



Fifty-third Parliament

Parliamentary Debates
(HANSARD)

FINAL DAILY

Tuesday, 2 August 2022
(for inclusion in Volume 761)

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND
Published under the authority of the House of Representatives—2024

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KARAKIA/PRAYERS	11089
MEMBERS SWORN	11089
PETITIONS, PAPERS, SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	11089
ORAL QUESTIONS—	
Questions to Ministers—	
Question No. 1—Social Development and Employment	11090
Question No. 2—Prime Minister	11092
Question No. 3—Housing.....	11094
Question No. 4—Revenue	11095
Question No. 5—Police	11097
Question No. 6—Housing.....	11098
Question No. 7—Prime Minister	11099
Question No. 8—Health.....	11100
Question No. 9—Housing.....	11101
Question No. 10—Environment.....	11103
Question No. 11—Justice.....	11104
Question No. 12—Immigration	11105
SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE	11106
SECONDARY LEGISLATION CONFIRMATION BILL—	
First Reading.....	11106
Instruction to Regulations Review Committee	11106
ACCESSIBILITY FOR NEW ZEALANDERS BILL—	
First Reading.....	11107
Instruction to Social Services and Community Committee.....	11126
ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL—	
First Reading.....	11126
Instruction to Justice Committee	11132
DATA AND STATISTICS BILL—	
Third Reading	11132
MAIDEN STATEMENT	11138
DATA AND STATISTICS BILL—	
Third Reading	11141

CONTENTS—*continued*

FAMILY COURT (FAMILY COURT ASSOCIATES)

LEGISLATION BILL—

First Reading..... 11151

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL LEGISLATION BILL—

First Reading..... 11164

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE 11178

THREE STRIKES LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL—

In Committee—

Part 1 Amendments to Sentencing Act 2002 11179

TUESDAY, 2 AUGUST 2022

The Speaker took the Chair at 2 p.m.

KARAKIA/PRAYERS

TANGI UTIKERE (Labour—Palmerston North): Te Atua Mana, te akameitaki atu nei matou iakoe no toou takinga meitaki taau i riringi mai ki runga ia matou. Te akaruke nei matou i to matou tu tangata, te akamaara nei matou i te ariki vaine, e te pure nei matou kia arataki koe i ta matou uriuri anga manako, kia rave matou I ta matou angaanga i roto i teia ngutuare na roto i te pakari, te tuatua tika e te akaaka no te meitaki e te au o to matou basileia Niu Tirenī. Amene.

MEMBERS SWORN

SPEAKER: Kia orana, members. I understand that Sam Uffindell is present and wishes to make the affirmation of allegiance. Would he please come forward to the chair on my right.

SAM UFFINDELL (National—Tauranga): I, Samuel Julian Uffindell, solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to law.

**PETITIONS, PAPERS, SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

SPEAKER: No bills have been introduced. Petitions have been delivered to the Clerk for presentation.

CLERK:

- Petition of Lydia Chai requesting that the House ban the export of plastic waste to developing countries
- petition of Pete Young requesting that the House legislate to require public reporting of all “Deaths with Vaccine”.

SPEAKER: Those petitions stand referred to the Petitions Committee. Ministers have delivered papers.

CLERK:

- Ngāi Tahu Ancillary Claims Trust Annual Financial Statements 30 June 2021
- Government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition of Lucy Mclean.

SPEAKER: Those papers are published under the authority of the House. Select committee reports have been delivered for presentation.

CLERK:

- Report of the Finance and Expenditure Committee on Overseas Investment (Forestry) Amendment Bill
- report of the Health Committee on the Petition of Dr Shane Reti and Matt King
- report of the Justice Committee on Firearms Prohibition Orders Legislation Bill
- reports of the Petitions Committee on the
 - Petition of Barbara Ann Joyce
 - Petition of Conrad Petersen, and
- report of the Regulations Review Committee on the Complaint about the Coroners (Pathologists Fees) Regulations 2007.

SPEAKER: The bills are set down for second reading. The report of the Regulations Review Committee is set down for consideration.

ORAL QUESTIONS**QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS****Question No. 1—Social Development and Employment**

1. RICARDO MENÉNDEZ MARCH (Green) to the **Minister for Social Development and Employment**: Does she think that families in receipt of a benefit are facing cost of living pressures currently, exacerbating poverty?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON (Minister for Māori Development) on behalf of the **Minister for Social Development and Employment**: On behalf of the Minister, we do agree that families on a benefit will be facing—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! I just want to check: is the Minister not the Minister? I thought the Minister was the Acting Minister.

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: No, I'm not the Acting Minister.

SPEAKER: You're not the Acting Minister?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: No.

SPEAKER: Sorry, I thought—

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: But I'm on behalf of the Minister.

SPEAKER: You're on behalf of the Acting Minister?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: On behalf of the—yeah.

SPEAKER: OK, thank you.

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: Kia ora. So, on behalf of the Minister, we do agree that families on a benefit will be facing cost of living pressures. Like many families, we knew when we came into Government that people on a benefit were experiencing hardship, which is why we have prioritised them, first, through our Families Package, and then through lifting main benefit rates to historical levels. Alongside this, we have raised the abatement threshold, increased dental grants, and lifted Working for Families tax credits. A report released by Ministry of Social Development (MSD) shows our changes have led to around a 40 percent increase in after-housing cost incomes for those on a main benefit since 2018. We know beneficiaries do it tough, which is why we have prioritised them. We are working with them and changing things, and, hopefully, changing their lives.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Is the fact that hardship grants for food are going up a sign that people on a main benefit are unable to meet the cost of living and that benefit increases under her Government haven't been enough?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: So the—Mr Speaker, can I just ask what the question is?

Hon Gerry Brownlee: Yes it's—oh, I can give it for you, if you like, Willie.

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: Oh, thanks, Gerry. So is the question—sorry, can I just ask, are you asking are they enough—is that what you're saying? Cost of living, yeah—because I missed the—

Ricardo Menéndez March: Can I repeat the question?

SPEAKER: Yes.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Thank you. Is the fact that hardship grants for food are going up a sign that people on a main benefit aren't able to meet the cost of living and that benefit increases under her Government haven't been enough?

Hon Gerry Brownlee: The answer is “Yes, that's right.”

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: No, no, that's not right, Gerry Brownlee. But, on behalf of the Minister, a report released by MSD on the weekend shows that our changes have led to a 40 percent increase in after-housing costs income for those on a main benefit after inflation. Providing support for those on a benefit goes beyond the welfare system. That's why we're addressing these pressures through half-price public transport, free lunches in schools, free period products in schools, and more public housing.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Does she think it is kind to exclude children living in poverty who are in benefit-receiving households from the cost of living payment?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: I'm sorry, look, I just—can you repeat the question? I'm just finding it hard to hear.

SPEAKER: And can I ask while he's doing it that Mr David Bennett turn his volume down? Thank you.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Does she think it is kind to exclude children living in poverty who are in benefit-receiving households from the cost of living payment?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: I hear the question; I respect the question and the member. It's not a matter of being kind, because this Government has been more kind than any other Government in the last generation. As a Government, we have made once-in-a-generation increases to incomes for those on a benefit. Our changes have led to around a 40 percent increase in after-housing costs income for those on a main benefit, inflation-adjusted since 2018. Now, as someone—unlike the Opposition—who has worked with many beneficiaries, and I have tried to encourage them—

Hon David Bennett: He's on fire.

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: —none of them—many of them wouldn't know a beneficiary if they fell over one. But the reality is this—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member will resume his seat. It was a straightforward question. It may be that some of the inane interjections deserved a response, but I just want to say to the Minister that he is not doing much good by chasing the bait. *[Interruption]* Right. Bennett—out. Mr Bennett will leave the House.

Hon David Bennett withdrew from the Chamber.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Does the Minister expect to see a decrease in the value of hardship grants and debts to the Ministry of Social Development as a result of the recent benefit increases, and, if not—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Order! Right, who was that?

Chris Penk: Sir, we're just trying to establish the basis on which you kicked out Mr Bennett.

SPEAKER: No, but members don't need to call out loudly in order to do that while a question is occurring.

Chris Penk: I'm just helping with your directional pathfinding, sir.

Hon Michael Woodhouse: Speaking to that, Mr Speaker, to the extent that somebody did call out, it was probably me, and I was establishing what had actually happened. But I do apologise if it was a bit noisy.

SPEAKER: All right. Well, I'm pretty surprised—

Hon Member: Sorry.

SPEAKER: OK. Well, we've got three apologies now, and that's probably enough. I'm surprised that any inquiry was necessary, given the volume of the interjection—the out-of-order interjection. Ask the question again.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Does the Minister expect to see a decrease in the value of hardship grants and debt to the Ministry of Social Development as a result of recent benefit increases, and, if not, when will she take action so that benefits cover families' basic essentials without them needing to take on debt?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: In terms of debt, as part of the welfare overhaul, the Government has initiated a cross-Government debt to government work programme which is looking at reducing hardship and preventing debt from occurring. Steps have already been taken as part of the work—for example, increasing access to dental grants so that people don't go into debt for high-cost dental needs, and changes to legal aid,

including removing interest off debt, increased eligibility thresholds, and removing the legal aid user charge. This is an ongoing piece of work.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Is it her Government's preference that families who receive benefits take up more debt with the Ministry of Social Development in order to pay for basics like food, clothing, and rent, rather than get the cost of living payment?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: Of course not. We want to work with these families and we are working at the coalface. I want just to reiterate what I was saying earlier, which is that there is a lot of working going on at the community level, and we're working in tandem with community providers right now, and that's why I was going on about the beneficiaries. Some of us work at ground level with them and understand the pressures, and the other side of it is that we're able to move them on into areas and into opportunities that they've never had before. This Government has provided more opportunities than most Governments—in fact, all Governments—when you look at the types of programmes we've initiated: Mana in Mahi, He Poutama Rangatahi, Māori trade training, and record apprenticeships. There are opportunities there for many of our beneficiaries and I have seen the encouragement that our providers are doing, and we, as Government MPs, are also trying to give them some sort of support and plan going forward, rather than just staying on the benefit.

Ricardo Menéndez March: Is it her Government's goal that people do not need hardship grants in order to meet basic expenses, and, if so, what actions will she take to ensure that people are able to meet all of their basic expenses off their main incomes?

Hon WILLIE JACKSON: We have provided support for people, as I've said earlier, more so than any other Government in recent history. We've had a 40 percent increase in after-housing costs in terms of incomes for those on main benefits, inflation-adjusted since 2018. Couples with children are \$237 per week better off, which rises to \$268 in the winter months. We've lifted 66,500 children out of poverty. A lot of this work has been underestimated and criticised by the Opposition. As well as that, opportunities are continually made available for young people in terms of getting off benefits and working in tandem with many of our community providers.

Question No. 2—Prime Minister

2. NICOLA WILLIS (Deputy Leader—National) to the Acting Prime Minister: Does he stand by all of his Government's statements and actions?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, particularly the Government's support for New Zealanders during the current volatile and uncertain environment. We're boosting the incomes of seniors, students, and low-income families, while a million New Zealanders are receiving the winter energy payment. Over 1.3 million New Zealanders have received the first cost of living payments this week to support New Zealanders with the increased costs they are facing. This builds on our cut to fuel excise duty and half-price public transport until January 2023. New Zealand is in a strong position to support households and businesses. Unemployment is low, exports are growing, and Government debt is substantially below most other nations. There is no single or easy solution, but we will continue to provide support to New Zealanders in these challenging times.

Nicola Willis: Why did the Government claim 2.1 million people would receive the cost of living payment when only 1.3 million have reportedly received it—a large number of whom live overseas?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: That's because yesterday was day one of the scheme.

Nicola Willis: How much taxpayer money has the Government used to make cost of living payments to people living overseas?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: We're not quite sure. The fact of the matter is—

Hon Members: Ha, ha!

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: —at this stage—there are 33 New Zealanders over there who don't like the cost of living payments; there are 1.3 million New Zealanders yesterday who received that, and they're saying thank you very much to a very considerate and caring Government.

Brooke van Velden: Is it correct that “Before each monthly payment, Inland Revenue will check each individual's eligibility for the payment.” in regards to the cost of living payment, and, if so, can he guarantee that the IRD will prevent people who are ineligible from receiving the second and third monthly payments?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: The short answer is yes, and I see that the Minister of Revenue has a question at question No. 4. The detailed questions, I guess, should really go to him.

Nicola Willis: How many people who've spent time in New Zealand on working holiday visas but have since returned home—such as French backpacker Benoit Berton—have received the cost of living payment?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: We're still gathering data—I mean, like I said, this is day two of this scheme. Of course, nothing is perfect—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member will resume his seat. I'll refer the member to Speakers' ruling 183/3.

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: Mr Speaker—

SPEAKER: No, no, the member will—a further supplementary.

Nicola Willis: How many people such as Charlotte Castle, who left New Zealand more than six years ago, have received the cost of living payment?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: When people shift or change address, they normally go to the post office. They let the post office know that they've changed it so that the mail can go somewhere else. What we've learnt is that when people travel overseas to live overseas, we actually now need to inform Inland Revenue that they've also moved overseas. It is a very simple process for them to actually go online and to inform Inland Revenue that they don't believe they're eligible, and I recommend and suggest that people do just that.

Nicola Willis: Whose fault is it that New Zealand taxpayer money has ended up in the bank accounts of people living overseas: the Government, for such a poorly designed scheme, or New Zealanders who didn't change their address with the IRD?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: I see that the cost of living payment has triggered the member's hyperbole reflex. If we take all her hyperbole and we halve it and halve it again, she'll still be about a mile away from where reality is.

Nicola Willis: Wouldn't it have been fairer to taxpayers to simply adjust their income tax rates for the cost of living so they can keep more of what they earn, rather than overtaxing them, hiring hundreds of bureaucrats, and then sending millions to London “yo pros” and French backpackers?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: We have a cost of living crisis and the Opposition's solution was to give \$2 a week to the people who need it the most, while they give themselves tens of thousands of dollars in tax relief. The other thing that I've also found out about the National Party policy is—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! That's something I think is unlikely the member will ever have responsibility for.

Nicola Willis: Does he agree with Jacinda Ardern, who said in 2017 that “Kids living in cars & motels is not a sign of care”, and can he confirm how many kids are living in cars and motels today?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: In regards to the first part of the question, yes.

Nicola Willis: Is the Acting Prime Minister concerned to learn that 486 families are living in cars, according to latest data—four times the number when Labour gained office—and when will the Government stop blaming National for Labour's multiple failures to deliver?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: One of the things is that we inherited a problem. There were so many people living in cars under the previous Government that we have had to solve the problem. We have delivered over 10,000 public homes, which is the most building that any Government has done since the 1970s. We're well aware of the situation, and we're taking steps to address it.

SPEAKER: Question No. 5, Ginny Andersen.

Ginny Andersen: My question is to the Minister of Police, and it reads: what recent progress has been made—

Hon Member: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER: Oh sorry, I apologise. I apologise to the member—it just feels like it's taken a long time to get here. I missed question No. 3—

Chris Bishop: We're happy to give it a miss.

SPEAKER: Are members happy to give a question away?

Chris Bishop: No, no.

SPEAKER: No—oh, someone else's question? The member knows he can't do that, but he can give his own questions away, and he's running the risk of doing it.

Question No. 3—Housing

3. ANAHILA KANONGATA'A-SUISUIKI (Labour) to the **Minister of Housing:** Kia orana, Vaa Tuatua. What progress has the Government made on the delivery of public housing?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Minister of Housing): Kia orana. This morning, I announced the Government has added more than 10,000 new public homes since 2017—another major milestone in our plan to tackle the national housing crisis. These 10,037 new public homes, including 8,240 new builds, are tangible proof of our commitment to rebuilding the public housing stock after years of neglect. We are restoring the housing safety net with the biggest State housing - building programme since the 1970s. While we celebrate more than 10,000 new public homes today, we know that the job isn't yet done. We will continue our record investment and delivery in public housing as a priority, in addition to our wide range of other actions to boost housing supply, because we know how crucial adequate housing is for the health, security, and stability of individuals and whānau.

Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki: Which parts of the country have benefited from the Government adding 10,000 new public homes?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: We're adding public homes across the country from Northland to Invercargill. We've made significant investment in regional New Zealand as well as Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury. For example, in the Waikato region, we've added 681 more public homes, and on the East Coast we've added 331 new homes. Right across the country, people will be noticing many new homes going up, and they may not even realise that it's public housing under Kāinga Ora. We're adding public homes in places that have long been without them. For example, down south, we're adding homes in places that have been waiting for new public homes for decades. In Gore, we've delivered the first public home since the mid-1980s, and we will add another 20 public homes to the current stock of 40 by the end of 2024 to replace homes built mainly in the 1940s.

Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki: Why is the Government undertaking the largest State house - building programme since the 1970s?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: Because it is so badly needed. Since 2017, we have been rebuilding New Zealand's public housing stock after years of neglect by the previous Government. While we have delivered 10,037 new public homes in five years, the previous Government's slash-and-burn attitude to public housing resulted in 1,500 fewer.

SPEAKER: Question No. 5, Ginny Andersen.

Ginny Andersen: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Police: what—

Hon Member: Point of order, sir.

SPEAKER: Oh, I apologise. I'm still counting laps from that points race. Question No. 4, Nicola—no. Question No. 4—yeah—Nicola Willis. Sorry. The fact that the member had two questions—that's what's got to me, all right? OK. I just can't count to two today.

Question No. 4—Revenue

4. NICOLA WILLIS (Deputy Leader—National) to the Minister of Revenue: Does he stand by his statement in relation to the number of ineligible people receiving the cost of living payment that “We’re not sure of the exact number, you don’t know what you don’t know”, and what is the analysis, if any, supporting his claim that about 1 percent of the approximately 2.1 million people who received the payment are not eligible for it?

Hon DAVID PARKER (Minister of Revenue): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes. Eligibility decisions are based on the best information that Inland Revenue holds. That information is and will always be high quality, but is and will always be out of date at the margins. The vast majority of people getting the payment are hard-working New Zealanders who are entitled to it. We’ve got the balance right, providing a time-limited income boost to help out 2 million Kiwis during a period of heightened cost of living. IRD does not have perfect and up-to-date information in all cases and never will. The alternative would be to have required over 2 million people to apply for it. The cost of administering that would have been much higher than the savings and would have delayed the payment. We also know that the extra hurdle would mean many people who were eligible would not apply. It’s far better than alternatives like tax cuts that would give \$2 to the lowest-income earners and tens of thousands of dollars not just to CEOs but to overseas-based landlords. My estimate of 1 percent is based in my confidence that the IRD information is robust and the vast majority of recipients are entitled to the payment.

Nicola Willis: Why did he claim just yesterday that 2.1 million people would be receiving the payment when IRD has confirmed today that only 1.3 million people have received the payment, many of whom live overseas?

Hon DAVID PARKER: I didn’t say that. The member is misrepresenting my statements. Indeed, I have answered many questions—including, I think, in this House—assuring New Zealanders that if they haven’t already filed their tax return and, therefore, don’t meet the eligibility criteria but then later file their tax return for the year ended 31 March 2022, the payments will be backdated. I think in the House last week, I confirmed that those people have until 31 March next year to do that.

Brooke van Velden: Can he guarantee that the IRD will prevent people who are ineligible from receiving the second and third monthly payments?

Hon DAVID PARKER: What I can assure the House is that the data checks that are carried out by Inland Revenue will be carried out again before every subsequent payment. The quality of the data will continue to improve. I would observe that the Inland Revenue Department is increasingly relying on automated data sets. This has enabled them to vastly reduce the cost of administration of tax services. Staffing numbers are down by close to 2,000 people as a consequence of those automated services. It not only saves Government administration and, therefore, taxpayers many, many hundreds of millions of dollars; it also rewards taxpayers by enabling them to get automated payments and refunds, and the data sets that are relied upon in these automated processes are constantly being improved.

Dr Duncan Webb: How many of the estimated 2.1 million people eligible to receive the payment were paid the \$116 of the cost of living payment just yesterday?

Hon DAVID PARKER: As the member opposite has already said, 1.3 million were paid yesterday—as the deputy of the Labour Party has said—on day one of the scheme. We know from feedback that this has assisted with the cost of living, as well as the assistance we've given with decreases in taxes and public transport costs. We know it's sincerely appreciated by the people who have received it, for whom it makes a difference. None of those 1.3 million people would have received anything if an application process had been used. It would take many, many months if you could ever do it. The other estimated 800,000 or so will become eligible after they file their tax return for the year ended 31 March 2022. Those are people such as those who use tax agents or file IR3 returns, rather than have their returns automatically calculated by the computer.

Nicola Willis: Does the Minister agree with Australian Kelly McGuire, a resident in Australia, who received the cost of living payment and says, “The money could make a lot of difference to a lot of families and it just seems a bit wasted imagining how many people like us there might be out there.”?

Hon DAVID PARKER: I think I've already addressed that question by making the point that the alternative application-based process rather than relying upon data sets would have cost a lot more money than it saved. Obviously, we continue to strive to improve those data sets.

Nicola Willis: Can the Minister confirm that the Inland Revenue Department recommended against being the delivery agency for the cost of living payment, specifically warning Ministers that the information it holds may not be up to date, meaning some people who should receive the payment might not, and, conversely, some people will receive the payment who should not have?

Hon DAVID PARKER: Yes, I can confirm that, and that's been obvious from the papers that have been released and questions that we've answered previously. It's also true that the Inland Revenue Department and the Treasury both recommended against tax cuts, which would have been inflationary, hard to deliver, and would have increased the Government deficit.

Nicola Willis: Can the Minister confirm he has no idea how much taxpayer money has gone into the bank accounts of people living overseas, he has no idea how many eligible New Zealanders have missed out on the payment—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member's had two questions.

Hon DAVID PARKER: I can confirm that the data sets relied upon by the Inland Revenue are very, very good—probably amongst the best in the world—but they are not perfect. We continually improve them, and the alternative would be to waste more money on administration on an application process that would've prevented the 1.3 million people who received a cost of living payment from receiving it yesterday.

Brooke van Velden: Has the Government sought or received any advice about extending the cost of living payment beyond October, and, if not, will he rule it out?

Hon DAVID PARKER: I've received no such advice, but have no current work under way to extend it, so I wouldn't want to set the hares running by implying that I was.

Brooke van Velden: Is it the Government's position that the cost of living payment is not inflationary because it is “time-limited”, or is it the Government's position that it is refusing to rule out extending the cost of living payment beyond October?

Hon DAVID PARKER: I haven't refused to rule out the extension beyond the end of October. As I've previously explained, we haven't sought advice; we're not planning to extend that payment. In respect of the inflation point, government is a complex thing, and with the inflation around out-turn from the COVID pandemic around the world, this Government believes that it is appropriate to assist people with temporary support through

the likes of the excise duty, the increased subsidies for public transport, and this time-limited cost of living payment. That is less inflationary than longer-term tax cuts.

Brooke van Velden: Is it acceptable that a young person who lives in a household that earns half a million dollars a year receives the cost of living payment and spends the money on an expensive new handbag?

Hon DAVID PARKER: Oh well, that's a purely hypothetical question. The eligibility criteria are that if the person earned less than \$70,000 in the year ended 31 March 2022 and they weren't in receipt of the winter energy payment, then they are entitled to it. One of the criticisms that we often hear from the Opposition is that the Government's measures apply only to people in receipt of Government support, rather than to middle-income people who are also facing cost of living pressures. This payment responds to that; how people apply it is for them.

Chris Bishop: Point of order, Mr Speaker. Sir, it's not the world's biggest thing, it's just to point out that you've traditionally had a rule that the primary question gets two supplementaries afterwards—

SPEAKER: Yes, and I'll point out that that's generally what I do, and there's no requirement for me to do it. So the member is being disorderly again.

Question No. 5—Police

5. GINNY ANDERSEN (Labour—Hutt South) to the Minister of Police: What recent progress has been made on the implementation of firearms prohibition orders in New Zealand?

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Minister of Police): Good news: I am advised that the bill has been reported back to the House. It was reported back last Friday, and I thank the Justice Committee for reporting the bill back several weeks early. I intend to take a proposal to the Business Committee this afternoon that will see us agreeing on a timetable to have the bill passed into law by the end of next week. This is another step in the Government's response to criminal behaviour, and it reflects our ongoing goal to ensure that police have the right tools they need to keep our community safe.

Ginny Andersen: What is the purpose of the orders, and how will they help to reduce gun harm in our communities?

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS: Firearms prohibition orders will help to further reduce firearms violence in our communities by prohibiting high-risk offenders from accessing, being around, or using firearms or ammunition. The bill gives the court the power to impose an order lasting 10 years, and it makes it a further criminal offence to breach the conditions of the order. I am concerned about the potential for further gun violence in our communities, and this bill targets those people with a history of serious violent offending and gun crimes, barring them from accessing the most dangerous of weapons.

Ginny Andersen: What will this mean for individuals who breach prohibition orders?

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS: A breach of firearms prohibition orders will attract stern penalties, including up to two years' imprisonment if a person breaches a certain condition and is found, for example, to reside in a location where there are firearms, or visits a prohibited location such as a gun shop; up to five years in prison if the person is found to be in possession or control of a firearm; up to seven years' imprisonment if the firearm was a prohibited firearm such as a military-style semi-automatic; and up five years in prison—or up to seven years' imprisonment if the firearm was a prohibited firearm—for knowingly supplying the firearm to a person subject to a firearms prohibition order.

Ginny Andersen: What alternative approaches to firearms prohibition orders did the Government consider in bringing this bill before the House?

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS: The Government did consider previous proposals that were considered in 2014 and 2016. We also considered previous bills that have been considered by the House to limit firearms prohibition orders to only gang members, and also to have the police issuing the firearms prohibition orders. We ultimately decided on this course of action because we thought it was justified to have a wider scope, a wider coverage, than just gang members—that, in fact, there were examples where other violent offenders should also be covered—and we felt that the most appropriate body to be issuing the orders wasn't the police but was the courts, and so, ultimately, we feel we've reached a better balance.

Hon Mark Mitchell: Will the implementation of the firearms prohibition orders include the search powers that the Police Association recommended, saying that without them the bill would be useless?

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS: Welcome back to the member. I was worried—I hadn't seen him for a while. As has been well canvassed—and we canvassed at the select committee—the Government doesn't intend to provide the police with additional warrantless search powers. There are additional warranted search powers that the House will be asked to consider shortly that deal specifically with gang-related tensions. In terms of warrantless search powers, we did consider a range of advice on that, and, ultimately, one of the risks that we were weighing up there was that they could end up being used against law-abiding firearms owners, and that is a group that the Government does not want to target with this legislation.

Question No. 6—Housing

6. RAWIRI WAITITI (Co-Leader—Te Paati Māori) (Remote) to the Minister of Housing: Tēnā koe e te Pīka, otirā tēnā tātou e te Whare.

[Thank you, Mr Speaker, indeed my greetings to all of us in the House.]

Kia orana kotou katoa i te 'Epetoma o te reo Maori Kūki 'Āirani. Te kaupapa 'Ātuitui'ia au ki te Oneone o tōku 'Ui Tupuna. Does she stand by all her Government's statements and actions on housing?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Minister of Housing): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. Yes. I am particularly proud of the more than 10,000 new public homes that this Government has delivered since 2017, the largest public house - building programme since the 1970s. I am also proud of and stand by the suite of dedicated Māori housing policies of our Government, led by Minister Henare. These address housing needs from homelessness right through to homeownership.

Rawiri Waititi: How can she stand by her Government's actions on rental housing in Te Waiariki when new data shows that for the first time ever, the median rent in the Bay of Plenty has surpassed both Auckland and Wellington, making it the most expensive place to rent in the country?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: The Bay of Plenty, and particularly Rotorua, is one of the most challenging areas we have for housing. There is a very simple reason for this: there simply are not enough houses. Over the last decade, the population of Rotorua has grown by around 9,000 people. However, there have only been 1,500 consents granted in Rotorua, most of those in the last two years. There simply have not been enough homes built in that area, and that is why Rotorua was one of the first cabs off the rank in the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund, as was Tauranga through the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund. Our Government is finally backing this region to make sure that we can have more homes built. Other Governments have not done so.

Rawiri Waititi: Is she concerned by reports such as those from the Rotorua Budget Advisory Service manager, Pakanui Tuhura, who has said that people in Rotorua were

doing anything and everything to keep a roof over their kids' heads, including taking extra jobs, bringing in family as boarders, and buying less food?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: Yes, I am, and this is why Rotorua was, I think, the largest recipient of the first round of the Infrastructure Investment Fund. It's also why Rotorua has been singled out as an area for over-delivery in the public housing plan, because we simply do not have enough public houses in Rotorua. The previous Government decreased the number and failed to build there, and we are building them back.

Rawiri Waititi: How is it not an indictment on her Government that things are so desperate for whānau in my electorate, with rising rents, rising prices, and flat-lining incomes, that Rotorua residents are saying, "We may as well go bush."?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: We acknowledge how difficult it is. We acknowledge that housing is one of the areas that people are struggling with the most. However, this housing crisis is one that has been created over a long period of time. What there needs to be is a commitment to a long and sustained period of work and investment, which our Government is putting in. We will turn this around, but it is not going to happen overnight.

Rawiri Waititi: What is she specifically doing to address rising rents and homelessness in Waiariki other than pumping millions into private hotel companies?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: I've addressed a number of those initiatives in answers to previous questions in this set. Critical is making sure that we have land that houses can be built on, and this is why both Rotorua and Tauranga have been large recipients of the first round of the Infrastructure Investment Fund, with Rotorua being the largest. Rotorua in particular is also an area that has been singled out for over-delivery in the public housing plan, and it is one of the place-based initiatives we have because we understand there is such need in this area.

Question No. 7—Prime Minister

7. BROOKE VAN VELDEN (Deputy Leader—ACT) to the Acting Prime Minister: Does he stand by his Government's statements and policies?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS (Acting Prime Minister): Yes, and, as we've just heard, particularly the 10,037 additional public homes delivered since Labour came into office. Investing in public housing is a priority of this Government—more than 10 percent of all public housing in New Zealand has been built under this Government. After a lost decade that left New Zealand with 1,500 fewer State homes and a backlog of deferred maintenance, this Government has rebuilt the State's ability to grow and provide public housing, with the biggest State housing - building and improvement programme since the 1970s. Warm and dry public housing provides an important safety net for New Zealanders. It is crucial for the health, security, and stability of individuals and whānau.

Brooke van Velden: How does the Government spend \$14 million, hire 750 people, and still fail to get basic things right—like not giving the cost of living payment to non - New Zealanders living overseas?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: Again, there's members on the other side of the House that are opposed to the cost of living payment. The reality is there's 1.3 million New Zealanders, and counting, because when others get their tax returns filed for this year, they're very appreciative of the fact that they're getting the cost of living payment.

Brooke van Velden: Given that policy experts—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member will start the question again. You don't ever start a question with a "Given".

Brooke van Velden: When policy experts, care-experienced youth organisations working directly with children and young people, and all other political parties are saying that the Oranga Tamariki oversight bill creates the risk of increased abuse and the

potential for abuse to be swept under the carpet, will the Government consider withdrawing the Oranga Tamariki oversight bill?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: The short answer to that is no. We believe that it will give Oranga Tamariki the oversight that it actually needs, and I know that the Minister for Children believes that Oranga Tamariki needs strong oversight.

Brooke van Velden: Does he stand by the Government's policy of using *Shortland Street* to promote nursing as a career option, and how does he respond to the New Zealand Nurses Organisation president, Anne Daniels, who responded, "Is this for real?"

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: So I'd caution the member on making light of the reach *Shortland Street* has. With viewership of 350,000 people a night, that's a lot of potential future nurses, healthcare assistants, and allied health workforce.

Hon Gerry Brownlee: Oh, come on.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Oh, you know you watch it, Gerry.

SPEAKER: Order! Who was that?

Hon Gerry Brownlee: It was Megan Woods.

SPEAKER: No, no—there was noise from both sides, and the loudest—[*Interruption*]

Hon Dr Megan Woods: It was me.

SPEAKER: Well, is the member taking her mask off in order to withdraw and apologise?

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Oh sorry, no—I'll put it back.

SPEAKER: Well, I'm just trying to work out if the member pleaded guilty to causing that ruckus.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: I did.

SPEAKER: Right. Well, withdraw and apologise.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: I withdraw and apologise.

SPEAKER: And I just want to warn the people who reacted to the member not to, because your reaction was louder than the original crime.

Brooke van Velden: What does he say to Prudence Thomson of Accent Health Recruitment, who says it is "insane" that nurses are not on a tier 1, straight-to-residence pathway, and does he accept that doing so could be more effective at improving the health workforce than using *Shortland Street*?

Hon KELVIN DAVIS: There is now a clear pathway to residency for all registered nurses based on their occupation, so long as they stay a nurse for two years. This is a globally competitive offer, and it's also interesting to note that since 2017, there has been an increase of 4,276 fulltime-equivalent nurses, and also an increase in doctors by 1,765. This Government has been addressing the problems in the health system; understanding, as well, and appreciating that the health sector has been under incredible strain over the last couple of years.

Question No. 8—Health

8. Dr GAURAV SHARMA (Labour—Hamilton West) to the Minister of Health: What recent announcements has he made on the future of the health workforce?

Hon ANDREW LITTLE (Minister of Health): Yesterday, I announced a package of targeted measures to train more health workers domestically and bring more doctors and nurses into the country to help address immediate workforce pressures. The package to boost the health workforce includes the establishment of a one-stop shop for international recruitment within Te Whatu Ora—Health New Zealand, training more GPs and radiology registrars, and removing significant cost barriers for professional registration.

Dr Gaurav Sharma: How will these measures grow our domestic workforce?

Hon ANDREW LITTLE: Growing our domestic health workforce is an important step for the long-term change required in New Zealand to ensure everyone can get the best care where and when they need it. Our domestic workforce pipeline will benefit from, firstly, the expansion of a successful programme that provides \$5,000 in funding for every non-practising nurse in New Zealand who wants to return to nursing to help get them re-registered; secondly, a joint project with the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners to increase the number of GPs trained each year to 300 and to get more Māori and Pacific GPs; thirdly, doubling the number of nurse practitioners trained each year from 50 to 100; and, finally, increasing training slots for radiology registrars from 100 a year at the moment to 115 a year from 2024.

Dr Gaurav Sharma: What will these new measures mean for internationally qualified health workers wanting to come to New Zealand?

Hon ANDREW LITTLE: As a Government, we know that we won't meet the demand required for our health workforce through our domestic pipeline alone. Now we've changed immigration rules to make New Zealand one of the easiest places in the world for health workers to come to, we've put in a range of measures. Te Whatu Ora—Health New Zealand is an accredited employer, so it can facilitate bringing people into the country, and the following measures will allow us to ensure the process of moving to Aotearoa New Zealand is as easy and attractive as possible: firstly, an international recruitment service is being set up within Te Whatu Ora—Health New Zealand, which, as I said before, will be a one-stop shop for all those people who want to come here; secondly, the provision of up to \$10,000 in financial support for international nurses for New Zealand registration costs; and, thirdly, covering international doctors' salaries during their six-week clinical induction courses and three-month training internships.

Question No. 9—Housing

9. CHRIS BISHOP (National) to the **Minister of Housing:** Does she stand by her statement, “What we don't have is people living on the streets and in cars”, and how many children were included in the applications for people on the public housing register who were living in a car at the time they applied as at the quarter ending 30 June 2022?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Minister of Housing): In answer to the first part of the question, I stand by my full statement in the context of defending expenditure on emergency housing motels against Opposition attacks, where I said, “What we don't have is people living on the street or in cars. That's the alternative.”, and I am yet to hear from the critics of that spend a constructive suggestion of what the alternative is. Stopping spending isn't the answer. The answer is building permanent transitional and emergency housing, and that is exactly what we are doing. In answer to the second part of the question, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) advises me that they collect data on the people applying to the register at the point of presentation, and in the quarter ending 30 June 2022, 480 applicants on the public housing register reported living in a car at the time they applied. People living in cars is not acceptable, and the difference under our Government is they don't have to. We acknowledge that there is a housing crisis, we have removed the cap the previous Government set on funding emergency housing places, and we actively work with people to come forward and seek help if they need it. This is the same spending that the member and his party is constantly criticising.

Chris Bishop: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The primary question is “how many children were included in the applications for people on the public housing register”. The Minister gave me the total number of applications, which was 480. I know for a fact that the data is broken down as to how many children were included in the applications, and the Minister didn't give me that answer.

SPEAKER: Well, if the member knows the answer—

Chris Bishop: No, I know the fact that the data is built like that.

SPEAKER: I think it's an area the member can pursue by way of supplementary, if he wants to.

Chris Bishop: Well, point of order, Mr Speaker. The—

SPEAKER: Is the member proposing to not have a supplementary?

Chris Bishop: No. I'm proposing that you make the Minister answer the question, which is a primary question on notice.

SPEAKER: And if there was a requirement to answer the question, this place would be very different. The question was addressed.

Chris Bishop: It's a primary question on notice.

SPEAKER: Order! Order! Does the member want to have a supplementary?

Chris Bishop: Yes.

SPEAKER: Ask it.

Chris Bishop: How many children of the 480 the Minister referenced in her primary answer were included on the applications for people on the public housing register who were living in a car at the time they applied at the quarter ending 30 June 2022?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: The household composition data is broken down in a way that doesn't necessarily reflect whether or not those children are in cars. So if we have a look at two-plus adults with children that were part of it for the period ended 30 June 2022, there were 15 applicants; single with children were 99. But the point about this is it doesn't necessarily follow because of the complex family arrangements of these that these children are actually in the custody of the people who are applying. The situation is a little bit more complicated than the numbers, and that's why I gave the member the total number in the answer to the primary question.

Chris Bishop: Can she confirm that the Government has regularly provided—including as recently as March last year—the number of children included in the applications for people on the public housing register, and, given the total number is 480, why can she not tell the House now what the number of children included in those applications is?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: In as far as I have responsibility as the Minister of Housing for this, the numbers that I have given are what I am advised from MSD—that the household composition is broken down by the number of household applications that include children in those applications. There could be other data, but that is not what I have been advised of.

Chris Bishop: Why did she say in June 2021 “What we don't have is people living on the streets and in cars” when the number of people recorded as living in cars at the end of March 2021 was 435, including 198 children?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: The point that I made in answer to the primary question is that when people identify as living in a car at the point of application to go on to the housing register with MSD, then they do not stay living in a car. They are then transferred into emergency housing, and that offer is made to them. Of course, not everyone chooses to go on it, but the offer is made. The other point that I made in answer to the primary question is that, unlike the previous Government, who capped the number of places—and Paula Bennett, by her own admission at the time as Minister, admitted that there were not enough places for everybody that needed it—in 2017, we give people a motel roof over their head rather than a car roof over their head, and that member is now crying crocodile tears because he and his party do nothing but criticise that spending.

Chris Bishop: Does she agree with the 2017 statement by Labour MP Jacinda Ardern that “Kids living in cars & motels is not a sign of care”, and, if so, is she concerned that according to MSD, the number of people living in cars has quadrupled under this Government?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: Yes, I do agree with that statement from Jacinda Ardern, and that's why we as a Government have put in place measures such as the Homelessness Action Plan. It's why we are funding the largest public housing build since the 1970s. It's why we have more than quadrupled the number of permanent transitional houses since we came into Government. I also concur with Simon Bridges, who is quoted in *Blue Blood*: "We didn't put sufficient weight on the social issues like housing and the environment. The '14-'17 term was the time to open up the till a bit and do something about social spending." Clearly, Mr Bridges went on a road to Damascus that the current housing spokesperson for the National Party has not been on.

Chris Bishop: Will she instruct her officials to go out and make their number one priority getting kids and families out of cars and into accommodation, and say to her officials, "I will not approve a single extra back-office staff member for your organisation until you sort it out."?

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS: The back-office staff members, who you sorted out—the refuge of the people without policy since for ever. I don't have to give that undertaking to this House, because that is exactly what our Government is doing. We are not a Government that by our own admission is not funding enough motel places to get kids out of cars—we have made that a priority. The National Party have done nothing but criticise that, but I stand by the quadrupling of transitional housing places, I stand by the Homelessness Action Plan, and I stand by the 10,000 additional public housing places that we have delivered in five years of Government. What we are doing is dealing with the dregs of the carnage of a housing crisis created by the National Party.

Question No. 10—Environment

10. INGRID LEARY (Labour—Taieri) to the Minister for the Environment: Kia orana, Mr Speaker. What reports has he received on the costs of consenting under the Resource Management Act?

Hon DAVID PARKER (Minister for the Environment): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Late last year, I received a report from the Infrastructure Commission on the cost of consenting infrastructure projects in New Zealand. This report found the cost of consents for medium-sized infrastructure projects has increased 150 percent in the last 10 years. Costs are now 250 percent of what they were just a decade ago. The time taken to make decisions on consent applications for infrastructure projects has also increased by as much as 150 percent over the same period.

Ingrid Leary: Will the cost of consents for infrastructure be substantially reduced under the Spatial Planning Act (SPA) and the Natural and Built Environments Act (NBA)?

Hon DAVID PARKER: The over 100 Resource Management Act (RMA) plans will transition into around 14 NBA plans. Infrastructure projects will flow from spatial plans through to NBA plans, with designations in place, and then be allowed as permitted activities, subject to meeting standards. Millions and millions of dollars of cost and much delay and frustration will be avoided.

Ingrid Leary: How will these standards be developed?

Hon DAVID PARKER: The National Planning Framework will consolidate existing national direction under the RMA. Importantly, a new infrastructure and development chapter for the National Planning Framework is currently being developed. This work is being led by Te Waihanga—the Infrastructure Commission—in cooperation with the Ministry for the Environment and other agencies. It is expected to include standards by reference for things like sediment control. Applicants will be able to propose control standard 1, 2, or 3, and the council in its decision will specify which standard is to be

applied. Neither the applicant nor the council will have to specify complex bespoke conditions, which they currently do, at enormous cost and time.

Ingrid Leary: How ready will the new system be when it starts compared to the RMA?

Hon DAVID PARKER: The SPA and NBA process will be decades ahead. The RMA lacked national direction for decades. No standard plan format was provided, and no significant central government help was provided to councils for first-generation RMA plans. Budget 2022 allocated funding for the completion of the National Planning Framework, the infrastructure chapter I've referred to, and the first model SPA and NBA plans.

Question No. 11—Justice

11. Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH (National) to the Minister of Justice: How does she reconcile her statement to the House on 21 June that “equal voting rights are critically fundamental to New Zealand’s democracy” with her statement in relation to the Canterbury Regional Council (Ngāi Tahu Representation) Bill, “we will be supporting that bill”?

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN (Minister of Justice): I'd reconcile it in the same way the previous National Government did during their tenure—specifically, that I don't believe the statements to be contradictory.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Is she aware that the Canterbury Regional Council bill gives Ngāi Tahu the right to appoint two councillors after all eligible voters, including Māori, have had an equal vote for the other councillors, thereby giving unequal voting rights to Ngāi Tahu members?

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: I'll get this House to cast our minds all the way back to the good old years of 2015-16, when the Rt Hon John Key was at the helm, and you'll remember that it was that then National Government that stewarded through the Environment Canterbury (Transitional Governance Arrangements) Bill. That bill, if this House will recall, did exactly one of two things: first, it ensured that there were democratic representatives elected to Environment Canterbury (ECan); secondly, it ensured that Ngāi Tahu retained the right and the obligation to appoint two members to that entity. To quote, actually, a good friend of this House, the Hon Scott Simpson: “I think that probably one of the great hallmarks of this time”—

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Point of order.

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: —“under the guidance”—

SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member cannot have a point of order at the moment.

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: I go back to one of the great quotes of this House from the Hon Scott Simpson, as he was then. When commenting on the appointment of Ngāi Tahu representatives to ECan, he said, “the rebuilding of relationships in Canterbury, not only with other local government authorities and territorial bodies but also particularly with Ngāi Tahu ... I was delighted that we will be able to make the recommended changes which have been adopted in this bill to have Ngāi Tahu nominating two representatives.” I could go on. The Hon Louise Upston—

SPEAKER: No, the member can't—the member can't.

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: No, sir? OK.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I asked a question about a particular bill, and she gave an answer about National Party history 10 years ago and didn't actually address the question that I answered.

SPEAKER: Well, I think she addressed the issue, if not the bill.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Does she think that it is a good constitutional practice for a material change to the constitutional principle of equal voting rights to be carried through this House without public engagement and support for that change?

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: It's like all my Christmases have come at once this question time. Like previous Governments have in this House, we absolutely believe in the fundamental constitutional presumption of representative democracy—as we have done—tailored in New Zealand's context. As the previous National Government—I'll quote my friend Louise Upston. The committee was making some amendments to the Environment Canterbury bill on the recommendation from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, as it was in this case: "I support the recommendation [to add two additional roles], given the guardianship role and the strong partnership that has developed between Ngāi Tahu and Environment Canterbury". She goes on to say that it's appropriate to ensure that this partnership recognises Ngāi Tahu's "significant and unique interest in Canterbury's environment and the management of its natural resources". This side of the House continues to enable the growth of our unique constitutional arrangements.

Rino Tirikatene: Is the Minister aware of the results of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act assessment of the Canterbury Regional Council (Ngāi Tahu Representation) Bill undertaken by the Ministry of Justice?

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: As the member knows, determining the consistency of the legislation with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act is the responsibility of the Attorney-General, supported by the Ministry of Justice. However, I note that the publicly available assessment undertaken by the Ministry of Justice stated that "the Bill appears to be consistent with the rights and freedoms affirmed in the Bill of Rights Act", and that "The Bill is intended to reinstate"—reinstate on the basis of the amendments made in 2015-16 under the National Government—"Ngāi Tahu representation on Environment Canterbury, which was previously provided for during 2016-2019 under the Environment Canterbury (Transitional Governance Arrangements) Act 2016."

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Does the Minister not understand the difference between appointments made by a democratically elected Government which is accountable—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Order! Who was that?

Hon Member: Nicola.

SPEAKER: Who was making—well, Nicola Grigg just lost one of Mr Goldsmith's supplementaries.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Can I start the question again, Mr Speaker?

SPEAKER: You can.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Does the Minister not understand the difference between appointments of commissioners by a democratically elected Government which is accountable at the ballot box, and a permanent constitutional change made by a Government which moves away from the principle of equal voting rights?

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: Fortunately, I do, as can be reflected in the fact that I understood, for example, that the Environment Canterbury (Transitional Governance Arrangements) Bill was a composition of seven democratically elected members plus two additionally appointed members by Ngāi Tahu—so same-same.

Hon Paul Goldsmith: Supplementary.

SPEAKER: No, the member lost it—well, it was lost for him.

Question No. 12—Immigration

12. ARENA WILLIAMS (Labour—Manurewa) to the Minister of Immigration: What recent announcements has he made about opening New Zealand up to the world?

Hon MICHAEL WOOD (Minister of Immigration): This Sunday, New Zealand marked the final step in our reconnecting plan with visitors from non - visa waiver countries and international students now eligible to apply for a visa to enter New Zealand. We also opened the maritime border to cruise ships, specialist vessels, and recreational vessels. This follows the opening up of the Accredited Employer Work Visa earlier in

July, which has received healthy interest from employers, with 23,000 job-check applications received and 7,100 approved. As a country, we're looking forward to welcoming everyone from around the world back to our shores, which is great news for our tourism industry and our economy and society as we move into the warmer months of the year.

Arena Williams: How will the full reopening of our borders benefit our economy?

Hon MICHAEL WOOD: Well, pre-pandemic, visits from cruise ships were worth in excess of \$500 million a year, of which \$356 million was spent onshore, providing a valuable economic contribution to our regions. The opening of our maritime border in time for the warmer months of October to April will see that spend return to these communities. Prior to the pandemic, the international education sector was worth several billion dollars per year to our country. The full resumption of student visa processing is great news for learning establishments, who we're working closely with to help recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Arena Williams: What reports has he seen about demand for travelling to New Zealand?

Hon MICHAEL WOOD: Well, we know that globally there is pent-up demand for people to visit New Zealand. In January, 58 percent of Australians who would like to visit New Zealand wanted to come within six months of the border opening and the same figure was 77 percent for visitors from the American market, and we're seeing very strong results in key winter destinations like Queenstown. These reflect New Zealand's reputation as an attractive destination to visit, and I acknowledge the work of my colleague the Hon Stuart Nash in helping to set the tourism industry up for this return of visitors.

SPEAKER: That concludes oral questions.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Leader of the House): I move, *That the sitting of the House today be extended into the morning of Wednesday, 3 August for the first reading and referral to select committee of the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill, and consideration in committee of the Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill, the New Zealand Bill of Rights (Declarations of Inconsistency) Amendment Bill, and the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill, and the second readings of the Screen Industry Workers Bill and the Construction Contracts (Retention Money) Amendment Bill.*

Motion agreed to.

SECONDARY LEGISLATION CONFIRMATION BILL

First Reading

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Leader of the House): I move, *That the Secondary Legislation Confirmation Bill be now read a first time.* I intend to move that the bill be reported to the House by 5 December 2022.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Bill referred to the Regulations Review Committee.

Instruction to Regulations Review Committee

Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Leader of the House): I move, *That the Secondary Legislation Confirmation Bill be reported to the House by 5 December 2022.*

Motion agreed to.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR NEW ZEALANDERS BILL**First Reading**

Hon POTO WILLIAMS (Minister for Disability Issues): I present a legislative statement on the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill.

SPEAKER: That legislative statement is published under the authority of the House and can be found on the parliamentary website.

Hon POTO WILLIAMS: I move, *That the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill be now read a first time*. I nominate the Social Services and Community Committee to consider the bill. At the appropriate time, I intend to move that the bill be reported to the House by 16 May 2023.

It is an honour and a privilege to introduce the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill to this House. Today marks an important and historic milestone for the disability community and for Aotearoa New Zealand. The journey here has been a long one paved by my predecessor, the Hon Carmel Sepuloni, who I would like to mihi to for her contribution. The path here has also been paved by those within the disability community. I acknowledge the amazing team of sign language interpreters who are present today to support the first reading of the bill. I'd also like to acknowledge those who produce the closed captions for the speeches in this House to ensure everyone can be involved in their House of Representatives.

For too long, the disability community has been ignored by both Government and non-Government entities. This bill seeks to change that. As the Government, we must lead by example in decision-making and consultation processes. We were elected on a mandate to improve the lives of those with disabilities—tāngata whaikaha—and their families, and others with accessibility needs to have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations. We made a commitment in 2020 to introduce an accessibility for New Zealanders Act to help New Zealand to become more accessible and inclusive for disabled people and other New Zealanders with accessibility needs. Today, we take another step towards delivering that commitment.

It has been a long journey to get to this point. Many have been advocating for systemic accessibility improvements for decades as a result of experiencing significant barriers to accessing infrastructure, communication, information, education, and employment opportunities as well as public facilities which many of us take for granted. This bill will help us address those barriers and ensure that disability issues are at the forefront of decisions made by the Government of the day.

The Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill creates an enabling framework focused on progressively identifying, preventing, and removing accessibility barriers that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and others with accessibility needs face, so that they have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations. It does this in three ways. Firstly, it establishes the Accessibility Committee led by disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau to provide independent recommendations to myself, as Minister for Disability Issues, on how to address accessibility barriers and grow accessibility practices. Secondly, it strengthens accountability across the Public Service and Government towards progressing accessibility. It does this by creating strong, clear roles for responsibilities for the Minister for Disability Issues, the chief executive of the new ministry, and the Accessibility Committee to implement and enable a framework with the support of agencies across the Public Service. And, thirdly, it builds knowledge and awareness of the importance of addressing accessibility barriers, and growing accessibility practices across New Zealand.

This legislation will build on and support the work of Whaikaha—the Ministry of Disabled People, which we launched here in Parliament just last month. There is real

momentum at play and I intend to ensure that momentum continues and, more importantly, translates into tangible outcomes for disabled people. The key elements of this bill, which I have just outlined, sit alongside the important role of Whaikaha, such as notification mechanisms, policy support, voice, and partnership. These make up the accessibility framework.

In providing these recommendations, the Accessibility Committee has a vital role in this accessibility framework, as well as an enormous responsibility, given the vast range of barriers and the scale of change required. To help, the bill sets out that the chief executive of Whaikaha will support the committee in developing their recommendations and provide administrative and analytical support to ensure they are able to do their role properly. This committee will have a direct line to Government through me as the Minister for Disability Issues. As Minister, I too have a role in supporting the committee—this includes considering and approving their work programme and, importantly, presenting their recommendations to this House and working with other Ministers to consider those recommendations.

Changes implemented as a result of the committee's recommendations will take time, which, I know, may be frustrating to the community, given they have waited so long already. However, we have to get this right, and by taking an enabling and progressive approach, the bill will balance the need to accelerate progress on accessibility issues while also ensuring we examine and understand the gaps in existing regulation, policy, and practice.

In the spirit of “Nothing about us without us”, this legislation will bring together the expectations of disabled people, the affected sectors, and experts to work together to shape policy and hold Government to account on accessibility issues while ensuring accessibility is improved progressively over time. The flexible and progressive approach this bill takes will ensure the Government can set priorities to resource accessibility measures.

It is important to note that while the bill does not have a regulatory focus, as some have called for, it will help shape new or amended regulations across Government to improve the lives of disabled people. These will be worked through with relevant stakeholders. The approach will give organisations who are required to make changes as a result of the committee's recommendations time to understand and adopt efficient or innovative approaches to legal obligations and the ability to adapt changes in society.

For this to be successful, a cycle of monitoring and review will be required so that the Accessibility Committee can regularly assess how well new and existing policies are performing, and the framework can grow and develop over time. The bill enables this by requiring the committee to provide an annual monitoring report, independently assessing how well its recommendations have been implemented by the Minister for Disability Issues, which must be subsequently tabled in this House. It also provides for a review of the Act every five years to ensure the accessibility framework is working as effectively as it can and to further explore other mechanisms, if not. This legislative review mechanism is an important way of ensuring improvements are continuously made over time, given the long-term nature of the work, to achieve a fully accessible New Zealand.

It is my intention as Minister that, when passed, this legislation will ensure accessibility is at the forefront of future decisions and improve accessibility for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau. Once enacted, this legislation will be administered by Whaikaha as the first Ministry of Disabled People in any comparable jurisdiction, and the first ministry with a New Zealand Sign Language name.

I'm looking forward to the Social Services and Community Committee considering this bill and hearing submissions on it. I believe it is important that the committee takes more time to do this to ensure that we get it right. That's why I will move a motion later

in this debate to ask the committee to report back in May next year. It is not often that a longer select committee time frame is sought, but I believe it is the right thing to do to ensure that everyone can have their say. It is really important that select committees are accessible and inclusive and responsive to the needs of the disability community. I will be sending suggestions to the committee on ways in which the process can be made mana-enhancing, that ensures that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their communities can share their views and feed into the development of the bill in ways that work for them. It is disappointing to hear that some parties will not be supporting this bill to the select committee stage, a place where we can hear from the community and make better law. None the less, it is still my hope that we will have a productive cross-party contribution made at this committee.

In closing, I want to thank the many disability community representatives and interest groups who have input into the design of the accessibility framework, in particular Access Alliance who have worked closely with officials on this work over the years—your input has been crucial in getting us to this point and I am grateful for the time and energy you have put into helping us get it here. I look forward to the select committee continuing these conversations and supporting the Government's commitment to accelerating accessibility across New Zealand. I commend the bill to the House.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Jacqui Dean): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

PENNY SIMMONDS (National—Invercargill): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill being taken to the select committee. Currently, New Zealand does not have comprehensive legislation to help identify, remove, and prevent barriers experienced by people with access needs. We know that as our population grows and people live longer, the impact of accessibility barriers will only increase. We cannot afford as a society to let barriers in the built, communications, and digital worlds to prevent people from participating fully and equally in society.

I am very pleased that the Minister has enabled a longer select committee process, and I thank her and acknowledge her for that. I also want to acknowledge the Access Alliance group, who were formed in February 2017. This was a diverse range of disability groups who came together to call for legislation that would enable people with disabilities to more actively participate in society, and I believe we have some of those founding members of the Access Alliance here today and I want to acknowledge them for the wonderful work they have done. I think the founding members should be mentioned here today: the Association of Blind Citizens New Zealand, CCS Disability Action, Cerebral Palsy Society of New Zealand, Deaf Aotearoa, Disabled Persons Assembly (New Zealand), Kāpō Māori Aotearoa New Zealand Inc., National Foundation for Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Blind Low Vision NZ, Parents of Vision Impaired (NZ) Inc., People First Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

They were the founding members of Access Alliance, and many of the members of those groups have put in countless hours to get legislation through here. They will, however, be disappointed at how far this legislation goes, and that is one of the main reasons that we are supporting this bill to select committee, because we believe that members of a variety of advocacy groups and individuals from the disabled community should have the opportunity to present at the select committee to tell their stories, to try and improve this legislation.

The Access Alliance came up with 13 principles that they felt should form the core of the Act, and I understand a number of them came from what is seen in Canada. So I think it is worth noting the things that the Access Alliance wanted to see in this legislation. First of all, they wanted the Act to apply to all. They wanted it cover all persons with

disabilities whether it be physical, sensory, cognitive, communication, or mental health - related, and would include visible, invisible, permanent, and episodic conditions. So they were very clear that they wanted it to be an all-encompassing piece of legislation.

They wanted the Act to have time lines, and I think they will be particularly disappointed around that not being part of the legislation. They wanted the Act to set a bar that would build on other disability and human rights legislation, regulations, and policies which provide lesser protections and, therefore, use the Act to lift the bar on accessibility.

They wanted the Act to provide accessibility in all areas of life. Obstacles may include but are not limited to physical, legal, information, communication, attitudinal, technological, or other barriers. So they wanted the Act to go broadly across all areas where accessibility was an issue.

They wanted the Act to set policy, to influence and effect the development and the implementation of public accessibility policy. They wanted the Act to champion access to all goods, services, and facilities, and they wanted the Act to champion accessible workplaces, employment, and education. They wanted the Act to charge the Government with the responsibility to lead, educate, train, inform, and review, and, again, I believe that they will feel this Act falls far short of doing all those.

They wanted the Act to be enforceable, and I know this is an area that is particularly disappointing in that if it cannot be enforced, how much difference will it make? They wanted the Act to be made real through regulations so that it could be fairly implemented, and they wanted to ensure that public funds were not used to create or perpetuate obstacles to full accessibility in all areas of life. They wanted the Act to be used as a lens through which other legislation could be vetted to ensure that other legislation was not in conflict with improving accessibility. They wanted the Act to have real force and real effect.

So there will be disappointment amongst the advocacy groups that have been working long and hard on this legislation, and the wider community of people living with disabilities. Disabled people and their families face significant barriers. They need improved access to housing, transport, information, communication, technology, and public buildings and spaces, and it is vitally important for that improved accessibility to enable them to participate in and feel belonging in the world.

This bill is like the announcement of an announcement. It is a bill that enables two nomination committees to be formed, with one nomination committee representing the community and one nomination committee representing Māori. The nomination committees are to nominate for the actual ministerial advisory committee, and the ministerial advisory committee can then consult with the chief executive of the new disability ministry to have more technical committees. So it is a bill that enables committees to enable committees to enable committees, and that is where the disability communities will be disappointed that it's almost kicking for touch their issues into committee after committee after committee.

There will be a cycle of monitoring and review, and that is where the disabled communities will be wanting to ensure that they have plenty of say in that review process. But the legislation is about process. It is not about regulations. It is not about time lines. It is not about reporting where there are access barriers. It is not about ensuring that public money doesn't get wasted on creating more barriers. It is a bill about committees to form committees to form committees.

So I'm sure that in the select committee process we will get a significant number of submitters who say this doesn't go far enough. But I do have to sound something of a warning that we have not seen a lot of evidence of this Government taking notice of submitters, with the most recent being the over 90,000 submitters on three waters reform,

where they have gone ahead to employ executives even before those submitters have been heard. So I would temper expectations with those concerns. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Dr EMILY HENDERSON (Labour—Whangārei): In contrast to the last speaker, Penny Simmonds, I rise with great enthusiasm and confidence in the direction that we are now taking. I want to begin, first, by acknowledging and congratulating the disability community's activists, who have brought us to this point. I note with some sadness that, in fact, it was back in 2017 that the Access Alliance came to all of the parties in this House and asked them to sign up to this sort of accessibility legislation. Let me tell you which parties agreed to do so. Labour agreed to do so—everyone, in fact, except the party facing me, except the National Party. So it is a little rich to hear from the member opposite that we are failing to give voice and to give representation to the disability community, from the one party in this House who refused to sign up to this legislation.

This is a day of celebration, and I want to also acknowledge and celebrate Minister Sepuloni, who did so much of the work in setting up the ministry, and I want to acknowledge and congratulate our first Minister of the new ministry—Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People—Minister Williams. I also want to commiserate with Angie Warren-Clark, who is, in fact, the chair of the Social Services and Community Committee, lucky enough to be in a position to investigate this bill. She is, unfortunately, stuck in the hellhole of Montreal! She has, however, texted me to ask me to say to you, Madam Speaker, that she is so delighted to be chairing the select committee—not at the moment she is not; I am the Acting Chair—to create the best legislation we can for our disability community. She asked me to say: “We really want to support the disabled community to participate in the submissions process.” Therefore, it gives me particular joy to have heard Minister Williams comment about her support for a longer process for submissions.

In social services, we have spent some time investigating issues where we have wanted the voices of the disability community to come forward—and, similarly, we have wanted the voices of other groups who often struggle to access places like Parliament, including young people. We have a history, in the last year, of experimenting with ways and means to increase the accessibility of our submissions process, and we will be delighted to take that experience further and to try to make our process even more accessible as we go. So thank you to the Minister for facilitating us to do our job properly.

The real, fundamental kaupapa of this bill is “Nothing about us without us”. And, thus, this bill does two things. The first is that it sets up this advisory committee, whose job is to give recommendations to the Minister as to where the barriers are and what to do to remove them. Now, the committee, as is set out in the bill, will be nominated by a community nominations panel and a Māori nominations panel, both of whom are charged to make their nominations from within the disability community itself, to make sure they access across the range of the disability community, and also that they include whānau and caregivers so that their voices are also heard. “Nothing about us without us” is the watchword. But, you see, we cannot begin to set regulations and deadlines and all of those important things that will come until we actually know what the community want, and they themselves are going to need something to help them get there. And that is data. Unless we have the data as to what is going on out there, we are not going to be able to enable them to give those recommendations. Thus, the other crucial part of this bill is an information-gathering power, because the sad fact is that too many Governments in the past have failed to gather the data. We are rectifying that fact.

That is set beside the very strong processes for accountability, for the annual review of how we are doing and where we are up to from the committee; the strong administrative support they're going to get from the department itself; and, finally, the five-year annual review of this piece of legislation so that when we are ready to go to deadlines and

regulations, we will be able to. These are all parts of what is an extremely progressive, extremely worthwhile bill, and I commend it to the House.

MAUREEN PUGH (National): Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. Like my colleague Penny Simmonds, I stand in support of the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill in its first reading in the House today. We are supporting this bill through to select committee, but, as has been alluded to by my colleague, there is quite a lot of work to do on this bill. As we can imagine, there will be a lot of interest in this bill from the disability sector.

I thought I would lay the foundation of my contribution today by just looking at some of the numbers with regard to the disability sector. We know from a disability survey that was done in 2013, that there were an estimated 1.1 million disabled New Zealanders, to some extent or another. Now, if we put that in context, that's actually over 20 percent of New Zealand's population. So the sector is not an insignificant part of our Kiwi way. Again, in that survey, it was realised that some people with disabilities also have multiple impairments. So when that survey was conducted, 53 percent of disabled people actually had multiple impairments. So we can start to see the complexities that do arise with people with multiple impairments in the disability sector.

If I even refer to my own childhood growing up with disabilities in my family—one being a severe intellectual disability, non-verbal communicator—as a child, I didn't realise that this person was intellectually impaired, I just thought he was another playmate in a big body. Such is the innocence of a child. But, as I grew up, I started to realise the commitment that my relations had to make to the upbringing of someone with such a severe disability, and the barriers that exist in our society for people in that situation. And my grandfather, bless his soul and God rest his soul, was a coal miner on the West Coast and suffered a severe back trauma in a coal fall in the mines and was a paraplegic my whole life. So, again, he was my grandad and I thought that's normal for us. But, again, as I grew up, I started to realise the barriers that are imposed on someone, especially with the ability to get around in a wheelchair in those days. I've still got the gear lever that he used to use in his manual car—being able to use the break and the clutch in this complex mechanism that he had to get installed in his car—and still drive relatively safely. But such are the complexities.

So when we look at this kind of legislation, I think what we see is a very wasted opportunity. For all of the consultation and the thinking that has gone into this over five years, this is the best that can be produced? That almost appears to me to be tokenism, in terms of getting something on the statute book that looks as though there has been real debate and real consultation, real listening.

What we're going to end up with is this piece of legislation that sets up the Accessibility Committee, and the legislation will also enable the Minister to appoint two more people to that committee. It's already going to have up to eight people on it. Then the legislation requires the Minister to establish a community nominations panel for the purpose of nominating candidates for the committee members.

Chris Penk: Oh, layers of waste.

MAUREEN PUGH: And it is—thank you, Chris Penk. It's layers and layers. Again, what we see from the Labour Government is layers of bureaucracy before anything on the front line is actually delivered. It also enables or requires the Minister to establish a Māori nominations panel for the purpose of nominating candidates for appointment to the committee. So it just seems such a wasted opportunity.

As Penny Simmonds alluded to before, it looks as though this is driven simply by accountability to the process without any consideration of what the outcomes are going to be. If I look back to my times in local government, when the Building Act was amended, we had directives about what new buildings could be built in your district.

Those buildings that were new, public, and accessible to the public, whether it was free or paid, say hospitals or theatres, or things like that—the Building Act actually required tangible changes to be made to the design. So that was supporting accessibility. It was early days of it, but it actually gave us tangible solutions for some of the accessibility issues, and, over time, we would see, as buildings are either updated, renovated, or built, the accessibility change and more accessibility for people that needed it. So they're the tangible things that can happen. But, sadly, this bill does not do that.

One of the things that did stand out to me in reading this bill was around the lack of enforcement that it actually has. If I look at some of the clauses, it empowers the committee to request information from specified entities that it considers necessary or desirable, which is all very nice; they can request it, but there is nothing in this legislation that says that they must comply, that they must provide that information. So, again, another missed opportunity. There are no time lines in this bill. There is a review after five years, but I'm not sure what it will be that will be reviewed. It will probably be the process, and there'll be a lot of boxes that can be ticked. But we want to always go back to the people that this bill actually seeks to support, and they're the people with the disabilities, the over 20 percent of Kiwis that we are talking about. We want to make sure that their accessibility to buildings, to transport, and even to our streets has improved in some way, but this bill does nothing to allow any kind of data gathering that will measure improvements for them in accessibility in their everyday lives.

When I look to some of the press releases that were done just recently, just last month, one lady is actually saying that if there are no changes made, tangible changes, such as in this legislation, which there are not, people like her will still be forced to shower on her veranda. I think that's an absolute tragedy. There doesn't seem to be, in any of the legislation that we deal with in this House, any commitment from the Government to create enforceable legislation. I think the main barrier to doing that is because this Government is afraid of measuring outcomes. We can all probably guess why that is. It is because they have failed to deliver for Kiwis across this country on a raft of legislative change. I have to say that in the press release that I read neither Minister Sepuloni nor the new Minister for Disability Issues would commit to accessibility legislation that was enforceable. I just think that's a tragic waste of this House's time and a tragic waste of opportunity because this is not going to come around again any time soon.

So unless we can get some very big changes to this bill in the select committee process, I think we have just delivered another piece of tokenism. I would like to say too that if we are, for the disability sector, very genuine about delivering changes and improvements to accessibility across this country, and if we are to take steps forwards, let's make them giant leaps, not this tokenism that we're dealing with today. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Dr LIZ CRAIG (Labour): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a real pleasure to speak on this bill, because many of us have got family members, we've got work colleagues, or we've got friends for whom aspects of the built environment pose real barriers to them living the lives that they want. I just think about my father, following his stroke, and those three steps that used to go up to our front door, the steps we always used to run up without even thinking about. For him, they became a significant and almost insurmountable barrier to coming and having dinner with us.

I also think about people who have spoken in the public domain about having a vision impairment and changes to the bus timetable that the council has put in place, changes to routes, changes to timings. And while most of us could read about that in the local newspaper, for those with vision impairments, if we didn't have an accessible format what it could mean is actually missing the bus entirely, or else getting on the wrong bus in the wrong direction and missing an important event. And I'm also thinking about people in

wheelchairs who, if there's no accessibility, there's no ramp at the local cafe, are not able to go there and meet with their friends, or if they can get up to the counter but there's no accessible facilities, it means that their time there gets cut short because they have to go home to use their own bathroom. So this is a really important issue.

I think, when we're thinking about how we design our built environment, it's incredibly important that we have the voices of those with lived experience around the table. And I think we've got a situation in New Zealand at the moment where our approach to accessibility is incredibly fragmented across different Government agencies, and we've also got very few formal avenues for the voices of those with lived experience to have their voices put into policy.

What this bill does is it takes us much further towards achieving a goal of having an accessible society where everybody can go and participate in the way that they want. And so what this bill is doing is putting in place a framework which we can use across Government, and that creates an approach where we identify barriers and we prevent them and we remove them. In doing so, we've got the voices of those with lived experience around the table.

As we've heard already, it establishes a ministerial advisory committee, the Accessibility Committee, and this is going to be led by disabled people and their whānau, their carers. What that is going to be doing is making those recommendations at the highest level to the Minister for Disability Issues on how to address accessibility barriers. And as we've also heard, the committee will have eight members, who'll be appointed by the Minister. In appointing those members, the Minister has got to make sure that the majority of members are disabled, but also that the members of that committee have a very sound understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, and also of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and also have experience in preventing and removing accessibility barriers. So it will be an incredibly skilled group around the table to provide that advice, but we're also making sure that we've got adequate representation—making sure that you've got the broad range of types of impairment reflected around the committee, different age groups, and people from different cultural backgrounds and ages, but also making sure that we've got whānau and caregivers there to add their voices to where we need to go.

It's going to be important that that committee then makes recommendations to the Minister on how we can prevent barriers to access for various Government agencies, not only making recommendations but then being required to report annually on their progress at implementing those recommendations. Basically, then, the Minister will have to present a copy of that report to us here in Parliament, in the House. This is really an important part of the ongoing cycle of monitoring, evaluation, and making sure that that progress is being made. And so alongside Whaikaha, which is basically the new Ministry of Disabled People, which was only established a month ago, this is the important next step in making sure that disabled people and their whānau have that voice and are able to reduce those barriers that prevent them from living the lives they want.

I'm really looking forward to hearing from people coming to select committee and sharing their views on the bill about what they feel the bill will achieve for them and any areas they think may need to be strengthened. This is an important bill, and I'm really proud to commend this to the House.

JAN LOGIE (Green): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Green Party to speak on the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. I too, before I get into the context of the bill, want to contextualise this discussion as others have before me, where, as has been noted, I can't imagine that there's a person in this House who doesn't either have a family member or a friend or a colleague who has a disability. It's estimated at least

1.1 million New Zealanders have a disability, and then at any time any one of us may have an access issue as a result of an accident on top of that.

So this is an incredibly important issue for us as a country because we know there are barriers upon barriers upon barriers in the way of full participation in our society for disabled people. That comes out of a history where there was a time where disabled people were thought to be wrong—that, actually, they needed to be hidden away in institutions or in back rooms of houses because they were a source of shame to families—and it's actually only in very recent times that there have been structural, systematic attempts to change that and to move from a model of fixing people versus recognising that diversity adds to our strength in our communities.

Disability is part of our diversity and is something to be celebrated. That shift from a medicalised model to a social model of disability—we're a long way from living in the enlightened world of seeing disability as the barrier as opposed to the person, and that history shows up in a really real way in some of the examples we've heard already this afternoon about inability to get into cafes, or catch public transport, or even shower within your own home.

We know that only 2 percent of our houses are accessible. We know that there's double the number of disabled children living in poverty than non-disabled children and that there's a much higher likelihood of poverty when there's a person with a disability in a household that a child is living in. We know the unemployment rate and underutilisation rate for disabled people is double what it is for non-disabled people. This is not the fault of our diverse communities. The fault is that our world was created in a way that thought and worked on an idea of a norm that does not exist, that does not reflect our diversity, and that has actively locked disabled people and our children out of participation in society.

So this is so important, and our activists and advocates have been working with members in this Parliament and Government for years—at least five—to get accessibility legislation that would systematically identify and remove those barriers on that systems level. When New Zealand signed up to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we signed up to take appropriate measures to develop, promulgate, and check the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public, including those provided by private entities. It's pretty obvious we don't have that, and yet we signed up to the convention quite a few years ago now. The only mechanisms that we've got for disabled people to address their exclusion because of decisions made by this place and individual businesses and institutions in our community is on an individual basis through the Human Rights Act—but that doesn't address or resolve the systemic issues—or through the New Zealand Disability Strategy and the Disability Action Plan.

I am really struggling to see, if I'm really honest, how this legislation takes us much further than the Disability Action Plan, which is also supported by a ministerial committee on disability issues that reports to Cabinet and receives advice from Cabinet and reports on a regular basis, and sets the priorities for cross-Government action and reviews progress by Government agencies. I can see the point of difference in that this will set up committees to enable disabled people to appoint to, in effect, the equivalent of that committee. There's a bit more structure around identification, but that work programme still has to be signed off by the Minister. The reporting timelines are slightly different, but this has nothing in it that identifies the need for standards or enforcement, or even the complaints or disputes resolution mechanisms that have been seen as essential and part of accessibility Acts in other countries.

So today I do, on behalf of the Greens, want to bring in—we acknowledge we're really looking forward to the select committee stage, and we will actively engage in that process,

but we won't be voting to support this. We will today be bringing through the voice of frustration from disabled people who have worked for years to get something that will be a step change in removing those barriers, and not just, at worst, window dressing or, at best, an incremental movement towards acknowledging their rights, which are rights—they are not “nice to haves”.

I want to at this point bring in the words of Jonathan Mosen, who is the CEO of Workbridge—a very well-respected, I think, analyst in this area—who said, “This is the sort of bill you get when there is no accessibility caucus demanding progress. It's the sort of bill you get when a political calculation is made that there'll be little media interest no matter how much disabled people object. It's the sort of bill you get when the answer is always to form yet another Committee and put disabled people on it, without giving us any real power to make real change. The bill is simple. The Government's going to form two committees to nominate a committee. The committee nominated by the committees is going to talk about stuff we already know about that desperately needs addressing. When it's had those discussions, Committee nominated by the two committees is going to advise the Minister, who will tell Parliament. The best thing we can do now is start again and demand a New Zealanders with Disabilities Act.”

I also bring in the voice of Warren Forster, who has worked with communities right across the country, bringing in disabled people's voices about how we could actively create legislation that would work to speed up the removal of those barriers. He sent me a message in response to this bill, saying, “Effectively, they've wasted four years to announce a committee that will be in place in two years' time—six years to form a committee. Nothing I have seen suggests this will be effective. When I first met with officials in 2018, they said they wanted a bill. And I said, ‘If you want to set up a committee, I can draft a bill today and you can put it in the House tomorrow, and you have a bill to set up a committee.’ But as I explained, you don't need legislation to establish a committee to advise the Minister, to ask other Ministers to use their regulation-making powers to improve accessibility. There are some positive noises in there, but this is largely ineffective window dressing.”, and disabled people deserve more.

We, as allies and family members and friends and colleagues, deserve more than window dressing. The time for pale ambition and glacial progress was in the 1950s. This is the time to actually listen, and progress real change.

The Green Party would like to see legislation that has enforceable standards; an independent disability commission that sets barriers, set standards, and removes barriers; and a programme of work not signed off by a Minister but independently led and approved by disabled people, with enforcement powers covering the private sector with safeguards against the risks of centralising power. This bill is not it, but we will work as constructively as we can and encourage disabled people to send the Government a message: you deserve more.

TONI SEVERIN (ACT): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of ACT as their disability spokesperson to support this bill, the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill, but, like many others before me, we still have concerns—as do Penny Simmonds, and Maureen Pugh, and also Jan Logie. We agree: this is a committee to nominate people to committees, so it just seems to be committees versus committees. It's quite sad, because the Access Alliance, who I've only just recently met—because I'm only a new MP here, for the last nearly two years, coming up—have formed this great group of 12 different disability groups, and they have already done a lot of work that I feel could have probably been taken and put into a bill, in some form. However, it is not being done. And, as Maureen Pugh mentioned, 1.1 million are identified from the 2013 survey as disabled, with multiple disabilities. As for myself, my godson has a disability, which is quite severe, and I myself fall into the category of learning disability, and also the sad reality is that I

have to look after my eyesight. So, one day, I may need the services of a guide dog and have to learn to use Braille.

There are a lot of hidden disabilities that many people do not see. You see the access disabilities but there are so, so many. The other sad reality is that we already know this, and there are so many things that we can also instruct the public on: simple things even businesses could do that would not cost a lot. But if they know that there are problems, if the complaints have been heard, there are different things that can be done, just simple things like asking the communities. Mr Clark from the Blind Low Vision sent me just a few things that the Access Alliance have been gathering as a diary of access problems: the likes of a park where wheelchairs are not able to physically get in with other children; then also just simple things, such as our pathways, where people leave their rubbish bins and then the rubbish collectors come and leave them in the middle of the footpath, and so they're an obstruction—not only for the disabled but even for mums with prams—that they have to navigate around; some have to go on to the streets. For me, coming from Christchurch, we still have problems with our pathways where holes and potholes are around and forming.

So there are just so many different things that could have been put into this bill, like standards, as has been mentioned by Jan Logie, and time frames, and enforcements. The enforcement is to come and give people that time to fix things, because also there is usually always costs involved in this. But if we're not aware of these barriers, how can we fix them? And then also we need a proper complaints and solution process, because we have spoken to and heard from many disability groups that sometimes their complaints are not heard, and this is just not on. They are very much part of our community, whether you can absolutely see their disability or whether it is hidden—we need to make sure.

As I've read in the paper, accessibility is not just for car parks and toilets; it is our homes, it is our businesses, it's websites, it is learning aids, it's equipment to help people with any of these issues—transportation, parks. There is just so much that could have been done and also a buy-in for all New Zealanders. We can't move forward unless we bring the whole of New Zealand with us, and make them realise that we all, some day, could be disabled. We have an ageing population, and many of this ageing population may end up having to need some form of access. Also, as we say, we can also have temporary disability, where we incur an accident or surgery which then temporarily puts us in need of some sort of access to get around—and that's when able-bodied people realise how many barriers there are for those who are disabled.

The other thing is, with this committee having a nomination panel of the community nomination and a Māori communication, it's great, it's fantastic. However, what about representation from rural areas, which, again, their disability areas are probably totally different from urban areas—Asian, Indian Asian, Chinese, the Pasifika. These are all different areas and they all come from different cultures that have different ideas around disabilities. So I hope that all these lovely different areas come and talk to us at the select committee. I am glad that we have a long, extended time so that we can make sure that everyone's voice is heard. Because this is very important: we need to hear everyone's voice—be it disabled, be it able, and different races—because, as we say, every race has different requirements around culture. Some cultures don't like to mention or talk about their disabled within their communities. So this is a huge input that needs to come out.

Now, I say that we are all able—whether or not you are disabled or able—because, if you get the right tools as a disabled person, you can be part of this society. It may not be that all of them can give you a lot of ability, but they can be part of this community as a whole. And we need to make sure that they have these tools to make sure that they are part of this community, and they feel part of this community, and not excluded like has happened over the many years that this has occurred.

Now, as I said, I have a learning disability, and we find that those run within many families and, if it's not diagnosed, this can on for generations. Now, I know mine is only a very minor disability, but if we don't have children learning and being able to participate in things, that's another huge barrier that we are incurring. And this is a thing; it's a hidden disability, and most of us don't want to be classified as disabled. People see the physical disabilities, and, yes, that is a huge barrier there for a lot of them, but the hidden disabilities—you know, we've got to make sure that they are identified just as much as the visible ones.

Now, the other thing that's really important is we do believe that every New Zealander has the right to exist to their best ability. And this bill, again, I'll reiterate, it just seems to be committees forming committees. It definitely doesn't seem to have any teeth. That's why we're going to be supporting it to the first reading through to the select committee, and we hope that we can get some teeth in it.

Before I finish up here, I would really like to thank Access Alliance group. They have done a fantastic job in giving a really great framework which could have been well and truly implemented into getting some things already up and running, and could have given teeth to the ministry when it opens to start doing things—even just contact between the Government and local government on just simple, simple barriers occurring in everyday lives. And the diaries that the beautiful people are now submitting so that we have ideas—now, this should have happened ages ago and looked at what we could have done sooner. I feel that this bill is not going to go far enough. I do hope that in select committee we get some very great submissions that will lead us to a bill that will give us some standards, give us some time frames, give us enforcement down the track, because, as you say, we've got to bring all New Zealanders together, and that means that we just can't lump enforcement straightaway on businesses, or things like that. And also we need a good area where complaints can be heard, because this is another thing: these complaints, from what I understand from many disability people, have been overlooked, and we can find good and fast solutions.

So I commend this bill to the House, and I look forward to the select committee hearing, and hearing from the wider community of New Zealand. I hope that this can go further than what's just committees setting up committees. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

ANAHILA KANONGATA'A-SUISUIKI (Labour): Kia orana Vaa Tuatua. It's an honour and a privilege to make a contribution to the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. First of all, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Minister Carmel Sepuloni, who has done most of the work to set up the Whaikaha—the Ministry of Disabled People—and, of course, I also acknowledge the leadership of the Hon Poto Williams, who has now got the ball and is running with it. I want to acknowledge the leadership of the House in terms of that.

In terms of the Office for Disability Issues, they describe the community as—and I want to quote—“We are children, young people adults. ... we are parents and grandparents. We also are friends ... and whānau. What we want is no different to anyone else in New Zealand;”. That's the description provided by the disabled community, and that's the description that they provide within the Office for Disability Issues.

My brother Paul is 36. Paul has mild autism and developmental delay. Paul is a supervisor in charge of screen printing and gardening, and leading and training others like him at Spectrum Care vocational services. The funding for the care and support of Paul is by Taikura services. Paul wants to drive a car. He wants to drive a car, but he can never ever get a driver's licence, although I think that for people like my brother Paul, if the technology enables it to be a gain, then surely he can get a driver's licence. But he can't do that, so Paul is supported by my sister Ivanaka, who does everything that I should be

doing. He is supported at home. Though my mum has passed away, Paul is supported to remain there with my nephew Lenny, his wife Anna, and also my older brother.

What I'm trying to say is that the description of the community about themselves is actually what I've just described: a group of people who support this to happen.

The Minister talked to us in the spirit of "Nothing about us without us"—that is the spirit of this bill, and if my memory serves me right, in the *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026* and the *Disability Action Plan 2019-2023*, it talks about accountability mechanisms, and it also talks about cross-cutting issues, such as disability data. We know that it's difficult to find data and how that's recorded, but I know through the select committee process, until May next year—May next year—we will hear from the community about this.

Today, I want to urge people like my family, who never submit a submission to select committee, to take this opportunity, until May, to put a collective submission in on how a family supports their family member—for my brother Paul to catch the bus to work. If I had my way, I would actually want Paul to sit his driver's licence and see if he can do it, but I know that my family would never allow that because they still believe that he can't do that.

Today, we've heard from the Minister about setting up an Accessibility Committee to hear from them, and accountability in terms of reviewing this bill, once it becomes an Act, in five years' time, so that it can come back to this House, and, of course, have access to the Minister. Reports will come to the Minister to address those and to remove those barriers that we as able-bodied people have made decisions to put there.

I want to acknowledge the Minister and the work that has been done, but I want to urge people out there: please, one in every four New Zealanders has a disability—please, make a submission to the select committee. I'm honoured to be a member of the select committee. We will be there. We will move around New Zealand, as the leadership of the Minister has directed us to do, and we will do that.

So please do make a submission. I know that my brother Paul probably won't be able to write one, but my family can help him write one and present that to the select committee. So, in light of that, in the spirit of "Nothing about us without us", it's about us: if our family member is unable to do it, we will be coming together as a family and making that submission. I commend this bill to the House.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ian McKelvie): I call Nicola Grigg—five minutes.

NICOLA GRIGG (National—Selwyn): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise to just take a quick in support of the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. I'm actually sitting here feeling quite remiss that I wasn't aware that a quarter of New Zealanders live with a form of disability, through my own naivety, I suppose, and so I've been quite taken aback by the statistics that we've been presented with today. I do believe that the sheer number of New Zealanders and the sheer complexity of the various forms of disability they live with should be reason enough for the Government to present a bill like this to the House today.

We do support this bill but with some reservations, I think, as has been well canvassed by other members across the House this afternoon. We cannot emphasise enough how important it's going to be for the Social Services and Community Committee to roadshow this, to take it out across the country, to actually practise what they preach and make themselves accessible to the people of New Zealand, to hear submissions from user groups and stakeholders and those who certainly will be impacted. We at this stage, from what we've seen of the draft—sorry, of the bill that's been presented—don't think it goes far enough. It does obviously provide a legislative framework to address what some might describe as systemic disability barriers, and a lot of other people have gone through those today, particularly around public buildings and spaces and transport. But there's also

things like services, particularly health services, technology, websites, applications, and communications barriers.

Ironically at the weekend, I was attending a future forum for young people up here in Wellington and had a young deaf woman come up to me with a draft idea for a petition. It was to ask the Government to look at making closed captions, or the words that we see on the screen just above me, available across all channels and across all programmes. I do hope that she now sees this bill and makes a submission on it and asks the Government to consider ideas like that, which would be life-enhancing for people like her. We do understand that this framework will reflect and align with the United Nations and other international organisations to address those systemic accessibility barriers, and we do obviously support that. It's good to see that this legislation will be overseen by the newly formed ministry, and we do hope that it does form a close alliance, for want of a better word, with the Access Alliance, because that is the one group that has really clearly, to me, spent many, many years in an activation space and an activist space, and I think that without their work, I doubt that we'd be seeing this bill here in front of us today. It's been five years of work.

I note that in 2017, when this Government first formed a Government, that was when the impetus really started to occur. Again, I note that it has taken five years to get this in front of the House today. But we do join other calls in encouraging groups and people from across New Zealand to get in front of that select committee and to help shape legislation that they've been advocating for for decades, and again, on my learning journey just this afternoon, I've heard about the impacts on some people. In everyday life for me, I take no notice of potholes in footpaths, and I take no notice that my voting information pack doesn't come in Braille or in another language or any other form. I take no notice when there's concrete blocks. I suppose having come from Christchurch, I'm used to broken footpaths and potholed roads and buildings crumbling down all around me. But also, there are things like hospital access. There's one example here: for a blind person to be able to read all the preoperative procedures and safety protocols was actually literally impossible for them.

So this is a very lofty goal. We do support it. We would like to see more focus on regulation being included in here. We don't like the idea that this does feel very much like an announcement of an announcement, but we do very much encourage New Zealanders to get involved and to help shape this so that it is of use to them and their lives. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

BARBARA EDMONDS (Labour—Mana): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's been a really interesting afternoon, listening to the contributions from across the House today. There has been some really good debate and some really good points that were raised right across the House. There are definitely points around enforcement, etc., which I believe taking this bill through to the select committee will iron out. One of the major, standout points in the regulatory impact statement about this bill is that it really needs to be tested against tangata whenua, against businesses, and, as my colleague Anahila Kanongata'a-Suisuiki has mentioned, having people come to the select committee—and what the Minister has done to extend that select committee process—is so vital for ensuring that we get those voices, that we can hear those voices. So for some of the issues raised today by the opposite side of the House, I believe, by putting this through the select committee, we will get that good opportunity for analysis and be able to critically look at the bill and see whether it meets some of those or fails some of those tests.

Also, during this debate, I've had a little bit of reflection about my personal experience, like many other people have today. I have a cousin—my Uncle Esalei; his boy Lomi—who has spina bifida. I remember him racing around in this little trolley around our house, and I never used to see the stress on my Uncle Esalei. He used to be able to hold that as a

good, strong Samoan man and hold his fortitude. We never saw the stress of what it was like to have a disabled child. They moved over to Australia when I was in my teen years and, unfortunately, my cousin Lomi passed away from complications. Then my Uncle Esalei died about a month later, and it was very much our family's belief that he died from heartbreak.

I see every day throughout my mighty electorate of Mana what our disability groups and advocates are trying to do. What they're trying to do is provide wellbeing, provide accessibility to things that we who are able are able to access every single day. I think of the Whitford Brown Community Trust, who host dancing every Tuesday or Wednesday in Te Rauparaha Arena. I went to one of their sessions—I definitely should stick to my day job. I also think of Oasis, who is at the back of the Waitangirua Mall. They provide disability advocates to ensure that people have access to the entitlements that they deserve. I also think of Riding for the Disabled. I hosted their conference, about a month ago, here in Parliament. I think about the hard work that they're doing in Pāuatahanui, having built up and established an under-cover riding platform so that people throughout the Wellington region can come to their under-cover premises for their children to be able to have some good exercise to help with their core building and their development.

This bill deserves to go to select committee. It deserves to have those voices from the people at Whitford Brown Community Trust, the people from Oasis, the people from Riding for the Disabled, the people from Alliance, and the people and families who look after disabled children every single day. I remember one of the last comments that the Health and Disability Commissioner said in a recent public accounts committee, which was on financial accounts. We asked her to come to the committee and to provide her view about how we can put representation in our legislation that is financial legislation. She said there is the spirit of "Nothing about us without us", but she said her hope is that we move to "Nothing without us."

So, on that note, I absolutely stand here proudly supporting this bill to the select committee so that, across the House, we can continue to have constructive discussions. Just like my colleague over here, I ask that members of the public and members of that important community come forward and make their views known during the committee's submissions process. Thank you.

TERISA NGOBI (Labour—Ōtaki): Kia orana and meitaki maata, Vaa Tuatua, and happy Kūki 'Āirani or Cook Islands Language Week. As always, it's an honour and a privilege to take a call in the House as the member of Parliament for the Ōtaki electorate—or the beautiful Ōtaki electorate, I should say—but also as a member of the Social Services and Community Committee who will be working through this Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill in its first reading.

Can I mihi and acknowledge, first, Minister Sepuloni and the officials who have done lots of mahi in the last five years leading up to this bill, but, of course, also, the Hon Poto Williams and the officials for championing this bill through the House.

Today is a good day—despite what you might hear from some of the Opposition, today is a really good day. We get to introduce this legislation that is going to mean accessibility for all. As the Minister said earlier, this bill will improve the accessibility and, actually, the lives of those with disability—tāngata whaikaha—and their whānau and, actually, all others that have disability needs. This bill will address barriers like communications or getting or receiving information, education and employment opportunities, and accessibility to public facilities for many for whom this currently is a barrier.

Further, this bill establishes an Accessibility Committee, which I'm really excited about. It's going to be led by tāngata whaikaha, our disability communities, and so we know that we're going to get authentic voices from people with lived experiences, and their whānau as well. This Accessibility Committee will make recommendations directly

to the Minister for Disability Issues, and it is critical that we receive that guidance and information from people, like I said, who have true lived experiences with accessibility issues and disability issues.

On that note, I would also, like my colleague Anahila, encourage the disability community, or tāngata whaikaha, and their whānau, and our community, actually—those awesome people like the Mana electorate that my colleague Barb was talking about. We in the Ōtaki electorate also have really great NGOs and community groups that work with people with disabilities. I have also worked in the disability sector for about 12 years here and in London, and can say that people have been calling for this for a long time. So it's really good that this is a time that you can have your voice, and make sure that you submit on this bill. Your voice and your experience is really critical to this.

I will also be encouraging my friends and my whānau—and other people have talked about their personal experiences. I have my nephew Rawiri, from the awesome Ōtaki electorate, and his supporting whānau, my awesome auntie, or his nana, Mabel Tasker, and my awesome uncle, or his poppa, Roy Freegard. I'm going to talk to them about making sure that they submit on this bill and tell us about the accessibility issues that Rawiri has faced. Rawiri also has spina bifida and he is in a wheelchair. He's a young Pacific-Chinese-Māori rangatahi, so the ACT member will be pleased to hear that when they submit, they will cover off some more of those diverse communities that you wanted. He's also a really awesome representation of not just our whānau but also the Ōtaki electorate, in terms of he plays wheelchair basketball at a high level and he also swims at a really high level. But, of course, we know that that will come with accessibility issues, as well; not just the fact that he is in a wheelchair but that he is playing at a high level of sport. So it would be really cool to get his real lived experience around what that means, but also Nana Mabel's and Poppa Roy's experience of what that means in terms of whānau and what that means in terms of making sure that they get through some of those barriers, in terms of the accessibility issues. But, also, I'm quite sure that they're a really resilient whānau and so is Rawiri, and they will have some really cool solutions, I think, too, that they will be able to talk to us in the select committee about, as well.

I'm also really pleased and heartened to hear the Minister talk about making sure that she'll be seeking a longer period for the select committee. This is such a critical issues to be able to seek submissions on. I also look forward to going out to our communities to make sure that we get that real, authentic voice. This is a great day and I am very much looking forward to hearing submissions in the select committee.

HARETE HIPANGO (National): Kia orana, Mr Speaker and to the Whare, and I acknowledge Minister Poto Williams, your Cook Islands heritage, and also your leadership as the Minister for Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People.

On that note, let's not kid ourselves. This is a Government that speaks itself up, is self-congratulatory, and applauds itself for its efforts which are of little value and significance to the people who are most affected, the people who wish for their voices not only to be raised in volume but to be listened to, not just heard or lip-serviced or lip-synced. They actually want this Government to heed and to take to heart the voices of the people of New Zealand most affected and, in fact, under this Government, most disaffected.

This debate is about the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. I acknowledged appropriately Minister Williams, and the Minister's new responsibility for Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People, which is a new ministry—more bureaucracy—established on 1 July this year. There was, or there still is, as I understand, and I stand to be corrected, an Office for Disability Issues, Te Tari mō Ngā Take Hauātanga. This new ministry, established this year, is another unnecessary layer of bureaucracy. I say that because I have heard in the House, with everybody else who has been listening—and not just hearing but listening and taking to heart—the voices of our disabled community and the

disability sector. Their voices—as is well known for those of us who have sat on the Social Services and Community Committee for the oversight of the Oranga Tamariki bill, and the voices of the people in that sector, particularly the voices of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and our tamariki, our children who have lived in State care—have been dispensed with.

In the same way I’ve heard speakers address the House this afternoon, advocating on behalf of the disability sector—my colleague Penny Simmonds, who is our spokesperson, for the National Party, for the disability sector and our colleague Jan Logie, spokesperson, again, for the Green Party. That voice in unison is falling on deaf ears with this Government. So let’s be real. The self-congratulatory speeches from the Government and patting themselves on the back and saying what they’ve done—everything from the voices of the disability sector, from the social sector of our children in care, Oranga Tamariki, is falling on deaf ears. That is the arrogance of the members in this House that I’ve heard speaking, congratulating and applauding themselves about how great this bill is for our disabled community. What this bill does is it layers up bureaucracy by establishing and setting in place a committee with another committee to appoint and make nominations to that committee, which is going to do nothing more in terms of its functions.

I now turn to the bill. Those functions set out in clause 15 are going to be scrutinised with quite some eye and detail, heart, hand, and head that are in sync with the disability sector, to say that this Government should have done more since 2017 than establish a new ministry and then put this bill before the House to create yet more committees to advise the Minister and her ministry on who should be appointed by a community appointments committee and a Māori nominations committee. I turn back to clause 15, functions of the committee, by which two committees have to be appointed to appoint members to the committee whose function will be to provide advice to the Minister. What has the Minister been doing when we have so many agencies, voices, representatives from our disability sector who have been advocating for years on what needs to be done?

Another function is to develop a work programme. Five years later, we’ve got a bill introduced to this House to say we now need to look at developing a work programme, but before we do that, we’ve got to appoint two committees to nominate members for a final decision for the Minister to make on who’s going to be on that committee. Well, there are a number of us in this House who have given service on various committees, and it didn’t go through that lengthy, unnecessary, inordinate process for those appointments or selections to be made.

Another function is to make recommendations to the Minister. Why is the Minister not listening to the very people most affected or disaffected, our people and the disability sector?

My colleagues in the House this afternoon have spoken about the different levels of disability and I’m going to bring it back, as I always do, in terms of where my heart and my relationships and connections are, and that is Te Wanganui. So as uri, as a descendent of the Wanganui tribal peoples, also as National Party spokesperson for Māori development, the relationship that I connect back to Wanganui is that a former Minister of this House, Dame Tariana Turia—who was Minister for the disability sector back in 2016. There was a news release on 16 June that Wanganui’s Sir Robert Martin was appointed to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Robert Martin was our first representative for the disability communities, being a disabled person himself, advocating and representing as of 2016 at the United Nations. And here we are, 3 August 2022, seven years after this Government came into power, introducing this Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill.

In the remaining moments that I have left I'll be seeking some time to sit alongside members, my colleagues on the select committee, in terms of input around the details of the letter of the law. Because as lawmakers, as legislators, we have a responsibility to our New Zealand public to get things right. At a cursory glance at this bill, and, again, I draw on my lived life experience, as mana whenua of Wanganui, as tangata whenua, of dual heritage—my mother, a Pākehā, tauiwi, Celtic, third generation New Zealander; my father and his people being Māori. So, of course, I always look at the letter of the law with my legal discipline, but also my dual heritage cultural context, and I've already picked up on terms of some detail and definition—whoever writes or drafts these bills and legislation, that's why it comes to select committee; because there are those of us that come from the context of different perspectives but the context of lived experience. I look at the terminology: "tāngata whaikaha means disabled people who are Māori". Actually, tangata whaikaha is a disabled person; tangata whaikaha Māori is a disabled person who is Māori. That's just one example.

The other one that I've picked up as well, which should be subjected to scrutiny and to perspective—and when I sit on a select committee, I sit with that lived experience of a dual heritage context, unlike some other select committee members, who I'm constantly reminded, and they happen to be Labour Government members, that I've got it wrong, when they haven't lived my life experience.

Well, I just put it on the record that there are other elements of this bill that need scrutiny, that the Government members need to be held to account for, because this is their bill; this is what they are to be held to account for. And importantly, in being accountable, it means more than just hearing and dismissing and dispensing because it suits your kaupapa. I remind members of this House and members on the Government bench that we are here to represent the interests of our communities; not, as you see, a political agenda to secure the position that you have right now. We are to be reminded that we are here because we have been chosen by the people, and it is a privilege to do so, not to kick them for touch when it suits your political motivations—my apology, Mr Speaker—when it suits the Government's political motivation to do so, according to their will.

On that note, I think my message has been loud and clear. I've raised my voice and volume. I do that because I am here as a member representing the people we represent.

INGRID LEARY (Labour—Taieri): This legislation is long overdue. It's a great start, and it's a necessary start. I think there's an irony—that this place should reflect New Zealand society, disabled people—along with some young people as well—and they are probably the least represented. There's an irony that this place, which is about enabling our communities, is one of the hardest places for our disabled communities to get into. So I think the pathways in here should not just be institutional but also through every political party. I would say to the Green member who spoke, Jan Logie, and to the National member who just spoke, Harete Hipango, that that is worth reflecting on.

So how does that lack of representation play out? Well, we've seen it in outcomes in education, employment, income, housing, and health. COVID has certainly exacerbated the inaccessibilities, and it has also shone a light on the disparities, which is something that we can learn from. For me, one of the biggest and most revealing things for us to note is that there is no positive duty on the Crown to include disabled people; that it is up to those people to complain when that, in fact, can be very, very difficult and inaccessible itself. It's people like Chris Ford in my Taieri electorate, from the Disabled Persons Assembly, who has tirelessly advocated for the last 22 years, who is making this progress.

It is people like Dave King from People First in the southern region; he's the vice president, who revealed COVID self-isolation disparities—what it would mean, his

concerns for disabled people around self-isolation, and what we could do as a society to help and make that situation better. People like Heidi Parks, who is a teenage champion for accessibility from Kawerau. She was a winner of the Local Impact Award in 2021—she spoke at Festival for the Future over the weekend. She wants to use her prize money to start getting wheelchairs into schools, simply so that students can have a go in the wheelchair and see what it's like. She is so frustrated with people not understanding what her lived experience is.

So how do we change all this? Well, I can see that it would be tempting to immediately regulate, to mandate legislation, and certainly that's what this Access Alliance have wanted to do. And I tautoko their advocacy. It would be quick, it would be economically efficient, but it would also be hierarchical. So it is no surprise to me that the National Party is advocating for this. Because one of the issues we have with quick legislation is that when it comes to implementation, if it hasn't been thought through properly and if it is not properly represented, it will result in a divide and conquer culture and that is the last thing that this community needs. So requirements like standards, enforcement, complaints procedures, and so on—the step change that is needed—will come at the right time. But if we want to bring the whole of New Zealand with us, which is what Toni Severin from the ACT Party has said—and others have said as well in this House—then it needs to be done appropriately.

Currently, there simply is no framework to work from. The data collection is just not good enough. So in order to do this properly and to have enduring and flexible legislation that adequately and more than adequately meets the requirements of our disabled communities, we need to do the process properly. As tempting as it may be to rush it through and to try and have a restrictive and compliance-based quick fix in legislation, the outcomes could be terrible for some members of those communities because not everybody agrees with what the solutions are. Hence the need to get the committees appropriately represented and put into place. Hence the need to do this thoughtfully and carefully.

One final point I would like to make is the line that we've heard in the House today that one quarter of New Zealanders live with a disability. Now, that statement still puts the focus back on the people. The social model of disability requires us to look at the enabling or disabling environment. It requires a fundamental rethink about how we operate as a society, and that requires a framework and a culture change. It does not need a quick fix which is going to further marginalise some people and which is likely to be changed in very short order when the problems become apparent. This bill creates that framework. This bill is the first step towards a truly inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand for all people, and therefore this is the right way to go. I strongly recommend this bill to the House.

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill be now read a first time.*

Ayes 108

New Zealand Labour 65; New Zealand National 33; ACT New Zealand 10.

Noes 12

Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand 10; Te Paati Māori 2.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ian McKelvie): The question is, *That the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill be considered by the Social Services and Community Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Social Services and Community Committee.

Instruction to Social Services and Community Committee

Hon POTO WILLIAMS (Minister for Disability Issues): I move, *That the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill be reported to the House by 16 May 2023.*

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT BILL**First Reading**

Debate resumed from 28 July.

ARENA WILLIAMS (Labour—Manurewa): Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker, and it's a pleasure to stand and take a short call on the Electoral Amendment Bill. Members will recall that this bill makes a number of changes to the Electoral Act 1993 to increase public trust in the transparency of the political donations and loans framework and to extend the eligibility of overseas voters to enrol to vote in the 2023 general election.

Let me start with just a comment that the integrity of Parliament as an institution is very much informed by the integrity of both the rules that govern parties and people here and the parties and people themselves. I have been alarmed in this debate by some pretty flippant discussion about people's motivations, particularly in relation to donations. I would say that everyone here takes very seriously the role of parliamentarians in maintaining the integrity of this place, and that, really, what we're having here is a discussion about the problem that we're trying to solve, because we agree, I think, around the House that we do have an issue with public perceptions around the transparency of donations and that we all want a system that people have trust and confidence in.

The problem here that this bill is trying to address—well, there are three. The first is that transparency around large donations needs to be improved. There is influence that people have when they make a large donation to a political party, and it's only right that we record the name of the person making a donation. That extends to the second point, which is that when someone makes a donation of up to \$1,500 and they are named and they intend to be named, there is no rule which requires party secretaries currently to disclose that part. That is a fundamental part of something like trust accounting, where if you give a donation to any cause and you expect to be named and you expect that to be transparent, you would expect the trustee—or, in this case, the party secretary who is receiving the donation on your behalf—to be transparent about what your intentions there were.

The third is something we haven't really canvassed in this debate, which is that there are two ways in New Zealand that we participate in political decision-making, if you're your average Joe. One is to give a party donation, because parties need to be able to advertise and they need to be able to run big election campaigns. But the second one is volunteering. By going out and knocking on doors, by getting on the phone for your preferred candidate, you do make a difference in our electoral system. That is always disclosed. You're doing that with your face. You're doing that with your name. You're doing it with your voice on the phone when you say, "Kia ora, it's Arena Williams. I'm here and I'm campaigning for my candidate because I reckon she's giving us a good go." All people who volunteer and do that are participating in a political system. Their names are known. Their identities are known.

So this is also about making sure we get the balance right of participation, where we say that if you have a lot of money, you should put your face and name out there too. It should be fair between people who give their time and their effort and people who give their money, because those things are both important in our political system, and this bill strikes the best balance, and that's why I support it.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ian McKelvie): I call Simon O'Connor—five minutes.

SIMON O'CONNOR (National—Tāmaki): Look, National continues to oppose this bill, for a number of reasons. Look, in effect, it's screwing the scrum, and I'll explain that in a little bit. Fundamentally, too, it sits in the background, and we heard it today from a Minister of Justice who is exhibiting an enormous arrogance when it comes towards our electoral system.

Anna Lorck: No arrogance there.

SIMON O'CONNOR: The Minister was simply—well, no, actually arrogant sometimes, only mixed with a bit of ignorance.

Hon Dr David Clark: They don't like transparency.

SIMON O'CONNOR: We're being yelled at by a Minister who doesn't like—

Matt Doocey: Worst health Minister in 50 years.

SIMON O'CONNOR: That's right. The Minister was not terribly happy about some transparency two years ago.

Look, this is screwing the scrum. There's a general convention in this House that changes of electoral law—

Anna Lorck: Who's the scrum?

SIMON O'CONNOR: —are actually—and, actually, someone yells out from the other side, "Where's the scrum?", and that sums up the left wing. They don't actually want any scrum. They don't want a game. They just want to win at all costs—at all costs. And the thing about donations is, yes, there are limits in place. If people are giving enormous amounts of money, we do want to know, and New Zealand's electoral law is already sufficient in this space. But what the left want is to, basically, name and shame every person who gives money or time that opposes them. And we have already seen that more in the cultural areas where if someone stands up and gives an opinion which is different to this Labour Government, they are harassed, they are bullied; the twitterati, the commentariat hoe into them. Be under no illusions that when these rules come into play, Labour and its stalwarts and its mates will hoe into those New Zealanders who dare to give money to any party other than the Labour Party. They probably won't mind about the hundreds of thousands of dollars given to the Green Party, but anyone on the right, particularly in the likes of National—who will, predominantly, actually receive lots of little donations—they are more than happy to track these people down. As I say, they are going to bully and harass them, and, fundamentally—fundamentally—we end up with a series of rights.

So we've heard about transparency from the other side. There's two points on that. The first is actually, yep, transparency's important, but so is the freedom of privacy or the freedom to have privacy, the freedom of expression, and the freedom of association. Particularly in the political realm, those are important. I think most New Zealanders would agree, on one hand, yep, large donations should be shown up or declared, but, actually, New Zealanders should have the right to donate to a party of their choice without having to be named, shamed, and harassed.

But to illustrate the Orwellian-ness—the Orwellian-ness—of the Labour Party, they've spoken today and earlier in the debate all about transparency. But do you know what? Do you know what? The Labour Party is refusing to release its submission to the Ministry of Justice on this very bill. Gosh, they've gone very quiet now. Why will they not release their submission to the Ministry of Justice? We've just heard from speakers, and the hecklers, of just how much Labour wants transparency. But what it illustrates is they don't believe that. What they want is transparency for those they disagree with. They are more than happy to hide—they are more than happy to hide when it comes to them.

It still plays into the elements of donations, because where does the Labour Party get most of its money from? The unions. Masses and masses of money given by the unions.

Anna Lorck: And it's disclosed—it's disclosed.

SIMON O'CONNOR: Oh, and it's disclosed. Oh, la-di-da. You know, this union gave a million dollars. I mean, yes, we all know that. Everyone knows what drives the Labour Party, but they're not so fussed by that. What they want to do is get to those ordinary Kiwis who dare oppose them and hold different political views.

And the final point, because we've heard it being said today in the House that "Oh well, you know, there are some good elements in this bill. We should vote for it." Yes, there are some good elements. One of them is overseas voters. A number of my locals in Tāmaki will be very pleased to see that this law will extend the ability or the franchise to vote, seeing that this Government locked them out of their own country—you know, "Wow, thanks for imprisoning us, Labour." But you know what? If this was a bill simply about extending the franchise to overseas voters, we'd have voted for it in a heartbeat. I'd say, gosh, and I can't speak for the National Party overall, but we'd have probably have said, "Let's do it in a day. Let's get this sorted." But that's just a distraction. At the end of the day, this is against the ethos of this House where electoral bills are agreed in a bipartisan way. Let's not also forget, for those listening at home, the Government is conducting a review into electoral law reform, but so urgent is this matter that it has to be pushed through Parliament. And, as I said earlier, Labour won't even release its own submission.

MARJA LUBECK (Labour): Kia orana, Mr Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to take a call on the Electoral Amendment Bill. I think it's rather telling that the National Party makes a comment like it is against the ethos of this House to talk about transparency, and I think it's quite off to actually think that people in New Zealand are not going to like these changes to our electoral law, because if you look, in fact, at a survey that was undertaken by Victoria University in 2021, it found that almost 70 percent of the respondents indicated that they didn't have a reasonable amount of trust in party funding. So, in fact, it's hugely important work that our Minister of Justice is bringing to this House, to improve transparency around political donations and around political funding in general. So this bill will make those changes to electoral law on donations to political parties. It will strengthen our electoral law, and it will do such things, as have been spoken to already in detail by my colleague Arena Williams, as lowering thresholds at which donations have to be declared.

But it is also very important to look at another issue that this bill tackles, which is, of course, the overseas voting eligibility and extending that eligibility for voting for overseas voters to six years for citizens and four years for permanent residents. It's really important because, of course, we have recently had quite significant challenges for our New Zealand citizens and permanent residents to exercise those votes because of our borders, but the good news is it's all open for business now. Our borders are open, but we still need to make some changes in the meantime. All in all, this is an important change. We do want to have that transparency in these donations. I commend this bill to the House.

RACHEL BOYACK (Labour—Nelson): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's a pleasure to take a short call on the Electoral Amendment Bill. As previous speakers have noted, it makes a number of changes to the Electoral Act 1993 to increase public trust in the transparency of the political donations and loans framework, as well as extending eligibility for voters overseas to vote in the 2023 general election. This is an excellent bill, and I must say it's disappointing to hear Opposition contributions and parties saying that they can't even bring themselves to vote for this bill to go to select committee to hear the views of the public through that important process.

We live in a time and a world that is growing in complexity, with multiple challenges such as COVID-19, climate change, and the undermining of our rules-based system. It is critical that we as parliamentarians do all that we can to support trust and confidence in our political system. Opposition speakers have tried to downplay the views of the public and the results of a Victoria University study—which to me is quite bizarre: that Opposition members would seek to undermine one of our upstanding universities. Victoria University found that 70 percent of respondents indicated they did not have a reasonable amount of trust in party funding. Some Opposition speakers have suggested that neither \$15,000 nor \$5,000 is a large sum of money so it shouldn't matter where the line is set. Well, for the people I meet, \$5,000 is a very large sum of money. In the Government's view, the public have a right to know who is funding our political parties, because it is about transparency.

We've had some unique challenges over the past couple of years that have stopped many of our citizens and permanent residents from being able to return to New Zealand, because of COVID, and so I'm pleased that New Zealand citizens and permanent residents will have an extension of that time frame so that they can participate in the 2023 general election. It is the right thing to do. This is an excellent bill. I look forward to seeing the submissions through the select committee process, and I commend it to the House.

JOSEPH MOONEY (National—Southland): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to speak on the Electoral Amendment Bill. The National Party opposes this bill. There is no evidence that the status quo has proven so problematic that a review could not address it. So a review is currently under way. The issue is: why is the Labour Party pushing this through now, before that review comes back with any recommendations? Any major change to electoral law should be considered as part of a wider electoral review. The primary issue that has been raised by people concerned about transparency is people splitting donations and keeping it below the threshold and doing multiple donations. This bill does nothing about that. It changes the amount that donations should be—or the public disclosure threshold for donations and contributions to political parties. It changes it from \$15,000 to \$5,000. Will that make any difference? The frank answer is no, it will not. It will not address that issue that people have expressed concern about.

There is a real issue here in terms of something that is commonly called a “constitutional convention”, and that is, if there's to be a change to electoral law, the convention is that it should be agreement between all parties in the House. There should be agreement between both sides of the House when there's a change to electoral law, so that we don't have the impression or the reality of laws being changed to benefit one party over another, so that we maintain a fair playing ground. The concern here is that the Labour Party is pushing through a change to electoral law without having that agreement across the House, in effect breaching that constitutional convention.

I remember something similar back in 2007, 2008, when the Electoral Finance Bill was pushed through by the then Labour Government—again, wanting to change the playbook and doing it with the real concern amongst the country that it was doing it to improve its own electoral prospects. That is the real issue. These kinds of changes to electoral law should not be done in a way that is done to potentially favour one side of the House over the other, and it should not be done when there's a review under way which is looking at this wider electoral issue. There's a real concern here. There's a piecemeal approach being taken by Labour. One is being taken which they have decided to push ahead, given their numbers in the House, having won the election last time, and doing it without consultation with the other parties.

The other concern is that the National Party was happy to release its submissions to the public. There are three other parties which the Ministry of Justice has declined to release to the public, and that raises a real concern here. If this is really about transparency, why is there not transparency about the submissions that three other political parties have made on this issue? The National Party is quite happy to do so. We're being transparent about our view and our position on this. Why are there three parties that the Ministry of Justice are holding back? That is a real concern.

Another issue is the very limited opportunity that the public had to give feedback on the Government's proposals on this electoral reform. The Ministry of Justice called for submissions over the Christmas and New Year period. Now, as anyone who spends any time in New Zealand will know, that is a time when most people aren't thinking about politics and aren't thinking about the law; they're thinking about where to go on holiday and spend some time with their family. It's quite cynical, it would seem, that the Ministry of Justice called for those submissions over the Christmas and New Year time period, an extremely short time frame, with submissions closing on 25 January. Critics could certainly be forgiven for being somewhat cynical about whether the Government really wanted to have public input—a substantive public input—on this change.

There is another issue, which I heard David Seymour touch on last week, and that is the concern by businesses who have Government contracts and/or have other relationships that they don't want to put the Government of the day off side. If there are businesses who have these relationships or they have a policy framework which may affect them—and certainly, many political decisions affect businesses right across New Zealand—then there's a concern that if they have to disclose all of these donations, they're going to be identified and there are going to be consequences for them. Unfortunately, I have heard from businesses that there has been a feeling that the Government will respond negatively to them if they don't feel that they're on the Government's side.

So there has been a real withdrawal of confidence in many people I've spoken to, unfortunately, in the business community about the present Government, and that is a concern. It has a chilling effect on the operation of businesses in our country, and that is something that we shouldn't encourage and we shouldn't see as acceptable in our system. We should be ensuring that we have a framework in which all people feel that they can have some confidence in. We should not change them without having cross-party commitment, to maintain that constitutional convention that anything that affects the electoral system needs to have bipartisan support, so that we don't get into a situation where we have parties changing the rules when they have the power. We agree that we have a robust constitutional framework where we compete against each other on an agreed playing field, where we have an agreed set of rules, that we then play robustly within those rules but we don't try and change the rules to benefit ourselves. That's a really important constitutional convention that New Zealand should maintain, and, unfortunately, this bill does reduce that confidence in that system.

There are some other issues in terms of the complexity of the change in this area and the uneven impact on parties' finances. I note that the ministry itself actually recommended against making any changes in that area ahead of the 2023 election. So the question is: why has Labour pushed ahead with this despite that recommendation? It's disappointing that the Government is doing this. If the objective is to ensure political parties can access financial support, to play a robust role within the MMP system, the question is: how does this improve that? We need to ensure that all political parties can have a robust campaign in an election, can put their message forward. Look, if this was a

real problem, you'd ask: why did Labour win with a compelling majority at the last election?

Look, the National Party, the ACT Party, the Green Party, and the Labour Party were all able to access finance. The Labour Party won. The country decided that their message was the most compelling one in that election. Labour won with a resounding majority. Why do we have to change the electoral finance law now without that bipartisan support? If there is a real issue, Labour should be consulting with the other parties and making sure that it's something that's going to be durable, something that all parties can agree on, and something that maintains that constitutional convention around our electoral law.

This bill is, unfortunately, deeply, deeply flawed. It does not address that fundamental issue that submitters were concerned about, which is the issue around splitting donations and keeping it below the threshold. All it does is change that threshold from \$15,000 to \$5,000, among a few other things. I note it does also include in it the issue of New Zealand citizens who have been living overseas and New Zealand residents during the COVID period, and it changes that eligibility period for overseas voters to six years for citizens and four years for permanent residents just for the 2023 election. That, in my view of it, seems a sensible thing to do, because people have been locked out of the country, often without the wish to do so, because the borders were very strictly controlled, obviously, for the last two years, and people haven't been able to travel back into the country, as a consequence.

That, however, is not the most substantive part of this bill, which is quite a significant one. It does go back in my mind to that 2017-2018 period when the Labour Government decided that they were worried about losing the next election, and they decided to change the electoral finance rules and brought in the Electoral Finance Act, and it didn't work out particularly well for them. So it was a terrible piece of legislation. This has echoes of that, unfortunately. Labour are trying to screw the scrum in their favour. It's not a good thing to do, and I would ask them to reflect on that and maintain that constitutional convention which is really important: that we don't change electoral law without bipartisan support across the House. In conclusion, unsurprisingly, the National Party does not commend this bill to the House.

DAN ROSEWARNE (Labour): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. As a new member, this my first time speaking in the House. It's a huge privilege to be speaking to the Electoral Amendment Bill, an important bill, because, right now, public trust and transparency in the political donations and loans framework is relatively low.

I myself have never had the pleasure of receiving a considerable donation for my campaign. If you know of anyone, I'll be glad to meet up! My campaigns have always run on the smell of an oily rag. If I did, however, know wealthy individuals or organisations who had a large amount of money to donate, then it's only fair that the public has visibility of it. The key point that I want to make today is that people deserve to know who's bankrolling their politicians. This bill does that. This bill makes various changes to the political donations and loans framework, and it also increases the public disclosure about party funding.

This bill lowers the threshold for disclosing the identity of party donors from \$15,000 to \$5,000. The new \$5,000 threshold provides a careful balance, increasing the amount of information that's publicly available about party donations, whilst not providing an overload of information, and respecting donor privacy for smaller donation sums. It, essentially, provides balance. The Minister of Justice, the Hon Kiritapu Allan, has nominated the Justice Committee to consider the Electoral Amendment Bill. Select committee consideration of such a technical area of the law will be valuable. We welcome public and expert submissions on this bill. So I commend this bill to the House.

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the Electoral Amendment Bill be now read a first time.*

Ayes 77

New Zealand Labour 65; Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand 10; Te Paati Māori 2.

Noes 43

New Zealand National 33; ACT New Zealand 10.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is, *That the Electoral Amendment Bill be considered by the Justice Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Justice Committee.

Instruction to Justice Committee

Hon MEKA WHAITIRI (Minister of Customs) on behalf of the **Minister of Justice:** I move, *That the Electoral Amendment Bill be reported to the House by 5 December 2022.*

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the motion be agreed to.*

Ayes 75

New Zealand Labour 65; Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand 10.

Noes 43

New Zealand National 33; ACT New Zealand 10.

Motion agreed to.

DATA AND STATISTICS BILL

Third Reading

Hon Dr DAVID CLARK (Minister of Statistics): I present a legislative statement on the Data and Statistics Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: That legislative statement is published under the authority of the House and can be found on the Parliament website.

Hon Dr DAVID CLARK: I move, *That the Data and Statistics Bill be now read a third time.*

I'm told that global sharemarkets value data more highly than physical assets, and that is because good data is critical to good decision-making. I think that's no less true in governing a country and making decisions on behalf of citizens. Good data is critical to good decision-making. Alongside that, I think it's critical that we have modern, fit for purpose legislation that builds on and reinforces strong ethical decision-making frameworks, clear accountabilities, and the proud independence of the Government Statistician in the production of robust statistics. I think these things are critical for good decision-making in Governments and also for holding Government decision makers to account. Of course, the data that's produced in Government is also used by business, by citizens, by academia, and by others.

It is a real privilege to be ushering the Data and Statistics Bill through its third and final reading today. Not many statistics Ministers through New Zealand's history have had this opportunity and privilege of passing legislation. In fact, the current Statistics Act that we will be replacing dates back to 1975 and the third Labour Government; the Hon Mick Connelly was the Labour Cabinet Minister in this role—not quite 50 years ago. I can tell you, I wasn't very old at that point in time!

This Data and Statistics Bill has been carefully crafted. As I mentioned during the committee of the whole House, early decisions were taken when the Hon Craig Foss was the Minister of Statistics, before the development of the legislation was supported by the careful stewardship of the Hon James Shaw.

New Zealanders rightly expect our national statistical agency, Stats New Zealand, to be a credible source of data and statistics about issues facing New Zealand. Stats New Zealand is a trusted guardian of personal and commercially sensitive information. In the last few decades, national data and statistics systems have faced challenges arising from rapidly changing technologies, requiring relevant systems to evolve at an equally rapid pace. The Data and Statistics Bill is a legislative response to a changing situation, building a resilient and reliable data and statistics system. Government's collection, stewardship, and use of data is shaped by consideration for the people, communities, environments, and organisations the data is from, about, and for.

The new Data and Statistics Bill ensures the flexibility to draw upon sources of data other than surveys, creating efficient and sustainable data-collection processes. These will be better equipped to withstand disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This more efficient system will reduce the burden on people to manually provide data for statistics, without compromising data and statistics quality.

For the first time in New Zealand's history, our statistics legislation recognises the relationship between Māori and the Crown, and the Government's obligation to work with Māori to ensure that data and statistics meet the needs of Māori, iwi, and hapū. Closing data gaps, and improving data quality, will ensure we make the right decisions to improve outcomes for these groups and that they can make decisions themselves which empower their people. We want this approach to empower Māori, iwi, and hapū to make decisions that will benefit their communities. The bill supports work already under way such as developing a Māori data governance model. This model will mutually benefit Māori and Government agencies by realising Māori data aspirations through effective iwi-Māori participation in the data and statistics system, and supporting Government policy development that is informed by Te Ao Māori insights and innovations. At this point, I do want to pay respect to my colleague the Hon Meka Whaitiri for her strong and important leadership in this area.

Good data and statistics sit at the heart of democracy. The public interest is served by good data and statistics. As I've said, good data and statistics are essential for good decision-making, and so too are good data and statistics important to holding decision makers to account.

Before drawing to a close, I want to emphasise again that all data collected by Stats New Zealand will continue to be appropriately safeguarded. The interests of the people and organisations represented in or by the data used for statistics and research will be protected by appropriate privacy, confidentiality, security, and transparency settings.

With that top of mind, I do want to thank members from across the House for their participation in the debates on the Data and Statistics Bill. Analysis of the bill has tested the provisions, and a range of thoughtful submissions have resulted in legislation that has been approved, of which, I believe, this House can be immensely proud. Thanks to all of these efforts, we can be confident that when the Data and Statistics Act comes into force on 1 September 2022, it will deliver a robust, future-focused data and statistics system and will shape our systems better into the future. It is a pleasure, as I close, to deliver this bill for its final reading in what is, as the Hon Darren Hughes used to be fond of saying—and I suspect every statistics Minister before him—as the Minister of the only portfolio that counts, the statistics portfolio, it's my pleasure to commend this bill to the House.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (National): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Well, it is the only one that counts, although the Minister of Finance might have a different view on that, the Minister of Revenue might have a very different view on that, and, given the amount of money being racked up on climate change, the Minister for Climate Change Issues might also beg to differ.

The Minister was probably about 18 months old when Mick Connelly, in this Chamber, debated the merits of what became the Statistics Act. I'd like to be able to tell members that, as a nine-year-old, I had my ear tightly pressed against the transistor radio, listening to every word that was being debated late at night, but I can't. Generally—

Andrew Bayly: You would have been a sick puppy if you had.

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Well, I listened to plenty, just not this one, sad to say, Mr Bayly. But, despite the ubiquitous nature of statistics and the statistics legislation, this is an important bill which National will support at third reading, as it has throughout the process—but with caveats.

I think we certainly support the overall goal that the Minister laid out: high-quality data and statistics that enable the Crown to gather information that's so important for the decisions that we need to make about health, education, police, fire, and so on—the deployment of resources, the understanding of need that is in just about every walk of life. We support the goal of data being collected and stored in a way that maintains the privacy of the individuals and the organisations that give up that information. That is of absolute paramount importance. And we support strong engagement with iwi Māori under the Crown's Treaty obligations to view information as a taonga, and to engage meaningfully with iwi on the importance of keeping it secure and using it well. I hope we do those things; I hope this bill, when passed, does all three of those things, and it may well do. But there were a number of very learned people in groups who have expressed concern that it won't do all it sets out to do, and it may do some things that it shouldn't do.

We kicked around a lot of those concerns in the Governance and Administration Committee, and we had a good old chinwag about it in the committee of the whole House last week. I want to commend the Minister for the way in which he engaged with that. You know, it has been 47 years since we updated the Statistics Act, and it was necessary and appropriate that we did give it a good airing. While we didn't get the sort of changes that I think might have improved the legislation, the Minister has, in his engagement with the committee, put on record, I think, enough assurance from his perspective that will, at least at the start, alleviate some of those concerns. So I thank him for that. I think that's a really important part of the legislation-making process. But it also gives a measure, I think, of where we can monitor the extent to which we're able to protect and use data meaningfully. And where we fall short of that, if there is a legislative reason for that, I can give this House an assurance that the future National Government will make improvements to it and we won't wait 47 years to do so.

Those areas that we heard a lot about, in terms of concern—and it came, actually, down to the fundamental purpose of what we were doing, and that was obviously the gathering of statistics. But the issue of research became something of almost a philosophical irritant. I think there is still—within the legislation when it's passed—a disconnect between the purpose as set out in Part 1 and what is actually said further in the bill, at what will become section 22. That's OK. I don't think, in substance, at the start, at least, that's going to be a particular problem. But I do worry that there could be research creep, or data-gathering creep for the purposes of research, the like of which we're not actually sure, but let's just collect it in case we might need it in the future. I think that is a potential problem. And the manner of the collection of data in the future's going to be a really, really interesting one to watch.

Administrative data is the term used for the collection of information through other sources that are not the traditional source. I've heard the Minister say that that was how we used to do it in the past, and that's where we're kind of heading. I don't agree that we will ever get to a point, as the chief statistician has told the select committee, where we would not need censuses. I actually think that's not a goal that we should set, because the snapshot that we get from the widespread stopping and reflecting on where we are, who we are, how we identify, what we earn, how we earn it, where we live, who we live with—all of those sorts of things, I don't think the richness of that data can be got only from administrative data, and I think, in the context of the legislative framework we set, it will be very interesting to see whether or not we get to that point. I don't think we should; I don't think we will. Actually, censuses have been taken for over 2,000 years—I know that from my elementary biblical studies—and I think they'll continue to do so for a long time yet.

On that point, the collection of that data and the ability to do that reflects something of a split personality, almost, in the public. We protect our privacy fiercely on one level, and yet we live our lives on social media, an open source, on another. That makes it quite easy, as the Minister has said, in terms of corporate organisations seeing the value of that data in the same ways that they would any other assets—it's data they don't have to pay for. And that old saying of "If you think the product is free, you are the product"—not you, Mr Speaker. But that's the kind of really unusual situation we have between our desire for privacy and our living life in the open.

Delegation powers was a discussion that we had and a concern that was expressed by a lot of people. I'll be watching this area with interest because there was a lot of concern—but I don't think a lot of it was justified—about the degree to which the chief statistician should be able to delegate powers. Actually, he has that power now anyway. And the examples that I think it was the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties came up with, with Police and the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, I don't think is a concern that I would have, but I'm going to keep a weather eye on it.

The last thing I think that this bill does, of course, is it gives effect to Census 2023, but now with a condition. That is that the chief statistician, on his own initiative, can delay Census 2023 to 2024. I think he will. He won't make it completely independently from Cabinet, but I don't think he should be making that decision at all. I think the Minister should make that decision according to criteria that isn't difficult to set out, and I tried to put it into the bill, but there has to be a public engagement on why that should happen. Here's my prediction: we won't have a Census 2023, because I don't think the Government is prepared to take that risk. It was a debacle in 2018. I think Stats New Zealand is still shell-shocked by what went on in 2018, and they're going to kick the can down the road, past election 2023, so that at that very crucial time, when we realise what a complete pig's ear the Government's made of Census 2023, it'll be in the election season. That's a risk that I don't think this Government is prepared to take.

Hon Dr David Clark: Put a decent box of Peregrine on that.

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: So there we are—well, he's preparing the Cabinet paper, he's admitted to the House that there is a go/no-go decision, we'll see. I've laid it out. I'm not on a ministerial salary, so it's not going to be a big bet. But that's my bet, anyway.

But, look, it's a very important piece of legislation. It's so important that the good people of Tauranga have come all the way to Wellington to listen to the third reading. I'm sure that's why they're in the gallery!

Hon Member: It's all for you.

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: It's all—that's right. But I should just finish by wishing my friend and colleague Sam Uffindell all the best for his maiden speech, and commend the bill to the House.

RACHEL BOYACK (Labour—Nelson): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to take a call on the Data and Statistics Bill. I do want to begin by thanking the officials and my fellow members on the Governance and Administration Committee for the considerable work that went into consideration of this bill. It isn't often that a committee considers an entire rewrite of such an important bill that is fundamental to how society works, and the work that was done to improve this bill and make it even better was significant. I also want to thank submitters who took the time to come to select committee and who helped the committee to improve this bill—your contribution was incredibly valuable.

In this short contribution, I just want to note some specific protections that have been put in place to ensure that the privacy of New Zealanders is protected, and that the Government Statistician continues to operate both independently but also with the appropriate checks and balances that are required when holding data on New Zealanders. One particular piece is around the delegations—which the previous speaker, Michael Woodhouse, noted—of the Statistician. We heard during select committee from the Privacy Commissioner around some of the important things that we should do in order to ensure that the delegation powers were used appropriately by the Statistician. One of the things we inserted was a clause requiring the Statistician to publish information about that delegation. And we also just note in the committee report that the Statistician is motivated to take care when considering delegations because ultimately, as the Government Statistician, they are still responsible for decisions made when they delegate those functions.

The other point I just want to touch on briefly is around accessing data for research, which, as Michael Woodhouse also noted, came up significantly in the committee stage of the bill. There are a number of protections that are here in this bill that safeguard the process around accessing data for research. There's a whole host in here around ensuring that that research is in the public interest and that the right type of people are appropriate in order to access that research. And so I'm confident that through the process, through select committee, we have actually put enough robustness into the bill to ensure that the use of data for research will be appropriate.

My final comment I just want to make is the importance of honouring the Treaty of Waitangi and the perspectives of Māori within this bill. It is exciting to have a Data and Statistics Bill that appropriately notes the role that iwi Māori play in the collection of data and the use of that data for their people. So I want to congratulate the Minister on this important piece of work. It's a milestone today as we pass this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

ANDREW BAYLY (National—Port Waikato): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's a pleasure to be talking on the Data and Statistics Bill third reading, and I'm very conscious about time because we've got a very important maiden speech due very shortly.

I just want to start out by—the issue is that the Minister stated right at the outset when he introduced this bill today by saying that he understood that on the stock markets, most of the value of companies comes down to data. I find that statement rather troubling because here we are: we've got a Minister of commerce who also is responsible for this bill. The reason he gave as to the value placed on data is actually not correct. He is correct in the sense that data is important, but the reason why so much value is ascribed to businesses is actually because of intellectual property. I find it troubling that the Minister can't differentiate that issue when introducing a bill of this importance.

Anyway, this bill is—as my good colleague the Hon Michael Woodhouse noted, we're going to support it. But we have had caveats with this bill. I think the important thing is we want to make sure there's a better collection, publication, and analysis of data that is

actually obtained and to produce good quality statistics for use in New Zealand, not only by the Government but by other people.

It's important that we get this because when National was in power, the importance of social investment was such a crucial issue in terms of our decision making, making sure that our interventions—our initiatives that we were putting in place—were actually directed at the right outcomes, at the right groups to achieve those outcomes. Without data, and good quality data, you cannot achieve that, and that's why this bill is so important.

Of course, we've seen some issues with that over time and, unfortunately, a lack of focus on social investment by the current Government, which I think is a real shame—an absolute shame. Because otherwise, you do not have a context, you do not have a framework in terms of the Cabinet or the Minister being able to determine where should we be putting our money, where should we be putting our effort? But of course we don't hear that from our Government, because this Government just wants to spend lots of money and talk about what it's doing without any outcomes.

Anyway, getting back to the bill. The Minister of Statistics will continue to have responsibility for specifying the data and statistical priorities, and that is important. Of course, it is the role of the Statistician to actually put in place the procedures and methodologies for collecting that data. We have no issue with that and, of course, what this bill does is seek to put in place a new framework.

One of the important things—and I don't think anyone really picked up previously—is that there is a multi-year data and statistical programme designed, which has been embedded into this bill. So there is a framework and there's a period so people know what's going to go forward in terms of the work that Stats New Zealand does, which is a good thing because it's going to prioritise data collection and the production of official statistics.

Part 3 was the bit that was pretty interesting. First of all, there's the mandatory requirement and it firms up the relationship or the requirement on Government agencies to provide information to the Statistician, and that is correct. That is appropriate; we want to make sure that the Stats New Zealand CEO has the ability through his department to be able to go and get the right sort of information, and we think that is good. That obligation to provide data for official statistics will apply whenever a mandatory data request is made, unless other legislation expressly prevents provision of this data.

Now, the bit that was contentious is the bit of this Statistician being authorised, or being able to authorise other agencies, to collect data on behalf of Stats New Zealand and to produce official statistics. Of course, quite rightly so, we had a number of people highlight this issue. It is a fundamentally important issue to make sure that if we are delegating—and that was the first question: whether in fact the Statistician should be allowed to do that. Some would argue they've had that power for some period of time, but it is important that the constraints around that—the appropriateness of that—is properly captured in the bill.

My good colleague Michael Woodhouse introduced a Supplementary Order Paper (SOP) that ensured that anyone who has delegated power must comply with Part 5 of the bill. That's a very important thing.

Look, I think I'm going to give way because I want to make sure that Mr Sam Uffindell gets his opportunity, but the last thing was the research. We want to make sure that anyone—

SPEAKER: Five minutes.

ANDREW BAYLY: Oh, I've got more time. Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's very appropriate. So the use of data for research was, again, a significant issue that was traversed quite widely in the committee of the whole House stage, because, of course,

what is the purpose of data? It is for the collection of data, principally for Government decision-making. But the role and the use of data for research, and who uses that data was a primary concern to many people—and we’ve had many submissions on it, but it also occupied a lot of the time during the committee of the whole House.

We want to make sure that it is appropriate—again, my good colleague put up some very good SOPs on that matter. It was important; I think we traversed the issue quite comprehensively during that process.

The last thing is the census, and of course the Hon Michael Woodhouse was right. The last census was an absolute shocker—a shocker. To have the Minister not being clear whether, in fact, we’re going to have another census on the due date in 2023 or—and he’s kept his options open—whether in fact, he might delay it until 2024. Wow. That is unbelievable.

We should have a census every five years. That is something that everyone in New Zealand knows occurs. It shouldn’t be something that comes out of the blue. This should be a Minister who should be saying, “This is what we’re going to do, make sure it happens and don’t muck it up. Don’t muck it up.” Of course, that’s not what we’ve heard from the Minister—not what we’ve heard from the Minister. It is wrong; we need a Minister that is very clear about the priorities. We need a Government that’s clear about the priorities, and that’s not what we’re seeing from this Minister, nor this Government. Get it right.

SPEAKER: I think we’re getting pretty close to the time. Therefore, what I’ll do is, in accordance with a determination of the Business Committee, call Sam Uffindell to make his maiden statement.

Debate interrupted.

MAIDEN STATEMENT

SAM UFFINDELL (National—Tauranga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is an absolute honour to be able to rise and speak in this House. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the people of Tauranga for sending me here. It is a special privilege to represent you not only in our community back home but down here in our capital within the halls of Parliament. You have put your faith and trust in me, and for that I will always be grateful, I will never take it for granted, and I will work tirelessly for you so we can make Tauranga the greatest city to live in in New Zealand.

I also want to thank the people in the National Party that put their faith and trust in me. Our electorate, like so many others in the National Party, elects its candidate locally. So I am here solely on the grace of those local delegates who have so entrusted me to represent them. I want to thank all of our electorate team, our local Tauranga members, and the wider National Party who have worked so tirelessly and put in years of dedication and service to our great party. It is because of all your hard work, guidance, and goodwill that I am here today.

The New Zealand National Party is a great party. It is a party that values freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and freedom of ideas and that looks outwardly, openly, and welcomingly towards that world; embraces what is best; and looks to incorporate this is a uniquely Kiwi way. I am proud to be a member of a party that embraces equal citizenship and equal opportunity, encourages competition, and champions personal responsibility. This is the party that gives New Zealand and New Zealanders the best chance of reaching our potential. I am incredibly fortunate to be able to step into the shoes of the Hon Simon Bridges, who is so loved by our membership back home and who left the electorate in such great shape for me to walk into. Thank you, Simon, for all your years of service to Tauranga and the National Party.

I come here as the member of Parliament for Tauranga, a city that has quickly transformed itself from a sleepy port and beachside retirement town to one of our country's fastest growing and a critical piece in New Zealand's strategic make up. The sandy streets and rustic baches of Mount Maunganui have now largely been replaced by multimillion-dollar houses and apartments. Vast expanses of dairy farms and kiwifruit orchards have been subdivided and replaced by suburbia. Our port has grown to be the largest in New Zealand, with nearly three times the volume of its nearest rival. We are a key link between our largest city and commercial hub, Auckland, and the heartland of New Zealand dairy farming, in the Waikato—an industry that is still the economic backbone of our country. We are the epicentre of our country's horticulture, and I want to thank all of those involved in the kiwifruit industry for all the prosperity they have contributed to our city and our region. I was reminded just recently at the Bay of Plenty young grower awards of the enormous role hort and ag has to play in our future, not just as goods for export but the export of tech services, something we should lead the world in and something that has the potential to provide billions of dollars of economic benefit to New Zealand.

I love our city, but we face some significant challenges. Tauranga's growth has not been supported by the infrastructure it needs. The Tauranga Eastern Link, built by my predecessor and used by my family every day, is the best road in New Zealand. However, such roads of its quality are few and far between. This Government's cancellation of the full Tauranga Northern Link and inability to allow the port to build a third berth have not helped; in fact, they have actively hindered and constrained not only Tauranga but our nation's future economic engine and housing stock. We must rise above such prohibitive regulation and nation-limiting politics and do what is right for the electorate of Tauranga and our country. While I am your member, I will fight relentlessly as your local voice to ensure that Tauranga receives the investment, infrastructure, and support it needs to reach its potential, and serve the best interests of its people, its businesses, and the country.

Our region is beset by gang issues and, unfortunately, like the rest of New Zealand, a growing culture of lawlessness, lack of accountability, a sense of impunity, and significant underlying generational social problems. We need friends, family, and, in particular, parents, to step up and show what is right. Ultimately, though, the State must hold people accountable. However, the State has a greater role to play in helping lift those likely to go down that path, not by being the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, but by direct social investment that identifies these individuals and families and works directly with them to set them on the right path.

On top of issues related to crime and gangs, Tauranga suffers severe housing and transport infrastructure deficits. Our hospital needs upgrading, and more children are truant and underperforming in school. This is not unique to Tauranga though. In many ways we are just a microcosm of the many endemic issues crippling New Zealand. For us to begin to tackle these problems, we need a change of mind-set. I spent the first 12 years of my career in Sydney and Singapore—modern, forward-thinking, successful, advanced economies and societies. I led high-performing teams and high-performing cultures. I worked to reduce inefficiencies, to innovate, to problem-solve. We committed ourselves to utilising our resources to the best of our ability and to achieving set, measurable outcomes. These countries and these organisations fostered cultures of competition and success.

Unfortunately, this mind-set is a distant reality to that promoted by this Government. Since returning to New Zealand in 2020, I have been astonished by the general malaise that has set in. This Government's complacency, the acceptance of mediocrity, the fear of the outside world, the rejection of personal responsibility, the dumbing down of expectations, and the closed-minded absolutism.

When I was young I played a lot of sport, and, every time I played, my dad taught me to play to win—and I did. And I loved it. Now we don't even keep the score. If we're going to fulfil our obligation to future generations to leave this country in a better position than we inherited it, if we are going to keep happily spouting the mantra that New Zealand punches above its weight on the world stage, if we as individuals—and a country—are going to reach our potential, we need to take a good, hard look at ourselves. We need to lift our horizons. We need to set clear targets and strategies to get there, and we need to get busy winning. We need mind-sets and policies that are focused on performance and outcomes. We need an education system that is focused on keeping our children in school; ensuring they have a fundamental understanding of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects; and setting them up to compete on the world stage in the 21st century. We need a health system that's able to cope with public demands, that has the staff it needs, that allows someone to go to an emergency department any time of day with confidence they will quickly receive the treatment they need. We need an immigration and workplace system that embraces talent. We need a social welfare system that directly intervenes in the lives that need help, working with them to get them back on their feet and set them up to lead lives of self-sufficiency and self-worth.

If we are going to provide the education, health, social services, housing, infrastructure, and growth our country desperately lacks, we need more than ideology, slogans, and announcements. We need an open mind-set, a more dynamic and efficient Public Service, and an economic engine that is able to develop the resources and capital our country needs. We need to embrace the outside world and all it has to offer. We need to shake our tall poppy syndrome and start celebrating our success stories. We need to understand that Government doesn't always know best and doesn't always do best; that its role is to set the vision, consult with key stakeholders, agree upon expectations, and empower those in society that are proven in delivering outcomes. We need to treat the finances of New Zealand and future generations with respect, uphold the independence and singular focus of our Reserve Bank, and avoid treating the public purse like Monopoly money. Surely our children deserve the respect that those before them spent prudently and didn't saddle them with intergenerational debt while simultaneously driving outcomes down.

We are faced with generational and societal division—the homed and the homeless—and it's critical that we not allow this trend to continue, or our delicate society may well fracture. We need to address our housing supply shortages; free developers and community providers from overly burdensome regulatory constraints; and get Government out of the way and let the experts build houses.

We need to look to a future where we develop high-skilled, high-waged jobs, leveraging off Kiwi ingenuity and our competitive advantage in our primary industries. We have such huge potential to drive the export of technological goods and services in this area. We need to incentivise individuals and businesses to invest heavily in R & D; set the conditions for skilled people, their families, and foreign capital to efficiently move here. We need to back our hard-working business owners and set conditions that allow them to unleash the creative and technological capability that sits in front of them. We need to work relentlessly on lifting our ailing productivity. We need to set in term long-term strategic plans. We need infrastructure pipelines around transport, housing, schools, and hospitals; digital connectivity; regional hubs of excellence; and all other manners of public amenities and services.

The door is fast closing on our ability to keep pace with the rest of the developed world, and one of my greatest fears is that my children will one day grow up in a New Zealand that has receded from that club, and that is why I'm here. I didn't come to Wellington to be a career parliamentarian. I came here to fight for the people of Tauranga and to ensure

my children grow up in a New Zealand better than the one we returned to in 2020. We have much work to do, but I know in Christopher Luxon and Nicola Willis we have a team that can lead New Zealand into the 2030s and beyond. In Christopher, I have huge confidence that he will rise to be one of our great Prime Ministers, and it is and always will be an enormous honour to serve on his team. He inspires confidence, commitment, and belief, and he has all the skills, experience, and vision necessary to drive our country to where we want to be.

I want to finish by thanking my friends and family. To my parents and siblings—Peter and Jennifer, Daisy and Harry—thank you for your endless love and humour. Dad, thank you for imbuing in me an internal competitiveness and a fondness for people. Mum, thank you for bestowing upon me a thirst for knowledge, empathy, and resilience. Daisy and Harry, thank you for always encouraging me to follow my passion. To my friends: you’ve given me so much more than you’ll ever know, have shaped me hugely, kept me humble, and I’m so lucky to have so many of you close to me through all the intimacies and trials of communal living in Dunedin and Sydney. My wife’s family have been an endless pillar of support to us, and, frankly, without their help, I’m not sure this path would be achievable or sustainable. Julia and I will for ever be grateful for your countless support.

And, finally, to my little family. To my wife, Julia: it is a selfless act for anyone to allow their partner to go to Parliament. You take such a heavy duty on yourself to enable me to be here, follow my passion, and undertake an opportunity to improve Tauranga and New Zealand. I will be eternally grateful to you, and I promise, when I leave this place, we can do whatever you want. And finally, to my children—Lily, Zippy and Teddy—I’m ultimately here because I want to improve our country for you and your children, so that you can grow up here in a country that allows you to reach your potential and that, even if you do leave, it will only be for a while, and one day you’ll be back again. I hope I make you all proud. Thank you.

SPEAKER: The House is suspended for the dinner break until 7 o’clock.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 p.m. to 7 p.m.

DATA AND STATISTICS BILL

Third Reading

Debate resumed.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Jacqui Dean): The House is resumed. When the House rose for the dinner break, the members were considering the Data and Statistics Bill.

NAISI CHEN (Labour): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in this House to talk to the third reading of the bill amending the Statistics Act of 1975.

Simon O’Connor: Oh, great year.

NAISI CHEN: I wasn’t born before then.

Dr Duncan Webb: You always say that.

NAISI CHEN: Ha, ha! OK, I’ll stop myself from saying that from now on. I did a bit of research especially for the digital exclusion debate last week in the House, which was brought to us by the Citizens Advice Bureau. The bill that we’re trying to amend right now is 1975. In 1983—which makes it eight years after the bill was passed—the internet was invented.

We’ve known from speeches previous to this debate already that this world is a very different place than what it used to be in 1975, and rather than just calling it the Statistics Act, we know that data is now an integral part of our lives. Fun fact: in the last two days, more data has been created and captured than any data from the beginning of human

history to the year 2003. So we are in a rapid world of creating and capturing data, and we need to govern data in the right way as well.

This bill will seek, obviously, to modernise the framework for accessing data for research to make sure that the Minister and also the Statistician of the Government have the right powers to make sure that we do it ethically and we do it safely. For instance, there will be additional safeguards when overseas-based researchers access our data. There is the Five Safes framework we're putting in place through this bill to make sure that we, as New Zealanders, especially in relation to our indigenous data—our iwi and Māori data, which is such a taonga for our nation—protect it in the best way possible while also advancing the way that we govern our country, that we do research, and that we enlighten ourselves with the technology that we have. On that note, I commend this bill to the House.

Dr ELIZABETH KEREKERE (Green): E te Māngai, tēnā koe. I rise on behalf of the Green Party in support of the Data and Statistics Bill. Many thanks to the Governance and Administration Committee and all of the organisations and people who submitted in the hearings, which of course did result in several amendments made to their draft bill.

While we welcome the repeal and replacement of the Statistics Act of 1975, we recognise the outstanding concerns raised by those organisations and submitters, including professionals across the sector. We heard several of those concerns raised in the committee of the whole House, and it's a good reminder that if you feel strongly about something, the hearings are not the end of it. You can keep coming to us and asking us to raise these concerns for you and we can put up those Supplementary Order Papers (SOPs) that are heard in that committee of the whole House, and while none of those were deemed worthy by the Government, those issues were roundly aired and debated in the House.

So the Greens very much appreciate that the bill contains a specific section on Te Tiriti o Waitangi, where it aims to recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi—the Treaty of Waitangi—by providing for the interests of Māori in data, statistics, and research, because, let's be honest, it's not a strength of Governments to provide for Māori interests. No shade on the current Government; it's been all 53 Governments so far. So we are thankful that it is there, and we recognise that the effective implementation of such a provision is contingent on working with Māori leadership in that area and working with whānau, hapū, and iwi as it relates to what the kaupapa is.

Fortunately, Stats NZ does have a mana ōrite agreement with Te Kāhui Raraunga—the Data Iwi Leaders Group, and although the Minister assured us there's a strong relationship with them, that relationship was not strong enough for the Minister to incorporate their recommendations outlined in *Tawhiti Nuku*, the Māori data governance co-design outcomes report. It did not allow Te Kāhui Raraunga to look at the bill before it went to Cabinet, it didn't respond to any of the concerns they raised in their submissions, and it didn't consider the SOPs which were put out by the Greens and Te Paati Māori on their behalf. So we just thought a review clause—this is what they suggested. If we can't have all those other things, let's just look at a review clause that would allow us within three years after the commencement of this Act to commence a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Act in accordance with the terms of reference set out by the Minister and the Data Iwi Leaders Group—Te Kāhui Raraunga. We included the Privacy Commissioner and the Chief Ombudsman in that.

Of course, privacy is one of the major concerns we have consistently raised, and I acknowledge the New Zealand Council for Civil Liberties—thank you for coming to meet with us, and I'm aware you met with and sent information to colleagues across the House. We appreciate the ongoing and consistent lobbying, because if people do not trust what will happen to the data they provide, they may choose not to provide that data or not to

make sure it's accurate when they provide it. "De-identified" is not the same as "anonymised", and the more data you have on a single individual or a community, the easier it is that you're not going to get either of those things.

This bill accelerates a shift from data collection that uses formally designed surveys and big surveys—like the census itself—into using administrative data. Now, the standards for that collection of data is far, far lower, and far fewer protections are in place for those people who have provided it and so it can be easily skewed in different ways. The quality of that data provided against Government agencies, then, that is coming, and that is then going to be available for other researchers and other people and businesses to use, needs to be on the same high standard.

Finally, as one of the many Māori takatāpui researchers in this country—and I know there are other researchers in this House—I'm currently involved in several community-based research projects. So I do want to shout out to all the people that do this work in the community, generally unpaid: Counting Ourselves for trans and non-binary people, Identify for young LGBTIQ people, at the trans perinatal care project, and I'm an ambassador for the Manalagi Project for rainbow pasifika. Just a shout-out to all of those people and all of those teams doing incredible work—I use your data all the time.

But the other researchers, any actual MP knows that we need to have our hands—we have to have that good evidence, that quality information, because the creation of good quality data is core to what we do. The respect of our sources must be core to what a researcher does, because when we collect information and stories directly from individuals and whānau, they trust us to protect what they have gifted us, and that's why we call it a taonga. In many cases, a breach of privacy could cause them real harm. In a world that discriminates, for example, against people with diverse gender, sexualities, and sex characteristics, there are people who actively look for such information to hurt us.

As researchers within communities where little accurate data exists, we must create it, so we routinely use the vast amount of information collected by Stats NZ and all Government departments to extrapolate from what data is available to identify needs and strengths and to advocate for our communities but also to test the validity of Government data with our own research and life experiences. We must protect that data, we must make sure it's accurate and of high standards, and we must protect the privacy of those people. We must protect the integrity of the chief statistician. On that basis, we consider this bill does go towards that, and so we commend this bill to the House. Kia ora.

DAVID SEYMOUR (Leader—ACT): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of ACT in opposition to the third reading of the Data and Statistics Bill, and it's been quite a journey that this bill's had.

Initially, ACT has looked at it and saw it on the surface as being something that would seek to modernise something in the form of the 1975 Act that probably needed to be modernised, given the enormous changes in data-handling technology that have occurred over the past 47 years. But as we looked deeper into the bill, we heard serious concerns raised by people who have enormous expertise. One of them was a former chief statistician, Len Cook. Another was Sir Geoffrey Palmer, one of the foremost architects of New Zealand's current constitutional framework. Another was the Council of Civil Liberties. Another was the council of librarians—although I'm going to get the exact title wrong on that.

We looked at what these people were saying and we realised that this bill had serious problems. We hoped that the Government would respect the parliamentary process, and when serious problems were raised with the bill—problems that brought into question whether the sanctity of data and statistics collected by Government and the security of those data and that statistics—we thought that maybe the Government would listen to these people with considerable expertise and make suitable changes to the legislation.

There was even an alternative put up. Helpfully, the Australian Parliament in recent time has passed a piece of legislation aimed at solving many of the same problems our Government wanted to solve, but has done it without the pitfalls identified by those experts.

What were those problems? Well, as a bit of background, the position of the chief statistician and, in particular, the status of official statistics have been carefully constitutionally protected for very good reason for a very long time. When a survey is done, it has the potential to damage the Government of the day's interests. It may turn up results about employment or the price of things that might favour one side or the other of politics. It might gather data or information that would be key to some people's privacy.

There are many reasons why you would want a person who had the power to not just collect but actually demand that statistics be provided. It's compulsory to fill out a lot of surveys done by Statistics New Zealand. It's critical that that person with that sort of power has their power tightly circumscribed and held accountable and that the official statistics that they collect are subject to a high standard of privacy and cannot be misused, and the person collecting them cannot be interfered with politically if the results of their statistics might turn out to be politically charged. Those are things that at least the previous Statistics Act preserved.

So people who are listening at home might think, "How on earth could you have a political debate about the collection of statistics?" Some people might think that it was a particularly uninspiring area of policy. Well, actually, it's critical, and let me just give you one example. I saw recently a wonderful movie, the movie *Whina*, a biography of the life of Dame Whina Cooper. One fascinating scene that was described—and it was a real part of her life—was when she became the president of the Maori Women's Welfare League in Auckland, and in order to find out about the true state of the welfare of Māori women in that city, they actually went out as the league and did their own census. They collected data that the statistics department wasn't collecting, and they forced the debate. Up until that time, a lot of the statistics that New Zealand had collected had been administrative data, and the problem with administrative data—that is, data of people that have already engaged with a Government department—is that the people who most need to have a light shone on them by official statistics aren't included.

A classic example of this was when the Government recently decided to use the health service user population for the population to vaccinate during COVID-19. They accidentally missed only about a percent, but it was about 50,000 people, because they hadn't been to their doctor recently—exactly the people that needed to be included weren't. What they should have done is use the census and use the official data that the Government had that included everybody, rather than just those who were already engaged with the healthcare system.

So back in the 1950s and as recently as 2021, we see how important it is that we have official statistics that can be collected and that people will share their data with, without fear or favour. That is a backstop to relying on administrative data that people can know will not be misused and their privacy will not be violated—all really important stuff.

So what were the objections to this bill? Well, really, two things: first of all, this bill muddies the water between the collection of official statistics and research. In other words, assembling official statistics according to all the safeguards that are required to make sure that the data is given safely and not misused and that it's collected without fear or favour—that has been blurred into research which could be done by just about anybody.

So the powers that the Statistician has to collect data are not necessarily just used for the collation of official statistics. In fact, early in the bill, I think it's Subpart 3 said "official statistics or research", and when I asked the Minister of Statistics what was the

difference between the two, he gave a perfunctory answer, only to come back at 9 o'clock the next morning and say, "Oh, I was stumped by the simplicity and profundity of your question." Well, I've always thought myself to be a simple and profound questioner, but to have a Minister accept that he didn't understand two of the most critical terms in the legislation he'd been shepherding through Parliament for the last year is absolutely unacceptable.

The next problem: having blurred the lines between official statistics and research and removed the protections of official statistic rules for the data that's collected by the chief statistician, then it said, "Well, actually the chief statistician can defer or delegate those powers they have to anyone else in the entire public sector."—theoretically, about 47,000 people. I've been in correspondence with Len Cook, who said to me—and I'm sure he won't mind me repeating—that if he'd been told, in his time, that his powers that he held to be important and a sacred duty had been delegated to someone else, well, what would he have done? He said he would have resigned. But now we have this enormous and sacred power of the chief statistician that is blurred into collecting official statistics and research that anybody can have. Anyone can have it delegated to them by the Minister, and what we do is we destroy that line between official statistics and research that Whina Cooper had to contend with almost 70 years ago.

Now we have a situation where the Government can demand your data, the Government can use the powers to demand data delegated to any other department, and that data can be used either for the purpose of official statistics or research. It undermines the whole integrity of New Zealand's statistics-gathering operation at a Government level. That is completely wrong.

I'd also add that this legislation has peppered throughout it requirements that Māori be consulted early and meaningfully, and I think that's a wonderful thing. The only problem is I think we should be consulting all New Zealanders early and meaningfully in a modern, multi-ethnic, liberal democracy.

You know, the statistics department itself categorises New Zealanders as not only Māori and European but also Asian New Zealanders, also MELAA, or Middle East, Latin American, and African New Zealanders—for people who might be interested—and also Pacific New Zealanders. Having just been to Samoa, I have always regarded it as a very important part of New Zealand. Unfortunately, the racial preference that has been needlessly peppered through a bill on statistics is another example of this Government's divisiveness. It has to stop. We need to unite behind good ideas and stop trying to make discrimination great again by finding superficial differences in each other instead of our common humanity.

That is just one extra reason why the ACT Party cannot support this bill. But the real problem with it is a fundamental misunderstanding on the part of the Minister himself what this bill actually does to the integrity of statistics gathering in New Zealand. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

JAMIE STRANGE (Labour—Hamilton East): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to take a fairly brief call on the Data and Statistics Bill at its third reading. I'm sure members would like for me to speak for longer, but we have canvassed this bill fairly well here this evening.

A lot of what we do in Parliament is updating pieces of legislation. This bill replaces the Statistics Act 1975, and a lot has changed since 1975. In fact, the Waitangi Tribunal was created in 1975, *Footrot Flats* had its debut, and there was a gentleman named Robert Muldoon—who some people may have heard of—sitting in the Prime Minister's chair in 1975. So a lot has changed since that time. Society has changed. The way we interact as New Zealanders has changed.

But what hasn't changed is the importance of good data and good methods for collecting the data—modern methods to ensure that we have accurate data. Because, as we've heard from other speakers, data is vital in many areas, but particularly in terms of Government agencies—in terms of their ability to support New Zealanders, whether it's in health, education, police, housing; in fact, in most areas of society where Government agencies are providing support to New Zealanders, they do so based on data. It's important that that data is accurate in order for them to make their decisions.

Good data and statistics sit at the heart of democracy. We have a strong democracy in New Zealand, and it's important that we protect our democracy by ensuring we have good data. I commend this bill to the House.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Jacqui Dean): I call Chris Penk for a five-minute call.

CHRIS PENK (National—Kaipara ki Mahurangi): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So this is the third reading of the Data and Statistics Bill. We've heard contributions from across the House that I think have very fairly summarised the legislative process so far. As my colleague and friend Michael Woodhouse has said, on this side of the House, notwithstanding that we've had some reservations about the particular operation of parts of the bill, none the less we support its intent overall and certainly are not minded to oppose the bill in its entirety on the basis only of those particular points. So that's where we've landed.

I think it's maybe worth thinking about the way that the bill has come to Parliament—I was about to say “and having passed”. It almost will have passed, of course, and in fact it is about to do so, and then it will remain only for the Governor-General, in her wisdom, to sign it into law, giving the Royal assent.

But in terms of the legislative process for this Chamber, we had, of course, the introduction of the bill at its first reading. Typically, of course, the House would regard a bill as containing a meritorious idea or not, and voting for it at least to proceed to select committee on that basis. I tend to be a bit harsher than some others in this House. I think if the bill isn't in a sufficiently good state, that there's nothing wrong with trying again. But, as it happens, the intent of this seemed obvious enough: to modernise—as others have said—recognising the passage of time and, more importantly, since 1975, the increase in technology, the additional ways that data can be collected, the nature of the data collection, and the use of the data too. So with that initial good intent being recognised across the House, with the bill having gone to select committee and having heard from a number of submitters that while its intent was shared almost universally, nevertheless there were particular points that could be the subject of reservation.

In the second reading, reporting back, essentially, from that select committee to the House, and, indeed, in the committee of the whole House stage, we saw a good examination of the detail. The Minister was put through his paces, and I think, to give him his due, he engaged with that questioning from this side of the House and the points that we were making on our own behalf but also on behalf of those who had so diligently and helpfully got in touch with members of Parliament and policy makers regarding certain reservations that they had.

The Green Party member who has spoken on this bill actually, I think, made a really good point about the fact that the legislative process need not stop, in a way, even after the bill has been passed into law, in the sense that we can continue the conversations—I think she might have said. Certainly it's right that we as citizens, actually, first and foremost, and then as policy makers and MPs and Ministers, from time to time, should always be interested in whether the bill or the Act, as it will be, is working in the way that it's intended and without those unintended consequences whereby data might not be used always as it should. So while a formal review may or may not be included in a particular

piece of legislation, that's not to say that ongoing scrutiny and monitoring can't take place; indeed, I would argue that it should.

We've heard about the collection of data, the use of data, and the sharing of data, and that's not only between Government agencies, which on this side of the House, we'd say—or at least speaking for the National Party—is a worthwhile thing to the extent that it allows Government to be more responsive to the needs of its citizens. From a National Party perspective, our social investment approach actually demands that our Government agencies work together collaboratively to understand the needs of vulnerable people in our society, particularly, those whose needs can't be categorised in neat silos that equate exactly to specific Government departments and agencies. So that sharing is very important and meaningful and enabling in that sense. But we have nevertheless expressed those concerns as encouraged by others to do so about the fact that data could also be used for the purpose of research and be shared, therefore, with others who don't have that official stamp of approval, so to speak.

So balancing that with the natural interest that we have in this House of the privacy of individuals, and noting that the data, at a level, will always belong to the person who has given it—particularly if it's not given voluntarily—and noting the obligation that is on the State, therefore, to use that data correctly for the purpose it's intended and, therefore, accord with our expectations in terms of the legislation, let's continue to look at the legislation even after it's passed and consider if any further changes are needed. In the meantime, however, I commend the bill to the House.

INGRID LEARY (Labour—Taieri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think it's important that this House notes that this bill seeks to update legislation which is 45 years old, so let's not forget that. I think we're all in agreement about the state of some of the data collection in New Zealand.

We're coming from a wellbeing perspective, on this side of the House, and that means having data which we can use to be able to target interventions to get the best possible outcomes to create equity. Today, in this House, we have been discussing the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill. That is an example of a particular sector where there just hasn't been adequate data collection to be able to make very big and quick changes that data collection needs to happen. Others in the House tonight have said how critical data collection is to our democracy, and so what this bill will do is update our systems to make sure that we can get better data and that we can therefore have a more robust wellbeing approach. Of course, that needs to be balanced with efficiency, with value, and, perhaps most importantly, the systems integrity that we've heard discussed tonight.

I know, when I was studying law 30-something years ago—I actually did my honours thesis on privacy law and at that point there was the Tucker case and the very emergence of the tort of privacy. Well, that has changed so significantly. We have had huge developments in privacy law, confidentiality, security, and the things that we need in order to make sure that we do have the appropriate checks and balances on the data collection and the data use. And I'd also add that the bill is in accordance with a whole host of international treaties that look specifically at confidentiality, security, and appropriate use of data collection.

So I think we've reached that position very thoughtfully, very carefully, through robust democratic processes to make sure that we are falling as close to the perfect line as we can on managing those tensions. There is a statement in one of the regulatory reports that says: of course we could do more, but the cost just would not be value for money for New Zealanders. I thank the previous member, Chris Penk, for his thoughtful contribution and I commend this bill to the House.

SIMON O'CONNOR (National—Tāmaki): Thank you very much. Look, statistically, the chances of me speaking on this bill were almost zero until about 30 seconds ago, and then it went from a statistical relevance of zero to obviously a statistical relevance of now one. Therefore, I am speaking. Data-wise, I think it's really important—exceptionally important—for the House to understand that this is the first time I've had the privilege and honour to speak on this Data and Statistics Bill. And because we are talking data, it's important to know that while this is my first time, being the third reading in the House, it will also be my last, which may be a prediction of my political future—who knows! I hope other people on the other side don't look so enthusiastic!

Joking aside, we are of course at the third reading of this Data and Statistics Bill. It is not a bill without controversy, which is somewhat surprising. One would think and other members in the House on both sides have indicated that you would think a bill on data and statistics would be relatively straightforward. Some of the early controversies were actually just noted by the previous speaker, Ingrid Leary, who sat down, noting I think in a slight way that this bill being 45 years of age was a bad thing. As someone who is just above 45 years of age, I take that slightly offensively! Some things at 45, 46, aren't too bad! But she is right: this bill is well overdue—well overdue—a review, and I do want to acknowledge the Minister David Clark for his work, although it has been, I think, appropriately raised that the depth and knowledge of the bill sometimes was lacking, which in turn has given some lack of surety to the House.

It's probably important to note that National is supporting this bill, and I will touch on some of those reasons as we go through. But fundamentally, data and statistics in themselves are what I'd term as something that is amoral. They don't come with any particular bias, prejudice, or other. It's how they're used, and I think that's probably a very quick and important distinction to make. Collecting the data, how it's collected and so forth—that's relatively, if you will, straightforward. This bill has run into trouble simply because of how it is going to be used. I think actually there's been really good debate, with in many ways the House showing its quality over the last few days as we've discussed this, to actually tease out what exactly this bill intends to do. Despite some short calls by some in the House, I think it's relatively useful that not only the Minister through committee stage in particular but members are putting very, very clearly on to *Hansard* the intention and, importantly, the interpretation of this bill.

Fundamentally, the data collected is at the service of all New Zealanders. It is not to become at the service of particular Government departments to serve any Government of the day—and I want to really stress that: any Government of the day. So this is not trying to play a partisan line. It applies as equally to the National Party when it retakes the Treasury benches next year as it does to—statistically, quite a high probability. Quite a high probability. I'm trying to be generous tonight. I'm not going to give those statistics. The data's looking pretty good, too! But no, sorry, bad humour aside, this is not about Labour, National, left, or right; it's fundamentally how that data is used. Rightly, it has been pointed out that several well-known people, including a previous Government Statistician, obviously the Council of Civil Liberties—so, it'll be Thomas Beagle and crew—have raised serious and genuine concerns. I want to say to them from the National Party side that we've heard those. We've thought about those. We've interrogated those. It's our belief that we are still in the right space with this law, that the necessary checks and balances are in place.

Look, fundamentally, it's all coming down to how the Government Statistician can delegate their powers. It's probably important for people to understand at home again that the collection of data is one thing. There are, of course, ethics around that. How then that data is used does become fundamentally important, and I suppose we've become

somewhat used to, if not complacent, that the statistics held by the department are firewalled, separated at a certain degree of distance from any Government of the day, from any agency. The delegation, the ability of the Government Statistician to hand that data over, to share that data in some way—that has been in operation, as I understand it, and happy to be corrected, particularly by a fulsome 10-minute call from the Government benches. I think it's always best to put out a lot of data, statistically, to achieve a 10-minute call. But it would be really, really useful for people to understand that, actually, since I think 2013, we've had the ability—or the Government Statistician has had the ability—to share the data.

Look, I'm not going to be able to interrogate this at length, but I think most people at home would understand that, of course, the data being collected is not simply done for itself. I mean, that would make no sense whatsoever. So when we think of the likes of the Census or the Household Labour Force Survey and so forth, that is always being shared in some way or form. It's about setting the protocols in place. As I say, we on this side of the House—and, obviously, along with Government, because we are both supporting it—do believe that sufficient protocols, the right protocols, the right interpretation of this legislation, is in place.

Really importantly, if I was to put on my foreign affairs, defence, trade, and other hats on—from the past, I might add—the place of this statistical data and its use by our security intelligence services is a particularly sensitive area. I know that's been addressed. It's one I will always remain nervous about, and I do want to make it clear that's not a particular reflection on our security agencies and our intelligence agencies—enormous amount of respect for the work that they do and lead. But there's always, always a nervousness when data is being shared, particularly in that space. But again, from the National Party side, we believe that the interpretation of how this bill should operate is sufficient.

But I suppose that comes again with two points. One, we do want to make abundantly clear into *Hansard*, into the written record of this Parliament and consequently to the judiciary, if it reaches that, of what we understand this bill to mean; and secondly, to indicate—well, in the committee stage, my colleague the Hon Michael Woodhouse put through a couple of Supplementary Order Papers. I'm not going to relitigate them. They were exceptionally good—really, really good. Disappointingly but, again, statistically expected—I made a lot of money off this bet—the Labour Party voted them all down, which is a bit of a pity. Fortunately—fortunately—while materially important, they weren't sufficiently so that we had to drop them or drop our support of the bill. So that's just important to note there.

Look, a couple of other points. Again, it comes down to delegation, just to give some surety, particularly to people listening at home. The delegation of powers is discussed in this legislation but also the State Sector Act of—was it 1998? No, 1988—another famous year for various reasons. It also makes it really clear what Government agencies can and cannot delegate out. So that's really important, including that it must be published—or, again, that's my understanding. In other words, in the worst case scenario—well, actually, there are really bad worst case scenarios one could ponder. But in the general case of the day or the week, if the Government Statistician was choosing to share the information in some shape or form, that has to be advertised, which, of course, provides a degree of transparency for us.

There's been lots of discussion and debate around research, how this could be used for research. The overall goal, I certainly think, is a positive one. That's a personal reflection. I'm always very, very supportive of researchers, as various ones know around the country. If they ever want to talk about politics or our constitutional structure or, I don't know, China—anyone want to come and talk to me about that in a few days? Go for it. Just a

quick aside. But actually, importantly, research still needs to be governed by some structures, and, importantly, the way that the Government Statistician is able to, if she or he chooses to give out this information, is very, very clearly spelt out in the legislation, and, importantly, that it has to be for the public interest.

That's just a small illustration of how the interpretation works. It's not for the interests of the academics. It's not for the interests of the researcher. It's to be in the public interest. In other words, this information collected by the Crown—notice I say “the Crown”, not “the State”. Statistically, the use of “State” is erroneously used 100 percent of the time in this, the Realm of New Zealand. But as, again, a side note, the public interest must come into play. Anyway, I have used almost all my time, which statistically is somewhat appreciated, but, being generous, because this is a statistical and data bill, I'd like to gift at least six seconds to the House.

Hon MEKA WHAITIRI (Associate Minister of Statistics): I'm pleased to take a call as the last speaker on the third and final reading of the Data and Statistics Bill. Can I acknowledge all those parties in the House that are supporting this bill. Can I acknowledge my colleague the Minister of Statistics, the Hon David Clark, in ushering this bill. I think it's a thorough bill. It has seven parts, it has four schedules, and it is around modernising so that we have a fit for purpose data and statistics system in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In my brief contribution in this third and final reading, I want to just put on record the engagement that this Minister has had with iwi Māori in the formation of this bill but also with iwi Māori in supporting their aspirations around data and statistics. I just want to acknowledge the work of the Data Iwi Leaders Group, which comes from the Mana Ōrite Relationship Agreement, which was signed under the then Minister of Statistics, the Hon James Shaw. I want to acknowledge that. From that particular agreement, it commits the Crown to working and engaging with iwi Māori in building their capacity, to let their aspiration of better data to inform their decision making, particularly in a Treaty settlement context—and I want to say that this bill not only actively engaged with them but we continue to work to build the capacity. If you look across the Māori economy and all those Treaty settlement groups, they are massive players economically, socially, and environmentally in this country. So it's important that we have a data and statistical system that unlocks that economic and social potential in those organisations, which do not just benefit iwi Māori but actually benefit all.

In contributing as the Associate Minister of Statistics with my colleague the Hon David Clark, it's a lovely piece of legislation that modernises something that's dated since 1975. But I particularly want to put on record the engagement this Minister had and continues to have with the Data Iwi Leaders Group, which represents the chairs of our national iwi forums. With that small contribution, I'd like to commend this bill to the House.

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the Data and Statistics Bill be now read a third time.*

Ayes 108

New Zealand Labour 65; New Zealand National 33; Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand 10.

Noes 12

ACT New Zealand 10; Te Paati Māori 2.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

FAMILY COURT (FAMILY COURT ASSOCIATES) LEGISLATION BILL**First Reading**

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN (Minister of Justice): I present a legislative statement on the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ian McKelvie): That legislative statement is published under the authority of the House and can be found on the Parliament website.

Hon KIRITAPU ALLAN: I move, *That the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill be now read a first time.* I nominate the Justice Committee to consider the bill.

The family justice system supports children, parents, and whānau through significant times in their lives. An accessible Family Court that operates without undue delay is core to a fully functioning family justice system.

In 2019, the independent panel examining the 2014 reforms to the family justice system reported that the family justice system is not performing as it should. In particular, the panel found that delay is widespread in the Family Court. This delay impacts on most other areas of the family justice system. The Family Court deals with a diverse set of issues, including the care and protection of children, family violence, divorce, and relationship property. The effective delays in the Family Court can, therefore, be widespread.

Confidence in the Family Court system is undermined if people cannot effectively access the Family Court in a timely manner. Protracted proceedings can exacerbate parent, family, and whānau conflict. This is particularly harmful to children. Children's sense of time is slower than adults, and protracted proceedings can amount to a substantial proportion of a young child's life. In care of children proceedings, delay can mean that the children do not have contact with non-custodial whānau for significant periods of time. This can cause the relationship to disintegrate and be detrimental to the child and to whānau wellbeing. For victims of family violence who may find court processes re-traumatising, court delay can also exacerbate or prolong their trauma.

The Government is committed to addressing these barriers to justice in the Family Court. This bill will form just one part of a long-term programme of change in the Family Court. In 2020, the Government began its first phase of reform based on the panel's recommendations, aimed at better supporting families and whānau through the family justice system. The reforms included the reinstatement of legal representation in the early stages of Care of Children Act proceedings; improved information for children, parents, and whānau; the establishment of Kaiārahi, Family Court navigators, to help parents and whānau navigate the system; and increased remuneration for lawyers for children to incentivise the recruitment and retention of skilled practitioners.

The purpose of the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill responds to a particular issue identified by the independent panel, which is that the high administrative workload of judges contributes to delay. The panel recommended a new position be established in the court to take on some of the judges' workload. In response to this recommendation, the bill establishes a new role in the Family Court: the Family Court Associate. Establishing the Family Court Associate role is intended to improve outcomes for people participating in Family Court proceedings—particularly children—by making more effective use of judge time and reducing delay.

The Family Court Associate will be a judicial officer. A judicial officer is a statutory role with independence from the executive. As a judicial officer, the Family Court Associate can take on tasks currently performed by a registrar. They can also take on some judicial work that does not require a judge's expertise or experience but could not be done by a court officer such as a registrar.

I expect highly experienced family lawyers will be appointed to the role. They will have jurisdiction over matters including those relating to care of children, child support, Oranga Tamariki, and family violence. They will have the power to deal with a range of areas, including directing parties to undertake dispute resolution and non-violence services, presiding over pre-hearing conferences, convening settlement conferences, and making orders by consent under specified legislation.

The Family Court Associates will spend the majority of their time doing work on the papers, but will also be in court for some matters, including for convening settlement conferences. However, the role is distinct from a Family Court judge. There are some matters dealt with in the Family Court that will always remain with judges due to their impact on people or their complexity. These types of matters include the final decisions about guardianship and those that materially affect children.

We want Family Court judges to be able to concentrate on progressing cases—which can be incredibly traumatic for children—through the court, instead of on time-consuming administrative matters. The Family Court Associate role will help them to do just that.

I want to acknowledge the panel for their report on the 2014 family justice system reforms, which has informed the creation of the Family Court Associate role. I also want to acknowledge the judiciary, the New Zealand Law Society, and the Remuneration Authority for providing comments on an exposure draft of the bill. These comments have certainly been very helpful in refining the bill.

The public will have the opportunity to share their views on the bill at select committee, and I look forward to the Justice Committee's consideration of the bill. To enable the Family Court Associates to become operational as soon as possible, I am proposing that the Justice Committee report on the bill to the House after four months.

The establishment of the Family Court Associate is one part of the long-term programme of change to the family justice system. I commend this bill to the House.

CHRIS PENK (National—Kaipara ki Mahurangi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill, as the Minister has outlined, is an item of work that fits within a broader context, and I think that she's made some very sensible points in relation to that. I'll delay no further before advising that the National Party does support this legislation, and I'll explain why we think that it's a useful step in the right direction, as I go through this 10-minute contribution, but I will, of course, also note areas in which we'll be really interested to hear discussed at select committee to understand the extent to which it may be useful and to consider what other measures might also assist to solve the same problem.

First, though, I think it's worthwhile to acknowledge that making legislation in the area of the way that the courts operate is something that we should do carefully in this House. I don't mean to suggest that the Government isn't doing it appropriately in this case, but I will say that I think it's always fair to acknowledge that the courts, in a way, are a separate realm—they're certainly a separate branch of Government. Mostly, there's a degree of separation in terms of policy matters; you know, we make the laws, they apply them or interpret them and thereby also make them, I suppose. It's worth acknowledging that. But, I think, in terms of the operation of the courts, while we don't interfere with the decisions of courts at a day-to-day level, it's appropriate for this branch of Government, the legislature, to give courts the tools that they need to be able to carry out their job independently.

So one of the tools that can be offered to them, we've heard from the Minister through her presentation now, in the form of the legislative statement and, indeed, the bill itself, is the creation of a role known as Family Court Associate. The problem that needs to be solved is—I suppose, the first question—the Minister has, rightly, pointed us in the

direction of the independent panel that was established to understand some of the failings of the current justice system—more particularly, the court system, and more particularly than that, of course, the Family Court. It's well known in the legal fraternity—but, sadly, all too well known among those who have had the unfortunate experience of interacting with the Family Court in the way of their ordinary lives necessitating that dealing, in a non-professional context—that the Family Court has been beset by difficulties over many years. I think it's fair to acknowledge that these are longstanding issues that we're discussing, effectively, tonight, and no Government has exactly got it right. I think that it's important for all parliamentarians to take very seriously the problems that we face, and commit ourselves to trying to help to solve them.

So what, then, are the problems? Well, as outlined by that independent panel, one of them is the delay of resolution of issues in court that is a widespread problem that impacts on most other areas in the family justice system. I think, most importantly, it contributes to a deepening family and whānau conflict, including with parents but involving, of course, sadly, in a lot of cases, children being the pawns in the game of chess that is conflict played out in the Family Court, and that's deeply unfortunate, to say the least, for the young lives involved. Delay will often exacerbate existing divisions or break down relationships that should otherwise exist between parent and child, notwithstanding the other parent may have different ideas about how things should proceed. So that was one category of problem. It's easy to be glib and use expressions like “justice delayed is justice denied.”, and it seems so obvious to say, and we say it a lot, but we say it because it's true, and, in the Family Court particularly, quite tragic consequences oft in times of these delays.

The second half of the problem that's sought to be remedied by this bill is the high administrative workload of judges. That's a contributing factor to delays. So these things are not entirely independent. But I think we should ask ourselves, as we go through, whether there are opportunities to reduce the administrative burden, as well as doing the thing that this bill is looking to do, which is to share the burden by creating a Family Court Associate who can help the judge with her or his work and so share that burden in a way that's set out by law as prescribed pretty tightly, as we'll see with the detail about the particular Acts of Parliament that are being amended in this way.

So the Family Court Associate is a new creature, I suppose, of statute—a judicial officer, we will call that person—and will have what I'd be tempted to call quasi-judicial roles—I suppose, actually, technically they are judicial roles; they're currently conducted by judges, and so it's appropriate that they won't be able to be dismissed readily; there would need to be good cause for that. Their pay can't be reduced while they're in office, and so on. So there can't be political interference, whether that's in this place or, indeed, politics with a lowercase “p” perhaps being exercised in a court context. So we would see that they would be appointed for a certain period of time, with an opportunity for renewal, and they would fulfil various functions of the judges themselves, including that they would be able to transfer a proceeding to a judge proper if the matter is too complex for the associate himself or herself.

So all this is very well, but it's worth noting, and I did foreshadow this at the start, even as I said that National would be supporting the bill, that there are issues that we in this House and the select committee—and I note that its chair is present tonight and other members of that committee are present, so I ask them to take on board the questions that National has in this space. The first of which would be: the extent to which other measures are going to be needed in this, as well. Now, the bill only has a certain scope, but we have to see these things in context. We have to acknowledge this is something of a band-aid solution to a gaping wound. The court system is in turmoil. It's been exacerbated by COVID-19. Yes, that's there to acknowledge. But we do need more imagination,

creativity, and urgency to be applied to the solutions to these problems. So this is a step in the right direction, but it's a small step, and we need to bear that in mind.

Second, we need to have some understanding of the extent to which this is going to help—in the eyes of the Government or those who are advising them, to what extent can we expect delays and processing times, and so forth, to be reduced? That's something that we won't know with exactitude, and it's an exercise in making a prediction and, therefore, trying to look into the future, but to at least have some sort of feel for what the Government is aiming to achieve by this legislation would be very helpful in terms of ensuring its continued support not only in this House but, actually, more importantly, in the courts themselves.

Next, we also need to acknowledge that these are measures that won't be able to be undertaken immediately. The Family Court Associates need to be recruited—that's an issue in itself; we'll come back to that—and trained and then start operating in a way that is knowable and accountable in terms of the rules of the court. That's probably with the courts more so than the Parliament or the relevant Minister. But these procedures need to be developed. The recruitment needs to be taking place. The related point there is that we will be recruiting from a pool of people who are already practising in this space. If we're to have family lawyers who are experienced to the tune of at least seven years in this jurisdiction, then that means that these will be practitioners who aren't able to operate on the other side of the bench, so to speak. So there'll be an element of robbing Peter to pay Paul—that's probably inevitable to set up such a system; I wouldn't suggest or want to be misinterpreted as suggesting that we should have people who are inexperienced. So it's probably a feature of the system, rather than a bug, but, nevertheless, there is a cost to these things. It's not a silver bullet, as I say, that we'll be able to establish this role, appoint people to it, and be out of the woods entirely in terms of the delays, the processing difficulties, and so forth.

And, finally—and it's a very mundane point, perhaps, but, actually, I think an important one—the physical spaces, the courtrooms themselves. I think it's been acknowledged in the supporting documentation provided by the Government, these areas need to accommodate the fact that there'll be this additional person or persons conducting this role; they need a degree of independence. They certainly need to be able to have a workable situation to be able to perform these various functions.

So, for all these reasons, we're cautious. We don't think it's a silver bullet, but we do think it is, in itself, a useful measure. So I say, National will continue to support the bill as long as we have a good-faith engagement from the Minister, the select committee, and others, who are, like us, committed to the ideal of a fast, fair, and efficient justice system, including, and especially, the Family Court, which has been left for far too long to languish as a very unhelpful institution. We certainly hope that it can be better in that, and we commit ourselves to that purpose.

GINNY ANDERSEN (Labour—Hutt South): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This bill, the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill, is evidence in itself that Labour is committed to improving access to justice. The bill establishes a new role in our courts, and specific to the Family Court in particular, to help free up judge time and reduce delays, enabling judges to focus on the more substantive work and to enable a more fluid flow of material through our Family Court. This is a particular recommendation that was made in *Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau*, which has identified this one particular area.

It's really heartening that National are going to support this bill, because it rebuilds some of the damage that was done by that party when they were in Government. National's Family Court reforms back in 2014 resulted in lengthy delays for children and their families. Those reforms saw a significant increase in the number of without notice

applications. They rose from 30 percent of applications in 2014 to a whopping 70 percent, and this is why the independent panel was appointed to find some solutions to the problems that had amounted. It's important to note that at the sharp end of those delays are children, are families, are families who are trying to grapple with the breakdown of the family unit, and the longer and the more protracted those judicial pathways are, the more damage is done to our children, and that can be lasting emotional damage. So delays in the Family Court can be prevented, and delay in the Family Court in particular. It can really reduce the stress on families, it can reduce parental conflict, and it can also reduce those long-term impacts that we can have on the mental health of children. The Ministry of Justice has noted that they estimate the Family Court Associate role will potentially save up to 25 percent of judicial time, and that's got to be a good thing.

So what does this new role do? The new role will take on some of the Family Court judges' workload, and that will enable judges to progress more substantive matters far more quickly than we've seen before. They'll also take on the work in the early stages of proceedings, and administrative work, and that will be things like appointing a lawyer for child, or a lawyer to assist in the court in various interlocutory matters, and keep those things moving in the early stages. They will also have the power to deal with a range of areas, including directing parties to undertake dispute resolution, non-violence services, presiding over pre-hearing conferences, convening settlement conferences, and also making orders by consent under specified legislation. However, it is important to note that this role is distinct from a Family Court judge and that there are some very important matters that will always remain in the hands of a judge due to their impact on people and also due to the complexity of those issues. Those types of matters include the final decisions around guardianship and also those that materially affect children.

I'd like to wrap up by saying that I'm really proud of the bill, which goes some way to undo damage that has been done in the past, and that it sits really well with the wider work that this Government is doing to reinstate legal representation in the early stages of court, particularly in relation to children and the wellbeing of children, by also, alongside of this, establishing the Kaiārahi Family Court Navigator role to help parents and whānau navigate the family justice system; also increasing lawyer for child remuneration to support the retention of skilled practitioners; and also giving young people and our courts the opportunity to participate in decision making which directly affects them. All these things go towards looking after our families when they enter through what can be a really hard time for a mum, a dad, and the kids. So I commend this bill to the House, and I look forward to receiving the submissions at the Justice Committee.

Hon JUDITH COLLINS (National—Papakura): There's a lot of talk tonight about people helping their kids through things, and whānau and family. The best way of keeping your kid safe is to keep them out of the Family Court and out of having to deal with the fact that their parents and their extended families cannot sort themselves out. It is an incredibly sad thing for people to expect judges to have to sort out all their problems for them and to sort out their relationships. And even worse, when I see—and I have seen, and many of us who have practised know that there are parents who, unfortunately, use their children to attack the other parent. That is an awful thing to see. So it's good to see that we've got this new role here, which is to try and speed up matters in the court, but the best way of speeding it up is to keep them out of court in the first place.

Most people who undergo a relationship break up, particularly involving children, most people do not end up in court, and that is because they have decided to take charge of their own lives, that if they do have lawyers, those lawyers have tried to find them a solution that does not involve getting a judge to sort things out for them and does not involve them telling parents which days they can see children and what times and actually abdicating the responsibility of parents. It's all very well to talk, as I've heard tonight,

people talking about “Oh, these attempts of the Family Court; it’s all so terrible, since 2017.” Actually, it’s always been a problem. That’s why steps have been brought in.

The Family Court was first set up at a time when the District Court used to deal with these issues and it was going to be a fast, cheap service that was available to people when they needed it. It is now an expensive service that is actually utterly reliant on legal aid. Legal aid does not come from the Government; it comes from the taxpayers—the very people that, in these cases, often don’t have very much money because, in many cases, they had a home that is now split; they’re now both homeless or they’re renting or they’re trying to get ahead. And what we see in Family Court matters are people in most cases—not all; most cases—who are absolutely distraught because their relationship has failed, their children are upset, and their children are often under such stress that they may be playing up at school, they may be going through all sorts of other traumas.

I know it’s so old-fashioned, but, really, let’s just put the kids first for a start. Try and keep them out of court. When they are in court, it’s good to get it moving fast, but don’t kid ourselves that these parents are somehow made better by any Family Court system. The Family Court—and I often look at those judges who work in it and my heart goes out to them. I don’t know how they cope with the constant and utter negativity and watching people who once loved each other so much that they had children together now hating each other so much that they don’t even want to be in the same room together.

I’ve had to deal with those situations for other people, as a lawyer. I know some of my colleagues here have as well. It is really distressing, but to send people straight to a court rather than trying to sort it out through mediation is cruel. It’s cruel because there are things said in court, and in affidavits in particular, that can never be taken back. People tend to forget this. They seem to think that somehow a court will make it all better, but they will never take that back. It is really important that we understand that.

It’s good to have, you know, this new role. It hopefully will help. And, obviously, COVID has been very difficult, many people feeling the court system has ground to a halt over the 24 months where we’ve had massive disruption. Those of us who were lawyers and with practising certificates still get the notices about how we’re supposed to try and engage in the court system. Thankfully, I’m otherwise occupied in this system, but it is really hard for people, and rather than looking at how we’re going to fix everything for people, how about we actually just give people a bit of a chance to sort things out? Promote mediation, which has always been a primary role for lawyers to be able to do. It is actually a lawyer’s obligation to first try to sort these matters out and to help people to find a way, rather than charging off to court. Going into Family Court signifies a failure—a failure of a relationship, a failure of the legal profession to be able to keep the matter out of court, and a failure of people, in many cases, to put their families first, their children first. I guess that’s sort of slightly judgmental, but you know what? I think parents have to be able to sometimes stand up and be the adults in the room and say, “Our kids come first.” Children do not ask to be born; they are born, and it’s our obligation to do whatever we can to put them first. I just think sometimes we expect other adults, particularly with a gown on or something else, to be in charge. We’ve got to be in charge of ourselves; sort the matters out. My big plea to families caught up in the Family Court system: try and sort the matter out yourselves. Get lawyers. If you’ve got lawyers who just simply want to take this matter to court, think about: are they the best people for you? Do they want to help you or do they want to help the system? Put the kids first. Keep your kids out of court.

VANUSHI WALTERS (Labour—Upper Harbour): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to take a very brief call in relation to this important bill, and it’s really positive to hear that the Opposition are supporting this bill.

For anyone who's spent a bit of time with children and young people, I think what we know is that they feel time differently. So with court proceedings, where adults might feel that they're long and they're difficult, for children sometimes they're excruciating. What we know is that 16,000 children and young people come in front of the family dispute resolution process in a year, and research has also shown us that when those proceedings are elongated, they're four times as likely to have mental wellbeing issues. So this is a bill that really responds to that. It's a bill, as colleagues have spoken to, that responds to *Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau*.

I am a member of the Justice Committee, so I do look forward to a robust discussion at that stage and I commend this bill to the House.

GOLRIZ GHAHRAMAN (Green): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to begin by congratulating the Minister Kiri Allan Tapu—or the Hon Kiri Allan Tapu—for bringing this bill. Sorry! I've just been corrected. I'm just very excited.

I was in the justice system and, like the speaker from the Labour caucus—Vanushi Walters, who's just resumed her seat—worked on children's rights for much of my legal career. We together were in part involved in putting forward New Zealand's non-governmental report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. I remember when the National Party policies that impacted the Family Court came into effect, and the absolute heartbreak—on behalf of children and young people, on behalf of families who needed access to justice—but also the absolute embarrassment of standing up in front of the United Nations' human rights body and saying that a nation that can well afford rights for our citizens, that is well aware of their rights, is going to cut those ad hoc.

So I want to contrast the merits of this bill, which actually hastens access to justice, extends the right to justice and access to expert carers for our children like lawyer for child, to the speech of the Hon Judith Collins, who was the last speaker from the National Party caucus, who, when she was the Minister of Justice, and I sat on the Criminal Bar Association executive, was taken to court in relation to her legal aid policy, all the way up to the Court of Appeal. That policy was found to be unlawful. It was found to be unlawful because the Minister had gone outside of the mandate of the discretion provided by the legislation, the empowering legislation for legal aid, which said that legal aid policy must be made only to provide high-quality legal services for indigent accused. It was found that that Government's policy on legal aid was made for cost-cutting only. That's not good for the nation, it's not good for access to justice for New Zealanders, and, when it comes to the Family Court, it's deeply harmful to children.

So we're repairing a little bit of that today with this technical bill. I am glad to see that the role of Family Court judges is protected to some extent and that we're not just hastening the process, although access to justice in a timely fashion is incredibly important. I do note that we're providing a broad discretion for Family Court Associates to actually do the work that's needed in the Family Court to ensure that disputes are resolved in a way that that doesn't delay things—because they are delayed; our justice system is so delayed as to be in breach of all sorts of rights to access to justice—but that we are actually preserving rights as well. So we're preserving and remunerating the lawyer for child in a better way. We're preserving the Family Court judges' role in terms of making final decisions on issues that materially impact children and young people. But we're saying, actually, most people that come through the Family Court need a resolution that's fair and just and timely, and that we're not going to cost-cut in an area that's so fundamental to our democracy and to our human rights - based system of justice. So I do commend this bill to the House.

NICOLE McKEE (ACT): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on behalf of the ACT Party to speak to the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill. It looks

like, for the Minister, it's support around the House this evening for what is a necessary bill. But just like our National Party colleagues, we do have a few little concerns. I think that we can sort these out through the select committee process, but I will outline what some of those are today.

As I said, we definitely do need to address the issue that we have in the Family Court and, regardless of who is in Government at the day, this actually goes right back to 2014 and before then. What we are seeing is an average age of Family Court applications sitting in the court process scene for about 175 days. When we have defended Care of Children Act applications averaging 384 days to clear, then we do know we certainly must have a problem. That is 69 percent of those Care of Children Act defended cases that have been sitting for more than 384 days.

So the Ministry of Justice wants to implement a Family Court Associate role, and they have stated that they believe this will clear up 25 percent of judges' administration time, allowing judges to concentrate on their core responsibilities and having the Family Court move faster in their processes.

One of the questions we have is that while this is needed, is that the actual solution that's going to achieve the outcomes that we all need to see, which is a Family Court process that moves faster and for the benefit of both the applicants and the children involved. The question is there because no reviews have been done to determine the causes of the delays. So we're looking at a report from 2014, a panel that was implemented in May 2018 that again referred another report in June 2019—not able, at that time, I'm sure, to fully assess the impact of COVID on our court systems.

So the panel has made these recommendations—that's Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau panel. But we do ask: where's the added and updated advice since the 2014 report and since May 2018, when the panel was put together? Where's the analysis to say that the problems identified will actually be solved by this approach and by when, and what are the key performance indicators so that we can measure how this is working and if it actually is working, and how we can improve it if need be?

But let's get back to our intent, which is to support this bill because it's about improving the outcomes for those that are participating in the Family Court process, particularly for the children. This omnibus bill will allow a Family Court Associate to hold powers additional to that of a court registrar, with some of the functions and powers of a Family Court judge. They'll be making determinations involving quite a large number of Acts, and I think this is quite significant.

I won't go through all of the years, but I'll very briefly let you know that it's the Adoption Act, the Care of Children Act, the Child Support Act, the Family Proceedings Act, the Family Violence Act, the Marriage Act, the Oranga Tamariki Act, the Property (Relationships) Act, the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act, and the Status of Children Act. So, by getting these associates involved across all of these areas, I expect we will see—or I hope that we will see—a significant movement in the number of cases so that we are no longer having some waiting 384 days on average just to be processed.

The intent is that they—"they" being the Family Court Associate—will make many of the administrative decisions, especially those at the beginning of, or the early stages, of proceedings, but not the substantive decisions as the social significance and their impacts on human rights, along with the sheer complexity of decisions, need a more learned appraisal.

So I do wonder, then, why is it within the bill that it states that if there is no High Court judge, District Court judge, or Family Court judge available in an emergency to make decisions, that a Family Court Associate will step in at that stage. So that's probably me just needing to have a bit more information on that one.

This bill's been brought to the House to deal with the delays. However, it appears to be more like a permanent adjustment rather than just dealing with the delays. That may not be a bad thing, but I do wonder around the appointments of the Family Court Associate.

We understand that there'll be four to six lawyers in year one, and a further six to seven lawyers in two years after that. But the regulatory impact statement actually states that the judiciary and the family law section are confident that there are enough Family Court lawyers to fill these roles. They've actually gone on to say that there's 173 active lawyers at the moment with 10 to 15 years' experience. But the ministry itself is not so confident that those people will be wanting or willing to actually step up as a Family Court Associate. So we're looking at a very small number of associates, but 173 lawyers to choose from, whereas the bill itself is actually only seeking to appoint any barrister or solicitor with seven years' experience and a current practising certificate as someone who could be appointed as a Family Court Associate. So my reading of this is, they don't even need to have any Family Court experience, and I think that that's wrong. So I think that's another issue that we will need to delve into once we get to select committee.

Seeing as this is a fixed term—albeit a rather long one, at seven years—why aren't we ensuring that those with the skills are utilised in the Family Court experience? ACT thinks that this is important and here's why: because one of the main aspects about our Family Court is the without notice applications. They're essential to protect our kids. They're essential to make sure that they're a tool that's available for child abuse or neglect in emergency situations. But the without notice applications can also take a very long time to process—as I mentioned earlier, 384 days on average. This is time that you can't make up as a family; it's time that you cannot make up as a parent. The strain is real and it's damaging, especially when one parent is prevented from visitation rights with a child for very long extended periods of time.

Young 25-year-old parent Sam took his own life due to his frustrations with the system, leaving a note that said, "Fix the Family Court." Another father, Jono, has waited three years for his case to be heard. He said he's going to give up on the relationship with his daughter because he simply can't handle the strain anymore. His partner, Lily, explained, "He jumped over barrier after barrier until he can't jump anymore, and people say he walked away. No, he didn't walk away. He was pushed out of her life."

If this is the outcome for the parents going through the Family Court system, what the heck is happening to our kids? Parents and children alike are facing adverse health impacts, suicidal tendencies, and they're broke. So we must put in the criteria that the Family Court experienced by those barristers and solicitors with current practising certificates is a necessity because of the type of situations that we are dealing with in the Family Court, and the emotion that has played out with these family members.

So, in summary, we do support this bill. We think that it's a great idea, and we need to be able to move through the Family Court process faster. But we expect experience needs to be imported before the appointment of the Family Court Associates. We'd like to see how the success is going to be measured so we make sure we're on the right track and can remain on that track in the future. So, in this first instance, we will support and we will work hard with the Justice Committee to make sure that it's fit for purpose and we can continue down this route. Thank you.

Dr EMILY HENDERSON (Labour—Whangārei): Kia ora, Mr Speaker. As a member of the Justice Committee, I am delighted to commend this bill, which is a further step in our plan to increase access to justice, particularly in this sensitive area. The Family Court, it is absolutely of no doubt, has become a very delayed and difficult jurisdiction and, having listened to the Hon Judith Collins earlier, I start to understand why. It is clear

that she considers that it is some sort of simple jurisdiction in which naughty parents need to be told to sort themselves out.

The problem with the Family Court is that, by the time you actually get people coming to court, they are the ones dealing with the most intractable and difficult problems that we have. We are talking mental illness, drug abuse, child abuse, interpersonal violence—these are not quick issues to deal with; they are issues that require expertise. Unfortunately, what the Hon Ms Collins did was to strip out the expert help. She stripped out the counselling; she stripped out the access to Family Court lawyers at those early stages when people most needed it. Now, as my colleague Golriz Ghahraman said, this was done to save money—what an absolute travesty of justice. Justice delayed is justice denied, and nothing is clearer than the Family Court as an example of that.

Therefore, this is absolutely sensible. It is no band-aid; it is an important step that we not only roll back the ridiculous things that were done to our court but we now bring in this additional expertise with senior Family Court lawyers who will be able to take some of that administrative burden off our hard-working judges. It is a new role, but there are highly successful precedents in the High Court associate justice role, which is in itself a specialism, or even in the recorder role in the UK, which is, essentially, a judicial apprenticeship. Now, whether our Family Court Associates become an apprenticeship or a specialism in themselves, or perhaps both, is yet to be seen. I commend this bill to the House. I look forward to working on it with my colleagues.

JOSEPH MOONEY (National—Southland): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to speak on the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill. I'm happy to commend this bill to the House as one that National supports. This came out of the independent panel that examined the 2014 reforms of the Family Court in their report *Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau* and recommended the Family Court Associate role, which is a judicial officer role but not for the purposes of section 12B of the Remuneration Authority Act 1977.

As judicial officers, Family Court Associates will be independent of the executive and will have powers additional to those of the registrar. They'll be able to take on some work currently undertaken by judges, including decisions made at early stages of proceedings, and this will enable judges to focus on progressing case work. Substantive decisions in proceedings, however, will continue to be made by judges because of the social significance of those decisions, the impact those decisions have on human rights, and the complexity of the decisions.

This is trying to solve a complex issue. As the speaker just immediately before me said very correctly, justice delayed is justice denied, and that is a real systemic problem in our court system. Certainly, as someone who practised for many years in our court system, one problem I have seen personally, time and time again, is people who are waiting to have their matters heard in court. A lot of the problems come through the uncertainty that is generated by waiting for their court case to be heard, because there's no clarity about what the final position is going to be. People's lives are, effectively, put on hold. And, as another Speaker before me said, time is different for children. So these matters that come before the Family Court, unfortunately, often involve children, and, unfortunately, often—quite accurately, as the Hon Judith Collins said—it's parents who are not putting their children first. That's something I have personally seen in our courts. In fact, we do see some quite inane things like parents fighting over calendars—so determining when the kids can be where, on what date, and on what time. So these are things that take up a lot of the judges' time, and, unfortunately, it isn't good for our kids. But we do need to find solutions for these intractable problems that people who have come to the court system can't, for whatever reason, sort out with each other. So this comes to the Family Court.

This will not solve everything, I have to say, though, as there are a lot of other issues. Pre-COVID, we had some significant delays in our courts; COVID has just exacerbated those, and people are waiting a lot longer now for cases to be heard, which have been delayed, in some cases, to a point where one wonders whether “justice delayed; justice denied” really even has validity anymore, because people are waiting for so long. This is, however, a good step to address that issue and to try to reduce that delay and enable, in particular, children who are caught up in the Family Court system to have their matters heard, hopefully, faster. That is a good thing.

I note that point around the Family Court Associate. The pre-requisites are that they have held a New Zealand practising certificate as a barrister and solicitor for at least seven years, which is similar to what is required for someone to be considered for a judicial role, who also must have practised for at least seven years. I note it says that by reason of their training, experience, and personality the person is suitable to hold the office of the Family Court Associate. It will be interesting to see whether anything comes back from the select committee just going into a little bit more depth about what that means. This bill will say that they can be appointed for a term of up to seven years and may be reappointed for further terms. So there is some correlation between the time this person has practised as a barrister and solicitor and the time that someone who would be considered for a judicial role would have had to have practised as well. That is a good thing, because this is a court system that has a huge impact on families and, in particular, on children.

I have practised, as I said, for years in our court system. I have seen the impact of delays on people, on families, and on children. This bill, as I said, will not solve everything. In particular, it won't solve the issue of people who need to apply for legal aid to get a Family Court lawyer. It's incredibly hard in my region for anyone to find someone to do that role, and I know that's an issue right around the country. But this is a good step in the right direction, and I am happy to commend this bill to the House.

Dr DUNCAN WEBB (Labour—Christchurch Central): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. I'm very happy to stand briefly, just to commend the bill to the House, in light of the fact that the Māori Party don't have anything to say about this bill, which comes at a bit of a surprise to me. This is a bill which is, simply, designed to improve access to justice, to speed up resolution of matters in the Family Court and particularly those pertaining to children. An absolutely important bill. Great to see the support around the House. I commend it to the House.

ARENA WILLIAMS (Labour—Manurewa): Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker. It's a pleasure to make a short contribution to the House. May I start by thanking the Minister Kiri Allan for prioritising this piece of work, which will address some particular problems which we're seeing in our Family Court system. We know—and have agreed around this House tonight—that delays in the Family Court are prevalent, and that the high workload of judges is contributing to that. It's always good, you always hear from me in these opportunities, where there is cross-partisan agreement on these issues and they are forward-looking issues; they're about our access to justice and about the way we promote people using our justice system efficiently and getting our value for money out of that.

It is an important service that people are able to access something, that when they come to the end of the road about what they can agree in their family, that they're able to turn somewhere for help. That's why I look forward to canvassing these issues in the select committee. I hope that the court lawyers of the National Party are able to join us. It's always good to hear from some of those members, like Joseph Mooney before me, and like Chris Penk. I look forward to having these discussions later on.

HARETE HIPANGO (National): Kia ora. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I jumped the gun a bit, but I'm very eager to stand and take a call on this for the National Party on the

Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill. I commend the Minister the Hon Kiritapu Allan for leading the way and shining the light on this. Members in the House will be aware that there's a number of us who've practised in this area. This was a specialist area of legal practice that I devoted most of my legal career to, serving the Family Court and those persons who came before the Family Court, and with a particular interest in advocating for our children.

So what's being addressed in the House tonight is that our children are central to most of the proceedings that come before the Family Court. What is often overlooked is the impact on our children, in the lack of timeliness with these proceedings being concluded. It's been mentioned in the House this evening, and it's also part of the regulatory impact statement, the average age for all Family Court application types—that's excluding dissolutions of relationships, i.e., divorce, as once upon a time it was known as—is currently 175 days. However, for defended Care of Children Act substantive applications, which makes up 69 percent of all active Care of Children Act applications before the court, the average case takes 384 days to resolve in the Family Court. That's the average case. I've known cases that have taken more than five years. That is totally unacceptable. That unacceptability is because of the delays that occur, associated with multi-tier, multi-layered complexities, and, as I say, unacceptabilities—part of that is dragging the system out. It's about keeping a check on that.

It's been identified in the review that was undertaken by the working panel, having released their report in May 2019, *Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau: The final report of the Independent Panel examining the 2014 family justice reforms*, identifying a range of issues. So this is just addressing, with the appointment of Family Court Associates, the tip of the iceberg really. There were 69 recommendations that came out of that panel report about law, policy, and practices that currently govern care of children matters, and it's actually not good governance—some of the practices that have been happening. So it's been identified that this may be one way to alleviate the burden, the pressures of lack of timeliness, but also the burden of judges' workloads. I'd invite this Government to turn their mind to considering appointment of additional Family Court judges because the appointment of Family Court Associates is just addressing administrative burdens or overloads. This is a multi-tiered, multi-complex issue that needs to be addressed.

I've raised in the House before, a number of years ago, when there have been other bills coming before the House on Family Court matters, that in the criminal jurisdiction, which I also practised in, we had duty solicitors who were appointed at the early stages, and then, after that, that was to help navigate. So there's been mention of Kaiārahi being appointed, Family Court Navigators. That's actually similar to what's happened in the previous district health boards with people who know the system well helping to navigate through it for those who don't know it so well.

So I've previously also raised, in the jurisdictions, we have the duty solicitors that are there at a point of entry to enable the people who are seeking to access justice—whatever that means. "Justice delayed is justice denied" is a term that I've used frequently in this House. Duty solicitors in the Criminal Court jurisdiction and, in part, Family Court Associates, sort of help alleviate the pressures of administrative overloading with our judges. It doesn't actually address those people who are coming into the Family Court system, who are trying to navigate how to access a Family Court lawyer through legal aid, many of whom who haven't been eligible for legal aid. So I invite the Government again to consider and contemplate the benefit of a duty lawyer within the Family Court.

There was a time when I would go from Criminal Court jurisdiction, as a duty lawyer, to Family Court jurisdiction, representing my clients, seeing persons who needed—because they were self-representing, they weren't eligible for legal aid, they didn't have lawyers for whatever reason, because they didn't like their lawyers sometimes, so we'd

kick them for touch. But it was about having a lawyer there to help navigate with those initial proceedings before the court.

It's been identified also that the Family Court Associates, and it's of a 27-page piece of drafted legislation, a bill, of 95 clauses long with a new schedule to be introduced into one of the many Acts this is going to be addressing, known as an omnibus bill—that this going to take a bit of time. The Minister has indicated in the House the preference of a four-month engagement with the public. I commend that because it is sufficient time for engagement. The reason that I commend that is that this has to focus on child-centric issues and the impact on our children for these Family Courts and the Family Court proceedings.

So it was mentioned in the House this evening, concern about the suitability of who may be appointed into this role. New section 7A under the bill specifically identifies that the person may be appointed as a Family Court Associate if that person has, for at least seven years, held a New Zealand practising certificate as a barrister, or barrister and solicitor; and is, by reason of their training, experience, and personality a suitable person to hold the office. So that draws on the fact of suitability based on experience, notably within the Family Court, notably working with clients in distress, notably, and, more importantly, with clients that are children. So I don't sit on the Justice Committee, I've just spoken with the chief whip and I asked if I might be permitted to come and join in on these conversations, partly because of the experience that I have of some 27 years as a Family Court lawyer working in this space.

What is also identified coming out of the review panel's works is the multi-tier layer of this. So I've touched on the fact that there needs to be more Family Court judges. I've had conversations with very senior, experienced Family Court judges who are coming to the end of their tenure. With them about to come to the end of it, they take significant intellectual knowledge capacity and experience. With the introduction of new judges coming in, we need to calibrate that more, so we don't have a high end disperse, dispersal, departure of our very senior, experienced judges, but more on a continuum, being appointed on a regular basis. I recall addressing this House on the Coroner's Amendment Bill just last year, that's when I used the line "Justice delayed is justice denied" repeatedly, because of the tardiness of the Government in appointing additional coroners. At the time, there wasn't the full complement that was permissible under the law for coroners to be appointed. It was only a sub-appointment, or partial appointment, so it was incomplete in that.

So I'm emphasising the importance that, with the Family Court Associates coming in, being appointed, it's only going to alleviate part of the issue. The other issue of complexity, of course, is that our facilities are not adequately set up. We have Family Courts—there's minimal when we have Youth Court hearings that are happening, having to go between whatever space is available. So the physical configurations of our courts are not suitable. So I'm going to zoom in now to the use of technology that this country was exposed to when we were masked up with COVID. But we were also exposed to the use of technology because it was a matter of necessity. This may well be a matter of necessity, where proceedings can be—and it has through our audiovisual links—for bail applications with inmates who are detained out at the prisons, once upon a time, sometimes still occurring, put into the police wagon, transported in at quite considerable cost of time, of expense, of everything else, and that was not efficient utilisation of practice, time, and facilities. So we have technology. So it's about how we move into that space more efficiently, more effectively.

So the bill itself, in terms of Family Court Associate appointments, is just dealing with one aspect of that. So there are 69 recommendations. I commend the Minister for advancing this through the House. It has the support across the House. I look forward to

contributions, if I'm permitted to sit in there at select committee, because it's about keeping the lens and the focus on those most affected, and I always come and speak on a Family Court issue or matters that are affecting our children—oversight of Oranga Tamariki. Our children often get overlooked. There's an oversight in a lack of how central they are and pivotal. We must make and adapt our proceedings around them. I commend this bill to the House.

GLEN BENNETT (Labour—New Plymouth): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. This bill is based on the recommendations made in the 2019 report *Te Korowai Ture ā-Whānau*. Now, translated, that's very much around forming a korowai around a whānau, around protecting, around supporting, around empowering children, their parents, and their whānau as they work through parenting and guardianship issues. This piece of legislation goes some way to that and, therefore, I commend this bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is, *That the Family Court (Family Court Associates) Legislation Bill be considered by the Justice Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Justice Committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL LEGISLATION BILL

First Reading

Hon KIERAN McANULTY (Associate Minister of Local Government) (remote) on behalf of the **Minister of Local Government:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I present a legislative statement on the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: That legislative statement is published under the authority of the House and can be found on the Parliament website.

Hon KIERAN McANULTY: I move, *That the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill be now read a first time.* I nominate the Governance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

I'm pleased to bring the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill to the House. This is an omnibus bill that amends several Acts to improve the way that individuals and communities are represented by and can participate in local government elections. To do this, the bill completes the Government's work to fix the Māori ward laws, provides more flexibility for different representation arrangements at Auckland Council, and updates the recount rules for local elections. The bill also clarifies that candidates' nomination documents can be submitted electronically.

The bill concludes 18 months of work to improve the ways that councils can make decisions about how their communities are represented. This work began in February last year, when the Government removed the poll provisions that had long disenfranchised and disadvantaged Māori. I'm happy to say that there will be 35 councils with dedicated Māori electoral representation at the next local elections.

Last year, the Minister of Local Government promised there would be an enduring mechanism for councils to consider Māori electoral representation without poll demands. This bill fulfils that promise. We consulted with the public and heard that the gaps between the Māori ward process and the general ward process needs to be closed. Councils already consider how their communities are represented every six years in a process called a representation review. In this review, they decide which communities should receive distinct representation through a system of wards. A common example is

a rural ward to ensure rural residents are adequately represented in council decisions. It is sensible that councils should also consider Māori wards as part of the same representation review process.

The bill moves councils' decisions regarding specific Māori representation inside the representation review and makes them the first step of that process. There will be a new requirement for councils to engage with their communities—including Māori—when they make these decisions. It isn't a requirement that every council have Māori wards—it's not a model that will work for every community—but it is important to ask the question of what value specific Māori representation can add to local governance, and it is important to make these decisions early on, instead of waiting until just before the elections, so everybody knows what to expect. That's the new first step of this new process.

The second step is to make detailed decisions about the implementation of Māori wards and general wards at the same time—for example, how many councillor positions and where the ward boundaries will go. The Local Government Commission will continue to oversee these decisions.

The bill adjusts the timing of the representation review so that councils have more time for community engagement and decision making. These changes will achieve a fairer representation review process that works for everyone.

The bill also provides Auckland Council with more flexibility to determine its representation arrangements. Auckland Council is unique. Every other territorial authority can determine its own membership of between five and 29 councillors, plus the mayor. Auckland Council has a fixed membership of 20 councillors and the mayor. The fixed membership requirements limit Auckland Council's ability to grow or change its representation arrangement as its communities grow and change, so the Government is removing the 20-councillor cap and enabling Auckland Council to determine its membership like any other council.

Auckland Council also has 21 local boards. The local board boundaries were set 12 years ago and they are cumbersome to change, so we are providing two alternative, streamlined processes—both overseen by the Local Government Commission—that will help Auckland Council to review its local board boundaries in the future. These changes will support Auckland Council to adapt its representation arrangements to keep up with population changes over time.

The bill also addresses the issue of tied results in local elections. Tied results are rare, but when they do occur, they introduce a lot of uncertainty and disruption. At both parliamentary and local elections, ties are currently resolved with the toss of a coin. There has never been a tie in the final results of an election to this House, but, in 2019, there were ties at two different council elections. One was in Whakatāne. There was a tie in the final results. Following the law at the time, a coin was tossed and a winner was decided on the basis of that coin toss. The other candidate asked for a judicial recount, which was her right, and the recount found that she was the winner of the election. By this time, the original winner had already been sworn in and had started her work, but she had to leave the job.

This bill proposes three changes to make these processes run more smoothly and make these events less confusing, and to restore the mana and kaitiakitanga where these are lost. First, the bill proposes an automatic judicial recount for tied election results. This already happens in parliamentary elections, where a coin toss will only occur if the judicial recount upholds the tie.

Second, the bill provides candidates with an off-ramp from a deadlocked tie. Affected candidates who are tied after a judicial recount may decide to withdraw from the election

rather than have their fate be decided by a coin. It is an option that some candidates may prefer.

Finally, the bill requires councils to wait to have their first meeting until any recounts are complete. The exception is for urgent business that can be conducted without the involvement of any candidates affected by a recount. These changes provide a sensible structure to the recounts process.

Our system of local government is in a state of change. Much of this is long overdue, and there is likely to be more change after the Review into the Future for Local Government makes its final report next year, but there will always be local democracy, and our democratic systems must always be fit for purpose. Department of Internal Affairs officials have engaged Local Government New Zealand, Taituarā, Auckland Council officials, Local Government Commission officials, and council chief executives on the workability of this bill. I'd like to thank these organisations for their assistance to make sure the proposals in the bill will work well.

Of course, this is local election year, and so I want to take the opportunity to remind everybody listening at home to check their enrolment is up to date at www.vote.nz/enrol so that their local election voting papers will be posted to the correct address.

This bill will have a full six-month select committee process. So while the changes in this bill won't be ready for this year's election, they will come into force early next year so that councils can use the new representation review process ahead of the local elections in 2025. I commend this bill to the House.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to.

SIMON WATTS (National—North Shore): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on behalf of the National Party and as the member of Parliament for North Shore and as the party spokesperson on local government, in relation to the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill first reading. Listening to the Associate Minister provide an overview of the bill, of which it was very positive and very rising, I must say, the reality is, when I visited a large number of councils across this country, not one of them has raised the need or the requirement for legislation in this bill.

Hon Mark Mitchell: Not one.

SIMON WATTS: It's quite ironic—not one—when the Prime Minister quoted, it was not even a week ago, that “It will not be the policy of any government I lead to embark on ... substantial reform of local government or governance unless it is sought [or] unless there is broad[-based] consensus amongst local government ... [that there is a] need for [or for] the direction of [that] change.” Yet, once again, we have a Government that is trying to push through central government remit and rules and regulations on to local government—in effect, mandating to local government the consideration around the need for Māori wards. That is completely unnecessary legislation. It will be no surprise, probably, from my brief introduction, that National will be opposing this bill and will be opposing it throughout this process.

I want to explain to you the reasons and the rationale for this. But what this is, is that the Minister, in the context of what are some elements of technical change within this bill, has used the opportunity to slip in this change around making it mandatory for councils every six years to put consideration around the need for Māori wards. There is absolutely already legislation in place around that. Let's be clear: the National Party do not oppose the concept of Māori wards when they comply with the principles around democracy and when they are wanted by our communities. This is a democracy, and people within our community democratically elect people to represent them at a local community level; they do not, as part of our democracy, need central government remit in order to ram through and force upon them this type of arrangement. That is a significant concern for us and that's one of the key reasons why we will be opposing this bill.

I think the other aspect around this is that, in regards to the original bill that was set up, of which this is, obviously, a continuation on, National were very clear in terms of the opposition around that because of the fact of the way it was pushed through under urgency. The Associate Minister is correct that these changes will not have any effect in regards to the 2022 local government elections. But as I said right from the outset, not one council—not one council—that I’ve spoken to has said, in terms of all of the issues and challenges and priorities in front of them today, that this is the legislation they need; actually, quite the opposite.

Local Government New Zealand, within only the last three to four weeks, has articulated one of the single biggest issues for local government in this country is a significant degree of reform and change that is being pushed upon them by this Government right here—reform and change in many areas which is unnecessary, ideological reform, and local governments are struggling under the weight of a large degree of unnecessary reform; very, very poor reform. I won’t get into the detail in regards to three waters, but that will just give you a sort of sampler of an example. But this, on top of it, continues to reinforce the fact that central government knows best—the ideology around the fact that, actually, we can’t rely on or trust our local democratically elected individuals that represent us at local government to make decisions about their local communities. No, central government needs to mandate, “They must undertake these tasks”. Well, what other tasks does this Government—and I’d hate to think, because they’ve probably got a long list of items in terms of what’s coming down the pipe next—need to force upon local government to make sure that they are considering. It is completely unnecessary and it goes to the heart of a Government that does not trust the people that are democratically elected to take responsibility for their communities.

The other aspects of this bill which were referred to were in regards to the change of the number of councillors at Auckland Council. Well, I don’t know, but I come from the private sector. Having 20 people around the table is actually quite a hell of a lot of people to try and, you know, make a decision for an entity that, while large in terms of complexity, is not large and significant in the regards of other business operations. To try and get a degree of consensus from 20, in fairness, is challenging. But the fact that they believe that we need potentially another nine councillors to be sitting around that table to have a bit of “Kumbaya”, well, I’m sorry, but I don’t buy that for a second. I don’t buy it either because, as a ratepayer, who pays the bill for that bureaucracy, right? That additional element around that.

No one in Auckland Council has come up to me—and I’m looking across the House; there are a few other members from Auckland in this House. My colleague here the Hon Mark Mitchell—how many times have you been asked that, actually, “You know what, Mark? The number one issue that I face in my electorate is we need some more councillors”? No, I didn’t think so. I didn’t think so—no. Actually, I generally hear that, “You know what?”—and my mum used to say this—“Simon, it’s quality; not quantity”. You know, let’s talk about quality, not quantity. We don’t need more. We need to make sure that the ones that are in there have the right support, capability, and competence, and the right framework in which they operate—the right measurement and accountability frameworks—the right incentives and the right consequences to ensure they are delivering outcomes. We don’t need nine more people just to make up more representation. So I don’t buy that for a second, from the Minister, that this is something that everyone’s been calling out for, because they’re not.

I think, in regards to the boundary lines and that, I always start worrying when central government wants to start getting involved with changing of electoral boundaries—particularly this Government, you know; they love doing a bit of that and it’s generally for their own purposes. So we don’t buy that. Again, not an issue that’s been raised by

any of the local government people that I've spoken to, and I've spoken to more than the Associate Minister has in his short amount of time that he's been in his seat. But the reality is this is not a priority. Again, this is a Government trying to pump through centralised ideology in terms of this reform.

I guess, the element that we probably can agree on is in regards to the recount process. But looking at the times—you know, this has happened three times since 2019, so, again, not the biggest fish to fry in regards to change. That element of technicality is small. But, again, in the context of this bill, that's probably the only aspect that we think has any merit, and on that basis really is inconsequential in terms of the scale of this bill. So we're going to, obviously, look and continue to see what feedback comes through the select committee, because this Government's going to ram through this legislation. No matter what I say or what the Opposition say tonight, they don't listen. This is a Government that continues to prove to Kiwis that they know best. They aren't listening to what Kiwis are saying and you can see that through other elements of consultation or feedback that's asked for. They're saying, "We're going to listen, but we're not going to change". That is just the way things are at the moment, and that degree of arrogance that's coming through from this Government is reinforced again through what are relatively minor bills such as this. So we'll see where this goes. I can be pretty sure where it will go. It'll get rammed through. It'll be more red tape and complexity.

In regards to the consideration around those Māori wards, I think it really continues to go at the heart of central government, and this Government in particular, not trusting the people in order to manage and control their own local communities. For that reason, we strongly oppose this bill.

RACHEL BOYACK (Labour—Nelson): Look, I'd really like the previous speaker, Simon Watts, to actually read the bill, because if you read the bill, you'll notice that it doesn't require any local government territorial authority to implement a Māori ward. All it says is that they need to consider it.

Our local government authorities already undertake a representation review every six years. I might just talk to the Nelson example recently, where they undertook their representation review and they moved from an at-large system to a ward system. So we've moved from having 12 councillors elected at large, to wards. So we've got two wards in place, and then the Māori ward, and then three councillors who will be elected at large, and we've moved to an STV system. And, actually, this change is actually something that our local council really wanted. Thirty five councils—

Simon Watts: Well who'd you ask? Tell me the names. Who?

RACHEL BOYACK: Well, I've just been chatting to the mayor, so off you go.

Simon Watts: Oh, you've been chatting to them!

RACHEL BOYACK: You obviously haven't talked to her as recently as I have. One of the things that we found out is 35 councils have moved to having a Māori ward. They have chosen to do that. That's around half of our councils. All that bill actually says—if you read the bill—is that you need to consider a Māori ward, alongside all the other considerations. "Consider" is the word; not force, not ramming through. So just read the bill before you wax lyrical.

So the other the other thing is, I would encourage that member to go to places like Gisborne, go to places like Wairoa, go to some of the places that have implemented a Māori ward and give them that speech and hear what they say to you. I understand from the Minister that this is a matter that has been raised with him on his many travels around the motu. You can't just chat to somebody at a conference and think you've spoken to the council. Our Minister is going around and having proper, robust, consultative meetings with these councils, and this is one of the matters that has been raised with him.

It's an excellent bill. It makes three very small changes. One is around ensuring that councils have to consider to have a Māori ward. One is around ensuring that Auckland has adequate numbers of councillors to govern that city properly. It's not just a business, Mr Watts. Auckland Council is probably the largest organisation that we actually have in the country in terms of its turnover, and it doesn't have the ability to add councillors to ensure it's governed properly and represents its communities. And then the other matter, of course, is when people do end up having unjust decisions, when there's a tie. It's a minor, minor issue, but it has been an issue in a couple of cases, and it's good for the Governance and Administration Committee to look at it. So I sit on that select committee, and I'm really looking forward to hearing from councils—really looking forward to hearing from councils.

Simon Watts: Come on, come on, come on—keep going! Come on!

RACHEL BOYACK: Oh, mate, we'll have many chats at select committee, I'm sure we will. But what I encourage you to do, Mr Watts, is read the bill. There's no forcing here; it is only around ensuring that these councils consider putting in place a Māori ward. And I'm delighted that around half of our councils have done so—have chosen to do so. That the elected members on those councils have chosen to implement those wards. And on that note, Mr Watts and House: I commend this bill to the House.

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH (National): Well, thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill. If we believed what the member on the other side—Rachel Boyack—said, that there's really nothing to see here in this bill; it's nothing to worry about; it's just offering a few suggestions; nothing to worry about; nothing to see here, then maybe we might be sucked in to voting for it. But we aren't, because we see that it's part of an agenda that is, unfortunately, becoming increasingly divisive in this country, in the way that the Government is running New Zealand over the last four years. That is of deep concern to us—the divisive nature of the way the Government continues to operate.

And so if we look at it in relation to local government and Māori wards, what we've seen is—first, for a long time in our history, local governments have had the ability to bring in Māori wards in their district, but they've had to ask the people whether or not they agree with having a Māori ward by a referendum. That was always the pattern. And, generally, over time, when people were asked, they didn't want one. Most of the referendums lost—my guess is because the majority of people were wary about dividing the population along ethnic lines and extending that into a new area of Government—i.e., local government.

So what happened was that in the last election, there was no mention of this—the Government never talked about changing all this. They concealed their goals in this matter. But, when re-elected, they suddenly rammed through legislation under urgency in this House, changing the rules so that no longer did councils have to ask the population. I mean, who would want to ask the population? Who would care what the population thinks? And so they did away with the requirements for a referendum and it was just up for the council to decide if they wanted to create these new wards. Lo and behold, all of a sudden, it was easy to do, because it's very easy if you don't ask anybody whether you like something or not. You just do it. And we've seen a large number of councils introduce these wards.

The primary thing that this legislation does is it finalises those provisions made under urgency to make that change, and it was a change that we opposed, that we don't agree with. We believe, in the National Party, on this side of the House, that New Zealanders can be trusted to make decisions about how the democracy works in this country. We're not of the view that Willie Jackson is, that democracy has changed. I don't recall going to a constitutional convention where we decided that we were changing the nature of our

constitution or our democracy. I don't recall a referendum of anybody asked. I don't recall ever hearing Jacinda Ardern standing up and saying, "Oh, by the way, vote for me and I'm going to change the way democracy works in this country. I'm going to change our democracy." I don't recall her ever saying that, because she never did. But Willie Jackson now thinks that's the case, and the Government keeps pushing through changes to the way in which we make elections.

But this bill—so not only does it entrench the idea that we shouldn't ask the population in a referendum about whether we want to introduce Māori wards into a particular council; that the council alone can decide. Now, the next step, which is also being introduced in this bill, is, every six years, our councils must reopen the issue and reconsider it and put it as the first item of agenda to be considered or not and must engage with the community. I must say, you do have to admire thechutzpah of this Government, where they bring in a piece of legislation saying, "It is important, you know, that the councils must engage in consultation with the community and Māori community about this issue." Tomorrow, we're going to be giving the third reading and passing—well, this Government is going to be passing a bill, the Canterbury Regional Council (Ngāi Tahu Representation) Bill, where nobody asked the population and, in fact, the Canterbury Regional Council made a deliberate decision not to consult the people in relation—

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member can—

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH: It is entirely relevant, Mr Speaker, to this bill, which I'm about to say.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yeah, I'll decide that, OK? You can mention that upcoming bill in passing, but you cannot debate it. You debate this bill. So it better be relevant.

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, indeed. The point I was making was that with this bill and in this introduction, the Government is saying that they're requiring councils to consult with their community about these issues, and I'm pointing out the rank hypocrisy of that, given the way that the Government has operated and continues to operate in the very same sector. This is exemplified—and nobody's looking; they're all sort of looking down because it's a little bit hard to follow the logic that their own Government is following here. They want councils to consult when they are on the issue of Māori wards, but when they are forced through by legislation—are changed to the very foundation of our understanding around equal voting rights and how the system works in Canterbury—they do it because the Canterbury Regional Council asked for it. But, lo and behold, the Canterbury Regional Council made a deliberate decision not to ask the community. So the only point I'm making, and I won't labour the point any further, is that it is rank hypocrisy.

Then we hear, if I go further on the issue of rank hypocrisy—we heard from the Prime Minister, only a week or so ago, saying with great sanctimony at the local government—

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I'm going to caution the member: linking that term and another member—in this case, the Prime Minister—would be completely out of order. So be very careful.

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH: Well, just speaking to that point of order, sir, sorry—

DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. I have just made a ruling. I've just made a ruling, and I'm on my feet. You don't question it. It would be the end of your speech if you did.

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH: Well, there we go. So, OK, I will never refer to anybody as a hypocrite again in this House. The Prime Minister said, "It will not be the policy of any Government I lead to embark on another substantial reform of local government or governance unless it is sought and unless there is broad consensus amongst local government about the need for and the direction of the change." Well, again, it's an interesting comment: "unless there is broad consensus amongst local government". Can anybody suggest a group that wasn't included when she said "unless it is sought for and

unless there is broad consensus amongst local government”? Is there another group, maybe the public—whether they might have any interest or broad consensus in it, whether that might be a relevant consideration? No, but she did say that she wouldn’t be introducing things without broad support and consensus. And again I make the point—and I hesitate to make the point—but the reality is that tomorrow a bill in this exact same area of local government governance is being passed, with no evidence whatsoever of any broad consensus around that issue.

So we’re left here with a situation that—what are we trying to achieve with all this? We’re trying to deal with the question in relation to the way that local government and our democracy in this country operates. And we on this side of the House have an expectation that New Zealanders will be consulted about, and have an opinion about, and a chance to have their say about when we change the fundamental rules of how democracy works in this country. That’s always been the approach in New Zealand. If you want to change the rules, if you want to introduce a Māori ward, you have a referendum, you put it in. If you want to take them away, you have a referendum, and so forth. This Government has changed those rules, and Willie Jackson has just announced that democracy has changed. But nobody else seems to be prepared to defend it or explain it in any other way, other than just agree with it, lump it, and move on. And that is no effective way to run a country.

The problem with it is that it leads to a sense of resentment and it also leads to a sense of divisiveness in this country. And it is my view that this Government will go down in history as one of the most divisive Governments in recent history, because they keep on dividing New Zealanders between one group and another group—one group and another—whether it’s landlords and house owners, whether it’s farmers and city folks, and, in this case, people on the Māori roll and those not. And that’s not any—

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member’s time has expired.

NAISI CHEN (Labour): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise proudly in this House to speak on the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill. My good colleague Rachel Boyack has just canvassed all of the reasons why we give the local councils freedom to choose whether they will establish a Māori ward or not. But I just want to use the remaining part of my contribution to talk about the Auckland aspect of this bill.

Auckland is a fast growing city. It currently holds over one-third of our population, just over 1.72 million. But, also, it is projected to grow in the next 10 years, to 2033—yeah, in the next 11 years. So by 2048 it could make up 37 percent of the population; it’s now currently 34 percent. So we know we’ve got rapid growth of population on the horizon for Auckland City. Therefore, we need to give the city its own right through its own process of representation to make sure that they have adequate representation on their council. So I commend this bill to the House.

Hon EUGENIE SAGE (Green): Kia orana, Mr Speaker; thank you. I’m pleased to talk a call on the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill, and can I congratulate all the candidates for city and district councils, regional councils, unitary councils, community boards, and local boards around the country. They’ve all increased their social media activity, they’re out putting up billboards, knocking on doors, calling, and engaging with their communities, because they want to serve their communities, and I do encourage them to all get their nominations in by 12 August, 12 noon.

I think the National Party, and particularly Mr Watts and Mr Goldsmith, are over-egging it in terms of the scale of the changes that they think are in this bill. It is not trying to change the fundamental rules around local government; it is trying to improve the way local government operates and improve some processes, such as the nomination process, by allowing candidates to put in their nomination forms electronically so they don’t get

prevented from being candidates by being delayed in traffic, as I know has happened to at least one candidate.

So the National Party's also quite cynical, I think, about local government. We had Mr Watts talking about councillors on Auckland Council sitting around the table singing "Kumbaya". That is totally disrespectful of the enormous work that councillors at Auckland do, and the scale of their responsibilities. So this is, again, an example with the National Party's comments—it suits them to have electoral systems that don't encourage effective representation.

The reforms that the Labour Government has led, particularly the reforms in the previous legislation around putting the establishment of Māori wards on an equal footing with general wards so that you didn't have to require a referendum to establish a Māori ward—you don't for a general ward; why should you for a Māori ward? That was an improvement in local democracy. So it's absolutely ridiculous for the National speakers to claim that this is about a lack of trust by central government in local government, when it increases the flexibility for councils to determine the number of councillors, in the case of Auckland Council; their local board boundaries, in the case of Auckland Council; and when it improves electoral processes. It is nonsense for a result where two candidates tie to be determined by a coin toss. So this bill ensures that there is automatically a judicial recount in those circumstances, rather than it just being determined on something as opportunistic as a coin toss.

This bill is ensuring that there are these technical changes, and it's about better implementing the purpose of the Local Electoral Act, which is to provide for fair representation of electors and effective representation of communities. And local authorities do this by reviewing their representation arrangements at least once every six years, and what the bill is doing is ensuring that, in that review of representation arrangement, councils have to consider the issue of Māori representation and whether to create Māori wards. In Auckland, the changes in the bill will improve representation, because the current law is far too rigid; it restricts Auckland Council to 20 councillors plus the mayor. That doesn't provide for effective representation of communities in such a fast-growing city, where we've got those 20 councillors representing 13 wards, and that limit on 20 councillors also obstructs Auckland Council's ability to create Māori wards and improve Māori representation. So the bill simply provides Auckland Council with the ability to determine whether it wants to have between five and 29 councillors, and I'll be interested in submissions on the bill as to whether there should be that 29 cap.

As members know, the Local Electoral Act has the 10 percent plus or minus rule to ensure that a vote in one constituency is similar to a vote of another. But the Local Electoral Act also provides for breaches of that rule to ensure effective representation, and the regulatory impact statement notes that this can happen in relation to local board boundaries, where, at the moment, there is a complete misalignment in Auckland between the ward boundaries and the board boundaries, and Auckland Council has signalled that it wants to be able to adjust the board boundaries, to get that alignment back again. The bill allows that to happen.

I am interested that the regulatory impact statement also says that the Remuneration Authority has advised that it—the authority—is unlikely to increase the size of the governance pool funded by council to account for the salaries of any additional councillors. The salaries in local government are not high. The responsibilities of councillors are significant and, if we want to attract capable people, if we want to ensure that there's less risk of corruption, we need to ensure that there are adequate salaries for local councillors and board members. So this restriction on increasing the pool if the number of councillors increases, I think, is unfortunate.

The bill also provides for—I think I have covered all of the major points, but it is not the massive sweeping change that the National Party is claiming it is. It is simply some technical amendments in an omnibus bill which improves the representation processes and makes quite sensible changes in the nature of a judicial recount and the processes that apply there. The Green Party is pleased to support it.

SIMON COURT (ACT): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The ACT Party will be opposing this bill. The ACT Party represents that group of New Zealanders who believe in liberal democracy: one person, equal before the law, having one vote, and no taxation without equal representation.

Look, the purpose of this bill appears to continue the agenda that was kept hidden from the New Zealand public at the last election to promote a co-governance agenda, a divisive agenda allocating rights to different groups in New Zealand by virtue of their ethnicity, with vague references to Treaty principles—Treaty principles which are not written down anywhere in this bill. They exist in the ether. They exist as something to be drawn down on whenever it's convenient to the Government or to those who espouse their philosophy of ethno-nationalism, which is what they stand for. This bill, the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill, is yet another example of how this Government, rather than fixing the real problems that New Zealanders hope Governments will fix, like making sure there's enough hospital beds and enough nurses and that teachers are actually teaching children who are in the classroom—it's not solving those kind of problems. They're not delivering three waters infrastructure; they're delivering divisive co-governance, which was their hidden agenda, as we now know.

I want to talk a little bit more about the problems with the bill, the bill that purports to help fix local democracy. Well, what problems are we trying to solve? It looks like, essentially, this bill is designed to consider specific Māori representation, Māori wards, and Māori constituencies, for those people of Māori ethnicity who choose to identify themselves on the Māori electoral roll. It doesn't propose any better way to provide for representation for those individuals of Māori heritage who are on the general roll or who are just not interested in local politics. It proposes to lift the membership restrictions on the Auckland Council governing body. Now, that's 20 councillors representing wards like Rodney in the north of Auckland, a very, very large rural ward with about 85,000 people in it, which has to compete for resources and attention against those very, very large urban wards—say, like Puketāpapa in East Auckland and other parts like Waitemātā, which includes Waiheke Island.

Now, all of these different constituencies within Auckland have different needs. They have different infrastructure needs and they have different social and economic needs. But what they have in common is that the people who live in Auckland actually need a functioning city that's got good infrastructure, that makes serviced land—affordable serviced land—available for housing, and that allows businesses and people, families, to get to work and to move freight and goods around, and that requires competent transport infrastructure.

I want to come back to what local government wants as opposed to what Government wants. At the local government conference, which I did not attend, because I assumed it was simply a woke talkfest, what the Prime Minister said was that she wouldn't be doing any major local government reform unless local government themselves asked for it. Well, we know what a statement from the Prime Minister is worth now, don't we, because here we are debating another piece of significant local government reform legislation that they didn't ask for. They didn't ask for three waters reform. What they asked for was help with infrastructure funding and financing for those communities that couldn't afford to pay for their three waters infrastructure. They didn't ask for the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, which allows for three-

storey, three-house developments on a single house lot. That's causing chaos in cities like Hamilton, which are trying to work out how to design their plan for it, where they already have capacity for 100,000 new homes—all of the capacity they need for the next 30 years. What Hamilton needs, what their planners told me they need, is access to better infrastructure funding and financing mechanisms, not three waters reform.

Local government didn't ask for another port study like in Auckland, trying to work out whether the Manakau Harbour port, which was very popular in the days of four-masted sailing ships—whether that would be a good place for the Government to decide to intervene in another part of the productive economy. I mean, they certainly didn't ask for a bike bridge over Auckland Harbour. What Aucklanders do want, though, is better public transport. They want better transport connections. Local government didn't ask for a new Mount Victoria Tunnel in Wellington either, which apparently delivers no extra lanes but provides for about 1,500 cyclists per year to use the existing tunnel. They didn't ask for that, and they certainly didn't ask for this bill.

So I think when the Prime Minister returns from Samoa, perhaps a member should ask her “Does she stand by her statement at the local government conference that the Prime Minister said this Government won't be doing any more local government reform unless local government asks for it?”, because this bill that we're debating tonight and the Prime Minister's statement appear to be different facts. Perhaps the Prime Minister's statement is simply fact adjacent rather than being an actual fact.

So, look, I just want to come to what ACT would do. Well, firstly, what ACT would do is listen to local government. It was reassuring—in fact, heart-warming—for some members of the Labour Government in the House tonight. One member commented that Kieran McAnulty, the Associate Minister of Local Government, has been going around the country talking to local government. Well, I wonder what they told him, because I don't think they told him they want this piece of legislation, the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill. I think they probably told him “You can stick your three waters somewhere, and, by the way, if you're going to talk about fixing three waters, how about you just set up some better infrastructure funding and financing?” That's what ACT is focused on.

We've released a policy just a few short weeks ago, what we call the cost of living policy, where we talk about infrastructure funding and financing, resource management reform so that fewer organisations and randoms can turn up at your consent hearing and object to pieces of infrastructure, whether it's a distribution warehouse that exceeds some height limit or whether it's an East West Link project that was designed to get freight off local roads. What ACT says is that fewer people should be able to object to those type of consent applications—in fact, very few: only the neighbours. So when we were thinking about what local government needed, we thought they needed better resource management law that actually incentivises them to say yes to building stuff so that we can build our way out of the cost of living crisis. They certainly, certainly did not ask for this piece of legislation, Mr McAnulty, if you're still watching this.

What ACT would do is that we would consider providing for recall powers, because, actually, some councils don't make good decisions. I mean, Mr Watts referred to Auckland councillors holding hands and singing “Kumbaya”. Well, I don't know what they were smoking the day they declared a climate emergency, because they clearly forgot that Auckland Transport, the other part of council, has to build roads and make sure that the city doesn't end up in gridlock. That's why Auckland Council has just won a case, actually, proving that their climate emergency statement was unnecessary and stupid, and, in fact, they should be listening to the transport department, who actually wants to build roads and deliver transportation for the city.

So ACT would listen to local government when it's making sense. We'd give councils clear objectives and incentives, like sharing 50 percent of the GST on all new builds so that councils have an incentive to say yes to new development. We'll be opposing this bill. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

JAMIE STRANGE (Labour—Hamilton East): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. I commend this bill to the House.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a split call—I call Maureen Pugh.

MAUREEN PUGH (National): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think that the previous speaker that just resumed his seat has the record for the shortest contribution in the House today—and possibly just as well, because it's obviously become very difficult for the Government members to defend this bill and defend the constant barrage on local government.

My colleague at the other end of the House here—Simon Court—has just articulated very well, I think, the position of local government. I thought I might just do a bit of a poll in the House tonight. How many MPs in the House tonight have been approached by their councils to say that the issues that are being canvassed in this bill are the single biggest issues they want the parliamentary time taken up with? I think that deserves a New Zealand Transport Agency zero plugged in and on display. Nobody gives a toss about the things that are in here, even though they are tweaks. The reality is that local government is nearing—I'd say—consultation collapse from the amount of consultation and change that they have been facing over the past three years, thanks to this Government.

Three waters is obviously a topical one, and one that is taxing the minds of our local representatives. Then that leads us to the problem of the future of local government and what that will even look like. They're the things that I think local government would like the Government and the Parliament to be spending its time on, not the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill that's with us tonight for its first reading.

Councils are really worried about the Resource Management Act reform—there's so much coming down the pipeline in that regard—and other Government legislation: funding infrastructure—that's already been canvassed. There's a general cost of doing business, and when councils are forced to make changes to the way they do business, there is only one place they go to for the funding, and that's their ratepayers. I can tell you just recently I was speaking to one of the mayors in West Coast - Tasman who told me that they've had it up to their eyeballs with consultation because, at the end of it all, they're the ones that are accountable to their community. That's democracy at work. If the community doesn't like it, the councillors hear about it.

What we are hearing in this bill is a few tweaks around the number of councillors at the Auckland City Council, a toss of a coin being delayed until after a judicial count has been sorted, and being able to file nominations electronically. But hidden in all of this is the sneaky little part of it that talks about representation review and Māori representation.

The reality is that in the last 20 years, 24 councils have tried to establish or introduce Māori wards. What they've had to do is go out to their communities and consult. That's democracy at work. Out of those 24, two have ended up being successful, so that tells you that the communities, when democratically considering it, do not want separate Māori wards. Local government has complied with the rules in the Local Government Act. They consult with their communities, and they're the responses that they get.

But when you don't like those responses, what happens? You change the law—you change the law so that you can get the answer that you want. The problem with this is that there is such a culture that has built up in this country about having a mature, grown-up conversation about this that now, if it is raised, what are you called? A racist. Well, I'm

telling you, in the words of Willie Jackson: in this country, democracy is changing. It is changing for the worse. And I tell you: the public in general is not happy with it. It's not happy with all of these tweaks to local democracy. It's not happy with the imposition of central government telling the people that they know best and that they should sit down, be quiet, and be told what to do.

Dr TRACEY McLELLAN (Labour—Banks Peninsula): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. How do the changes in this bill make it different from the current requirements? In a nutshell, there is just simply not any current requirements for councils to even bother considering Māori wards. All this does is it means that some councils can avoid making a decision at all. So despite the silly, vacuous protestations by the Opposition, it's a very straightforward bill that makes some local electoral changes. It happens to be well supported by the government sector, and, on that basis, I commend the bill to the House.

TANGI UTIKERE (Labour—Palmerston North): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. For the last two weeks, we had the Local Government New Zealand conference in the mighty city of Palmerston North. It was wonderful to have ministerial colleagues, including our local government Ministers McAnulty and Mahuta there on the ground listening to councils in my electorate, and the feedback. Now, we not only had those two Ministers but I think we've had at least five, including the Prime Minister. So on this side of the House, we are engaged with local government. The Leader of the Opposition beamed in, probably from Te Puke, but I do know that this is a particular piece of work that is well-timed and I commend it to the House.

IAN McKELVIE (National—Rangitīkei): Well, if I could honestly say I was looking forward to this coming to select committee because we could make some constructive changes to it, I would, but I can't, because I've never seen the select committee change anything a Minister's sent us yet, and I've been here a little while. Anyway, that's enough of that.

I want to get on to the point of this bill. As a former mayor, I take a good deal of interest in local government and things that happen in local government. I was around when the Local Government Act 2002 was passed. It was actually, I felt at the time, quite a constructive Act; I note people in local government were frustrated at the time because it would change the way they'd been doing things for the previous 13 or 14 years, but, none the less, it was a good piece of legislation that did a good job for local government and structured local government very well.

Now, I just was thinking a little while ago about the number of pieces of legislation that have come to the House affecting local government this year. I think it's eight this year. You can imagine that local government was a very popular place for people to put themselves in. We've got, of course, as the Minister so rightly said in his introductory remarks, the local government elections coming up this year. I understand that we've got almost 50 percent of our mayors going from local government—retiring or leaving it. When you think that there's eight pieces of legislation that have come in this year to affect the way they operate, it's not surprising that they're scarpering. I wonder seriously whether there will be anyone standing for local government in a year or two's time, because everyone will have been put off it.

I want to talk a little bit about what we might well do with a piece of legislation, instead of doing what we're doing here. If you think about local government, local government relies entirely on those people standing for positions on council to promote the election. No one else promotes the election—the Electoral Commission doesn't, or virtually doesn't; local government don't promote it, because they've got to spend ratepayers money to promote it; so no one promotes it, and we wonder why people don't stand for local government. There's absolutely no promotion of the fact that there's an election

happening or the activities of the council at all. So I think that we're very seriously threatening democracy by consistently and continually interfering in the processes of local government, and not really, in many cases, structured interference in those processes, but processes that are extremely frustrating for the people involved, for our local communities, and for people standing for positions in local government. So I think, if we continue to interfere in local government without putting a structure in place that lets them get on with life, manage the affairs of our local communities in a manner that at least enables the local community, to some extent, manage what happens in their areas, then we're going to have serious problems attracting anyone to stand for local government. Why would you, at the end of the day, when you're constantly, effectively—I was going to say “abused”, but you're not necessarily abused, but you're, certainly, constantly under scrutiny, you're doing a job where you're poorly paid? I don't think, if we continue to interfere in the processes of local government, we're going to get anyone standing.

The other point, with respect to this bill, is that if you think about the fact that you could be the Mayor of Auckland, a great job, and every time you front up to your committee, you've got 29 people to convince that you're right or wrong, imagine that! Not a wonder that they've got some interesting people standing for the Mayor of Auckland. I think that that's a real challenge for a city of Auckland's size to have, potentially, a council of 29 people running it—there will never be a decision made in Auckland, on that basis. I just think, to attract people of the standard that you need to run a city like Auckland—or, in fact, any of our councils for that matter, but certainly a city like Auckland—you've got to have a structure in place that encourages people who have got the capability to stand and who wish to be part of what goes on there. So that's a little piece on Auckland that I wanted to talk about.

I want to talk about the tied result thing for a minute, because I do think that's a kind of sensible solution to a very minor problem, because, actually, it's not really satisfactory having a councillor elected on the toss of a coin then thrown out as a result of a judicial recount, and so you've got a job one minute and you haven't got a job the next. Pretty untidy. So I do think that that little piece of alteration to the law, which could have been put in, probably, any four or five pieces of local government law we've passed through this Parliament in the last six or eight months but happens to be in this one—that's a sensible change to it.

The Auckland Council issue I've talked about. Simplifying the process to change local board boundaries, again, probably much of an Auckland issue as anywhere else, and probably won't affect anyone else much, but, none the less, probably it would have been a sensible suggestion but it certainly doesn't require a piece of legislation to pass it. As for enabling candidates to submit electronic nominations, I guess that's progress, but, again, it hardly required a separate piece of legislation to enable it to be passed.

I want to talk for a little bit about the piece of this Act that, I guess, talks about—I'll use that term—Māori representation in local government and the way local councils need to deal with it as they go through their representation review. In my time in council, we went through that representation review and invariably considered Māori wards because the Local Government Act 2002 enabled that process to take place. It didn't happen in the Manawatū district at that time for reasons best known to Māori, not best known to the council, because council made the decision that their local iwi and local Māori communities wanted us to make. I think that that's how it should be and that's how it should have remained. But, none the less, we've had changes to the Local Government Act in recent times that have changed the process. We've now got another change to the Local Government Act which is, effectively, the Local Government Electoral Legislation

Bill, this one's called, which, effectively, changes that, potentially, again. That will be a very interesting discussion to have in select committee, because I think there will be, in my view, a large number of submissions on that point and it will be very interesting to see where we get to as we consider that in the long term.

So there's been a lot of talk about local government. I think, if you go back in time, that local government has had more and more and more loaded on it ever since that 2002 Act came to pass, and Governments of all colours have been to blame for the fact that we put more emphasis and more responsibility on local government, but it, effectively, forced the ratepayers to pay those bills. That's one of the real challenges we've got with our rates bills at the moment, and there wouldn't be an MP in this House that doesn't get a daily complaint about the rates bills—*[Interruption]* What are you trying to tell me to do, Goldsmith? I'm having a turn for the first time in a few days where I haven't been told what to do every time I stand up in the House! Ha, ha!

So, anyway, I think that there's a lot of consideration that needs to be given to this bill, even though it is a very small bill and does not really influence a lot of stuff. But in the course of the select committee process, it will be very interesting to see what we get in the way of submissions. I assume I was getting hurried on by Mr Goldsmith, so I will commend the bill to the House.

LEMAUGA LYDIA SOSENE (Labour): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and kia orana. I'll take a short call on the bill. I support this bill, particularly because it talks about a range of topics and covers representation. In my previous working life, I worked over a decade for Auckland Council as an elected member, and I know the value of Māori wards and Māori representation that the current legislation does not cover. So, on that note, I commend this bill to the House.

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill be now read a first time.*

Ayes 77

New Zealand Labour 65; Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand 10; Te Paati Māori 2.

Noes 43

New Zealand National 33; ACT New Zealand 10.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is, *That the Local Government Electoral Legislation Bill be considered by the Governance and Administration Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Governance and Administration Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I declare the House in committee for consideration of the Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill, the New Zealand Bill of Rights (Declarations of Inconsistency) Amendment Bill, and the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill.

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON (Ian McKelvie): Members, the House is in committee for further consideration of the Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill and consideration of the New Zealand Bill of Rights (Declarations of Inconsistency) Amendment Bill and the Animal Welfare Amendment Bill.

THREE STRIKES LEGISLATION REPEAL BILL**In Committee****Part 1 Amendments to Sentencing Act 2002**

CHAIRPERSON (Ian McKelvie): We come first to the interrupted consideration of the Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill. When we were last considering this bill, Part 1 was being debated. This is the debate on clauses 3 to 10, and schedule—“Amendments to Sentencing Act 2002”. The question is that Part 1 stand part.

Hon PAUL GOLDSMITH (National): I do cast our mind back briefly to the debate we had about three strikes, and the question I asked was: why are we doing this bill? The repeal is to take away the three-strikes legislation, which was targeted at our worst repeat offenders to keep them in prison for longer. These were—and there’s only been a handful of people who’ve had three strikes—our most serious repeat offenders. The Minister’s claim—Minister Faafoi, when he introduced the bill—was because it hadn’t worked. I pointed out that, well actually, the advice from the officials was that there was no evidence at all, or no international detailed evidence, showing whether the legislation had worked or hadn’t worked.

So I asked the Minister why she was doing this in the absence of any evidence, and she replied that “Well, clearly there is evidence, because violent crime has not decreased since this bill has been introduced.”, and, secondly, that “Because there has been a stark rise in sexual offending since this bill has been introduced, therefore it hasn’t worked.” I haven’t heard such an infantile argument put forward by a Minister of Justice in my life, which is to say, “Behold, violent crime hasn’t decreased since the introduction of this bill.”—therefore, three strikes hadn’t worked.

Perhaps, I suppose, the question I have is: did it occur to the Minister that there could be some other reasons why serious crime hasn’t decreased over the past five years—particularly since they’ve been in Government—and I can suggest one or two other potential reasons, such as the soft-on-crime approach to law and order that this Government has focused on or such as the massive failure in social policy and housing policy, and the fact that 100,000 kids are not in school regularly. There’s a whole host of reasons why crime has increased over the past few years, and it strikes me as an infantile argument for the Minister of Justice to make the claim, as she did in our last debate, that the evidence that the three-strikes legislation hadn’t worked was because violent crime had not fallen. So I do ask the Minister to reflect on that.

The second question I asked—which I didn’t get an answer to—was how on earth could the Minister of Justice come to the conclusion, looking at the scene that we face in New Zealand today and every day—and today has just another example on the news tonight of a dairy owner had a couple of regular attacks on his property, fearful for his property and, ultimately, his safety. We see the rise of gangs, we see shootings on an unheard of level in Auckland and around the country, and we’ve seen an increase in violent crime of more than 20 percent. We see all this—everybody sees it; everybody understands it. Why is it that the priority for this Government and the conclusion that they’ve drawn is that, “Oh, we’re too tough on the worst offenders and we’ve got to reduce sentences for those worst offenders.”? Why and how does she come to that conclusion? Thank you, Mr Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ian McKelvie): Members, the time has come to leave the Chair. The House is suspended and I will resume the Chair at 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Sitting suspended from 9.56 p.m. to 9 a.m. (Wednesday)

Index to Tuesday, 2 August 2022

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

1R—First Reading
2R—Second Reading
3R—Third Reading
CWH—Committee of the whole House
LS—Legislative Statement

BILLS

Legislation is listed under BILLS. The name of an originating bill that has been divided into separate bills is shown in *italics* after the names of the new bills.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Questions are listed under ORAL QUESTIONS by ministerial portfolio.

AFFIRMATION—

see OATH OR AFFIRMATION

ALLAN, Hon KIRITAPU—

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11151

ANDERSEN, GINNY—

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11154

Oral Questions—

Firearms Licensing—
Firearms Prohibition Orders,
Implementation, 11097

BAYLY, ANDREW—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11136

BENNETT, Hon DAVID—

Withdrawal from Chamber, 11091

BENNETT, GLEN—

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11164

BILLS—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill, 1R 11107; LS 11107; referred to Social Services and Community Committee 11125; instruction to Social Services and Community Committee 11126
Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11132; LS 11132; 3R 11141

BILLS—*continued*

Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11126;
referred to Justice Committee 11132;
instruction to Justice Committee 11132

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11151; LS 11151;
referred to Justice Committee 11164

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11164; LS 11164; referred to
Governance and Administration
Committee 11178

Secondary Legislation Confirmation Bill,
1R 11106; referred to Regulations
Review Committee 11106; instruction to
Regulations Review Committee 11106
Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill, CWH
11179

BISHOP, CHRIS—

Oral Questions—

Children—

Public Housing Register, Children
Living in Cars, 11101

BOYACK, RACHEL—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11136
Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11128
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11168

CHEN, NAISI—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11141

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11171**CLARK, Hon Dr DAVID—**

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11132

COLLINS, Hon JUDITH—

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11155**COURT, SIMON—**

Bills—

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11173**CRAIG, Dr LIZ—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11113**EDMONDS, BARBARA—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11120**GHAHRAMAN, GOLRIZ—**

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11157**GOLDSMITH, Hon PAUL—**

Bills—

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11169Three Strikes Legislation Repeal Bill,
CWH 11179

Oral Questions—

Electoral System—

Canterbury Regional Council (Ngāi
Tahu Representation) Bill, 11104**GRIGG, NICOLA—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11119**HENDERSON, Dr EMILY—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11111Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11159**HIPANGO, HARETE—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11122Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11161**HIPKINS, Hon CHRIS—**

Bills—

Secondary Legislation Confirmation
Bill, 1R 11106; instruction to
Regulations Review Committee
11106

Sittings of the House—

Sitting Hours—

Extended Sitting, 11106

INSTRUCTIONS—

see SELECT COMMITTEES

KANONGATA'A-SUISUIKI, ANAHILA—

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11118

Oral Questions—

Housing, Public—

Delivery, 11094

KEREKERE, Dr ELIZABETH—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11142

LEARY, INGRID—

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11124

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11147

Oral Questions—

Infrastructure—

National Planning Framework, 11103
Resource Management Act Reforms,
Consenting Process, 11103**LOGIE, JAN—**

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11114**LUBECK, MARJA—**

Bills—

Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11128

McANULTY, Hon KIERAN—

Bills—

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11164**McKEE, NICOLE—**

Bills—

Family Court (Family Court Associates)
Legislation Bill, 1R 11157**McKELVIE, IAN—**

Bills—

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11176**McLELLAN, Dr TRACEY—**

Bills—

Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11176

MAIDEN SPEECHES / STATEMENTS—

Uffindell, Sam, 11138

MENÉNDEZ MARCH, RICARDO—

Oral Questions—

Beneficiaries—

Cost of Living Payment, Exclusion,
11090

Cost of Living, Pressures, 11090

MOONEY, JOSEPH—

Bills—

Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11129

Family Court (Family Court Associates)

Legislation Bill, 1R 11160

NGOBI, TERISA—

Bills—

Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11121

OATH OR AFFIRMATION—

Members Sworn—

Uffindell, Sam, 11089

O'CONNOR, SIMON—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11148

Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11127

ORAL QUESTIONS—

Environment—

Infrastructure—

National Planning Framework, 11103

Resource Management Act Reforms,
Consenting Process, 11103

Health—

Sector—

Workforce, Recruitment Initiatives,
11100

Housing—

Children—

Public Housing Register, Children
Living in Cars, 11101

Cost of Living—

Rotorua, 11098

Homelessness—

Waiariki Electorate, 11098

Public—

Delivery, 11094

Rent Prices—

Bay of Plenty, 11098

Immigration—

COVID-19 Response—

Border Restrictions, Reconnecting
New Zealand, 11105

Justice—

Electoral System—

Canterbury Regional Council (Ngāi
Tahu Representation) Bill, 11104

ORAL QUESTIONS—*continued*

Police—

Firearms Licensing—

Firearms Prohibition Orders,
Implementation, 11097

Prime Minister—

Children—

Emergency Housing, 11092

Cost of Living Payment—

Overseas Recipients, 11092, 11099

Health Sector—

Nursing Workforce, Shortland Street
Promotion, 11099

Housing, Emergency—

Motel Use, 11092

Immigration—

Migrant Nurses, Residency Fast-
track Eligibility, 11099
11092

Oranga Tamariki—

Oversight of Oranga Tamariki
System and Children and Young
Person's Commission Bill, 11099

Revenue—

Cost of Living Payment—

Advice to Government, 11095

Inland Revenue Department, 11095

Overseas Recipients, 11095

Inland Revenue Department—

Cost of Living Payment, Advice,
11095

Cost of Living Payment, Processing,
11095

Social Development and Employment—

Beneficiaries—

Cost of Living Payment, Exclusion,
11090

Cost of Living, Pressures, 11090

OTHER LANGUAGES—

Cook Island Māor—

Utikere, Tangi, 11089

Waititi, Rawiri, 11098

PAPERS—

Presented, 11089

PENK, CHRIS—

Bills—

Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11146

Family Court (Family Court Associates)

Legislation Bill, 1R 11152

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS—

see POINTS OF ORDER

PETITIONS—

Presented, 11089

POINTS OF ORDER—

Personal Reflections and Unparliamentary
Language—
Ruled Unparliamentary, Interjections,
11100

PUGH, MAUREEN—

Bills—
Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11112
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11175

ROSEWARNE, DAN—

Bills—
Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11131

SAGE, Hon EUGENIE—

Bills—
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11171

SELECT COMMITTEES—

Instructions—
Justice Committee—
Electoral Amendment Bill, 11132
Regulations Review Committee—
Secondary Legislation Confirmation
Bill, 11106
Social Services and Community
Committee—
Accessibility for New Zealanders
Bill, 11106
Reports Presented—
Finance and Expenditure Committee,
11089
Health Committee, 11089
Justice Committee, 11089
Petitions Committee, 11089
Regulations Review Committee, 11089

SEVERIN, TONI—

Bills—
Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11116

SEYMOUR, DAVID—

Bills—
Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11143

SHARMA, Dr GAURAV—

Oral Questions—
Health Sector—
Workforce, Recruitment Initiatives,
11100

SIMMONDS, PENNY—

Bills—
Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11109

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE—

Sitting Hours—
Extended Sitting, 11106

SOSENE, LEMAUGA LYDIA—

Bills—
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11178

STRANGE, JAMIE—

Bills—
Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11145
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11175

UFFINDELL, SAM—

Maiden Statement, 11138
Member Sworn, 11089

UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE—

see POINTS OF ORDER

UTIKERE, TANGI—

Bills—
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11176

Other Languages—
Cook Islands Māori, 11089

VAN VELDEN, BROOKE—

Oral Questions—
Cost of Living Payment—
Overseas Recipients, 11099
Health Sector—
Nursing Workforce, Shortland Street
Promotion, 11099
Immigration—
Migrant Nurses, Residency Fast-
track Eligibility, 11099
Oranga Tamariki—
Oversight of Oranga Tamariki
System and Children and Young
Person's Commission Bill, 11099

VOTING—

Bills—
Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
1R 11125
Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11150
Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11132;
instruction to Justice Committee
11132
Local Government Electoral Legislation
Bill, 1R 11178

WAITITI, RAWIRI—

Oral Questions—
Cost of Living—
Rotorua, 11098
Homelessness—
Waiariki Electorate, 11098
Housing—
Rent Prices, Bay of Plenty, 11098
Other Languages—
Cook Islands Māori, 11098

WALTERS, VANUSHI—

- Bills—
 - Family Court (Family Court Associates)
 - Legislation Bill, 1R 11156

WATTS, SIMON—

- Bills—
 - Local Government Electoral Legislation
 - Bill, 1R 11166

WEBB, Dr DUNCAN—

- Bills—
 - Family Court (Family Court Associates)
 - Legislation Bill, 1R 11161

WHAITIRI, Hon MEKA—

- Bills—
 - Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11150
 - Electoral Amendment Bill, instruction to
 - CWH 11132

WILLIAMS, ARENA—

- Bills—
 - Electoral Amendment Bill, 1R 11126
 - Family Court (Family Court Associates)
 - Legislation Bill, 1R 11161
- Oral Questions—
 - COVID-19 Response—
 - Border Restrictions, Reconnecting
 - New Zealand, 11105

WILLIAMS, Hon POTO—

- Bills—
 - Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill,
 - 1R 11107

WILLIS, NICOLA—

- Oral Questions—
 - Children—
 - Emergency Housing, 11092
 - Cost of Living Payment—
 - Advice to Government, 11095
 - Inland Revenue Department, 11095
 - Overseas Recipients, 11092, 11095
 - Housing, Emergency—
 - Motel Use, 11092
 - Inland Revenue Department—
 - Cost of Living Payment, Advice,
 - 11095
 - Cost of Living Payment, Processing,
 - 11092, 11095

WITHDRAWAL FROM CHAMBER—

- Bennett, Hon David, 11091

WOODHOUSE, Hon MICHAEL—

- Bills—
 - Data and Statistics Bill, 3R 11134

WOODS, Hon Dr MEGAN—

- Points of Order—
 - Personal Reflections and
 - Unparliamentary Language—
 - Ruled Unparliamentary,
 - Interjections, 11100