



New South Wales

Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament
First Session**

Thursday, 11 November 2021

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 11 November 2021

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. Matthew Ryan Mason-Cox) took the chair at 10:00.

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

Announcements

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The PRESIDENT (10:02): Honourable members, today is a very important day. Each year we commemorate the signing of the Armistice that ended the First World War, in which so many Australians lost their lives or were wounded, and remember all those who have died in subsequent wars. I will be representing this Parliament together with the Speaker at the official Remembrance Day ceremony to be held at the Cenotaph this morning. As agreed to in the Whip's conduct of business motion yesterday, proceedings in the Chamber will cease at 11.00 a.m. to observe a minute's silence. Following this, the House will move to debate on private members' business item No. 1449 standing in the name of the Hon. Shayne Mallard relating to Remembrance Day 2021, which will take precedence until question time. Business will be again interrupted at 5.30 p.m. to allow further debate on the motion until the dinner break. I thank all members for the respect given to Remembrance Day.

Motions

TRIBUTE TO MR LANZ PRIESTLEY

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (10:03): On behalf of Ms Abigail Boyd: I move:

- (1) That this House notes with sadness the death of the inspiring and dedicated social activist and community organiser Lanz Priestley.
- (2) That this House notes Mr Priestley's significant contributions to the community of Sydney, particularly his dedication to leading the creation of Sydney's 24-7 Street Kitchen and Safe Space at Martin Place for unhoused persons.
- (3) That this House passes on its deepest condolences to Mr Priestley's family and the many community members who advocated alongside him.

Motion agreed to.

WORLD TOILET DAY

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (10:03): On behalf of Ms Abigail Boyd: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Friday 19 November 2021 is World Toilet Day, a day which celebrates and raises awareness about the 4.2 billion people across the world living without access to safe and sanitary toilets; and
 - (b) this year's theme is focused on "sustainable sanitation and climate change", which relates to the impact of climate change-induced disasters on toilets across the world, and the importance of ensuring safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for all people.
- (2) That this House notes that:
 - (a) according to WaterAid Australia, women and girls face disproportionate gender inequality regarding their access to safe, hygienic and sanitary toilets, which includes access to acceptable public, school, workplace and private toilets, as well as access to affordable essential period products to combat increasing period poverty in Australia; and
 - (b) according to a report by the Australian Network on Disability titled *Design for Dignity Guidelines* published in 2015, there is an urgent need for fully accessible toilets in public bathrooms as well as in homes, to provide dignified access for the over 20 per cent of Australians who live with a disability.
- (3) That this House calls on the Government to commit to ensuring more accessible, inclusive, safe and sanitary toilets for all people in New South Wales, to support the global movement to end period poverty, and to tackle the global sanitation crisis.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

That the order of private members' business be as follows:

- (1) Private members' business item No. 1426 standing in the name of the Hon. John Graham relating to a referral to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters;
- (2) Private members' business item No. 1435 standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Borsak relating to the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill (No 2);
- (3) Private members' business item No. 1376 standing in the name of Mr David Shoebridge relating to the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Amendment (Age of Criminal Responsibility) Bill;
- (4) Private members' business item No. 1459 standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Pearson relating to impacts of animal agriculture on the environment;
- (5) Private members' business item No. 1381 standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Borsak relating to an order for papers regarding the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex;
- (6) Private members' business item No. 1382 standing in the name of Hon. Robert Borsak relating to an order for papers regarding aerial shooting operations;
- (7) Private members' business item No. 1434 standing in the name of the Hon. Mick Veitch relating to an order for papers regarding the Hawkins and Rumker coal exploration areas;
- (8) Private members' business item No. 1460 standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Latham relating to a new housing and property tax system;
- (9) Private members' business item No. 1443 standing in the name of the Hon. Rose Jackson relating to an order for papers regarding the appointment of the Chair of WaterNSW;
- (10) Private members' business item No. 1349 standing in the name of Ms Cate Faehrmann relating to the Special Commission of Inquiry into "Ice";
- (11) Private members' business item No. 1462 standing in the name of Mr Justin Field relating to the environmental impact statement for the Warragamba Dam Raising project;
- (12) Private members' business item No. 1444 standing in the name of the Hon. Rose Jackson relating to an order for papers regarding changes to water restrictions in the Greater Sydney region;
- (13) Private members' business item No. 1395 standing in the name of Ms Abigail Boyd relating to the Everest horserace;
- (14) Private members' business item No. 1446 standing in the name of Mr David Shoebridge relating to Glencore mining;
- (15) Private members' business item No. 1332 standing in the name of the Hon. Robert Borsak relating to an order for papers regarding disqualifications from greyhound racing; and
- (16) Private members' business item No. 1457 standing in the name of Ms Cate Faehrmann relating to eastern Australian grey nurse sharks.

I indicate to the House that with respect to the private members' business items at paragraphs (1), (4) to (7) and (9) to (16), it has been agreed that those motions will be considered in the short form format.

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

Motion agreed to.

Committees

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS

Reference

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1426 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (10:11): I move:

That the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquire into and report on the adequacy of the funding allocation of the NSW Electoral Commission for the 2023 State General Election and, in particular, taking into account the latest advice around issues of electoral integrity arising from foreign interference in elections.

This resolution refers a very important matter, which has been pursued by a range of members in the Chamber, to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. There are two issues. The first is the funding allocation for the State general election that all members will take part in and that it is the Electoral Commission's job to supervise. Many members in the Chamber have sought evidence on this matter through the committee. I do not claim to have led on this agenda, but I have watched closely as the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, the Hon. Robert Borsak and Mr David Shoebridge have all pressed the matter. What is the funding to support the Electoral Commission? The answers have been very alarming. The Public Accountability Committee looked at the issue, and I will quote its report at some length. Paragraph 3.27 in the report stated:

The Electoral Commission also referred to cases where the funding provided for 'protected items' such as the conduct of a State general election appear to have been inadequate. For example, the Commission stated that the budget allocation for the 2019 State election in the 2018-19 budget process was based on the initial budget allocation for the 2015 State election with CPI adjustments, but failed to take account of a \$6 million overrun which occurred in 2015 or the fact that a number of new or increased costs would be incurred in 2019. Further, the Commission stated that Treasury's forward estimate for the conduct of the 2023 State election is again based on the 2015 amount with CPI growth only and is more than \$30 million short of what the election will cost to oversee and conduct.

That was then. My concern is that when the commissioner turned up to estimates last week and was questioned more on the issue of cybersecurity by members present here, he said he needs at least \$22 million more over four years to meet the New South Wales Government's own cybersecurity minimum standards. It is very clear—and he has testified to it—that the commission is not currently compliant. He has given very clear evidence on the face of it. Those are the concerns of the Chamber. They are the concerns of a range of parties, and they should be of concern to the whole Parliament. I know it is of concern to some Government members as well. It has been clear that there have been attempts to resolve that. This is a good faith attempt to raise a serious issue but not to send it to some political committee of the House. There are plenty of other places we could refer it to that would provide a stage to have the argument on. That is not what the motion seeks to do.

The motion seeks to send a serious issue to a serious committee that is controlled by the Government, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, to look at the funding issue in this context with this question: Given the rising threat of foreign interference to elections here and elsewhere, and the funding available, are we set for a 2023 election that can be conducted safely, fairly and without interference? It is a serious question for any jurisdiction, and it should be a serious question for New South Wales. We are the largest jurisdiction in the nation. It is a serious election that will be conducted here in 2023. We are the economic powerhouse of the nation. The idea that we are immune to that behaviour because we are a State jurisdiction is naive. That is the concern I raise.

There is never a good time for there to be funding pressures on the electoral system. It does sometimes happen, but this is the worst time, given some of the challenges. What do we know about the challenges? There has been a significant rise in the proliferation of disinformation and misinformation about elections. The Oxford Internet Institute evidence highlighted that organised social media manipulation campaigns take place in 70 countries, which is up from 48 countries in 2018 and 28 countries in 2017. There are issues around misinformation and disinformation, and there are issues with the conduct of the census, not this time, but the time previously. The iVote system must be secure. With those words, I commend the motion to the House. I thank members for the interest they have taken in the issue over time.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (10:16): I make a brief contribution on behalf of the Government. The Government does not oppose the referral. I appreciate the honourable member's interest in the matter. However, I emphasise that the Government's support for the reference to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters should not be interpreted as the Government accepting an argument that funding for the Electoral Commission ahead of the 2023 election will be inadequate in any way. As a point of comparison, the Electoral Commission will receive \$201.4 million for the current financial year. That significant funding total is an increase of 178 per cent from last year and is for costs associated with local government elections, including the costs for last year's deferral. The significant uplift should demonstrate the Government's commitment to a properly resourced Electoral Commission.

I note that the integrity and security of our elections are of fundamental importance. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Electoral Commission is fully equipped to deliver elections. That is why the Department of Customer Service is working closely with the Electoral Commission to address critical recommendations relating to its business case for a cybersecurity uplift. That is being considered in the lead-up to the 2022-23 budget process, which ought to be borne in mind by the committee. Government members join Opposition and crossbench members in looking forward to a chat with the Electoral Commissioner about his management of the Electoral Commission. We do not oppose the referral.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (10:18): The Greens strongly endorse the referral. We have heard from the Electoral Commissioner for well over 12 months that the bedrock of democracy in the State and how our local and State elections are run are at serious risk. There is chronic underinvestment by the Government, which is refusing to update the most basic things, like the software to run a local council election, the cybersecurity protections to protect local and State elections from external attack, and even the investment in people. The Electoral Commissioner tells us that he hires staff and has them skilled up to learn how to do the job, but the seasonal and election-by-election funding often causes those high-quality trained staff to be let go or kept on at significant financial risk to the Electoral Commissioner, who cannot guarantee the ongoing funding stream.

Most recently, we saw the Electoral Commissioner last year ask for additional powers and funds to deal with COVID. The commissioner's request was rejected by the Government. This year he asked for additional funds to deal with cybersecurity; that request was also rejected by the Government. Starving the Electoral Commissioner of the funds needed to make sure our elections can occur is not in anyone's long-term interest. A major crisis in the State electoral count would throw our system into complete disarray. The financial cost and uncertainty of not having a viable outcome from an election—putting to one side the democratic cost—is something the Government needs to take on board, understand and address with proper funding. The Greens welcome the referral, but what is really frustrating is that the Electoral Commissioner has been saying this in some of the most frank and direct ways imaginable. Even that absolute bluntness does not seem to get the message through to the Government. Maybe this inquiry will; we live in hope.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (10:20): I thank my colleague the Hon. John Graham for moving this motion. It is critical. Anyone who listened to the evidence in budget estimates on Friday would have been horrified at the degree of exasperation from the commissioner. He was asked directly whether, if he got the \$22 million tomorrow, he would be able to come up to speed on the cybersecurity integrity for the upcoming local government elections in about three weeks, and the answer was an emphatic no. Even if people are not being asked to vote remotely, there is a very real possibility that a foreign entity, a State actor or someone may opportunistically try to get hold of the electoral roll by hacking into the system.

Most New South Wales taxpayers and voters would be horrified to hear that this is the reality facing them in the upcoming local government elections. We have five by-elections coming up a couple of months after that. This is an urgent situation, and it should be investigated fully by the joint standing committee. It is a laudable motion that should be fully supported, and I thank the Government for supporting it. Let us hope that it is taken seriously, that the evidence given in that inquiry is taken seriously and that we get some action for this poor fellow who is trying to do his job as a public servant to maintain the integrity of the voting system on behalf of the New South Wales people, as he should.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I move:

That a message be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly conveying the terms of the resolution agreed to by the House.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

ICAC AND OTHER INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT FUNDING) BILL (NO 2) 2021

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (10:25): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to reintroduce the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill (No 2) 2021, albeit a different version, given the objections raised by the Government and the subsequent ruling of the President. The Leader of the Government raised an objection to the reintroduction of that bill on the basis that it contravened section 5 of the Constitution Act, which requires that all bills for appropriating any part of the public revenue or for imposing any new rate, tax or impost shall originate in the Legislative Assembly. While I remain of the view that the previous bill would not have constrained the Executive from making

funding decisions, I agree with the Hon. John Graham that it may have constrained some of the principles around how that funding is provided. But, in the end, the funding decision would still sit with the Government in the lower House.

Nevertheless, the President upheld the objection of the Leader of the Government after receiving advice from Mr Bret Walker, AO, SC. I thank the Leader of the Government and the President for that ruling because what we now have is a more comprehensive bill that will truly facilitate the administrative and financial independence of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission, the Ombudsman's Office and the Audit Office. More importantly, it reflects the outstanding work done by the Public Accountability Committee and its recommendations that were unanimously supported by every party during the inquiry into the budget process for independent oversight bodies and the Parliament of New South Wales.

The Leader of the Government in this House may not be aware, but the recommendations during that inquiry were fully supported even by his own colleagues. That in itself is strongly indicative of the widely accepted need to create a far more robust and independent funding model for critical oversight bodies, as the Chair of the Public Accountability Committee, Mr David Shoebridge, noted in his report. The report recommended a range of reforms, including a review by parliamentary oversight committees of annual budget submissions of each agency to make recommendations as to the funding priorities. During the inquiry, the committee revisited the budget process for the different bodies and in its first report looked at, in light of recent developments—including the publication of the Auditor-General's report concerning funding arrangements for the Independent Commission Against Corruption—the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Electoral Commission, and the Ombudsman's Office, as well as the tabling of two special reports to Parliament by the Independent Commission Against Corruption regarding its funding.

The Public Accountability Committee's inquiry also examined the budget process for the Audit Office for the first time and made separate recommendations in relation to the budget process for the Audit Office. It was the unanimous view of the committee that annual funding for the Audit Office's performance audits should be provided as a separate amount in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill rather than a government contribution, and that the Audit Office should be removed from the Premier and Cabinet cluster. This bill that we have before us reflects all the recommendations and evidence we have heard and seen. When talking about corruption within government, the conversation always goes back to Labor and Eddie Obeid—as if comparing corruption makes you look better. The fact is that Mr Obeid did a charcoal sketch of corruption in New South Wales. This Government has given us an absolute Michelangelo.

As I noted earlier, the purpose of this bill is to facilitate the administrative and financial independence of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission, the NSW Ombudsman's Office and the Audit Office. The bill also seeks to constitute, by statute, committees to review the budget information prepared by the Department of the Legislative Council and the Department of Parliamentary Services and to determine amounts of appropriations for inclusion in the annual Appropriation (Parliament) Acts. Additionally, the bill seeks to extend the functions of the existing Public Accounts Committee to the review of budget information prepared by the Audit Office and to the determination of amounts of appropriations for inclusion in the relevant Appropriation Acts.

If the amounts of appropriation are inconsistent with the determination of the committee, this bill will require the Treasurer to make a statement of explanation regarding the inconsistency. The need for this bill is more important now than ever. When we previously debated an earlier version of this bill in this House, it was unanimously supported by everyone except the Government members. Regrettably, it was defeated in the other place, where the Government used its numbers. Given what has unfolded recently with the resignation of Gladys Berejiklian, the need for this bill is more important now than ever. The ICAC has once again shown that it is above any coercion and is truly an independent agency serving the people of this State. So the onus is on the Government to support the bill, if it has nothing to hide. Let us be clear—this is not a money bill.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party are again expecting the Government to object to this bill based on the spurious argument that somehow we are seeking to allocate or appropriate the privilege of the Government. This is not the case and this bill reflects our approach perfectly. It forces the Government to consider proper independent structures for the future funding of these bodies for adequacy and long-term resilience, especially the ICAC, which has pleaded for adequate, ongoing funding and independence so that it can do its job without fear or favour of government. The bill was drafted on the basis of the work done by the Public Accountability Committee and the recommendations that came from that inquiry, and also took into consideration the four recommendations that were made in the *NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Special Report: The need for a new independent funding model for the ICAC*.

The report, in itself, was and is unprecedented and necessary as this Government, which is subject to close scrutiny by ICAC, is not happy to properly conform. This bill gives effect to each of these four recommendations and the recommendations from the Public Accountability Committee. The Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman's Office were set up as independent statutory authorities with their own statutory charters. They were created by this Parliament and are answerable to this Parliament and not to the Executive Government.

Yet we now find ourselves in a situation where each of these commissions is dependent on the Executive Government for funding. This should never have been allowed to develop and it certainly was not the intention of the Parliament. If we had a government that was not as dodgy as this one, we would not be worried at all. Instead we have a government that has ignored good governance and not taken ministerial responsibility seriously. It has indirectly sought to control particularly the investigative activities of the ICAC by strangling off funding needed to bring on inquiries or to finish inquiries on a timely basis. I turn to a quote that the ICAC Commissioner gave in his opening statement when appearing before the Public Accountability Committee a few years ago. It goes to the very heart of what this bill is all about. He said:

It was most certainly not the intention of the New South Wales Parliament when it created the commission as a statutory corporation with a special charter, as a unique legal entity, that it would become subject to or dependent in any way on the Executive Government.

I find it astonishing that, having sought additional funding on the basis that it was urgent and essential, the commissioner was told by a senior bureaucrat words to the effect, "The ICAC must learn to live within its budget, like any other government agency." This is not an agency of the Government. It is an independent statutory authority created by this Parliament that should be independently resourced through the Parliament and by the Parliament. This Government has known for many years now that parliamentary appropriations for the commission have been insufficient and that the amount from one year to another, or at any given moment, will vary.

It is unbelievable that we find ourselves in a situation where we had a sitting Premier who had given evidence to the ICAC inquiry into disgraced former Liberal MP Daryl Maguire—with whom she was in a secret five-year love affair and relationship—having refused to grant additional funds to the ICAC when requested. These requests were made during the investigation. It was not a good look for the previous Premier and it was not a good look for this Government. To paraphrase the ICAC Commissioner, the commission belongs to the people and it must not be undermined or constrained either directly or indirectly through resourcing issues. It is not just the ICAC that has had to beg for funding. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission is in the same predicament. When asked what impact an additional 1,500 police officers would make, the Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, Michael Adams, said:

What it will mean is that we more brutally filter what we look at. We have to skim examine rather than actually examine a whole lot of complaints.

He went on to say that they are getting an increasing proportion of complaints come from within the police force. They sometimes say, "We do not trust the police to investigate this. We want you to do it." Over that past couple of years we discovered that hundreds of millions of dollars have been thrown around and used to pork-barrel predominantly Liberal and Nationals held electorates before the last State election without any paper trail because the paperwork has been put through the shredder and emails have been deleted. Yet the commissioner of police does not see a case to investigate. I am sure that many in this Chamber will have more to say when the bill comes back for debate next week. I will finish with one final quote from the ICAC Commissioner:

The principle of independence is the bedrock of the commission to its independence. It ensures that the commission and its officers undertake their functions free of control, free of interference, free of influence from the Executive Government, members of the Executive Government and public authorities of course all being subject to the commission's jurisdiction.

The committees of this Parliament do an outstanding job and have the interests of the people of this State at heart. The onus will be on the Government and the Treasurer to make a statement of explanation if an appropriation made by an Appropriation Act is inconsistent with the determination of a committee on the appropriation and by extension, the will of this Parliament through its members. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CHILDREN (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT (AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY) BILL 2021

First Reading

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by Mr David Shoebridge.

Second Reading Speech

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (10:38): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Children do not belong in prisons. They belong at home, at school, playing with their friends. They deserve a chance to learn from their mistakes and they deserve the help that they need to overcome disadvantage. We should seek to reduce harm. A justice system should be based on this fundamental principle. The current one is not. The fact is the laws in place right now will see 10-year-old children being locked up. They breach our human rights obligations and are out of step with the global consensus. They do not work to keep the community safe, nor do they stop young people from offending and reoffending. Our criminal justice laws for children are broken. The youngest of those children are still losing their baby teeth. They do not have their pen licences, let alone their driver licences. Some of them spend their first night away from their families in a prison cell. They are still kids.

Medical experts tell us unanimously that children's brains are still developing, especially the parts that regulate judgement, decision-making and impulse control. Anyone who knows a teenager or a tween knows that to be true. Many people are not aware that on any given night in this country about 500 children are in prison. Most of them have not been found guilty or sentenced; they have simply been refused bail. Most will not receive a custodial sentence even if they are later found guilty. Too many of the children in prison are Aboriginal kids, poor kids or homeless kids. First Nations over-representation in children's prisons is worse than it is in adult prisons. Tonight about 45 per cent of the young people locked up in jail in this State will be First Nations kids. We know what the numbers in the Northern Territory will show: Close to 100 per cent of the kids in jail in the Northern Territory are First Nations kids. Not only is it wrong, it is also structurally biased against First Nations peoples.

Those young people who have been sentenced to time in prison are overwhelmingly not on the serious end of offending. Many children in prison are there for justice offences like breaching bail by not coming home by a certain time or personal drug use or larceny. They are in prison because of structural social failures because we have not put in place better solutions. I know that because there are cohorts of kids for whom alternatives to prison are not just considered but are available, and they are being accessed right now. They are kids from rich families, often white and well connected. For them, treatment programs are available. There is psychiatric treatment when needed, additional warnings, high-paid lawyers and community orders. For none of them is there prison.

Instead of investing public money in more prisons, we could use the \$1,344 a day that we currently spend locking up marginalised kids to provide access to the supports they need. More than half of young people in prison are being held on remand. Most could be released immediately if the money that was being invested in imprisoning them was instead invested in providing safe and secure accommodation options. That \$1,344 a day would pay for that secure alternative option. Locking up young people in prison because they do not have a safe place to live makes young people pay for the systemic failures in the system. That is why I have introduced this bill to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New South Wales from 10 years to 14 years and to require alternatives to prison for children under 16.

People often ask: What are the alternatives to prison? That is often the pushback in much of the conservative media. Thankfully, the Australian Capital Territory [ACT] is much advanced in this space. Indeed, the ACT Government—a government of Labor and The Greens—has resolved as a matter of principle to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 14 years. It has been doing the heavy lifting to work out the alternatives to prison. The ACT Legislative Assembly has not only committed to raising the minimum age for criminal responsibility but also, in preparation, the Government has commissioned a review of the service system in order to identify the service gaps, implementation issues and alternative models to meet the needs of 10- to 13-year-olds likely to be affected by the proposed reform. What did it find? I read onto the record a brief extract from the final report of the *Review of the service system and implementation requirements for raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Australian Capital Territory*. It states:

The report offers an overview of an alternative response to meet the needs of children affected by raising the age of criminal responsibility. The response includes a non-justice embedded youth worker model and safe accommodation options to support police's interactions with children who may be at risk of antisocial or unsafe behaviour. The alternative response proposes a Multidisciplinary Therapeutic Panel (MTP), a collaborative forum to make service delivery decisions for children with complex and challenging needs. The MTP would consider and review children who have been referred to the panel because of the level of complexity of their needs or because there are insufficient or inadequate existing service responses to meet those needs. The work with children and their families would be coordinated by a new wraparound service.

Remarkably, the ACT review found that most of the services needed to provide therapeutic assistance to put in alternatives to prison are simply not available for kids aged 10 to 13. The criterion for entry to most of those services start at age 16. Not only are we criminalising kids in that cohort but the ACT review finds that we are not even providing the most basic alternative services. The justice system is just not a safe or appropriate place for

young people and it is well known that early contact with the criminal legal system increases chances of reoffending substantially. We can and must do better.

I now turn to the bill in detail. The bill is in fact very simple. It amends section 5 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 14 years. This accords with the global consensus. Other nations have a minimum age of criminal responsibility of 14, 16 or 18 years. It is based on understandings of cognition and development that show it is simply not possible for younger children to meaningfully understand the implications of their actions or how they relate to the criminal law and social norms. There is significant—indeed, overwhelming—scientific evidence that 14 is the bare minimum for this, but even that is likely to be too low. The bill also inserts a new section 5A, which specifies the minimum age for imprisonment. It provides:

- (1) A court must not sentence a child under the age of 16 years to imprisonment as a penalty for a criminal offence.

That does not take any other punitive or diversionary measures off the table. It does not mean there are no consequences. It simply means that the consequence of prison—one which we know is particularly harmful and associated with reoffending, alienation and a future downward spiral in a young person's life—is not an option for the courts. We know that the young people who do go to prison are not the ones with the expensive lawyers. They are not the ones with the wraparound services available to address issues they may be having. They are some of the most disadvantaged young people in the State. Putting them through the criminal justice system and incarcerating them only entrenches that and cuts off alternative pathways. The medical evidence is clear: Child prisons hurt all children. What hurts an 11-year-old or a 13-year-old also hurts a 15-year-old. Given half the children in prison are on remand, the bill also provides that remand should not be an option for children under 16 years.

Recently we have had an experiment in what it needs to de-carcerate young people. The COVID period is a great example of how it can work. In this last year we have seen serious attempts to ensure that young people are granted bail and not exposed to the COVID risks in youth prisons. Research from Yfoundations showed that a 25 per cent reduction in the number of young people in prisons had no matching increase in offending, police cautions or any other criminal justice marker. For many of the young people who, despite that change in attitude, have been held on remand in the juvenile justice system, it is simply because they have not been found a safe home—or they do not have a home to go to at all. A young person being locked up because they have not got a home is perhaps one of the most unfair punishments one could imagine. It doubly penalises a young person for poverty and homelessness, with the penalty being they are sent to jail. For clarity, the bill specifies the non-custodial options for children aged 14 and 15:

- (3) This section does not affect a court's powers to—
 - (a) impose a non-custodial sentence as a penalty for a criminal offence, or
 - (b) deal with a person under the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 or provisions of other legislation that provide for the detention of a person because of a mental health or cognitive impairment.
- (4) In this section—

imprisonment includes commitment of a person to the control of the Minister administering the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 under section 33 (1) (g) (i).

The bill is simple because the change is simple, but we recognise that the consequences will be far reaching and that significant work will be required to provide the alternatives needed to help young people get their lives on track. We hope these changes would be accompanied by public policy changes to help address the consequences of law-breaking or breaches of justice orders, for example, to require courts to promote principles of diversion, rehabilitation and community support.

We have not prescribed this in the bill, because the intention is not to narrow options. Institutions must be able to tailor these solutions to the situation at hand. There are many alternatives for early intervention and diversion of young people from the criminal justice system, as well as measures to improve mental health and wellbeing; additional trauma-informed training of the police; reforms that target the needs of at-risk young people; and a Housing First option for everybody without a home. Again I refer to the groundbreaking work of the ACT. It has mapped out the alternatives to prison. We know what needs to be made available; prohibiting the jailing of young people will give the impetus needed to deliver that in New South Wales. Raising the age is not an alternative to doing this work and putting these programs in place, but it is a way of making that happen and driving the change that all the experts are telling us is needed.

This is not a radical proposal. It is supported by a large number of international and Australian human rights organisations such as the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Yfoundations, Change the Record, the Australian Medical Association and the Law Council of Australia, as well as the Office of the Children's Guardian and the Advocate for Children and Young People. The list of organisations supporting the Raise the Age campaign

is too long for me to read out, but it is found at www.raisetheage.org.au. It is my strong belief that the New South Wales Parliament should also be one of those organisations. This bill is a chance to do something really important. I hope that everyone in this place appreciates the importance of childhood and recognises that we should protect young people, help them learn and grow, and break cycles of poverty and disadvantage. Prisons do not do that, and they never will. Raising the age is a way of living up to that promise and being the village that does not stand by when a kid gets into trouble or throw them into the too-hard basket, but steps up, helps out and makes change. I am proud to commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Hon. MARK PEARSON: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1459 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (10:53): I move:

- (1) That this House commends Sir David Attenborough for his powerful speech at the twenty-sixth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change known as GlasgowCOP26, where he spoke about the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions in order to prevent catastrophic global warming.
- (2) That this House notes that Sir David Attenborough has spoken publicly about:
 - (a) no longer eating meat;
 - (b) encouraging others to adopt a plant-based diet; and
 - (c) concerns regarding the negative impacts of animal agriculture on the environment, including:
 - (i) land clearing causing deforestation;
 - (ii) loss of biodiversity and species extinction; and
 - (iii) methane emissions-related global warming.
- (3) That this House condemns the Australian Government for failing to support the GlasgowCOP26 motion to adopt the Global Methane Pledge which commits signatories to reduce methane emissions by 30 per cent from their 2020 levels by 2030.
- (4) That this House calls on the New South Wales Government to:
 - (a) adopt the goals of the Global Methane Pledge;
 - (b) assist the animal agriculture industry to reduce herd numbers; and
 - (c) report to the House on what level of reduction in herd numbers would be required to reduce methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030.

It has been said that Sir David Attenborough is a living legend and an international treasure. When Sir David speaks, the world listens. At 95, and a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, Sir David has had a long and illustrious career as an English broadcaster, natural historian and author. Over the years he has spoken about the urgent need for humanity to change course to prevent damage of catastrophic proportions to the natural environment. Sir David's speech before the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties [COP26] of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was no different. The goal of COP26 is for signatories to agree to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Sir David stressed the urgency with which governments need to act in order to bring down the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide below its current level of 414 parts per million. He also spoke about the need for affordable clean energy, to move to sustainable foods and to recapture carbon by restoring our natural ecosystems. In interviews he has discussed how he has converted to a mainly plant-based diet in recognition of the harm caused by animal agriculture through land clearing, massive water usage and the methane produced by cattle and sheep. Methane is the second biggest contributor to greenhouse gases after carbon dioxide. Animal agribusiness uses 77 per cent of the land used for agriculture and contributes more than 16 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The United Nations has long been calling for a drastic change in the world's consumption of meat, particularly in wealthy nations that are large contributors to the climate crisis.

Decreasing methane levels would reduce global warming by 0.2 degrees Celsius by 2050, reducing the severity and frequency of extreme climate events caused by climate change. In recognition of this, the United States and the European Union launched the Global Methane Pledge at the Glasgow conference. The Global Methane Pledge is a joint agreement to slash global methane emissions by 30 per cent from 2020 levels in all industries by 2030. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said reducing methane emissions is

"one of the most effective things we can do" to fight climate change, and called the gas "the lowest hanging fruit" because the changes needed to be put in place do not require expensive technologies. More than 100 countries have signed the pledge. Australia refused to sign the pledge, despite being amongst the top 10 countries producing methane from animal agriculture. Australia is also one of the top four countries exporting cow and sheep meat and dairy products.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that Europe needs to reduce the consumption of meat by 79 per cent, the consumption of dairy by 74 per cent to 83 per cent, and the consumption of egg and seafood by 68 per cent and 65 per cent respectively if Europe is to meet its climate goals. Ireland, for example, would need to reduce its national herd by more than one million cattle if it were to achieve the climate targets. Australia has a global responsibility to cut its methane emissions. I urge the New South Wales Government to follow in the footsteps of those 100 signatories to the pledge and start the work to identify how much we need to reduce animal agriculture in order to reduce the level of methane emissions by 30 per cent from the 2020 levels by 2030.

I ask my colleagues to support this motion, to adopt the goals of the Global Climate Pledge and to have the Minister report on what level of reduction in herd numbers would be required to meet them. Of course, we need to support the animal agriculture sector to manage this transition. My greatest fear is that our leaders will continue to bury their heads in the sand and change will come without us being prepared. Just as Scott Morrison is now rightly derided for holding aloft a lump of coal in the Federal Parliament and mocking the South Australian Government for its move to 100 per cent renewables-generated electricity, I half expected my colleague the Hon. Wes Fang to have brought in a big slab of steak in response to my motion. That is what we need to watch. All theatre and an absence of forward thinking and vision do no favours for the people of New South Wales. The future is renewable energy and plant-based foods. The New South Wales Government must accept this reality and move with the times.

Debate interrupted.

Announcements

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan) (10:58): According to a resolution of the House of 10 November 2021, proceedings are now interrupted to enable all members and officers to observe a minute's silence at 11.00 a.m. to mark Remembrance Day.

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

Motions

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): According to the resolution of the House of 10 November, I call on private members' business item No. 1449, standing in the name of the Hon. Shayne Mallard, relating to Remembrance Day, which will now take precedence of all other business on the *Notice Paper* until interrupted for question time.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (11:01): I move:

(1) That this House notes that:

- (a) on Thursday 11 November 2021, Australia commemorates Remembrance Day when on the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, a minute's silence is observed and dedicated to remember those soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe;
- (b) at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of continuous warfare as Germany, the Allied Powers and the United States concluded an Armistice becoming known as "Armistice Day";
- (c) 11 November is universally associated with the remembrance of those who died in the First World War, which mobilised over 70 million people and left between nine million and 13 million dead and as many as one-third of these with no grave;
- (d) Australia was a small nation with a population of fewer than five million and from this population base, no less than 416,809 men enlisted of which 302,000 served overseas,
- (e) of those, 62,000 were killed, 155,000 were wounded and a further 8,000 died of war-related injuries after the war; and
- (f) after the Second World War the name of Armistice Day was changed to Remembrance Day to honour those who had died in WWII and later other Australian military conflicts including Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan as well as peacekeeping operations across the world.

- (2) That this House acknowledges all of the men and women of the Australian Defence Force past and present who have made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives so that we can live freely and in peace today.
- (3) That this House encourages Australians to attend a local COVID-19 safe event, or to pause in their home, schools and workplaces to remember and pay their respects to those who died fighting for Australia.

I move today's Remembrance Day motion with deep humility and respect. Remembrance Day is a solemn day to commemorate the sacrifice made in defence of our nation and our Western democratic ideals and values. We remember all those who were lost and those whose families remained in Australia. We mourn their sacrifice with pride and take strength in the example set by their courage and national commitment. On this day just over a hundred years ago in 1918, the guns on the Western Front fell silent at 11.00 a.m. after more than four years of warfare. The Allied armies of the United Kingdom, United States, France, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and others fought hard to drive back the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. In doing so, they defended the principles that we hold dear today of democracy, freedom and equality for all.

By November of 1918, the Central Powers had been pushed so hard that they decided it was necessary to call for an armistice while they negotiated a peace. Thanks to the allied efforts, the Central Powers agreed to the strict conditions of the Treaty of Versailles—in effect, an unconditional surrender. As many historians have observed, it was less an end to war in Europe and more a pause in a century-long European civil war, which would reignite two decades later. Since that day, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month has had a special meaning in the hearts of many around the world. It is a time when we should pause and give a moment's reflection to the sacrifice made by those who fought and remember those who sacrificed so much for us.

The First World War involved over 70 million military personnel as well as countless millions more at home supporting the war effort. An estimated 8.5 million of those fighting lost their lives in the conflict. An estimated 13 million civilians died due to direct conflict or disease and starvation associated with World War I. The remains of millions of these military and civilian casualties were lost forever. Among those still unaccounted for are 17,000 Australian soldiers who fought on the Western Front. Their families will never be able to properly say goodbye so, as a State and as a Parliament, we mourn with them together. The loss of a grave, or a grave that is far away, gave way to our culture of monuments and memorials in towns, town halls and churches, which we view very much as an integral part of our urban and township fabric today.

According to the official rules, those enlisting to fight overseas had to be 18 years old and those under 21 needed permission from their parents or guardians to go and fight. The national average age of a soldier who fought in World War I was just 24. But as has become common knowledge now, many of those who enlisted lied about their age in order to fulfil what they saw as their civic duty to defend their home, or frankly to be with their mates. The youngest known soldier to lose his life during the war was Private James Charles Martin, who was just 15 years old. He was from a small town in the Riverina region of New South Wales. Today a boy of Private Martin's age would not be allowed to leave school—and, actually, it is believed that Private Martin was not the youngest Australian soldier to fight.

Less than two weeks after the war began, 1,000 men who had enlisted in New South Wales formed the 1st Australian Infantry Battalion. Two months later, they embarked for Egypt following a short stop at Albany in Western Australia. The battalion would take part in the infamous Anzac Day landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, while most notably they fought the battle of Lone Pine in August, only one year after enlisting. For their valiant efforts at Lone Pine two members of the 1st Battalion received the Victoria Cross: Captain Alfred Shout and Lance Corporal Leonard Keyser. In Leonard Keyser's case, the abridged citation accompanying his Victoria Cross describes his bravery as follows:

On 7th August 1915, Keyser was in a trench which was being heavily bombed by the enemy. At great personal risk he picked up two live bombs and threw them back at the enemy. Though wounded he continued throwing bombs, thereby saving a most important portion of the trench. Next day Keyser bombed the enemy out of a position from which temporary mastery of his own trench had been obtained. Although again wounded he declined evacuation, volunteering to throw bombs for another company, which had lost all its bomb-throwers. He continued to bomb the enemy until the situation was relieved.

Captain Shout's valour a couple of days later was described as:

On the morning of 9th August, 1915, with a small party, Captain Shout charged down trenches strongly occupied by the enemy, and personally threw four bombs among them, killing eight and routing the remainder [of the enemy]. In the afternoon he captured a further length of trench and continued personally to bomb the enemy at [very] close range, under very heavy fire, until he was severely wounded, losing his right hand and left eye. He succumbed to his injuries.

While these two men rose above and beyond the call of duty, their bravery and loyalty to their mates is not unique to them alone. These are the traits of all the diggers who stood side by side on the beaches of Gallipoli and in the trenches of France. Whilst in no way am I seeking to detract from the bravery of those two young men or the thousands of others who fought for Australia, I take a brief moment to also reflect upon the bravery and sacrifice and futility of those who fought against them.

Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli 10 months later in December 1915, the Australian forces were reorganised and expanded from two divisions to five. All five divisions were progressively transferred to France. Until the war ended in 1918 most of the Australian infantry fought in France and Belgium. The line being defended by the Allies in this region is what we refer to as the Western Front. Often considered to be a metaphor for the horrors of the war, the Western Front played host to the worst experiences imaginable for our soldiers: near constant firefights fought in cold, wet and muddy conditions with limited rations and the ever-present threat of recently invented chemical warfare tactics and diseases.

Running a distance of 760 kilometres from the English Channel near Ostend to Belfort on the Swiss border, the Western Front was the Allies' line of defence preventing the Central Powers from fully invading France. This theatre of the war is where many of the most infamous battles occurred—the Somme, Flanders Fields, Verdun, Ypres. This is also where the war would come to an end as the Allies began to push the Central Powers back out of France. Pivotal in this momentum were efforts by the Australian forces who conducted so-called "peaceful penetrations". These exercises involved Australian and New Zealand patrols discovering poorly defended sections of the German line and, having crossed at these points, approaching the German outposts from behind and capturing them with minimal force. In some Australian units this became something of a competition, with individual companies competing to see who would be most effective with this tactic. It is reported this tactic had a significant effect on the morale of the German forces, who would go on to surrender a few months after it became a regular occurrence. One captured German soldier is reported to have said:

You bloody Australians, when you are in the line you keep us on pins and needles; we never know when you are coming over.

Those manoeuvres, combined with the efforts of the Australian forces at Gallipoli, Egypt, Palestine and other Western Front battles, earned the Australian soldiers a reputation of great bravery. General Herbert Plumer, commander of the British Second Army, captured that sentiment, saying:

I would like to tell you that there is no division, certainly in my army, perhaps in the whole British Army, which has done more to destroy the morale of the enemy than the 1st Australian Division.

In total 64 Victoria Crosses were awarded for valiant efforts during World War I, twice as many as have been awarded in all subsequent conflicts, and 15 of those were awarded posthumously. The first Victoria Cross awarded to an Australian for actions during World War I was for valiant behaviour, less than one month after the landing at Gallipoli. The final Victoria Cross of World War I was awarded for actions taken during the last engagement of the war that Australian infantry were involved in on 5 October 1918. From the start of World War I to the very end, Australian soldiers fought with courage and a sense of loyalty to the men fighting next to them.

The day of commemoration we know as Remembrance Day was originally known as Armistice Day for the Armistice that brought an end to the First World War, which was then thought to be the war to end all wars. Following the Second World War, however, the Australian and British governments made the decision that Remembrance Day was a better name to commemorate those who served in all wars. In 1993, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Armistice, Australia commemorated a particularly moving Remembrance Day. On that day the remains of the unknown Australian soldier were laid to rest in the Australian War Memorial's Hall of Memory. A two-minute silence was observed nationwide as the soldier was laid to rest at 11.00 a.m.

That moment, which is etched in my memory, served as a chance for all Australians to share the grief, respect and pride as a nation by stopping whatever we are doing and observing a moment of silence to pay tribute to the men and women who have served our nation and who are serving today. We also pay tribute to the families at home who shared in that sacrifice. Then Prime Minister Paul Keating delivered a memorable speech at the 1993 Remembrance Day ceremony laying to rest the Unknown Soldier, in which he summed up what we today consider the unique Anzac spirit. He said:

The Unknown Australian Soldier we inter today was one of those who by his deeds proved that real nobility and grandeur belong not to empires and nations but to the people on whom they, in the last resort, always depend.

That is surely at the heart of the ANZAC story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is a legend not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity.

I have mentioned in this place before that this solemn day allows me to reflect on my family's service. My great-uncle Frank Farrar from Badgerys Creek—the only brother of my grandfather—enlisted in 1917 in Liverpool at the age of 21. I am guessing that was the earliest point where consent from his parents was not required. On 5 September 1918, one year after enlisting, uncle Frank was killed by shelling at Péronne in the big push in the Battle of Somme on the Western Front in France. Tragically, it was only six weeks before the Armistice that he lost his life at such a young age.

Throughout the generations, my family, like many families, lived with an ever-present sense of loss of great-uncle Frank; however, we were also proud of his service to our country. In recent years I discovered that the portrait of a World War I soldier in the dining room of our home at Badgerys Creek was not a portrait of great-uncle Frank—which I always thought it was—because we had no photographs of him; the picture was put there by my great-grandmother many years ago to symbolise his presence. I thought that was telling of grief and love.

In a sense, that is what we as a nation have done with the unknown Australian soldier, who symbolises the person we lost and whom we want to remember. He could be anyone's brother, uncle, father, friend, colleague or neighbour, and because of that he is those things to everyone. We all hold some connection to those who fought for our values of freedom, democracy and equality, if only by virtue of the fact that we are able to experience those things every day in New South Wales and Australia. With Remembrance Day being held largely on the other side of COVID-19 lockdowns, at least for us in New South Wales it is worth giving thought to the strength of character and resolve our diggers passed down the generations to the Australians of today.

Our challenge seems insignificant in the face of what those who came before us had to overcome. The legacy of loyalty and resilience that they passed down has been one of the biggest reasons Australians have rolled up their sleeves and got on with what needed to be done to confront the ongoing pandemic. We have been inspired by the example of strength and resolve in the face of great threats. I am again reminded of Paul Keating's speech in 1993. He said:

For out of the war came a lesson which transcended the horror and tragedy and the inexcusable folly.

It was a lesson about ordinary people – and the lesson was that they were not ordinary.

On all sides they were the heroes of that war: not the generals and the politicians, but the soldiers and sailors and nurses – those who taught us to endure hardship, show courage, to be bold as well as resilient, to believe in ourselves, to stick together.

I encourage all those who are able to do so safely to attend a commemoration service this Remembrance Day and reflect on all the men and women who have served, and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of our values. You can find information about Remembrance Day events by contacting your local Returned Services League branch. With those words and great respect and reverence, I commend this important motion to the House.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (11:15): Every year on this day Australians mark the Armistice agreed to between the Allies of World War I and Germany and France. We pause to remember all who have served and all who have lost their lives in conflicts in a period of over 100 years. In the challenging year that we have all had, it is very good that today has fallen at a time when the community is able to come together and mark this solemn day. I thank the Government for bringing forward this motion. We make time today to remember the people whom we have lost in war. In the First World War nearly 417,000 Australian men enlisted and over 62,000 were killed. A further 156,000 of those men were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. Those who returned home had their lives changed forever. They fought in horrendous conditions, witnessed things that no-one should ever see and they returned changed forever—or they did not return at all.

Just 18 years after the war to end all wars unfortunately we were again at war. Around 10 per cent of the Australian population, 730,000 personnel, enlisted in the Australian Army. There were 400,000 serving overseas and nearly 40,000 of those Australians lost their lives. War has claimed over 100,000 Australian lives since our first international conflict in 1860. Whole generations have been lost to us through conflict. It has shaped the way we see ourselves. It has shaped the way we live our lives. As a result of their sacrifice there has been fundamental change in our families and the way that Australia sees itself in the world. Today there remain over 1,000 Australian men and women deployed overseas, putting their personal safety aside to do the work that our Government has asked them to do. It is dangerous work that should never be taken for granted.

We should all reflect on the very real sacrifice that over 100,000 people have made in the course of our history. We are altered by it. Often it is too easy for us to go through the motions of these commemorations. In recent times there has been a welcome change, where it is taken more seriously. The time is made to reflect. We tell the important stories and remind everyone of the need to never forget the sacrifices that have been made. I have said this before: It is incredibly important to think about the profound action that our governments ask of people when we send them to war. We do not have a lot of returned service people in this place anymore; we do have some. It is something that few of us in this place have actually experienced.

We ask people to go and fight on behalf of our country for what we believe in and for the values that we seek to hold and to keep. We ask people to put their lives on the line. They come back harmed, if they survive, and it is something that should never be taken lightly. It should never be taken without profound thought and serious understanding of the consequences of what we are doing. I acknowledge the people across our community who work with returned service people and their families every day. They do incredible work, very much under

the radar. They support families in their worst times, continuously, over many years. We all have to be thankful for the work that they continue to do.

I also acknowledge the impact on those who are harmed in war not through physical means but through mental health. We know that war causes immense emotional and psychological harm. I acknowledge the work of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and the important work it has already done to report on the more than 1,200 Australian defence force personnel who have died by suicide in the past two decades. There is so much more work to do, and the Opposition looks forward to seeing the outcomes of the royal commission and to real action being taken to support our veterans. On behalf of the Opposition, again, I thank the Government for bringing this motion forward. I thank the House for making the time—not taking the time, but making the time—to ensure that we can reflect on these issues, remember the sacrifice of others and hopefully learn the lessons of the past to try as much as possible not to find ourselves sending our people into harm's way.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:21): One Nation very much supports this motion of remembrance on this special day. One hundred and three years ago today in the forest of Compiègne, in the personal rail carriage of General Ferdinand Foch, the Armistice was signed to end the Great War, supposedly to put to an end the greatest of wars and for it never to happen again. Yet it is a day that reminds us of the fragility of peace because less than 22 years afterwards, they were again in that same rail carriage, in that same forest, signing a different armistice, with France surrendering to Adolf Hitler and the evil of the monstrous Third Reich. On this day, when we honour the service of so many Australians who fought for their country, and for freedom, liberty and the honour of being an Australian, it is also important to remember just how fragile peace can be.

War is the worst of the human conditions and we must always commit ourselves to peace and as much harmony as possible between the peoples and countries of the world. While this is a State Parliament, I think every single MP at every level of government—every public representative—has that commitment. While Australia has an honoured history in war, we also have a record of making some mistakes—acts of folly—that sent young people to their slaughter unnecessarily. I think there are two aspects of this day: to remember the service of Australians who committed themselves in World War I, World War II and other conflicts to fight for the freedoms of our nation and what they thought was right at the time in the historical context, but also to commit ourselves to avoiding any circumstance where young Australians would unnecessarily be sent into war.

One of the great moments of my life was to take my two young sons to Gallipoli three years ago around this time. It snowed, just as it did in 1915 as the Anzacs were trying to make their exit. That campaign was disastrous at every level. Its only successful aspect was the evacuation. But, as I stood there with my two sons of a similar age to the young men who landed there on the first Anzac Day—whether you were standing on the cobbled beach of Anzac Cove looking up at the Sphinx or visiting Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair or, worst of all, the slaughter field of the Nek—it makes us realise just what those young men went through. It makes us realise the level of bravery, camaraderie, determination and resilience they had—great Australian characteristics, laced with a larrikin sense of humour to get them through the worst of times. To stand on that hallowed turf made you feel very proud to be an Australian. Yes, it is Turkish land but it is also a hallowed field for any Australian with a sense of national pride and respect for what happened there so long ago.

In leaving Gallipoli, I remember having a long conversation with my sons about Australia's history in war, and they had a variety of views as to what had been justified and what had not been. When I was in the Federal Parliament I was involved very heavily in the campaign to stop us going to Iraq. As a public representative, a citizen and most particularly a father to two young men, I worry about some of the talk in the public debate now. On this Remembrance Day I believe it is appropriate to honour the past and those who have served but to also keep a watching eye on any possible folly in the future.

The history of Vietnam shows it was a mistaken conflict where Vietnam was not of any strategic importance to Australia in the 1960s. Those who had a theory about the downward flow of communism were wrong. It is easy for political leaders to send young men and women to war. It is others and the young who face the bullets, the barrage and the possibility of death. Look at Vietnam and Iraq. In 2003 Iraq was of no strategic consequence or importance to Australia. Those in public life who sometimes feel like they need an enemy on the foreign front tried to manufacture one in Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction that did not exist. Again, it was an act of folly. I worry about what is being said about China and Taiwan now. Of course, Australia must be strong and resilient in its defence planning and have an eye out for the rise of China and what that might mean. They are the contingencies of international diplomacy and defence strategies. But I think it is important to note that, just like Vietnam in the sixties and Iraq in 2003, Taiwan is of no strategic importance to Australia.

Those who feel the need to find an enemy on the international front and talk the language of war and rattle their sabres, knowing that they themselves will never face the bullets, need to learn from Australian history and the wonderful aspects of our military history and those who served but also the mistakes that were made which caused a loss of life among young Australians. On this day, I remember both aspects of war—the honour and the

service but also the folly of this dreadful human condition. If we can avoid that and argue against it in circumstances where it is unnecessary, I believe that is the greatest tribute to the fallen.

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (11:27): I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. As Aboriginal affairs Minister, I acknowledge and pay tribute to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have served and continue to serve in our armed forces. On Remembrance Day it is important to honour the service and sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women and the sacrifice of their families because it is a time when we as a nation come together to commemorate the sacrifice of all Australians who have died in war or during operational service and those who have served our nation in times of conflict and peacekeeping operations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a long tradition of fighting for country and continue to serve with honour amongst our military forces. There are currently almost 2,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women serving in the Australian Defence Force. This day is also a time to honour the people who support our veterans, and their families and communities. Earlier this year in May, I attended the Indigenous veterans commemoration ceremony at the Anzac Memorial. It was indeed a privilege to meet Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans and their families and hear their stories. As we come together on 11 November, as we do each year, to mark the events of the Great War, I encourage every Australian to commemorate and honour the service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service men and women and remember their legacy.

We honour and remember them and we should not forget them. I also make some other remarks on this particular day. Every honourable member has been touched in some way or another by the story of those Australians who have served overseas in the defence of Australia and in our cause. I note the remarks of the Hon. Mark Latham in the debate. It is not always a cause in which there is consensus, but nevertheless we should always remember that everyone who puts on the uniform deserves respect, no matter what an individual may think from time to time about the cause they are fighting for. I remember on this particular day the service of two of my family members. My maternal grandfather, Thomas William Wright Killiby, was a soldier in the Great War. He served with distinction on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918.

I keep and have always kept in my Parliament House office two items of militaria, I suppose you would call them, that he returned with from the Great War: his whistle, an item that always haunts me, because he would blow that and his comrades would climb out of the trenches and run into the German lines; and his bugle, which he would blow to send signals to his comrades on the field of battle as well. He came back from the war but he fought in many battles on the Western Front, many of which honourable members would be aware of, but in particular the Battle of Mont Saint-Quentin, which was probably the turning point of the war. When the Australians rushed up that hill and took out the Germans, from that point onwards the German war high command knew the game was up. It was a great privilege to be able to visit that site some years ago. It was such a beautiful place but such immeasurable horror was seen that day. It is very hard to reconcile the both of them.

The other person I remember today is my namesake, Donald Thomas Grant, my paternal grandmother's brother. He was a sailor and he died in the defence of Singapore on an Australian ship under attack from the Japanese. During the five-year period in which my sister lived in Singapore, we went and found the memorial to him. That was a very special moment for my sister and me as well. So we remember them. We remember all Australians who died and fought. We remember the families that they left behind and in particular we also remember the many good organisations like Legacy and so many others that do such good work for our veterans and their families as well. We pay tribute to them. Lest we forget.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE (11:33): I am honoured to make a few remarks in contribution on this Remembrance Day, a day in which we honour those men and women who have sacrificed so much in the service of our country. We honour them for their valour and commitment and for their ultimate sacrifice. This Remembrance Day, 11 November 2021, marks the 103rd anniversary of the Armistice ending the First World War, during which 300,000 Australians served overseas and over 60,000 lost their lives. Over the course of the Great War, World War II and the Korean War, and in Malaysia, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and the myriad of peacekeeping operations around the world, it is estimated that over 100,000 Australians have lost their lives serving in our armed forces, as well as millions more from other parties. For them we pause and observe a minute of silence to remember their sacrifices. We also mourn the millions of innocent civilians who have been killed across all wars and conflicts. There are no winners in war except pain and misery. No doubt every commemoration will bring forth reflections of war and valour, but remembrance is about those service men and women who we honour today.

Many Australians remained largely where they fell, too far away to repatriate. The physical presence of cenotaphs and memorials is our silent testimony to the many thousands who did not return. There is no distance

in the hearts of those who lost loved ones, nor vagueness in the memories. Their love continues to burn. They are remembered everywhere across our nation, in places where they fell and in cemeteries throughout the lands that they traversed. In 2016, along with a number of my Labor colleagues, I had the honour of visiting the graves of Australian service members at the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Qasqas in Beirut, Lebanon, where we paid homage to them.

Today reflects on the courage, valour and sacrifice of the men and women who have served our country in war, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Together with all people from around the nation, we solemnly promise to never forget the courage and mateship that they represent, and honour the memory of those brave men and women, wherever they may have fallen. We must continue to acknowledge their service and sacrifice. We must also continue to acknowledge all the individuals and organisations that support our veterans and their families. More than a century has now passed since the guns fell silent on the Western Front. However, the legacy of our diggers continues to radiate life. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (11:36): This is a really important day of the year. The ability to make a contribution today should not be underestimated because it is so important to what we continue to teach our children. We hope they will never lose perspective on what we are remembering. As other members have referred to, we remember not only the valour of the people who have participated in war but also the grief of those who have lost loved ones and the tragedy that emerges from the pointlessness of conflict. The important thing about today is to reflect on the contributions of people who have made such a sacrifice by participating in conflict and sometimes by giving their lives. Those stories contribute to the fabric of our society and are so important to teach our children—the smallest things: the willingness to be generous and the resilience of people.

My grandfather fought in France in the First World War. I have some of his letters, which are ordinary: He talks about the food that they were eating; he talks about his girlfriend; he talks about wanting to get home. He was tragically wounded and, obviously, repatriated. He came home with those stories and the camaraderie that he had built up, which is still on display if you go to any RSL club throughout Australia. The camaraderie that exists between people who have participated in conflict still exists. However, none of them will tell you, "I want to go back." None of them will say, "I want to do this again." The camaraderie is there, and the lessons they learned through the smallness of these events are lessons that we all ought to learn. Today is a time when we reflect on the magnanimity of life. We ought to think about the virtue of magnanimity and how much we can rise above and give of ourselves. We can have lots of debates in this place and everywhere about the smallest of things, but there is a level to which people can rise. Sometimes we see the best of it in this place, where members make contributions about really important things, and today is one of those. It is a display of the virtue that we have.

My father was a navigator on a Lancaster in the Royal Air Force in the Second World War, and he did 30 flights over Germany. To survive that was significant, because the success rate for Lancasters in the Second World War was about one in six that actually returned. However, he managed to get through it. He never used to talk about it, but what he had done left a really profound impact on him. I learned recently that he prayed for the people that he bombed, and that is the sort of thing that comes out of people who participated: It contributes to the sorts of people that they became later in life. I always think about the things that you find out about your own family later in life. Although he never talked to me about it, he told my brother about the impact that it had on him to bomb what he thought were innocent people in Germany. It was really life changing for him. He would have been 100 this year.

When I was looking at some of the stories that emerged out of the First World War, one that impacted on me and that I feel compelled to tell was about a family called the Watherstons. In the First World War only three families in Australia lost four sons, and they were one. It was not an easy start for the brothers. Their parents, James and Isabella, were raising nine children in Boston Island, South Australia, when they both tragically drowned in a rowboat accident. It is not an easy start in life when one's parents die in that manner.

By the time World War I broke out, Frank, Cyril, Edward and James Watherston were spread across Australia working—Frank and James in Perth, Cyril in Sydney and Edward in Port Pirie. Cyril and Edward joined up in early September 1914, and they were in the first intakes of their two regiments. Cyril was in the 7th Light Horse Regiment from Sydney and Edward left from Adelaide on the *Ascanius* with the 10th Battalion, one of the most famous battalions in Australian military history. The 10th was amongst the first infantry units raised for the Australian Imperial Force so was the first ashore at around 4.30 a.m. on 25 April 1915 at Gallipoli. They penetrated the furthest inland of any Australian troops during the initial fighting.

Frank joined up in 1915 with the 11th Battalion, six months after his brothers. He had a wood merchant business with his brother James in Perth and worked out of Fremantle in timber cutting. James joined up after he discovered that his favourite brother and workmate, Frank, had been killed at Knife Ridge, Gallipoli, in June 1915. Unusually, Cyril was permitted to transfer from the 7th Light Horse to the 10th Battalion to be nearer to his brother

Edward after hearing of Frank's death. Cyril was killed when a shell came across from the German artillery and blew up his little convoy of horses and equipment. Edward died at Pozieres two months later on 23 July, just 15 kilometres away. Sadly, his brother James was aware of Edward's death when he attacked with the rest of the men of the 11th Battalion. He was shot and killed by machine gun fire on 19 August, also at Pozieres.

It took until April 1917 to confirm all the brothers had died. It is hard to fathom just how terrible an impact the war had on families, none more so than the Watherston family. How unimaginable it would have been for their remaining sisters and brother to receive those telegrams from a world so far away that their brothers were not coming home. Those sacrifices and the sacrifices of countless others who have served, and those who are still serving, demand that we reflect on this day. They gave so much to preserve freedom, to safeguard democracy and to protect the futures of generations to come. We pay our respect and honour them in silence. Lest we forget.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (11:45): As do many all over the country, we stand here today to remember those who served to defend Australia. We remember the sacrifice of those who fought so that we are free today, and we acknowledge the great cost of that freedom. Today is personal for many, and many in the Chamber have shared family stories. I will share one of mine. I remember my great grandfather who served in both world wars. He lied about his age to fight in World War I—like many did. At the onset of World War II, he was training men at Mosman in the anti-tank divisions. He basically defied orders and said to his superiors, "I trained those boys. If they go, I go."

An interesting piece of history that many people do not know about was a clause that said you could be sent home if a direct family member was sick, particularly a wife or a spouse. It is a family legend that my great granny faked an illness because she wanted my great grandfather home. When he returned, he was upset to have been taken away from his boys who were out there fighting, and he was not with them. He refused to speak to her for three months. Sharing and talking about those stories is an important part of Remembrance Day. It is how we keep the day alive as we progress further into the future. Many who fought in those wars have long since passed. It is important to share their stories so they are not forgotten pages of history. They were husbands, fathers and grandfathers. They deserve to be remembered. I commend the motion of the Hon. Shayne Mallard. Lest we forget.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (11:47): I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for moving this motion. I just had the great privilege of attending the service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. It was extremely moving, with lots of time for thought and reflection. I acknowledge two young people that I met today, who were recipients of the 2021 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. They are outstanding young Australians, who were part of the ceremony today. I was proud to see them representing their community so well. They spoke beautifully and recited a wonderful poem together, and laid a wreath. They told me that they felt so fortunate to have received the scholarship and to have been picked to represent young people in New South Wales. They were outstanding. I mention that today because it surpasses generations. It was incredible to see two year 12 students standing there feeling passionate and engaging with people, and understanding the significance of what people from our great nation sacrificed to make sure we enjoy the privileges of freedom of democracy today. Lest we forget.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:49): Remembrance Day allows us to pause, to reflect and to remember the lives of those who fought and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms that we cherish today. Is it a solemn day that is observed annually on 11 November, noting the formal end of hostilities of the First World War. Hostilities formally ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, after four long and hard years of continuous war. Remembrance Day evolved from Armistice Day, which commenced with King George V hosting a banquet in honour of the President of the French Republic on the night of 10 November. Subsequent Armistice Day events were hosted the following morning, on 11 November. On the first anniversary of the Armistice, King George V requested that all people of the British Empire suspend normal activities for two minutes on the hour of the Armistice "which stayed the worldwide carnage of the four preceding years and marked the victory of Right and Freedom."

The observing of two minutes of silence was first proposed by an Australian journalist, Edward George Honey, who, in a letter published in *The London Evening News*, proposed a period of silence for national remembrance. His letter was brought to the attention of King George V, who issued a subsequent proclamation that requested that "all locomotion should cease, so that, in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead". It was after World War II that most member States of the Commonwealth adopted the name of Remembrance Day to honour veterans of that and subsequent conflicts, as we do today. More than 330,000 Australians served overseas in the First World War, with more than 60,000 dying, having a massive and lasting impact on our country and depriving us of many of the greatest of a generation.

It is inspiring to see the sea of red poppies in this House today, which are synonymous with Remembrance Day, in a tradition that has its origins in the 1915 poem *In Flanders Fields*, written by Lieutenant-Colonel John

McCrae. The poem was written after Lieutenant-Colonel McCrae, a Canadian, presided over the funeral of his friend. He noted how poppies grew quickly around the graves of those who died and was inspired by the renewal that can come from the darkest of moments. In 1918 Moina Michael wrote a poem in reply, *We Shall Keep the Faith*, which speaks of promising to wear a poppy in honour of our dead. This practice has become an important fundraising drive for the Returned and Services League of Australia that helps it undertake its important support and welfare work.

Remembrance Day allows us to pause, reflect and remember the lives of those who fought and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms that we cherish today. Like other members, I cannot stray from my own family's history when it comes to service in the First World War. As we have heard from many members, we continue to keep their service and their sacrifice alive in our memory today. My great-uncle, William Arthur Miller, paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War. He enlisted in Grenfell at the age of 23 years and three months. Sadly, he was to be killed in action in 1916 in Pozieres in France at the age of just 24. I was honoured to be able to visit Villers-Bretonneux a few years ago on the Centenary of Anzac to see where he is remembered.

In considering his loss and going through the records, which, thanks to the Australian military, are so readily available today, it was interesting to be able to go through the documents and see the family's struggle for years to get his effects. They started their communications in 1916 and got those effects in 1923. It was also interesting to see the letters that were sent back and forth in trying to get those personal effects. They were only two fountain pens and a diary, but of course they would have meant the world to his family, who had moved from Grenfell to Homebush by then. At that stage, they moved into a home on Meredith Street at Homebush, which was vacated by another person who had sadly passed in that war. In preparing for this debate, I was able to find a new piece of information about another family member of mine, Victor William Clarke, which was the deceased notice provided in *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Advocate*. It outlined:

... son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Clarke, of Liverpool Road, Smithfield, has been killed in action. Private Clarke left Australia on the 18th April, 1916, and was wounded on August 12, 1916, at Pozieres. On that occasion he received 14 wounds. He was 24 years of age. His father was a member of the Royal Naval Reserve, whilst his younger brother, Gunner Leslie Clarke, is at present in France with the heavy artillery.

Thankfully, Gunner was to return alive. Unfortunately, that was not the fate of Victor William Clarke, who was killed at the age of 25 in the fields of Belgium when troops advanced towards the Hindenburg Line. Our family have a postcard—which I still have in my possession—from Victor, written to his sister, my great-grandmother. He spoke of looking forward to what was to come, and he spoke so fondly of coming home to see his beloved sister, Vera Ethel, my great-grandmother. She remembered Victor by naming her firstborn son after him. Her son would then go on to fight in World War II and, thankfully, return—her son who always reflected, "I have Uncle Vic's chin." I was fortunate to visit Menin Gate in Ypres 3½ years ago to remember Victor, to acknowledge his service and to see the battlefield where he unfortunately paid the ultimate sacrifice with his life.

This year's commemorations in Australia will remember them all and will be different to those from previous years as they are held in line with the COVID-safe requirements of today, which have seen limited attendance at many of the events. The New South Wales Government also live streamed the service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place today, ensuring that everyone who would normally have attended services has the opportunity to observe them. As part of this commemoration, and as a continuation of the commemorations for the centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF], a C-130J Hercules from No. 37 Squadron at RAAF Base Richmond conducted a flyover of the CBD this morning, which I saw coming across from my office earlier today. The sails of the Sydney Opera House were lit up this morning and will again be illuminated tonight from 8.00 p.m. until 11.00 p.m. with poppies, commemorating the service and sacrifice of our veterans and current serving personnel.

In recent years we have also seen some fantastic opportunities emerge in our schools, where students have been crafting poppies and have been taught the significance of the poppy. They have been reading and learning about the poem *In Flanders Fields*, which we have reflected on in this Chamber. Our Ode is taken from another wartime poem, written in the early days of World War I by Laurence Binyon, and has been used in association with commemoration services in Australia since around 1921:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Lest we forget.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (11:57): I take a couple of moments to speak on the motion moved by the Hon. Shayne Mallard. This motion gives us a chance to reflect. At this time every year I reflect about my great-grandfather, James David Taylor, who landed at Gallipoli and found himself at the field hospital on a number of occasions and was eventually medevaced out from there. I am glad of that because otherwise I would not be

here now. A lifelong wish of mine was to be able to stand at Gallipoli in April to observe and feel and appreciate what those men did. In 2018 I had that chance with the Hon. Trevor Khan, where we stood side by side, with the birds behind us, on that morning. It was so surreal and eerie. You then turn around and look at the Sphinx from the cobbled beach and reflect on what must have been going through their minds. One can only imagine the great deal of fear and the capacity of those men to overcome that fear on that morning at Gallipoli. We have heard members talk about the bravery and camaraderie that would have gotten them through that fear.

It is important that we take the time to reflect. When my great-grandfather went to Gallipoli, he left behind a wife and two children, hoping to come back. I am certain that every hour of every day they would have been quite concerned for his welfare, not knowing what he was going through. I think, on a day like this, we should also reflect upon those who remained at home. It is an important motion. I am glad that it has been put before the House for us all to take a moment to reflect upon what is an important part of our history. The contributions in this debate have been outstanding. I think all honourable members should feel quite heartened that we have not forgotten. Lest we forget.

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

Questions Without Notice

SCHOOLS RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (12:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. With hundreds of schools and childcare centres closed due to COVID outbreaks, will rapid antigen testing be implemented at every school and childcare centre across the State?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:00): I thank the honourable member for her question in relation to what is an important and very topical issue as we learn to live with COVID in our community and, of course, do see some of the impacts in relation to our school and early childhood settings. As I said yesterday when I was asked about this, obviously, we have large numbers of schools in our communities and a large number of people each and every day in schools and early childhood services. So, almost from the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen that when we have cases in our communities we often have cases in our schools. This is about making sure that we do everything we can to minimise the disruption. As I said yesterday in response to a question from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, we are trialling the rapid antigen at-home tests in Albury. We are continuing to work with NSW Health in terms of where we can use these tests more broadly going forward.

In fact, just yesterday I had another meeting with my department about this particular issue, identifying further school communities where we might be able to use rapid antigen testing. But I do want to make a couple of points, particularly in relation to the fact that the rapid antigen tests do not replace the need for polymerase chain reaction [PCR] testing when someone is identified as a close contact. As I also mentioned yesterday, in Albury we are using rapid antigen testing as both a broad surveillance approach but also to get kids back into the classroom more quickly if they are identified as a close contact. Certainly our work with NSW Health has been very much around a targeted and a localised suppression approach, using rapid antigen tests in those scenarios. That is why, as I said, the trial in Albury is incredibly important. We are looking at where we can and need to roll this out to other school communities. We will continue to work with our colleagues in Health and right across the education sector in terms of where rapid antigen testing can and should be used.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (12:02): I ask a supplementary question. I listened very carefully to the Minister's answer. Will the Minister elucidate two aspects of her answer. Is rapid antigen testing going into every school and, if not, where are the next places that it is being rolled out?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:02): As I said in my earlier answer, we will use the rapid antigen tests in a very targeted and localised suppression approach. I think that is important. We need to use it where we have got cases in the community. I think that is what parents and our community would expect. In terms of where it is going to be used next, there are currently some discussions underway about which schools are impacted. Obviously when there is a positive case that affects a school community it is very nuanced. It depends on the individual circumstances of that particular case—whether it was a member of staff or whether it was a student, and if you are seeing additional cases in those school communities. Albury was picked because, as I said yesterday, there were a large number of schools impacted across the sectors. Some schools had already had one or two closures, with further cases coming through, and so the health advice was that Albury was a good place to trial this and set it up.

We are working closely with non-government schools, who are also using rapid antigen testing. So, effectively, what we will now be able to do is to look at where we are seeing cases coming forward and where we can use the testing. I think it is likely that the priority will be to have the tests in primary school settings, as I said,

because those children largely are unable to be vaccinated, unless they have already turned 12. I am happy to keep the member updated as we look to use it in other schools. It will be something that will, literally, depend day by day on where cases come in and what the advice is about where these rapid antigen tests can be most useful. But I am certainly very committed to using rapid antigen testing where we can and where it is needed, as I said, as part of that targeted and localised suppression approach, where it is appropriate.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:04): I ask a second supplementary question. Would the Minister elucidate her answer in regard to "targeted". In her answer she mentioned "targeted" twice. Will she reveal the timetable of the expansion? The Minister said there is a trial in Albury and she is looking at other sites. Can she provide a timetable of when the community will be told where the further sites will be?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:04): As I said, this is an ongoing scenario that we are talking about each day as members in this Chamber would know, as certainly members downstairs are very aware. On any given day I am notified as the Minister about where there is a positive case in a school community, what the impact is, how many close contacts there are. We are doing a good job of turning that around quite quickly—cleaning, contacting, contact tracing and getting kids back in the classroom as soon as we can. There are opportunities to refine that even further. As soon as I am notified, I also share that information with the local MP and as part of that, communications will go out to parents, families and local members. If the advice is that we can do rapid antigen testing in that school, that is part of the communications that will go out.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. I asked very specifically: Would the Minister provide a timetable? All this information is very useful and very interesting, but my question was very specific—a timetable.

The PRESIDENT: I think the Minister was generally in order. No doubt those comments were partly introductory. I ask the Minister to bring her mind to the timetable.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I do not have a crystal ball. I cannot predict where the next COVID cases will come that impact a school community. On any given day that is when we get advice about what was the case, what were the number of close contacts, how was the opportunity to bring these students back in the classroom, what is it that we can do in those communities. I am very happy to say that we are actively looking at how we can introduce this in other schools, particularly that need for primary school students not to be out for 14 days but back after seven days and testing from day 8. They still need to do the PCR test and follow the relevant health advice in that first week. But again, it is: How do we minimise the disruption? How do we get students back more quickly? Where are the school settings that it is appropriate to use these rapid antigen tests to have our students back in the classroom?

It will continue to be an iterative response. It has to be because we are only a week and a half into using rapid antigen testing kits at home. We are day three or day four into our Albury students being back at school a few days early on. We are working through this, managing it in a good way given the scenario that we find ourselves in. I am happy to keep those updated. As I said, local members will be notified when there is a positive case in their school and when rapid antigen testing will be used in that context. It can literally be a day-by-day scenario. That communication will be very open to the school community and to the local members when and where we are using those rapid antigen tests. We have done that since the beginning of the pandemic. We will continue to do that with our school communities and our members of Parliament.

SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

The Hon. PETER POULOS (12:07): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business. How will Small Business Month help small businesses throughout New South Wales to participate in our economic recovery?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:07): Has the Hon. Adam Searle got new glasses?

The Hon. Adam Searle: No, they are very old glasses.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Is that because you are tired?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will draw himself back to the question.

The Hon. Adam Searle: Don't respond to interjections.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I will learn. Everyone will be aware of course, because it was probably the foremost date in their calendars, that we generally hold Small Business Month in October, but because of the pandemic we have had to delay the celebration of Small Business Month until March next year.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: They have been just trying to survive; they have had a bit on.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Of course. It is important that we embrace the recovery which is now taking place and all those small businesses are demonstrating the resilience with which they are now participating in the great programs that are being introduced by the Government. Some of those are the \$250 million package for the Stay & Rediscover vouchers and the \$193 million for a \$250 thankyou voucher to families with school-age children. I am sure the education Minister thinks that they are great vouchers. There is also \$50 million for CBD Friday vouchers. The Government has taken a lot of initiatives to support small businesses. The best thing about March 2022 will undoubtedly be Small Business Month. I noticed that the shadow Treasurer came in a bit late today, but already he will be putting that in his calendar.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Don't interject! The theme of Small Business Month 2022 is "Rebuild, Recharge, Renew".

Mr David Shoebridge: You are provoking interjections now!

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Don't provoke us.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: This is disorderly. The New South Wales Government is offering grants of up to \$2,500 for local councils and up to \$3,500 for business chambers, industry associations and not-for-profits to deliver events during Small Business Month that directly benefit and support the small business community in their local area. Applications opened on 1 November and are set to close on 10 December 2021. I encourage any of those eligible for the grants to jump on the website at smallbusinessmonth.nsw.gov.au to get some tips on making a grant application from the grant guidelines and to lodge their application. Everyone gets one. They do not have to worry whether they are—everyone is entitled to one, wherever they are.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: No pork-barrelling on this one. This one's safe, is it?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Stop interjecting. Small Business Month is all about networking and sharing ideas on new and better ways of doing business in a changed world. *[Time expired.]*

SCHOOLS RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (12:11): My question is directed to the Deputy Leader of the Government and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Given there are more than 800,000 students in New South Wales, and nearly 500,000 primary students, and her Government has procured 500,000 single COVID test kits, will the Minister admit that if every student were tested, the Government does not have enough tests to last beyond a single day?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:11): I thank the honourable member for his question. I repeat what I said earlier: Rapid antigen testing is part of a targeted and localised suppression strategy.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yesterday I indicated that we have already procured the initial 500,000 tests. We also have the option to procure more tests. We are establishing those opportunities with the providers of the rapid antigen tests where they are needed. The other advice that I put clearly on the table is that we are working with NSW Health on this issue. We are not in a situation where NSW Health advice is that every student should be rapid antigen tested every day. Looking at our school closures, over the last month from 10 November to 10 December 207 public schools have been impacted: 156 primary, 45 secondary and six schools that have both primary and secondary, which are our schools for specific purposes or our central schools. On any given day in New South Wales the average closure rate is seven schools out of more than 2,200. On average they are closed temporarily for about a day. Of the average of seven, about five are primary schools.

Our targeted approach identifies where COVID is in the community and where the schools that are impacted by COVID are. When the size of our education system is considered—the number of students and the number of schools—it makes sense to put the resources into school communities that are currently being impacted. That is why we have procured the first lot of tests. There is no impediment to us getting more, should we need them. This is about following the health advice, working with our colleagues in NSW Health and doing what we can to minimise disruption. We have about five weeks of school left before the school holidays. We also need to consider the ongoing health advice on vaccination rates and on what vaccination opportunities might be available to primary school students should they come in over the Christmas holidays.

Like many, we are eagerly awaiting the advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. Like everything we do in our response to COVID, this is about a safe and sensible approach and using the tests where the need for them is identified. It is about making sure that we provide that opportunity to limit disruption to our school communities. As I said, I am very comfortable with where we are at in terms of rapid antigen testing. I think the trial in Albury gives us a good sense of what we need to be doing in other communities where we can roll this out.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Opposition members understand that interjections are disorderly. I have given a little latitude but I draw the attention of members to the standing orders in that regard. Where members are persistent in looking to undermine the Minister who is giving an answer I will call it out of order. Opposition members are on their last warning. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: As I said, we will continue to work with our school communities to implement this in a targeted approach, making sure that we are using what is available to us to support our school communities.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (12:15): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of her response where she referred to the option of the extra 500,000 tests and elucidate when she will take up that option to buy those? The Minister says she does not have a crystal ball to find a COVID outbreak, but surely these tests would help.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:15): Again, this is about having that safe and sensible approach to how we manage COVID in our school communities. I know the work the department has done to make sure it has gone through the procurement to have a provider of these tests—to have, as I said yesterday, that initial 500,000 on the way and more to access. We will continue to work with NSW Health in relation to these matters as well.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: As I have said, we are working with NSW Health in terms of the strategies and that targeted suppression approach that we have for our schools. We have not had advice from NSW Health that rolling out rapid antigen tests for every student every day at every school across the State is what we need to be doing. Its advice is to work on that targeted approach, which is why we started down in Albury—

The Hon. John Graham: Surely a more comprehensive—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I am not sure when those members opposite suddenly became experts in health, epidemiology and rapid antigen testing. It is important—

The Hon. Walt Secord: Well you are!

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: We are just asking the question. We are allowed to ask the question.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister has the call.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: As I have said, we will continue to work with NSW Health and with all sectors about where we use rapid antigen tests—where it is appropriate and in what context—and that will continue to be the case, as it has been throughout the pandemic.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (12:16): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of her answer where she said that the approach is targeted and limited based on directing resources to their highest value use? Given the analysis she has presumably done, will she tell the House how long the test kits will last in that situation?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:17): When I talk about a targeted approach, we are targeting schools that have had positive COVID cases. I think that is fairly self-evident. We targeted Albury as the initial place to trial this system because it had a lot of cases and it had a lot of school impacts. This is a serious issue and I am not trying to be facetious. However, I cannot be any clearer in terms of targeting it to school communities that have had COVID impacts. Literally we have hundreds of schools across New South Wales that have not had a positive COVID case and have not been impacted. There is not COVID in those school communities. The whole point of this is to make sure we are safe, we are sensible and we take that targeted and localised approach, working closely with our colleagues in NSW Health. We have done that in all aspects of COVID in our school communities from the beginning of the pandemic and it is what we will continue to do.

CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES TRUST

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (12:18): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, representing the Minister for Water and Property. How much public money from the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust has been used to send this week's defamation threats to a journalist at Michael West Media? Why is public money that has been set aside to bury the deceased instead being diverted to bury a journalist with defamation threats simply for asking tough questions?

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Point of order: The question contains a considerable amount of argument and should be ruled out of order. "Bury a journalist" is argument.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: To the point of order: "Bury a journalist" is irony, which is specifically out of order per the standing orders.

The PRESIDENT: The last part of the question contains ironic references. I invite the Minister to answer the first part of the question, if she wishes to do so.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:19): In this House I represent the honourable member that resides in the other place who Mr David Shoebridge has referred to. I will take on notice the part of the question that was ruled in order and get an answer back to the member.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

The Hon. WES FANG (12:20): My question is addressed to the arts Minister. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's support for the Sydney Film Festival?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:20): I am absolutely delighted to.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Great opening night. The Premier got booed and hissed at.

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

The Hon. Walt Secord: Mr President, on the opening night of Sydney Film Festival the Premier was booed!

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member will resume his seat.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That deserves a second call to order, because he is not telling the truth.

The Hon. John Graham: Don't canvass the ruling.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am certainly not canvassing the President's ruling. I am discussing it. In any case, it is time to grab the popcorn—if members can stay awake on the weekend—because Sydney Film Festival is still going and it is one of the greatest cultural highlights of the year. This year marks the physical return of Sydney Film Festival after an all-digital offering in 2020. It is the first major festival in Sydney after this year's lockdown. This is the sixty-eighth year of the festival. It is one of the longest running festivals anywhere in the world, and audiences have been looking forward more than ever to the buzz of cinemas around the city. In 2019 the Government announced a 20 per cent increase to the festival's four-year core funding of \$1.2 million per year and additional support of \$355,000 over four years for the Travelling Film Festival to expand its footprint into 13 regional New South Wales cinemas. Every community across the State deserves its fair share of the arts and culture budget.

Within this year's slate of films at the festival our Screen NSW funding programs have supported 16 films, all premiering at this year's festival. This is testament to Sydney's status as a UNESCO City of Film and the support provided to the thriving local screen industry through Screen NSW. One of these supported films, *Here Out West*—the festival's opening film—is an anthology of interrelating, poignant stories of a family in western Sydney. It was produced by Co-Curious, a western Sydney-based firm, and was made by eight talented writers from eight different cultural backgrounds, working in nine languages and living across western Sydney. It is an absolutely extraordinary film; I loved it and highly recommend it. Make a note of it, and go and see it if you can. If not, watch it, as I am sure you will be able to, on a streaming service sometime in the future. After wrapping up in Sydney, the festival will start travelling. It will go on the road to 13 locations, including Orange, Port Macquarie, Young, Huskisson and Warrawong.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Wagga Wagga?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Several. I won't go through all 13. The Travelling Film Festival provides an important cultural and economic boost to our regions, bringing audiences back to their local theatres following

almost two years of uncertainty. I hope Sydneysiders and communities across regional New South Wales enjoy what is clearly some of the best screen talent New South Wales has to offer.

HUNTER AND CENTRAL COAST TAFE VIRTUAL LEARNING

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (12:23): My question without notice is directed to the education Minister, representing the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education. Is the Minister aware of the current proposal by his department for the Hunter and Central Coast TAFE centres to deliver the first semester of all TAFE courses via at-home learning? Will the Minister outline the data and educational research on how the reduction of face-to-face hours somehow improves educational outcomes? Will the Minister admit that this is another cost-cutting exercise and a continued approach by the Government to further undermine our once-great TAFE system by turning it into a glorified internet cafe?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:24): I thank the member for his important question focused specifically on the provision of TAFE in the Hunter. The member has asked for some details about how students in that area are being supported to learn. I am happy to take the specifics of the question on notice and refer it to the Minister responsible and come back to the member with a response.

STUDENT TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RATIOS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (12:24): My question is directed to the Deputy Leader of the Government, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Given the serious mental health concerns for young people following 15 weeks of remote learning and the Federal Parliament's Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention recommendation to increase the ratio of school psychologists to a minimum of one to 500 students, what is the current student to school psychologist ratio in New South Wales schools?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:25): I thank the Hon. Courtney Houssos for her question. She certainly raises an important issue about the mental health and wellbeing support for our students in New South Wales public schools. Obviously, given the time that we have had learning from home, we know it has been tough on our young people and has had an impact on mental health and wellbeing, not just for young people but for all of us. My colleague the Hon. Bronnie Taylor has clearly articulated a few times in the House the amazing work that her agency is doing about that. This is a multifaceted approach and we need to look at how we can support our young people in the school setting, how we work with our partners in the community, and also in a more clinical setting, depending on the individual needs of the student.

I am very aware of the calls for one school psychologist to 500 students. I know that is something that the parliamentary committee in Canberra has recommended in its recent report. In New South Wales members would be very well aware that we have commitments in place to increase the number of school counsellors in our high schools. We made an \$88.4 million election commitment that is being rolled out and going very well. School counselling positions have increased under our government. In 2015 we had 790 school counsellors in our public schools. As at 5 October 2021 we have 1,154. Those positions are growing. We are also rolling out support officer positions in schools, an additional election commitment that each high school will have a student support officer, somebody in addition to the counsellor, who can assist students. I know, and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor knows—she says this often—students need to have access to someone they feel comfortable speaking to. For some it might be a counsellor, for some it might be their student support officer, or the school wellbeing nurse, a position we are rolling out across the community. Again, I pay tribute to my colleague for the work that she is doing.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: Point of order: Although the information that the Minister has provided is quite useful, I did ask a very specific question, and given there is only a minute to go I ask that the Minister return to the specific question: What is the current student to school psychologist ratio?

The PRESIDENT: The Minister was directly relevant for a time, then moved into generally relevant. I encourage the Minister to come back to the thrust of the question.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: As I said, it is important to have the context that school counsellor positions are important, but they are one part of the matrix of support that is available for our students. We are training up school counsellors to fill those roles and the numbers can change literally each day. The current ratio is one school counsellor to 709 students. As I said, the point is that the school counselling services are one part of that holistic approach that we take to student mental health and wellbeing.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: The web of support.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The web of support, thank you. I acknowledge that interjection. To simplify it to numbers and ratios does a discredit to the amazing people who work in school communities to support our kids.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (12:29): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer and provide more information to say whether school psychologists and school counsellors are both counted together to calculate the ratio of 1 to 709 or whether that is the ratio for school counsellors only?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:29): I will take that question on notice. I suspect that it is the ratio of both. Those opposite need to understand that we have school counsellors who have both a teaching and a psychological qualification and psychologists, who have a psychological qualification. There are two options that can fill those roles. I am happy to come back to the member to provide the specific answer.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:30): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer in regard to school support officers? How many schools have school support officers?

The Hon. Trevor Khan: My daughter is one.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:30): I acknowledge that interjection. I know that the Hon. Trevor Khan's daughter has taken up one of those roles. As part of fulfilling that commitment, 350 additional school support officers are to be employed. A significant number of those positions have been filled. I am not sure of the exact number. But I will see whether I can get that by the end of question time. Those positions are being phased in. That phasing-in began in 2020 and will go through to the middle of 2023. Phase 1, which ended at the end of June 2021, was an additional 183 school support officers. By the middle of June next year there will be an additional 207, and by June 2023 an additional 74 student support officers will be in place. That was the plan as part of that phasing-in. I will check those specific numbers, but I know that that rollout is happening and going well. We know one of them, whom the Hon. Trevor Khan is referring to.

These officers are important because they provide that additional support for students who might be experiencing bullying, stress and other wellbeing issues. They complement the work of the school counsellors. We are also making sure that those resources are available, particularly in our schools for specific purposes and in our central schools as well. There are 65 school support officers for those schools, in addition to the 350 we had as part of the election commitment. Many of them are already in our schools, because the recruitment for those positions has been happening throughout the year. I will get the current number and am happy to provide that to the member on notice.

INFRASTRUCTURE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

The Hon. LOU AMATO (12:32): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Will the Minister provide the House with an update on the New South Wales Infrastructure Traineeship program?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:32): I thank the Hon. Lou Amato for his question. Challenges of determining what a young person wants to do after completing year 12 can be complex. Many students have prepared and worked towards what comes next, whether it is attending university, taking up other tertiary education opportunities or entering the workforce. In the past, taking some time off to travel was high on the list. Next year the kids may be able to get out and about more. For some people, determining this can be a much harder task, with options and opportunities not as clear. And the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on opportunities for school leavers cannot be understated.

It is important that those deciding get the support they need. That is why last year we introduced the Infrastructure Traineeship program. It is a two-year course for year 12 school leavers to gain practical experience in the construction industry while also studying for qualifications. These positions are paid. Candidates rotate through three settings: placement in a government agency, placement with a contractor and finally placement with a consultant. Throughout the traineeship, candidates undertake study in courses such as project management, procurement, surveying and business, as they work on projects across the Government's \$109 billion infrastructure program, whether they be in transport, roads, hospitals or our school buildings underway.

Last year the traineeship program received 2,200 applications, with 137 candidates taking up positions in the two-year course. They started their rotation in the early part of this year. I am pleased to say that we have extended that program, with an additional intake of students to start early next year. We saw the demand from the high number of applications. We are also currently opening applications for anyone who is in year 12 this year, particularly those who are unsure of what pathway to take. It is an opportunity to give some paid experience to

young people while they are studying and set them on the pathway to the construction industry, where the opportunities are ample. I am pleased to see that, of the candidates in the 2021 intake, 47 per cent were female, 10 per cent identified as Aboriginal and 13 per cent were from regional New South Wales. I hope that we can continue and even improve those statistics with next year's cohort.

I share some comments from the current trainees. James Cavallaro has been working in school infrastructure on a range of projects. James says, "I wanted some form of financial freedom and to be able to leave school with some form of independence and be able to get real workplace experience in the infrastructure industry." Bandala Farrawell has been working on an auditorium project at Stanwell Park Public School. She said, "I had no idea what I wanted to do, but I have an interest in infrastructure, and this program has provided me with an excellent opportunity to learn and grow." Calvin Drury, who has been working with school infrastructure at Glenmore Park High School, Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School and Jamison High School, said, "The traineeship has been monumental, amazing and worthwhile. The other trainees and my supervisors have made the entire experience enjoyable and have helped me every step of the way." I wish these trainees good luck. We look forward to welcoming the next cohort.

RURAL LAND REZONING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (12:35): My question is directed to the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, representing the Minister for planning. Given the continued negative impact of increases to lot size and rezoning by local councils to rural landowners, will the Minister ensure that rural landholders are not continually and adversely affected by the stroke of a pen, rezoning by local councils through local environment plans, and undertake to reinstate dwelling entitlements to those landowners who have had their dwelling entitlements removed by councils? If not, why not? It is a simple one and should be able to be answered.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (12:36): I thank the member for his question, although I do not quite agree with his saying that it is a simple one. As much as I would love to have a crack, after 10 years in this place I think that there are times when as a Minister you should do your job and say that that is a very detailed and important question. As a member of a regional community I understand that it is important to those of us living in the bush. It is a—

The Hon. John Graham: You must have a view.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I have a view. But I will take that question on notice and refer it to the Minister for what will be a great response.

WORKSITE FEMALE AMENITIES

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (12:36): My question is to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. The NSW Women's Strategy states that the Government will:

... boost the number of skilled women construction workers and the number of women in trade-related work.

Why will the Government not enforce the requirement for toilets for women on worksites in New South Wales?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:37): I thank the honourable member for her question. I acknowledge the Electrical Trade Union's report *Nowhere to Go*. I note the report's statements about the obstacles women face in the industry and the need for accessible amenities. The New South Wales Government supports the report's notion, which is that that amenities on worksites across regional and metropolitan New South Wales should be sanitary and accessible, and available to and suitable for everyone.

Labor and The Greens should stop politicising the issue. Clearly their research has failed to take into account the existing Work Health and Safety regulations and prescribed code of practice. Section 41 of the regulation says that a person conducting a business or undertaking must provide and maintain adequate and accessible facilities. This means that facilities must be maintained in good working order and be clean, safe and accessible. There are strong penalties for failing to uphold these duties, including fines of \$7,200 for an individual and over \$35,000 for a body corporate. The Government has prescribed codes of practice. Instead of sitting here and saying that we are not doing things, why does Labor not take the time to read through the codes of practice we already have, highlight the worksites that are not following the prescribed codes of practice and call on SafeWork NSW to find these worksites? You would rather—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Opposition members are retorting and interrupting far too much. I call the Hon. Penny Sharpe to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: There are strong penalties for that offence—over \$35,000 per offence. Members opposite should talk about the issue and report it to SafeWork NSW so things can change instead of playing politics in the Chamber. Let us take the time to highlight the amazing work—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: It is your job to enforce it.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: I moved a motion in Parliament about this months ago.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: You don't—

The PRESIDENT: This is not an opportunity for people to have conversations across the table. I call the Hon. Courtney Houssos to order for the first time.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: You must listen. I know it is really hard to have to be negative all the time—

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: I take that on board. Let us take the time to highlight the amazing work of the sector. Alison Mirams, CEO of Roberts Co, for example, has developed the most amazing amenities, including breastfeeding rooms—

The Hon. Mark Buttigieg: Point of order: My point of order is about relevance. The Minister is now almost at the end of the time she has had to answer the question. The question was very specific: Why will the Government not enforce requirements? We do not want to know about the requirements; we know that they are there. We want to know why the Government will not enforce them.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister was in order. I ask the Minister to continue.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: As I said, please listen to what I am saying. Let us talk about the example of amenities, including breastfeeding rooms, that CEO Alison Mirams has implemented at worksites across Concord hospital and at Macquarie Exchange to make female workers feel welcome—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: Breastfeeding rooms in hospitals are very important, but they have absolutely nothing to do—

The PRESIDENT: Government members will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition does not need assistance. I call the Hon. Bronnie Taylor to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Rose Jackson to order for the first time. This is not an opportunity to have a conversation across the Chamber. The Leader of the Opposition will continue taking her point of order.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: My point of order is very straightforward. It is about direct relevance to the question, which was about enforcing the rules that are in place.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: To the point of order: What I said exactly was "worksites at Concord hospital and Macquarie Exchange", which is directly relevant to the question.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister is being relevant, but I ask the Minister to now focus more directly on the enforcement requirements and the Government's posture in that regard. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR: Again, I refer to the fact that I encourage any member in the Chamber who knows of any worksites that are not complying to report it, and allow the appropriate process to take place and then people will be fined. I have great delight in telling the Chamber that my office has met Alison Mirams and I will be meeting with her and Gabrielle Trainor, chair of the Construction Industry Culture Task Force, next week to discuss this further—actions not words.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (12:42): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer in relation to clause 41 and provide information about how many infringement notices have been issued for breach of that clause?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:42): I thank the honourable member for her supplementary question about exactly how many notices have been issued. I will take it on notice and get back to the member. I repeat that clause 41 outlines the duty that a person conducting a business or undertaking must provide and maintain adequate accessible facilities. There are strong fines and penalties that already exist, so instead of talking about that, let us use the process to make sure that those things happen rather than taking political opportunities.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (12:43): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer and provide us with more information around how many inspections have been conducted in order to enforce the clause 41 provisions?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:44): I am happy to take that question on notice and provide the honourable member with a number. If the member is aware of any worksites breaking those codes, I encourage her to report them.

The PRESIDENT: Opposition members are getting carried away. They will come to order.

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (12:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women. This week is Perinatal Mental Health Week. Will the Minister outline how the Government is supporting the mental wellbeing of new mums and dads in New South Wales?

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (12:44): I thank the member for her question. Perinatal Mental Health Week can sometimes get lost in the bigger mental health picture. It is a time to raise awareness and collaborate to ensure that parents in need know that they are not alone. One in five new mums and one in 10 new dads experience some form of perinatal depression and anxiety. Each year around 6,600 mums develop severe postnatal depression. Tragically, that can lead to a loss of life. Being a new parent is a huge challenge, and perinatal anxiety and depression can be a very isolating experience during what should be the happiest time for any new parent. That is why the New South Wales Government has significantly increased its investment in supporting new parents.

It is not just about providing direct mental health supports; it is about helping parents with their parenting during the difficult formative years. Last year the Government invested \$44.3 million across its Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services, Wesley Mission Mums and Kids Matter program, Tresillian, Karitane and the Gidget Foundation. We also continued construction of two new much-needed statewide public mental health mother and baby eight-bed units to deliver specialist inpatient perinatal mental health care for women without being separated from their baby. The first of those new units will open early next year at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, with the second at Westmead to open soon after.

Our investment in Tresillian has delivered residential parenting services at Canterbury, Nepean, Willoughby and Macksville; day services at Canterbury, Wollstonecraft, Nepean, Lismore, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Queanbeyan, Dubbo, Broken Hill and Taree; new day centres to come at Grafton, Griffith, Goulburn, Muswellbrook, Armidale and Cowra; new Tresillian 2U vans at Queanbeyan, Bathurst, Tweed and Inverell; and free access to the SleepWellBaby app for 50,000 new parents. Our investment in Karitane has delivered residential services at Camden and Carramar; day services at Randwick, Oran Park, Balmain Village Health, Shellharbour and Shortland; a new virtual residential parenting service supporting early parents; and emergency COVID funding to support families in south-west Sydney.

Our investment in Gidget Foundation has delivered new Gidget Houses at Dubbo, Coffs Harbour, Taree, Queanbeyan, Wagga Wagga and Manly; the Family Project, an initiative which helped families get through lockdown together at home; the expansion of Start Talking Telehealth programs; 10 new Gidget clinicians; a Gidget Virtual Village for mums; a Gidget Virtual Village for dads; and the Gidget Perinatal Support Centre powered by Sonder. Supporting families and children is close to my heart—and the Government's—which is why in Perinatal Mental Health Week I remind all new parents that help is there if they need it so please reach out. It is an important week and an important discussion. I encourage all members to make sure they let people know that help is available.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK AND PLATYPUS PROJECT

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (12:48): My question is directed to the Leader of the Government, representing the Minister for Environment and Energy. In September the Government announced plans to translocate a group of 10 platypus to the Royal National Park where there have been no recorded sightings of platypus since the 1970s. Locals have provided me with photos of coal sediment in the waterways leading into the national park where 10 tonnes of coal was spilt into Camp Gully Creek in 2009. What has the Government done to monitor and remediate the impacts of mining activities from the nearby Metropolitan coalmine on waterways leading into the Royal National Park prior to reintroducing platypus populations?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:48): I did see the story that the honourable member is referring to, which looks like an absolutely great program. I am also quite familiar with the Royal National

Park. I am not sure which part of the Royal National Park the reintroduction of platypus is proposed for. There are obviously different catchments across the national park.

I am also well aware that the Metropolitan Colliery is in the vicinity of Helensburgh and would be quite a different catchment to, for example, the Hacking River. Nevertheless the honourable member provides some very detailed information about coal sediment that she says is from a spill related to the activities of the Metropolitan Colliery. The member's question asks for some detail which I am unable to provide her today. I am very happy to refer her question to my colleague the Hon. Matt Kean, who amongst his duties is the Minister for Energy and Environment, and obtain a response.

ICARE INJURED WORKER PAYMENTS

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (12:50): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business in his own capacity and representing the Treasurer. After years of advocacy by sick and injured workers and Unions NSW, icare has today finally announced that it will repay 53,000 underpaid workers \$38 million. Will the Minister confirm that the Treasury Managed Fund, which insures the State's teachers, nurses, hospital cleaners, correctional officers, firefighters, police officers and other public servants, is included in this program?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:51): I thank the Hon. Daniel Mookhey for his question. Today icare announced that it will proactively pay \$38 million in total to 53,000 injured workers affected by historic pre-injury average weekly earnings [PIAWE] calculation errors to accelerate the remediation program and to get benefits back to the people who need them most. I would have thought that that would be a welcome announcement. Since 2020 icare has written to 280,000 injured workers, conducted a statewide awareness campaign and reviewed over 16,000 of the potentially highest impact claim files to address possible miscalculation errors in PIAWE between 2012 and 2019.

To date 3.5 per cent of the files reviewed have been identified as having received underpayments, with the underpayment averaging less than \$26 per week. It was also discovered that 2.3 per cent of files received overpayments of similar value, which will not be recouped. The icare board and the cross-government steering committee, consisting of icare, New South Wales Treasury and the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, have considered the approach and have endorsed the proactive payment option, following the independent review by Deloitte—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Point of order: I appreciate the Minister's general relevance on the matter but he is reading from a press release. The specific question was about whether the Treasury Managed Fund is covered. He is halfway through his answer. I ask that the Minister be directly relevant to the question, given there is a live level of interest in this matter.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will continue. I ask him to be directly relevant to that part of the question the member has drawn his attention to.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: To the extent that the question in fact invited me to address the issue relating to the announcement today, I am addressing that part of the question and I continue to do so. Richard Harding, the CEO of icare, said:

I would like to offer my sincere apology to any injured worker who has been—

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Point of order—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: He is reading from the press release.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I decide how I answer the question.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will be directly relevant to the question. It is not an opportunity for the Minister to make a statement or to read a press release; it is an opportunity to answer the question directly. At the moment the Minister is not in order. The Minister will directly answer the question. If the Minister does not have the information specifically at hand, it is open to him to take the question on notice, not to make general observations. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: To the extent that today's announcement is that 53,000 workers, as identified by the shadow Treasurer, are being paid a total of \$38 million by way of compensation, I think that should be a welcome announcement and those opposite should be embracing that opportunity.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (12:54): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of his answer where he refers to the 53,000 workers. What proportion of them are covered by the Treasury Managed Fund and thus work in the public sector?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:55): To the extent that this calls for additional information about the break-up of the compensation package and how it is being distributed, clearly I do not have those significant details. In fact, we can come in here and play these games—

The Hon. John Graham: Which is okay.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: It is okay.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: We ask you questions and you either know the answer or you do not.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Correct.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Point of order: I draw the attention of the House to the fact that questions are asked and then answered. For members to hear the answer, they need to listen. The constant interjections from those opposite cause confusion because it is very difficult for members to hear the answer. I ask that the members be called to order so that the House can hear the Minister answer the question.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister has the call. I encourage the Minister to be directly relevant and not to debate or perambulate around the question. If the Minister does not have the answer, he can take the question on notice.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I thank you, Mr President, for your guidance. To the extent that the question calls for me to provide a break-up of the 53,000 workers who are receiving part of this compensation package, I will endeavour to provide that information to the shadow Treasurer in due course.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:57): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate his answer? In the original answer and in answer to the supplementary question, the Minister made reference to the 53,000 workers. How much of the compensation will go to police officers, who are one of the most affected?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:57): To the extent that this is a replication of the previous question in that the Hon. Walt Secord wants a further category to be identified in terms of the 53,000, clearly that is encompassed by my previous answer and I will endeavour to obtain that information for the member.

ABORIGINAL PROCUREMENT POLICY

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (12:57): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business. How is the New South Wales Government's Aboriginal Procurement Policy helping increase skills and economic participation for Aboriginal people in New South Wales?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:58): I thank the Deputy President for his question. One of the ways that the Government is firing up the economy and creating jobs is through government procurement, as we heard a bit about yesterday, in particular through our refreshed Aboriginal Procurement Policy. Coming into effect from 1 January 2021, the Government has set ambitious yet achievable targets, and by working with Supply Nation, which is Australia's largest database of verified Indigenous businesses, we are making it easier for government to contract with Aboriginal businesses. In the past financial year the Government spent more than \$173 million directly with Aboriginal businesses, almost doubling our spend from the 2019-20 financial year.

This number is a testament to our new targets, which include 3 per cent of goods and services contracts for each New South Wales Government cluster with Aboriginal businesses per financial year; a 1 per cent target for each New South Wales Government cluster of addressable spend directly with Aboriginal businesses on goods, services and construction per financial year; and a requirement for suppliers to direct 1.5 per cent of the project value to support Aboriginal participation, such as direct employment or subcontracting with Aboriginal businesses, on contracts over \$7.5 million.

I also acknowledge the Hon. Don Harwin and his work in this space. He has convened round tables every six months with businesses and the Aboriginal community as part of Closing the Gap. This is a great chance to hear direct feedback as we work to drive employment, business growth and economic prosperity for Aboriginal communities. While there is always more work to do, we are on the right track. The goods and services contracts target for the first six months was 102 contracts. We achieved 126 contracts. We had a target spend of \$59.33 million directly with Aboriginal businesses in the first six months, and we spent just over \$100.51 million with Aboriginal businesses during this period. We also had a goal of supporting 3,000 full-time equivalent employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and we have met this target, with close to 4,000 employment opportunities supported since 1 July 2018. There is so much power in the dignity of work, and getting more people into jobs is part of the Government's focus as we fire up our economy and get back to business.

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

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (13:01): Yesterday the Hon. Walt Secord asked me a question about the membership program at the Powerhouse Museum. I am advised that the Powerhouse is currently undertaking a review of its membership program that will feature new benefits, including access to Powerhouse Museum programs across what will be all four of its sites in Ultimo, Parramatta and Castle Hill and at the Sydney Observatory. The new Powerhouse membership program will be launched in January 2022 and will include exclusive access to exhibitions, learning and public programs and the extraordinary Powerhouse collection.

Prior to COVID-19 there was a price of admission for entry to the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the membership program was closely tied to incentives around the cost of entry. The New South Wales Government is now absolutely delighted to be providing free entry to the Powerhouse Museum for the benefit of the communities of New South Wales and its many national and international visitors. So the person who brought this matter to the attention of the Hon. Walt Secord should not by any means be concerned but rejoice in the fact that this State has a government that is investing in a renewed \$500 million Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and a brand-new \$845 million museum at Parramatta and is providing free entry.

STUDENT TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RATIOS

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning) (13:03): Earlier the Hon. Walt Secord asked me a question in relation to how many student support officers are currently in schools. I am advised that as at 5 October this year 179 student support officers have commenced in our schools. A further 163 of those positions have been filled and recruitment action is underway for the remaining positions. I think the Hon. Courtney Houssos also asked for clarification around the qualifications of those who fill school counsellor positions. School counsellor positions may be filled by either a qualified counsellor or a qualified psychologist, as I said, and the current ratio of those positions to students is one to 709.

I also make the point that school counsellors play an important role but are part of the solution. Mental health support in schools includes the student support officers whom I just mentioned, psychologists, telepsychologists, wellbeing nurses and a network of mental health facilitators to support our students' mental health. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to how we provide mental health support in our schools. Our students are too important not to have that broad safety net of support. If we look at the literally thousands of employees in our public schools in mental health support roles and the entire suite of support and calculate that as a ratio to student enrolments, it comes to approximately one to 415.

Supplementary Questions for Written Answers

STUDENT TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RATIOS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (13:04): My supplementary question for written answer is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning. Will the Minister provide a list of schools that currently do not have a school psychologist?

Questions Without Notice: Take Note

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I move:

That the House take note of answers to questions.

STUDENT TO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST RATIOS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (13:05): In question time today the NSW Labor Opposition asked a series of questions about school counsellors and psychologists in our schools. Young people and mental health is always an incredibly important issue but even more so now, given what our young people and our community have faced over the past two years and in particular the past four months. The important distinction is that over the past four months we saw distinctly different outcomes for our young people depending on where they live in our city. If they were part of the 47 per cent living in the local government areas of concern, they had much stricter lockdowns and much harsher restrictions. They had a very different experience to those who lived in other parts of Sydney or indeed other parts of the State.

The Government, whenever asked about this issue, consistently refers to the commitment it made more than two years ago, before the election, to introduce 328 additional counsellors, costing \$88.4 million. That was a worthy commitment at the time, but since then our regional communities have faced drought and bushfires and our entire community has confronted more than two years of living with a global pandemic. Quite simply, times have moved on and the time for a new response is now. Devastating figures that came out from Melbourne earlier this year showed that the rate of presentation of children to emergency rooms because of self-harm has increased by one-third since the same time last year. Children who are self-harming have increased at such an alarming rate.

The Minister often likes to talk about a community-based response. The issue is not in isolation in our schools. It is true to an extent but our schools offer a unique opportunity to provide this support. That is why the ratio is so important and that is why we continue to ask these questions. There is a distinction. In 2016 the Government introduced the ability for schools to hire psychologists without requiring a teaching degree in order to increase the number. But even this week the ABC reported that school psychologists were seeing seven students in a day. This means that they can barely cover the current ratio of one to 709. There is a need to decrease this ratio. There is a need for more counsellors. There is a need for more psychologists and that need is now.

SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (13:08): I take note of the answer given today by the Minister for Finance and Small Business, who is still present in the Chamber, with respect to Small Business Month.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: He is sticking around for your answer.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: He is sticking around to hear more of the good news on Small Business Month. We may have to wait for Small Business Month but the wait will be worth it, as the Minister outlined. A wonderful array of vouchers to support the COVID recovery throughout New South Wales will help to launch Small Business Month, whether it be the \$250 thankyou vouchers, the two additional \$25 Dine & Discover vouchers—the Minister may finally be able to take the Hon. Daniel Mookhey out for lunch with one of those vouchers—or the four \$25 CBD vouchers, which I know the Hon. Rose Jackson has been waiting for. I have seen her comments to the then Treasurer, now Premier, about the Friday lunch vouchers and she is very excited. There are also the \$50 Stay & Rediscover vouchers. Couples or partners can take those together and stay anywhere throughout New South Wales.

It is a very exciting time for New South Wales. In addition to what we have already seen with Dine & Discover vouchers, where the average spend was \$41, this will be a great multiplier with a total customer spend per day of \$450 million. The vouchers benefit small businesses across New South Wales. As our friends at COSBOA would say, members should go local when spending their Dine & Discover vouchers. I recognise the great work of COSBOA throughout this period in supporting small business through CEO Alexi Boyd and chair Matthew Addison—and of course their predecessors, Peter Strong and Mark McKenzie. Who could forget the work of great NSW Small Business Commissioner Chris Lamont and his team, who are doing a great job through the Small Business Commission. Whether it is parents going out on an extra date night, families taking their kids to the zoo or young people heading into the CBD for a long Friday lunch, it is very clear that we will see a turbocharged recovery here in New South Wales in 2022 and beyond.

The Minister highlighted the theme of Small Business Month being "Rebuild, Recharge, Renew". With grants of up to \$2,500 for local councils and up to \$3,500 for local business chambers to deliver events during New South Wales Small Business Month, we will see fantastic events across the State. Local business chambers and councils know best what will directly benefit them and support the small business community in their local areas. I encourage members across the Chamber to make sure that local councils and business chambers in their communities are aware of the available grants and get their applications in before 10 December for an exciting local Small Business Month event. As the Minister said, the small business sector drives the State's economy through business growth, innovation and jobs. Small Business Month will help them rebuild, recharge and renew.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

The Hon. WALT SECORD (13:11): As the shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage, I respond to an answer from the arts Minister in relation to the Sydney Film Festival. I am an avid film festival attendee. The very last job I had in Canada before migrating to Australia was in September 1988, when I was a media officer at the Toronto International Film Festival. I have attended every Sydney Film Festival since except in 1991, when my daughter was born, and last year due to COVID. Firstly, I declare that I was an elected member of the Sydney Film Festival from 2005 to 2009, and I resigned when I became a ministerial staff member. I attended the 3 November opening night evening for the New South Wales film *Here Out West*, and I agree with the arts Minister that it was a fantastic film. I have purchased tickets for several screenings already, and this weekend Julia has picked a Spanish film and a Russian film for us to attend. I clarify something that I said earlier in the

Chamber. I said that the Premier had been booed at the Sydney Film Festival. Boos and hisses occurred during his video message. They did clap, to be fair, for the Hon. Don Harwin. I conclude my remarks there.

INFRASTRUCTURE TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

The Hon. LOU AMATO (13:13): The New South Wales State Government is offering year 12 school leavers an opportunity to apply for a New South Wales infrastructure traineeship. The traineeships are designed for year 12 school leavers seeking to commence a career in the booming infrastructure industry, with more than 100 places available across New South Wales. The two-year traineeship program combines TAFE studies with practical experience working for New South Wales government agencies and private sector industry employers. Trainees will have the opportunity to complete a certificate IV in Business, Project Management Practice or Procurement and Contracting. School leavers can step straight into a paid role within the industry and gain practical industry experience across multiple sectors.

Trainees will receive free training from TAFE NSW in courses such as Project Management and Procurement as well as first aid and white card accreditation funded by Training Services NSW. This pathway sets young people up for a future in the infrastructure sector by providing a fantastic employment opportunity and a chance for them to get their foot in the door. Graduates will do office-based rotations between government agencies, contractors and consultants over two years. The benefits of the initiative are two years of full-time paid work while studying for one or two days per week, a nationally recognised certificate IV qualification from TAFE NSW and vital workplace experience that participants can take anywhere.

Successful applicants will pay nothing for their qualification and incur no debt. It is available in metro and regional areas, and successful applicants will earn an annual salary of \$36,500. The current traineeships on offer are certificate IV in Business, certificate IV in Project Management Practice and certificate IV in Procurement and Contracting. I commend the New South Wales Government on the New South Wales infrastructure traineeship initiative, which is a great start for our young people. TAFE offers terrific pathways to wonderful and rewarding careers.

WORKSITE FEMALE AMENITIES

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (13:15): I take note of answers to questions asked by my colleague the Hon. Rose Jackson regarding why the Government will not enforce the requirements for toilets for women on New South Wales worksites. The Minister proceeded to recite the code, with the implication that there were already provisions in place, and then took the question about enforcement on notice. The issue is not about the code and the provisions for amenities on worksites; the issue is with the enforcement of that code. We heard the debate last night brought on by Ms Abigail Boyd and the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] campaign that has engendered it, and the whole point is that the code is not being enforced.

The response we heard from the Government last night was that SafeWork has been actively engaging with the ETU on this matter, but that is the whole point. The ETU has raised the issue with SafeWork and pointed out the examples, but clearly there have been no prosecutions and no action. Otherwise we would not have had the debate last night and today in question time. It comes down to the enforcement and thus the requirement for a more prescriptive legislative regime. If SafeWork is not prosecuting, it clearly does not have the specificity in the code required to carry out the prosecutions. It is too general; it is too vague—"We need good amenities in worksites" or words to that effect. The ETU's recommendation 1 goes to the heart of the problem:

The Workplace Health and Safety legislative regime must be amended to provide prescriptive minimum requirements for workplace amenities which ensure they are regularly serviced, accessible, suitable, and open.

It goes on to list the requirements: ratios of toilets, suitable sanitariums and differentiation between the requirements of men and women. The point that seemed lost on the Minister is that the current code is inept and inadequate, and it is not being enforced or prosecuted because it is not prescriptive enough. Today's line of questioning was trying to tease that out. Instead, all we got was a recitation of the code and the Minister taking on notice how many prosecutions there will be. I can almost guarantee there will be zero, which is why Ms Abigail Boyd's motion last night was so important: because we need to legislate prescriptive minimum requirements.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

WORKSITE FEMALE AMENITIES

The Hon. WES FANG (13:19): I take note of the answer given by the arts Minister to the question that I asked about the Sydney Film Festival. It was great to hear about the festival, and it is fantastic to see it emerge from lockdown. To have festivals that have survived the pandemic back and thriving, such as this one, is fantastic. The only reason the people of New South Wales can enjoy festivals such as the Sydney Film Festival is that they went out in droves and got vaccinated. While the festival wraps up in Sydney on Sunday, the film festival

experience hits the road and will go to regional New South Wales, with the Travelling Film Festival. It will take the best of the Sydney Film Festival to 13 locations across the State: Sawtell, Huskisson, Warrawong, Orange, Tamworth, Young, Ulladulla, Murwillumbah, Port Macquarie, Lismore, Wollongong, Newcastle and Wagga Wagga. This will give regional New South Wales an important cultural and economic boost and gets people out into their local theatres. Most importantly, it will get communities back together again.

I welcomed the answer from the Minister today. It was so joyous to see not only the Minister but also the Hon. Walt Secord come to life when talking about the film festival. Those who are engaged and involved in film festivals know that this Government is supporting film festivals and the arts in this State. The Hon. Walt Secord is very much in awe of not only the Minister but also the Premier, who was able to present himself to the festival. I briefly make note of the contribution of the Opposition Whip to this debate, where he attacked the Minister for elucidating on the requirements in legislation at the moment for worksite amenities for females. The Minister said, "If you have information, bring it forward." Members opposite are not doing that.

WORKSITE FEMALE AMENITIES

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (13:22): I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women in response to my question about toilet facilities for women on New South Wales worksites. It was nice of her to commence her answer by acknowledging the work of the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] in raising this issue as part of its campaign. It would have been nicer if the Government had supported the motion acknowledging that campaign, which was put to this House yesterday. All that motion did, and all the ETU is doing, is drawing attention to a genuine issue. We and the ETU know that the code requires amenities to be available. The problem is that it does not happen. I do not know if this is news to the Government, but when it makes laws it has to have a regime to support them. We cannot just write them, file them in a bottom drawer somewhere and hope that people know about them. We have to have regimes to enforce what the law is.

It is not as though real examples have not been brought forward of areas that this is not happening in. That is exactly what the ETU campaign is doing. It is not good enough to say, "If you have some information, why don't you bring it forward?" The ETU has done exactly that, and that is what the motion was about. That is occurring, yet the facilities are not being made available. To be clear, we are busy enough trying to figure out how the Government stuffed up the public transport network so badly. The union movement is doing its job raising these issues and bringing them to the attention of Parliament. The Government is not even supporting the motion, and the suggestion is that it is good enough. It is not good enough. This is not something that has no consequence; it has real consequence.

The NSW Women's Strategy states that the Government wants to get more women into trades and onto construction sites. The lack of amenities is a genuine and major barrier to that. If someone is turning up to any workplace in the country and does not have somewhere to cleanly and safely go to the toilet, that is a problem. The reality is that for some women it is embarrassing to talk about getting their period when they did not expect it, bleeding through their clothes and having to go home because they did not have a change of clothes there and there were no adequate facilities. That is embarrassing. It is embarrassing to not have someone who you can ask for a tampon. It is embarrassing to have to think, "There are no other women here. What am I going to do? Can I get to the chemist?" They get the guts to raise it with their union and say that this is a real problem that is stopping them from wanting to work on a construction site, and the union says that it will raise it on their behalf. It does that, it causes the motion to be brought and the response that it gets is that if there is a problem, take it to SafeWork. It is not good enough. If we want to change this, we need to be proactive and have an enforcement regime to make sure it happens.

WORKSITE FEMALE AMENITIES

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (13:25): I take note of the answer regarding women's toilets on construction sites. I begin by making it clear, as the Minister did, that every member supports women having access to toilets on construction sites. The motion last night, and the Government's approach to it, was not in conflict with that position. The statement expressed how that issue should be addressed. I congratulate the Hon. Rose Jackson and the Labor Party on making up with the Electrical Trades Union [ETU]. It nearly destroyed two Labor governments. Many of us, including the Hon. Walt Secord, will remember the Carr premiership almost being torn apart and him having to be smuggled in through the basement into this building. A second Premier, Morris Iemma, was torn to pieces by the ETU. This is why The Greens keep moving these motions. Obviously the Opposition is making up, which is nice to see.

We are all in agreement on the need for women's toilets. ETU surveys have found that about 80 per cent of women feel that they have work-related issues that differ from their male colleagues. Clearly, there is a big cultural issue that the ETU and everyone in the industry needs to work on. Eighty-five per cent of women indicated that they have difficulty obtaining appropriately fitting work attire, and 51 per cent reported that they had been

subject to bullying or harassment that they believed was gender related. These are the issues that ETU surveys are telling us about, and we want to get on with the job of helping women in construction in all of these areas. We do not want to get stuck on the Labor Party politicising women's toilets. Members opposite feel that they did not get enough out of it last night, so they have brought it back and tried to spend question time today politicising women's toilets when everybody is on the same page on the issue and wanting to step out more broadly.

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (13:27): Firstly, I touch on the answers given by the Minister for Finance and Small Business about Small Business Month, which is incredibly important. If there was ever time that Small Business Month was important, it is right now. Only yesterday I mentioned in a question to the small business Minister that small business confidence at the moment is at a record high of plus 29. It is an important time to showcase our small businesses, whether they are in the city or in the bush. As the Minister highlighted yesterday, the recent data that was released by MYOB shows that EFTPOS machines are tapping and zapping away. They are incredibly busy. That is fantastic because we need our small businesses to be busy, we need them to re-engage their workforces, we need them to employ people and we need them to invest into their business and into our economy.

If there was ever an important time for the Government to support small business and to showcase Small Business Month, it is right now. The Minister and the Hon. Scott Farlow highlighted earlier today the awesome uptake of the Dine & Discover voucher, saying that an average \$25 voucher is generating \$41 in total customer spend. We are talking about \$450 million. The vouchers will benefit small businesses in Small Business Month, which is fantastic. The Minister highlighted the important theme of the month, being "Rebuild, Recharge, Renew". I applaud the Minister for all the work that he is doing in his portfolio around Small Business Month. I also want to touch on the question and some of the commentary from the Hon. Walt Secord around the Sydney Film Festival. He turns up here—

The Hon. Walt Secord: The Premier got booed. He got hissed.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: He turns up here talking about booing. The only people that love booing are the members of the Labor Party. All they do is turn up in this Chamber and whinge and whine. They are a big pack of negative Nellys. All they do is look at the negative in every situation. I sometimes wonder why they do not turn up in this Chamber and support small business and support New South Wales, but they do not. What I want to see from the Australian Labor Party is more cheering for New South Wales and more cheering for small business. Less booing from the Australian Labor Party and more cheering. Maybe Government members can give those opposite a few lessons on how to cheer more and boo less. I want a lot less booing from members of the Labor Party. I also wanted to speak to the questions directed to and the answers given by the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, in particular around the mental— *[Time expired.]*

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

Motion agreed to.

Deferred Answers

ANIMAL FRIENDLY DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE REFUGES

In reply to **The Hon. EMMA HURST** (20 October 2021).

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts)—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

On 19 October 2021, the New South Wales Government announced \$484.3 million over four years in new investment in responding to domestic and family violence.

This included \$426.6 million over four years to expand core and cluster to deliver and operate around 75 additional women's refuges, almost doubling current capacity, that support women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Suitability for family pets will be part of the design considerations of each of the new refuges. A stakeholder consultation and co-design process in early 2022 will inform the design.

COOLER CLASSROOMS PROGRAM

In reply to **The Hon. WALT SECORD** (21 October 2021).

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning)—The Minister provided the following response:

The Cooler Classrooms Program is a \$500 million five-year investment to deliver cooling, heating and fresh air ventilation systems to more than 900 New South Wales public schools. This is the first dedicated program to support installation of air conditioning in New South Wales public schools, with priority given to schools in the hottest parts of the State.

More than 600 schools with a mean maximum January temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and above were automatically eligible for the program.

Schools with a mean maximum January temperature below 30 degrees Celsius were invited to submit an application to the Cooler Classrooms Fund. These applications have been assessed and schools approved for delivery have been notified. Should further schools be approved for delivery they will be advised.

Eleven schools applied to both Round 1 and Round 2 of the Cooler Classrooms Fund. The applications were considered and a scope of works approved for delivery.

As at the end of September, more than 4,500 classrooms and 300 libraries have been delivered as part of this historic investment.

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

In reply to **The Hon. MARK LATHAM** (21 October 2021).

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts)—The Minister provided the following response:

Organisational policies, training programs and events offered to public sector employees are matters for the head of an agency.

BANKSIA MENTAL HEALTH UNIT

In reply to **The Hon. WALT SECORD** (21 October 2021).

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women)—The Minister provided the following response:

Minister Anderson wrote to Minister Hazzard on 2 September 2021, requesting additional acute child and adolescent mental health beds be included in the new Banksia Unit. Minister Anderson has also written to my office at various times this year to make representation on behalf of his constituents regarding their experience at the current Banksia Mental Health Unit, including on 16 February and the 10 August 2021.

In 2018, Clinical Services Planning [CSP] for the New England region of Hunter New England Local Health District, including the Banksia Unit started, and has involved extensive consultation with more than 350 staff, consumers and community members.

NSW Health used the current National Mental Health Service Planning Framework to model likely future demand for, and recommended mix of, mental health services including acute beds to 2030-31.

The modelling for the Clinical Service Plan indicated that the district and the New England catchment have adequate mental health adult acute care beds (especially beds for people aged 18 to 64 years) to meet current and expected demand by 2030-31.

The modelling also identified that the district will require dedicated older persons mental health acute beds (especially beds for people aged 65 years and over) by 2030-31. Therefore, the Banksia redevelopment includes eight additional beds that can support older person's mental health

Minister Hazzard and I also met with Minister Anderson and representatives from Hunter New England Local Health District on 1 November 2021 to discuss the planned beds for the new unit.

As agreed at that meeting, the district will also consider other design options to enable additional flexibility to support increased numbers of children and adolescents at the new Banksia Unit.

It is also important to note that over the next 10 years, in line with contemporary national and international models of care, the district will continue to transition consumers from hospital to community-based care where appropriate, which will improve access to adult acute beds.

The district is confident the new Banksia Unit, as part of a district-wide network of mental health services, will address likely future demand for mental health services including acute beds, in the region to 2030-31.

It should also be noted that any changes currently under consideration to the Banksia Mental Health unit scope may affect the current timeline for the build.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): A couple of members have asked about the tie I am wearing today. This tie was given to me by Dr John Kaye a long time ago. I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 3.00 p.m.

Private Members' Statements

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Hon. LOU AMATO (15:01): During these uncertain times the world has experienced much sadness. Of particular sadness is the tragedy of suicide. Suicide remains the leading cause of death for Australians between the ages of 15 and 44. The tragedy of suicide is not limited to the victim; it also creates unbearable suffering for family and friends. What makes suicide so painful is that it is entirely preventable. Ultimately, the families and friends of the victim spend the rest of their days questioning why they could not see the signs. Coming to terms

with the knowledge that a loved one's suffering was so great that in their minds all options for repose were extinguished and all hope lost is possibly one of the greatest tragedies imaginable. The current world pandemic has placed insurmountable pressures on many people. Fear of the pandemic, isolation due to lockdowns and loss of income have taken many people to the edge of endurance. Although we cannot wholly assuage the sufferings of pandemics, bushfires, droughts and floods, as a people we must work together to seek out the ills of our times and, where possible, find ways to lessen suffering and hardship.

I applaud the work of the mental health Minister, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, in her great initiative to combat the tragedy of suicide. The creation of Safe Haven spots for those who find themselves on the road to despair is commendable. Our goal is to get through the pandemic and maintain the wellbeing of the people of our State. The creation of Safe Haven spots are an additional tool in the Government's Towards Zero Suicides program. The Safe Haven spots initiative provides for suicide prevention outreach teams to be established in every local health district across the State to support people in suicidal distress, providing rapid mobile outreach support to people experiencing a crisis.

Thoughts of suicide can be triggered by a painful experience such as a divorce, unemployment, retirement or death of a loved one. Those mobile teams will support individuals in the places where they live. The teams combine clinical expertise and lived experience of suicide. They care for people at or near their home, ensuring they stay connected with family, friends and other valuable support networks. The New South Wales Government is actively working towards zero suicide. The new Safe Haven spots program is a great step forward in reducing the tragedy of suicide.

WESTERN SYDNEY JOBS

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (15:04): Last month Professor Phillip O'Neill from Western Sydney University presented a paper entitled "Jobs/Housing Imbalances in Western Sydney". The research confirms that despite the let-her-rip housing and population boom from 2014 to 2019, the total number of jobs accessible for western Sydney workers is again unacceptably low. Effectively, that boom has no enduring positive legacy. Overall, job numbers are insufficient, including for the region's rising number of graduates.

The continuing concentration of graduate jobs in the Parramatta and Sydney CBDs means ongoing car dependency and the daily grind of long commutes. Training and access problems mean continued jobs inequality, especially for women and young people. The fragile labour market in western Sydney is changing. During the boom two sectors dominated: construction jobs for men, and care and social assistance jobs for women. Professor O'Neill's paper states, "Bung on a boom, especially one driven by record population growth, and jobs spring up in construction. But they disappear just as readily when the boom is over."

The major jobs growth for women has been in the low-wage area of health care and social assistance, in particular the Certificate III and IV workers engaged in child care, aged care and disability support. Being a professional in the community and disability sector is not all about being nice or caring. It requires doing the job at best-practice standards, like every other professional. This sector is critical and is underpinned by Federal Government funding, which has a large impact on low-wage outcomes. The other important growth sector has been transport and logistics, particularly in areas such as Blacktown.

The challenge is to ensure there are jobs in western Sydney for truck drivers and e-commerce warehouse staff, as well as jobs requiring advanced skills in logistics, rather than have those jobs grow elsewhere—to the east or offshore. I believe that will be the key challenge in the development of Western Sydney Airport [WSA]. When it opens, supposedly in late 2026, WSA will not have a freight rail line, only a corridor and a vague promise. The final paragraph of Professor O'Neill's paper states, "New housing, big item infrastructure and folders of MOUs for the dream of an Aerotropolis all have their place. But so much more needs to be done."

HUNTING

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (15:07): I am happy to report to the House that hunting is in terminal decline. In 2014 academics Finch and Murray estimated the number of recreational hunters in Australia at 300,000, well down from 900,000 in 2002. Those who engage in this blood sport represent only 1 per cent of Australians. Perhaps it is no coincidence that that is the same percentage of people with a psychopathic disorder in the general population. The current statistical trajectory shows that within a generation hunting will be perceived as a deviant activity. That is despite the best efforts of the hunting lobby to promote hunting as a noble endeavour. Indeed, in the near future the practice of wall-mounting taxidermied heads may result in a police report and a search warrant to examine the contents of the basement.

In the modern world where plant-based food is cheap, plentiful and easy to procure, why would anyone choose to hunt? One oft-cited reason is to "commune" with nature and enjoy the thrill of the chase, but that could be satisfied by snapping a photo, not blasting the head off an animal. Another discredited justification is

environmental protection. However, the Invasive Species Council has dismissed the argument that recreational hunters are conservationists. In a 2002 study Clifton and Flynn found that hunters are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour, like property damage, and more likely to harm animals. I am reminded of the words of the great poet William Blake:

Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear

The uncomfortable truth is that, stripped of all the confected reasons for hunting, we are left with what is called the "dark triad", a trio of negative personality traits—narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy—that are linked to the harming of others, including animals. Trophy hunting is a classic example of narcissistic behaviour in those with an inflated view of themselves and an obsession for self-promotion. Machiavellianism is the tendency to engage in manipulative, exploitative behaviour. Psychopathy concerns the inability to experience empathy or remorse. Social media has made it so much easier for "dark triad" hunters to show off, boasting of their triumphs of extreme animal cruelty. I foresee a time when my crossbench colleagues will quietly drop the word "shooter" from their party name. There will be no more big-game hunting and no more majestic bull elephants slaughtered for bragging rights and photo opportunities.

CHILDREN IN CUSTODY

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (15:10): As of today there are roughly 172 young people detained in Youth Justice centres in New South Wales. Of those held in Youth Justice centres 109 are on remand. While that may not seem like a lot—and it is encouraging to know that the number of children held in custody has reduced over the past five years—it is not a number we should be proud of. In fact, New South Wales has the largest number of young people detained compared with other States and Territories in Australia. Of particular concern is that 45 per cent of those held in custody are First Nations young people. Recent data suggests that 63.9 per cent of young people held in custody in 2019 went on to reoffend within the next 12 months. That is much higher than the figure for adults in custody, with 42.4 per cent convicted of another offence within the next 12 months.

We all need to be held accountable for our actions, and that includes young people. However, we need to ensure that we are properly supporting young people who are in trouble to get back on track rather than, unintentionally or otherwise, leaving them in the too-hard basket. Mistakes and bad choices do not have to determine the future life direction of young people who are already in trouble. We need to continue to better understand the reasons that lead young people to commit criminal offences and activities. The 2015 Young People in Custody Health Survey reported that 48 per cent of detainees were exposed to at least one traumatic event in their young lives. It went on to highlight that almost all—94 per cent—of those in custody have reading comprehension difficulties, as well as suffering from a range of attention and behavioural disorders and substance or alcohol-related disorders, or experiencing high levels of anxiety. What this demonstrates is that young people come into the justice system under already challenging circumstances. It is the responsibility of the Government and members of Parliament to ensure they have every opportunity to overcome those challenges and reform their lives for the better.

To improve the lives of young people who find themselves in custody, policy initiatives must go to the heart of what got them there. We should focus on programs that will support young people through their trauma and mental health issues, as well as facilitate them achieving better educational outcomes and attainment. Furthermore, we need to ensure that young people stay connected to their friends and families or, if that is not appropriate or in their best interests, a long-term support network. Most importantly, we should look to invest in and expand diversionary approaches to keep young people from ever coming into contact with the justice system. If we provide support early enough, we can change the lives of young people in custody for the better—or ideally before they even get to that point. I take this opportunity to thank all of the people who work in Youth Justice NSW caring for young people in detention across six centres in New South Wales. Their work is critical to setting young people on the right course and to leave custody in a better place than when they arrived.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (15:13): The latest Ipsos Issues Monitor shows that housing affordability is now the number one concern for people in New South Wales. You would have to be living under a rock not to notice the stratospheric rise of property prices in Sydney. What is less widely known is that there has also been a dramatic decrease in housing affordability in regional New South Wales. Housing affordability is an issue that affects all people in our State, whether they live in our cities or in our regions. Home ownership levels amongst younger Australians are at their lowest since the 1950s, with young families finding it harder and harder to save for a deposit. Sydney's median house price is now \$1.3 million, which is a jump of \$308,000 over the past 12 months or \$843 a day. That has meant that for the average family in the 25-to-34 age group the time taken to save for a deposit has increased from six years in 2013 to now nine years.

Desperate to get onto the property ladder, young people are taking out massive amounts of debt. The average new mortgage has grown by \$120,000 in the past 12 months, now sitting at \$731,600. I certainly would not want to be in their shoes when interest rates go up, and they will go up. When they do, thousands of young families will find themselves saddled with a massive debt, putting the family budget under immense stress. However, the people most impacted by the rising costs of housing are the battlers: the single mums, the elderly, the disabled or those just down on their luck. They are the real faces of the housing affordability crisis in New South Wales. As more and more people find themselves renting, those who are less well-off are being squeezed out of the private rental market and into social housing.

The only problem is that there is not enough social housing being built. Through no fault of their own, working families on modest incomes are finding that the ladder of opportunity is being kicked out from under them by the soaring costs of housing. This crisis is not confined to Sydney. The internal migration of Australians away from major cities to the regions has crowded locals out of the market. The rental vacancy rate in the regions is less than 1 per cent. People are living in caravan parks and tents because of the lack of rental accommodation. This is simply not good enough for a First World country like Australia. We must act now to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society have access to adequate housing. I urge the Government to make housing affordability a top priority.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES SMALL, A FORMER MEMBER FOR MURRAY

The Hon. WES FANG (15:16): The Murray electorate lost a true local champion on 29 October when James Small, a former member for Murray and passionate advocate for his community, sadly passed away. Born in Bondi in 1933, Jim, as he became known, was the third child of Ivan and Phoebe Small. From an early age the values of family, community and a strong work ethic were instilled in Jim, values which he carried throughout his entire life. Moving to Deniliquin as a young boy, Jim went into the National Service before taking up a role as a bank clerk and then building a successful farming operation. With his wife, Judy, and four children, Jim was heavily involved in the Deniliquin community, including the Rice Marketing Board, the Deniliquin Hospital board, the Deniliquin Nursing Home Foundation and the Deniliquin housing commission. Outside of his formal roles, Jim was an enthusiastic advocate for his local schools to ensure that country kids received the same educational opportunities as those in the city.

It was not long before Jim's love for the Murray drew him to politics. With Tim Fischer contesting the Federal seat of Farrer, Jim was preselected for The Nationals to contest the vacant seat in Murray and was successfully elected in 1985. Over his 14-year career as the member for Murray, Jim fought day in, day out for his community. He continued the hard work of his predecessor and was well respected across the aisle and by his people. On retirement, not content with relaxing back on the farm, Jim famously rode his pushbike to Sydney in 1993 to promote the Sydney Olympics and around Australia in 1999, undertaking a massive fundraising effort for cancer, kidney and heart research. He was 65 years old when he completed his "Tour d'Australie". In more recent years, Jim and Judy returned in their caravan to towns he briefly visited on that marathon ride. On behalf of the National Party and this place, I extend my condolences to Jim's family for their loss. He was an incredible man and a stalwart of our party. He will be missed. Vale, Jim.

ANTI-PALESTINIANISM

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (15:19): The foundation of our democracy is a commitment to the inherent and inalienable rights of all people to education, housing, safety and freedom from vilification. Australia has a proud history in the formation of these rights at an international level. A former Labor leader and Minister for External Affairs, Dr H. V. Evatt, oversaw the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the President of the United Nations General Assembly for its third session. The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations captures the spirit and conviction motivating his historic commitment. It states:

We, the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained ...

This is why I have been a vocal critic of the treatment of Palestinian people by sections of the international community. I am deeply troubled by the ongoing vilification and oppression of Palestinian communities and the forces which coalesce to marginalise their suffering. The Arab Australian Federation's September statement on anti-Palestinianism highlights that:

Blatant prejudice is evident when Palestinians, engaged in a peaceful pursuit of nationhood, are depicted as terrorists, stigmatised on religious or ethnic grounds or characterised as an inferior people.

The statement outlines eight principles to combat this trend in accordance with international law. Principle One states:

Anti-Palestinianism exists when Palestinian people are denied rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ...

Principle Two highlights that Palestinian people are entitled to their own State under international law. Principle Three notes that Palestinians are entitled to legitimate means of protest and advocacy for independence. Principle Four asserts the right of Palestinian people to representation in multinational forums such as the International Court of Justice. Principle Five states:

Palestinians have the right, in accordance with international law, to engage in resistance against unlawful policies ...

Principle Six notes that the UN's recognition of the State of Israel in 1949 was conditional on Israel's acceptance of the right of return. Principle Seven asserts that Palestinians have the right to their history, including their right to commemorate Nakba Day. Principle Eight affirms that international law brands collective punishment a war crime, such that recriminations against Palestinian communities for the actions of individuals are unlawful. I endorse these principles and the Arab Australian Federation's campaign against anti-Palestinianism. Human rights must not be applied or enjoyed selectively; they are a commitment to all people, regardless of their wealth or geopolitical power.

ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (15:21): This morning, outside Parliament House, I met with the family of Mark Mason. Mark Mason's family members came outside Parliament House again, as they have many times over the past 11 years, because today marks the eleventh anniversary of Mark Mason's death, when he was shot to death by police in his home, in Collarenebri. Mark Mason was a proud Gomeroi man. He was in his home when five police officers entered. He was capsicum-sprayed. He was tasered. He was drive-stunned. He was subdued by the five officers. Then, eventually, he was shot twice and killed. The forensic evidence suggests that one of those shots was in his back. True it is that, in his home, he was trying to defend himself. That is true. But the question is how could any system justify five police officers entering a First Nations man's home, capsicum-spraying him, tasering him, drive-stunning him, subduing him and then shooting him to death and seeing no consequences. That is exactly what happened.

This morning his daughter, Darlene, who is a brave and strong Gomeroi woman, stood outside and demanded justice for the death of her dad. She did so in the context of two other Aboriginal deaths in custody in this State this week. There was a death in custody at Shortland Correctional Centre on Sunday—another hanging in a prison. When will we get rid of the hanging points? When will we accept that the criminal justice system is a place of enormous peril for First Nations people? Then, just on Monday this week, there was another death by shooting of an Aboriginal man in his home. What we heard from Mark Mason's family this morning is that these constant reports of deaths of other First Nations people traumatises the family again. And it does not happen only once a year. It happens repeatedly, month in, month out, re-traumatising First Nations families. For First Nations people we do not have a criminal justice system in this State. First Nations people do not call the police to come and help, because some of the most dangerous people in their lives, in their families' lives and in their homes are the New South Wales police. It is about time we saw that and recognised and addressed this fundamental racial bias in our criminal justice system. May there be justice for Mark and strength to his family.

POLITICAL BIPARTISANSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (15:25): In the near future this Chamber will honour a woman of utmost intellect and integrity, a person I respected and adored. The Hon. Virginia Chadwick's rich legacy will be permanently commemorated in this Chamber with the unveiling of a marble bust, completing the collection in the Chamber and ensuring that her achievements will never be forgotten. Virginia was an intuitive Liberal and a great warrior for women. She used every opportunity she had to make a difference in that space. I look forward to her likeness gazing down upon this Chamber and physically reminding us of all that is good in politics, to never forget or give up on the finer aspirations that draw us together here, to be true to ourselves and to respect each other for the diverse life experiences each of us brings to the Chamber table.

When she was approaching retirement from this place, she reflected, saying, "There are two types of people in politics. It's the nice people and the nasty, and they are spread across all parties. As parliamentarians we each are gifted the opportunity to seek out the nice people and work across partisan barriers to do truly great things." I have seen many examples of that in this place. I see the Hon. Damien Tudehope reach out to like-minded members of other parties. From a different perspective I see the Hon. Trevor Khan do the same. Irrespective of whether I agree with their goals, this place is better for the idea that we can be proactive as parliamentarians working to better the community, whilst respecting the legitimate bonds of partisanship. We all serve two masters: the parties who preselected us and the citizens who pay us. There is always opportunity to give our best service to both, to be good politicians and good parliamentarians.

Recently both the Government and the Opposition experienced changes of leadership, and, in keeping with the worst traditions of the Rum State, we have stepped over the issue of fallen leaders. I feel that this is one thing we can improve upon, because I know that those former leaders—Gladys Berejiklian, John Barilaro, Jodi McKay and Adam Searle—gave their parties and their communities the very best they could and their retirements from office were in circumstances beyond their immediate control.

This is politics, of course, and they all accepted it with composure and dignity, which in itself is a great service to our democracy. I just believe that there are significant personal costs in politics, which are painfully on display in these tumultuous moments. I simply take this opportunity to thank those members for their service, to acknowledge that each had conviction and purpose, that their families will have been profoundly impacted and that this will have added to their burdens during the leadership transitions. I have often reflected upon our culture of stepping over our fallen tall poppies. I find it confronting, and the safest course has been a kind of deafening silence. But perhaps we can do better than this. For my part I thank the former leaders of both parties. I acknowledge their service. I know that I speak for many colleagues in this place.

THELMA MCCARTHY, OAM

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:28): I pay tribute to Mrs Thelma McCarthy, OAM, who was recently awarded life membership of the Australian Labor Party. The award was enthusiastically presented by the Federal Labor leader, Anthony Albanese, in Armidale. All those who have had the good fortune to meet Thelma know that she is a proud Labor woman and a champion of the New England region. Thelma is just a few years shy of 100 years old, but her passion and zeal for the community have never dimmed. A World War II veteran, she joined the RAAF at the age of 17, during the darkest days of the war, just after the bombing of Darwin. As one of the nation's first female telegraphers, Thelma quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. Based in Canberra, she met not only her future husband, Bill, but also a young navigator by the name of Gough Whitlam. The McCarthys and the Whitlams were to remain lifelong friends. Thelma and her fellow telegraphers also had the good fortune of dining with Prime Minister John Curtin at the Lodge, followed by a personal tour, which would be a memorable experience for anyone.

Bill and Thelma married towards the end of the war and settled in the New England region where they ran a grazing property. In 1978 Bill won the then Country Party electorate of Armidale, with the first of the two "Wranslides", and then successfully won the larger electorate of Northern Tablelands in 1981. Bill McCarthy resigned due to ill health on 22 April 1987 and died three days later. Showing great courage and her characteristic steely resolve, Thelma stood as the Labor candidate in the resulting by-election, narrowly losing to the National Party candidate. She would have been an outstanding member of Parliament. It is amazing to think that in 1987 she would have been only the seventh female member of the other place if successful. Thelma maintained an active presence in the community as a member on the NSW Bicentennial Council, where she was instrumental in improving the Armidale arboretum as a bicentennial gift to the region.

Later she was an active chair of the New England Regional Art Museum, one of the finest museums in regional New South Wales. She also served on the NSW Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing. Age has barely dimmed Thelma's energy, and she recently featured in a *Weekend Australian Magazine* story as a leading member of the local Anglican congregation and for standing up to the local bishop, who wished to bar the long-serving church organist from church services because he was married to another man. I recommend members read the article if they have not already done so. It is a reflection of the fire and passion for justice that still stirs in that grand dame of Armidale. Thelma's life membership in the Labor Party reflects a life dedicated to serving the community, also reflected in her receipt of an Order of Australia for her service to the Armidale community and New South Wales. I wish Thelma and her family all the best. On behalf of the House, I thank her for her selfless service through a long and illustrious life.

NATIVE FOREST BIOMASS

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (15:31): I note a recent decision by the New South Wales Government environment Minister, Matt Kean, who made it clear that native forest biomaterial in New South Wales will not receive any government funding for the production of hydrogen in New South Wales. It is an important step to make sure that our forests do not become a source of biomass for the industry, which should be genuinely renewable if it is going to proceed at all. I congratulate the Minister and the Government on that decision. I look forward to future decisions making clear that we will not allow our precious forests to be burnt for electricity in any way, shape or form.

Motions

ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (15:32): I oppose the motion moved by the Hon. Mark Pearson. It betrays an ignorance of the fact that, far from agriculture having a negative impact on the environment, it has the opportunity to be at the forefront of change and play a leading role in helping achieve net zero targets. Industry players are supportive of net zero by 2050. The National Farmers' Federation has thrown its weight behind the target, the Cattle Council of Australia supports the red meat industry becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and net zero is a New South Wales Government target. Supporting agriculture and net zero targets is not mutually exclusive. For example, the beef sector has more than halved its methane emissions since 2005, and is one of the few sectors to have delivered reductions over time.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries is actively working hand in glove with primary producers to achieve that, which can be done by developing and maintaining systems that track climatic and production conditions across the State; identifying pathways to lower emissions in agriculture and addressing supply chain signals by breeding for lower methane in cattle and sheep and reducing nitrous oxide emissions in cropping; and assessing the scope for emissions reduction options in the agriculture sector. I am glad that the Hon. Mark Pearson raised the issue of land management in his motion because that is exactly what our farmers are doing. In fact, a recent report released by the New South Wales Government revealed that more than 43,000 hectares of regulated rural land—for those who do not get out to the regions much, that is equivalent to more than 225 times the size of Centennial Park—has been set aside in perpetuity to promote native vegetation growth across the State. That is a result of the Government's land management laws.

Let me be clear: Farmers are the best land managers we have. They are also our best environmentalists. Farmers utilising the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code to remove native vegetation set aside 12 times more land in perpetuity to actively promote biodiversity and conservation. I repeat: Landholders are our best environmentalists. We need to do the work to get regulatory frameworks right now and we need agriculture front and centre now. If farmers are cut out, then farmers are cut off from the opportunity to be at the policy table. The Government opposes the motion because agriculture can play a leading role in cutting emissions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:35): I thank the Hon. Mark Pearson for the opportunity to pay tribute to the incredible Sir David Attenborough and his advocacy for the urgent need to take action on climate change. Over the course of eight decades Sir David Attenborough has dedicated his life, energy, passion and often his personal safety to showcase the world's natural environment to all of us. He has an uncanny ability to spark a shared passion in everyone who has contact with his work. For someone of my vintage, David Attenborough documentaries opened up the world for us. Because of his incredible work, Attenborough has had three plants, a spider, a snail, a grasshopper, a frog, a lizard, a marsupial lion and a shark-like fish named after him.

More recently, Sir Attenborough has dedicated himself to showing us all what is at stake if we do not take urgent action on climate change and protect the biodiversity of our natural environment. In doing so, Sir David Attenborough motivates us with enduring hope. In Glasgow last week he urged world leaders to turn tragedy into triumph, and urged us to be motivated by hope rather than fear in our avoidance of climate change disaster. I put on record some of his words, which are extremely important. He talked about how predictable seasons and reliable weather have been the foundation of what the human race has been able to achieve over thousands of years. He said that the reality is "we are in trouble" and the stability we are relying on "is breaking down". But, he went on to say that "affordable, clean energy, healthy air and enough food to sustain us all" is within our reach, and "nature is a key ally" if we do that. It is also part of a more equal world. The motivation, as he has always said, should be hope and not fear. He left the Conference of the Parties 26 with this thought:

If, working apart, we are a force powerful enough to destabilise our planet. Surely, working together, we are powerful enough to save it.

Those are incredibly important words. I indicate that Labor does not support paragraphs (2), (3) and (4) of the motion because they go far further than the issues raised by David Attenborough and, importantly, they do not speak to Labor's position on how we address climate change in this State. We have foreshadowed that we will introduce a bill to legislate our emissions reductions targets and set up a net zero commission to oversight that and help us work together on that issue. The Hon. Mark Pearson's motion is ahead of where Labor is in relation to that, but that does not diminish our commitment to making change. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) to (4).

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (15:38): On behalf of The Greens I speak in support of the motion, with an amendment, which I will come to. I thank the Hon. Mark Pearson for bringing this important issue before the House. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas. It is around 84 times more powerful than carbon dioxide at warming the atmosphere when assessed over a 20-year period. It is a live fast, die young gas. Once it is released into the atmosphere, it traps the heat far more efficiently than carbon dioxide until, over the course of 10 years, it is broken down through a chemical process into carbon dioxide and water. Australia has ratified the Paris Agreement to hold global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's

special report on global warming raised the alarm of the tipping points that will occur if we breach that target. We are barrelling towards overshooting that target, so the importance of driving down high-potency methane emissions is particularly critical.

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing the agriculture sector in New South Wales. An environmentally sustainable system of agriculture following regenerative agriculture practices is essential to food security, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation. Farmers and graziers must be assisted to adopt ecologically sustainable agricultural practices and rapidly phase out worst practices. In some instances, that may include a progressive reduction in herd sizes. The co-benefit of adopting regenerative land management practices will be, where land use practices may have previously been responsible for soil degradation, these once degraded lands and habitats can be restored as carbon sinks. Most methane from agriculture—biogenic methane—comes from the breakdown of plants that, when they were growing, would pull carbon dioxide from the air. Farmers and the agriculture industry play a vital role in balancing the impact of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere and will require support along with clear guidelines.

In contrast, the burning and extraction of fossil fuels releases into the atmosphere additional greenhouse gases that had otherwise been separate to the carbon cycle of plant growth and consumption. Releasing this additional methane into the air causes an extra burden on the carbon budget in addition to the immediate effects of the high-potency methane emissions. In recent years agriculture and associated land clearing released around 115 million tonnes of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere per year. In comparison, burning fossil fuels for energy released around 400 million tonnes of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere each year.

Over the past six years, methane emissions from this sector have increased due to expansion of the natural gas industry and associated fugitive emissions—those that escape or are released during gas production and transport. Coal mining is also culpable for an unacceptable level of fugitive methane emissions, with active and inactive coalmines leaking tens of thousands of tonnes of methane into the atmosphere each year. The amendments we are making to this motion reflect this reality in a more nuanced way. They recognise the fact that a holistic approach to emissions reduction must be taken across industries. There is little point in reducing herd sizes if there is no regenerative practice in place to restore the quality of the land to draw down further carbon emissions. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (4) (b) and (c) and inserting instead:

- (b) assist the agriculture industry to improve land use and food systems in New South Wales through reforms along the lines of regenerative agriculture and agroecology including where appropriate a progressive reduction in herd numbers;
- (c) create strong and enforceable standards to regulate biogenic methane emissions in line with the reductions required to meet the goals of the Global Methane Pledge;
- (d) commit to a moratorium on new coal, oil and gas projects in order to arrest and reverse the rise in methane emissions that are a result of the expansion of fossil fuel industries;
- (e) create strong and enforceable standards to regulate fugitive emissions from active and inactive coalmines and gas wells in line with the reductions required to meet the goals of the Global Methane Pledge; and
- (f) report to the House on what measures the Government will take across industries to reduce methane emissions by 2030.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I indicate at this stage that the Hon. Catherine Cusack is seeking the call and I suspect that Mr Justin Field will be seeking the call. The position is that we now have two amendments that cross over in the same area. I will stay in the chair for this part. I would anticipate putting Ms Abigail Boyd's amendment first. If it goes down, that sorts out the problem. If it gets up, I will then put the Hon. Penny Sharpe's amendment. I think it would have the effect of that amendment going down as well. Essentially the Labor amendment will override, because Ms Abigail Boyd's one only deals with paragraphs (b) and (c) and Labor seeks to take out the whole of paragraph (4). I have laid that on the table so there are no unintended consequences for anyone.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK (15:44): I disclose that I grew up on a beef property and my parents planted over 20,000 trees on that property over a 20-year period in order to address issues like environmental and soil degradation. We take a very proactive view that agriculture and the environment can coexist. I come from lived experience that that can be achieved. I echo the comments of the Hon. Penny Sharpe. David Attenborough is an absolute giant of our century. His name will be remembered in centuries to come, and his education and the journey he has taken us on has been remarkable. Nobody—least of all me—wants to be voting against David Attenborough. But in relation to this motion and the way it has been represented, particularly in relation to agriculture, I simply must object, and I will put some facts on the table.

First of all, the idea that we can reduce methane emissions by one-third by virtue of getting rid of meat—animal-based agriculture, which is the purpose of it—is nonsensical. Three-quarters of the methane emissions are from wetlands. They are naturally based. So even if we got rid of all of our human emissions we could not reduce

those emissions by a third. In relation to human emissions, 33 per cent are from fossil fuel use, 30 per cent are from animal agriculture and 15 per cent are from plant agriculture. Waste is 18 per cent and all other is 4 per cent. I am a huge fan of capturing methane from waste. I believe there is an enormous amount that can be done in that space and I have been working with farmers to offset those emissions, which is definitely the way to go. It is the constructive way to go in terms of maintaining our economy and maintaining a positive effort in this particular journey.

The idea that climate change is some kind of mandate for veganism is ludicrous. It is just nonsensical and all it does is aggravate and upset everybody who we need to get on board on this important journey. In fact, the whole tenure of the motion offends me because I feel like the Federal Government has taken a gigantic step forward. It is not what everybody wants and not as far as everybody wants but, my goodness me, I was elated when I saw they made that decision and went to Glasgow. I do not think this is at all in that spirit of building the consensus that we have the opportunity to build. Attacking our farmers in this way, with stuff that is factually incorrect, is very counter-productive on this issue.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (15:47): I think most vintages in this place have been touched in some way by the educational experience and the immersion of David Attenborough's films, in particular—and I am sure it was not him but the filmmakers and the production crews involved—the way he could take you into the natural environment and make you feel a part of those places that are actually vanishingly rare. This is one of the things. It makes it seem like it is everywhere but actually these special natural places are vanishingly rare, in large part because of human action, and that is what this motion is fundamentally about, what COP26 is fundamentally about and what the various motions that were before the climate change meeting were all about. I was frustrated that Australia was not more of a leader in Glasgow, not just on this question of the methane mandate to reduce methane by 30 per cent by 2030—and I assure the Hon. Catherine Cusack that we were talking about the human emissions there, absolutely recognising that there are natural methanes.

The Hon. Catherine Cusack: It is only 30 per cent. Even if you got rid of it—

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Of course it was not the suggestion that we were going to stop methane emissions from wetlands, but the reason that most countries in the world saw this as an important thing to do is because of the incredible potency of methane emissions and the fact that they are short lived. If we had dealt with this issue long before now, the urgency of trying to deal with human-caused methane emissions may not have been so great. But I agree with the Hon. Catherine Cusack's point. Having grown up in the cattle capital of Queensland, in Central Queensland, having had cattle myself—our family did—I do understand. I do not think we are going to revolutionise our food production systems in the window of time that will make the difference that we need. I do not want the agricultural question to be a distraction. I recognise that the industry is doing more than most. Not only can agriculture and the environment coexist; they must coexist.

This is a distraction from Australia's contribution to methane emissions through its fossil fuel sector. We have become the global leading exporter of liquefied natural gas in the past two decades. Time and again we are seeing that science has misread and totally underestimated the fugitive emissions from that industry. All of a sudden in the past two decades we have created this huge new pool of fugitive methane emissions, which are now making us a much bigger contributor to the global climate change problem than we were previously. I wish we would spend more time talking about that folly.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (15:50): I want to say a couple of things and I know it will not surprise a lot of members. I will pick up on something Mr Justin Field said that the environment and agriculture must coexist. I know the Hon. Mark Pearson is not going to be too happy about me saying this, but a large proportion of the population eat meat, and that will continue. We have to feed our population. I know he has a long-term goal to get us all to be vegan and eat plant-based products. There is a place for plant-based protein supplement foods, but agriculture and the environment must coexist. A range of actions already have been undertaken in the agricultural sector and I dare say more initiatives will be put in place. We only have to look at the great regenerative agriculture projects in New South Wales and Australia and talk to farmers who are quite actively engaging in the process right now.

It is easy to slag off the agricultural sector and say they are the demons of the world and environmental vandals, but that is not the case. People in the farming sector do not deserve to be slighted in that manner. We are all beholden to highlight where good work is being done. In my experience, the positives far outweigh the negatives in this area. Is it enough? I think all members would acknowledge there is a long way to go. In this space governments of all persuasions will pull the public policy levers to assist in that process. I do not think the big stick approach works. I have had the conversation with my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe a number of times around incentivising stewardship arrangements to reward and actively promote farmer engagement. We all must do the necessary work to ensure, first, that we provide our population with the food and fibre that is required and, second, that we enhance the environmental outcomes for the State and the world.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women) (15:53):

I make a brief contribution to debate on the motion. I want to acknowledge the Hon. Mick Veitch for his comments. In this place he often talks a lot of sense when it comes agriculture. I think that comes from his experience. I am one of the only members in this Chamber who currently works and lives on a property and is part of a family farming operation. I understand that we all come from different sides and have different views. I try at all times to be extremely tolerant, but I do not always succeed. This whole conversation to try to demonise farmers—to use the words of the Hon. Mick Veitch—is just terribly unfair. If farmers do not look after their land, their country and the animals that they produce, their businesses do not succeed. We have an amazing agricultural industry that has played such a vital role during COVID. People have been through such difficult times and now they are enjoying one of the most fabulous seasons imaginable.

I acknowledge there are alternatives such as plant-based products, but those plant-based products are made from crops that are also produced by farmers. It would be prudent in this place to acknowledge the incredible contribution that farmers make and how they actively look after their country and their animals. I would hate to see a place without farmers. I know the great work that they do and the belief and pride they have in their work. Sometimes I hope that they are not among the 60 people who occasionally watch this Chamber's sittings and hear themselves being demonised. To demonise them is not fair and it is not right.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (15:55): The Government will support the amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe and acknowledges the contributions of the Hon. Mick Veitch and the Hon. Catherine Cusack to the debate. Sir David Attenborough, as others have said, is a living legend. He certainly alerted and warned us about climate change way before Al Gore and The Greens in some of his earliest work on ice breaking up in Antarctica. One of the great things about Sir David Attenborough is he reaches a broad audience through his great personality and work in the media. Millions of people have come on board on the issue of climate change not because they have been lectured to but because they have been respected and brought into the debate. The Government will support the amendment and, if it is successful, the amended motion.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (15:56): I am very conscious of the time but, as other members have jumped up to talk about this great issue, I want to give a plug to some of the great work done by the CSIRO, because science is the answer to so many of the problems that are in front of us. Methane emissions are a huge problem.

The Hon. Mick Veitch: Seaweed for cattle.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN: I acknowledge the Hon. Mick Veitch's interjection. Feeding just five grams of a very specific species of seaweed per one kilogram of feed to cattle can reduce methane emissions by 80 per cent. So science is the answer, as it is with many of the problems before mankind. The CSIRO, as always, has come to the rescue. More people need to learn about that, especially if we are going to be told that we need to drastically change our diets, because nobody really wants to do that. Science is the solution.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (15:57): In reply: I welcome the robust debate. Obviously one of my roles and that of the Animal Justice Party is to cause a bit of a sting and get the conversation happening. I point out that Sir David Attenborough was very unpopular when he first began to talk about climate change. It was an inconvenient truth at the time, but it was the truth. I make it clear that even though the motion did have a little edge to it, it is not about demonising farmers. It is quite clear that we have to work with the people who are on the land and who have been part of the land for a long time, including Indigenous people. But as the Paris summit found, animal agriculture produces a greater assault on the climate than all of the transport systems around the world, and that was looking at all of the issues of animal agriculture. It is not about agriculture; it is about animal agriculture. We need to move away from the mass production of animal flesh in intensive livestock productions and all of the methane that that produces. The motion was purely about steering us away from that. I welcome the amendments. I will be supporting both sets of amendments to help the passage of this important motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The Hon. Mark Pearson has moved a motion, to which Ms Abigail Boyd and the Hon. Penny Sharpe have moved amendments. The question is that the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd be agreed to.

Amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd negatived.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: On behalf of the Hon. Robert Borsak: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1381 outside the order of precedence be postponed until a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: On behalf of the Hon. Robert Borsak: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1382 outside the order of precedence be postponed until a later hour.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

HAWKINS AND RUMKER COAL EXPLORATION AREAS

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1434 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (16:02): I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 14 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Regional NSW, the Treasurer, and Minister for Energy and Environment, or the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, relating to documents prepared concerning the Hawkins and Rumker coal exploration areas:

- (a) all documents disclosing advice prepared or provided by the Advisory Body for Strategic Release;
- (b) all documents disclosing reports prepared or provided by the Advisory Body for Strategic Release;
- (c) all documents disclosing reports prepared or provided by Resource Strategies Pty Ltd; and
- (d) 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.

This motion is pretty straightforward, as the documents are reports. There should not be a swathe of documents in the return to this call for papers. They relate to Advisory Body for Strategic Release reports and reports prepared by Resource Strategies Pty Ltd regarding the proposal for the Hawkins and Rumker coal exploration areas. The Opposition appreciates that at last week's estimates Minister Toole ruled out coal exploration and coalmining in those areas, but the reports are significant because they relate to the decision that has been made. Labor would like to have a look at the documents to see how they drove the decision of Government at the time. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (16:03): The Government opposes the motion because it is entirely redundant. The strategic release overview document states the following at paragraph 3 on page 6:

The Advisory Body will operate in a transparent manner and recommendations that it provides to the Minister for Resources will also be made publicly available after consideration by Cabinet.

A copy of the document is available on the Mining, Exploration and Geoscience website. Following Cabinet consideration of the potential Hawkins-Rumker release area, it is proposed to publish the Advisory Body for Strategic Release recommendation to the Deputy Premier, the preliminary regional issues assessment [PRIA] report, the resource assessment report and the commercial viability assessment report. That is in line with the approach followed recently after the PRIA examining potential areas for gas exploration in the Far West that were ruled out as part of the Future of Gas Statement. Despite the mover of the motion having been appraised of this, he is proceeding with the motion anyway. I suspect it is for someone in the other House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***HOUSING AND PROPERTY TAX REFORM**

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:06): I move:

That this House, to improve housing affordability and economic and employment growth, supports New South Wales making the transition to a new housing and property tax system whereby homebuyers are given a choice between paying stamp duty up front or making lower longer term annual property tax payments on their asset.

One of the foundation stones of good economic policy is choice. Choice and competition are the backbone of the workings of a market economy, driving productivity, economic growth and employment growth. It is unusual to find any aspect of economic policy where choice does not work. Other systems have tried to eliminate choice, and they did not come up all that flash. Choice tends to be a good thing in a liberal democracy and also in a market economy. One can only wonder why choice has not been embraced more fully by the major parties on both sides of this Parliament when it comes to stamp duty reform.

A model was developed by the Treasury under former Treasurer Dominic Perrottet to say that we should open up a second stream of consumer payment for homebuyers in New South Wales. The first stream, of course, is well known. It is a punitive, inefficient tax that limits residential and labour market mobility. It is the traditional stamp duty system. Documents produced by the Treasury show that the median Sydney dwelling price was \$970,000, with a stamp duty up front of \$39,000. In the couple of years since those figures were produced, the numbers have now grown to a median price of \$1.3 million and a median stamp duty, accordingly, of \$56,000. One could not imagine anything more punitive and restrictive for people getting into home ownership or moving from one home to another than an up-front payment of \$56,000 in the city in which this Parliament sits, with other adverse consequences for the rest of New South Wales.

The alternative that has been developed, the choice that has been proffered in the Treasury model, is a longer term and recurrent property tax payment on the unimproved capital value—a flat \$400 and 0.3 per cent of the unimproved capital value. On a block of land in Sydney with an unimproved capital value of \$600,000, that is about \$2,500 per annum. This is stretching out the level of payment so that, at a recurrent \$2,500, it would take 23 years to be the equivalent of the current median stamp duty payment. You do not need to be John Maynard Keynes to understand the benefits of this reform to housing affordability. Hopefully it was not KPMG that did the modelling at Treasury—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: It was.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I don't think it was.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: And they have done the secret consulting audit.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I don't know about that, but there are other reports that I will refer to.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: That is okay.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I have been scared off. I was making a joke, but the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has scared the pants off me. I turn to the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling [NATSEM], the credentials of which no-one can question. It is perhaps Australia's pre-eminent social and economic modeller, out of the University of Canberra. In 2020 NATSEM looked at the system in the Australian Capital Territory, where that government is pioneering this change in Australia. Over 20 years, it is replacing its stamp duty and insurance duty with a broad-based land tax through a general rate system. It has calculated an increase in the number of homebuyers under this new tax system of 5.4 per cent, so the new system does create extra home ownership.

The NATSEM report last year looked at first homebuyers, who would pay 4 per cent less tax in the longer term under the Territory system, and it found the new system to be more progressive, helping low income earners pay less on stamp duty and rates as a proportion of their income. Moreover, NATSEM found that there was a clear increase in the number of rental properties in the ACT. If someone moves from rental to home ownership, it takes some heat out of the rental market. It found that there were lower rent costs for three of the four lower income quintiles and higher for the highest quintile in the Territory. NATSEM concluded that rental prices for units show a decrease from 5 per cent to 16 per cent due to the reform. That is a big decrease in rents. We should not think of this reform as just being about home ownership; it also frees up room, diminishes demand in the rental market and puts downward pressure on rents, which one would automatically think the Australian Labor Party would embrace. I will come to that later.

The Hon. Rose Jackson: I can't wait.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: This is free research I am reading out for the shadow housing Minister. It is something from NATSEM that she has not read or considered to give her a policy for lower rents in Sydney

and throughout New South Wales. When I am doing the research for the student union, she should not scoff at it. My best advice to the shadow Minister is to lap it up, soak it up and reproduce it. The NATSEM result, unlike the modeller whose name we dare not speak, is regarded as statistically significant and robust. The Treasury progress paper in June this year had an interesting quote from the McKell Institute, which alerted me to something highly significant in this debate. Who would the McKell Institute be doing research for? They are the only researchers in New South Wales for the Labor Party. Again, they are much better credentialed than KPMG.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: That is true.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The shadow Treasurer is vouching for the credentials of the McKell Institute. What has the McKell Institute said about this reform? It has said that there would be a short-term price increase but overall there would be a net positive effect on housing affordability. The shadow Treasurer is scoffing, so I go to a key point. As I understand it, the Labor Party objection to the stamp duty reform is that it would bring more people into the housing ownership market and put some heat into it, causing prices to go up. If that is the Labor proposition, it would have to give up entirely on any form of housing affordability policy because, by definition, a housing affordability policy brings extra people into the home ownership market. That is the purpose of housing affordability. The Labor proposition, as I understand it—

The Hon. Rose Jackson: We don't have a proposition. They are the ones who are in government.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I have consulted widely with the member's colleagues, and I know that there is a proposition. The Labor proposition is that having more home owners is a bad thing and we should not do it. We cannot have extra housing affordability without more home owners. One follows the other like night follows day. More home owners equals housing affordability, but Labor does not want to have more home owners in the market because, it says, that will put heat in the market and prices will go up. Its own McKell Institute has said that the net positive effect on housing affordability is evident. It is hard to argue against your own research institute. There is the Have-a-looky Mookhey library upstairs. Maybe he is developing a think tank up there as well. I recommend that Labor does not reinvent the wheel but sticks to the McKell Institute think tank. I will not embarrass the shadow housing Minister by mentioning who was in charge of this McKell Institute research. Their credentials are well known and well established.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: That is fair.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That is taken as a fair point. I am upgrading from KPMG by the minute, aren't I? I am getting higher into the Labor hierarchy. The McKell Institute is, of course, highly significant. The Treasury paper goes on to say that the reform would cost significant amounts of revenue over the first 20 years. We know that the fiscal overhang is about \$2.5 billion per annum, which I will come back to later. It goes to the issue of the Commonwealth Productivity Commission report. This is highly significant. The stamp duty reform is not just about cheaper rentals and better housing affordability, it is also a significant micro-economic reform. The Productivity Commission in Canberra has found that 25 per cent of households say they will not move. They are scared off due to the costs associated with moving and the up-front impost of stamp duty.

We live in a world with a more mobile labour market; people are generally more mobile. We hear about the aging society, but the truth is that 25 per cent of people in New South Wales are scared of moving closer to their job to cut travelling time or moving closer to where their kids' school might be. Empty nesters are not downsizing because they are scared off by the inefficiency of punitive stamp duty. Giving home owners a choice is a very significant micro-reform. It would match housing mobility with what we know to be the labour market mobility and the aging society that means people need to downsize for reasons of housing asset efficiency. It is a significant micro-reform that some inside the Government have said would increase gross State product by \$11 billion.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: It is KPMG.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I said "some inside the Government". It would increase employment by 1.4 per cent, or 75,000 additional jobs, and increase the size of the economy by an extra \$3,300 per household. The report also says that long-term housing costs in New South Wales would reduce by 3 per cent to 4 per cent, which is supported by Grattan Institute modelling—another left-of-centre outfit. These are significant benefits. Whether you are talking about modelling inside the Government, the McKell Institute, the Grattan Institute or NATSEM, there is clear evidence of the benefits. The best that Labor can do is say it does not want this because it would create more home owners and perhaps cause higher prices in the short term. That is the definition of housing affordability. I look forward to the contribution by the shadow Treasurer as to what reason he could have to oppose this promising reform that is laden with economic growth, efficiency, micro-reform, employment growth, housing affordability and rental reductions. The research notes I have then go to the McKell Institute report in March. The McKell Institute, Labor's think tank of choice, writes:

Since 2012, the McKell Institute has expressed its commitment to the principle of transitioning away from stamp duties towards land taxes ... it is a reform that is vital to ensuring, as the Consultation Paper notes, a modern tax system.

It also says:

The introduction of a property tax may place upward pressure on house prices in the short term, but the reduction in stamp duty costs will still result in a net positive effect on housing affordability.

It says that we should emulate the ACT Government scheme, which in large part the Government proposal is doing. It continues:

The overall effect of the policy proposed in the Consultation Paper is to substantially reduce the upfront cost of housing, regardless of any short-term change in the house prices.

The McKell Institute then quotes from its soul brother, the Grattan Institute, as follows:

... as the reform will result in a better allocation of housing stock, property prices will reduce in the long run.

This is another basic economic principle. If we have a more efficient allocation of the resource or the asset in society, the market will find its equilibrium and property prices will reduce in the long run. They are the words of the Grattan Institute as quoted in the McKell Institute report. The McKell Institute concluded:

Owing to its previous work in this area, The McKell Institute welcomes this once-in-a-generation opportunity to create substantial reform to a flawed taxation system. This opportunity is therefore rare, and not to be squandered.

That is why I have brought this motion forward, because I cannot understand why there is not uniform support across the Chamber and across the Parliament for this reform. When everyone from the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling [NATSEM] to the McKell Institute to the Grattan Institute is recommending it, then obviously it should have bipartisan support. Why does it not? That is a good question. But another good question is: Why has the Government not progressed its own reform? Why has the Government not legislated for this, knowing that it would receive a favourable hearing—at least from my part of the crossbench—in this Chamber? Where is the legislation from the Government? The reason the Government has not progressed it is that it cost \$2.5 million in the fiscal overhang in the first year and then decreasing—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Billion. No, more than that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That is one of the estimates. But the whole point about this Government is that it has plenty of money for everything except the micro reform that would grow the economy, add jobs and assist in housing affordability. If you walked into the new Treasurer's office and said, "Listen, mate, I've got this wonderful, technological idea. I can turn a hydrogen-powered solar panel into an electric vehicle and then it converts into a community battery", the Hon. Matt Kean will say, "Mate, you are saving the planet. You're Wonderman. Here, have a couple of billion, and if you need a lobbyist, here is a business card for Michael Photios. We'll sprinkle some Photios dust all over these rent-seeking, renewable subsidies."

The Government has plenty of money for everything. The State of New South Wales has a \$19 billion deficit. When we factor in the Transport Asset Holding Entity of New South Wales [TAHE] report, it is really \$29 billion. The Government has plenty of money for 183 grants just in the seat of Dubbo and for renewable energy—\$3 billion for Twiggy Forrest for hydrogen. The Government can fund anything except the one reform that actually matters for the future of New South Wales to deliver housing affordability of choice in the tax system, employment growth, economic growth and even an improvement in the rental market. You have to wonder about the priorities of this Government when it will spend and spend on everything except the one thing that really matters. To some extent, I am condemning the major parties on both sides of the Chamber—Labor for its misunderstanding and ignorance about the nature of good micro reform and the Government for its fiscal indulgences in missing the opportunity to fund this up-front and for failing to go its colleagues in Canberra and say, "Look, if there's a problem in the GST allocations out of the Grants Commission, that's got to be changed." Surely, the whole purpose of the Grants Commission—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: You are assuming that is not taking place.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If it is taking place, where is the outcome? Where is the beef? Where is the result? Surely the purpose of the Grants Commission is to reward States that produce micro reform and are growing the economy. States that do not undertake micro reform should not be rewarded in the distribution of GST. There should not be any penalty for New South Wales doing the right thing, for growing the economy and, of course, for adding to income tax and other receipts on the Commonwealth budget. This is a reform that is eminently doable, but the Government has done nothing. It has done nothing other than produce discussion papers and position papers, many of which have interesting data and confirm the importance of the reform. But why is it not happening?

My purpose this afternoon is to try to kick along the major parties on both sides of the Chamber. I have provided Labor with a basic, understandable, acceptable lecture on what actually works in economics. Will they take that on? It is from the McKell Institute. How can Labor refute it when its own people did the research and are asking why nothing is being done to support it? The Government needs a little bit of fiscal priority to get this right. It needs to start spending money in New South Wales on the things that actually matter, that grow the economy. Why are we not moving forward accordingly? The Minister for Finance and Small Business answered a supplementary question that I put to him in June by responding that there was a consultation process on board. The economics of this are beyond dispute. This is a reform that must happen. But perhaps there are concerns in the interest groups? The Minister responded:

There is a strong consensus that reform of the existing system is needed;

The proposal resonates strongly with first home buyers struggling to save for a deposit and also pay stamp duty;

So the outcome of the consultations is positive. Homebuyers want this; of course they do. People want choice in their lives. They want the choice of avoiding a median stamp duty of \$56,000 in Sydney and getting into a lower-cost, recurrent stream of payment that allows them to either buy their first home or move around with their existing housing assets. If the consultations have been successful and if the economics add up, then what is the problem? I am hoping to cut the Gordian knot quite decisively in this debate. If the House confirms its support for this reform, as it should and as I hope, then it can go ahead with the Government knowing there would be support in the Legislative Council for legislation. Let us get this moving. It certainly should be a feature of the budget next year. I was disappointed at the Treasury estimates to hear the new Treasurer, the Hon. Matt Kean, pedalling away from this.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: He had not even read it. He had not even read the policy.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: He had not read the policy. I was initially worried that he was too woke to do anything called micro reform or to do anything other than sprinkle Photios dust across New South Wales. But it turns out that he had not read the policy. So it was more out of ignorance than ideology that he did not embrace it. The next day, I suppose the Premier ticked him off. I was not there but I am told the Premier said, "Matt Kean just does what I tell him."

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: He did, yes. I offered to read it to him.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: He did? They are probably good words, now that he is the Premier, to say that about his Treasurer instead of the reverse. The Hon. Matt Kean should do what the Premier says on this issue. The Premier, as the former Treasurer, had this reform moving. The shadow Treasurer is barking a lot about it, but why is he not out there advocating for it? It is good policy. It would improve housing affordability and lower rentals in this sharp Sydney market. So while the shadow Treasurer grins like a Cheshire cat, you have to wonder why he is not putting this reform out there. The problem is the shadow Treasurer has a think tank that is doing all the thinking while he tanks the policy. The Hon. Daniel Mookhey needs to avoid that. Everyone should support this reform. It is outstanding. I look forward to the debate.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (16:26): Some of the observations made by the Hon. Mark Latham are truly capable of being supported, but his observations in relation to the Government are misplaced. However, the main point that he makes in support of his motion is that this is a policy that has been out there for discussion for some time and we have heard zip from those opposite in terms of a critique of the policy. Sorry, maybe we have had critique of the policy, but they fail to say whether in fact stamp duty is a regressive tax and, if so, what Labor would do to replace it. What would the Opposition do? Today is an opportunity for the Labor members in this place to tell us what the Opposition would do. First, they need to disown the tax and then tell us what Labor's policy is to replace it. This is the time to do it. The Government is encouraging members of the Opposition to get up in this place today and tell us what Labor's plan is for the benefit of the people of the State.

How is the Labor Party going to improve housing affordability by the removal of what those opposite readily will say is a regressive tax? What would they do in terms of policy position? Today is the day. I urge the shadow Treasurer to tell us today what his plan is. The deafening silence from those opposite is appalling in terms of their contribution to the debate and the benefit to the people of the State. In fact, it is a frightening prospect if the alternative Treasurer cannot come in here and tell us today what Labor's policy is. All we will get from those opposite is weasel words: "We want to amend the motion to say something or other. Let's do that. Let's amend it." Is the shadow Treasurer going to amend the motion? I will bet anything that the Hon. Daniel Mookhey will seek to amend this motion to make sure that he does not have to say a word. Surprise! He is going to amend the motion so that he does not have to tell us what Labor's policy is. I am sure I will not be wrong on that because he does not have anything worthwhile to say. I have to leave the Chamber shortly to do something for the benefit of the State.

The Hon. Rose Jackson: You're not even going to stay and listen!

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: No, because I know he has nothing to say. That is the problem. I will leave the substantive argument in the hands of the Hon. Scott Farlow. He will make the substantive argument. I address one issue that the Hon. Mark Latham raised regarding the manner in which the Government has approached this reform. We want this reform to happen and we want it to be done on a bipartisan basis. We also want to make sure that we get it right. One of the issues that has been raised with the Government is whether intergenerational transfers should be the subject of a stamp duty or a property tax. It is a great question, and we should resolve those sorts of issues. We will do that and we will do it in circumstances where we get it right. We do not want to make this the great scare campaign that those opposite will want us to have. Come on, Daniel, this is your moment to tell us what you are going to do. Promise me now that you will not seek to amend this motion. Promise now so you do not have to say anything. Go on, please promise me. He won't because we know. I thank the House for its indulgence.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: A Treasurer who doesn't know his policy and a finance Minister who won't stay. That's hilarious!

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You do, though, don't you? You do know the policy.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Yes, I know your policy. I know your policy better than your Treasurer does. He doesn't know his policy.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You do know, and you have read—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: I have absolutely read it.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You have read the McKell report, you have the Grattan Institute report.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Yes, I have read it.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: And yet you still cannot think for yourself, can you? Come on, this is your chance, mate. I thank the House for its indulgence. Members have indulged me because, I have to say, this motion is a big opportunity for this House. It is what this House should be about.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: It's an opportunity for Labor!

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: It is a big opportunity for Labor. Come on, do it. I say to the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, come on, do it. Show us that you are capable of having a creative thought. I thank the House for its indulgence.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: See you shortly.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I will see you soon. I will be watching up there.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (16:32): I am really disappointed that the honourable finance Minister has engaged in the parliamentary equivalent of a hit and run. I would have loved him to have stayed. Here today, gone tomorrow, I say. That is what is happening with the finance Minister. It is not particularly encouraging that we have a Treasurer who is proposing a policy that he has not read and a finance Minister who will not stick around to defend it. That is basically the Government's position today.

On the substance, I place on record my appreciation for the Hon. Mark Latham's attendance at budget estimates hearings and also for bringing forward this motion. I have no issues with that at all. However, I am up-front about this. We would prefer to be debating a policy from the Government on a matter as important as housing affordability than debating a crossbench motion on it. The one point that the Hon. Mark Latham made is that it is not like the Government has not had enough time to develop its position. The first the Opposition heard of the property tax proposal was back in 2019 when the then Treasurer and now Premier, Mr Dominic Perrottet, launched what he called a Federal interstate finance review.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Federal Financial Relations Review.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Federal interstate financial relations review. He commissioned a blue-ribbon panel, which was chaired by David Thodey and included other luminaries like the former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson. The Treasurer tasked the panel with developing a proposal, which it then did. I acknowledge that I was not the shadow Treasurer at that time; the Hon. Walt Secord was. Certainly he had the opportunity to engage in that process. That led to the release of the panel's report and the now Premier's rather infamous appearance at the National Press Club, which, I understand, was welcomed by the Federal Government. I think Josh Frydenberg was thrilled to have Dominic Perrottet come down to Canberra to tell him what to do.

The report said there should be a land tax in lieu of stamp duty. I do not think the panel referred to the choice mechanism. It also said that the GST should be up to 15 per cent and should apply to food. The report made the point that other forms of taxation, which some have said are not progressive, should be further embraced. The genesis of the proposal that went out comes from that very same vision. I cannot help but note the similarities between the Thodey review that was done for Mr Perrottet and the Shepherd review that was done for Mr Abbott in that both of them made a louder case for the GST going up and for the GST being widened than they did for this particular reform. Of course, GST politics involves both Federal and State levels and is a complicated matter.

I defer to the former shadow Treasurer of the Federal Labor Party at that time, who, in the aftermath of the GST's introduction made clear some of the views that have taken hold since then, certainly in the community with lived experience of it, as to why perhaps that would be a controversial policy for a government to pursue. That was the first time we had the opportunity to see this particular proposal. That was over two years ago. Last November a consultation paper developed by the New South Wales Treasury was released. I use the phrase "developed by the New South Wales Treasury" loosely because, as we have since found out, it was in fact developed by KPMG. The New South Wales Treasury paid KPMG about \$5 million.

As far as public consultations go, what was most interesting about that process was that any person who wished to participate in it and in the consultation that took place after it had to sign a non-disclosure agreement with KPMG. They could only see the proposal in KPMG's office and they could engage and provide their views only as mediated by KPMG to the New South Wales Treasury. That is quite a remarkable way of undertaking public consultation. I do not want to digress too far, but I do note that elsewhere the member who has moved this motion has rightly joined with people like Percy Allan and others to identify better ways to undertake public consultation. The member may perhaps embrace the outcome of that consultation but probably would not embrace the method.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: Percy Allan!

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I will not digress too much, but Mr Allan is an interesting former New South Wales Treasury secretary.

The Hon. Mark Latham: Hear, hear! Bring him back.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I acknowledge the interjection in so far as he was at least a Treasury secretary in the traditional sense—a person less famous for his adventurism and far more famous for his reformist instincts, albeit for the Greiner and Fahey governments, but interesting nonetheless. Last year I had the opportunity to speak with him and others about this particular reform. He had interesting views.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: What did Percy say?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The better question is what would Percy do, not what did Percy say. But it is an interesting way of undertaking consultation. I remember vividly reading that consultation paper in the back corner of the Chamber last year while the Hon. Mark Latham was debating Mr Matt Kean's energy legislation. In fact, it was released the same week that Minister Kean's energy bill was introduced into this House—

The Hon. Mark Latham: You would've had plenty of time to read it.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: —and I had ample time to read that paper and to fully understand exactly what was being proposed. In this year's budget, released on 23 June, we saw a progress paper about the consultation paper. The progress paper dealt at great length with what precisely had been identified since the release of the consultation paper and the views of Treasury in response. It was an interesting document, as always. It was well written and of high calibre and good enough to at least identify precisely the Government's intention with regard to this particular reform.

I go to such lengths in detailing these steps simply to say that blind Freddy would know that the Government is committed to this reform. Blind Freddy would know that this is close to the heart of the new Premier. Blind Freddy should have had enough familiarity with the proposal to be able to handle it. I was startled when I asked the most basic questions about this of the new Treasurer in budget estimates last week. When I was asking the person the Government says we should trust with a tax reform of this scale that impacts on every single household in New South Wales—literally every household is subject to this—I was startled to hear that the person who is apparently to be entrusted with such a far-reaching reform had not even read it. It was remarkable. It is not as though it was me interpreting it. I literally asked him, "Have you read it?" and his response was, "I have read parts of it." I pushed it even further and he said, "There were passages of it." I then had the opportunity to test him on certain aspects of the model and he could not explain them. Because I am generous of character I offered to read it myself and turn it into an audiobook for him, which he would then be able to listen to as a podcast.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: You've got dulcet tones.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: In my dulcet tones, in fact.

The Hon. Don Harwin: You speak very quickly, though.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I do speak very quickly; I accept that interjection. I am much better than I used to be in that respect.

The Hon. Don Harwin: When you were at my estimates, for example, I could barely keep up with you.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I accept the interjection from the Leader of the Government. I do my level best.

The Hon. Don Harwin: I certainly don't know how Michael Coutts-Trotter did.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I accept the interjection, which was about how Michael Coutts-Trotter could understand me.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Catherine Cusack): Order! I do not accept interjections. I ask the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to continue, please, and direct his remarks through the Chair.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: I will, Madam Deputy President. Thank you for your counsel. Nevertheless, it seemed like the Treasurer was not as receptive to my offer around the audio production of his consultation papers as I was in making it, but I was reassured the next day when the Premier knew the policy. It was very helpful that the Premier himself had read the paper; in fact, he volunteered to nominate it as one of the best pieces of writing published this year in Australia. I was happy to nominate him for the Miles Franklin Literary Award as a result. The questions that I put to the Premier have to do with the core point that I want to come to in this debate, which is that we do not have a policy from the Government to respond to. There is no policy on the table from the Government whatsoever. We should be debating legislation instead of debating a motion, yet the Government has not gotten itself organised enough to present it.

As best as I can tell, it has not even gone to Cabinet in any substantial sense. It is not clear at all that the Cabinet has seriously engaged with it. If Government members want to talk about the sincerity of reform and reformers, the Opposition's basic point is that before they take a national victory lap and call themselves the greatest tax reformers in a generation, Government members should actually propose the reform for which they are taking credit, none of which was what the Premier did. If members want to speak about the context in which this reform is being pursued, here are some basic facts. These are the views that I put to the Premier. I asked him to provide some insight and reassurance in the absence of an actual proposal. I asked the Premier whether or not he could explain what the impact would be on family finances when unimproved land value in the last five years has risen each year by an average of 5.5 per cent but wages have only risen by 2.3 per cent.

Basically, the tax bills people would have paid would have risen more than twice as fast as their wages if this had been in place for the past five years. This is in the context of families paying record tolls and record fines, and record low wage growth. Is the Premier that certain that this is affordable? The response from the Premier was telling. He said, "That is a serious matter that needs to be looked into." The Opposition agrees with him in that respect. The second aspect of the broader context in which we asked questions related to the Federal nature about whether or not this is affordable in the budget context. We asked, "Are you certain that New South Wales, with a \$19 billion budget deficit and \$100 billion of gross debt before the bill comes in from the pandemic, can take a structural hit to the budget of \$2 billion every year for the next 50 years?"

That is what this paper says will happen if the Government pursues this model, and that is before we get to the \$1 billion we lose in GST. If implemented by the Government, this so-called tax reform will cost the budget \$3 billion at minimum per year for the next 50 years. What does that mean practically? It means that there is far less money to pay for our essential services. The basic message is that if the Government pursues this in lieu of Federal support or anything like that, it will have serious consequences for whether or not we can afford pay rises for our nurses, doctors, hospital cleaners and schoolteachers, because that is the only other lever the Government has on this. The concerns were specifically about the context in which this reform is being pursued. To actually speak now about the model, it is so telling that the abolition of the premium rate of tax for land tax is slipped into the detail of this reform.

I am not sure whether honourable members noticed that. The Government is proposing to abolish the premium rate, which kicks in at \$3 million, for land tax. What does that mean? It is going to be sending every residential investor into the land tax stream and making them compete further with first home buyers. That is not my view; it is the view coming from the Grattan Institute and others. That is the discrepancy in what is being pursued here. To the extent to which the economists say there is a theoretical benefit, as described by the mover

of the motion, there is a real consequence about whether or not we are actually giving more tax advantages to people who wish to profit from property, rather than those who wish to own it. That is a serious, serious concern. Let us be clear: 40 per cent of stamp duty revenue comes from the top 4 per cent of transactions at the top of the market. If you fiddle with that premium rate it will have serious consequences about whether or not this is affordable.

These are the reasons why Opposition members are not rushing into this debate. These are the reasons why we are not trifling with this. What Labor has said as a party, which I reiterate today, is that it wants a tax system that promotes home ownership. Home ownership is the key to building intergenerational wealth for working families. That is Labor's view about the New South Wales tax system. Equally, Opposition members make the clear point that we want a New South Wales tax system that promotes economic activity and creates jobs. We want a tax system which equally provides for social justice.

We have made it clear before and we make it clear again: If the Government was serious about those three propositions there would be space for us to talk about how we can have a better New South Wales tax system. But the Government has serious questions to answer about its own policy, and that is before we get anywhere near asking, "Where is the policy?" I could be juvenile and say, "Show us your policy," but I will not. I reiterate that this is a serious issue that requires a serious response. I know that the finance Minister is not here, and I know that he dared me not to amend the motion, but I feel like I am going to have to do. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting all words after "growth" and inserting instead:

- (a) calls on the Premier, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet, MP, to release his long-awaited plan to apply land tax instead of stamp duty on residential properties; and
- (b) reminds the Treasurer, the Hon. Matt Kean, MP, that he should read it.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (16:47): On behalf of The Greens, I speak briefly to this motion. It has been The Greens policy for quite a while—

The Hon. Mark Latham: You're one up on Labor. I thought you would have a policy; The Greens have policies.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: We do have policies. I will take this opportunity to explain how our policies are made. They are made by our members, where each member has an equal contribution and an equal say. We nut it out for a very long time before we change any aspect of our policies. Sometimes it takes years and years but, once it is in place, as MPs we are bound to support that policy. I think that makes us far more predictable than many other parties. When it comes to stamp duty, the Australian Greens economic justice policy supports the replacement of stamp duty with land taxes in circumstances that target land value and housing wealth, not housing consumption; in the context of broader taxation policies which preference progressive taxation over regressive taxation; and also in the context of our housing policy. It goes for pages and pages, but the nub of it is that we support the transition from stamp duty. Stamp duty is incredibly inefficient. The only good thing about it is that it is progressive. As inefficient as stamp duty is and given the impact it is having on housing affordability, it is long past time that we got rid of it.

From a revenue perspective, it is very useful to have a more stable revenue that comes in from an annual land or property tax than comes from stamp duty, which tends to be a much bumpier thing. When you look at what the purpose of taxes should be, either for raising revenue or for influencing behaviour, or as a policy lever, housing taxes do both and can be very useful income for the State. But it has to be done right. When we have a proposal like this—and I will come to the proposal from the Premier from when he was Treasurer in a moment—it depends on the details of the particular proposal as to whether it will positively impact affordability of housing and whether it ensures appropriate exemptions for those who are doing it tough. The last thing any of us wants to see is for a land or property tax to result in people not being able to live in their homes for reasons outside of their control.

The Hon. Mark Latham asked why this has not happened yet, and that is a very good question. But do you know why? It is because there are no Greens in government. Because in the ACT the Labor-Greens Government dealt with this a while ago. It has been our policy. Clearly, it is all to our credit. We dealt with this ages ago. The transition that was put in place there was done in a way to avoid the shock to the market we keep hearing so much about but also the shock to individuals. People were well informed going into this as to what expenses they were going to have in connection with a housing purchase down the track.

The Greens support the transition but we also know that it cannot be a blanket support. That is what brings me to the proposal we saw last year. Contrary to what the Minister said earlier, we were very vocal in our criticism of that particular proposal. I raised it with the then Treasurer during budget estimates, because I believe it was deeply flawed in many respects. The modelling on which the assertion that it would be revenue neutral within a

certain time was based was flawed. I think they were perhaps massaging those numbers a little bit generously, which then causes concerns as to what amendments would get made in due course and how that might negatively impact both on individuals trying to buy a home and also those currently living in a place that might become subject to this. So we need to ensure that the proposal, if and when it comes back—and I do support the Hon. Daniel Mookhey's amendment asking for the proposal to come—

The Hon. Mark Latham: You were going so well.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Apologies for that. In my view it needs to go to a proper review. I do not think you can make a reform which has so many details, is so technical and is such a major departure from what we have done previously without having a parliamentary review into the proposal. So I would encourage the Government to welcome such a review. The end product of the proposal would then be far better than if it were just pushed through without that review. We need to ensure that housing is primarily a home, not a commodity. The Perrottet proposal did not strike the right balance between the needs and interests of individuals buying their home versus people who are buying a second or a third home and investors. We need to take a much closer look at that.

I encourage the Government to consider the concept of using a previous stamp duty amount that was paid on a purchase as a credit going forward for land tax, instead of the choice, which is why we are voting for the Opposition's amendment. I think the choice element in this motion is not something we could support. If we were to structure a transition where we are moving from stamp duty to land tax but the stamp duty amount that you have paid in the past is used as a credit going forward over the next however many decades in paying off land tax then we would have the entire housing stock being treated on the same basis. I think that would reach a better position from a revenue perspective as well as for predictability, not just for purchasers of these homes but also for the market generally in knowing what is going to happen down the track. With those comments, I thank the honourable member for bringing the motion, but I do have a problem with the choice aspect. I do not think that that is necessarily the best way to structure the transition from stamp duty to land tax, so we will be supporting the Opposition's amendment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (16:55): It is now time for the Government's substantive response, after the Hon. Damien Tudehope's intervention earlier, which was quite the prophecy, I must say, of the actions of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, when he said that he dared him and that he would amend the motion. And indeed he did, because Labor is running scared on this one. Labor does not want to nail its colours to the mast. I commend Ms Abigail Boyd, who came to this Chamber with a substantive policy proposal from The Greens on land tax, abolishing the choice provision but looking for a credit for stamp duty. Maybe that could help the Opposition to come up with a policy, potentially. Maybe the Opposition could workshop with The Greens, because The Greens are providing leadership, at least on this front.

On this side of the Chamber we are providing leadership when it comes to the reform of property taxes in New South Wales. Of course this is something that has interested the Premier, not just when he was Treasurer but when he was finance Minister as well. I think the Hon. Daniel Mookhey said that the first he had heard of the proposal was in 2019. He obviously was not paying attention because the Premier, when he was the finance Minister in 2016, flagged this proposal. I do think it was met with much enthusiasm from the then Premier, Mike Baird, but it was met with enthusiasm from the then Federal Treasurer, Scott Morrison, who embraced the proposal at the time.

Hopefully, if we are to embark upon this with, as the Hon. Damien Tudehope said, the support of the Opposition, we would see that support replicated by the Federal Government again. The Government supports this motion as moved by the Hon. Mark Latham in its current form, with no amendments. There are many potential benefits from replacing stamp duty with an annual property tax, including higher home ownership, higher productivity and a boost to economic growth and employment. As the Hon. Daniel Mookhey went through, self-rating his own budget estimates hearing with the Premier and with the Treasurer as well—

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: I did well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think the Hon. Daniel Mookhey watches them on replay for his best hits.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: The KO mini.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: He might think so. I do not know if they came away thinking that. And he was of course offered a directorship, I think, in the Perrottet institute, which is very exciting for him and for his future career. One of the things he asked for was that the Premier outline the benefits in terms of moving to a land tax. But the proposal is far-reaching and the Government will not be rushed in its consideration of the proposal. From the debate of all members in the Chamber we have seen why it is important not to rush. We need to make sure that this is right.

In November 2020 the Government issued a public consultation paper setting out a proposal to replace stamp duty and land tax with an annual property tax based on unimproved land values. This was followed in June 2021 with a progress paper providing further detail on the proposal and seeking a further round of public comments. Throughout this period the Government has engaged with many sectors of the economy, business and the community at large. The feedback received is being very carefully considered and work is continuing to prepare a fully detailed proposal for Government consideration. In addition to this proposal the Government is in the process of considering a range of options to address the challenge of housing affordability, which we know—and I note that the Hon. Rose Jackson has raised the issue in the Chamber—is becoming increasingly concerning throughout New South Wales, not just in Sydney.

In addition to this proposal the Government will need to be satisfied that the final design of the proposal improves the wellbeing of the whole community, that the transition to any new arrangements is fair and that the overall fiscal impact can be managed. The consultation paper and the progress paper released by the Government have set out a property tax proposal with several core features. A central element of the proposal is that buyers would be able to choose whether to pay stamp duty or a smaller annual property tax. We have already heard from Ms Abigail Boyd that that is not something The Greens support. For a typical residential buyer, stamp duty is around \$35,000 while under the proposed property tax rates a typical owner-occupier may pay around \$2,000 per year.

It should be noted that half of all residential buyers hold their property for less than 14 years. I also note for the benefit of the House that the progress report found that first home buyers are increasingly older when they purchase their home. In 1995-96 the average age of a first home buyer was 33 years old, which increased to 35 years old in 2017-18. In fact, in the past two decades the share of first home buyers aged under 35 has declined from 69 per cent to 55 per cent. Stamp duty concessions introduced for first home buyers have given full concessions for homes up to \$650,000, and partial concessions up to \$800,000, but that still leaves one-third of first home buyers paying full stamp duty. So clearly there is still work to do to support first home buyers.

Once a property is subject to the property tax, all subsequent owners would be required to pay the property tax. The property would no longer be subject to stamp duty or to land tax. For those not buying a property, there would be no charge, which is important to note. There would be no double taxation, so those who have already paid stamp duty on their property would not have to pay the property tax. The property tax would be an annual tax based on unimproved land value. It would consist of a fixed amount plus a variable rate depending on land value, following the same general structure as council rates, which members are familiar with. The proposal sets out tax rates that balance the goals of increasing home ownership and ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability.

Residential owner-occupied and primary production properties would pay lower rates than residential investment properties, which in turn would pay lower rates than commercial properties. A surcharge would apply to large aggregate land holdings. To help manage the fiscal impact of the reform, property price thresholds could be used to restrict the set of properties eligible to opt into the property tax. By prioritising the least expensive properties, price thresholds would maximise the number of eligible buyers while containing the near-term fiscal impact. Over time, as fiscal space permits, the price thresholds could be increased to allow all properties to opt in. In response to concerns raised in consultation, protections would apply so that the property tax does not result in rent increases without a tenant's agreement. A deferral scheme would recognise that taxpayers' financial situations can change over time and ensure that no-one facing hardship needs to sell their home to meet property tax liabilities. I know that concern raised was by Ms Abigail Boyd.

A system of indexation could ensure that average property tax payments grow in line with average incomes, and that property tax remains affordable over time. Finally, the consultation paper proposed that stamp duty concessions for first home buyers could be replaced with first home buyer grants during the first three years of the reform. Those grants could be used to pay stamp duty or, for those who opt into the property tax, the grants could be used for other purposes such as buying furniture for the new home. We have discussed the property tax consultation process, which is significant and far reaching. We want to make sure we get it right. The formal consultation began with the release of the consultation paper in November 2020, which outlined the benefits of the change and proposed the broad policy framework.

There were a multitude of submissions to the "Have your say" community-focused website, which was a front door for walk-in community views. The website attracted more than 23,800 visits, 6,152 responses to the quick poll and 3,544 survey completions. Some 57 formal submissions were received that were not subject to confidentiality requests. Those submissions included contributions from the real estate sector, the banking and finance industry, professional advisers, the commercial property sector, residential developers, community representative bodies, local government, economists, think tanks, the mining sector and the farming sector. Stakeholder engagement meetings were held with interested parties and working groups on specific issues, such as people affected by financial hardship, which provided important input to address concerns. During a property

purchase Revenue NSW, Service NSW and other third-party organisations and systems are connected together to enable a purchase and subsequent lodging of information and payment to occur.

As part of the consultation process, those implementation stakeholders were consulted on the implications of the reform and readiness/change management activities that may be needed from their perspective should the reform progress. The Government released its progress paper in June 2021, providing a further layer of policy detail and updating key elements of the proposal following the first round of consultation. The Government received 35 unique submissions and a large number of similar submissions through coordinated campaigns. The Government values the time and effort that stakeholders have put into providing feedback, particularly in a period affected by COVID-19 public health orders. In general, there is widespread support for the proposition that New South Wales should move away from the existing property tax system, characterised by the large up-front cost of stamp duty, towards an alternative system that makes home ownership more accessible, supports household mobility and better facilitates economic growth and prosperity.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey outlined a bit of his "best of" from budget estimates, including asking the Premier questions with respect to the recent increase in property prices. One thing the member failed to mention, however, was the information provided by the Premier, who said that how to address those increases was a concern. That is why we want to get this policy right. He also outlined the concern that property prices in the past 12 months have increased by 25 per cent, which means that people buying property in that period have, on average, paid \$10,000 more in stamp duty. There is not a magic solution for that. With property prices increasing, there will be increases in the transaction duties that are levied on them, so we need to get this right for all. It is incumbent upon all of us in this Chamber to work towards a real solution and not play politics. That is what we on the Government side of the Chamber are interested in doing, and the motion moved by the Hon. Mark Latham shows that he is interested in doing that as well. We want to work through the various issues.

On my list I have both my personal speech and the official Government response, so I turn to some of my concerns. The current system does not work because we find that people are living in inappropriate homes because they are scared of moving with hefty stamp duty bills. That means that the housing stock is not meeting the needs of the community and that we have older residents living in large homes with many unused bedrooms and younger families living in smaller properties when they should be in more suitable accommodation. Stamp duty is adding to that problem. The progress paper found that many people stay in homes that do not suit their family or lifestyle because of those up-front stamp duty constraints. Not only does that affect the standard and quality of living for people in New South Wales; it also has significant impacts on housing availability appropriate to people's needs, whether they be downsizers or young families trying to get their foot on the ladder.

The report also found that stamp duty has the effect of making those who more frequently buy and sell property pay more taxes than those who do not; that is, those who buy and sell more often are carrying the burden of paying more for our roads, hospitals, schools and infrastructure. As the Hon. Mark Latham mentioned, when there is a more mobile workforce, it is a constraint on that workforce, especially as we come out of lockdown and see the economy open up with the COVID recovery. I just finished a call with the Council of Small Business Australia, the Business Council of Australia and Business NSW. The feedback continues to be that their workers are just not in New South Wales for business at the moment. Skilled and unskilled labour is not in the particular areas it needs to be in New South Wales. We need a workforce that is mobile and that can go to the jobs as they exist around New South Wales.

I know members in this Chamber, particularly regional members, have seen the population growth in regional New South Wales during this time. People see the regions as a more attractive destination to live in, which brings more supporting industry to those areas because more people are needed to work in restaurants, cafes, hospitality and the services of towns in regional communities. Taking away the stamp duty impediment will allow more people to move to regional New South Wales. The report also found that switching from stamp duty to a more broad-based tax will allow for more flexibility for homeowners, and it identified that there are potential benefits to the State in attracting growth industries from other States and overseas. It is important that we get this right, and I draw the House's attention to several areas that need particular attention. We have talked about the impact on the State budget and we have talked about the issues of the Commonwealth Grants Commission and working that out with the Federal Government to make sure that we are able to supplement one of the State's largest revenue streams.

We must be aware of the risks—and I think Ms Abigail Boyd touched upon this—of a two-tier property market, with those who have transitioned across to the new scheme and those who are on the old stamp duty scheme, and what that will do to housing prices and transactions. It is a bit like the Old System land titles and the Torrens Title System, in a sense, but with more financial implications. We must be aware that just like council rates, a property tax tied to the unimproved property value can mean that the tax rate has the potential to go up

and down with unimproved property values and is not necessarily marked on the price that someone pays for the property.

We need to look at every angle and at alternative methods to ensure that this is the right method. I note that in relation to the debate about the Australian Capital Territory model, the feedback to the Federal Financial Relations Review and subsequently is that that was the wrong model. Those reforms were rushed through and, while stamp duty was reduced, annual rates on properties significantly increased, which has had an overall impact of increasing taxes paid on properties. Clearly, this is not the outcome we want for New South Wales.

I thank the Hon. Mark Latham for this motion and for his support for stamp duty reform in New South Wales. Stamp duty reform has the potential to have a significant positive impact on our State and genuinely help people get into their first home, move when their lifestyle changes and downsize when they feel that they need to. We have the opportunity to move to a more efficient, effective and equitable system of taxation, but we need to make sure that we take our time, do our homework and get this one right.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (17:10): In reply: I thank each of the speakers in the debate. The two speeches given by the Hon. Scott Farlow were something of a civil performance, but I thought both speeches were good—the official and the personal. I thank him for his contribution. I particularly thank Ms Abigail Boyd for revealing what I understand to be the only rational Greens policy that I know of. It was refreshing to hear six minutes of rational economics from the spokesperson. It fell apart quickly when she said she would support the Labor amendment, but I certainly appreciated the six minutes of rational, sound economics at the beginning of her speech. It is noteworthy that the greenest jurisdiction in Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, is leading the nation with this reform, and quite successfully so. It makes the point that it should be regarded as embarrassing for New South Wales—the largest, most important jurisdiction in the Commonwealth—to have been shown up by a tin-pot local government bunch of Greens in the ACT. They have got it right.

We are by far the big brother who should be leading micro-reform of this nature, but we are paralysed. The political system in New South Wales is frozen. The Government is frozen by its fiscal extravagance and says it cannot afford it, and members on the Labor side are just frozen full stop. They are completely paralysed by this. The contribution of the shadow Treasurer was unique. It was a masterclass in distraction. It was a magical mystery tour of everything but an outlining of a policy. While the tin-pot regime in the ACT can have a policy, the mighty Australian Labor Party, whose spiritual and literal home is here in New South Wales, cannot even muster a policy even though its own think tank, the McKell Institute, has shown the way forward.

We heard everything but a policy position from the shadow Treasurer. He told us about budget estimates, he told us about the Thodey review, he told us about GST, he told us about the Percy Allan consultation and he went round and round. Although, he did raise one point as to why Matt Kean had not even read the policy. The truth is he had spent day and night, week after week, analysing the Liverpool Council 1992 capital works budget to try to fit me up for the construction of our fabulously successful Pompidou—a clownish fountain in the middle of the hot Macquarie Street Mall. Of course, if we needed one more clown in that fountain, I would have added Matt Kean if I had known him back in the day when I was mayor of Liverpool. So he had spent all of his time studying my capital works programs at Liverpool Council 30 years ago and none of his time actually reading his own policy paper on this fundamentally important reform for New South Wales.

It has been an interesting debate and was perhaps capped off by the Hon. Damien Tudehope, the senior Minister in the debate, who said he was worried about a scare campaign. If anyone is scared about what the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has to say, they would be scared of their own shadow. In terms of scare campaigns, his contribution was like being beaten to death with a wet lettuce. It was not going to knock anyone around politically at all, because the Hon. Daniel Mookhey wanted to avoid every single aspect of adopting a policy position. If someone was scared of that, they would never do anything in public life. They might as well just stay at home and do their knitting. There is nothing to be scared of.

The proposition that anyone could run a scare campaign on a policy laden with choice is ridiculous. If you try to run a scare campaign on this, what you are basically saying is that homebuyers are not smart enough to work out their own choice. Do they want to pay a median of \$56,000 stamp duty up-front or do they want to go into the recurrent stream and pay about \$2,500 a year to make it more affordable to get a foot in the market or to downsize or move closer to where their kids are at school or closer to where they work. These are all regular, sensible decisions in which we can trust the consumers, homebuyers and asset owners of New South Wales to make their own choice.

If you are scared of choice in politics, you would be scared of your own shadow. There have been administrations that have tried to defy choice. Whole empires in history have fallen because they did not provide choice. Whole centrally planned economies have fallen because they did not provide choice. The natural conclusion is that choice is good. People like choice, people want choice, people can be trusted with choice and

we should provide that choice as a Parliament. I was amazed to hear that the Hon. Damien Tudehope was so timid. I think he scared himself, because I listened closely to the Labor position, and I have spoken to other Labor shadow Ministers about it. I would not be scared for a nanosecond by what they do. Fundamentally, the speech from the Hon. Daniel Mookhey was from someone sitting on the fence, and he will henceforth be known as Splinters.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Catherine Cusack): The Hon. Mark Latham has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes 15
Noes 18
Majority..... 3

AYES

Boyd
Buttigieg (teller)
D'Adam (teller)
Faehrmann
Graham

Jackson
Mookhey
Moriarty
Pearson
Primrose

Searle
Secord
Sharpe
Shoebridge
Veitch

NOES

Amato
Banasiak
Fang
Farlow
Farraway (teller)
Field

Franklin
Harwin
Khan
Latham
Maclaren-Jones
Mallard (teller)

Martin
Mitchell
Nile
Poulos
Roberts
Ward

PAIRS

Donnelly
Houssos
Moselmane

Mason-Cox
Taylor
Tudehope

Amendment negatived.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Catherine Cusack): The question is that the motion be agreed to. Is leave granted to ring the bells for one minute?

Leave granted.

The House divided.

Ayes 18
Noes 15
Majority..... 3

AYES

Amato
Banasiak
Fang
Farlow
Farraway
Field

Franklin
Harwin
Khan
Latham (teller)
Maclaren-Jones
Mallard (teller)

Martin
Mitchell
Nile
Poulos
Roberts
Ward

NOES

Boyd
Buttigieg (teller)
D'Adam (teller)

Jackson
Mookhey
Moriarty

Searle
Secord
Sharpe

Faehrmann
Graham

Pearson
Primrose

NOES

Shoebridge
Veitch

PAIRS

Mason-Cox
Taylor
Tudehope

Donnelly
Houssos
Moselmane

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Catherine Cusack): According to resolution of the House of 10 November, I call on private members' business item No. 1449 standing in the name of the Hon. Shayne Mallard, relating to Remembrance Day, to take precedence until 6.30 p.m.

Motions

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans) (17:35): I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for moving this very important motion. Today is Remembrance Day, when we pause to remember that after more than four years of horrific fighting and the loss of millions of lives, the guns on the Western Front fell silent. It was on this day 103 years ago, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, that the Armistice was signed. It was actually signed at 5.45 a.m. but it was effective at 11.00 a.m., when the fighting stopped and the horrors of the Great War reached an end.

More than 60,000 Australians lost their lives on foreign soil during the conflict—young lives tragically cut short—and 156,000 were wounded. Despite the loss, the Great War galvanised a spirit of unity in the Australian people. It began to define our nation. The spirit of the Anzacs—their sacrifice, bravery, courage, and mateship—shaped our nation. The names and places of First World War battles remain part of the collective Australian memory—Anzac Cove, Lone Pine, Beersheba, the Somme, Pozières and Villers-Bretonneux, to name just a few.

In 1997 Armistice Day was renamed Remembrance Day. The name change broadened the meaning of the day, extending the focus from the First World War to a day that now commemorates over a century of service by Australian men and women. Names like New Guinea, Kokoda, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and many others are now added to the locations where Australians have served. Today we remember all who have contributed to the defence of our nation throughout all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. In conjunction with observing one minute's silence at 11.00 a.m., we wear a red remembrance poppy. The idea of the remembrance poppy was conceived by Madame Guérin of France as a way to raise funds to rebuild regions of France torn apart by the First World War. Today we wear our remembrance poppies as we recall the thousands of graves lining the fields of Belgium and north-west France and we recall the war poem:

In Flanders Field the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row ...

Poppies are still exchanged for a donation to support the work of the Returned and Services League, the RSL, with veterans, just as envisaged 100 years ago. We wear our poppies to signify we remember all those who fought in and assisted with the First World War and the military involvements that followed. This morning I attended a moving dawn service with Mr Ray James, OAM, president of RSL NSW; Sergeant Pete Rudland (Retd), a veteran of the war in Afghanistan; and bugler Lance Corporal Justin Williams. We observed the lighting of the sails of the Sydney Opera House with poppies as a sign of remembrance and in thanks to our veterans for their service. The poppies will be projected onto the Opera House again this evening, and I commend it to members if they get a chance to watch on TV. School resource packs were also developed and sent electronically to schools throughout New South Wales in the lead-up to Remembrance Day to help our students learn about the contribution of our veterans.

Thanks to the incredible efforts of the New South Wales community in achieving high vaccination levels, we were able to come together for the State Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph in Sydney's Martin Place. Many other services took place in local communities across the State to mark this special day and to remember the sacrifices of our servicemen and servicewomen. After a very difficult year, I am so glad that our communities could gather today to reflect on those who served our country, to educate our next generation about the sacrifice

they made and to thank those returned servicemen and veterans here with us now. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (17:39): It is an honour and a privilege to speak to the motion moved by the Government Whip on Remembrance Day. This motion gives us time to reflect on the hundreds of thousands of Australian men and women who have served and the more than 100,000 Australians who have lost their lives since 1860. In the First World War, more than 416,000 Australian men enlisted, as well as 2,500 women who joined as nurses. In total, more than 62,000 people were killed and a further 156,000 were wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. They fought in horrendous conditions, witnessed things that no-one should ever see and returned changed forever, if they returned at all.

In World War II, an astounding 730,000 personnel enlisted in the Australian Army, which was 10 per cent of the entire Australian population. There were 400,000 serving overseas, with nearly 40,000 of them losing their lives. Whole generations have been lost to us through conflict, and it has shaped the way we see ourselves. It also shaped the way we live our lives. As a result of their sacrifice, there has been fundamental change in our families and in the way that Australia sees itself in the world. There are currently about 1,000 Australian men and women deployed overseas in various capacities.

As members know, while I am a proud citizen of this country, I was born in Canada and I am the son of a Mohawk-Ojibway First Nations man. I draw the attention of the Chamber to the perspective that I bring to Remembrance Day as an Australian of Canadian upbringing. This is a day that both nations have in common. Both Canada and Australia, as we know them today, rose from the British colonial era as former colonies. Both countries are now mature and independent societies, but both have paid the price in their journey to modern nationhood. Both countries had their national identity forged, to a large extent, in World War I. For both Canada and Australia, moments like these were formative in creating a genuine national identity.

There is no Canadian child of my generation who has not memorised the lines of *In Flanders Fields*. I could almost recite the entire poem from memory. The poem was written by Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a doctor from Guelph, Ontario. That is the region where I grew up and near where my mother and siblings currently reside. It speaks of the human cost of war, which is something that transcends any national boundary. Like most members of this Chamber, both of my parents have family members who served in World War I. My maternal great-grandfather served in Europe and returned to Canada with a young Welsh wife. Further, both my maternal grandfather and grandmother were in the Canadian air force.

My father's Mohawk-Ojibway family has an even longer tradition of serving under the Canadian and British flags. My ancestors fought with the British against the Americans during the American War of Independence and again in the War of 1812 when the Americans tried to invade Canada. Most recently, another Secord, a cousin of mine from the reserve, completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2011 with the Canadian Army. He is still in the Canadian Army. Canada, like Australia, has a long tradition of Indigenous people serving in its armed forces.

I move to one Indigenous Canadian soldier specifically, who I believe typifies the personal cost of war. My great-uncle, Thomas Secord, was one of the 4,000 Canadian First Nations people who served in World War I. In total, more than 600,000 Canadians served in World War I. Thomas Secord was one of the very first people, First Nations or otherwise, in the entire country of Canada to enlist in World War I. Imagine the shock for him. He travelled from an Indian reserve in Southern Ontario in Canada, across the Atlantic Ocean to the United Kingdom with the 4th Battalion and to the trenches and mechanised slaughter of Vimy Ridge and the Somme in France. He was wounded in 1917 and returned to Canada a year later.

Like Indigenous Australian soldiers, Canada's treatment of their native soldiers was not always the best or fairest. For Thomas Secord, there were issues about whether his payments were sent to his blind and destitute mother in Canada, and he had disciplinary proceedings against him for drunkenness. While he struggled with alcohol, he received an honourable discharge. In total, he was away from Canada for almost four years. He saw the trenches and experienced poison gas. After the war he was never able to fit back into life in Canada or on the reserve. In December 1924 his de facto wife and her three children died in a fire on the Indian reserve. Shortly afterwards, he petitioned the government and the Indian agent at the time—the so-called protector of natives—to formally leave the tribe. He could no longer live there; he no longer belonged.

There are more than 100 pages of notes, official correspondence, evidence from others and materials held in the national Library and Archives Canada on this. It is incredibly sad reading. His time in Europe changed everything for him. Thomas Secord would go on to spend the remaining years of his life as a labourer and a fruit picker. He died homeless, as a recluse living in a cave on an escarpment near Niagara Falls. As a modern day researcher, I was able to find so much about him. I felt deep and profound sadness when I read his military records and notes from the Indian agent—the Canadian equivalent of the so-called Aboriginal protectors here. It wrote

and made observations about him that he never would have known about. It is extraordinary. The closest feeling that I could describe it to was reading Kate Grenville's book about writing *The Secret River*, where she reflects on reading notes and observations made by colonial officials about the character and personality of her ancestor, Solomon Wiseman, that he never would have known about, hundreds of years after he passed. You could feel the deep and disturbing racism in the comments and observations about Thomas.

Since migrating to Australia, I have had the privilege of attending countless Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Cenotaph and at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, as well as small services in the Eastern Suburbs and with the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men & Women [NAJEX] in Darlinghurst. I look forward to attending services once again with NAJEX and with my friend, its president, Mr Roger Selby. In the past 10 years I have also made the Australian pilgrimage to Anzac Cove at Gallipoli, visited the Commonwealth War Graves in Beersheba in Israel on the edge of the Negev Desert and visited the site of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, which brought the United States into World War II. In addition, I have also been to the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which I have spoken about on many occasions here. I understand the solemnity of these days and the gravity of the sacrifices made on behalf of our two nations—Canada and Australia. I understand why we can never forget.

Finally, I end on a personal and positive shout-out. The veterans Minister, the Hon. Natalie Ward, referred to meeting the RSL NSW president, Ray James, this morning. I refer to Ray James and his lovely wife, Pauline. They are from Sydney's south-west. I met them in 2011 for the first time, shortly after I was elected, when he was the president of the local RSL branch. I heard Ray talking on the radio today about this year's ceremony and being excited about being able to see mates again post-COVID. Mr and Mrs James, their children and their grandchildren are great servants to the community and are active in veterans' rights and veterans' affairs. They do great work and have friends on both sides of politics. While I am not breaching any secrets, Mrs James was once on the ALP ticket for the Legislative Council. For the record, she would have made a great MP. I thank the House for its consideration and commend the motion.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (17:48): I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for moving this motion so that Remembrance Day will be remembered in this House. I support the motion. I was privileged to take part in the Remembrance Day service held today at 11.00 a.m. at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. I was pleased to see the leaders of our nation there. Everyone from the Governor down took part in that service. Anzac Day has a special meaning for me personally because my father, who was a British citizen, volunteered in World War I to join the Gloucestershire Regiment of the British Army when he was only 17. It was not very long after joining up that he was fighting the Germans in France. Soon after that, he was machine-gunned by the Germans and sent back to the United Kingdom to a military hospital to be taken care of. Thankfully, he recovered. But, to my surprise, when he was well, he was sent back to France again and so the Germans had a second, thankfully unsuccessful, go at him.

My father was only 17 when he volunteered to join the Gloucestershire line infantry regiment in the United Kingdom. When I turned 17, I volunteered for National Service. I went to the army recruiting depot and said, "I wish to volunteer for National Service." I was told, "You don't have to volunteer. You will be called up when you turn 18." I said, "Well, I want to go now." They obliged me by taking me straight into National Service at age 17. I enjoyed those years in the 13th National Service Training Battalion Ingleburn. It was a very poignant moment when the *Ode of Remembrance* was spoken at the service at the Cenotaph today. I assume the moving words of the ode will be spoken many times today:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Yes, we remember them. Thank you.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (17:52): Remembrance Day is a sacred day for our country, as we honour the sacrifice of our service men and women and, importantly, their families. It is also a time to remember the extraordinary deeds of the thousands of Australian men and women who ensured our nation's security and freedom that each and every one of us enjoys here today in this great country. It is the time to not only reflect on the end of the war but also commemorate those who fought for the nation that we are fortunate to call home and for doing what our country asked of them and enduring the best and, unfortunately, the worst of humanity.

For many, Remembrance Day serves as the commemoration of a loved one who has served, sometimes more recently, or a friend who has passed away in service. Remembrance Day is also an opportunity for us to acknowledge and thank the numerous volunteer organisations and associations, and the individuals who keep these groups alive, for their work each and every day to honour and remember our service men and women.

Legacy, the Returned & Services League of Australia, Australian War Widows, and Soldier On are just a few of the organisations that are dedicated to caring for our veterans and the families of deceased and injured veterans, including their dependants. I also acknowledge the numerous community organisations that work tirelessly as volunteers to keep the memory of our service men and women alive—organisations like the Granville Historical Society.

I had the opportunity to visit their museum a couple of years ago, to meet with the volunteers and see firsthand the work they are doing to preserve the history of Granville, including producing the Granville Roll of Honour. The honour roll and the book the Granville Historical Society has published tell the story of the soldiers who enlisted from Granville and include details of where they served, when and where they died and as much information as could be obtained from service records. Over many years the historical society gathered this information, like many organisations do across communities throughout our State, with the aim of answering the questions that a descendent of someone who died in war would ask. I thank all the volunteers at the Granville Historical Society and across New South Wales who are doing valuable work.

In paying my respects today and honouring the legacy of those who served, I do so with immense pride and a great sense of gratitude. I also acknowledge the work of the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson during his time as director of the Australian War Memorial. He worked tirelessly in that role to not only raise awareness of the War Memorial but also make it interactive and welcoming for people of all generations and backgrounds. One of the initiatives that he introduced was the cleaning of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Back in 2013 he made the statement that he found it to be a "transformative, spiritual and emotional experience", which is why he then invited all members of Parliament to participate in the cleaning. I understand that he would quite regularly go out there on his own and get down on his hands and knees, or on his stomach, to clean the tomb. The other thing he introduced was the selling of poppy badges which can be worn on Remembrance Day each year—as I am today—but also throughout the year. I thank the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson for his work. I honour all those who have served our country and who have given us the freedoms that we are able to enjoy. Lest we forget.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (17:55): I make a contribution to debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Shayne Mallard on this Remembrance Day. The history of the First World War, Australia's most lethal conflict, in which 61,630 Australians died, was also a history of a significant domestic conflict. I listened to the contribution of the Hon. Natalie Ward. While the recollection of the First World War has now led to great unity within our community, at the time it was actually a bitterly divisive conflict domestically. Australia was split on the question of conscription. We had two referendums on the issue. The first was held on 28 October 1916, with the result that the proposition to support conscription was defeated 1,160,033 votes to 1,087,557 votes. The second referendum was held on 20 December 1917. The proposition was again defeated, 1,181,747 votes to 1,015,159 votes.

One of the key participants in that domestic conflict was a person by the name of Arthur Rae. Arthur Rae was a Labor member of Parliament in New South Wales. He was in fact one of the first in the cohort of Labor members elected in 1891. He was defeated in the following election. He then went on to serve as a senator, elected in 1910 and defeated in the following election. He was then elected again as a senator in the 1920s for another term. Arthur Rae played a pivotal role in the conscription conflict. He was a lifelong opponent of war. He was the person who moved the resolution to commit the Labor Party to fight against conscription in that referendum, a decision that led to the expulsion of the then Labor Premier, William Holman, and the then Labor Prime Minister, William Hughes.

But Arthur Rae also had a significant personal investment in the conflict. He had five sons and two daughters. Three of his sons were of military age. He had twins, Charles and William, and their younger brother, Donald. William and Donald enlisted on 28 December 1915. Charles enlisted on 27 December 1916. Two of his sons died as a consequence of the war. William served with the 20th Australian Infantry Battalion and was killed in action on the opening day of the Battle of Amiens. Donald Rae served with the 19th Battalion. He was taken prisoner at Hangard Wood on 12 April 1918. He was repatriated to Britain on 11 December 1918. Relevant to this day and age in a pandemic era, he died a month later of pneumonia during the influenza pandemic. When Donald Rae was buried, his father chose the inscription on his grave. It reads:

Through fire, wounds, prison
Came safely
Then gazing homeward
Died.

On Remembrance Day we remember those who fought and those who fell, but we also remember those who fought for peace.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (18:00): In 1916 the great British poet Robert Graves published his extraordinary poem *A Dead Boche*. A "dead Boche" is French slang for a dead German. The poem tells the story

of a British soldier in World War I searching for German greatcoats among those killed to keep his own troops warm at night. That macabre task was not one that he enjoyed. The poem reads:

To you who'd read my songs of War
And only hear of blood and fame,
I'll say (you've heard it said before)
"War's Hell!" and if you doubt the same,
Today I found in Mametz Wood
A certain cure for lust of blood:
Where, propped against a shattered trunk,
In a great mess of things unclean,
Sat a dead Boche; he scowled and stunk
With clothes and face a sodden green,
Big-bellied, spectacled, crop-haired
Dribbling black blood from nose and beard.

War is hell. The horror and carnage inflicted by the First World War resulted in one of the bloodiest periods of human history. Today is Remembrance Day, a day honouring the fact that at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918 the guns fell silent on that war to end all wars. Remembrance Day marks the official ceasefire between the Allied and German forces. It has become an important moment to stop and reflect on not only that war but on all conflicts in which Australia has fought since. It is a day when we pay tribute to those who have served and who continue to serve our nation in uniform; when we acknowledge the bravery, the valour and the sacrifice of those who fight in our name; and when we thank our diggers for laying the fundamental foundations of the nation that we have become.

It is also a day to remember exactly what it was we sent our young soldiers into—a world filled with bodies, bullets and blood. Sometimes I feel that we have a tendency to camouflage the carnage with euphemisms and inspiring stories of individual heroism and broad brushstrokes of duty and patriotic pride. We must not do only that. That only serves to betray those who died on the field or who have lived with haunting pain for the rest of their lives. On Remembrance Day it is important that alongside the stories of bravery, valour and pride, we also remember the stark reality of war.

Recently I have been reading an extraordinary book, Paul Ham's *Passchendaele: Requiem for Doomed Youth*, a detailed and horrifying, stark and sobering retelling of what happened through that interminable campaign of attrition. As written in the book, it "shows how men on both sides endured, with a very real awareness, that they were being gradually, deliberately wiped out." Through almost the entire book the author lets the reader draw their own conclusions about that campaign by using objective fact and extemporaneous stories and by allowing the voices of the soldiers to come through in their own words. The author quotes a Sergeant Wilson trudging through the battleground three days after the first battle:

"I have never seen such destruction," Sergeant Wilson says. "It is hard to imagine that 4 years ago peaceful people tilled this same soil and that it was one of the most prosperous districts in Europe. Now, as I saw it today, well it's simply an awful nightmare, a hideous reeking swamp seething with living (and dead) beings. A place that stamps itself on one's mind and memory like a red hot iron."

He gives voice to a British gunner who spoke of the capture of Passchendaele:

Fifty square miles of slime and filth from which every shell that burst threw up ghastly relics, and raised stench too abominable to describe; and over all, and dominating all, the never-ending, ear-shattering artillery fire and the sickly reek of the deadly mustard gas.

I do not quote those men to shock and wallow in the grotesque. I do it to remember them, and the thousands and thousands of those with whom they served, and to acknowledge their brutal experiences and their reality. For every soldier who returned home after the Great War and after every single conflict since, it has been incredibly difficult. Many shut down, never speaking of that part of their lives, because they simply could not relive the trauma and the horror all over again. Too often those of us at home who did not see the conflict have failed too. Too often we have shied away from the gory details. Too often we have withheld the help and support that we owe to every single man and woman who has stood on the front line of Australia's defence.

I acknowledge that as a society we have improved a great deal on that front, but I believe we still have a long way to go. We can only truly support those who return home from the front lines if we are honest with ourselves and each other about war and what it is, and if we are honest about the hell that those who survived and those who did not went through. On 11 May 1922 King George V, a man in whose name so many fought and died, visited Tyne Cot War Cemetery in Belgium, the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world. I can think of no better way to conclude my remarks than to simply quote the words he spoke that day. He said:

We can truly say that the whole circuit of the Earth is girdled with the graves of our dead. In the course of my pilgrimage, I have many times asked myself whether there can be more potent advocates of peace upon Earth through the years to come, than this massed multitude of silent witnesses to the desolation of war.

Lest we forget.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (18:07): In reply: It has indeed been a moving hour-and-a-half of Remembrance Day tributes. I thank the members who spoke on the motion that I had the great honour to humbly move on behalf of the House. Today across the nation at memorials and in Parliaments, council chambers and schools, observations on Remembrance Day have been made. As the Hon. Penny Sharpe observed, in recent years there seems to be greater awareness and poignancy about Remembrance Day than in previous years. It has become something that we reflect more upon. We reflect on the sacrifice of those who have served in all the conflicts in which Australia has been involved and of those who serve today. We reflect on those who pay the ultimate price and on those who returned injured and damaged. We also reflect on the families who stayed behind and who dealt with significant damage and trauma for many years, perhaps lifetimes, afterwards.

The Hon. Mark Latham made a good contribution. He spoke about warnings made in the past about the future and contemporary issues. All members' contributions were welcome and very good. In no particular order, I acknowledge those members: the Hon. Penny Sharpe, Leader of the Opposition; Minister Don Harwin; the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane; Minister Damien Tudehope; the Hon. Mark Banasiak; the Hon. Scott Farlow; the Hon. Natalie Ward; the Hon. Walt Secord; the Hon. Mark Latham; Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile; the Hon. Anthony D'Adam; the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones; and the Hon. Ben Franklin. The message today is that we pay tribute to and remember all those who have served and sacrificed. I commend the motion to the House. Lest we forget.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

INSURANCE AND CARE NSW

Further Return to Order

The CLERK: According to the resolution of the House of 20 October 2021, I table documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the administration of Insurance and Care NSW, received this day from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of the documents.

Claim of Privilege

The CLERK: I table a return identifying those of the documents received this day that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Return to Order

The CLERK: According to the resolution of the House 20 October 2021, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding proposed changes to infrastructure contributions, received this day from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of the documents.

Claim of Privilege

The CLERK: I table a return identifying those of the documents received this day that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

WATERSW CHAIR APPOINTMENT

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1443 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (18:10): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1443 outside the order of precedence for today, of which I have given notice, by omitting "21 days" and inserting instead "28 days", and inserting "created since 1 January 2020" after "the following documents".

Leave granted.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 28 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 January 2020 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasurer, Treasury, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and WaterNSW relating to the consideration and appointment of the Chair of WaterNSW:

- (a) all documents relating to the consideration and appointment of the Chair of WaterNSW; and
- (b) 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.

WaterNSW is obviously quite important and is increasingly large and active, managing multimillion- and billion-dollar projects. It does important work. The chair resigned earlier this year and a member of the board, Ms Kaye Dalton, was appointed as an interim chair. The initial communication from WaterNSW was that that was occurring while a process was being undertaken to find a new chair, which was very ordinary, except sometime after that announcement was made Ms Dalton was appointed as the interim chair for a period extending, I believe, until 2024. It has gone from a relatively ordinary process where a chair resigns, there is a process, someone is acting in the role and someone else is found, to the appointment of an interim chair for quite an extended period of time.

I am interested to know a little bit more about what is happening on the board of WaterNSW and what has occurred in relation to the appointment of the chair. It could well be that Ms Dalton was keen to do the role for some period of time but only wanted to have the title "interim chair"; we do not know. It would be useful to find out because, as I said, WaterNSW is doing some pretty big projects. I will say one other thing in relation to why I have moved this motion as a call for papers under Standing Order 52. I have tried so many times, as many members in this House have, to use questions on notice and applications under the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] to obtain information about what is going on. If something looks a little bit unusual and a member wants some more information about something, it seems like a pretty ordinary thing that any member of Parliament might want to do, whether they are in the Government or the Opposition. They might want to have a bit of transparency, access to papers and access to documents.

The answers that you get are just unbelievable. You cannot use questions on notice to find out anything that is going on. As we have seen in the recent example highlighted by my colleague the Hon. Mick Veitch, Ministers will literally give answers they know are incorrect to questions on notice. There is no point using them. Applications for information under GIPAA are almost as difficult. One example is that I recently tried to do an application for information under GIPAA in the Department of Customer Service, which is Minister Dominello's department. Don't we hear a lot from him about being the Minister for Digital! He is so woke with his iPads, iPods, computer work and selfies where he is holding up bits of paper and saying, "I hate paper!"

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am prepared to withdraw the comments about Minister Dominello, if that will help.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): I will hear the point of order first.

The Hon. Wes Fang: The member was making aspersions against a member of the other place. If she is going to do so, she should do so by way of substantive motion.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): I uphold the point of order.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I withdraw those comments. I will go back to my efforts to put in an application for information under GIPAA with the Department of Customer Service, which does not have anything to do with Minister Dominello's social media activity. You cannot pay for a GIPAA application over the internet through the Department of Customer Service, that great Service NSW department. You have to use electronic funds transfer. You have to go into your own bank account and transfer \$30 into the Department of Customer Service bank account. Presumably because there is quite a bit of money going in and out of the Department of Customer Service bank account, the department said, "You didn't pay for your GIPAA application."

I had paid my \$30. I had to go back into my bank, take a screenshot of my little \$30 payment and send that back over to the Department of Customer Service. And then, of course, it acknowledged that I had paid for my GIPAA. This was weeks after I had put it in. I understand that the objection members sometimes have to requests under Standing Order 52 is that they are a lot of work. Well, if the GIPAA process and the questions on notice process were anywhere near adequate, we would not be here. This is only the second Standing Order 52 motion I have ever moved; I do not use them that much. But I am giving up on the other processes, and that is why this information is being sought via Standing Order 52.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (18:17): Regardless of the content of the member's speech, the Government will not oppose the motion.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (18:17): The Hon. Rose Jackson has indicated that she is seeking information that she has struggled to get elsewhere. She has completely struggled with the system of applications for information under GIPAA and questions on notice. As well, many community members are unable to get what they need to get through GIPAA applications and also have to pay a lot of money for that. It is not just \$30; it comes back and there is a heap more money there. I trust that most members, when they do their orders for papers under Standing Order 52, have information that they have heard could be useful in terms of exposing situations within the Government, or they are just increasing transparency, because the Government could definitely do with a lot more of that. We have shown that Standing Order 52 can uncover great things, so I support the motion wholeheartedly and I look forward to seeing what it says about the appointment of the WaterNSW chair.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

SPECIAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE DRUG "ICE"

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1349 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (18:19): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 4 March 2020 the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" which was established by Premier Gladys Berejiklian, released its final report containing 109 recommendations;
 - (b) the report is a comprehensive, evidence-based document that resulted from large-scale consultation with all stakeholders across New South Wales including experts in the field, service providers, persons with lived experience, community members and many others;
 - (c) the Government has failed to respond to the recommendations of this inquiry 18 months after the report's release;
 - (d) the Government's "tough on drugs" approach has failed, with levels of illicit drug use consistently increasing in New South Wales;
 - (e) drug rehabilitation services are woefully inadequate in New South Wales, particularly in regional areas; and
 - (f) that the war on drugs causes far more harm than drugs themselves and unfairly targets lower socio-economic and Aboriginal populations.
- (2) That this House recognises the statement made on 7 October 2021 by an alliance of peak health bodies including the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and the Australian Medical Association (NSW) that the Government's delay in enacting the recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" is costing lives and damaging communities and calls on the Government to:
 - (a) develop an evidence-based whole-of-government alcohol and other drugs policy and a drug action plan as recommended in the commission's report, in consultation with experts in addiction medicine, general practitioners and other relevant health practitioners;
 - (b) significantly increase funding of evidence-based alcohol and other drugs services so that everyone seeking treatment can get it; and
 - (c) ensure personal addiction issues are treated as health and social issues, not as criminal ones.
- (3) That this House calls on the Government to adopt all 109 recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice".

This motion calls for the Government to adopt all 109 recommendations of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice". Three years ago this Government, under former Premier Gladys Berejiklian, commissioned an inquiry into the drug ice. There were very good reasons for that. Crystal methamphetamine was at that time, and still is, having an enormous impact, particularly in regional New South Wales. That was three years ago. The Government at that time knew it had to do something and was willing to put its faith into experts to come up with recommendations for what was needed, because what it was doing was clearly failing. So Professor Dan Howard, SC, a former president of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in New South Wales and Crown prosecutor for 15 years, was commissioned to lead the special commission of inquiry.

Professor Howard went above and beyond his duty. The inquiry heard from over 160 witnesses, including first responders; nurses; doctors; lawyers; teachers; experts in mental health, drug treatment and rehabilitation; current and former police officers; and those with lived experience of drug addiction. The commission produced a comprehensive 1,200-page report with evidence-based recommendations on how to reduce the harms of not just

methamphetamines but all drug use. The report has been widely embraced by the drug and alcohol sector, and the New South Wales Bar Association, among others, has endorsed all 109 of the report's recommendations. Commissioner Howard said that the State's approach to drug use was profoundly flawed and that reform would require political leadership and courage.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard was quick to provide an interim response, rejecting recommendations for more supervised drug use rooms, drug testing, prison needle exchanges, ending the use of drug-detecting dogs, as well as decriminalisation of drug use. A response to the further 104 recommendations was promised to come by the end of 2020. But, 18 months later, this Government still has not responded to the commissioner's report. Australia's peak medical groups, including the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian Medical Association (NSW), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, have also strongly criticised the Government's lack of response. They say that the Government's long-term drug policy failures are costing lives and damaging communities. That is what the special commission of inquiry found as well.

The isolation, uncertainty and anxiety caused by the pandemic and prolonged lockdowns have seen substance use escalate in our community. The most recent report of wastewater monitoring, which is from July of this year, has found that ice use in Sydney has for the first time outstripped that in regional New South Wales, and it is increasing, which indicates that our current approach is failing. The tough-on-drugs approach, which is our current approach, has not and will not address this health crisis, because treating a health crisis as a criminal one does nothing to address the underlying causes of substance abuse and addiction.

I urge members to read at least some of the commission's report if they have not done so. Yes, 1,200 pages is a lot, but parts of the report has families' experiences. People with lived experience gave heartbreaking testimony, calling for a different approach. Recently Professor Dan Howard wrote an opinion piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, calling on Premier Perrottet to have some political courage and to enact the recommendations in the report. The former commissioner's frustration is palpable. He has prepared a comprehensive blueprint for reducing the harms caused by drugs, upon the recommendation of the Government, which has gone a decade without an effective policy about alcohol and other drugs.

Tim O'Connor, who retired last month after almost a decade as head of criminal investigations at the New South Wales Crime Commission, said last week that the entrenched approach to drugs was too reliant on policing and called for a greater emphasis on harm minimisation to turn users away from the products. He said, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." I note that the Opposition is moving an amendment to the motion. I will address that in my speech in reply. I urge members to support this very important motion.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (18:24): One Nation opposes this motion, which condemns the approach of being tough on drugs. Being soft on drugs is not going to work. Ice is the worst of drugs. It turns people into animalistic zombies, like something out of *World War Z*. You see the behaviour of people on ice: It is subhuman. While we can feel sorry for those with ice addictions, to have anything but a tough-on-drugs approach is an act of folly. That drug is evil and destroys families and communities. My view—I am sure you share it, Mr Assistant President—is that we should lock up people who sell the drug ice and throw away the key. That is one way of dealing with it. I would go in the opposite direction of this disastrous report and get tougher on those who peddle and sell it on the streets. I would get the addicts into the rehabilitation programs so that they can rid themselves of this scourge. Perhaps, if The Greens did not spend so much time on publicly promoting drug use, we would be in better shape in New South Wales. The motion should be rejected. Those who think you can have any approach other than being tough on drugs should understand that giving a green light to this stuff will cause a social and humanitarian disaster.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 8.00 p.m.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (20:00): On behalf of the Opposition, I speak in support of the motion. I thank Ms Cate Faehrmann for bringing it to the House. In particular, I thank the team, including Dan Howard, who delivered the ice inquiry report. With four volumes, 109 recommendations and months and months of evidence taken from November 2018 until the day it was delivered on 28 January 2020, the sheer breadth of the material covered is remarkable. It was delivered to the Government but not acted upon. That is a real pity. The Opposition puts on record its deep concern that this well-researched and well put together inquiry has not been acted on by the Government. I recognise, as the report does, the impact that ice is having across New South Wales. Despite the fact that methamphetamine use in the city is now outstripping that in regional areas, the impact on country towns is absolutely undeniable and a real concern that Opposition MPs talk about to people across New South Wales. The Opposition seeks to amend the motion. I move:

That the question be amended by deleting paragraph (3) and inserting instead:

(3) That this House:

- (a) calls on the Government to hold a drug summit in the same format as the 1999 drug summit that brings together MPs, health and medical experts, police, drug user organisations and people with lived experience, families and other stakeholders to build consensus on the way New South Wales deals with drug misuse; and
- (b) notes that the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" has made it clear that our drug laws are not working and it is clear there is a need for significant, holistic drug law reform.

Rather than simply endorse the 109 recommendations, our amendment calls on the Government to hold a drug summit that will allow people to get together and take a step forward. In the foreword to the ice inquiry report there is a good reflection on the success of the 1999 summit, which I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Twenty years ago, to address the severe problems caused by a different illicit drug, heroin, the NSW Government held a Drug Summit. The Government determined upon and carried out an aggressive 'Plan of Action', by which it invested much political will and a significant amount of funding, including on innovative programs recommended by the summit. As a result, NSW was regarded as a world leader in drug policy and reform. The results of its various initiatives yielded substantial rewards: outstanding gains in the fight against HIV and other blood-borne viruses, including hepatitis B and C; expansion of the methadone program; expansion of needle and syringe programs; and the increased availability of naloxone for reversing heroin overdose. NSW also established a Medically Supervised Injecting Centre — I (one of the first in the world — which has more than proven its worth in saving lives, preventing the spread of blood-borne viruses and providing harm reduction measures, education and support for people who inject drugs. A Youth Drug Court was also introduced and the successful Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment diversionary program was established.

Many of these programs were criticised at the time as being too radical, and their implementation required leadership and no small amount of courage on the part of the Government. The dramatic reduction in harms from heroin use and dependence that resulted are now widely regarded as a triumph of public health policy.

Unfortunately, since 2006 the momentum of drug and alcohol policy and program development in NSW has stagnated considerably — so much so that NSW currently has no formal drug policy plan in place. The last NSW Health Drug and Alcohol Plan expired a decade ago.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I thank members for granting leave because that excerpt puts on record the view of the ice inquiry about the success of that drug summit, which we see as the model. The evidence is now on the table as a result of the inquiry, but it also takes getting people together to take a step forward—having everyone around the table who has strong views, who has to implement these laws and who is affected by these laws. That is what our amendment calls for.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (20:03): The Government does not support the motion moved by Ms Cate Faehrmann. We have previously publicly stated that we are currently in the process of finalising responses to the inquiry into the drug ice. Although the inquiry was commissioned in 2018 and reported back on in 2020, the Government provided an interim response in March 2020. We made it clear that we were reviewing all 109 recommendations in detail and, as the mover of the motion said, it was a complex report and quite detailed. At the time we made it clear that we do not support five of the recommendations—namely, recommendation 51 in relation to additional medically supervised injecting centres, recommendation 53 and recommendation 54 in relation to pill testing, recommendation 80 in relation to ceasing the use of drug detection dogs and recommendation 97 in relation to needle syringe programs and correctional centres.

As I said, the Government is finalising its report. We are committed to developing meaningful and substantial reforms to the inquiry's final report, which recognises the deep harm caused by illicit drugs and, more importantly, putting community safety first. We have announced two initiatives since the report came out, including a \$7.5 million funding boost to drug and treatment services in Dubbo—that funding will be used to establish a purpose-built facility for withdrawal management and residential rehabilitation; and an investment of \$27.9 million over four financial years to expand the Drug Court of NSW to Dubbo. As members know, the Drug Court is currently at Sydney, Parramatta and Toronto. It is a multi-agency response to drug-related offending. The court has proven to be effective at driving down crime and the intensive rehabilitation that it provides costs less by reducing offenders' need to go to prison. We do not support the Opposition's amendment to refer to a summit for the main reason that the special commission of inquiry was extensive enough, with over 250 submissions. I thank all those individuals and organisations that came forward, and I look forward to the Government finalising its report.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (20:06): I add my voice in support of the motion of my colleague Cate Faehrmann and endorse her contributions. I thank her for bringing the motion before the House. On 4 March 2020

the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice", established by former Premier Berejiklian about 12 months before, finally reported to the Government with 109 recommendations. Before the ink was even dry, critical recommendations from the Premier's own hand-picked inquiry were rejected without even cursory examination. For example, key things like finally getting pill testing at music festivals, which all the evidence shows will save lives. Without even spending a moment to consider it, it was rejected out of hand. Because of the politics of that decision, we know that people's lives will be lost, especially young people.

It is now more than a year and a half since the recommendations—which were miles away from radical—were handed to the Government. Those recommendations said, "Stop putting people into jail for personal drug use. Find an option outside of the criminal justice system. Do not criminalise addiction." Surely that is something we could rally around, especially now that we have all of the evidence to show how the war on drugs is unwinnable. If members want proof positive that the war on drugs is unwinnable, they do not have to accept the position put by a Greens MP or the cannabis law reform advocates; they can just listen to the former NSW Crime Commissioner, who is now on record saying that despite decades of work, thousands of people put in jail and billions of dollars spent on police, intercepts and jails, the war on drugs is lost and unwinnable.

If we want a policy position that sees billions of dollars handed to organised crime and that sees bikie gangs set the standards for the quality control of drugs—if we want a system that will empower crime and put at risk young people's lives across the State—we choose the current war on drugs. I commend my colleague for bringing this motion and I condemn the Government for failing to implement the 109 recommendations for core reform.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (20:09): I support the motion moved by Ms Cate Faehrmann and the amendment moved by my colleague the Hon. John Graham. It is not good enough to say, in response to this motion, that the Government is considering its position on the ice inquiry. The fact that it has taken so long for it to do so is why this motion has been moved. This motion would not have been moved a year ago. We would have given the Government a reasonable amount of time to get across the issue. But that is not what has happened. This inquiry was commissioned by the former Premier herself. It did not come out of nowhere. She asked for it to occur. It did a substantial body of work, as has been noted, visiting regional communities and talking to many different groups, families, advocates and experts. It delivered a comprehensive report but we have heard nothing from the Government.

This issue has not come out of nowhere. Even the issues in the report were not new. It was not as though the ice inquiry findings were somehow radically different from the body of work that has been building up decade after decade about how our current approach to drug policy is not working. It is clear that the politics of this issue are too difficult for the Government, and that is a real shame. It is a real shame that the former Premier gave people and families hope that the Government was interested in doing something other than jailing their sons and daughters who had tragically become addicted to drugs. The Government was interested and the people told their stories. They shared their stories of addiction and how hard it is to access treatment in regional New South Wales. People said, "Help me, please. I don't want to be a mum addicted to drugs who can't be there for my kids. I don't want to live my life like that. I want treatment." And the Government's response is that it is not available. People are crying out for help and it is not available.

The Government gave people hope. They told their stories to the special commission of inquiry. The report came down and since then there has been absolutely nothing. So it is frustrating not just for the experts and advocates who care about this issue—it is very frustrating for them because they know that change needs to occur—but also for the families and other people who are being hurt by our current approach and who know another approach is better. There is no doubt about that. The special commission of inquiry makes that absolutely clear, and yet nothing has happened. I call on the Government in the strongest possible terms to get its act together. We have seen a little more activity from Minister Speakman recently. There is a bit of a flurry in the Attorney General's office. Now is the time. Let's get the response before the Parliament and help the families who are crying out for it.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (20:12): I support the motion brought by Ms Cate Faehrmann, which calls out the Government's failure to respond to a genuine social crisis in New South Wales. As The Greens candidate in 2015, I remember being asked to participate in a forum at Sanctuary Point in the Shoalhaven. A mother put it together in a desperate plea to raise public awareness of the impact that ice addiction was having on her family and community. It was a really difficult process to participate in, hearing the anguish of families who could get no support, hearing how children were being lost to organised crime and bikie gangs, how they were being roped into a life of crime as a result of their addiction and how, when they turned to the health system at the end of the day, after some primary care there was absolutely nothing available locally in terms of rehabilitation and support.

It seemed absolutely hopeless, and in reality very little has changed for our South Coast community since then. The impact of ice remains the same. The special commission of inquiry made important findings and recommendations that could address those concerns. It is disappointing that the Government has not acted to

address them in a meaningful way. It is absolutely clear that the war on drugs has failed and that the people who now suffer the consequences are families, kids and communities. It now has a multi-generational impact. There is an opportunity here to act on the evidence base from the special commission of inquiry. This motion calls out the Government's failure but the Government has an opportunity to step up and fix that. I hope it does.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (20:16): I will say a few words in opposition to some of the things that have been said tonight. I do not believe the war against drugs has failed but it will fail if we surrender and hand over to the drug crime bosses in New South Wales. Only this week we had a big capture of ice and other drugs imported from Ecuador—tonnes of them. So organised crime is very busy—

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order: Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has been sitting listening quietly to all other contributions and I suggest that Mr David Shoebridge and Ms Cate Faehrmann should do likewise while he is making his contribution. I ask that they both be called to order.

The PRESIDENT: Members will respect the member who has the call and is speaking. Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile has the call.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I am not surprised that members are a bit upset because this is the opposite of their philosophy and how they would tackle drug crimes in this State. That is why I put on record that there are members of this House who do not agree with those propositions but who want to win the war and save our young people from drugs as far as is humanly possible. I am quite happy to have an inquiry into ice. That is no problem.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (20:17): I was not going to speak in this debate but I take up the point raised by Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile. Yes, the ice inquiry was important but it will be a complete waste if, after all the time, effort, expert advice and opinion, and work by stakeholders—and, indeed, by Professor Dan Howard, SC, who was the inaugural Mental Health Commissioner for this State and is a person of great standing and repute in the law and mental health—we do not take the ice report very seriously. It behoves us all to do so. Law enforcement officials are very keen to pursue the war on drugs, but when police commissioners and directors of public prosecutions retire they all give speeches about how the resources that we allocate in that war are misdirected and we are not getting to the pitch of the ball.

Personally, I have profoundly ambivalent views about drug law reform generally, but I recognised the compelling case for legalising medicinal cannabis during my personal experience with the work of the parliamentary committee inquiry process. As a former staffer to the Attorney General of New South Wales, I was at the Drug Summit in 1999. I saw the very important work that body did by bringing together experts and stakeholders in a non-partisan way and trying to work through the issues diligently and dispassionately to find some common ground and come up with real, practical solutions that do the very thing that Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile advocated—save our children from the dangers of drugs. But just saying "no" is not going to work. It is not human nature.

We all know that young people, particularly young men, take risks as their brains are developing. They are hardwired by biology to do that. Often that will involve making bad choices. That should not ruin them for life. I am not saying or suggesting that we should take a drug liberalisation approach, but we should take a harm minimisation approach. Let us be rigorously hard-nosed and pragmatic about this. It is the very definition of futility to do the same thing that does not work over and over again. We have to think and do something a little different if we want to achieve a different result. Professor Howard has given us a road map. I am not saying that every recommendation has to be fully implemented, but the substance and the body of it has to be otherwise we will fail yet again.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (20:20): In reply: I thank all of the members who spoke on this motion. I appreciate their passion about this issue. Let us remember that this motion is about calling for the Government to implement all of the recommendations from an inquiry that the former Premier asked for. She asked Professor Dan Howard to undertake a commission of inquiry to look at the terrible scourge, as they called it at the time, of ice on our communities and to come up with recommendations after extensive consultation right across New South Wales with all of the experts, the people who are addicted and their families, legal experts, and health professionals. The report is 1,200 pages. Let us remember that at roughly the same time there was also the coronial inquest into those six terrible deaths at music festivals. What did the coroner come up with during that inquest? Pretty much the same recommendations around treating drug use as a health issue as opposed to a criminal one.

I note the contribution of the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones. She said that the Government had set all 109 recommendations, except for those five that were pretty much ruled out. A couple of members have talked tonight about the politics of the use of ice as opposed to the science and the facts around treating it as a health issue. The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones gave a political response. I understand and support Labor's call for a drug

summit. We had a drug summit about 22 years ago. We have seen the evidence around the harm of drugs play out as well as the research on what decriminalising drugs will do and other things that the inquiry recommended. The summit was a long time ago.

The commissioner made 109 recommendations to deal with drugs as a health issue to save lives. He brought together those people with lived experiences. We have seen this all over the world as well. We do not need another drug summit. We have heard so many experts and brought together many families. What we need now is courage and political leadership, which includes political parties saying where they clearly stand on drugs so that we can progress the legislation. I urge members to support the motion. I indicate that The Greens will not support the Labor Party's amendments because the time has come. Every time the Government does not act on the important recommendations which will save lives, we lose people.

The PRESIDENT: Ms Cate Faehrmann has moved a motion, to which the Hon. John Graham has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes13
Noes21
Majority.....8

AYES

Buttigieg (teller)
D'Adam (teller)
Donnelly
Field
Graham

Jackson
Mookhey
Moriarty
Primrose

Searle
Secord
Sharpe
Veitch

NOES

Amato
Boyd
Cusack
Faehrmann
Fang
Farlow
Franklin

Harwin
Khan
Latham
Maclaren-Jones
Mallard (teller)
Martin (teller)
Mitchell

Nile
Pearson
Poulos
Roberts
Shoebridge
Taylor
Tudehope

PAIRS

Houssos
Moselmane

Farraway
Ward

Amendment negatived.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion be agreed to. Is leave granted to ring the bells for one minute?

Leave granted.

The House divided.

Ayes5
Noes29
Majority.....24

AYES

Boyd
Faehrmann (teller)

Field
Pearson

Shoebridge (teller)

NOES

Amato
Buttigieg

Jackson
Khan

Poulos
Primrose

NOES

| | | |
|----------|------------------|----------|
| Cusack | Latham | Roberts |
| D'Adam | Maclaren-Jones | Searle |
| Donnelly | Mallard (teller) | Secord |
| Fang | Martin (teller) | Sharpe |
| Farlow | Mitchell | Taylor |
| Franklin | Mookhey | Tudehope |
| Graham | Moriarty | Veitch |
| Harwin | Nile | |

Motion negatived.

WARRAGAMBA DAM RAISING PROJECT

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1462 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (20:42): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the environmental impact statement [EIS] for the Warragamba Dam raising project was released for public consultation on 29 September 2021; and
 - (b) the Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall conducted a hearing on 8 November 2021 where a number of statements and allegations were made that raise questions about the integrity of the EIS, including:
 - (i) that the primary accredited assessor for the project resigned over concerns that directions from the consulting company preparing the EIS would put their accreditation at risk and requested their name be removed from the biodiversity assessment report;
 - (ii) expert analysis of threatened species impacts were watered down in the final EIS without justification;
 - (iii) multiple examples of selective editing of the final EIS to downplay environmental impacts of the project; and
 - (iv) cost estimates for options contained in the EIS lacked sufficient detail and justification to be able to be verified or explained.
- (2) That this House notes statements by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in the budget estimates hearing of Portfolio Committee No. 7 on 28 October that, "It would be my expectation that the department's report is based on accurate advice", and "that any concerns that are raised are properly investigated", and "the department can assure itself that there was not any impropriety in how that advice was created".
- (3) That this House calls on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to explain what investigations will be conducted into the claims raised in the inquiry hearings and what actions will be conducted by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to assure itself there was no impropriety in the creation of the EIS for the Warragamba Dam wall raising project.

Members are aware that I have been chairing an inquiry into the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall for some years now. The inquiry was established in 2019 largely with the purpose of interrogating the environmental impact statement [EIS] that, at the time, we expected was imminent. It is now nearly the end of 2021 and, in late September, the Government finally put the environmental impact statement out for public consultation. During the various hearings that we have had about this project over the past couple of years, and in the media reporting about the process and the project itself, there have been extensive leaks from within the project team raising serious concerns about the environmental assessments that contributed to the final EIS. We have seen both State and Commonwealth agencies being highly critical of the work that is being done by WaterNSW as the proponent, largely driven by Infrastructure NSW and, at a ministerial level, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, and Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres.

The degree of concern raised by stakeholders and officials within multiple agencies should in and of itself raise concerns. In the recent hearings that we have conducted now that the EIS is public, the committee heard troubling evidence from people who worked directly within the project team, who worked on the preparation of the environmental impact statement, who worked on the biodiversity assessments that fed into that process and who embarked on the field work that created the primary science that has informed it. We heard from the primary accredited assessor for the project that she effectively resigned over concerns about the quality of the information that was going into the final EIS at the direction of the lead consultant, being directed by the Government's project

team. She felt that her accreditation as a biodiversity assessor would be put at risk if she put her name to this report.

Another scientist claimed that their advice and the assessment, field work and analysis that they conducted about how this project would impact on certain threatened species was changed. The wording was changed to water down their findings in the final EIS. We heard that there were systemic changes to the wording of expert evidence in the final EIS that effectively watered down or diminished the suggested risks from the proponent about this project, particularly to upstream biodiversity. Fundamentally, this raises a question about the integrity of the environmental impact statement. That statement is now being considered by the planning department. The public has an opportunity to make submissions. It should concern us all that such serious allegations have been made.

When we consider them against the criticisms by State and Commonwealth agencies, I think it is appropriate that the Government explains how it is going to investigate these claims and ensure the integrity of this document. I note that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces made statements in budget estimates hearings in response to questions from me. He said, "It would be my expectation that the department's report is based on accurate advice." He went on to say that any concerns that are raised are properly investigated and he continued, "The department can assure itself that there was not any impropriety in how that advice was created." The Government has an opportunity here tonight to explain how the Minister intends to do that to ensure the integrity of this process.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (20:47): I say from the outset that the Government will not oppose the motion. We have nothing to hide here. As a member of the Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall who participated in the inquiry earlier this week, along with the Hon. Taylor Martin, I have sought through the committee—

The Hon. Wes Fang: What am I? Am I chopped liver, mate?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Thank you for that. You are not very helpful, Mr Fang.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Shayne Mallard has the call.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: As I was saying, I have sought a mechanism to allow the Government, and in particular WaterNSW, to respond to these serious allegations. They are serious allegations that have now been aired in this House as well as in the inquiry and in the media. I have sought a two-hour hearing that would allow government agencies to respond to those allegations and perhaps respond to other questions about the environmental impact statement. But I am told that there is no ability for the committee to reconvene this month and probably not for the rest of this year. That in itself is concerning. We now have this motion in the House.

The Government shares the concerns about the allegations that have been made. We support the motion and are pleased to advise the House of the action taken by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. It is important to know this. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment has written to WaterNSW and asked it to respond to the evidence put forward in the hearing by this Friday. The letter asks WaterNSW to outline any actions it has taken previously or is in the process of taking in response to the matters that have been raised. The department will consider any responses from WaterNSW as part of the rigorous assessment process. The department will also consider any relevant findings and recommendations made by the Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall once its report is released.

I did email Mr Justin Field today and I have been emailing the secretariat to try to organise questions on notice, at least to WaterNSW—I was unaware, by the way, that the Minister had made this response until tonight—to allow those allegations to be addressed. In all seriousness and fairness to witnesses, whether they be government departments or individuals, they have a right to natural justice under our code in this House. We have not been able to land at a point to have them come in to respond. It looks like it has been short. But my moves to have another couple of hours of hearings to hear from the Government and my moves to put the questions on notice have been surpassed by this action tonight and the Government's action in terms of asking for specific responses to the allegations, which I guess will then feed into the committee's hearing. The Government supports the motion and it wants to seek answers as well.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (20:50): I make a brief contribution in this debate. Like Mr Justin Field and the Hon. Shayne Mallard, I am also a member of that committee. In fact, I asked the questions of the former lead ecologist that elicited the evidence that has led to not only the media coverage but also, of course, the motion here tonight. Observers of the deliberations of the committee will also be very conscious that this has not come out of a vacuum. There was, in fact, quite significant coverage of these issues in March, although the name of the lead ecologist involved was not mentioned.

The significance of this evidence is that it really shines a strong light onto systemic flaws in this process in a situation where the consultant engaged by the proponent is a corporation and you have individuals working for that corporation. Science is not always black and white. You have the data you get from the field work and then the scientists have to interpret it. I understand that in a lot of situations there will be a spectrum of reasonable conclusions that scientists can draw from the data. But of course when you are dealing with the experts in the field you have to respect the actual point of view that they then express, and the way they express the evidence they have gathered and that they have analysed. The evidence was that not just the company, SMEC, but also the proponent, WaterNSW, were sending clear signals to the individual scientists about, "We don't like that language, which is too definite. We want it calculated differently," effectively going from "This will be an impact" or "This will cause loss of native species" to "There may be some negative impacts".

There were many examples given of that nature, not only from the lead ecologist but also from Mr Crates, the regent honeyeater specialist. He also gave evidence of his work and his interpretation of his work effectively being rewritten and watered down by the corporation for which he worked under contract to WaterNSW. WaterNSW, the proponent, actually massaged the information and the language. In the case of the lead ecologist, WaterNSW had the hide to still have her name on work that she clearly wished to be dissociated from because in her view it did not accurately reflect the data she had collected or analysed or expressed in her work. There is a fundamental flaw in the system that allows this. These assessors have to abide by a code of practice. They should be independent. There should be a blind selection, where the proponent pays but does not choose. We need to get to the bottom of this.

Mr Justin Field: Point of order: I did not want to interrupt the honourable member. Something has happened in the House and a few people are interested in talking about it. But if we could possibly get through this motion without further interruption, I think that would be useful.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (20:53): The Greens support this motion. At the heart of it is the fact that, once again, doubts are being cast about the ecological assessments undertaken for major projects in New South Wales. In fact, evidence is being brought forward as to whether those ecological assessments are actually being undertaken with integrity. The motion simply calls on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to explain what investigations will be conducted into the claims raised, which are of course allegations around whether these assessments have been undertaken with integrity.

I draw the attention of the House to a submission received by an inquiry into biodiversity offsets being undertaken by Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment, which pertains partly to the subject of the motion before the House. The committee received a submission from the Ecological Consultants Association of NSW [ECANSW] which, after outlining a range of substantive core issues at the heart of what is wrong with the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme, stated in its second-last paragraph:

ECANSW would also like to raise its concern about the way the NSW Government is handling the ecological assessment relating to the proposed Warragamba Dam wall extension.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: The submission goes on:

We note that the accredited assessor who produced the biodiversity development assessment report [BDAR] was asked to change their assessment (unclear whether this was driven by the Government or the Company itself) to downplay the impacts of the project on biodiversity loss relating to a Critically Endangered Species. We applaud the assessor for standing their ground, but it raises questions about how the NSW Government plays by its own rules, and/or the type of companies it is contracting to conduct its ecological assessments.

This submission of the Ecological Consultants Association of NSW, which represents a lot of ecological consultants, is raising concerns to our biodiversity offsets inquiry. I support the motion, which is calling on the Minister to explain what investigations he is conducting into this and the other matters. The Greens support the motion.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (20:56): In reply: I start by acknowledging all the members of the select committee who have been diligently participating in that inquiry process. Those members are the Deputy Chair, the Hon. Rod Roberts; the Hon. Adam Searle, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Shayne Mallard, the Hon. Wes Fang and the Hon. Taylor Martin. The committee put out a consensus interim report, which I think was very good and reflected very accurately the concerns that were raised by many stakeholders. I wanted to make sure that the contributions of all members to that inquiry were recognised up-front. I thank the Hon. Shayne Mallard for his response and an explanation of what the Minister is actually doing right now. It is appropriate to seek that explanation from the proponent.

Whilst I think that is appropriate, I do then wonder what fundamentally happens to make sure that the evidence base that has informed the environmental impact statement [EIS] has integrity. Across the board, from

multiple witnesses, there are now questions about the integrity of that translation of the prime scientific basis of the field work and the assessment and how that has come through to the EIS. The Government has publicly stated that it wants to build this project. It is the Government's policy to build this project. A government agency has hired a consultant to do the EIS to support the building of this project. But the experts who fed into this process are now saying that their work has effectively been misrepresented in that end document. That is the document that is supposed to be used by the planning department to judge whether or not this project should proceed, what conditions are in place and how the impacts are managed. If that document is wrong, the entire process could be seen by a lot of people to be a fraud.

Already this is an incredibly contentious issue. I do not think there was any opposition to calling the Government before the committee. In fact, the committee wants an entire day with the Government and to interrogate the EIS in detail. As all members know, finding the time and space to hold additional hearings has been a challenge. There is also the difficulty of not having the transcript until a month after the hearing and being unable to use that evidence base to challenge the Government directly. Those things have conspired together. However, I have certainly undertaken and tried to work with the secretariat to find the time. It may be beneficial to see what comes back from the planning Minister, based on his undertakings tonight. I thank all members for their contributions.

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

Motion agreed to.

Documents

GREATER SYDNEY WATER RESTRICTIONS

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1444 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (21:00): 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 between 1 December 2019 and 30 June 2020 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasurer, Treasury, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and WaterNSW relating to changes to water restrictions in the Greater Sydney region:

- (a) all documents relating to changes to water restrictions in the Greater Sydney region; and
- (b) 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.

This motion seeks the production of documents under Standing Order 52 relating to the easing of water restrictions, specifically relating to what occurred at the beginning of 2020. For a long time we were in drought and were subject to severe water restrictions, as was appropriate. Then the bushfires occurred. As many members know, bushfires are devastating for a range of reasons. They have a significant effect on our drinking water supply due to ash and other debris being washed into dams. After the drought broke, the dams were full of water but they were also full of a lot of other material. A debate followed about how to manage the contamination of the water post-bushfires and the fact that we were still living under severe water restrictions even though the drought had broken.

I want to get to the heart of the factors that motivated the decision-making at that time. Obviously, I am hopeful that the documents will reveal that the decision-making was motivated by the need to ensure the quality of drinking water in Sydney and in the regions at that time. I am concerned that other factors may have influenced the decision on whether to ease water restrictions at that time. For example, perhaps consideration was given to the reduction in dividends paid by Sydney Water to the New South Wales Government during significant and severe water restrictions because water use is down. Perhaps consideration of those kinds of elements went into decisions that should rightfully be made entirely on the grounds of the safety and quality of the drinking water. We will find out. I am sure it is devastating to see such cynicism in someone so young. I hope to be proved wrong. I hope the documents reveal a considered look at the environmental and water quality consequences. We will see. That is why I am moving this motion to call for papers under Standing Order 52.

I reiterate briefly the comments I made earlier. I do not regularly move motions calling for papers under Standing Order 52. This is the third one I have ever moved. I have genuinely tried to use other mechanisms that do not take up the time of this House to access information, but it simply does not work. The order would not be

necessary if information had been provided in response to questions on notice or when I paid for an application under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 [GIPAA]. I put my money on the table, propping up the coffers of the Government, to pay for a GIPAA application. I got absolutely screwed around and received nothing in response. The Government has no-one to blame for these kinds of orders under Standing Order 52 when we are beaten down and exhausted trying to use the other available mechanisms for accessing documents. That is why I am seeking these documents by way of a call for papers under Standing Order 52. I look forward to seeing what the documents reveal about this period in New South Wales.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (21:02): The Government will not oppose this Standing Order 52 call for papers.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (21:02): I support the motion. I will be fascinated to see what comes back. I have been very concerned about the Government's motivations regarding water restrictions, both on our way into drought and out of drought. I raised these very issues as the drought was worsening in 2018-19, because it seemed extraordinary to me that the Government was delaying introducing water restrictions in Sydney at the same time it was bringing forward the transfer of billions and billions of litres from the Shoalhaven, in fact bringing them forward ahead of what its metropolitan water strategy said. Whilst residents of the Shoalhaven were on water restrictions, Sydney residents were not as the drought was getting worse.

It is pretty clear when one looks at the mandate of Sydney Water and its statement of corporate intent, that the Government sees Sydney Water as a cash cow. Fundamentally, its motivations and its objectives as a corporation are to make money for the Government. It is not to save water, it is not to be efficient with water use, it is not to implement targets for recycling or personal or household water use, it is not to manage stormwater and do stormwater re-use projects, it is to make money for the Government. That being the mandate of the corporation, one can understand how one might end up with decisions where boosting the revenue for the corporation trumps water restrictions that can preserve water in times of drought, or investment in other water efficiency mechanisms that ensure we are not using water unnecessarily.

In the driest continent on earth, with climate change bearing down on us, having just experienced the challenge of the worst drought on record where inflows and levels in Sydney's catchments fell at a rate that we have never, ever seen, I think it is time for us to look at that mandate, whether it is appropriate, whether or not the public provider of water in Sydney is acting in the public interest and not in the interests of the revenue stream for this Government. I support the motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

THE EVEREST HORSERACE

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1395 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (21:08): I seek leave to amend private member's business item No. 1395 outside the order of precedence by inserting after paragraph (4):

- (5) This House calls on the Government to take action to ensure that the rules in relation to whipping of horses be enforced, including through the application of penalties for breaches of the Australian Rules of Racing.

Leave granted.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Accordingly, I move:

- (1) That this House notes that The Everest horserace, along with nine other horseraces, was held at Royal Randwick Racecourse on Saturday 16 October 2021.
- (2) That this House notes that Racing Australia's Australian Rules of Racing allow a racing horse to be whipped up to five times prior to the final 100 metres of the race, and with as much frequency as the jockey wishes in the final 100 metres of the race.
- (3) That this House notes that, according to the stewards report from Royal Randwick Racecourse, on 16 October 2021:
 - (a) during race events at Royal Randwick Racecourse on 16 October 2021, 12 jockeys breached whip usage rules;
 - (b) of 12 horses racing in The Everest race, six horses were whipped in excess of that which is permitted by the Australian Rules of Racing, including Eduardo, who was whipped nine times prior to the final 100 metres of the race; and

- (c) two horses experienced bleeding from both nostrils, which is caused by exercise-induced pulmonary haemorrhage, a condition where blood vessels rupture due to strenuous exercise and bleed into the lungs and airways.
- (4) That this House notes that:
 - (a) data compiled by the Coalition for the Protection of Racehorses shows that 149 horses died on Australian racetracks between 1 August 2020 and 31 July 2021;
 - (b) New South Wales had the highest death toll of any Australian State or Territory in this period, with 63 horses dying on New South Wales racetracks; and
 - (c) a horse died on an Australian racetrack an average of once every 2.5 days during this period.
- (5) This House calls on the Government to take action to ensure that the rules in relation to whipping of horses be enforced, including through the application of penalties for breaches of the Australian Rules of Racing.

Last month The Everest horserace, New South Wales' answer to the Melbourne Cup, tastelessly billed as the "world's richest race on turf", was held at Royal Randwick Racecourse. During the course of the day, four horses performed so poorly that concerns were raised by stewards as to the wellbeing of the horses, and it was declared necessary for their trainers to report back on how the horse recovered from the race. Two horses were declared lame, meaning they were experiencing enough pain to visibly alter their gait. One horse did not properly recover from post-race fatigue and was making abnormal noises while breathing. Two horses experienced bleeding from both nostrils, which is caused by exercise-induced pulmonary haemorrhage, a condition where blood vessels rupture due to strenuous exercise and bleed into the lungs and airways. Twelve horses were whipped more than is allowed under the Australian Rules of Racing.

Racing Australia's Australian Rules of Racing allow a racing horse to be whipped up to five times prior to the final 100 metres of the race and with as much frequency as the jockey wishes in the final 100 metres of the race. Over 10 per cent of horses raced at Randwick on The Everest day were whipped more than five times prior to the final 100 metres of their races. Of the 12 horses made to compete in The Everest race itself, half were whipped by their jockeys more than the rules allow. Despite this, however, only one of the 12 jockeys that could not adhere to those measly whipping rules faced any consequences at all.

In contrast, two trainers were fined for taking too long to declare who their jockey would be. Two of two instances where the stewards were inconvenienced resulted in fines, while only one of 12 instances of clear animal abuse resulted in a fine. Meanwhile, the owners, trainers and jockeys made \$18,455,200 in prize money from the "richest race on turf" and the nine other races at Randwick on the same day. The single fine issued for whipping constituted only 1.4 per cent of the prize money won by the abused horse's owner, trainer and jockey. In the horseracing industry animal cruelty literally pays.

Since I gave notice of this motion following The Everest in October, Randwick racecourse also hosted the Bentley Cup, which takes place on Melbourne Cup day and is designed to allow the racing and gambling industries in New South Wales to capitalise on Melbourne Cup mania. I make particular note of this because one horse raced on that day was killed after a fracture during the race. The average life span of a horse is between 25 and 30 years, but The Grinder was only five years old when he was killed. In the last racing year 149 horses were killed on racetracks across the country, 63 of which died in New South Wales. With one racehorse dying on a racetrack every 2½ days, The Grinder will no doubt be one of over 100 killed again this year.

It is no secret that The Greens abhor horseracing. It is commodified animal cruelty, earning the gambling industry billions of dollars from the literal blood of sentient beings bred, raised and killed for our entertainment. The Greens would like to see the industry shut down for good, but that is not what this motion is about. It is also no secret that The Greens oppose the continued use of whips in the racing industry and would like to see them banned altogether. But, again, this motion does not ask for a ban on whip use by the horseracing industry. Today I ask the Government to do the bare minimum. During budget estimates I asked the Minister responsible for racing, Kevin Anderson, what he thought of the fact that only one of the 12 jockeys who broke the Australian Rules of Racing on the day of The Everest faced any disciplinary action. He told me:

The current rules of racing and the codes of conduct I believe are appropriate ...

The Minister also told me that if codes are breached, then the penalties will apply. This motion calls on the Government to take action to ensure that the restrictions on the use of whips included in the racing rules are enforced, which means ensuring that penalties are actually applied when the rules are breached. How can the Government claim that it or the racing industry prioritises animal welfare when it will not ensure that the paltry welfare standards are even enforced? The least it can do is take responsibility for the cruelty it has endorsed by allowing the racing industry to continue. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (21:14): On behalf of the Government, I oppose the motion. We have to ask ourselves about The Greens and the types of motions they move. The Greens are fundamentally opposed to anything that resembles fun. They do not like racing. They do

not like clubs. They do not like fishing and, most importantly, they do not like barbecues. They do not like anything that the ordinary people of middle Australia enjoy. They want to shut down everything.

The racing industry pays the bills of about 30,000 people across New South Wales, more than half of whom live in regional New South Wales. That is nearly 30,000 people who can put food on the table, a roof over their head and send their kids to school because of the racing industry. This motion is not just an attack on Racing NSW; it is also an attack on 30,000 men and women who are employed in the racing industry. These are people who care passionately about their animals, and attempts to smear the industry as cruel are reprehensible. In my experience, the people who look after animals in this industry love their animals. Some of the great stories of the protection and welfare of animals are told by people in this industry who live so closely to their animals.

Racing NSW is established by the Thoroughbred Racing Act as the industry's controlling body and is responsible for the control, supervision and regulation of thoroughbred racing in New South Wales. It administers and enforces the *Rules of Racing NSW*, which include equine welfare provisions and bind all New South Wales racing industry participants. The rules of racing tightly control the use of whips, tongue ties and spurs, and they include conditions for design and specification and restrictions that limit their use during racing and training activities. Racing NSW can impose significant penalties on any individual found to have breached the rules of racing. Those penalties include prohibiting a person from attending race meetings, suspending or disqualifying a person from involvement in the industry and issuing fines of up to \$100,000.

In line with commitments made in the Animal Welfare Action Plan, the New South Wales Government is currently reviewing the animal welfare legislative framework to modernise and streamline it. The Everest was the first major event held in this State following the lockdown, with 10,000 guests and 2,000 staff making their way to Royal Randwick to shake off their lockdown blues. That is a great thing—not something that should be attacked and politicised in this Chamber. The motion undermines the regulation of thoroughbred racing in New South Wales and should be opposed by every sensible member of this House.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (21:16): I am guessing that Ms Abigail Boyd was not at The Everest.

Ms Abigail Boyd: No.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If she had been, she would have noticed that the whips are padded. These whips have been changed to be padded so as not to leave any welt or other injury on the rump of the horse. There are restrictive whip rules, even for the padded whip. Generally racehorses are treated very well. At one stage I had the interesting experience of inspecting the air-conditioned, luxurious, palatial barn built at Arrowfield Stud for Redoute's Choice. The retired stallion passed away and now Snitzel has moved into accommodation that I would say is even better than that provided by the native Eastern Suburbs landlord Mr David Shoebridge, the leader of The Greens. A lot of horses are living in better digs than those provided by the Shoe.

I do not think we should have too many worries about what happened at The Everest, or the treatment of racehorses under the piles of regulations in New South Wales. Racehorses certainly fare better than do horses in the wild. How do they go in the wild—for instance, at the Snowy Mountains, where it is The Greens' policy to slaughter and kill thousands of horses to look after the plants, the weeds and the ground-dwelling vermin? These beautiful animals, which are part of Australia's national heritage—the brumbies—are being killed. At one stage these beautiful horses were being shot from helicopters. The Greens did not raise one word of objection to that, yet The Greens complain in this House about a racehorse meeting they did not attend and about padded whips.

If we are fair dinkum when we say we love the horse, we should protect the brumbies in the Snowy Mountains, recognise the standards that apply in the racehorse industry and hope that even the landlords can lift their accommodation standards to match those of Arrowfield Stud and other studs where racehorses live the life of Larry. It must be said that this motion is upside down. It is all wrong. It is more Greens hypocrisy. If they want to do something for beautiful horses, they should stop the killing of them in the Snowy Mountains.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (21:19): I oppose the motion, and I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

(1) Omit paragraphs (1) and (2) and insert instead:

(1) This House notes that an independent study found the New South Wales thoroughbred racing industry:

- (a) generates 27,601 full-time equivalent jobs;
- (b) engages 49,000 individual participants; and
- (c) contributes \$3.6 billion to the New South Wales economy.

(2) That this House notes that:

- (a) The Everest was established in 2017, and today is the world's richest race;

- (b) The Everest, along with nine other horseraces, was held at Royal Randwick Racecourse on Saturday 16 October 2021, with a crowd of 10,000, the first major event after the COVID lockdown; and
 - (c) over 1,500 individual employees were engaged on Everest Day, including bar staff, security, camera crews, stable hands and jockeys.
- (3) That this House notes that:
 - (a) following a process of consultation with industry stakeholders and members of the public, in August 2009 the Australian Racing Board introduced a set of new rules to restrict the whipping of horses, including the use of only padded whips; and
 - (b) Racing Australia's Rules of Racing allow a race horse to be whipped up to five times prior to the final 100 metres of the race, and with as much frequency as the jockey wishes in the final 100 metres of the race.
- (2) Insert after paragraph (3):
 - (4) That this House notes that:
 - (a) under the Racing NSW's Rules of Racing, any horse diagnosed with bleeding from both nostrils is immediately stood down from racing for a period of three months; and
 - (b) in the event, of a second occurrence they are permanently banned from racing.
- (3) Omit paragraph (5) and insert instead:
 - (5) That this House congratulates:
 - (a) the winner of The Everest on Saturday 16 October 2021, Nature Strip, that was trained by Chris Waller and ridden by James McDonald; and
 - (b) Racing NSW for their hard work to improve standards in the thoroughbred racing industry.

I lead for Labor on this motion. The amendment retains most of Ms Boyd's motion but seeks to omit paragraphs 1, 2 and 5. New South Wales Labor is a strong supporter of the racing industry. Although this motion deals with the thoroughbred industry, we also support harness racing and greyhound racing. An independent study stated that the thoroughbred racing industry generates 27,601 full-time-equivalent jobs, engages 49,000 volunteering and paid participants and contributes \$3.6 billion to the economy.

Going to the races is a favourite Australian pastime. This motion deals with The Everest, which was held at Randwick several weeks ago and was the first major event after the COVID-19 lockdown. But going to the races being a favourite is the case also across regional New South Wales. The Everest was established in 2017 and is the world's richest race. I was fortunate to be there on the day, with 10,000 other people. But it is important to note that it was not just the 10,000 spectators. There were over 1,500 individual employees. There were bar staff, security guards, camera crews, stable hands and jockeys, who are a key part of the industry, one we on the Labor side of politics advocate for. The Everest, together with the Golden Eagle, has seen a rejuvenation of our spring carnival, to the point where it is now challenging Melbourne's supremacy. For that reason we need to talk also about the flow-on effects of that, particularly on our tourism industry, which has been severely affected by COVID-19. I seek an extension of time to explain parts of my amendment.

Leave granted.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I will deal with the question of whipping, which my amendment seeks to add some information around. In August 2009 Racing Australia introduced rules that introduced padded whips and a range of restrictions on the way in which these padded whips can be used. Also, it banned the use of stockwhips and publishes the information that formed the basis of this motion. Extensive consultation was undertaken with the industry and with a range of stakeholders through 2008, before the rules were changed. Labor supports the highest standards of animal welfare. I think that previous speakers have noted that the vast majority of people in the industry love their animals. Whether they own, train, ride or care for these animals, they are motivated by that love.

The motion has a graphic description of exercise-induced pulmonary haemorrhage. Under Racing NSW's rules, any horse that bleeds from the nose is banned for three months. If it occurs for a second time, it is retired. So my amendment also commends Racing NSW for its important work to improve standards and make our spring carnival successful. We must work with industry to implement these changes. New South Wales leads the country. We were the first to invest in a program for rehoming. But we need nationally consistent rules. I commend the amendment to the House.

The Hon. MARK PEARSON (21:24): I find it extraordinary that members sometimes do not read motions before they respond to them. This is actually about the activities that occurred at a particular race meeting and the excessive use of the whip. If any member here were to take a padded whip that is used on horses and, on the street, lay into their dog with five or more strikes of that padded whip, they would find the police tapping them

on the shoulder. They would be facing charges of cruelty or aggravated cruelty, huge fines and possibly imprisonment for up to six months. What has become clear from questions posed to Minister Kevin Anderson during budget estimates is that the horseracing industry is out of control. The regulations are not being applied.

The motion brought forward by Ms Abigail Boyd is clearly aimed at a set of incidents where the actual cruelty that was inflicted was in breach of the industry's regulation and code and of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. It should have been dealt with seriously. People were being fined for bizarre things such as not appointing a jockey. Whipping a horse over and over again to make it run faster is simply not acceptable in this society. Even if it is a minimum standard, it should be policed to the absolute finality of the standard. It should not be disregarded, ignored and not taken seriously. That is what the motion is about and that is why the House should support it. The question of the horseracing industry, and other issues, will be up for debate when I introduce my bill to ban certain practices in horseracing. I commend the motion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (21:26): I move:

That the amendment of Mrs Houssos be amended by inserting at the end:

- (6) That this House notes the \$67 million investment from the New South Wales Government in regional racecourses in the 2021-22 budget.

We are debating horseracing—

The Hon. Mark Latham: It is all in Dubbo.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: —and its contribution to the economy. Did you say Dubbo?

The Hon. Mark Latham: It is all in Dubbo, that investment.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: Acknowledge it.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: No, I will not acknowledge it.

The Hon. Mark Latham: You have already.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Mr Latham, I will tell you where the investment is. A lot of it is in the Hunter Valley, because this Government is keen to see the Hunter Valley remain the racehorse breeding capital of New South Wales. It is where many of the famous racehorses and thoroughbred studs are. I have family in Dubbo, which is why I thought I heard the word Dubbo. Regional racecourses are the lifeblood—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Government Whip has the call.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I only have three minutes. I have family in Dubbo and I know the area well. As regional members would know, regional racecourses are the social lifeblood, the economic lifeblood and part of the culture of regional and rural communities. That \$67 million has a multiplier effect. It is not just the racecourses; it is the caterers, the groundskeepers, the suppliers to the racecourses and all the other businesses associated with it, such as accommodation and vehicle hire. There are many other businesses associated with the industry. It provides a major economic stimulus for rural and regional communities. There are some great racecourses in rural New South Wales: There is the Hunter Valley, Dubbo and Bathurst. Bathurst has a famous racecourse that received an upgrade. Warren is another racecourse that I have visited over the years. I have also visited Albury during my career. I have only named a couple of racecourses. I encourage members to support the amendment in order to reflect on the broader economic benefits of the racing industry.

The PRESIDENT: I remind members who made their contributions before the amendments were moved that they may speak again to address those amendments.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (21:29): This is an extraordinary debate. Ms Abigail Boyd has moved a factual motion. It states that there was a horserace, it was held on a certain date, it is called The Everest, there are rules that apply to the race and that many of those rules were broken, which had a profound impact on some of the animals that were raced around the track for the entertainment of a select few people. At the end of the day, that is not unusual. In fact, quite a large number of racehorses die every year on racetracks around Australia: one every 2½ days in New South Wales. I guess we cannot be too critical of other members trying to add their own facts, whether it be the economic contribution, the number of people employed, the regions that might be the beneficiaries of Government largesse or the racing and gambling industry in New South Wales. But they are trying to disguise the fact that there was a race, the rules were broken and horses got hurt and damaged, and we have a real problem with how that happens in Australia, not just in New South Wales.

It is a shame that members have sought to cover that up by pretending with all this fluff around the industry. I remember a couple of years ago when we had the debate on the inducement to gambling laws. I give credit to the Government for addressing what was becoming a really problematic thing: the gambling industry trying to

induce people, particularly those with an addiction to online betting, to gamble more than they had. When I made a request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act for the discussion around those reforms at the time, it was interesting to see a lot of correspondence from the media industry and the racing industry. One particular email that came from Racing NSW, Racing.com and Seven West Media copied in the former New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell, who was the CEO of Racing Australia.

It was all very buddy-buddy, with former government officials, the media, the racing industry and the crew on the board who used to be on one and then got appointed to the other. What did it say? They were encouraging the Government to exempt them from those inducement laws. It said, "Wagering is racing's primary income. It is its *raison d'être*." Gambling is the reason racing exists. All of that damage is because of that industry. You can say that the thoroughbred industry promotes jobs and creates income for people, but it is actually the gambling industry that does that. We have built flowery, glossy, largesse-driven, government investment, "sit in your special booths" events around it all. That is what it is about, and members cannot disguise it with all those other facts that they try to hide around it. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (21:32): In reply: I thank all members for their contributions. As has been said, originally this motion was simple fact. I tried to put it through as formal business on the basis that it was simple fact, and it got knocked back. It has now been moved in a slightly amended form. As I said in the beginning, it is not about asking for the racing industry to be closed down or banning whips altogether. The motion states that if we have rules to protect the welfare of horses, people should be penalised for breaching those rules, and the Government should step in when that is not happening. That is what the motion is about. Minister Tudehope responded by saying, "The Greens do not like fun." If the Minister's idea of fun is whipping a horse more than it should be whipped or could tolerate being whipped without sustaining permanent damage, I think he should get out more because that is an absurd situation.

My children look at racing, whether it is greyhound racing or horseracing, and they find it absurd. Why would you make those poor animals run around? Why is someone whipping those poor animals? As for the idea that it is okay because it is a padded whip, I would like to see you get whipped with a padded whip for that many times and tolerate it. It is absurd. Then we hear the statement that gets trotted out in every racing discussion that the people in the industry love their horses. If they loved their horses, they would not whip them so many times when it has been proven to cause permanent damage. Mr Justin Field said that gambling is the reason that racing exists; I could not agree more. Those people do not love their animals. They love the money, the culture, the dressing up and all the other things. I suggest they still do that but perhaps race people around in a circle, I don't care.

The Hon. Walt Secord: It is called the Olympics.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: There we go. Have more Olympics—fantastic.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Ms Abigail Boyd has the call.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I thank Racing NSW—sorry, I mean I thank Labor for its amendments. In relation to paragraphs (1) and (2) of the amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos, The Greens do not believe that any amount of money is worth a life, and that may be a controversial position in this Chamber. I seek an extension of time. [*Extension of time*]

If the horseracing industry contributes \$3 billion to our economy, then that would still be \$3 billion that we could do without. I also note that New South Wales loses around \$1 billion on racing gambling each year, and lining the pockets of gambling executives with betting revenue is not quite the same as putting food on the table for workers. I appreciate paragraphs (3) (a) and (b) in the amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos because they better highlight the mediocrity of the welfare standards in the rules of racing. They are better than nothing, but that is where my compliments end. Finally, in relation to paragraph (5) (b), while I am not sure that congratulations are quite due to Racing NSW for its failure to actually enforce its welfare-related rules—whatever.

The PRESIDENT: Ms Abigail Boyd has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Courtney Houssos has moved an amendment, to which the Hon. Shayne Mallard has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Shayne Mallard to the amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Shayne Mallard to the amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos as amended by the Hon. Shayne Mallard be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Courtney Houssos as amended by the Hon. Shayne Mallard agreed to.

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

The House divided.

Ayes27
 Noes7
 Majority.....20

AYES

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|
| Amato | Graham | Moriarty |
| Buttigieg | Houssos | Poulos |
| Cusack | Jackson | Primrose |
| D'Adam | Khan | Searle |
| Donnelly | Maclaren-Jones | Secord |
| Fang | Mallard (teller) | Sharpe |
| Farlow | Martin | Taylor |
| Farraway (teller) | Mitchell | Tudehope |
| Franklin | Mookhey | Veitch |

NOES

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---------------------|
| Boyd (teller) | Nile | Roberts |
| Faehrmann | Pearson | Shoebridge (teller) |
| Latham | | |

Motion as amended agreed to.

GLENCORE MINING

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1446 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (21:49): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that Swiss-based multinational mining giant Glencore plans to destroy Aboriginal heritage and land in the Hunter Valley to make way for an expanded open-cut mine.
- (2) That this House recognises that:
 - (a) the landscape surrounding Ravensworth holds deep significance for First Nations people in the Hunter Valley and across the country; and
 - (b) the land is the location of important sites of massacre, culture and dislocation, which must be respected and protected.
- (3) That this House affirms that:
 - (a) the truth of frontier violence against First Nations communities in the Hunter Valley and across Australia should be taught in schools and these sites must be preserved and respected, not excavated for environmentally destructive mining; and
 - (b) after Rio Tinto's devastating destruction of the Juukan Gorge, the community has made it clear that it stands with First Nations people in their struggle to protect land and culture from the mining and fossil fuel industries.
- (4) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Wonnarua traditional owners have lodged an application to protect the heritage and land surrounding the Ravensworth estate and homestead, which holds deep significance for First Nations people in the Hunter Valley and across the country; and
 - (b) Glencore has since launched an extraordinary personal and unprincipled public attack against two Wonnarua traditional owners who are standing up to expose the history of colonial violence against the Wonnarua people and to preserve the site.
- (5) That this House calls on:
 - (a) the New South Wales Government to protect this important landscape, allow First Nations people to guide the management of their land and ensure future generations can learn the history of this place and what happened there; and
 - (b) the Federal environment Minister to grant the application under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act to protect Wonnarua lands from Glencore's open-cut coalmine.

This motion asks the House to stand unambiguously beside First Nations peoples and to protect their heritage. It seeks the following:

- (1) That this House notes that Swiss-based multinational mining giant Glencore plans to destroy Aboriginal heritage and land in the Hunter Valley to make way for an expanded open-cut mine.
- (2) That this House recognises that:
 - (a) the landscape surrounding Ravensworth holds deep significance for First Nations people in the Hunter Valley and—

when understood in context—

across the country; and

- (b) the land is the location of important sites of massacre, culture and dislocation which must be respected and protected.

It asks the House to affirm some pretty basic truths, including the truth of frontier violence against First Nations communities in the Hunter Valley and across Australia, and asks for that to be taught in schools and for those massacre sites to be preserved and respected, not excavated for environmentally destructive mining. It also asks the House to affirm the truth that the country is changing and that, after Rio Tinto's devastating, deliberate and wanton destruction of the Juukan Gorge—Aboriginal heritage that went back tens of thousands of years—the community has made it clear that it stands with First Nations people in their struggle to protect land and culture from the mining and fossil fuel industries.

The motion also asks that House to note that in the Hunter the Wonnarua traditional owners are stepping up to protect their land. They have lodged an application to protect the heritage and land surrounding the Ravensworth estate and homestead, which any fair-minded person would acknowledge holds deep significance for First Nations peoples in the Hunter Valley. It asks the House to note the behaviour of Glencore, which has since launched an extraordinary personal and unprincipled public attack against the two Wonnarua traditional owners who are standing up to expose the history of colonial violence against the Wonnarua people and to preserve the site. It is a shameful attack in the media against First Nations peoples doing nothing more than trying to protect their land, culture and history.

As a result of that, the motion calls upon the House to accept that the New South Wales Government must step up, protect this important landscape and allow First Nations peoples—not some bureaucrats in the mining or environment departments—to guide the management of their land and ensure that future generations can learn the history of Ravensworth and what happened there. It asks the Federal environment Minister to step up and for once grant an application under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act and protect First Nations land—in this case, Wonnarua lands—from Glencore's open-cut coalmine.

This is a test for this House and this Parliament. Has this House heard the call from people across this country for their laws and their politicians to stand with First Nations peoples and protect their history and culture? It is the longest continuous culture on the planet. Glencore knows that the history of massacres on Wonnarua lands in and around Ravensworth is true because it has a report in its possession that was produced not by the Wonnarua people but by the consultant employed the Federal Government for Aboriginal heritage protection. That report acknowledges the history and the massacre sites and Glencore comes out and lies about it in full-page glossy advertisements across the Hunter. They know what they are saying is a lie, and they still do it.

With a racial bias, they try to attack the credibility of the two Wonnarua people who are standing up to protect their land. It is a Swiss multinational bottom feeder company that refuses to pay tax in this country and shovels its profits off to a Swiss subsidiary and trading firm, so that it pays 5 per cent corporate tax in Switzerland instead of 30 per cent corporate tax here. It steals from the public, it lies to the public and it tries to discredit First Nations people who are standing up to protect their land. We need to stand with the Wonnarua people and against international bottom feeders like Glencore.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (21:55): There is a sense of déjà vu on this side of the House tonight, as Mr David Shoebridge made a number of unsubstantiated claims about Glencore in the Chamber yesterday. Here we are today, debating the motion along the same lines as his call for papers. It begs the question: If Mr David Shoebridge already knows that Glencore is a hideous corporate tax dodger that, to quote today's motion, "plans to destroy Aboriginal heritage and land in the Hunter Valley", then why the need for a call for papers?

Mr David Shoebridge already knows everything. Who needs the Independent Planning Commission when we have Mr David Shoebridge in the House who thinks he is capable of passing judgement on a whim? That is the fundamental problem with the motion—it pre-empted the entire basis of the New South Wales planning system. Glencore's proposal for the Glendell Continued Operations Project is currently at the environmental assessment stage within the New South Wales planning department.

It will not suit the narrative for Mr David Shoebridge, but the planning department has been working closely with a range of stakeholders and other government agencies, including Heritage NSW. Following the member's call for papers, it is a deliberate distortion by the member to even reference the Juukan Gorge incident in Western Australia as part of the motion he has moved today. It is a ridiculous notion to think those planning decisions are made in a vacuum. Unlike Mr David Shoebridge, Planning will make a balanced assessment of the project merits, including the heritage value of the Ravensworth Homestead, before determining if the mine extension is approved or not. That is the process, but it does not suit Mr David Shoebridge or The Greens.

The Hon. Shayne Mallard: Point of order: Mr David Shoebridge is interjecting continuously and he should be called to order.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): Mr David Shoebridge will come to order. The Hon. Sam Faraway will continue.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY: That is the process, but it does not suit Mr David Shoebridge or The Greens. They come in here and are sticklers for the process, except when it relates to a mine extension. When it is a mine extension, all gloves are off and they say and do what they like. Ultimately, it is a matter for the Independent Planning Commission to determine whether the mine extension is approved. That decision is best left to the experts. For that reason, I oppose the motion.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (21:58): I report to the House that I have visited Ravensworth Homestead. It is a rat-infested hovel with a falling-down roof and no floorboards. The truth is it has no heritage value whatsoever. In fact, nobody gave two hoots about it until Glencore wanted to extend its coalmine, and then all of a sudden it became a magnificent heritage building, it became the Taj Mahal of the Hunter Valley, and The Greens were all over it like a rash. The Greens also invented a so-called frontier history. In reality, sadly, like skirmishes and problems 200 years ago, the Indigenous would wander up to the homestead and shots were fired. There was wrong on both sides. There is no massacre site and there are no Indigenous communities within the vicinity of Ravensworth. Mr David Shoebridge is inventing things to fulfil his own warped ideological, blinkered view of the world. The building is not worth two bob. The Ravensworth Homestead is long deserted. Nobody has cared about it; nobody has given it any attention, any renovation or any maintenance for a long while. But in deference to the heritage and environmental rules in New South Wales, the company has said it will lift it up and move it, like that other silly building at Parramatta.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Willow Grove.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, it is another Willow Grove, but nowhere near as valuable in its heritage status. The company is moving it. In truth, nobody cared anything about the site or its history until Glencore said they wanted to expand across the land for coalmining. If they said they were setting up a solar farm or windmills, then of course The Greens would be applauding it and there would be no consideration of Indigenous or any other history. It is all about blinkered ideology. I listened closely to Mr David Shoebridge and he did not report that he has visited the site. I expect he has not.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): According to sessional orders, proceedings are interrupted to permit the Minister to move the adjournment motion if desired.

The House continued to sit.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The real scandal at Ravensworth is the fact that Glencore has been trapped in this wretched planning system in New South Wales for 2½ years. I saw a presentation about the stages it has had to go through to get its approval for a coalmine—not uncommon in the Hunter Valley—creating jobs and opportunities in an important part of the State. The presentation went on and on about the hoops it had to jump through—hoop after hoop. That was 2½ years, and then it has to go through the torture of going to the Independent Planning Commission. It reminded me of the scene in the *Love Actually* movie where Rowan Atkinson is wrapping the present and the bloke says out of frustration, "What are you going to do now, dip it in yoghurt?" That is how I felt about the number of stages it had to go through for its development application. That is the real scandal, not the fabricated history we have heard from Mr David Shoebridge about a building that is not worth two bob.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (22:01): I make a contribution to the motion moved by Mr David Shoebridge. I lead for Labor, and I have been asked to indicate that Labor supports the motion. That said, we support the mining sector and the jobs associated with mining, and have repeatedly done so on the record. Mining injects \$15 billion a year into the economy and \$2 billion a year in royalties, which we use to run our health and hospital system. It creates 40,000 direct jobs.

The motion relates to extending a proposed open-cut mine to include the homestead. I have been advised that there have been documented massacres on the site. Between 1 August 1826 and 1 September 1826 there were

at least three recorded massacres. I have been advised that the Heritage Council of NSW has expressed concern about the lack of rigour in the assessment, and I believe that there should be more consideration of local issues before final approval. The motion highlights the lack of protection for Aboriginal heritage sites under this Government. At budget estimates last week we were told that 221 Aboriginal heritage impact permits were issued by the Government in 2020-21, and another 46 were issued since July this year. Earlier this week the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council's Anne Dennis raised concern about the treatment of Indigenous historic and cultural sites in New South Wales and the lack of a standalone cultural heritage protection law in New South Wales.

Members would be aware that in making this contribution I draw on my unusual family background. I grew up on the Indian reserves in southern Canada, and my father was an Ojibway-Mohawk First Nations man. I have a deep passion for reconciliation and a particular interest in Australia's truthful approach to the Frontier Wars. For the record, I have attended a number of commemorations of massacres. I support formal treaties with First Nations peoples at the State and Federal levels, and I also support enshrining a constitutional voice for Indigenous people. I am proud to have worked for a Labor Government that led the nation in apologising to the Stolen Generations for its policies and practices. This occurred on 18 June 1997. At the time, the sentiments of Bob Carr seemed remarkable. I thank the House for its consideration.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (22:04): I speak on behalf of the Government in opposition to the motion. As much as Mr Shoebridge might grandstand on these issues in this Chamber, I wonder if he ever bothered to reach out to Glencore—not an insignificant employer in the region—to hear its side of the story. It became apparent after yesterday's debate that anything Glencore says publicly is dismissed by The Greens as lies. But planning decisions such as the Glendell Continued Operations Project are never that clear-cut. Indeed, one key issue to be considered during the planning assessment of that proposal is the differing view of experts around the significance of the Ravensworth Homestead and its links to potential significant Indigenous sites throughout the area.

In relation to the Ravensworth Homestead, Glencore has previously stated that a plan to relocate the entire complex to Broke would make the homestead more accessible while preserving the heritage and history of the buildings and also making them more accessible for educational purposes. But let us not ruin "Senator" Shoebridge's sermon by injecting any facts into the debate. The planning system looks at a range of factors in determining a coalmine extension such as the Glendell project—one that includes a thorough assessment of Aboriginal links to that land, the heritage value of that homestead, and the various other hot-button issues the member points to in this motion. There is a mechanism to determine the approval of these projects. We will follow that process over the hysteria displayed in the motion moved by The Greens.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (22:05): In reply: I thank the Hon. Sam Faraway, the Hon. Mark Latham, the Hon. Walt Secord and the Hon. Taylor Martin for their contributions to debate on this motion. It is unfortunate that the Government seems to have failed to conduct even the most basic investigation of the Aboriginal heritage issues. I listened carefully to the contributions from the two Government members. There was one mention of Aboriginal heritage by the Hon. Sam Faraway in a dismissive tone, no mention of Aboriginal heritage by the Hon. Taylor Martin, and the only mention of Aboriginal heritage from the Hon. Mark Latham was to discount it and dismiss it. They could not have better demonstrated the problem.

Even more disturbing was the utter ignorance that the Government members showed about the New South Wales planning system. The Glendell project is a State-significant project. The National Parks and Wildlife Act sets out provisions for the protection of Aboriginal heritage and treatment of First Nations peoples and their culture like flora and fauna, however pathetic and insulting they may be to the First Nations peoples. As the Hon. Walt Secord pointed out, even those pathetic protections still allow a 100 per cent approval rate for the destruction of Aboriginal heritage when an application is made to the department; even those pathetic protections are turned off entirely for a State-significant project. There is no protection for Aboriginal heritage. Worse still, as the Opposition again noted in its contribution, even with the complete absence of protection, the planning department still failed to even get the advice of the Heritage Council or the advice of any independent heritage expert before marching down the approval path.

The only chance of protecting this site is not through the utterly debased New South Wales planning system but through an application currently on the desk of the Federal environment Minister using the Federal Aboriginal heritage protection laws, which still apply even though it is a coalmining project. The deeply uninformed and offensive comments of the representative from Pauline Hanson's One Nation party dismissing the heritage value of the Ravensworth Homestead highlighted his failure to understand that the entire site of Ravensworth is significant to First Nations peoples because it is the place of resistance where the massacres occurred; it is not for the building itself. I commend the motion to the House. I am deeply disturbed by the ignorance and the dismissal shown by the Government in its opposition to the motion.

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

The House divided.

Ayes 18
 Noes 18
 Majority.....0

AYES

Boyd
 Buttigieg (teller)
 D'Adam (teller)
 Donnelly
 Faehrmann
 Field

Graham
 Houssos
 Jackson
 Mookhey
 Moriarty
 Pearson

Primrose
 Searle
 Secord
 Sharpe
 Shoebridge
 Veitch

NOES

Amato
 Cusack
 Fang
 Farlow
 Faraway (teller)
 Franklin

Harwin
 Khan
 Latham
 Maclaren-Jones
 Mallard (teller)
 Martin

Mitchell
 Nile
 Poulos
 Roberts
 Taylor
 Tudehope

PAIRS

Moselmane

Ward

The PRESIDENT: Order! There being 18 ayes and 18 noes, I will need to cast my vote. Members would be well aware of the principles surrounding the deciding vote. I will reiterate a few of those principles for the edification of members who may not remember them at such a late hour of the night. The Chair should always vote for further discussion where this is possible and, where no further discussion is possible, decisions should not be taken except by a majority. This has been affirmed by the rulings of a number of past Presidents. I refer to the ruling of President Johnson on 30 May 1990 and to the ruling of President Burgmann on 28 November 2001, which stated:

Where there is an equality of votes the Chair casts their vote so as to maintain the status quo.

I cast my vote as a no. As a result, the question is determined in the negative.

Motion negatived.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: On behalf of the Hon. Robert Borsak: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1332 outside the order of precedence be postponed until the next sitting day.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

EASTERN AUSTRALIAN GREY NURSE SHARKS

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I move:

That private members' business item No. 1457 outside the order of precedence be considered in a short form format.

Motion agreed to.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (22:21): I move:

(1) That this House notes that:

- (a) eastern Australian grey nurse sharks have declined rapidly in recent decades and remain a critically endangered species in need of ongoing protection and conservation efforts;

- (b) according to a CSIRO report, eastern Australian grey nurse shark numbers are estimated to be between just 1,700 and 2,200, with the number of breeding sharks estimated at 400, which is too few to maintain a healthy population;
 - (c) Fish Rock near South West Rocks is one of the largest ocean caverns in the Southern Hemisphere, famous for its rich marine biodiversity and has been declared critical habitat for the grey nurse sharks that aggregate there;
 - (d) according to experts, a 1,500-metre radius marine protected area from the point to the rocks and gutters where the grey nurse sharks aggregate is required to protect this species from extinction;
 - (e) restrictions that are currently in place allow recreational fishers to lawfully fish within 200 metres of Fish Rock if they only use artificial and vegetable-derived bait, while no fishing restrictions are in place beyond 200 metres; and
 - (f) on 24 August 2021, Fish Rock was declared a "Hope Spot" by Mission Blue/Sylvia Earle Alliance, recognising its unique ecosystem and the critically important sanctuary it provides for a multitude of marine life.
- (2) That this House thanks all of the local campaigners who have raised awareness about the critically endangered grey nurse sharks at Fish Rock, including Shalise Lessfield who is the youngest Hope Spot Champion to date at 14 years of age.
 - (3) That this House calls on the Government to do more to protect the critically endangered grey nurse shark and save this gentle giant from extinction.

As a passionate diver, the Deputy President knows Fish Rock. I am also a passionate diver, maybe not so frequently as him.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): It has been a bad two years.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: But yes, I have dived at Fish Rock. This motion is about the fact that grey nurse sharks are critically endangered. It is all about supporting those individuals who are passionate enough to advocate for their protection.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Trevor Khan): I interrupt Ms Cate Faehrmann to note that it is my understanding there will be no division on this motion. That may make a difference to where members locate themselves. Ms Cate Faehrmann has the call.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Despite its very fearsome appearance, the grey nurse shark is in fact a gentle giant of the oceans. Former New South Wales Premier Bob Carr labelled them "the labradors of the ocean". They were hunted to near extinction in the 1950s and they are now critically endangered. There are not many left. They are not able to be caught or hunted. Their biggest threat is accidental hooking and being caught up in fishing gear. I have had the extreme pleasure of being taken to Fish Rock to dive with grey nurse sharks. There are 10 critical habitat areas in New South Wales where grey nurse sharks aggregate and Fish Rock is one of them. When I dived, there they were. They sit very gently on the bottom. They are absolutely incredible, awesome creatures.

Sadly, one of the grey nurse sharks I dived with that day had a fish hook hanging from its mouth. We know that some grey nurse sharks have been found dead with fish hooks in their stomach. We know that some of the fish hook wounds can become infected and the sharks die from septicaemia. A species such as the grey nurse shark can potentially live to 30 years, if not longer. They are slow breeding and have a very unusual reproductive system. Of all the shark species, they are the slowest to reproduce. They are critically endangered and every single shark matters. It is absolutely vital for us to protect their critical habitat area because every fish that ingests a fishing hook into its stomach and dies as a result has a big impact on the species.

For 20 years or so governments have recognised that grey nurse sharks are vulnerable and have moved to protect them by establishing recovery plans and putting in place measures to protect critical habitat areas from fishing. The CSIRO and fishery scientists have said that what is needed is a 1,500-metre exclusion zone from all fishing and all activity other than passive activity. We do not have that, but we have passionate advocates, including 14-year-old Shalise Leesfield who lives locally to Fish Rock. Shalise has been advocating for a 1,500 metre exclusion zone around Fish Rock for the protection of the grey nurse shark in that area.

On the nomination of Shalise, Fish Rock was declared a Hope Spot by Dr Sylvia Earle's foundation Mission Blue in recognition of its unique ecosystem and the critically important sanctuary it provides for marine life and more. Shalise is an avid diver and passionate advocate for the protection of our marine life. She got in touch with me because of her passion for the grey nurse shark and, therefore, for the protection of Fish Rock. She put in a nomination to the international organisation for this Hope Spot declaration, which means Fish Rock is now receiving international attention. I thank Shalise for her passion for the grey nurse shark and for the marine waters of New South Wales. I urge the Government to do more to protect the grey nurse shark.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (22:26): I thank Ms Cate Faehrmann for moving this motion. As members of this House may know, the eastern Australian grey nurse shark is critically endangered. As such, the New South Wales Government is already committed to protecting their populations. In New South Wales grey nurse shark endangerment is listed under the Fisheries Management Act 1994. The east coast population is also listed as

critically endangered in the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. That is why they are totally protected in our State and Commonwealth waters. Grey nurse sharks are extremely vulnerable to human-induced pressures, including certain forms of fishing in certain locations, which is why harming or fishing for them is illegal. We put every measure in place to ensure that people's activities do not impact their population. In fact, this Government has a comprehensive suite of protections in place to give this precious species the chance to have its numbers survive in our oceans.

The largest and most significant grey nurse shark aggregation sites in New South Wales are declared as "critical habitat", meaning they are essential for the survival of the species. Special rules apply at those sites to minimise the impact of fishing and diving activities on grey nurse sharks. All recreational divers and commercial operators are subject to a code of conduct for diving with the species. Furthermore, if a person catches a grey nurse shark while fishing they must release it carefully causing the least possible harm. Significant penalties apply if people do not abide by those rules. Mr Deputy President may be personally aware of that. Maximum penalties of \$22,000 and/or six months' imprisonment apply for first offences and \$44,000 and/or 12 months' imprisonment apply for a second or subsequent offence.

On-the-spot fines of \$500 apply for interfering with a threatened species, including grey nurse sharks, with maximum penalties of \$110,000 and/or two years' imprisonment. "Interfering" includes harassing, chasing, tagging, marking or engaging in any activity for the purposes of attracting or repelling a grey nurse shark. An on-the-spot fine of \$2,500 applies for harming, buying, selling or possessing a threatened species, with maximum penalties of \$220,000 and/or two years' imprisonment for endangered species, which obviously encompasses grey nurse sharks. These harsh penalties send the public a message that this is not acceptable. Please leave them alone. That is the message we are sending. I appreciate very much the honourable member's commitment to protecting this endangered species, but let me assure the House that every step is already being taken by this Government to do exactly that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (22:29): I support the motion moved by Ms Cate Faehrmann in relation to eastern Australian grey nurse sharks. I remind the House that the eastern Australian grey nurse sharks were first protected in 1984 under the Wran Labor Government. It is a very proud and important protection. Unfortunately, they are not out of the woods yet and these lovely animals are still endangered. Some of the reports put the number left in hundreds. The eastern Australian grey nurse sharks continue to decline rapidly. According to the CSIRO report, the eastern Australian grey nurse shark breeding numbers could be estimated at about 400. It is very, very low.

There are important places up and down the coast in Australia and we need to be very careful about the way we protect their habitat. I note the comments by the Parliamentary Secretary about the protections that are already there, but I make the point that more needs to be done. All of the protections that the Parliamentary Secretary talked about are very important, but it is not stopping these sharks being caught on fishing lines. That is one of the most common ways that we harm them and they have become endangered. I am a snorkeller, not a diver. I go snorkelling regularly near Jervis Bay and I am very lucky to be able to see eastern Australian grey nurse sharks in the wild. It is a hatchery where I go snorkelling, so I see many little ones very often. It is a wonderful sight and it is good to see that they are able to breed and are growing in that part of the world.

I recognise the work that is being done by many young people and many activists. We should not underestimate the power and the passion of young people in Australia and those who particularly love the ocean. They are young people who are fighting to care for the ocean and the creatures that live within it. They should be given due recognition. This is an important motion. It is a very modest motion. It is not seeking to direct the Government about what we do to further protect eastern Australian grey nurse sharks, but it is calling on the Government to do more. We acknowledge what the Government is doing, but we urge it to do a bit more.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN (22:32): As many members in this House know, I have become increasingly reluctant to speak on various matters but this is one that I will speak on. I started diving in the early seventies. I got what is now a proper certification in 1974. My advanced certificate was in 1981. I have continued to dive since then, until the last couple of years when COVID-19 and a whole variety of circumstances have prevented me, but this weekend I will be diving at Gordons Bay.

My experience of diving, particularly around Sydney in the seventies and eighties, was how decimated the marine life was around the harbour. When coming back to diving, particularly after I came into Parliament, the change in the harbour was extraordinary. Suddenly, there were blue groper around in the harbour and there was a marked reduction in the number of sea urchins—extraordinary to see. We know that was because there were controls on the catching of blue groper. I know this motion is not about that, but small things that governments do can make an extraordinary difference to the marine environment. I have dived Fish Rock for I do not know how many years. It is one of the most glorious places to dive in New South Wales. To see the grey nurse sharks there is extraordinary.

I have dived during the day and I have dived during the night. I have dived on the southern side and the northern side of the island. I have drift-dived around at night with those animals, which was an extraordinary experience. I have dived during the day and night at Jervis Bay with grey nurse sharks. I have dived during the day at Magic Point. I can tell members all the locations where there are good populations of grey nurse sharks. They are magnificent creatures. They are not the labradors of the sea; they are the greyhounds of the sea—beautiful, docile creatures that are absolutely deserving of all the protection they can receive. Protection comes in a whole variety of ways. I do not know whether 1,500 metres of marine protected area is necessary. I do not know whether the measures being taken to control fishing around Fish Rock are enough. What I know is that decisions will be based upon scientific evidence, and they must be based upon the knowledge that if we lose these creatures, they will never come back.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (22:35): I support the motion. It is so important that we protect all of our critically endangered species, but the grey nurse shark is something quite special. I have dived at Fish Rock. Members might not know that there is a 125-metre tunnel that goes through the middle of the island that you can dive through. You swim up and over where the ceiling has fallen out of the tunnel and you pop out the other side and hang there with this huge sand gulley in front of you. It is quite extraordinary. There were not many sharks on that side when I was there; they were mostly on the other side. It is a truly precious place. I saw dozens of grey nurse sharks, and they will pretty much let you pat them if you want. They are quite special.

The Hon. Trevor Khan: But you must not.

Mr JUSTIN FIELD: I would not recommend it. They can take a little nip, if you are not careful. It is devastating to go down to a place like that, knowing that the Government intends to control fishing, and see on the bottom sinkers all around, fishing lines hooked over the rocks and hooks hanging out of the mouth of sharks, sometimes hooks with ropes on them. People do not go fishing for snapper with hooks with rope attached. People deliberately go to catch these sharks. We might like to think that we regulate in the most appropriate way and respect the needs of all users of the marine environment, but in fact some uses are incompatible with the protection of threatened species. In this instance, with the grey nurse shark and very few known aggregation sites, extra special protection for these areas is justified.

I wish the Government had a better record when it comes to marine protections. There are fewer fully protected marine sanctuaries today than there were when the Government came into office in 2011. Now, less than 7 per cent of New South Wales coastal waters are fully protected in marine sanctuaries, including around one of our other special islands, Montague Island. It recently lost some of its sanctuary protections under what the Government has started to make into a bit of a theme, that is, amnesties that essentially allow illegal fishing to take place whilst the Government spends years pretending it is going through a process to work out how to best manage the area. What a nonsense! We need to do better than that. I appreciate the member bringing this motion before the House.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (22:38): In reply: I thank all the speakers who contributed to debate on the motion and particularly thank them for sharing their experiences of coming into contact, through snorkelling or diving, with these incredible creatures. As I conclude my contribution to the motion, I tell a story of a couple of divers at Fish Rock when I dived there about 10 years ago. When we were having dinner that night, they told me about going down to Fish Rock with knives, specifically to rescue grey nurse sharks by cutting the fishing gear out of them. They talked to me about a grey nurse shark that had a hook in its mouth. You hear about animals that are hurt that realise that humans want to help them. The grey nurse shark waited while one of the divers got the hook that had a rope attached to it and the divers cut this rope and hook out of the shark while the shark was there on the sandy bottom sort of saying, "Help me." The divers said that that was not an infrequent occurrence. Divers are working in some ways to help grey nurse sharks that are injured.

I acknowledge the contribution to debate by Mr Justin Field of diving at Fish Rock and seeing all the fishing gear, which is the main problem. But that is not the purpose of the motion. I deliberately called on the Government to just do more. I acknowledge the contribution by the Hon. Ben Franklin. But if we are to do what Shalise and many other marine conservationists, and probably all of us in this place want—save the grey nurse shark—it is the fishing gear that is killing the grey nurse shark. Within 200 metres of Fish Rock there still can be some kind of fishing. Within 1,500 metres of Fish Rock, Montague Island and other places there is quite a bit of fishing and that means fishing gear. That also means that grey nurse sharks will become entangled and grey nurse sharks will die. When divers are now diving not to see the grey nurse shark but to rescue them from the fishing gear, we got something wrong. I thank all members for their contributions to the debate. Hopefully, we can save these incredible creatures.

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

Motion agreed to.*Adjournment Debate***ADJOURNMENT**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

MR PAUL WILLIAM TAVELARDIS

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (22:42): On 29 December 2018 Paul William Tavelardis, a 66-year-old First Nations man, was in Summer Hill preparing to sleep in his station wagon for the evening. Instead he was attacked by two drunken young men. His attackers, Christopher McLaughlin and Nathan Kelly, hit and kicked Mr Tavelardis with such ferocity they left him barely conscious, bleeding on Grosvenor Crescent, and beaten so badly that he fell into a coma. He died just days later. McLaughlin and Kelly were arrested by police while standing over Mr Tavelardis, with his blood on their fists and clothes. Six witnesses saw the attack. Six witnesses provided their evidence to the police. Police provided DNA evidence, photographs, crime scene maps and graphs of the defendants' intoxication to the prosecution, yet these men were found not guilty on 21 September 2020. So offended with the police by what they saw as an obvious miscarriage of justice and gross irregularities in the Crown case that they wrote to the office of the Crown Prosecutor seeking a review. I read in part from their correspondence, which states:

MR TAVELARDIS was a victim of the *Stolen Generation* having been taken off his family by government authorities at a young age. The Victim was placed into an institution where he was allegedly subject to sexual assault. However, in spite of these setbacks the Victim has served his nation in the military and had raised a family. At the time of his death the Victim was a father, a grandfather and an aged pensioner.

I note as well that those who knew Mr Tavelardis described him as a gentle and caring man, who was known as a good Samaritan. In the trial, the defence characterised Mr Tavelardis as a dangerous criminal—a description utterly divorced from reality. But worse still, the prosecution was complicit in accepting these unfounded attacks upon this 66-year-old Indigenous man. And indeed Mr Tavelardis had advanced heart disease, had undergone two heart bypasses and was suffering from leukaemia, lung disease and arthritis. Despite this, the defence put the case—and the prosecution accepted—that Kelly and McLaughlin had come across Mr Tavelardis attempting to break into Mr McLaughlin's car. There is no such history, ever, of criminal activity by Mr Tavelardis, who also had \$120,000 in his bank. Police found the locks and the windows untampered with and did not find any of his fingerprints or DNA on the car.

Kelly and McLaughlin also claimed that Mr Tavelardis attacked them with a white pole. Not a single witness corroborated this version. In fact, multiple witnesses refuted it, many of whom were not called by the Crown. The pole they claimed he attacked them with was not found at the location that they claimed he attacked them either. Perhaps most importantly, Mr Tavelardis' physical health showed that he was not even capable of a sustained attack. Astoundingly the Crown Prosecutor supported these claims. Not only did the Crown Prosecutor claim that Mr Tavelardis was breaking into the utility but also stated, "The victim must have thought that the best form of defence was attack." That corroborated Kelly's claim that Tavelardis attacked him, utterly unsupported by the evidence. The judge told the jury that it was an agreed fact that Tavelardis was breaking into the car, because the defence and prosecution said it. I read from the conclusion of the police call for a review. It states:

Six independent witnesses saw Indigenous and susceptible Victim Paul William TAVELARDIS being unlawfully assaulted and beaten to death. At times it seemed as though the Crown Prosecutor had taken on the role of defence advocate and I believe that his acquiescence to the criminalization of the victim and his suppression of ... evidence to be highly questionable, if not unethical.

The acquittal of KELLY and McLAUGHLIN has sparked outrage in the press and has resulted in numerous adverse comments from members of the public. The Indigenous family of the Victim have also made their dissatisfaction known to the public via the media. I am of the firm opinion that if the actual Police case had been presented to the Jury it would have resulted in a conviction for Manslaughter, at the very least.

Paul William TAVELARDIS was born with disadvantage via being subject to both the ramifications and inherent generational disadvantages of both the *Stolen Generation* and *Institutional Child Abuse*. However, in spite of this he was able to live his 66 years on this planet with virtually no criminal convictions. Now, thanks to the matter of Regina vs KELLY and McLAUGHLIN, Paul William TAVELARDIS now stands convicted in the world press as being both a petty thief and an assailant. This invidious result was facilitated via the inexplicable actions of the Crown Prosecutor.

Nothing happened as a result of that complaint. There was no accountability in the office of the Crown Prosecutor. So tonight I call for the Attorney General to establish an independent review of this case, to review the evidence and the police case, and for that to be done by senior counsel from a jurisdiction other than New South Wales. Mr Tavelardis' life, history and family deserve no less.

RURAL AND REGIONAL ARTS FUNDING

The Hon. WES FANG (22:47): The arts industry has been one of the hardest hit sectors by the pandemic, and its recovery is of paramount importance as we emerge from COVID-19. Regional artists produce an incredible calibre of work, and their dedication to local art is of utmost significance to the cultural fabric of our community. This Government is committed to ensuring the development of artists and the local art industry beyond Greater Sydney. That is why it is such good news that audiences and creatives in regional New South Wales will benefit from increased employment opportunities and exciting community initiatives as regional arts development organisations receive a major funding boost to support the revitalisation of the arts after COVID-19.

I am delighted to say that four organisations in Wagga Wagga and Murray will be receiving this boost. They are Eastern Riverina Arts in Wagga, Leeton's Western Riverina Arts, South West Arts in Deniliquin and West Darling Arts, taking in the far south-west of the State right up to Broken Hill. These organisations play an incredibly vital role in developing our local arts scene and cultural offerings, whilst supporting our developing artists. I know that increasing their funding to \$200,000 per year will support employment, entertainment and economic outcomes in our backyard.

Starting out in a career in the arts can be a daunting experience. It can be a tough industry, especially for young people. It requires an enormous amount of dedication. These fantastic organisations help artists to brainstorm ideas with professional staff, connect developing artists to potential funding partners and local councils, promote exhibitions, offer creative spaces, and advise on some of the common pitfalls that occur with local projects. South West Arts in Deniliquin has its own youth radio studio for not only budding musicians but also those interested in podcast training or taking to the live airways. It runs multiple exhibitions and workshops for varying mediums ranging from poetry, film, landscape and contemporary paintings, dance and music, to name just a few.

I distinctly remember launching the *Ash Dust Air* writing anthology last year, written in response to drought, the recent bushfires and COVID-19. Eastern Riverina Arts encouraged participants aged between 14 and 25 to put into words their hopes, dreams and experiences from 2020 to create a compilation of stories from one of the most challenging periods for our region. The stories and poems in this book speak of fear, panic and evacuation, but also of determination of the human spirit, relief and getting on with life. It is an amazing collection of writing and has provided young people with the opportunity to speak out in response to disasters in recent times. Art has the incredible ability to connect young people to community through events and exhibitions, create a sense of place and belonging by providing activities that build resilience and self-worth, develop confidence and increase youth participation in the local community.

An exhibition such as *Ash Dust Air* gives us an enduring snapshot of the strength and resilience of regional communities, and the potential of the next generation. It is absolutely imperative that all members of the community have access to inclusive arts and cultural experiences. Geography should be no barrier to arts and cultural development and it is vital that the arts in regional New South Wales are given every opportunity to thrive and continue to bring wonderful and moving experiences to communities outside of metropolitan areas. We have such a rich tapestry of artists in regional New South Wales, especially in southern New South Wales. I am delighted that with the Government's support, we will continue to see new and incredible works developed well into the future.

ERNIE AWARDS FOR SEXIST REMARKS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (22:51): In ordinary years, every September around 300 women descend on New South Wales Parliament House. They are often in fancy frocks, sometimes very angry, and always ready to thunder the Strangers Dining Room with the cathartic "boo off" for the annual Ernie Awards for Sexist Remarks. The awards namesake, Ernie Ecob, was the secretary of the AWU—the old Shearers' Union. I think the Hon. Mick Veitch was a member of that union. I will say that the AWU is now very good. Ernie was famous for his comment that women only wanted to be shearers for the sex. In mid-1993, when Ernie resigned, some 40 union women gathered for lunch to celebrate. Guests were advised to wear a good frock, something Ernie would appreciate. At that first lunch, a trophy was awarded for the "most bestial remark of the year" and from there the Ernies were born.

This year was the twenty-ninth year of the annual Ernies awards. Each year the Ernies have decided the worst of the terrible misogynistic remarks and actions of the year, all under the supervision of the former President of this place, the Hon. Meredith Burgmann. Over the years a single category has grown to 10. There is the industrial, political, media, judicial, the Warney for those in sport, the newly renamed Trump for repeat offenders, the Fred for the clerical, culinary and celebrity and the Elaine for comments least helpful to the sisterhood. There has also been the introduction of the Good Ernie to reward men behaving better. There is, of course, the Gold Ernie, which is the award for the worst of the worst as voted by the loudest boos in the room.

This year the Ernies—like everything—had to adapt to the pandemic. Rather than being decided by the thundering roar of a "boo off", the council of Ernies elders was convened, of which I was honoured to be a member. You would think over the past year, misogyny would have taken a back seat to the health crisis of the pandemic. Disappointingly, the contenders did not disappoint, as usual, and there was way too much material for us to work with. I am very pleased to announce the winners of this year's Ernies awards.

The Industrial Ernie went to General Angus Campbell, Chief of the Defence Force, for telling incoming female ADFA cadets they should avoid making themselves prey to sexual predators by being aware of the four As: Alcohol, out After midnight, Alone, and Attractive. The Political Ernie went to our Prime Minister Scott Morrison, for his explanation that he only took action after hearing of Brittany Higgins' rape allegations against one of her colleagues because, "Jenny and I spoke last night and she said to me, 'You have to think about this as a father. What would you want to happen if it were our girls?'" The Media Ernie was awarded to radio presenter Jeremy Cordeaux for saying about Brittany Higgins' rape allegation:

I just ask myself why the Prime Minister doesn't call it out for what it is—a silly little girl who got drunk.

The Judicial went to Judge Robert Sutherland of the NSW District Court, who, when overturning Nicholas Drummond's conviction for hitting a young woman after telling her to "put her tits away", wished Drummond "good luck" and concluded that he made:

... a lewd and completely inappropriate remark towards someone he didn't know but whose dress might have been perceived by a former student of Knox to be provocative.

The Warney went to Ricky Stuart, coach of the Canberra Raiders rugby team, for saying, "If I can't have tough conversations with my better players, I might as well coach netball." The Fred was a dead heat between Professor Magnus Nyden, Dean of Science and Engineering at Macquarie University, who does not think there should be more women in sciences—"a woman is biologically wired to be more concerned about people, and men about things"—and St Luke's Grammar School for asking its male students to choose the qualities they would look for in a girl, allocating more points for virginity, looks and strong Christian values than for generosity and adventurousness. The girl students were given articles on the importance of virginity and how Satan provided opportunities for fleeting sexual encounters. Many of the winners of the Clinton/Trump award for repeat offenders have gone to Australian Prime Ministers. In 2021 it was the same, with the award going to Prime Minister Scott Morrison for his reaction to the women's March4Justice, when he said:

This is a vibrant liberal democracy. Not far from here, such marches, even now, are being met with bullets—but not here in this country.

He also reportedly told Australian of the Year Grace Tame, after she described her sexual assault, "Well, gee, I bet it felt good to get that out". The Elaine was yet another dead heat: Linda Reynolds was a winner for referring to Brittany Higgins as a "lying cow", as was Teena McQueen from the Federal Liberal Party, who said, "I would kill to be sexually harassed at the moment". In better news, the Good Ernie was also a dead heat. Liberal MP Russell Broadbent asked the Prime Minister to convene a national gathering of women; for all cabinet submissions, new policies and legislation to have a gender impact statement; and for politicians "to be quiet, listen and learn". Richard Hinds, ABC sports reporter, also won the Good Ernie for saying:

I've no idea whether Raelene Castle was a good CEO or a disaster. I'm 100% certain women in power are still held to a much higher account than men.

Finally, the Gold Ernie yet again went to our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, for his reaction to the March4Justice. Next year I hope we will be frocking up again for the thirtieth anniversary of the Ernie awards, when I hope we will have less material. But it looks like that will not be the case.

TREES

The Hon. LOU AMATO (22:57): When the environment Minister, the Hon. Matt Kean, announced the discovery of a new frog species, Assa wollumbin, inhabiting a small area of ancient Gondwana rainforest in northern New South Wales, he declared its habitat an asset of intergenerational significance without hesitation. After the devastation of the 2019-20 bushfires, the declaration of habitats to be of intergenerational significance is a sign of a new dawn in our stewardship of the Earth. Assa wollumbin is a unique frog species; the male protects the tadpoles in a pouch and releases them into the wild upon maturity. Even in the twenty-first century our planet contains many mysteries. We have not yet catalogued all life forms on our blue planet, and of those we have, we still know little of their life cycles and their symbiotic relationship with all other forms of life. Sadly, many wondrous species have no doubt vanished before we ever knew of their existence. In present times we have come to understand the importance of repairing the damage that human activities have done to our planet.

We are keenly aware that unless we take action our planet will deteriorate, affecting all life forms on Earth. For many the problem seems far too remote and the solution should be left to governments and environmental

groups. The average person is left wondering how they can possibly contribute. The answer is not as elusive as one may think: It is in trees. The next time members see a really big tree, they should take some time to study its beauty and form. The huge trunk and spreading branches are mostly made of carbon. That carbon was not taken up through the root system, but was inhaled from our atmosphere through the leaves and used to form the strong matrix of the tree's wood. Trees are responsible for more carbon sequestration than any other living organism on our planet. In return, they supply all vertebrates and invertebrates with life-essential oxygen. But trees do more than just provide oxygen. Many trees send down taproots deep into the ground to act as pumps to draw water from cavernous aquifers all the way to their leaves.

The water from the leaves through transpiration is released back into the atmosphere creating water condensation and precipitation. More trees equals more rain, less droughts and a reduction in bushfires. If we take an even closer look at a tree we will notice other living creatures have set up permanent residence in its bark, leaves and hollows. Trees provide homes for invertebrates, vertebrates, fungi and a host of epiphytic plants. Every tree is a mini ecosystem. Deforestation is causing many of our environmental ills, if not most of them. If deforestation is such a problem, then reforestation is the only answer to fix many of our environmental ills.

Sadly, the current trend of clearing native forest for new homes has not helped the situation. The average block of land is currently between 200 square metres and 350 square metres. That is far too small to plant even a single tree. The first thing we notice when driving around a new suburb in Greater Sydney is that there is not one tree standing. Gardens are devoid of trees and homes are now decorated with concrete and succulents in ceramic pots. If we travel to an older neighbouring suburb we will see trees on the nature strips, and in the front yards and backyards of most homes. Not only is a wooded suburb more pleasing, it is far cooler. Trees absorb heat and provide shade reducing our need to run air conditioners 24/7 during the baking summer months.

What can we do as a community and indeed as individuals to help our planet heal? We can plant more trees. We can plant them on the nature strips, roundabouts, walkways and patches of unused space which abound our suburbs. One hectare of trees sequesters 15.7 tonnes of carbon per year just four years after planting. That number rises to 25.3 tonnes per year after just 14 years of growth. Not only will we clean our air and provide microhabitats for abundant life, our suburbs will be cooler as well. Let us start planting.

PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr JUSTIN FIELD (23:01): Former Labor Premier Bob Carr tweeted this week:

Follow Singapore and legislate no medical or hospital expenses to be reimbursed to people who are not vaccinated without medical justification and then contract Covid. You ignored warnings and got the disease. You pay for your wilful stupidity, not the rest of us.

There is no question of the efficacy of COVID vaccines, especially with regards to them preventing serious illness, and it has been the reduction in transmission and serious illness, largely made possible by high vaccination rates, that has enabled the opening up we are now enjoying. I also understand the tough love of governments, including this one in New South Wales, where they have used restrictions enforced through public health orders to encourage, and in some cases to coerce, people to get vaccinated. That has taken some courage. Overwhelmingly, it has been successful; our vaccination rates are among some of the highest in the world. That is not surprising as Australia has always exhibited high support for vaccinations.

But I do not agree with the statements by the former Premier and I note they have been strongly criticised by others. They unfairly demonise some within our society, who, for whatever reason, have made a choice to not get vaccinated. We know that for those who are either hesitant or anti-vaccines, the approach by the former Premier is unlikely to be successful at changing minds. It is truly a strange notion, particularly for a former Labor leader, to walk away from support for the principle of universal public health. To suggest that people, regardless of need, not have access to the same free public health care as others is not a notion I support and I do not think it is one the majority of the public would either. Mr Carr went on to say in another tweet:

This should be enforced as we enforce smoke-free work environments or no driving while drunk.

What a strange comparison because while we enforce smoke-free work places, we do not ban smokers from having access to public hospitals or primary medical care, despite the fact that it costs about \$10 billion a year to treat their smoking-related illnesses. While it is illegal to drink and drive, we do not deny emergency treatment and ongoing public medical care to someone who has been in a crash, nor do we deny those who drink to excess and contribute to around another \$10 billion a year in associated health costs.

What about those who do not meet the recommended public health guidelines for exercise? Did members in the Chamber know that exercising every day can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, improve blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and reduce some cancers? It is recommended that adults should be active most days and do two and a half hours to five hours of moderate intensity physical activity

every week or one and a half to two and a half hours of vigorous intensity physical activity. If we look around the Chamber, who has met that standard? Those guidelines are on the public health website.

Do members know how much diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer contribute to health costs? We have all been warned about those risks and the impacts of them, but the impacts are not just visited on us, they are visited on our loved ones. People with underlying health conditions brought about in some way by those behaviours are also more likely, regardless of whether they are vaccinated, to get communicable illnesses like COVID and suffer them more severely.

It is an easy mark to go after the unvaccinated today. You are safe in the knowledge that the vast majority of the population is likely to be on your side on the basic principle that people should, if they can, get vaccinated. But I do not think it serves us to exacerbate the division that already exists within our society between those who have and those who have not. While I am using the comments by Bob Carr to frame mine, I also want to go on the record as saying that I disagree with the decision of the Government to push back freedoms for the unvaccinated in New South Wales from 1 December to 15 December. The Government based its original decision on the public health advice and told us that at the time. Since then rates in New South Wales have declined and the severity of the illness has as well, so how did the risks associated with freedoms for the unvaccinated escalate to justify pushing that date back? They clearly did not. It is now bordering on punitive.

The impact will not just be felt by the unvaccinated. It is on their families. It will delay family reunions. Businesses that, in solidarity, chose not to open up until everyone could participate have now had to delay opening up. The people who face those restrictions can still go to Coles and Woolworths today. They can fill up their car, drop the kids at school and even attend work. The public health response has been remarkable in New South Wales. People make tough decisions for themselves in a range of ways. There is always a tension between the public health imperative and people's private health decisions. The reality is that health risks for the unvaccinated sit primarily with those who are unvaccinated. We have had a tough time. We have been isolated and separated. Now is the time to come together.

BREASTSCREEN NSW

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (23:06): It is estimated that around two in five people will be diagnosed with cancer before the age of 85 in Australia. The most commonly diagnosed cancer in women is breast cancer. In fact, one in seven women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2017 alone, there were 17,725 new cases of breast cancer, with research suggesting that by the end of 2021 breast cancer will become the most common diagnosed cancer. What we know from the research is that when it is caught early women can recover from the disease. In fact, when caught early the chances of surviving from the disease are upwards of 92 per cent. This is why we must ensure that women are given every opportunity to get a breast screen to detect this disease—because early detection saves lives. Early detection also means that women have more treatment options.

Getting a regular mammogram is one of the best ways to detect breast cancer. BreastScreen NSW usually provides this service free to women aged 50-74, while women aged 40-49 and above 75 are also eligible to attend for a check-up. BreastScreen NSW forms part of the national BreastScreen Australia Program, delivered by nine screening and assessment services located within local health districts across New South Wales. Knowing all of this, it astounds me that women have been unable to access critical breast screening services provided by BreastScreen NSW for almost three months. This is because of the terrible decision made by the New South Wales Government on 16 August 2021 to temporarily close BreastScreen clinics across New South Wales due to the pandemic. Doctors and other health professionals are reporting a notable rise in more advanced breast cancer a year after last year's lockdown, and it is expected that we will see this same trend emerge over the next year. Doctors and others have also raised concerns about the suspected numbers of Australian women likely living with undiagnosed cancers after COVID-19 lockdowns.

As we reopen from our most recent lockdown, this critical service has only been partially reopened and only in some areas of the State. Where it is open, previously missed appointments are being prioritised, which is great, but it is compounding the delay in otherwise scheduled screening. I worry for the women who have missed appointments and urge them to re-book. I also urge the Government to reopen all clinics and I urge women not to further delay screening where required. The ramifications of a delayed diagnosis can include harsher, more invasive treatment such as chemotherapy or a mastectomy or, of course, worse: death.

It is outrageous that at this point breast screening is still not fully open and operational. An overwhelming majority of community members agree with this sentiment, with more than 30,000 people signing a petition to reopen all BreastScreen NSW clinics. This petition was handed to my colleagues the shadow Minister for Health, Ryan Park, and my friend Sophie Cotsis from the other place by Christina Bullivant, who knows the importance of getting checked. Christina was diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram at a BreastScreen clinic last year, despite showing no symptoms of the disease. I understand this well because I have supported a

member of my immediate family who has been through this exact same situation over the course of the last year. Thankfully, her cancer was picked up early by BreastScreen NSW and the treatment has successfully completed. This Government should take a good hard look at its priorities, because its decisions are directly putting the lives of our mothers, daughters and sisters at risk. I urge all women, if you notice something different or are due for a routine screen, to go and get it done. And I urge the Government to fully reopen screening facilities immediately.

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

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 23:10 until Friday 12 November 2020 at 10:00.