority.....3

AYES

Borsak, Mr R
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P
Voltz, Ms L

Brown, Mr R
Faruqi, Dr M
Houssos, Ms C
Nile, Reverend F
Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D
Walker, Ms D

Buckingham, Mr J
Field, Mr J
Mookhey, Mr D
Pearson, Mr M
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M
Wong, Mr E

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Colless, Mr R
Farlow, Mr S
Khan, Mr T

Blair, Mr N
Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
MacDonald, Mr S

Clarke, Mr D
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)
Mitchell, Ms S
Ward, Ms P

Mallard, Mr S
Phelps, Dr P

Martin, Mr T
Taylor, Ms B

Motion agreed to.*Bills***STATE DEBT RECOVERY BILL 2017****Messages**

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

LIQUOR AND GAMING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018**Messages**

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

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The PRESIDENT: I welcome school leaders from high schools in New South Wales who are attending the secondary schools leadership program conducted by our Parliamentary Education Unit.

*Documents***SYDNEY STADIUMS****Production of Documents: Order**

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (11:55): I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 January 2015 in the possession, custody or control of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Infrastructure NSW, the Office of Sport, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust, Venues NSW, the Minister for Sport, and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure:

- (a) any document prepared in relation to the demolition, reconfiguration or rebuild of Allianz Stadium or ANZ Stadium;
- (b) any document relating to cost benefit analysis for any projects under the NSW Government Stadium strategy;
- (c) any safety, security or compliance audit reports for Allianz Stadium;
- (d) any correspondence to any sporting code outlining safety and compliance issues at Allianz Stadium;
- (e) any agreement between the Government and the National Rugby League regarding fixtures;
- (f) any document relating to the permanent closure of Driver Avenue; and
- (g) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

I think the will of the House is clear with regard to the order for the production of documents under Standing Order 52. The reality is that there has been a brazen disregard for the release of information to the public under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, or GIPA, by this Government in regard to transparency and clarity of the business case and plans for the numerous announcements concerning the construction and refurbishment of Sydney stadiums.

I have lodged GIPA after GIPA with the Office of Sport, Infrastructure NSW, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Sport and the Minister for the Environment—all to no avail. Indeed, they would not even respond under terms of a GIPA to a request for an explanation for Infrastructure NSW's role and involvement in assessing these projects. Nor would they respond to a request for an explanation for the Office of Sport's role in assessing these projects. If these departments and agencies cannot tell us what their job is in response to a request lodged under GIPA, what is the point? The Office of Sport could not go as far as providing a list of the general nature and format of the records held by the agency that contain the information concerned, despite this being a requirement of section 61 of the Government Information (Public Access) Act. That was despite my further correspondence pointing to the requirements.

It is hard to justify spending billions and billions of dollars on infrastructure that has been universally panned as a bad investment not only by this Government's own departments but also by a conga line of chief economists, because no business case or cost-benefit analysis has been released. We now have a crisis, as the Government has created a trust deficit with every iteration of its never-ending stadium announcements. The reality is the business case for these stadiums does not stack up. We know at least one business case shows a return of only 60¢ for every dollar invested in the rebuilding of Allianz Stadium. We should compare this with the

Australian Sports Commission Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport report that shows for every dollar spent on grassroots sports to improve participation, a value of \$7.30 is created. This Minister for Sport has brought his magic wand to the figures for his business case. According to Infrastructure NSW, there will be three National Rugby League [NRL] teams playing 30 games out of that stadium, yet not one NRL team, other than the Eels, has agreed to play there. Now, to justify his business case, the Minister for Sport is claiming that he will have doubled the NRL games at Allianz Stadium.

The Minister had better start identifying which suburban grounds are going to lose their home games. He stated in the House that no events will be moved from the ANZ Stadium, and that means that roughly 33 NRL games will have to be moved from Penrith, Leichhardt, Campbelltown, Kogarah, Shark Park and Brookvale just to justify his business case. Those on the other side of the Chamber can get up now and tell the public what teams are moving, or admit that they do not have a business case to put forward. Then there are the Government's claims that events will come with new stadiums. That is very interesting, because last year, when the Football Federation of Australia [FFA] wanted the New South Wales Government to come on board for the Asian Football Confederation [AFC] Women's Asian Cup, it was not interested. It was fine to fund the men's cup, but not the woman's cup. Here at least is one event that the New South Wales Government is not interested in; it is clearly not a big supporter of women's sport. Why is the Minister—

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Point of order: Government members are constantly niggling and interjecting. I ask that they be directed to cease interjecting while the member is speaking.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I uphold the point of order. Government members will listen to the speaker in silence. The Hon. Lynda Voltz has the call.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: It is understandable that Government members interject and try to stop members speaking, because we have seen it all from this Government.

The Hon. Walt Secord: They hate scrutiny.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: They hate scrutiny. Look at what the Government did with Parramatta Stadium. I would ring journalists and say that the Government is demolishing Parramatta pool, and the Minister for Sport would tell the journalists, "No, that's not happening. That's not our final plan." What happened? A development application came in and within two months the Government was pulling the pool out. The Government told Cricket NSW that it would not touch its facilities. The week this announcement was made to Cricket NSW, I rang the organisation and said, "I've looked at the one picture I can find on this development and I can't see how they can build what they say they are going to without demolishing your facilities." They said, "No. We have a promise from the Government that they won't touch our facilities." Guess what? Two months later Cricket NSW is outraged that the Government lied to them and their facilities are coming down. That is the reality.

This Government will not tell anyone what is going on. It will not release its plans for closing Driver Avenue, but we know it is going to close Driver Avenue. The Government will not tell anyone what it is doing. It will not show us the business case. If it were serious about following a planning process for this stadium, it would have a Secretary's Environment Assessment Requirement [SEAR] before NSW Planning now. It would have made an application before NSW Planning and it would have lodged a SEAR, as it did with Parramatta. This Government has no transparency; as a result, there is no trust in the Government. The Opposition has no option but to pursue these documents through the House.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (12:01): I will deal with a number of issues that have been raised on this matter. First of all, I note that yesterday this matter was the subject of a move under Standing Order 44 to have it considered as formal business. We were not able to support that yesterday because as a government we needed more time. Given that this notice of motion was made only on Tuesday, we wanted to take the full 48 hours—as we expected it would come here today—to consider all the issues prior to making a decision on what we would do on this order for the production of documents.

The Government is always very careful on these issues because we know that an enormous workload is placed on the bureaucracy when there is an order for the production of documents. My predecessor the Hon. Duncan Gay noted in 2014 in relation to an order for the production of documents on the central business district and the South East Light Rail—and it was noted in the House at the time—that it cost the taxpayer more than \$800,000 and that 2,380 hours of departmental time was spent on it. Scrutiny is important but there needs to be a balance. On the occasion of the order for the production of documents I refer to, the Hon. Penny Sharpe said, "All I got was 40 boxes of rubbish." That can happen sometimes when members are not careful about the way they put together notices of motions pursuant to Standing Order 52.

The Government takes a very careful approach to its attitude to each order for the production of documents. Let me be quite clear, on 12 occasions during this parliamentary term, the Government has not opposed an order for the production of documents—in relation to a couple of different issues—being agreed to by the House. The Government agreed to a series of motions under Standing Order 52, for example, on the greyhound issue. We agreed to as formal business a Standing Order 52 order for the production of documents on the underdosing of chemotherapy patients. As I said, during this term we have agreed to 12 such motions. I advise the House we will agree to this Standing Order 52 order for the production of documents as well, for two very good reasons. First, the more information that is in the public domain, the more it will be absolutely clear that the proposal on stadiums is the right direction for the New South Wales Government to go. Secondly, when its cant and hypocrisy are stripped away, it will become clear that in fact it is the Opposition's policy too.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I warn the Hon. Daniel Mookhey that I will put him on notice if he continues to interject.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We heard from the Hon. Lynda Voltz that this project has been universally panned. How wrong she is. I could go through a very long list of people who are in favour of it, but I will just name one, the former Labor Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie. Over time he was fond of a backflip or two, as honourable members know.

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: Point of order: I ask that the House be called to order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): The House will come to order. I remind the Hon. Penny Sharpe that she is already on one call to order and I warn her to cease interjecting. Mr Justin Field will cease interjecting. Members will observe the debate in silence. The Leader of the Government has the call.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Earlier in the week, Peter Beattie made a point that was quite telling.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! I name the Hon. Daniel Mookhey.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Point of order: Are you calling him to order for a second time?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): No, for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It needs to be clear.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): It was clear to me.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I do not think it was.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): To be clear, I am naming the Hon. Daniel Mookhey for the first time.

The Hon. Lynda Voltz: Point of order: I ask that the Leader of the Government be called to order. He should not be questioning, directing or flouting the Chair's ruling.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order: It is quite clear that I was asking for clarity. I certainly was not canvassing the Deputy President's opinion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I accept that explanation.

The Hon. Niall Blair: To the point of order: The House is seeking clarification as to whether the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has been named or called to order for the first or second time. On my understanding, if the member has been named, he would then be escorted from the Chamber by the Usher of the Black Rod.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): As a matter of clarification, I call the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to order for the first time. The Leader of the Government has the call.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As I was saying, Peter Beattie made it quite clear when he said that Sydney might as well give up and relinquish its premier State title to Melbourne if it does not want to invest in bringing the city's icon stadiums up to scratch. He said New South Wales had to ask itself if it wanted Sydney to be a leader in sport or if it was happy to fall behind Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. He picked out those cities for a reason: all of those cities have been investing in their stadium infrastructure. He said further that the investment proposed for stadiums was chicken feed when held up to the rest of the budget and would inspire a whole generation of children to value sport and become more active. He went on to say:

The reality is Sydney is Australia's largest city—it should be a world leader attracting events internationally and to do that it needs the best facilities. And if not ... give up to Melbourne if you want to. That's fine but don't pretend you want to be a leader. You won't be called the premier state as you once called yourself.

The Coalition was elected on a promise that it would make New South Wales number one again. When we came to government, economic indicators put New South Wales last on a range of measures. Ours has now been the leading economy in Australia for 14 consecutive quarters. Our State is in great shape. We are also determined to be the best with sporting infrastructure, and any number of other infrastructure items. I do not apologise for having that aspiration for my portfolio. I am sure plenty of other Ministers have the same aspiration for their portfolios. I make it clear that this Government will invest 100 times more in health and education than in stadia over the next five years. While the ANZ and Allianz stadiums are being rebuilt, the Government will invest more than \$200 billion in health and education alone. What about public transport and roads? The cost of the stadia represents only 1 per cent of the amount that will be spent on health and education.

The Government is committed to delivering high-quality services across New South Wales, including excellent schools and hospitals. That is why since 2011 it has employed almost 5,000 additional teachers, more than 6,000 additional nurses and midwives, and 900 additional police officers. I note that in the last budget the Government also committed a record \$7.7 billion to new or upgraded hospital infrastructure. That means new hospitals in Mudgee, Macksville and the Tweed, and upgraded hospitals in Campbelltown, Randwick, Concord and Nepean. The Government has also increased its funding allocation for new and upgraded school infrastructure to \$4.2 billion, including a record \$747 million to clear the maintenance backlog.

Our State is in its strongest fiscal and economic position in nearly two decades. The Government will continue to work hard to ensure that New South Wales continues to grow and that it becomes an even better place to live, to work, to run a business, and to raise a family. I do not have time this morning to go through why this infrastructure program is essential in attracting events to this State. Allianz Stadium has been a concert venue for major international touring artists since it opened. It has hosted sold-out events for One Direction, Taylor Swift, Cold Play and Robbie Williams in recent years. ANZ Stadium has similar events and hosts more than 500 conferences, exhibitions and meetings as part of its special events calendar.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The second reason I said that the Government is not worried about this Standing Order 52 motion and that it is happy to support it is that when all is said and done this is also the Opposition's policy. The Opposition has lied to the people of New South Wales about its policy in its completely fraudulent anti-stadium campaign. The Leader of the Opposition has said clearly that he will build the Parramatta Stadium and the ANZ Stadium, and that he will invest in necessary works at Allianz Stadium. He has a plan to spend more than \$2 billion on stadiums, but he wants to lie about it all the way to the next election. The more information that is out in the public domain the better. The Leader of the Opposition is so embarrassed about his performance—

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: The Leader of the Government should not reflect on a member of the other House except by way of substantive motion. I also cannot work out whether he is reflecting on me or the Leader of the Opposition in the other place. He should stop being hysterical and focus on delivering the balance of his speech in the two minutes remaining to him.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): There is no point of order.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I make it clear that I was not reflecting on the Hon. Adam Searle. I would not do that. If he has taken offence, I apologise. However, I will not resile from making the comments I have made about the Opposition. It is not being up-front with the people of New South Wales. It has a \$2 billion stadium proposal. The more information that is in the public domain on this issue the better. The people of New South Wales are increasingly realising that what the Government is doing is in their interests. We want to make New South Wales number one again. We deserve to have the best stadium infrastructure in Australia for events and sports, and that is exactly what this Government will deliver.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (12:15): I speak on behalf of the Greens in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Lynda Voltz on behalf of the Opposition. Let us be honest about this; we are talking about \$2 billion being spent to knock down and to rebuild stadiums. There is no public demand for this. In fact, 200,000 people have signed a petition opposing this proposal. What is the justification for this expenditure? This call for papers seeks to get to the bottom of that issue. One of the stadiums involved is only 18 years old. If members were to look around the world at the famous sports stadia, they would see that some of them were built 100 years ago.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Name them!

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Name them?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: What about the Colosseum?

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: That is not the best example. The Yankee Stadium is 100 years old.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: No, it was rebuilt a few years ago. I am a Yankees fan.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: It is one of the most famous stadiums in the world and it was 100 years old when it was refurbished. This one is only 18 years old.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): Order! Members will not conduct a debate across the Chamber. Members will make their comments through the Chair. I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the first time.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: The Government has been dragged kicking and screaming to transparency on issues like this and others many times in the past. I experienced that when I tried to get to the bottom of liquor and gaming transparency. For the Government to say that it has been transparent is disingenuous at best. We know that there is a level of public anger. The anger within the Government's ranks is also increasing, and it is a public disaster for the Government. The Greens support the motion and, like the public, look forward to seeing the requested information. When it is before the House and when the Opposition and the media examine it, we will see that there is no substance to justify the Government's stadium policy and that the people of New South Wales are not being served. I look forward to the House supporting the motion.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (12:18): I will not speak to the substance of the motion because the Government intends to support it. However, I wish to ask the mover of the motion some questions in all sincerity. I have four questions relating to Standing Order 52. Is the member seeking details about the contracts for the leasing of facilities by sporting bodies and by service providers at the stadiums? If so, what does she envisage will be the consequence of the release of commercial-in-confidence contractual details about these specific arrangements?

The Hon. Adam Searle: Point of order: There is no provision in the standing orders for a member to interrogate the mover of a motion. The member can speak to the motion. However, the way in which he was conducting himself was disorderly.

The Hon. Don Harwin: To the point of order: The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps was directing his remarks through the Chair, so he was in order in that respect. The member was raising issues, to which the mover has a right of reply at the end of the debate. There is absolutely no substance to the point of order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Shayne Mallard): I do not uphold the point of order. The Hon. Lynda Voltz may respond to the questions in her reply if she chooses to do so.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: I asked the question: What does the member envisage will be the consequence of the release of commercial-in-confidence contractual details if she seeks those specific documents? Further, can she guarantee that the State Government will not face financial disadvantage from the release of commercial-in-confidence information in relation to those contracts? Would she be willing to voluntarily exclude or at least maintain confidentiality of commercial documentation in relation to the leasing of facilities to sporting bodies and by the service providers at the stadia?

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ (12:20): In reply: In response to the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps, as the Government is supporting this motion, I suggest the member direct his questions to the Leader of the Government.

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

Motion agreed to.

Committees

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Establishment and Membership

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (12:21): I move:

That notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders:

Appointment

- (1) A Public Works Committee be appointed.

Functions

- (2) The committee may inquire into and report on all public works to be executed (including works that are continuations, completions, repairs, reconstructions, extensions, or new works) where the estimated cost of completing such works exceeds \$10 million.
- (3) In examining such works the committee is to consider:
- (a) the stated purpose of the work and the need to carry it out;

- (b) the current and prospective public value of such work;
 - (c) the amount of revenue the work is expected to produce, where the purpose of the work is to increase revenue;
 - (d) the timeframe for carrying out the work; and
 - (e) any other related matter.
- (4) The committee is to inquire into future arrangements for the ongoing scrutiny by the Legislative Council of the matters set out in paragraphs (2) and (3).

Referral of inquiries

- (5) The committee is to inquire into and report on any matter referred to the committee by resolution of the House.
- (6) A committee meeting to consider a self-reference may be convened at the request of any three committee members in writing to the Committee Clerk.
- (7) The Committee Clerk must convene a meeting within seven days of the receipt of the request, providing that members are given at least 24 hours' notice.
- (8) A majority of committee members is required to adopt the self-reference. The terms of reference are to be reported to the House on the next sitting day.

Membership

- (9) The committee is to consist of seven members comprising:
- (a) three Government members;
 - (b) two Opposition members; and
 - (c) two crossbench members, one of whom shall be from The Greens.

Chair

- (10) That the chair of the committee be the Hon. Robert Brown, MLC.

Substitute members

- (11) Members may be appointed to the committee as substitute members for any matter before the committee by providing notice in writing to the Committee Clerk, with nominations made as follows:
- (a) nominations for substitute Government or Opposition members are to be made by the Leader of the Government, Leader of the Opposition, Government or Opposition Whip or Deputy Whip, as applicable; and
 - (b) nominations for substitute crossbench members are to be made by the substantive member or another crossbench member.

Electronic participation in deliberative meetings

- (12) A committee member who is unable to attend a deliberative meeting in person may participate by electronic communication and may move any motion and be counted for the purpose of any quorum or division, provided that:
- (a) the chair is present in the meeting room;
 - (b) all members are able to speak and hear each other at all times; and
 - (c) members may not participate by electronic communication in a meeting to consider a draft report.

Conduct of committee proceedings

- (13) Unless the committee decides otherwise:
- (a) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
 - (b) the chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
 - (c) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings is to alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each;
 - (d) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
 - (e) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the Committee Clerk within two days, excluding Saturday and Sunday, following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness; and
 - (f) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the Committee Clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration.

This extensive motion, which has been tabled and made available to members, is similar to the motion moved earlier today regarding the establishment of a public accountability committee. Therefore, I will not go into a lot of detail here. I note that the objections given by Government members during debate on the earlier motion are generic and may also apply to this motion. The Public Works Committee proposed in this motion is modelled on part 2 of the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912, which provides for a joint statutory committee to be called the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. Section 7 (1) of the Act states:

In every Parliament, a committee of members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, to be called the "Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works", shall be elected in manner hereinafter provided. Three of the persons so to be elected shall be members of the Legislative Council, and four shall be members of the Legislative Assembly.

Members will note that the establishment of a joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works is mandatory under this Act, yet the Parliament has not complied with this requirement. Indeed, this committee has not been active since the first session of the twenty-ninth parliament commencing on 25 November 1930, despite it being a requirement of the Act. A joint standing committee on public works under this Act is not to be confused with the modern Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Public Works, which has been established in previous parliaments under resolutions of the Legislative Assembly.

It is important to note that this Parliament has not even bothered to appoint a lower House public works committee as a stopgap measure, let alone comply with the provisions of the Public Works and Procurement Act 1912 to establish a joint standing committee. This is one of the reasons I have moved this important motion today. Legislation passed by this Parliament should be respected by this Parliament. Another fundamental reason for the establishment of this committee is to bring a particular focus to the delivery of the Government's historic \$80 billion investment in critical State infrastructure. During debate on the motion relating to Sydney stadia, the Leader of the Government talked about \$200 billion. Perhaps that increases the number of reasons an oversight committee as proposed in my motion needs to be established.

Investment in this State is desperately needed. Some might argue that this once-in-a-generation opportunity must receive proper oversight. We have already seen problematic implementation of the Government's agenda in projects such as the Sydney Light Rail and WestConnex. These projects have caused much public concern. I am not arguing that those projects should not be constructed but, if one can take any cognisance of the press, the public appears to be concerned about the Government's proposals for investment in new stadia. The House has just dealt with a motion on that issue. I will not go into detail about the issues raised in debate on that motion, but we are talking about approximately \$3 billion, by my calculations, when we add up the replacement costs of Stadium Australia, Allianz Stadium and Parramatta Stadium; the purchase of Stadium Australia; a new 15,000-seat indoor stadium; and so on. Whether it is \$3 billion or \$300 billion, there is a requirement that the Government afford maximum transparency to the people of the State. In relation to the stadia project, I contend that has not been the case.

As I have explained, the establishment of the proposed Public Works Committee will fill an obvious gap in public accountability for a range of key government infrastructure projects. Although the hurdle of \$10 million is very low, it is obvious that a committee such as this would not waste its time worrying about small projects. I repeat the comments made by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile in a debate earlier today that the Premier appears to support scrutiny. I believe the establishment of this committee will provide that scrutiny. The Government may well raise the issue of the cost to establish such a committee. I am cognisant of the issue of costs. When the Leader of the House held the position of President of the Legislative Council, I had to approach him for some extra money for the recreational fishing inquiry.

However, as I said in the House earlier today, the Government has lots of money and is in very good health. The Government is to be congratulated on that. But that does not mean that the Government should try to short-change scrutiny by limiting the amount of funds that are available to this House to carry out the work expected of it by the people of New South Wales. I am here out of a sense to do public good. I am not a career politician. I am grateful to the governments that have provided me with the opportunity to become involved in the committee process. For the reasons I iterated in the debate relating to the establishment of a public accountability committee, I believe the proposed Public Works Committee is a good idea, and I hope the Government will support the motion. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (12:28): I will start where the Hon. Robert Brown finished. I made an extensive contribution to debate on an earlier motion that the member moved in relation to public accountability. Three other Government members also contributed to that debate. We will not be re-litigating this issue. The House made its decision on public accountability. There is a commonality between the arguments that we would make on this motion and those we made on the earlier motion. The Hon. Robert Brown finished on the issue of cost and on the fact that the State is in great shape financially. The State is in great shape financially because—

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

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The Government does not waste money duplicating effort. I made that point in the debate on the earlier motion. I will reiterate how much just one individual select committee can spend on an inquiry. The cost of the Select Committee on Recreational Fishing was \$273,000. I am not suggesting that that was an inappropriate inquiry; it made many good recommendations and produced a good report—as one would expect when it had such a good chair. But committees come at a price. Scrutiny is worth paying for, but duplicating committees that can already do the job does not make sense.

Let me underline that. Portfolio Committee No. 4 is chaired by the Hon. Robert Borsak, and since 23 June 2016 it has been looking into the Government's proposal for the Powerhouse Museum. A portfolio committee can do right now everything that is being suggested for the proposed public works committee. There has been public interest in the Powerhouse Museum proposal—some opposition and quite a lot of support. Every single thing that the Hon. Robert Brown talked about can be done right now by Portfolio Committee No. 4. Moreover, that committee has been working on such things for almost two years. That underlines the point I have been making. About 700 projects will fall under the purview of this committee, with its \$10 million benchmark. Obviously the committee would focus on a few; so be it. As I have illustrated, existing committees can carry out the functions of the proposed committee. The Government relies on its earlier argument and opposes the establishment of the committee.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (12:31): For the reasons that I outlined earlier today, the Opposition will support the motion.

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (12:32): On behalf of The Greens, I support the motion that the Hon. Robert Brown has put forward to establish a committee to inquire into public works. It is imperative that Parliament conduct a detailed inquiry into public works projects in New South Wales. In the biggest State in Australia, unprecedented amounts of public money are being used for infrastructure projects. But as the level of expenditure has risen, so has public concern—and rightly so, because there is a chronic culture of secrecy in the Liberal-Nationals Government. All information is hidden from the public—the business cases and the massive cost blowouts—and the environmental impact statements are often flawed. Inflated benefits are often found to be skewed towards predetermined, favoured alternatives.

But these concerns have remained unanswered. Information about Government bungs, secrecy and cost overruns have to be dragged out using freedom of information laws, but this is becoming harder and harder under claims of cabinet-in-confidence. It is evident that the problems associated with the current crop of public works projects in New South Wales are not just road bumps, but point to systemic and colossal failures in the planning and carrying-out of infrastructure projects. The Government will not look into this—it is not exactly known for self-reflection! So we need this committee finally to undo this culture of secrecy, cover-ups and billions of taxpayer dollars squandered. This committee will provide a timely and much-needed investigation into the failures of public works planning and delivery by this Government. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN (12:33): In reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I especially thank the Leader of the Government for his contribution. Some of what he said is probably valid, but that is not an argument for not trying to improve the efficiency and efficacy of the committee system in this House. This is not the end of the evolution; it is just another step in the evolution. I foreshadow that, in accordance with one of its terms of reference, the committee will examine how effective its deliberations are, and perhaps form a view on how that might be taken forward into the next Parliament. That is one of the roles of this House.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Scott Farlow to the earlier debate, but it does not follow that, just because one committee in 2016 did not receive the sorts of suggestions that are being made here now, we should not act on this motion. This is the House of review and this is the oldest Parliament in the country. It behoves us to try continually to improve the system. I will do my level best to make sure that I prosecute any ideas that, in my opinion, will help this House to deliver services to the people of New South Wales. Again, I commend the motion to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes21
Noes18
Majority.....3

AYES

Borsak, Mr R
Donnelly, Mr G (teller)
Graham, Mr J
Moselmane, Mr S
(teller)
Primrose, Mr P
Sharpe, Ms P
Voltz, Ms L

Brown, Mr R
Faruqi, Dr M
Houssos, Ms C
Nile, Reverend F
Searle, Mr A
Shoebridge, Mr D
Walker, Ms D

Buckingham, Mr J
Field, Mr J
Mookhey, Mr D
Pearson, Mr M
Secord, Mr W
Veitch, Mr M
Wong, Mr E

NOES

Amato, Mr L
Colless, Mr R
Farlow, Mr S
Khan, Mr T

Blair, Mr N
Cusack, Ms C
Franklin, Mr B
MacDonald, Mr S

Mallard, Mr S
Phelps, Dr P

Martin, Mr T
Taylor, Ms B

Clarke, Mr D
Fang, Mr W (teller)
Harwin, Mr D
Maclaren-Jones, Ms N
(teller)
Mitchell, Ms S
Ward, Ms P

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members will resume their seats. Members who wish to have private conversations will take them outside the Chamber.

*Motions***AGRICULTURAL SHOWS**

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (12:43): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) agricultural shows are under way across New South Wales for 2018; and
 - (b) on the Monaro, Nimmitabel Show was held on 3 February 2018, Dalgety Show on 4 March 2018, and Cooma Show on 10 March 2018.
- (2) That this House notes that the Agricultural Societies Council of New South Wales is in its eighty-seventh year as the parent body of 195 Agricultural Show Societies across New South Wales.
- (3) That this House acknowledges the role of shows in promoting and protecting the pastoral, agricultural, horticultural and industrial resources of Australia, and educating the next generation so as to encourage their participation in the future.
- (4) That this House acknowledges the role of the Sydney Royal Easter Show in promoting agriculture and agricultural communities to city families.

Our agricultural shows are iconic events in country towns all around New South Wales. I have had the pleasure of attending plenty of shows recently, as the Monaro is in the middle of its show season. I just love them. Nimmitabel Show kicked off the High Country show season on 3 February. I acknowledge John Alcock, President of the Nimmitabel Show Society, and his team for another successful year. Personally, it was a great honour to be the second woman ever to open the Nimmitabel Show in its 115-year history. This year the show featured all the classics, including sheepdog trials, chainsaw races and a stockman's challenge.

A special focus was the junior judging and parading in the sheep and beef cattle sections. There were also plenty of kids' events to keep families entertained throughout the day. With our proud merino heritage, the Greenland Merino Stud Nimmitabel Show Shear competition is an important part of the day. The competition was devised to promote and encourage excellence within the shearing industry, interest in wool and an appreciation of the art and skill of shearing sheep.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will come to order. I cannot hear the member.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: In its eighth year, there are now four categories, including the Gordon Litchfield Wool Open Section. The great thing about a country show is, as I said before, they bring people together. My husband—who spends a lot of time on the farm with the sheep and cows, and not a lot of time with people—thinks it is fantastic. We take in our portable yards for the show society to use at all the events, and my husband

gets a chance to see and chat with other people—something that is really important for all our farmers to be able to do. The highlight for me was when I got to sash the supreme stud beast of the show, Charolais Curragindi Nulla, exhibited by the Nesbitt family from the Curragindi Charolais stud. In the cattle section, the shed was completely full—six studs with 32 exhibits, and 15 in the commercial section. The Curragindi Charolais stud also picked up champion female of the show, with Matilda.

The seventy-fourth Dalgety Show was held on 4 March. Life member Mrs Judy Walters opened the show, after many years of volunteer service to the society. She had just retired from her position as head steward of the cooking section. The Dalgety Show boasts some fabulous sections, including vintage cars and a great horse program that brings in riders from all over the south-east. This year it introduced the John Lawlis Memorial Perpetual Trophy for Champion Rooster, following John's passing last year. John was a local poultry breeder and was greatly respected as a judge and an entrant in many shows. Dalgety also acknowledged the great contributions of other community members by inducting new life members Shelley and Bert Thompson, and Jan and Keith Bennett. It is truly an honour to become a life member of the Dalgety Show Society.

The Dalgety Show is a great community effort that would not be possible without many hours of volunteer service and the community getting behind it. Congratulations to society president Julie Hedger and her team for all their hard work: Annie O'Keefe, Natalee Freebody, Christie Glasson and Trish Gerney. The Dalgety Show Society committee comprises all women, and they are a force to be reckoned with. They punch well above their weight at the Dalgety Show, and are an incredible bunch of really enthusiastic women. The show is one of the finest shows in the south, and I wanted to give them a big shout-out today. They are all really busy with jobs and families, but they get together to put on one of the best shows. Last weekend's Cooma Show was most exciting because Tasmanian David Foster opened the show. He has held the World Woodchopping Championship title for 21 years straight. Imagine that! He is possibly the only athlete in the world to win more than 1,000 titles, including every major woodchopping event in Australia and New Zealand. Is that not a feat?

The Hon. Niall Blair: And wearing a singlet while he does it!

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: It is just amazing. Cooma's 143rd show was held on 10 March. Amazingly, the show has been an annual event since 1875. Under the presidency of the fantastic Cathy Wassink, who is a great community leader in Cooma, the show society put on yet another wonderful event this year on a really beautiful day. It was a spectacular Monaro event. I particularly enjoyed seeing the rural medical students conducting health checks at the show. They were a great example of how show days can contribute to the ongoing success of rural communities. Students from the Australian National University's medical school, which is based at the Cooma Hospital, get a real feeling for what it is like to be part of a country community, practise medicine there, and see how much the community values them. I am pleased to inform the House that my blood pressure was a perfect 120/82. I took the Deputy Premier to have his blood pressure checked, and his was very good too—not quite as good as mine, but very acceptable.

Local shows are also an opportunity for local organisations to get out among their communities. I had a great day in the company of the member for Monaro, the Hon. John Barilaro, and numerous volunteers at The Nationals stand. It was really fantastic. We heard from members of the local community about the many ways they see this Government is on the right track and where the Government can still do more, which is very important. This weekend, on Saturday, the mighty Bombala Show will be held in the southern part of the State. I wish the organising committee the best of luck. But at all the shows I am struck by the efforts of the local show societies, the Agricultural Societies Council and the Royal Agricultural Society to engage with young people and introduce them to the show movement. The Agricultural Societies Council has a youth council—Next Generation—that is dedicated to engaging young people, thereby ensuring a positive future for New South Wales agricultural shows.

The Agricultural Societies Council Next Generation funds a scholarship for training and development opportunities that will benefit shows now and in the future. That council provides networking and social opportunities for young people throughout country New South Wales. I was very interested and pretty pleased to see that the entire Next Gen committee comprises women and is led by Hanna Barber. With young women leading the way, I have no doubt that things, including the next 115 years of Nimmitabel Show openings, will be a little more balanced. When many people think of country shows, they think of showgirls. The Showgirl Competition has been going since 1962, when 20 young ladies competed for a silver tray and a \$200 cash prize. Today, more than 500 young women enter competitions at more than 120 show societies for the opportunity to represent their community and potentially go all the way to the Royal Easter Show.

This year the Monaro again had some wonderful representatives including Annette Fitzgerald, which gave me great pleasure because she started preschool with my eldest daughter. I was pretty proud to see Annette come such a long way to represent the Nimmitabel community, which she does so well. The Monaro was represented also by Kristen Whiting from Cooma, who is another great girl and a great contributor. Nimmitabel

has a very proud history of showgirls and of women who have led the way. Mel Haylock was the first woman to open the Nimmitabel Show. Mel went all the way and won the State title, which did the Monaro very proud. What is even more tremendous is that Mel returned to the Monaro. She runs a farm with her husband, George, and their three lovely young boys. Mel is a real pillar of agriculture. She makes a huge contribution. She is a community leader. She often mentions to me that it is the skills she learned during the Showgirl Competition that have empowered her to speak up about issues. As president of the Nimmitabel preschool, she spoke out loudly about what needed to happen in terms of policy to ensure that young kids in the Monaro have the same opportunities as young kids in the cities. Mel is a really terrific example of Monaro's showgirl entrants. I am very proud to know her. I think she is tremendous.

Another fantastic Nimmitabel girl I must mention is Emily Blyton. I mention Emily because, as a student of Monaro High School, this year she topped the entire State in primary industries, which is a mighty effort. I know Emily and her family well. Emily says that she loved studying primary industries at school. She grew up on the farm, her father grew up on the farm and her grandfather grew up on the farm. Emily loves agriculture and is really excited about the future. It is pretty tremendous that a student from Monaro High School topped the State. It is amazing. Laura Clarke was also a student at Monaro High School, and is one of my favourite people in the world. Laura was a Nimmitabel showgirl and placed in the top 10 in four-unit English as a result of a film she made. During a drought when things were pretty ordinary on the farm on which she grew up, she wanted to tell a story. Film study was not offered at Monaro High School because of insufficient enrolments. Laura used to arrange for the cleaners to open the school for her early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Laura's film came in the top 10 in the State, which is a tremendous achievement by Laura Clarke, who is another fantastic girl from Nimmitabel.

I also mention Maisie Morrow, whom I had the great pleasure of meeting on Australia Day at the Nimmitabel Australia Day ceremony. Maisie won *The Land* Showgirl Competition 2017-18. Maisie's mother grew up in Nimmitabel, but does not live there any more. In our role as parliamentarians, we listen to a great number of speeches. Maisie gave a tremendous speech on Australia Day at Nimmitabel. When we talk about opportunities in rural communities, sometimes we may say that opportunities are severely limited and that there is great inequity. However, Maisie said being a female in a rural community gave her opportunities she never thought possible. It was fantastic to see this young and vibrant woman talking about all the positive aspects of living in a country area. I could really relate to that because if I had not married Duncan Taylor and moved to the country, I would not have had half the opportunities I have experienced. I do not think I would be a member of the Legislative Council. Country shows reflect that by exhibiting country communities and societies and showing that opportunities exist for anyone who wishes to step up and take them.

The Showgirl Competition aims to find a young woman who will act as an ambassador for rural New South Wales. Her role involves many official and informal duties at both the Sydney Royal Easter Show and during her travels interstate and overseas. The competition is an opportunity for personal development and networking for young women. With the Royal Easter Show just around the corner, I wish all the representatives from across New South Wales who have been selected to represent their zones the best of luck. In particular, I wish good luck to one of our Young Nationals, Alana Black, from Rydal, who will represent Zone 5. Alana is a great girl.

Another feature of agricultural shows and show societies is the Royal Agricultural Society Rural Achiever Awards, which is a leadership program that is designed to recognise the leaders of tomorrow who are already contributing to their community and to rural Australia. Nominees are put forward by show societies throughout the State, and eight finalists participate in a networking and professional development program over 12 months. One winner goes forward to represent New South Wales at the National Rural Ambassador Awards. If the calibre of entrants this year is anything like it was last year, people from rural and regional areas of New South Wales are in for a pretty exciting time.

The strong show culture and bright future for young people in southern New South Wales is reflected in the 2018 finalists. One finalist is Hanna Darmody from Bungendore, who is a terrific girl. Watch this space: I think she is ready to become the next Premier or Deputy Premier of New South Wales. She is an incredible girl who has enormous potential. I give a really special shout-out to Timothy "Timmy" Green, who was originally from Nimmitabel but who now resides in Wagga Wagga. I have known Timmy all his life. His mother, Mary, was one of my best mates. We both started working in the Cooma oncology clinic when it was first opened. Mary loved her three boys and was incredibly proud of them.

Timmy was always destined to do great things, which is really exciting. Unfortunately, Mary died of lung cancer just as Timmy went away to school in year 11. Mary had never smoked a cigarette in her life. It is pretty tough to work in an oncology clinic and then get cancer and find yourself being treated at the clinic where you worked. I remember Mary saying to me when Timmy went away to school in year 11, "Bron, you know, he's

going to do really great things." It made me so proud to see Timmy standing on stage at the show. I said to myself, "Good on you, Mary. I know you're looking down on this. Be very proud of him because he's an incredible young man." I had to give Timmy a shout-out today.

Erika Heffer of Deniliquin and Joseph Murphy of Bribbaree are also finalists, along with a couple of other competitors from parts of the Central West whom I am tempted to claim for the south as well. At the Royal Easter Show there are also the young judges competitions, the Young Farmers Challenge, and the Young Auctioneers competition. These competitions bring together talented young people from around regional New South Wales to showcase their expertise. The Royal Easter Show is just around the corner, kicking off on Friday 23 March and running until Tuesday 3 April. I bet the Minister for Primary Industries is excited about visiting the Country Women's Association stand.

The Hon. Niall Blair: I am helping them cook some scones.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: That is impressive. I hope to see all members there, cooking and eating scones.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: He might have some prize-winning honey to put on them.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Yes, scones with honey—yum. More than 40,000 entries come from across Australia, seeking to be recognised as the best in their fields. There will be arts and crafts, baking, dogs and cats, honey, olive oil, beer and cider, and the Great Backyard Pumpkin Challenge alongside sheep and fleece, goats, cattle and horse exhibitors. Even better for city families, the men, women and children exhibiting at the show are so friendly and proud of their work. Visitors can ask them anything and they will do their best to answer, share their world, educate others and extend their appreciation for agriculture—which is something we should all have. The show is a great opportunity for kids to learn how to milk a cow, turn that milk into butter, see chicks hatching and see how wool goes from the sheep's back and becomes clothing. I bet the President is wearing a wool suit today.

As more and more of our population has no link to the land, the Sydney Royal Easter Show is an important opportunity for city families to keep in touch with the work of farmers and the reality of how their food and fibre comes to be. Some people might think shows are a thing of the past or that people now go only for the rides or show bags. But I am proud to move this motion to recognise the work of local show societies, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW and the Agricultural Societies Council. These organisations carry on show traditions to protect and promote our primary industries to new generations. They keep up those connections and ensure that opportunities for learning and understanding are provided. Their work ensures that our primary industries maintain the support and trust of the broader public to keep doing what they do best: growing the cleanest, greenest and highest-quality produce in the world.

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

Announcements

RETIREMENT OF DON COLAGIURI, SC

The PRESIDENT (14:30): I am pleased to welcome into my gallery Mr Don Colagiuri, SC, who is well known to many members as the Parliamentary Counsel and head of the New South Wales Parliamentary Counsel's Office. Today is almost certainly the final parliamentary sitting day before Don's retirement. Don's intended retirement was flagged before Christmas and recruitment action is underway for his replacement. I do not know whether we should be talking about that before he leaves. Don's career as a parliamentary drafter commenced in the Chief Secretary's Department in 1972, and has continued since 1974 in the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. He has been the New South Wales Parliamentary Counsel since 14 February 2001. Don is a graduate in Arts/Law from the University of Sydney, was admitted as a barrister in 1975, and appointed a Senior Counsel in 2003. Don Colagiuri is a public servant in the truest sense of the term.

He has been described as "a legend of the public sector", and over the years his work has in one way or another probably touched the lives of everyone in the State. Don has had a particular interest in the drafting of constitutional, public sector, planning and criminal legislation, including the Model Australian Criminal Code. He has led enhanced access to New South Wales legislation via the NSW Legislation website and, since 2001, has been the Secretary/Chair of the Australasian Parliamentary Counsel's Committee, which amongst other things is responsible for drafting national uniform legislation. As Parliamentary Counsel, Don undertook the onerous task of getting large numbers of bills drafted to bring forward at the end of the parliamentary sittings. He has been unfailingly cheerful and courteous. Don, I am sure all members will join with me in wishing you all the best for a very well earned retirement and saying "thank you" for your service to the Parliament and the people of New South Wales. Well done.

Members stood in their places and applauded.

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of all members, I welcome from Lebanon the OTV crew, Rimial Nehme, Marcel Attallah and Elias Fawaz, who are guests of the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane.

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

Questions Without Notice

LIBERAL PARTY DONATIONS

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (14:32): I direct my question to the Leader of the Government, Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts, in his own capacity and as Leader of the Government in this place. Following his answers late last year and again yesterday about prominent Liberal Party donor Sally Zou, has the Minister now satisfied himself that the donations made to the Liberal Party have indeed occurred? Will he now inform the House what steps he has taken to ensure that the Liberal Party returns all donations so that outstanding workers' entitlements can be paid?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: Donations to the Liberal Party are an operational matter for the organisational wing of the party; they are not within the portfolio responsibilities of the Hon. Don Harwin. This is a matter that goes to the organisational nature of a political party and the internal dealings within that party. As such, it is outside the purview of his ministerial responsibilities and should be ruled out of order.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: The Minister is the Leader of the Government. He is also the Leader of the Liberal Party in this place. He has responsibilities for matters of public affairs relating to the Liberal Party, not only in its parliamentary sense but also more broadly. This is a matter of public affairs that falls within his portfolio as Minister for Resources, as the leader of his party in this place, and representing the Premier.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: To the point of order: There is no organisational or operational linkage between the honourable member or his portfolio responsibilities and the internal workings of the Liberal Party or its obligations under the various Acts of Parliament that relate to the receipt of donations. This is outside his area of responsibility. Mr President, if you were to accept the Leader of the Opposition's argument then literally anything could suddenly become part of the responsibility of the Leader of the House.

The Hon. Walt Secord: To the point of order: Yesterday the Minister took a number of questions on notice involving this subject, and he answered a number of questions on it last year. At the time, they were all in order.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Further to the point of order: Simply because a point of order is not deemed disorderly does not mean that the President can rule a subsequent question on the matter disorderly. The simple fact is that it is beyond the organisational purview of the Minister as a Minister to deal with matters where he has no direct linkage with the operational side of the organisational Liberal Party. Thus, it is outside his purview for members opposite to ask him questions about it.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Cover-up!

The PRESIDENT: I remind the Hon. Walt Secord that he is on two calls to order. If I hear one more interjection of "cover-up", I will call him to order for the third time. That is my final warning.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: To the point of order: The Hon. Walt Secord raised an issue in relation to the Minister answering questions on this issue previously. Questions have been put to the Minister previously that go directly to the issue of Liberal Party donations. He has answered those questions, and he has been generally relevant in doing so. I do not believe that it is outside the standing orders for the Opposition to continue to pursue the issue given that the Minister has canvassed questions previously.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: To the point of order: It is up to Ministers how they answer questions. A Minister answering a question does not necessarily mean that the question is orderly. My recollection of the questions asked last year is that they did not require the Minister to make comment about fundraising but, rather, to address his portfolio responsibilities, and this question should be distinguished as such.

The PRESIDENT: I refer members to a ruling by then President Burgmann in 2000:

Questions must relate to the conduct of public affairs within the government's responsibility which could be dealt with by legislative or administrative action.

In 1997, President Willis ruled:

A question not affecting the public affairs of New South Wales is out of order.

I note that similar questions—the Parliamentary Secretary distinguished earlier questions from this question—had been answered by the Minister. I also note that it is the Minister's prerogative to answer the question as he sees fit. However, I cannot see a link between this question and the Minister's responsibilities in relation to his portfolio. The question is out of order. Order! I call the Hon. Rick Colless to order for the first time.

SYDNEY WATER WASTEWATER OUTFALLS

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (14:39): My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy and Utilities. Will the Minister update the House on Sydney Water's plans to deliver a long-term solution for wastewater outfalls at Vacluse and Diamond Bay, and are there any alternative policies?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:39): As members would be aware, last week Sydney Water announced a process to find a long-term solution to wastewater discharges from the untreated ocean outfalls at Vacluse and Diamond Bay. As I outlined to the House then, as the Minister responsible for Sydney Water I strongly support this initiative. I welcome the support of the two local members, the member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith, and the member for Vacluse, Gabrielle Upton. We are committed to delivering infrastructure, unlike those opposite. They are just committed to announcing infrastructure, whether it was Carl Scully's Action for Public Transport 2010, which delivered no action or "Inaction by 2010", or this matter, when the former water Minister Phil Costa said:

There's money there and we've already begun. We're aware of it. We understand the problem there and we're dealing with it.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Sounds like the trolley of truth.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, the trolley of truth. That was almost eight years ago, and they did not, because one cannot trust Labor. I can inform the House that there is a new Labor plan on this issue. The member for Kogarah, the shadow Minister for Water, in response to the announcement, said that the solution is a further deep ocean outfall. He said that the Government has to come up with a deep ocean outfall so we can deal with this. I am advised that we do not need a new deep ocean outfall or outlet. The deep ocean outfalls and treatment facilities at Bondi are more than capable of handling the approximately 10,000 homes in question—remember that figure, just 10,000. I am further advised that the North Head treatment plant and deep ocean outfall would cost in the order of \$750 million in today's money. So, having gold-plated the energy networks, Labor wants to gold-plate the pipes too. This Government is protecting our marine environment, while at the same time delivering a \$100 cut to water bills this year.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Greg Donnelly to order for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: But what the shadow Minister, the member for Kogarah, is suggesting with a gold-plated deep ocean outfall would cost every consumer in Sydney Water's area of operation \$50 per annum extra on their bills. That is the policy of those opposite: a \$50 increase in water bills. Every home in Western Sydney will be paying \$50 extra under Labor's policy to pay for a deep ocean outfall for just 10,000 homes in Vacluse—\$50 extra at South Penrith, \$50 extra at Casula, all just to pay for Chris Minns' proposal for a deep ocean outfall for the people of Vacluse. Talk about a joke—that is what this policy-free zone opposite is, except those opposite are not a policy-free zone; they have this stupid plan. [*Time expired.*]

LIBERAL PARTY DONATIONS

The Hon. WALT SECORD (14:43): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, and Minister for Energy and Utilities, who is responsible for mining and workers in the mining sector. What communication has he had as Minister with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and member for Kiama, Gareth Ward, regarding a \$5,888 donation on 13 December 2016 from Sally Zou to the Kiama SEC? Will he ensure that this donation is returned and goes towards unpaid workers' entitlements from the Good Friday mine?

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Point of order: I will not repeat the arguments I made previously. However, I use the same precedent for at least the second half of that question and also probably for the first half.

The Hon. Adam Searle: To the point of order: To be in order, the question has to relate to public affairs.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot hear the Leader of the Opposition because of the continued interjections from his deputy.

The Hon. Adam Searle: As I was saying, to be in order, a question has to relate to a matter of public affairs within the Minister's portfolio. This relates to unpaid workers' entitlements in the mining sector and the

Minister is responsible for the resources industries, including mining. The fate of workers—whether it is their pay, their conditions, their safety or what have you—is a matter of public affairs falling squarely within the Minister's ministerial responsibility.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: To the point of order: What the question related to was in fact a donation, which is within the purview of the Liberal Party of New South Wales and not within the Minister's ministerial responsibilities. It does not relate to the public affairs to which the Minister is connected and as such should be ruled out of order.

The PRESIDENT: I note the point of order and the arguments for and against. The question went further than simply the donation. If it was simply the donation, I would not have allowed the question. I believe the Minister is capable of answering the question. I remind the Minister that it is his prerogative as to how he answers the question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:46): I am more than happy to address this issue. I cannot help it if the Opposition cannot write a question. I heard suggestions coming from the other side that I was going to take this question on notice if I stood up and took it. Well, I am not going to take it on notice. When questions were asked of me yesterday about this subject I came back to the House at the end of question time with a comprehensive answer on this issue.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: The Minister is debating the question and trying to answer questions from yesterday. I ask that he be directed to answer the question that he has been asked today.

The Hon. Niall Blair: To the point of order: The reason the Minister is giving the same answer as he did yesterday is because the Opposition is recycling the same questions from yesterday.

The PRESIDENT: It was difficult for me to hear everything the Minister was saying because the Hon. Mick Veitch and the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox are having a loud conversation across the table. I again remind members that if they wish to have a conversation, they can do so in the members lounge. The Minister was being generally relevant to the question, particularly with the way in which the question was asked and parts of that question which I had ruled in order and the Minister could answer.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have looked at the question that has been asked. Effectively there are two issues that are being canvassed: What communication have I had with the member for Kiama about a donation and will I ensure that a donation is returned? I fail to see what that has to do with my duties as Minister for Resources. If the Opposition has a problem with the donation, it should take it up with the Electoral Commission.

CADIA VALLEY MINE EARTHQUAKE

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (14:49): My question is directed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts. Will the Minister please update the House on the damage to the Cadia mine caused by an earthquake on 9 March? In particular, are the earthquakes below the mine being caused by mining activities? How is worker safety being guaranteed, given the ongoing earthquakes? Given the partial tailings dam wall collapse caused by the earthquake, can the Government guarantee that Flyers Creek, the Belubula River and the Lachlan River will not suffer pollution due to this earthquake or future earthquakes and dam wall collapses?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:49): The New South Wales Government is closely monitoring the failure of a tailings dam wall at the Cadia Valley operations goldmine south of Orange. I am advised that around 6.30 p.m. on 9 March 2018 a section of the mine's north tailings dam slumped, releasing tailings into the south tailings dam. At this stage, the release has been contained by the south tailings dam and a range of technical specialists are currently onsite assessing the situation. As a result of the incident, the mine's dam emergency plan was initiated, resulting in two nearby homes being evacuated as a precautionary measure. Blayney Council also closed a nearby road. The Resources Regulator responded to the incident and is maintaining a monitoring role from an environmental and work health and safety perspective.

The incident response also involved NSW Police, the State Emergency Service and local government. Dams Safety NSW—under the jurisdiction of my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry—will be the lead Government agency responding to the incident, and can issue emergency orders under the Dam Safety Act 2015, should the need arise. I am advised that the potential impacts of a failure of the tailings dam and the release of material are primarily of an environmental concern in the event that material was to escape the confines of the dam.

The nature of tailings materials at Cadia has been assessed as having a low potential for acid formation and soluble salt generation. Dams Safety NSW is working with the mine to ensure appropriate measures are

undertaken to address the dam's structural integrity and any environmental and public safety risks. The nature of the design of the tailings dams and the extent of the fault area are likely to result in a protracted period of works to address the failure. The Resources Regulator is working closely with other agencies, including Dam Safety NSW, to monitor the situation and provide advice as appropriate.

The management of risks associated with tailings dams is a current focus area for the Resources Regulator, and is documented in its published compliance priorities for the first half of 2018. Over the next four months a cross-agency awareness campaign, facilitated by the Resources Regulator, will be conducted across the coal and metalliferous mining sectors to ensure titleholders and mine operators are aware of their legislative obligations in relation to tailings management. The campaign will set out the regulator's expectations as well as identify key knowledge gaps that will need to be addressed by industry to promote best practice tailings management. The current incident at Cadia will also be used to inform the compliance program.

Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (14:53): I ask a supplementary question: Would the Minister please elucidate his answer by informing the House as to whether Dam Safety NSW, the Resources Regulator or any other entity or government agency is investigating whether there is any link between geological activity, including earthquakes, and the dam wall collapse at Cadia?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (14:54): I appreciate the opportunity to add some material in relation to this matter because it is an important issue. There are five significant mines in the Central West, employing more than 2,600 people. This is an important part of the economy of the Central West, and making sure we get this right is very important. In my earlier response I indicated that Dam Safety NSW had a particular role. No doubt my colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, would have plenty to add to this. I know that the seismic activity is of particular interest to Mr Jeremy Buckingham and I appreciate the assistance of my colleague, the Hon. Niall Blair, who has provided me with some advice to assist the honourable member.

At this stage, and with limited information available, the dam safety committee believes that the earthquake experienced in the region on 8 March—particularly because of its low magnitude—is unlikely to be a direct cause of the failure. However, this will be investigated further. My colleague, the Deputy Leader of the Government, expects to be given more information with the release of the preliminary report on 20 March.

RECREATIONAL FISHING

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (14:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is improving recreational fishing opportunities for anglers?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (14:56): Fishing is one of this country's greatest pastimes and we are so lucky in New South Wales to have some of the best angling spots anywhere in the world. In fact, approximately one million people participate in recreational fishing across New South Wales every year, and that number continues to grow. Last year the New South Wales Government announced a trial to establish eco fishing huts in national parks and other areas across the State to give people the chance to experience our great outdoors. The Department of Primary Industries, in collaboration with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, conducted the first trial of a remote heritage-style hut located in the Kosciuszko National Park, which is close to a number of quality trout fisheries. The location of that hut meant visitors had the opportunity to catch rainbow trout and brown trout from the Upper Murrumbidgee River and Tantangara Dam, providing a unique angling experience.

The department also conducted trials in six other huts throughout New South Wales. We have had enormous support for this style of recreational fishing because the huts go to the heart of the recreational fishing experience—the opportunity for sensational catches, picturesque settings and quality time with family and friends far away from the hustle and bustle. I am pleased to inform the House that there are now 14 eco huts on offer across the State. The huts cover a range of fresh- and saltwater-fishing experiences from as far north as Warialda, south to Eden and out to Bourke in western New South Wales. These huts are incredibly affordable for fishers and families. They are even more affordable if fishers enter their recreational fishing fee receipt number into the booking portal on the Department of Primary Industries website, when they will receive a 30 per cent discount. The Department of Primary Industries will use existing huts where possible and create new huts in other locations where there is good-quality fishing.

Our goal is to have some huts that people can drive to and other huts that will require a short hike to reach. Those huts will have water tanks for fresh water, solar lights for the evening, a barbecue and a small fireplace. We want to make sure our huts cover a range of fishing experiences from beach fishing for bream and whiting, to trout fishing in the high country, or chasing cod and yellow belly in our western rivers. I strongly

encourage anglers to get out and about in regional New South Wales and see everything that it has to offer. The Government wants to see more jobs in the bush and more foot traffic for our local businesses. The Government wants to see more local produce consumed. As I said, fishing is one of the State's most popular recreational activities. It is an activity I also personally enjoy. It is fantastic to see such a positive initiative being rolled out to more locations in New South Wales.

It would be remiss of me while referring to fly fishing not to mention the passing of a giant of the fly fishing world, Lefty Kreh, a world-renowned media personality and fly fisher and regarded as the most famous fly fisher who ever lived. He is credited with having brought the sport back to popularity through his media appearances. Unfortunately, Lefty Kreh passed away yesterday at the age of 93. He leaves behind many legacies, such as Lefty's Deceiver. That is not a Labor Party policy; it is a type of fly. Many of the flies that are used today have been modelled on Lefty's Deceiver. I offer condolences to his family. The fly fishing fraternity throughout the world will be sadder for his loss.

NSW NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE FIRE CONTROLLERS

Dr MEHREEN FARUQI (15:00): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts, representing the Minister for the Environment. Why has the Government abolished five fire controller positions in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service including at Merimbula, Bombala and Narooma, leaving just one experienced fire controller to manage the entire area?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:00): The question involves great detail about a particularly beautiful part of the State, Narooma and Bombala. They are great places. Bombala is very close to where the Hon. Bronnie Taylor lives.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: It is just 45 minutes from my place.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Apparently Bombala is just 45 minutes drive from where the Hon. Bronnie Taylor lives. As I said, the question asks specifically about fire controller positions in a couple of locations, which will require a response from the Minister in the Legislative Assembly whom I represent. I will endeavour to obtain a response as quickly as I can.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Courtney Houssos to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Bronnie Taylor to order for the first time. As I have indicated on previous occasions, if members representing opposing sides of politics wish to have a conversation, they should do so outside the Chamber.

ARTS BOARD LIBERAL PARTY APPOINTMENTS

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (15:02): In directing my question without notice to the Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts, I refer to community concerns about his appointment of three prominent Liberal Party members to arts board positions. I ask: Will the Minister guarantee to the House he was not compromised by lobbying from key party figures and donors?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Ben Franklin to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: As Luke Foley would say, "Yep, yep, yep."

The Hon. Ben Franklin: As Luke Foley would say, "Yep, yep, yep."

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:03): I should not let the backbench answer for me, but they pretty much got it right.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: You are compromised.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am completely flummoxed by the question.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: You are compromised, are you?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not flummoxed and I certainly am not in any way compromised by any of the appointments that have been made. In fact, I am very proud of all the appointments that were made to cultural institution boards at the end of last year. I am particularly proud that seven of the eight appointees are women and that now the majority of all the board appointees to the State's cultural institutions are women. Last week it gave me great pleasure to observe some of the outstanding contributions that are being made to our cultural institutions and wider arts organisations by women. But I digress. The most recent appointments will ensure that those organisations continue to be led by talented business and community leaders and some of the most capable minds in New South Wales.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Natalie Ward to order for the first time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Candidates were assessed against specific criteria that are linked to each organisation's enabling legislation and organisation requirements. Skills such as experience in sponsorship, philanthropy, financial management and acumen as well as risk and strategic planning were considered in the assessment process. Each new and reappointed member was assessed as having met the skill requirements of the relevant board and on that basis was deemed suitable for appointment. Positions on the boards of the State's cultural institutions are unpaid and require a significant amount of commitment, time, and acceptance of responsibility.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Unpaid or paid?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Unpaid is correct. I thank the new and current board members for their generosity and dedication to those important State assets. I make the point that every single one of the eight people who were appointed on my recommendation to State cultural institution boards had had significant experience in the arts in unpaid positions, not-for-profit organisations, or professionally. Is the Opposition suggesting that Anne Dunn, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Dance Company was unqualified? Is the Opposition suggesting that Michael Ebeid, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the Special Broadcasting Service, was unqualified? Is the Opposition suggesting that someone such as Sara Watts, who was appointed to the Australian Museum Trust and who previously has been the Chair of the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and who has extensive audit and governance committee experience, including being the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee of the Victorian independent, broad-based anti-corruption commission and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, is unqualified to add governance firepower to the Australian Museum Trust? [*Time expired.*]

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Dr Peter Phelps to order for the second time. I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (15:07): I ask a supplementary question.

The Hon. Niall Blair: Please, sir, can I have some more?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: The Opposition is very happy with the answer. In light of the answer given by the Minister, will he elucidate whether, in the interests of probity, he will reopen the roles and invite public applications in an appointment process that is done at arm's length from him and his office?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:07): I have never before heard so much rubbish in my life. No, I absolutely will not be doing that at all. Is the Opposition suggesting that someone such as Kathryn Greiner, who has given outstanding service to the State for years as the Chair of the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing and who has been a board member of Bell Shakespeare for many years, cannot make a contribution to the Sydney Opera House Trust? Is that actually what the Hon. Greg Donnelly is saying? That is what the Hon. Greg Donnelly actually is saying, is it?

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Just the Liberal Party members. Go through the eight Liberal Party members, Don.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Now we hear that because a person might or might not be a Liberal Party member it somehow disqualifies them. Goodness gracious me, I have not gone through every single appointment to a State cultural institution board under the former Labor Government, but I can tell the Hon. Greg Donnelly that if he is telling me there was never a Labor Party appointment made to a State cultural institution board, my response is, "Get real". I am not suggesting and would not know if she is a Labor Party member, but one of the people appointed to a board was Penelope Seidler, an outstanding Australian who has made a great contribution to arts philanthropy over the years and who is the sister of Elizabeth Evatt and the daughter of a former Labor Cabinet Minister. Goodness gracious me, have I offended the Hon. Greg Donnelly's standards by appointing a relative of a former member of this House? Or maybe he was a member of the other House.

The Hon. Adam Searle: He was a member of the other place.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It was the other place, thank you. He was certainly a Cabinet Minister during some time between the McKell Government and the Renshaw Government. I could go through all of the Labor ministerial staffers who were appointed to cultural institutions. I could remind the House that the Labor Party appointed the then Premier's wife, Jill Wran, as chairwoman of the then Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Are you attacking Mrs Wran?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not at all attacking Jill Wran or suggesting that she was an inappropriate choice. She was an outstanding chairperson. But where does the Opposition get off trying to accuse

us of corruption? Labor Party members were appointed to boards. I make no apology when persons of merit who may or may not still be members of the Liberal Party, such as Kathryn Greiner, are appointed. They are good appointments and I support them.

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Hon. RICK COLLESS (15:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Early Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is supporting communities in the Goulburn electorate?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:11): I thank the Hon. Rick Colless for his question and interest in early childhood education. He is a grandfather of six children now—

The Hon. Rick Colless: Seven.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Seven—so he is very interested in this portfolio. As a regional member of this House, I am sure that he enjoys his colleagues' visits to the bush. I enjoy the visits, particularly when I take good news with me. That is why I was thrilled to join the Premier and member for Goulburn, Pru Goward, at Bundanoon District Community Preschool last month. Bundanoon District Community Preschool needed more preschool places to be made available for the families in their local community. To address the issue, the Government contributed more than \$800,000 in Start Strong Capital Works funding to allow an increase in capacity from 25 to 86 places. That is more than 60 additional preschool places for the Bundanoon community. These extra places provide a direct benefit not only to the children who attend but also to the young families who want their children to have a quality early childhood education.

As I have said in this House many times, this Government understands the importance of quality early childhood education and the 600 hours of participation, particularly in the year before school. That is why we are continuing to work hand in hand with the sector to increase places—particularly in regional areas of the State where there is a demand—through initiatives such as the Start Strong Capital Works program. I was grateful for the opportunity to join the Bundanoon community and officially open the new extension. I congratulate everyone involved on the fantastic work that went into improving the service. It really is a wonderful preschool. While I was in the area, I also travelled to Laggan to visit the Crookwell Mobile Children's Preschool Service at Laggan Public School.

The Start Strong Capital Works funding is the gift that keeps on giving and, thanks to the Government's continued investment, the Crookwell Mobile Children's Preschool Service has been able to purchase a new van to transport its equipment. Mobile services are critical in regional areas, as many members in this House would know. Crookwell Mobile Children's Preschool Service provides a vital service, and I am proud of the work we do to support it. While meeting with Crookwell Mobile Children's Preschool Service staff, I was encouraged to hear of their support for the changes that the Government is making to improve the options for mobile preschools, which will allow services to add new locations to their contract where there is a need. Crookwell Mobile Children's Preschool Service is hoping to add Taralga to its service, and the staff were thankful that that potential opportunity is now available to them, through the Government's support.

The PRESIDENT: Stop the clock. It is impossible for me to hear the Minister because members are speaking loudly across the table. I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the second time. I call the Hon. Bronnie Taylor to order for the second time. Members will not make sound effects when I am giving a ruling or calling a member to order. I remind members that interjections are disorderly. I have not called members to order because the noise has made it difficult for me to know who is interjecting. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Government members are proud to spend time in communities, listen to what they need, and hear their feedback. I was pleased to be able to do that in Laggan. While I was in Goulburn, I visited the Anglicare Goulburn Early Childhood Centre, which is another wonderful early childhood service. I spent some time there chatting to Amy Kolosque, who was the recipient of a Government Rural and Remote Early Childhood Teaching Scholarship. Amy has worked in early childhood education for a number of years and has two children of her own. She told me how the scholarship has helped her to balance her work, life and study and has made the process a lot easier for her as she studies online. She was grateful for that support. Our final stop for the day was a visit with the Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council, a great LALC in the Southern Tablelands. The council members talked to us about their issues and the ways in which they would like the Government to work with them. The visit provided a wonderful opportunity for me to spend some time in the Goulburn electorate. As Minister, I was pleased to hear that our Government is supporting communities where they need it.

SOLITARY ISLANDS AND BATEMANS MARINE PARKS PILOT PROGRAMS

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (15:16): My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries. In relation to the Government's planned pilot programs on Solitary Islands Marine Park and Batemans Marine Park, concerns have been raised with me that the statewide threat analysis does not adequately address local specific threats to inform the local pilots. Will the Minister confirm that local threat risk assessments will be completed for each region before draft management plans are released?

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:17): I thank Mr Justin Field for his question, in which he acknowledged how the Government is undertaking the assessments. When we look to make decisions on the marine environment, we use a risk-based approach. We use a risk assessment to inform our decisions and we listen to experts who provide advice on those risk assessments—unlike the approach taken by those opposite when they were in Government, and unlike many others, particularly in The Greens, who want decisions to be made based only on ideology or a gut feeling.

This Government looks at the risks associated with the marine environments and then makes decisions based on the assessment of those risks and the input from experts who help to inform our decisions. In recent media, Mr Field raised the issue of management planning of marine parks such as Batemans Marine Park and Solitary Islands Marine Park. He is concerned that the Government will wind back protections and will fail to address the priority threats to the marine estate from climate change, pollution and other human impacts. As I said earlier, we are committed to the development of evidence-based management plans informed by the results of the 2014 Marine Estate Community Survey and a comprehensive statewide—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Does it include climate change as a factor?

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

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: I ask that the clock be stopped.

The PRESIDENT: The clock has been stopped. In accordance with Standing Order 192, I direct the Usher of the Black Rod to remove the Hon. Penny Sharpe from the Chamber. The member is excluded until the conclusion of the sitting day.

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

The PRESIDENT: I remind members that many of them are currently on two calls to order. I call the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane to order for the second time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: A comprehensive statewide threat and risk assessment was completed in 2017. The results have identified the priority statewide and regional threats to the environmental values—water quality, biodiversity and habitats—and social, cultural and economic benefits derived from the New South Wales marine estate. The draft Marine Estate Management Strategy 2018-2028 includes proposed initiatives and management actions to tackle the priority statewide threats to the marine estate. These threats include water pollution, climate change and the impacts of activities and coastal development and habitats on marine wildlife.

Mr Jeremy Buckingham: Ooh!

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call Mr Jeremy Buckingham to order for the third time. In accordance with Standing Order 192, I direct the Usher of the Black Rod to remove Mr Jeremy Buckingham from the Chamber. The member is excluded until the conclusion of the sitting day. The Minister has the call.

[Pursuant to standing order Mr Jeremy Buckingham left the Chamber, accompanied by the Usher of the Black Rod.]

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: We will ensure the management plans for each marine park are based on clear objectives, help to address priority regional threats, conserve social, economic and cultural values, and complement the initiatives and actions proposed in the statewide marine estate management strategy. Marine parks alone cannot address these threats, which is why this Government has taken a holistic, coordinated and evidence-based approach to the management of the entire marine estate, including marine parks. This Government uses a risk-based approach to inform us of the facts before we make a decision.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (15:22): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer with regard to the risk-based approach that is being taken and confirm to the House that a risk-based approach will be taken at the local level to inform the pilot studies for both the Batemans and Solitary Islands marine parks.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: The Greens might run out of members.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Catherine Cusack to order for the first time.

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:23): Mr Justin Field obviously was not listening to my answer, which is understandable because his colleagues did not have the respect to allow me to answer my question in silence. The Greens were not actually interested in my answer, let alone the scientific information I was giving. They are always looking for a six-second media grab. Mr Justin Field clearly was not listening to my answer. In fact, none of The Greens members was listening when I said that we will ensure the management plans for each marine park are based on clear objectives. If members of The Greens had been listening, Mr Justin Field would not have to ask a supplementary question. The Greens are too busy worrying about the next six-second media grab and are not interested in the actual science. More importantly, they are not interested in getting the balance right.

We on this side of the House do not draw lines on maps because we have a gut feel. We do not draw lines on maps because we do not like a particular activity. We will only draw the lines when we have the information and the evidence to do so. The Greens could not give a rats about the communities that they lock out of particular areas. They just do not like activities and so they say, "It is our view that we are going to try to enforce on everyone else." But that is not how we on this side of the House are going to do things. We value the triple bottom line approach. We value activities like fishing and diving. We value the environment and we value the social component that the environment in this State can offer the people of New South Wales. That is how we approach management plans. If members of The Greens do not like our approach, they should listen to the answers given to their questions. *[Time expired.]*

ABORIGINAL CHILD WELFARE

The Hon. LYND VOLTZ (15:25): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education. What is the Minister's response to community concerns about the statement of the Minister's Federal Nationals colleague and Federal Assistant Minister for Children and Families, David Gillespie, that the need to keep Aboriginal children in their own communities "doesn't trump other issues" in regard to child removal?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Early Childhood Education, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Assistant Minister for Education) (15:25): As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs I am aware of articles that have been published in media this week about the comments made by the Federal Assistant Minister for Children and Families, Dr Gillespie. As members would know, as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs I take the matter of Aboriginal children in care very seriously. Every child who is not with their family is a tragedy, but when it comes to the safety and security of children we put the children first, and that must be the number one priority of any government authority. As the Hon. Lynda Voltz would know, the matter is primarily the responsibility at a State level of the Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward. However, as this question has been asked, I would like to make some remarks.

First, as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs I think that the over-representation of children reported at significant risk of harm and removed into out-of-home care continues to be concerning. This Government is determined to avoid a repetition of past practices, which had a devastating impact on so many Aboriginal families. For that reason, as recently reported in the media, there has been a lot of progress in this area. In 2016-17, there was a reduction of 20 per cent of Aboriginal children entering out-of-home care. This is in the context of an overall reduction of 24 per cent of children entering out-of-home care for the same year. This was achieved by seeing more children earlier, engaging families in family group conferencing and supporting families earlier to access support services, where needed.

When Aboriginal children are removed from their families for care and protection reasons, under the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle, Aboriginal children and young people are placed, where it is safe and feasible, within their biological family, extended family, local Aboriginal community, or wider Aboriginal community. Aboriginal children should have a sense of their Aboriginal identity, be raised in their own culture and value family, extended family, kinship networks, culture and community. In New South Wales as at 30 June 2016, 78 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care are placed with either an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal relative or with an Aboriginal foster carer.

We also need to do more to prevent these children from entering the care system in the first place. That is why following an independent review of out-of-home care in 2016, the Government is investing about \$90 million over four years on approximately 900 new evidence-based family preservation and restoration places. These are places in specialist programs helping to keep children safely at home with their families or restoring children to their families after risks to safety have been addressed. Some 50 per cent of all new places will be for Aboriginal children and families. Improving our focus at the front end to prevent children and families from escalating through the child protection system is critical. Family and Community Services has targeted early

intervention reform to enable districts to work collaboratively with local Aboriginal communities to redesign existing targeted early intervention services to improve outcomes for vulnerable Aboriginal children and families, with \$8 million per annum to fund 10 Aboriginal intensive family-based services across New South Wales.

As I have spoken about in the House before, a review of the circumstances of approximately 1,200 cases of Aboriginal children who have been placed in out-of-home care in 2015-16 is currently underway. Recommendations will be made to the Minister for Family and Community Services as to what action will better support Aboriginal children. Finally, to answer the member's question, the New South Wales stolen generations organisations have met with the Department of Family and Community Services to talk about their issues. I meet with the Stolen Generations Advisory Committee on a regular basis, and it also raises this with me. There is a forum for these conversations to continue.

PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOLS TOURING PROGRAMS

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (15:29): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Arts. Will the Minister update the House on how major performing arts companies are working with schools to engage young people with the arts?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Minister for Resources, Minister for Energy and Utilities, and Minister for the Arts) (15:30): I thank the Hon. Catherine Cusack for her question. We all remember being at school and learning about the great bard William Shakespeare.

The Hon. Greg Donnelly: Where's this going, Don?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am trying to work out whether to say it or not. My staff want me to say it, but it is a bit marginal. It is March and the theme was the Ides of March. My staff were suggesting I should say that the Hon. Walt Secord is the soothsayer. He has been telling his friend the Leader of the Opposition to beware the Ides of March. I do not know. They suggested to me that the Leader of the Opposition in the other place has had a bad week and maybe he should be worried about the member for Kogarah. I told them that they do not need to worry about the member for Kogarah because he cannot come up with a water policy. But I will not go there.

This is why Shakespeare is so important to the curriculum. Never before was English used to so vividly describe the human condition, which is why the New South Wales Government is so proud to support organisations such as Bell Shakespeare. Its schools touring program is another example of a major performing arts company bringing work of the highest quality and engagement to our schools. From May to September 2018, Bell Shakespeare is touring performances in primary and high schools in Sydney and 10 centres in regional New South Wales. The program celebrates the power of imagination, great writing and performance through performances in schools that highlight Shakespeare's greatest plays, characters and themes. Bell Shakespeare also offers workshops and master classes for students to complement classroom study, and professional development for teachers.

In 2017 more than 35,800 New South Wales students in 219 schools participated in Bell Shakespeare's schools touring program. On 23 February I was delighted to launch Opera Australia's 2018 New South Wales schools touring program at South Coogee Public School with the excellent member for Coogee, Bruce Notley-Smith. Australia's premier opera company, Opera Australia, is touring a special, fully staged 50-minute performance of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. *The Magic Flute*, of course, tells the story of a noble prince being doublecrossed by someone who he thinks is his leader, only for him to be uncovered as a liar. I am not going to make that joke about stadiums policy. This celebrates 20 years of the company's touring programs to schools. *The Magic Flute* is a mysterious and wonderful tale of courage and love, and it will reach 45,000 students this year in more than 145 schools across regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government is proud to be supporting Opera Australia with more than \$66,000 for this program in 2018. Schools touring programs by Opera Australia and other major performing arts companies are integral to young Australians developing a passion for fine music and performance. These school performances and other programs in New South Wales by our outstanding opera, music and theatre companies enable our students and teachers to enjoy and be inspired by some of the most thrilling, beautiful and powerful works in arts and culture. We want excellent works by professionals to be made accessible and relevant to everyone in our State, particularly the young because we all know how powerful arts and culture as an experience can be for young people. [*Time expired.*]

That's all folks! If members have further questions—

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane: Point of order: Mr President, you indicated at the start of question time that this question time would go for one hour. We started around this time—at 2.34 p.m. or 2.35 p.m.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! I do not need to hear from the Leader of the Government. I looked at the clock very quickly. At the very latest, question time started at 2.34 p.m.—I gave the Leader of the Government the call at 2.34 p.m. The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane in his point of order used the words "we started around this time". The Leader of the Government has the call.

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

Committees

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Reference

The Hon. MATTHEW MASON-COX: I inform the House that in accordance with section 72C (5) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 and paragraph 2 (c) (iv) of the resolution of the House relating to the establishment of committees, the Privileges Committee resolved this day to adopt the following reference:

That the Privileges Committee inquire into and report on the Members' Code of Conduct together with any relevant aspects of the pecuniary interest disclosure regime for members under the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983.

Documents

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

Reports

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: According to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992, I table a report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, entitled "Energy Network Operator Compliance During 2016-17: Annual Compliance Report", dated October 2017. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

AGRICULTURAL SHOWS

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR (Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Regional Water, and Minister for Trade and Industry) (15:36): I make a contribution to the debate and in doing so thank the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for moving this motion—not just because it is a great motion, but also because it is timely. The show season in the districts is well and truly coming to a close and culminates in the Sydney Royal Easter Show, which starts next Friday. We know that many people are going to the last shows to try to get their final points to qualify for the Sydney Royal—particularly in some of the equestrian events. Our local shows play a fantastic role in regional New South Wales, and I am honoured to make a short contribution to this debate.

I like this motion because it not only celebrates the shows in the Monaro area, but also acknowledges the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW. This is a wonderful organisation made up of volunteers who not only make sure that all our local shows run smoothly each year and that everyone gets the opportunity to see what is best in show and the best produce on offer from across the State, but also provide a social gathering and entertainment for our regional communities. It is fantastic that the motion acknowledges the role of local shows and of the Sydney Royal Easter Show in promoting agriculture and agricultural communities to city families. The shows are a big part of my family's life—not only in my current role as Minister for Primary Industries, but also formerly as Minister for Lands as many showgrounds throughout the State are located on Crown land. My family has been involved in agricultural shows for a long time.

I have judged the home-brew and the ginger beer competitions at a local show. I have also had the privilege of judging the Showgirl Competition at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. That was one of the hardest jobs I have ever had to do. The judges must look for faults in people who have very few. By the time the showgirls get to the Royal Easter Show they have been through an exhaustive local and district process. They are our fine young leaders of tomorrow. It is difficult to make a choice. I have also been involved in the Rural Achiever Award. One of my young apprentices in Leeton went on to win the award and then to chaperone rural achievers for a further 10 years. It is a fantastic program and it is promoted at our show.

The highlights of the Royal Easter Show are often things that do not immediately spring to mind like show bags or the rides. They are the things we see only once a year—the woodchopping, the dog show, the

equestrian events, and the livestock shows. I encourage everyone to view the district courts, which are the district produce displays. They offer the best free information and entertainment at the show. Local produce from around New South Wales and Queensland is arranged by the courts to show off the produce for which their area is renowned. The design, the artwork and the imagination that goes into those displays is something to behold, and many people flock to see them. I have also had the privilege of watching my family participate in many show events. Of course, my wife and son participate in the equestrian events. In fact, we are having this debate off the back of a red ribbon won at the Moss Vale Show. Mr L. Blair's light honey entry at the show was awarded a red ribbon. It was very close to a blue ribbon—

The Hon. Mick Veitch: How did he lose a point?

The Hon. NIAL BLAIR: It was probably because he followed my advice. Shows teach the next generation about where their food and fibre comes from, and they encourage them to get involved. Schools run programs to encourage children to enter baking competitions, horticultural display competitions, colouring-in competitions and so on. They are all valuable in educating the next generation to understand not only the value of our shows but also the people who give up their time and who passionately participate.

The Royal Easter Show, which kicks off next week, will attract hundreds of thousands of people. It is disappointing that this year it does not coincide with the school holidays. If there were one thing I could do it would be to have the autumn school holidays include the Easter weekend so that families could attend the Royal Easter Show. I know that issue has been discussed. Unfortunately, like the weather, the timing of the school holidays has a huge impact on the show. We know when Easter falls each year and we should organise the school holidays to incorporate it so that people can attend the show. It is important for families to get to the Royal Easter Show and to experience the best of what regional New South Wales has to offer. It is great entertainment for children and a great family day out.

I conclude my remarks by sharing the best-kept secret in this country—that is, the President's Medal, which is run by the Royal Agricultural Society of New South Wales. Anyone who wins a medal in any competition at the show, whether it be in the dairy competition, the wine competition, the food competition and so on, can participate in the President's Medal competition. The competition goes behind the producers and their stories and judges them on a triple bottom line. It looks at the business and the economics behind it and the innovation involved. It also looks at the candidates' contributions to their local communities and the sustainability of their business. Some iconic brands have won the President's Medal.

I believe the competition will attract more attention as time goes by because it is a true test of the best of the best. As I said, candidates must have won a medal to be considered, and the judges then spend considerable time assessing their business. We already know that the product is good because it has been awarded a medal. This competition is about what sits behind that medal. Celebrities such as Simon Marnie and Fast Ed from Channel 7 have been judges, and this year I understand that a judge from *My Kitchen Rules* will be participating. It is a fantastic contribution and a great addition to the show.

I thank the Hon. Bronnie Taylor for moving this motion. We love our shows, but we must ensure that they are strong and that they are around for a long time. We have large shows at Bathurst, Camden, Orange and, of course, the Royal Easter Show, and they are the anchors for some of the smaller shows. I encourage everyone to attend the Royal Easter Show. If they do, I will see them there.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:46): I congratulate the Hon. Bronnie Taylor on moving this motion. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that on 25 May 2010 we debated a similar motion, which I moved.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: Shows are annual events.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: That is correct. My support for this motion is undoubted. As the Minister for Primary Industries said, agricultural shows are an opportunity for a range of produce, products, crafts, and arts to be displayed. However, before all that can be done, many volunteer hours are spent organising them. Working bees take place three and four weeks in advance. Some of them are social occasions, but the work done to get facilities ready takes an enormous amount of time and effort. We should take the time to acknowledge the volunteers and to appreciate their efforts. The Minister spoke about his son's red ribbon in the light honey competition. I will also indulge in a bit of skiting. Members know that I have spent some time on the bogghi shearing to make a living. I would compete in show shearing competitions, and I came third in 1983 in the New South Wales State titles. That year my very good mate Chris Potter won the New South Wales Shearer of the Year competition at Cootamundra. I spent a lot of time with him; we were shearing together for many years. Not only was he a champion shearer but he was also one of the best shearers I have ever seen. He is also a champion bloke.

Show shearing competitions have moved on; they are not like they were in the 1980s, when we would shear four sheep and were judged not only on our pace but also on how cleanly we worked. Participants in today's

Quick Shear competitions shear a sheep in about 30 seconds. It is unbelievable. People can travel around to country shows and admire the skills of the show shearers. They can watch the woodchopping and marvel at their skills also. Some shows, such as Gundagai, used to have sheaf tossing. It is amazing to watch very strong individuals—

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Tell us!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): Order! I encourage the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, who is on two calls to order, not to interject.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: Competitors throw the sheafs as high as they can. People can walk through the pavilions and look at the cakes, jams and quilting. People have some amazing skills. Some of my favourite shows are the home shows—they are the ones we always talk about. Adelong Show, which was just held, is a wonderful little show. Gundagai Show, held on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River in the shade of large trees, is a beautiful show. It is sensational. One of the best things about the Gundagai Show is the artisan home-brewers. I have had the opportunity to speak in this Chamber previously about Scoop Sullivan, who for a long time judged the home-brew and craft-brewing section at the Gundagai Show. He used to say, "There are a lot of bad beers out there"—and he was familiar with many of them.

It is not just about what these shows bring to the local economy. We can talk about the financial contribution. People follow the show circuits for whatever reason—equestrians, show shearers, woodchoppers and so on—and bring a lot of money into communities when they are in town. But there is also a community aspect to shows. The local community gets behind the events. I have noticed over the years that a country show is okay when times are good, but when people are doing it tough a country show brings communities together. A country show is an opportunity for people to check on each other and make sure that everyone is okay. A show is more than just entertainment; it is a peer support opportunity. In times of drought, people at country shows look after each other a bit more. It is important to note that shows make more than just an economic contribution to local communities; they are part of the fabric of those societies and contribute significantly in other ways.

The motion moved by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor mentions the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW. As the shadow Minister for Lands, I have met with this body on a number of occasions and they are a good bunch of people. They have the interests of the 190-odd agricultural shows across New South Wales at heart whenever they talk to me. Front and centre of their discussion is not just the shows but the facilities that are provided for the shows to function. They are concerned about the smaller, one-day shows. That is important. The Minister mentioned the larger shows, such as the Royal Bathurst Show and the Orange Show. But some of the smaller shows, such as the Adelong Show, the Gundagai Show and the Bribbaree Show, are one-day shows generally held on a Saturday. Some of them struggle to get volunteers for their committees. The organisation is important when talking about shows. Someone has to fill the role of committee president and so on. Usually the position of secretary is the hardest to fill.

The Hon. Dr Peter Phelps: Treasurer.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I acknowledge the interjection—so is the treasurer. Sometimes there is a combined secretary-treasurer role. They are difficult positions to fill, and sometimes the positions lay vacant for a couple of years because country communities cannot find someone to take on the responsibilities. That is a shame. The Royal Easter Show is an important event on the Sydney calendar and is the culmination of a lot of work. People who go to their local shows and win their show events gather points along the way, with the end goal of getting to the Royal Easter Show. People are proud of the ribbons they win at the Royal Easter Show. They really want those ribbons for needlepoint or whatever, and proudly display them. It will be a shame if we cannot get people to attend the Royal Easter Show. It is important for a range of reasons, including the theme of bringing the country to the city. The show is more than show bags; it is a lot more than just a day out. It is an educational opportunity and a chance to learn more about the regions, country life and where our food and fibre come from, as the Minister said in his contribution.

The showgrounds around regional New South Wales are quite important pieces of community real estate—for obvious reasons. The Gundagai showground is on the banks of the Murrumbidgee, which is an absolutely gorgeous spot. The Agricultural Societies Council has expressed concern to me that showgrounds will be sold at some stage in the future, particularly when the new Crown Land Management Act comes into effect. The Agricultural Societies Council told me that it has raised this issue with the Minister. We must watch developments very closely. When the new legislation comes into force some councils will see it as an opportunity to manage the land and sell it to raise revenue. That would be a terrible result for regional New South Wales, and it is beholden upon us all to make sure the legislation does not allow that to happen. Those communities have worked hard not just for five or 10 years, but in some cases for more than 100 years to look after the parcel of land that is the local showground. We need to make sure that sales do not happen.

In closing, I congratulate all those volunteers right across regional New South Wales who work so hard to make their show a big event on their local community's calendar. I encourage all those people who are toiling to make sure their prize jam, scones or needlepoint wins a ribbon to keep at it. They are good hobbies. I congratulate all the hard workers on show committees on the cracking job they do. I support the motion.

Debate adjourned.

Personal Explanation

BUTLER STREET RESERVE MARKETS

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (15:57): By leave: Earlier this week I drew the attention of the House to Butler Street Reserve in Byron Bay and referred specifically to Byron Community Centre President Jason Arthurton and Chief Executive Officer Paul Spooner. Mr Spooner has not contacted me directly but has made representations through other members of Parliament requesting clarification of my statement to the effect that the reserve revenues are going into his pocket. I wish to clarify that this was a metaphor and there was no intention to imply corruption or theft. I was alluding to the use of reserve revenues to pay or part pay Byron Community Centre salaries. I make this clarification for the avoidance of doubt. I thank the House.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

SOUTH AFRICA RACIST VIOLENCE

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (15:58): On 7 March I gave notice of a motion concerning the recent spate of racist violence we have been witnessing in South Africa. While the House has not yet had the opportunity to debate this motion, the events in that country continue unabated. The motion is on the record and I need not repeat it here. What I wish to emphasise is that it calls for this House to ask the South African Ambassador to confirm whether various allegations of systemic racist violence in that country are true, and also calls on our Federal counterparts to react to what is happening there.

I trust honourable members are aware of developments in the country since the African National Congress came to power. The current President, Cyril Ramaphosa, recently spoke in favour of a law which will set the stage for the expropriation of white-owned farmland without compensation. This has occurred in an atmosphere where major political leaders have engaged in racist rhetoric that incites bigoted elements of the population to target the Boer and white farming community. Many have already been killed—many in hideous and gruesome ways. Victims have been women and children—some so young that they have not yet learned to walk. I will not go into the morbid details, but hate is obviously a motivating factor.

This issue has recently been noted by our own media. I read a brief editorial in the *Australian* of 12 March, and a short article by Caroline Marcus the following day in the *Daily Telegraph*. Mainstream publications in the United States and the United Kingdom have also addressed this issue. The figures are disputed, but it is alleged that being a farmer is more life threatening than being a police officer in South Africa. Apparently, government authorities are not reliable in collecting the relevant information on farm attack victims. If true, this is suspicious. Many locals, including journalists, feel intimidated about even discussing this issue. Yet the language used by past and present government officials is unambiguous and bone-chilling.

At the very least, this is something that should be looked into by the international community. New South Wales is part of that community. We are quick to rightly denounce racist demagoguery wherever we see it, so why are non-government organisations so reluctant to react to this example? It is a terrible irony that a political movement once characterised by the legacy of Nelson Mandela seems to have turned towards race-based revenge politics now that it has come to power. It is also remarkable that a country that literally borders Zimbabwe cannot see the results of this kind of politics. On the same day I gave notice of the South Africa motion, I also gave notice of a motion to address the shameful episode in our history when our nation was not able to come to an agreement at the Evian Conference to help Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. I draw no historical equivalence here; I am merely saying that we have no right to be oblivious to the misery and suffering thrust on a people by intentional government policy.

Just as the South Africans should know better than to go down the path they appear to be presently treading, we too have no excuse to ignore the plight of persecuted minorities, no matter the colour of their skin. I welcome the comments of the Federal Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, who yesterday suggested fast-track visas for those affected by persecution in South Africa. I hope that the spirit of reconciliation that laid

the foundations for the rainbow nation will not be disgraced any further. I hope that Australia does not repeat, today, the mistakes that we committed at Evian by being slow to react. I hope that the motion will be debated in this House, and that appropriate action will be taken.

HORNSBY CONNECT CHARITY GROUP

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (16:02): I recognise and celebrate the work of an incredible local charity and grassroots organisation called Hornsby Connect, and in particular its tireless president, Steve Hopwood. Hornsby Connect is an independent not-for-profit organisation established by a number of local residents with the focus on helping others who are doing it tough. Its aims and goals are to operate a food distribution point that will provide people experiencing financial hardship with affordable groceries; provide a cafe-type facility for people to meet and get to know one other; assist people who are socially isolated to reconnect with society; provide personalised support to long-term unemployed and those who have been caught up in the poverty trap; and provide counselling and referral assistance.

The need for such a charity is very plain to see: food insecurity is a real challenge in contemporary Australia. Australia's food waste problem is being confronted head-on by an ever-growing number of food rescue charities—organisations which collect excess food from businesses and redistribute it to charities that support Australians who are doing it tough. The top causes of food insecurity include unexpected expenses or large bills; just not having enough money in the first place; having to make rent or mortgage payments; or illness, injury or an inability to work.

However, charities are struggling to meet the rising need for food relief. There has been an increase in the number of individuals seeking food relief from charities. The number of people seeking food relief each month who are unable to be assisted by charities is also increasing. The numbers belie the real struggle, but brave community organisations such as Hornsby Connect are acting to tackle this challenge. By partnering with the local community, Hornsby Connect helps to build relationships and empower individuals to make positive, life-transforming choices. When individuals are given the opportunity to make these decisions for their future, with a helping hand from somewhere like Hornsby Connect, the benefits for their own lives, the lives of their family members and the broader community are immense.

Another incredible benefit of Hornsby Connect is that its outreach and interaction with people living with disadvantage can put those individuals in touch with other services and organisations that can assist, empower and support them. It fills a need for many other services. Most of the food is sourced from Foodbank, Oz Harvest and SecondBite, which, in turn, rescue edible but surplus food and groceries from the country's farmers, manufacturers and retailers. This community initiative has changed people's lives by assisting to combat poverty and social exclusion, which many of its clients suffer from. As well as providing food, Hornsby Connect helps clients overcome great personal trials such as relationship breakdown, unemployment, and language barriers—things which can result in isolation and disadvantage.

None of the incredible work I have just described would be possible without the continued effort and reliable stewardship of Hornsby Connect by its president Steve Hopwood, and a dedicated and selfless team of volunteers. The New South Wales Government is incredibly supportive of charity organisations doing their bit to relieve suffering, and Hornsby Connect is an exemplar in this field. I conclude by saying that initiatives with such a genuine charter and mission can always use an extra pair of hands to help their cause. I encourage everyone to consider taking a step towards helping organisations in their own community—whether it is Hornsby Connect or another community organisation which is helping the less fortunate.

SYDENHAM CREATIVE HUB

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (16:06): The Government has big plans for the Sydenham-to-Bankstown corridor. Nearly 60,000 new high-rise dwellings will go into this corridor over the next 20 years. What is less clear is what the entertainment and cultural infrastructure will be. There is one project identified in the Urban Renewal Strategy—the Sydenham Creative Hub. Five years in the making, this project had been endorsed by the Department of Planning and by the former Marrickville Council.

I congratulate Mayor Darcy Byrne and his team, and the member for Summer Hill, Jo Haylen, who have been champions of this proposal. Now even that proposal is in trouble, with the Inner West Council voting it down. Situated around Sydenham station, in land under the flight path, sometimes prone to flooding, it could not be called prime real estate. However, that is precisely why it is already a part of the growing entertainment and music scene in that part of the city. It is an affordable home for small, creative businesses; music; and entertainment businesses—places like the Camelot Lounge, which is a fantastic music venue.

In Sydney, these businesses are currently leaving the central business district [CBD]—they are being driven out by the cost and the regulatory environment—and moving into the residential areas of our city. That is

why the Sydenham hub is so important. It is a planned way to deal with that dynamic situation. As the businesses are moving out of the CBD, the creative individuals are moving out of the east, further to the west of the city—largely driven by the costs of living. Kerri Glasscock, Director of the Sydney Fringe Festival, wrote a fantastic open letter recently in support of the Sydenham proposal. It includes this statement:

Artists and creatives could unquestionably have a more comfortable, easier and sustainable life in any other major city of this country. That is why we need this precinct to work. The proposal's key opponent is an industrial chicken factory which processes 14,000 birds per day but the factory has found an unlikely ally in the local Greens councillors. These local Greens are opposed to small bars, music venues and this entertainment zone, and they are for this industrial-scale chicken chop shop. I call on them to reconsider. After five years it would be a tragedy to see this plan fall over at the final hurdle. That is the message from the broad community group who have signed the petition to support the Sydenham Creative Hub. I say to my friends in The Greens: listen to Century Venues, the Live Music Office, MusicNSW, FBi Radio, Sydney Fringe Festival and Keep Sydney Open. I say to the local Greens: listen to the musicians who are asking you to support this proposal.

The Greens have sent mixed messages on music issues before. Greens Councillor John MacKenzie on Newcastle City Council said, "We needed to preserve the conditions in the Newcastle solution." The Newcastle Greens are backing the lockout laws at the same time as Sydney Greens are opposing them. Who could forget Senator Lee Rhiannon? I regard her as a very good campaigner. Sometimes I wish she was back in this place, although I did oppose her campaign to close the small venue, Playbar, which sat underneath her office. She launched a barrage of noise complaints about this wonderful small bar. We need to act to save our music scene. It is not too late. I call on the local Greens to back the Sydenham Creative Hub. These sorts of decisions are fundamental to the sort of cities we live in, the communities we make and the soundtracks we have.

HUMANITARIANISM

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (16:11): Alfred Deakin was our first animal advocate Prime Minister. It is a little-known fact that Alfred Deakin, one of our earliest Prime Ministers and a founding elder of the Liberal Party in Australia, chose throughout his life to follow and support the adoption of a plant-based diet. He was a self-described vegetarian but ceased any overt references to vegetarianism when opponents attacked him for being a crank. To avoid controversy, he would refer to his diet as being spartan. Deakin believed that eating meat was unhealthy and coarsened one's character due to meat being sourced through animal suffering and brutal slaughter. He was an advocate for improvements in animal welfare. He was particularly horrified by the treatment of horses used in public transport and haulage.

He lived by the Swedenborgian Christian and theosophical spiritual beliefs of non-violence and compassion for all. Theosophy rejects humankind's harming of animals by their "bringing the misery of fear, of terror, of horror, by carrying destruction wherever we go; we are not to arm ourselves with hook and with gun, and with other weapons which we are able to make." As a leading member of the Progressive Spiritualist Lyceum, Deakin would conduct Sunday services asking, "How do we prove our appreciation of God?" The congregation would reply, "By protecting, tending and ministering to all helpless living things."

Animal abuse was a common sight in the colonies. Horses were openly abused, beaten, whipped, over-driven and over-burdened. Cattle and sheep were driven into town for slaughter, often in very poor condition by the time they arrived. Animals were then crushed into pens, to be left unfed, unsheltered and unwatered while awaiting slaughter by local butchers. In response to these everyday cruelties, the Victorian Society for the Protection of Animals—later renamed as the RSPCA—was established, with Deakin becoming a leading patron. Using language that was ahead of his time, Deakin spoke of animals as "possessing a sensibility to physical and mental suffering." Motivated by his observations of animal abuse and cruelty, Deakin introduced the Animal Protection Act 1890. *Hansard* records members remarking upon the common sight of hundreds of animal carcasses left to rot in paddocks—deaths caused "by want of grass and water".

The Hon. Charles Pearson was supportive of penalties including imprisonment because it was "a mistake to allow a rich man to escape a punishment he richly deserves simply because he could draw a cheque upon his banker". The Hon. Mr Carter objected to the phrase "or causes any kind of unnecessary suffering" on the grounds that it could have unintended consequences, such as a jockey being charged for whipping his horse during a race. He stated that strictly speaking, no horse race was necessary, and therefore a magistrate could not find that whipping a horse to win a race was "necessary". The first Australian Vegetarian Society was founded in Melbourne in 1886. A key aim was to promote a more humane method of food production, with the goal of vegetarianism being adopted as the national diet.

Deakin had an active interest in the benefits of irrigation and became the Victorian Minister for Water Supply. Vegetarian Society members had lobbied Deakin to gain government funding for the establishment of the Mildura irrigation scheme, with the intention to open lands for plant-based agriculture, thereby making a healthy plant-based diet more affordable and available to the Australian public. The scheme's water pumping stations, irrigation systems and agricultural training supported migrants to set up the apple, pear, citrus, grape and olive farms which flourish today. Alfred Deakin was a humane man who worked to build a kinder, more compassionate

Australia. The Liberal Party is right to honour one of its founding fathers, and it would be fitting that by 2019, on the centenary of his passing, his compassionate vision for animals was embraced.

PARRAMATTA WAR MEMORIAL SWIMMING CENTRE

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ (16:16): On 31 March the anniversary will be marked of the last day of the Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Centre. This pool was ripped up by the New South Wales Government in its rush to build stadiums, and one year on, not one sod of dirt has been turned on a new pool. According to the time line of the New South Wales Minister for Sport, he can demolish and replace Allianz stadium for his mates in the eastern suburbs at the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust more quickly than he can rebuild a pool in Western Sydney for the long-suffering locals of Parramatta. According to a letter provided by Lord Mayor of Parramatta Andrew Wilson to local community groups, no work on a new pool is expected to begin before February 2019. I say "expected to begin" because the work will only begin if the New South Wales Government steps in and contributes more than \$30 million of the \$72 million the pool will cost.

This cost is based on the design put forward by Amanda Chadwick, the administrator appointed by the New South Wales Government. Even with a \$72 million price tag, the people of Parramatta are not getting what the Government promised. They were told they would get a replacement pool. Ms Chadwick was very clear that there would be a like-for-like replacement. As well as having a 50-metre pool, the Parramatta War Memorial Swimming Centre had a diving pool that doubled for water polo and underwater rugby. Under the new plans, it appears that the diving pool has ended up in the dustbin. This is a tremendous loss for both diving and water polo—two Olympic sports that relied on these facilities.

What about other sports in the Parramatta electorate? One can only assume that the ratepayers of Parramatta will have to make up the \$42 million shortfall to cough up for Stuart Ayres' rebuild of Parramatta Stadium. In the Parramatta local government area, \$42 million would have bought 140 amenity blocks. Forty-four per cent of fields have no female change rooms and 30 per cent of fields do not have any amenities. The \$42 million would have provided lighting on 28 ovals. It would have provided 840 netball courts. It would have provided 42 synthetic football or hockey fields. But the Minister for Sport believes that his stadium spend is more important than local grassroots communities. He expects local ratepayers to subsidise his stadium by \$42 million. It is just not good enough.

Swimming is the biggest sport in Australia. Thirty per cent of Australia's people swim. By far, swimming is the nation's biggest sport. When Sydney swelters, Western Sydney swelters more in temperatures up to 15 degrees higher. Even if the current proposal received State Government funding today, Parramatta would be without a pool for approximately four years. The New South Wales Government has shown complete disregard for the people of Parramatta. The Government has demolished their pool and has refused to pay for a replacement. The Government now is demanding millions of dollars of ratepayers' funds, which should be paying for grassroots sports, to pay for a replacement pool to subsidise the new stadium. This debacle will be further compounded by the Government's new light rail that is proposed to traverse soccer fields on the Robin Thomas Reserve in Parramatta, which will cut out one of the most important soccer facilities in the Parramatta local government area.

It is outrageous that the Minister for Sport has shown such complete disregard for the people of Parramatta, who have a right to sporting facilities and a right to use their ratepayers' funds to buy sporting facilities and increase participation in sport. More importantly, the people of Parramatta have a right to a pool that they paid for and owned. This Government must come to the party and pay the full cost of a replacement pool.

AUSTRALIA-INDIA TRADE RELATIONSHIP

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (16:21): By 2022, India is expected to be the most populous country in the world with a population of approximately 1.4 billion. Already it is the world's largest democracy with a current population of more than 1.3 billion. India is a country that already has shaped the world. At this moment it feels as though India is poised to take that position again. Prime Minister Modi's mantra—India Means Business—and his open approach to foreign investment as well as his belief that India can become the engine room of the global economy is driving confidence in India, both domestically and internationally. In January 2018 I travelled to India for the first time as a participant in the Australia India Youth Dialogue [AIYD]. That confirmed my thinking that Australia, and particularly New South Wales, should have a strong focus on India and developing a relationship with India.

There are more than 211,000 people in New South Wales who have Indian ancestry and there are 143,000 people in this State who were born in India. New South Wales has very strong and organic people-to-people links with India. The challenge is to further develop and embed those links to strengthen the Australian-Indian relationship. The Australia India Youth Dialogue was conducted over four days in Delhi and Mumbai and coincided with the Australia India Leadership Dialogue as a track-two dialogue, which included

15 representatives from Australia and 14 from India drawn from business, media, non-government organisations and the arts and politics.

As I have more time for my speech than I expected, I will name them. From Australia were Alexander Polson, Damian Thompson, Daniel Thompson, Esha Oberoi, Jessie Meaney-Davis, Karen Menzies, Laurie Pearcey, Luckbir Singh, Matt Keogh—who is a Labor member of Parliament from Western Australia, Nikita Nagesh, Sachin Kumar, Peter Corbett, Tanya Spisbah, Wesa Chau and me. From India were Arijit Banarji, Astik Sinha, Bindu Subramaniam, Bhakti Sharma, Chaarvi Amit Badani, Ishitashri Shandilya, Madhavkrishna Singhanian, Kalyani Khona, Mallika Bajaj, Nikhil Sharma, Shaili Chopra, Preethi Herman, Tasneem Fatima, and Vaibhav Chauhan. The topic for the 2018 AIYD was "Digital Disruption", which discussed the future of democracy, the future of work and the future of information. While digital disruption is a phenomenon impacting every nation on earth, there is no doubt that India is at the coalface where the next digital frontier has the potential to alter the trajectory of the world.

During my short time in India I could see that the device that was changing the country the most was the mobile phone. The majority of the Indian population largely have bypassed the personal computer and moved straight to the mobile phone. It is expected that 500 million Indians will be online by the middle of this year. Growth in the number of mobile phones in India is outstripping urban growth at the rate of 14.11 per cent in the past year. Over the next four years an additional 300,000 Indians are expected to come online. Most of the growth in access will be through low-cost mobile phones. This presents an exceptional opportunity for both Indian and Australian app developers. The growth in digital platforms is leading to a burgeoning industry for start-ups in app development to solve a multitude of problems and meet challenges. The biggest challenge in India is how the rise of digital technology and automation can lead to inclusion rather than displacement. This rise may see many traditional jobs being displaced, but India has been leading the world in delivering new employment opportunities from the digital revolution—particularly when it is a revolution that brings the world closer together.

There are a multitude of Australian companies and individuals who already are utilising India's manpower to support their businesses and applications. One of the great ties that binds Australia and India is our democratic systems. As the world's largest democracy, India has seen the digital realm disrupt politics and tear down the barriers of entitlements of government. Electors in India have the ability, and most certainly use it, to deliver a direct message to their elected representatives on the issues that matter to them. Through the prolific use of WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter, Indians are demonstrating their vibrant democracy. Their politicians are utilising those platforms to understand their constituents' concerns and demonstrate their initiatives. India's digital democracy is so vibrant that the internet is being clogged by daily "good morning" messages, which are often directed at and from politicians.

The New South Wales Government has seen India as an important destination since Barry O'Farrell, our current trade envoy to India, was Premier. In 2013 New South Wales deemed India to be a priority market under the State's international engagement strategy and developed the New South Wales-India Strategy. New South Wales has a Sister State relationship with Maharashtra and has signed a memorandum of understanding with Gujarat. As India further develops, New South Wales needs to look for more opportunities to develop relationships and facilitate India's rise. There is no better partner in that project than New South Wales' own Indian diaspora. They will be a key partner in tying our prosperity together.

DOYLES CREEK MINING

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS (16:26): I again discuss the Doyles Creek matter and Operation Acacia. On 25 February 2013 during the compulsory examination of Jamie Gibson, who is a former staff member of Mr Ian Macdonald, Counsel Assisting Braham attempted to convince Mr Gibson that a brief Mr Gibson thought existed in fact did not exist. Mr Gibson says in relation to that brief:

I'm sure there was a brief saying do it—

in other words, give Doyles Creek Mining the exploratory licence—

Mr Macdonald wouldn't have signed it unless he had the protection of his Department.

Commissioner Ipp said:

But you're not confusing the briefing note with the other one, the one that - the last one that was in fact sent, are you?

Ipp was referring to the departmental briefing note dated 5 December 2008. Braham said:

Well, Mr Gibson has given evidence of a briefing note countersigned by Dr Sheldrake.

Commissioner Ipp said, "Yes." Mr Braham said, "Now, there's no such briefing note ...". Unfortunately, there is such a briefing note. It is BN08/2869 from "NSW DPI" and it is headed, "Grant of an Exploration Licence". Part of its recommendation states:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 22 (1) (a) of the *Mining Act* ... the Minister grant an exploration licence in satisfaction of this application, subject to the terms and conditions specified in the license document.

The license document be signed and returned to the Maitland Minerals Titles office for completion.

What does that mean? It means one of two things: Because this was in the Total Records and Information Management [TRIM] system at the time, it means that the Independent Commission Against Corruption either was grossly incompetent to not find it or, alternatively, had the document in its hands, but denied its existence to try to get Mr Gibson to change his testimony in relation to what the department had briefed Mr Macdonald on in relation to awarding of the licence.

We all know that departments can be quite malleable and can bend to the will of Ministers, but what departments do not do is cover up and they do not condone criminality. What happened here? There was a recommendation that was based on an earlier recommendation on the 5 December brief. Subsequent to that, there was a response for internal correspondence, also on the TRIM system, in which the department confirms that there were no financial favours granted to John Maitland and moreover that there were numerous precedents where direct allocations had been made in the past.

In conclusion, I also refer to a letter dated 30 January 2009 from Dr Sheldrake to a resident in Jerrys Plains in which he also confirms that this was done by the book. The idea that the Minister did something without the authority of the department is completely and utterly false.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 16:30 until Tuesday 10 April 2018 at 14:30.