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Wednesday, 18 February 2026

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WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2026

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WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2026

The Speaker took the Chair at 2 p.m.

Start of Sitting Day

KARAKIA/PRAYERS

TEANAU TUIONO (Assistant Speaker) (14:00): E te Atua kaha rawa, ka tuku whakamoemiti atu mātou, mō ngā karakia kua waihotia mai ki runga i a mātou. Ka waiho i ō mātou pānga whaiaro katoa ki te taha. Ka mihi mātou ki te Kīngi, me te inoi atu mō te ārahitanga i roto i ō mātou whakaaroarohanga, kia mōhio ai, kia whakaiti ai tā mātou whakahaere i ngā take o te Whare nei, mō te oranga, te maungārongo, me te aroha o Aotearoa. Āmene.

[Almighty God, we give thanks for the blessings which have been bestowed on us. Laying aside all personal interests, we acknowledge the King and pray for guidance in our deliberations, that we may conduct the affairs of this House with wisdom and humility, for the welfare, peace, and compassion of New Zealand. Amen.]

Visitors

FIJI—PARLIAMENT**COOK ISLANDS—PARLIAMENT**

SPEAKER: I'm sure that members would wish to welcome the Hon Lenora Qereqeretabua, Deputy Speaker and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs from the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, and the Hon Tina Browne, Leader of the Opposition from the Parliament of the Cook Islands, who are present in the gallery.

Presentation

PETITIONS

SPEAKER: Two petitions have been delivered to the Clerk for presentation.

CLERK (14:01):

- Petition of Justice For All requesting that the House urge the Government to create a commission of inquiry into the police investigation and prosecution of Gail Maney, Colin Maney, Mark Henriksen, and Stephen Stone
- petition of Rebecca Robin requesting that the House phase out electroconvulsive therapy in Aotearoa and limit its use to rare, court-reviewed cases.

SPEAKER: Those petitions stand referred to the Petitions Committee.

PAPERS

SPEAKER: A paper has been delivered for presentation.

CLERK (14:02): Department of Corrections Long-term Insights Briefing.

SPEAKER: That paper is published under the authority of the House.

SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS

SPEAKER: A select committee report has been delivered for presentation.

CLERK (14:02): Report of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on the Regulatory Systems (Transport) Amendment Bill.

SPEAKER: The bill is set down for second reading. No bills have been introduced.

*Oral Questions to Ministers***ENERGY****Question No. 1**

SCOTT WILLIS (Green) (14:02) to the **Minister for Energy**: Has he seen reports that the big four electricity gentailers are projected to make \$1.86 billion in operating profits for the six months to December, and, if so, does he think it's fair that households will likely pay more on their power bills on average to fund a liquefied natural gas import terminal?

Hon SIMEON BROWN (Acting Minister for Energy) (14:02): Regarding the first part of the question, yes. Regarding the second part, official advice shows that access to liquefied natural gas (LNG) will reduce power bills for households by an average of \$50 per year.

Scott Willis: Would a liquefied natural gas import terminal be commercially viable without Government intervention?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Well, this Government is focused on fixing the dry-year problem, and the advice that has been received is that this is the best solution to do that. By putting in place the solution this Government has, the advice is very clear that it will reduce power bills for consumers.

Scott Willis: Does the Minister accept that funding LNG import infrastructure through a levy on electricity users is, effectively, a subsidy for LNG-fired generation, and, if so, how is this consistent with Aotearoa's binding commitments under our free-trade agreements to take steps towards eliminating fossil fuel subsidies?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: We're focused on addressing the dry-year problem to make sure we have affordable, reliable power for New Zealand households and businesses and that we don't shut down industries in regional New Zealand. Ironically, if we followed that member's plan, we would be substituting gas for coal.

Scott Willis: Why is it that the Government is willing to be interventionist in the fossil fuel industry, such as through billions of dollars for LNG infrastructure or the \$200 million for gas exploration, but is not willing to intervene on the lowest-cost solutions that would provide for the cheapest electricity like demand response, energy efficiency, distributed energy, or pumped storage?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Well, we are focused on fixing the dry-year problem, and that is critically important so that we can secure the future of thousands of jobs of regional New Zealanders and so that we can lower power bills for consumers, but the answer is that we need this, plus we need solar, plus we need wind, plus we need hydro, plus we need geothermal, plus we need other forms of energy generation and distribution as well. That's what we're focused on doing.

Scott Willis: Does he think that an LNG import terminal may have appeared to be the timeliest proposal, simply because the Government is running an accelerated procurement process that will see infrastructure fast-tracked with bespoke legislation?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: We are focused on solving this problem quickly because, on this side of the House, we understand the urgency of this problem. We saw the impact of the last Government's policies where power prices hit \$800 a megawatt hour, and their solution was a lake in the middle of the mountains, which wouldn't have delivered a single a bit of power until 2037. That's not good enough. We're focused on solving this problem today.

Scott Willis: What is the Minister's response to Paul Fuge, from Powerswitch, who advocates on behalf of consumers, who said of the LNG proposal, "This speaks to the power of the oil and gas lobby, which has managed to sell a donkey as a racehorse."?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: We are focused on making sure we have lower power bills for consumers. We're on the side of consumers here. We're on the side of industry to make sure we have affordable, reliable power, which saves jobs of regional New Zealanders. If we followed the advice of members opposite, we'd be waiting till 2037 until we had a lake in the middle of the mountains, which would then eventually, potentially, start generating some power. We are focused on fixing this problem today.

WORKPLACE RELATIONS AND SAFETY

Question No. 2

LAURA McCLURE (ACT) (14:07) to the **Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety:** What will the changes in the Employment Relations Amendment Bill mean for businesses and workers?

Hon BROOKE VAN VELDEN (Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety) (14:07): Yesterday, the Employment Relations Amendment Bill passed its third reading. Once the law comes into effect, businesses will no longer have to be fearful about being tripped up on small procedural steps when trying to move a problematic employee on or when taking a chance on a new worker because they're afraid of what will happen if it doesn't work out. This bill is about removing fear from hiring. Workers who are wanting to move up the career ladder will be considered for more challenging positions, and they will also benefit from the income threshold for personal grievances policy. When employers are scared to take a chance on an employee in a high-impact role, there are fewer chances given. We're backing businesses to have the confidence to hire.

Laura McClure: What reports has she seen on the Employment Relations Amendment Bill?

Hon BROOKE VAN VELDEN: Business New Zealand said that this bill moves us in the right direction towards a more confident workforce, stronger businesses, and a more resilient economy. Retail New Zealand said that the reforms will be particularly positive for small and under-resourced retailers, who often shoulder disproportionately severe consequences when navigating complex employment procedures. The *New Zealand Herald* described these reforms as the biggest labour market regulation change in decades, and I couldn't agree more. At the start of this coalition Government's term, we inherited significant economic challenges, and that requires bold solutions.

Laura McClure: What impact does she expect the Employment Relations Amendment Bill will have on employment and wages?

Hon BROOKE VAN VELDEN: I know there are many Kiwis who are concerned at the moment about what is on the job horizon for them. They may be searching for a job or wondering whether their incomes will grow in the jobs that they have. This bill will back business to hire with more confidence. When employers can hire and grow, more people get opportunities. That means more jobs and higher-paying jobs.

Hon David Seymour: Is it the Government's position that higher wages come from investment and innovation, or could wages be risen simply by passing a law saying they should be higher?

Hon BROOKE VAN VELDEN: That's clearly quite rhetorical, but this Government definitely has—*[Interruption]* Ha, ha!

SPEAKER: Just answer it anyway.

Hon BROOKE VAN VELDEN: Very good. This Government believes that it is the businesses out there, not politicians in here, that help grow our economy. That's people who get up every day who create new jobs for others. That's people getting money from their own back pocket and investing it in their company or getting people who believe in their dream to invest in their own companies so that they can hire more people and grow. That's how this economy gets ahead, not from Labour Party politicians believing that they can just sign new laws and raise wages.

SPEAKER: Remember that it's actually a Government question, so you can't answer quite the way you just did at the end there.

FINANCE

Question No. 3

NANCY LU (National) (14:11) to the **Minister of Finance:** What reports has she seen about the economy?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS (Minister of Finance) (14:11): Recent data released is consistent with a turnaround in the economy. The Household Labour Force Survey, for example, showed employment growth of 0.5 percent in the December quarter of last year, following five previous quarters of flat or falling employment. That means 15,000 more people with jobs. In addition, the number of hours worked rose 1 percent in the quarter, and more people were out there actively looking for jobs.

Nancy Lu: What are monthly data releases indicating?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Monthly economic data has largely been positive. For example, the Performance of Manufacturing Index for January indicated a healthy level of expansion in the manufacturing sector. The services sector is also in expansion, according to the Performance of Services Index. The BNZ, which runs these indexes with Business New Zealand, said that "The big question to end 2025 was whether the economy may be turning. Data since then has given us confidence that recent positive momentum can be sustained. The economy is growing."

Nancy Lu: What are forecasters predicting for December quarter GDP?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Well, economic forecasters are all predicting growth in the December quarter of last year. There are a range of estimates from around 0.5 percent to 1 percent growth. I note that the Reserve Bank's forecasts, which have just been released at 2 p.m. in the Monetary Policy Statement, are for growth of 0.5 percent in the December quarter. The official number will be out in a month's time. I do note that there has been a pattern of significant volatility in quarter-to-quarter GDP data. Looking forward, all economic forecasters are showing growth continuing through 2026.

Nancy Lu: Are there any risks to this outlook?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Yes. Forecasters work with what they know, but unanticipated events happen frequently. So, yes, there are risks to the outlook both on the upside and the downside. A recovery is evidently under way, with low interest rates providing stimulus to the economy, and members opposite will surely see this as positive news for New Zealand families and businesses. At some point, as the economy strengthens, the Reserve Bank will start the process of normalising monetary policy—easing off the accelerator a little as less stimulus is required to support growth. When to do that is entirely a matter for the Reserve Bank, which will be guided by its mandate and by the data.

Hon David Seymour: How important is careful spending of taxpayer money by the Government when it comes to making sure that there's no more inflationary pressure on the Reserve Bank that could otherwise put up people's mortgages?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Critically important. It is the case that the Government can make a choice to either manage its own spending in such a way that it does not add fuel to the inflation fire, or, conversely, can choose to spend at a level that adds more pressure to inflation, leading the official cash rate to be higher than it would otherwise be. It has been the advice of Treasury that Government fiscal decisions under the last Government did add fuel to the inflationary fire, and that decisions by this Government have eased pressure on inflation, and therefore supported interest rates to be lower than would otherwise have been the case.

PRIME MINISTER

Question No. 4

Rt Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Leader of the Opposition) (14:14) to the **Prime Minister:** Does he stand by all his Government's statements and actions?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON (Prime Minister) (14:14): Yes.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Is the cost of living crisis better or worse for New Zealand families now than when he became Prime Minister?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Well, inflation, as I've said to the member before, has gone from a record high under his level at 7.3 percent down to 3.1 percent. That's a much better outcome, and that's happening because you've got a Government that understands the economy and is actually managing spending so that inflation's come down, the interest rates have come down, the economy is growing, and people stay in work.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: So is the average family's shopping for groceries cheaper or more expensive now than it was when he became the Prime Minister?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Food inflation, as the member knows, is running at about 4.6 percent; total inflation's running at 3.1 percent. Under that member and his economic management plan, food inflation was running at 12.5 percent and inflation was running at 7.3 percent. I put our record of economic management against his record of economic management and debacle every single day of the week.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I didn't ask the Prime Minister for a dissertation on the previous Government's track record—

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: It's important context.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: —untrue though it was—I did ask him whether the average family's grocery shop—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Just a moment.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: —is cheaper or more expensive than when he became Prime Minister. He has been Prime Minister for the entirety of that time. He hasn't addressed that.

SPEAKER: Well, I think he made an effort to address it by talking about the difference in inflation, but the Prime Minister may want to—

Hon David Seymour: Speaking to the point of order—

SPEAKER: —hang on—make another comment.

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Well, as I said, I addressed the question. Our food inflation is running at 4.6 percent. That compares to 12.5 percent two years ago, when you were Prime Minister.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: So is the Prime Minister confirming that it's more expensive for a family to go to the supermarket now than it was when he became the Prime Minister?

Hon David Seymour: What do you want, deflation?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Yes, are you expecting prices to—are you expecting deflation? Is that what you're arguing for?

Hon David Seymour: Can the Prime Minister name a period in New Zealand history when we've had deflation—where prices have gone down for a sustained period—and don't economists recommend that that's not very good either?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: I would say I cannot think of a period in New Zealand's history of deflation, as the member seems to be wanting to advocate for. What I can say is this is a Government that has worked really hard to make sure we don't have wasteful spending, we don't spend \$66 billion and triple the debt and run up interest bills around the world; we actually get inflation back in the band of 1 to 3 percent, and that's what this Government's done.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Can the Prime Minister put in picture form that if inflation has halved, it's very likely that, comparatively, so have costs?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: That's right. I think when you actually think about low and middle income working New Zealanders, they want to be in a low inflationary environment, and that's what this country had been doing for a long period of time until we got the economic vandalism of the last mob, who didn't understand the economy at all.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: So is the Prime Minister agreeing with Winston Peters that the fact that inflation is increasing less fast than it used to means that prices are actually going down, which is not mathematically correct?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: That is not what he said, but for the member opposite—*[Interruption]* No, that's not what he said. For the member opposite to argue for deflation, for the member opposite to say why don't we take the midpoint of the band up to 2.5 percent; happy to have more costs labelled on working New Zealanders; happy to borrow more, tax more, spend more—that is economic madness. You ran this country into a hole economically. You've got no economic credibility. Look at that front bench. I wouldn't employ any of them in a lower middle management job.

SPEAKER: No, that's enough. That's quite enough—*[Interruption]* Mr Jackson, calm it. Could I just remind the—*[Interruption]* Sorry, Ms Woods?

Hon Dr Megan Woods: No, no, no, nothing.

SPEAKER: Yeah, nothing would be right. I just remind the Government that use of the word “you” has to be a little bit careful. I certainly did not exact any economic vandalism on the country.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: If he didn't intend to lower grocery prices when he became Prime Minister, why did both he and Nicola Willis advertise across the country that they intended to lower grocery prices for New Zealanders?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Look, the member—I don't know why you bother coming to this House every day to ask me questions on the economy. Look, you are the guy that took the keys to the car, you crashed it in an almighty ditch, you've stuffed

the economy, and we're fixing it up—that's the reality of it. You come here and argue for deflation; I don't know what you're thinking. I don't know what the new policy is. You want to borrow more, tax more, and spend more, and you want to hurt working New Zealanders—people you used to care about, but you don't care about them. You didn't back income tax relief for low and middle income working New Zealanders—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker. My question was pretty simple to the Prime Minister, about why he told New Zealanders, and why Nicola Willis told New Zealanders—there's a video of you unpacking the groceries in a kitchen, promising to make it cheaper, and the Government hasn't done that. The Prime Minister hasn't addressed—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Sorry—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: —that issue. *[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Sorry, we're going to—

Hon Chris Bishop: Go and watch the video—500,000 people have seen it.

SPEAKER: Mr Bishop, we're going to hear the point of order again, in silence.

Hon Nicola Willis: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER: No, we've got one going on.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: My point of order was pretty simple. The Prime Minister was asked why he promised New Zealanders he was going to make it cheaper to go to the supermarket when he doesn't intend to deliver that.

SPEAKER: That was the question.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Well, he then gave an answer that was highly political to a highly political question. *[Interruption]* Are there any other comments from anyone in the House? Supplementary, the Rt Hon Chris Hipkins.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Is unemployment higher or lower today than it was when he became the Prime Minister?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Well, the member understands that when a previous Government increases spending by 84 percent and it runs up inflation to 7.3 percent and has 12 to 13 interest rate rises, it slows down an economy; people lose their jobs. That's the reality of it, and that's why if you care about low and middle income working people, as all of the parties in this Government do, you actually run the economy well, because the people that get hurt are working New Zealanders. You don't care about them, because you trashed the economy.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Was Nicola Willis incorrect in the headline of August 2025, when she said that her “New supermarket plan would cut grocery prices”?

Rt Hon CHRISTOPHER LUXON: Well, Nicola Willis has done a good job of making sure fast-track provisions are available for supermarkets who want to enter New Zealand. But isn't it odd: for a man who purportedly cares about working New Zealanders, he hurts the economy—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Prime Minister's repeatedly claimed that the Government had no plans to cut grocery prices. I've just quoted directly a headline from Nicola Willis just last year saying that they were going to cut grocery prices, and he immediately just goes to attacking the Opposition. I was asking him what his Government's plan is: are they cutting grocery prices or not?

SPEAKER: Well, that is, I think, the point. The question asked about a plan; the Prime Minister was responding to that plan, but the House was exceptionally rowdy during that time.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Point of order.

Hon Nicola Willis: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER: Point of order, the—I'll go to the Rt Hon Winston Peters.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Mr Speaker, I hope you observed that last so-called supplementary question, which one would expect would be spontaneous from the questioner, but it wasn't. He, in an unparalleled situation in other Western democracies, is standing there in our Parliament, holding up his phone and reading a question that could possibly have been prepared by somebody else. That's not how this democracy should operate.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER: No, no—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order—

SPEAKER: No, hang on, I'll just respond to that, because I could actually see what he was doing from here. I think it's probably not the most desirable thing—phones are not prohibited in here; use of them for communication is. He was reading, I think, a googled headline from a period of time, and I could see it from here—but that speaks volumes for anyone that is watching it.

Hon Nicola Willis: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I proceed with caution because, obviously, some matters are matters of privilege, but it is—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Just wait. We'll hear the point of order in silence.

Hon Nicola Willis: Some issues are matters of privilege, which can be addressed via that means. However, it is simply wrong for a member in this House to claim that a headline is a quote. The member should know the difference.

SPEAKER: That's true, yeah—and that would be a good response in an answer.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker—happy to quote directly from—

SPEAKER: No, no, I don't want you—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: —the article, where—

SPEAKER: No, no.

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: —Nicola Willis promises to drive down grocery prices.

SPEAKER: Mr Hipkins—we've got a perfect demonstration for anyone watching this afternoon that it is election year, and tensions and arguments tend to heighten, but behaviour should not deteriorate. That was not a point of order. Are you seeking leave? Because if you're seeking leave, I'll deny it.

RMA REFORM

Question No. 5

Hon MELISSA LEE (National) (14:24) to the **Minister responsible for RMA Reform:** What recent announcements has he made about Eden Park?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP (Minister responsible for RMA Reform) (14:24): I was thrilled this week to announce that the Government is making significant changes to local planning rules that have been holding Eden Park back from its full potential. Last year,

we launched an investigation into whether those rules were unnecessarily limiting Eden Park's ability to host major events. There was public consultation, and we found that the rules were restrictive, out of step with modern stadium use, and were constraining economic activity. The changes we are making will allow Eden Park, New Zealand's largest stadium, to host more major events that bring significant benefits to the local and national economy.

Hon Melissa Lee: What do the new settings mean for Eden Park?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: Under the new settings, Eden Park will be able to host up to 12 large concerts and 20 medium-sized concerts per year as permitted activities, without needing resource consent. That's up from 12 currently, which, interestingly, were not permitted to be from more than six different artists or acts. The changes also enable a wider range of events, including exhibitions, displays, markets, fairs, and cultural and community events. Concerts can take place on any day, must finish by 11 p.m., and can run for eight hours. That's a significant increase on the current maximum of five hours on a weekday and six hours on a Saturday. Night-time sports games will be permitted on any day, including Sundays, provided noise standards are met.

Hon Melissa Lee: When can New Zealanders expect to see the benefits of these changes?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: The good people of Auckland don't have too long to wait. The changes will be in place in April 2026—just a couple of months away. We know that this will deliver tangible benefits. Over the last three years, 14 Auckland shows, including Coldplay—not a great band—and Pearl Jam—a very good band—generated \$33.7 million for the local economy, with nearly half a million attendees. There'll be so many concerts; it'll be over to many people to pick who they like. These common-sense changes will enable Eden Park to operate like a modern, world-class stadium.

Hon Melissa Lee: What feedback has he seen on these changes?

Hon Ginny Andersen: Any from Don McGlashan?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: If Don McGlashan could sell out Eden Park, I'll be the first one in the mosh pit.

Hon David Seymour: I don't think there'll be a mosh pit, mate.

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: No, probably not for Don McGlashan. There's been a significant amount of support for these actions. Unsurprisingly, Eden Park Chief Executive Nick Sautner said, "It's a historic day...[for] our city and our country." I also want to quote local Kingsland pub owner Steve Gillett, who said, "It's going to be a huge difference for local businesses", and I know that the local business associations are very supportive of this. The good deputy mayor of Auckland, Desley Simpson: "a real boost for jobs, hospitality, [and] local businesses ... help secure [Eden Park's] future as a truly world-class venue."

HEALTH

Question No. 6

TĀKUTA FERRIS (Te Tai Tonga) (14:27) to the **Minister of Health:** Does the Minister agree with the former Minister of Health's statement that "I want to see IMPBs with the ability to have commissioning authority. I will empower local health decisions and Māori health providers with more autonomy than they have had for some years"; if so, why does the Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Amendment Bill remove statutory functions from Iwi Māori Partnership Boards?

Hon SIMEON BROWN (Minister of Health) (14:28): I agree with the Hon Dr Shane Reti, who was very clear that Iwi Māori Partnership Boards (IMPBs) should be providing advice on the health needs of Māori across the country and that they should not be involved in the procurement of healthcare services. That's why we're strengthening the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee and clarifying the role of Iwi Māori Partnership Boards. Local IMPBs will continue to engage with local Māori communities about their health needs, aspirations, and health outcomes, and provide that advice to the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee. That advice will then support decisions made by the Minister and Health New Zealand's board. This is about putting patients back at the centre and ensuring the voices of Māori communities are clearly heard where they can make the most difference.

Tākuta Ferris: Given the removal of statutory functions from Iwi Māori Partnership Boards under this bill, how do decisions such as dismantling Te Aka Whai Ora align with the Government's promise to give Māori more autonomy and commissioning authority over their health outcomes?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Well, the Government's been very clear that we believe in having one health system, and we have a clear focus on our health targets. Ultimately, that is what will drive better performance and better outcomes for all New Zealanders, including Māori, and I would just point out to the member that when the previous Government removed the health targets, vaccination rates for Māori two-year-olds went from 89.3 percent down to 64.8 percent. Our focus is actually on improving immunisation rates, and we're pleased to have seen improvements on all of our health targets.

Tākuta Ferris: How does the Minister justify this bill in light of statements from Te Kāhui Hauora o Te Taihū and other Iwi Māori Partnership Boards that this is "another assault on Te Tiriti o Waitangi" and "further proof that the Government is not listening and is not interested in equitable outcomes for all"?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: I say to that member: our Government is focused on improving health outcomes for all New Zealanders, and the outcome of the previous Government's removal of the health targets had an incredibly poor result on Māori. As I just said, the vaccination rate for two-year-olds, for Māori, went from 89.3 percent down to 64.8 percent. Whilst the last Government was focused on restructuring the health system in the middle of a pandemic, we are focused on improving results for all New Zealanders, including Māori.

Mariameno Kapa-Kingi: How many times, if at all, did the Minister personally meet with Iwi Māori Partnership Boards before introducing the Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Amendment Bill, which removes these statutory functions?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: I've engaged with the Hauora Māori Advisory Committee. I've had meetings with Iwi Māori Partnership Boards, and I'm happy to answer that question in writing.

Hon Tama Potaka: Can the Minister let us know what this Government has been doing, and is doing, to improve the two-year-old Māori immunisation rate?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: This Government has reintroduced our health targets, which is refocusing the health system on delivery. We've seen an improvement in the outcome of that target for Māori children. It's now up to 68 percent. It still has further to go. We've also invested in the Immunising our Tamariki programme, which is putting vaccines in the arms of Māori children up and down our country, working with hauora Māori providers to deliver services in communities across the country to make sure we're actually getting the outcomes that we need.

Mariameno Kapa-Kingi: Does the Minister accept that moving iwi from statutory partners to advisers of a Minister-appointed advisory committee weakens the Crown-Māori partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: No.

Mariameno Kapa-Kingi: Sorry, I didn't hear the answer.

SPEAKER: Well, he can repeat it, but just the answer.

Hon SIMEON BROWN: No.

FINANCE

Question No. 7

Hon BARBARA EDMONDS (Labour—Mana) (14:32) to the **Minister of Finance:** Does she stand by all her statements and actions?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS (Minister of Finance) (14:32): Yes.

Hon Barbara Edmonds: Is a youth unemployment rate of 16.5 percent a sign of a growing economy?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: No.

Hon Barbara Edmonds: When she says there are 15,000 more jobs, is that a net increase or loss given there are 32,000 fewer jobs than when she took office?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: The member is confused in the difference between unemployment and employment. Unemployment is looking at the ratio of those who are actively seeking work and those who are able to find it; employment measures how many people are in work. The 15,000 figure corresponds to employment, which is to say that there are 15,000 more people in jobs in the latest quarter for which we have data than there was in the quarter before.

Hon Barbara Edmonds: How can she be trusted on growing the economy when unemployment continues to rise and the Reserve Bank here today now forecasts unemployment to stay higher for longer?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Because the actions that our Government has taken have supported the economy to be stronger than would otherwise have been the case, and the counterfactual is real: it is a Government that would have kept taxes higher, meaning that 1.2 million New Zealanders would be \$60 worse off a fortnight; it is a Government that would not have done any of the savings or consolidations that we have done, which would have meant fiscal policy would have supported inflation to be higher and interest rates to be higher; it is a Government that would have opposed fast-track legislation that is supporting the creation of thousands—

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The current Minister of Finance has no responsibility for actions that an alternative Government may or may not have taken had she not been elected to the office of the Minister of Finance. This isn't about what the previous Government did; it's about her assertions of what a re-elected Labour Government would have done. She (a) doesn't know that, and (b) has no responsibility for it even if she did have a view on it. *[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Please, don't interrupt a point of order when it's being taken. I think the point is that the question itself was one that invited that sort of answer, by asking how a Minister could be trusted. I think that's right on the edge of what's reasonable. I think the answer in that event was reasonable. We'll go to the next supplementary.

Hon Barbara Edmonds: How can she claim that “inflation is looking largely under control” when inflation increased for the last five quarters and the Reserve Bank has now forecast for it to increase faster?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: Because context is everything. It is the case that we have come from a period where inflation was out of the target band for three years, reaching a high of more than 7 percent. It is also the case that the Reserve Bank in their monetary policy statement today says that they think it is highly likely that inflation will be back in band in the next quarter.

Hon Barbara Edmonds: Will she take responsibility for any increase in interest rates given she always has taken credit for bringing them down?

Hon NICOLA WILLIS: As I outlined in my answer to the primary question earlier, it is the case that the Government takes responsibility for whether or not our fiscal policy decisions support or hinder the Reserve Bank and its job of fighting inflation. Our first legislative action as a new Government was to make it crystal clear that the Reserve Bank’s mandate is to fight inflation and we’ve consistently been their mate, ensuring that rather than pouring fuel on the inflation fire we’ve had sensible fiscal policy, which was not the case under the previous Government.

IMMIGRATION

Question No. 8

PAULO GARCIA (National—New Lynn) (14:36) to the **Minister of Immigration:** What update can she provide on the Active Investor Plus visa?

Hon ERICA STANFORD (Minister of Immigration) (14:36): Less than a year after it was refreshed, the Active Investor Plus (AIP) visa has been an incredible success, with a pipeline of \$3.39 billion in investment and growing. Already, \$1.05 billion has been invested, with a further \$2.34 billion expected to flow in the next six months. Investments are supporting growth across key sectors including tech, healthcare, aged care, horticulture, and digital media. The over 570 applications from around the world show there is strong confidence in our direction. I’m proud that we have delivered a visa that is attracting incredible investors who want to contribute their capital, skills, knowledge, and expertise to support New Zealand businesses.

Paulo Garcia: Why was it important to refresh the visa?

Hon ERICA STANFORD: Unfortunately, the investor visa introduced last term was overly complex and too restrictive in some places while being too permissive in others. It also didn’t reflect the realities of either investors or the investment ecosystem. This resulted in just 116 applications and around \$70 million in investment in New Zealand over 2½ years. This meant that the New Zealand investment sector and businesses were missing out on access to valuable capital. It needed to be completely refreshed, and I’m proud of the work that we’ve done with the experts in the immigration and investment sectors to redesign the visa. After only 10 months, we’ve received 573 applications valued at \$3.4 billion. This is a game-changer.

Paulo Garcia: What feedback has she received on the new visa settings?

Hon ERICA STANFORD: We’ve received great feedback on the new settings. For example, last week MA Financial director Enda Stankard said that the \$40 million investment in Queenstown’s largest hospitality group—which Active Investor Plus played a key role in—“was one of the first examples of a serious investment being made and deployed into a New Zealand business.” Immigration adviser David Cooper heralded

the changes as a turning point for New Zealand's economy. These policy changes recognise the immense value that these individuals bring and puts New Zealand back on the global investment map.

Paulo Garcia: What difference is the visa making for New Zealand?

Hon ERICA STANFORD: Over \$1 billion invested in New Zealand already, with another \$2 billion expected in the next six months, provides incredible opportunities for both new and established businesses looking to grow and to employ more Kiwis. The huge success of this visa has already created more higher-paying jobs for New Zealanders. For example, Supa Energy has received AIP investment from Motion Capital and is a climate change - focused venture capital fund. The investment will help community energy projects installing micro roof solar for schools, businesses, and community groups. With this investment, they've created more high-paying jobs in New Zealand. The \$2 billion of investment in the pipeline will do so much more of exactly this.

ENERGY

Question No. 9

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Labour—Wigram) (14:39) to the **Minister for Energy:** What is the estimated life cycle cost of the LNG terminal compared to the projected levy revenue over the 15- and 20-year life cycles described in his Cabinet paper?

Hon SIMEON BROWN (Acting Minister for Energy) (14:40): The life-cycle cost of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal is subject to commercial negotiations. However, I can say that the levy will be designed to cover both the capital and operating cost of the terminal. Independent advice shows that the cost of the levy will be significantly outweighed by the reduction in cost to consumers, who will be better off by \$50 per year.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: What are the specific significant caveats provided by respondents through the procurement process that led him to caution Cabinet that costs should be considered indicative only?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: There is a procurement process that the LNG terminal is subject to, and as we go through that process, ultimately, that will determine the final terms and conditions. In regards to the independent advice, as I said in my primary answer, the independent advice shows that the cost of the levy will be significantly outweighed by the reduction in cost to consumers by approximately \$50 per year.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Is there potential for the gas tax to be even higher for households if the fiscal risk to the Crown, identified in his Cabinet paper, of delayed levy recovery or cost escalation occurs?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Well, the independent advice shows that the cost of the levy will be significantly outweighed by the reduction in cost to consumers, who will be better off by \$50 per year. We are going through a procurement process at the moment, which, I think, is due to be completed later this year, but, ultimately, we are doing this to address the dry-year risk and to lower prices for consumers. I encourage the Opposition to get on board.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Point of order, Mr Speaker. That was a very specific question pertaining to the Cabinet paper and a fiscal risk that was identified in the Cabinet paper. The fact that there could be, through either delayed levies or cost escalations—it was

asking the Minister if there was a risk to consumers of higher taxes. He didn't address that. He talked about the scheme generally, but, given it's specifically drawn from the Cabinet paper, I think the Minister needs to at least address that.

SPEAKER: I think he had already addressed that in the previous answer. The Minister may want to make it clearer.

Hon SIMEON BROWN: As I've said in previous answers, this is subject to commercial negotiations. We're going through a process.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Is the Government's back-up plan to (a) to raise the levy or (b) to fund from general taxation if the unknown commercial revenue, referenced in this Cabinet paper, does not eventuate?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Our focus here is on solving the dry-year risk challenge and to do that rapidly. We're going through a procurement process at the moment, subject to commercial negotiations, but what I can tell the member is that independent advice shows that the cost of the levy will be significantly outweighed by the reduction in costs to consumers, and I encourage the member to get on board.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: What are the other levy-setting mechanisms his Cabinet paper references to recover any escalation in costs with the LNG terminal?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: The Government has agreed to go through a procurement approach. That is subject to commercial negotiations. We've said there'll be a levy on the industry; that, ultimately, the detail of that will still need to be designed. But the independent advice—and this is the good news—is that it shows that the cost of the levy will be significantly outweighed by the cost to consumers, who will be better off by \$50 per year.

Hon Dr Megan Woods: Why should a family already struggling with their power bill have any confidence they won't be forced to bail out an LNG white elephant through higher taxes just so the Minister can look like he's doing something?

Hon SIMEON BROWN: Well, what I'll say is we're actually focused on solving the energy challenges this country has, whereas her policy when she was in Government was to build a lake on top of the mountains, which wouldn't deliver a single bit of energy until 2037 and put at risk thousands of jobs, and had power prices hitting \$800 a megawatt hour. We're not prepared, on this side of the House, to do that. This policy will reduce power prices for consumers, and I encourage the Opposition to get on board.

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Question No. 10

CARL BATES (National—Whanganui) (14:44) to the **Minister for Tourism and Hospitality:** What recent announcements has she made about supporting major events in New Zealand?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON (Minister for Tourism and Hospitality) (14:45): Last week, I announced a suite of events, covering all the way from the Bay of Islands to Tekapō, as part of our Government's \$70 million major events and tourism package. The events cover sports, food, culture, and innovation, running from May to December this year, providing something for everyone and driving economic activity and confidence throughout the country. Tourism and major events are a crucial part of our Government's focus on economic growth. More world-class events means more customers, more visitors, more jobs, and, of course, a growing economy.

Carl Bates: What events are being funded by Events Boost?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON: This second tranche includes over 15 events, from the thrill of the solo trans-Tasman yacht racing in Ōpua to the world-class culinary experiences in Wellington, dazzling Matariki celebrations in Rotorua, the Deaf International Basketball Federation 3x3 World Cup in Auckland, and epic running festivals in Tekapō and the Nelson-Tasman region. These events showcase the best of New Zealand and promise unforgettable experiences for visitors and locals alike. Where there are existing events being funded, investment will support new elements and attract more participants and international visitors to New Zealand. In total, we will be supporting over 70 events, either directly or indirectly, through the major events and tourism package.

Carl Bates: What benefit does she expect to see as a result of this announcement?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON: When major events come to town, the economic ripple effect is huge. For example, for every dollar spent on a live performance, \$3.20 is returned in benefits to the community. Events don't just bring more visitors and economic benefits; they bring life and energy to our cities and towns, creating vibrant communities and unforgettable experiences. That's why we've invested in an exciting calendar of events, bringing vibrancy to our towns and cities and giving even more reasons for visitors to choose New Zealand.

Carl Bates: What feedback has she seen on this announcement?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON: The feedback has been fantastic. WellingtonNZ CEO Mark Oldershaw has said, "The funding represents a significant and timely boost for Wellington's events sector. It plays a pivotal role in Wellington's wider economy, boosting jobs and spend across hospitality, accommodation, retail, and tourism while infusing the city with energy, creativity, and atmosphere." Tourism Industry Aotearoa CE Rebecca Ingram said, "I'm delighted to see some of the events I know and love alongside new events being given a boost. That combination is what keeps our events calendar exciting and relevant. We are setting the stage for an extraordinary year." These events will bring vibrancy to our regions and deliver lasting benefits for communities and businesses across New Zealand.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Question No. 11

TEANAU TUIONO (Green) (14:48) to the **Minister of Climate Change:** Has he seen the Copernicus Climate Change Service's recent finding that 2025 ranked among one of the hottest years for the Western Pacific region; if so, what actions has he taken to ensure Aotearoa is committed to ambitious climate action?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON (Acting Minister of Climate Change) (14:48): No.

Teanau Tuiono: Does he accept that reducing emissions in Aotearoa ensures that New Zealanders can live in a more stable climate and ensures that our Pacific neighbours are not faced with increasingly severe impacts on their infrastructure, biodiversity, food security, public health, and economies?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON: Yes.

Teanau Tuiono: How does he reconcile his statement, if at all, that the Government remains committed to our domestic and international climate change commitments with the Minister for Resources' decision to shut down the possibility of New Zealand signing up to a road map away from using fossil fuels at the annual global climate summit last year?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON: I'd simply advise the member that this coalition Government stands committed to its international climate commitments and its domestic commitments, as has been previously stated many times.

Teana Tuiono: Did he raise any concerns with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister for Pacific Peoples when the decision was made to cut \$100 million per year from New Zealand's annual Pacific climate aid budget?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON: I don't have that information to hand, but if the member wishes to put it in writing, I'll provide the answer for him.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Why is he answering a question from someone who comes from Rarotonga to a country called New Zealand [*Interruption*]

SPEAKER: Just hold on. Do not call out or make any other noises while a question is being asked.

Question interrupted.

Points of Order

QUESTIONING A MEMBER'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN PROCEEDINGS

Rt Hon Chris Hipkins: Point of order. All members in this House are equal. For a member of the House to stand up and question whether someone's entitled to ask a question because of their country of origin is pure racism and you should have stopped him at the beginning.

SPEAKER: I most certainly did not hear that in the opening of Mr Peter's question. I will review the *Hansard*.

Rawiri Waititi: Come on, Mr Speaker!

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer: Come on; it's all the time.

SPEAKER: Who spoke then?

Rawiri Waititi: Yeah, I did.

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer: All of us.

SPEAKER: What are you saying?

Rawiri Waititi: He just said that he was from Rarotonga and he's got Māori whakapapa. That's just titanic that we allow that type of question to happen in this House.

SPEAKER: I didn't hear, I said, and I said I'll review the Standing Orders and I'll take action as a result of that. Mr Peters, if you want to continue your question without any sort of gratuitous comment against any other member in the House.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Now, Mr Speaker, I expect to have my question completed, then people will see the logicality of what I'm asking. I'm asking why he is answering a question to do with a country's name, from somebody who came here from a country called Rarotonga—a Realm country of New Zealand—and decides without any consultation with the New Zealand people that he will change the country's name.

SPEAKER: No, sorry, that's not an acceptable question at all.

Hon Member: Baiting.

SPEAKER: And that is the—I want that to be the last time that those sort of questions are directed so personally at members of this House.

Teana Tuiono: Point of order. Perhaps to assist the House, I would encourage the Minister to look further afield and to recognise the whakapapa of others who also have

whakapapa to the Tai Tokerau as well, which would make this question incredibly valid and relevant.

SPEAKER: I'm not sure which question you're referring to. Your own question is valid; there's no question about that. We'll move on to—

Teanau Tuiono: Supplementary. Do I ask that question again? Because he didn't really answer it.

SPEAKER: Yes, you can.

Oral Questions to Ministers

CLIMATE CHANGE

Question No. 11

Question resumed.

TEANAU TUIONO (Green) (14:52): Did he raise any concerns with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister for Pacific Peoples when the decision was made to cut \$100 million per year from New Zealand's annual Pacific climate aid budget?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON (Acting Minister of Climate Change) (14:53): With respect, Mr Speaker, I did answer that question.

Teanau Tuiono: Sorry, it got lost in the last five minutes. Why, at a time when rivers are running through homes in Banks Peninsula and the ocean is on the doorsteps of families in the Pacific, is this Government choosing to funnel billions of dollars into roads and a gas import facility that lock us into more climate-warming emissions?

Hon SCOTT SIMPSON: The answer is very simple: because the coalition Government takes a pragmatic and sensible approach to climate change issues. I invite the member and the members of his party to adopt the more practical approach, maybe, of some of their predecessors like Rod Donald and the late Jeanette Fitzsimons.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Question No. 12

Hon KIERAN McANULTY (Labour) (14:53) to the Minister for Infrastructure: Does he stand by his statements following the release of the Infrastructure Commission's National Infrastructure Plan?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP (Minister for Infrastructure) (14:54): In context, yes.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Does he stand by his statement that "Where we can build durable consensus, we should.", and, if so, will he support Labour's call to require all Government infrastructure projects to go through independent assurance by the Infrastructure Commission's Infrastructure Priorities Programme?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: As a general proposition, I am in favour of greater assurance. The Infrastructure Commission is not equipped to do all infrastructure projects that go through the Crown books right now. They're a small agency and they would not have the capacity or financial resource to do every project, but it is also true that we have already started a process around strengthening assurance capability inside the Government between Treasury and the Infrastructure Commission, and I'm happy to talk to the member around some changes that we may wish to make there, because I think it's in everyone's interest that we get better value for money from what we spend.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Is the Minister aware that during scrutiny week last year, the Infrastructure Commission indicated they did have the capacity, and, in particular, they

felt that the New Zealand Transport Agency's (NZTA) infrastructure projects should go through that process?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: Well, I don't have those comments that they made off-hand, but the investor management system, run by Treasury across that, basically collates every investment the Government's making, which is billions of dollars every quarter. It is definitely true to say the Infrastructure Commission does not have the capacity to do that right now. That's not to say that in the future they couldn't, with extra resources. As I say, we're giving some consideration to how we might get a better arrangement between the commission and Treasury, and I'm really happy to talk to the member offline around that. When it comes to the transport agency, as a Crown entity with its own balance sheet and with its own funding stream through fuel taxes and road-user charges, historically the arrangement has been that they make their own investment decisions in the same way that Kāinga Ora, for example, makes its investment decisions as a Crown entity as well. Is it possible that there are better ways around that? Possibly, and we'll give that some consideration.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Does he therefore disagree with the NZTA-commissioned Kanofski review, which states, "NZTA does not have a rigorous independent investor assurance process.", and, if so, why wouldn't he therefore take up the Infrastructure Commission's offer to do that work?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: I think, as a general proposition, it is true that NZTA could have been better in the past and could be better in the future around value for money of transport investments. It is true to say, as a country, we spend a lot of money on infrastructure, but as the commission points out, we are in the bottom in the OECD for efficiency of spend and we all need to do better.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Does he therefore agree with the National Infrastructure Plan's recommendation to "align investment expectations with available revenue"?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: As a general proposition, yes, we'll be responding to the plan as a Government, as required by statute, in June, but it is true to say, in transport, that available demand for transport spending far exceeds revenue. That is true under this Government, and, actually, it was true under the previous Government in which Crown loans, borrowing, and capital injections have been put into the National Land Transport Fund at a level at which fuel tax revenue is now about 50 percent of transport spending. Of course, that crowds out capital that could be used for other things, which I think is the commission's point, and that is something that the country will have to grapple with.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Is spending \$228 million on Auckland light rail without a single metre or piece of track to show for it an example of good infrastructure spending?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: The Government's views on previous light rail projects are well-known. I would just say that one of the ways in which we get into issues like light rail is that promises are made that far exceed capacity to cost or pay. The point the Infrastructure Commission has—

Hon Member: \$56 billion?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: \$56 billion? Oh, that was the cost, I think, of your twin tunnel plan at the last election, across the harbour—so, you know. The point the commission has made—*[Interruption]*

SPEAKER: Everyone, it's not a cross-House conversation.

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: It's a serious issue. The point the commission has made is that everything has to be paid for, and as a country, we have to prioritise.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Does he at least, therefore, accept that having NZTA projects independently assessed by the Infrastructure Commission could help give the sector the certainty and assurance that they've been asking for and help prevent the situation where promises were made to the tune of \$56 billion, and yet there is no clear plan on how to pay for it?

Hon Shane Jones: You mean like rail to the airport?

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Should I start the question again?

SPEAKER: No, you've finished it.

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: There's a range of important transport projects under way right now. We're required to, as a Government, respond to the National Infrastructure Plan in June. We'll be doing that, and we'll be engaging with the Opposition as part of that. I think the commission's plan is a wake-up call for many people across the Parliament and, frankly, the country that we've got to lift our game collectively when it comes to infrastructure.

Rt Hon Winston Peters: Does the Minister agree that the rail sector, which has spent 61c in every infrastructure dollar on maintenance and renewals in recent years and is now forecast to spend 75c, is the stand-out example of good asset management thanks to a nonsense approach?

Hon CHRIS BISHOP: The rail sector has done a better job than others when it comes to maintaining its assets. It is also true to say that there is significant catch-up renewal work required in both Wellington and Auckland to maintain what we have in terms of the metropolitan rail network in both those centres. That is another demand on the Crown books that successive Governments have had to deal with and will continue to deal with. It's also the case that the metropolitan rail networks in Auckland and Wellington play a significant role in public transport in both cities, and we're looking forward to City Rail Link opening in the second half of the year—the exact date is TBC—and we're looking forward to that opening.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Supplementary.

SPEAKER: No. I think you've used up all the available supplementaries.

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Yes, but you have discretion, so I thought I'd try.

SPEAKER: Yeah, I do, but we're over time.

Debates

GENERAL DEBATE

Rt Hon CHRIS HIPKINS (Leader of the Opposition) (15:02): I move, *That the House take note of miscellaneous business.*

In the last few days and weeks, we have seen an ugly side to New Zealand politics on display in this House, with outright race-baiting and, in some cases, direct racism being expressed in this House—attacks on our Chinese and Asian communities in New Zealand, attacks on our Indian communities in New Zealand, and, just today, attacks on whether those who have Pasifika heritage are entitled to ask questions in this House. What have we heard from the Government side on those attacks? Absolutely nothing. My challenge to the National Party is absolutely clear in election year: what are they going to do to combat and challenge that racism that we are already seeing in this year's election campaign? It is totally unacceptable, and it is totally unacceptable for those who are leading our country to say nothing and do nothing whilst Ministers in their own Government are doing that to the people of New Zealand.

New Zealanders deserve better, and they deserve leadership from their Government, and they are seeing nothing. They're quite happy to stand by while members of their own Government attack our Chinese community, our Indian community, our Pasifika community—migrants to New Zealand who work damn hard and contribute to New Zealand—and it's an absolute disgrace. Our diversity as a country is one of the things that makes us strong, and our Government should celebrate it, not cast aspersions on it.

That isn't what I was going to talk about today, because watching the Government patting themselves on the back and celebrating a job well done when it comes to supposedly fixing the basics shows just how out of touch they are with the day-to-day lives of New Zealanders. As Kiwis go to the supermarket, they will have Nicola Willis' promise to drive down grocery prices ringing in their ears.

Today, we had the Government deny that that was ever their goal. They had the Government say that, actually, lower grocery prices were completely off the table, despite the fact that only a few months ago, this very same Government was saying that its goal was to drive down grocery prices. They have given up on that.

We had the Government today saying that unemployment was nothing to be concerned about, which is a slight improvement on what they were saying last year, when they were saying that people who lost their jobs shouldn't take it seriously—160,000-odd New Zealanders out of work do take that personally, and this Government is completely out of touch on the fact that unemployment is hurting.

We saw the Reserve Bank deliver its verdict today: inflation staying higher for longer, unemployment staying higher for longer, interest rates going up faster than they were going to as of November, when they delivered their last update. That is all on this Government. If the Government was responsible when those figures were improving, the Government is responsible as those figures are getting worse. This is a Government that wants to claim all the credit when interest rates go down, but when interest rates start going up again, oh, well, that's just the independent Reserve Bank making those decisions. It is the independent Reserve Bank making those decisions, but if the Government think their actions were what lowered interest rates, then their actions are what is driving interest rates back up again.

I'll quote directly from Nicola Willis, when she said, "Kiwis are being pummelled every time they shop for food, with hard-working people being forced to empty their bank accounts just to half-fill their trolleys." That was back in mid-2023. Well, what's happened? After two and a half years of this Government, it's gotten more expensive to go to the supermarket after they fixed it. What did they say just under a year and a half ago, October 2024? Nicola Willis, or the Government, declared, "The era of crushing prices is now over." Well, what's happened since then? Prices have gone up more—food prices up, electricity prices up, council rates up. What's one of the things driving up council rates? The fact that this Government have cut funding for council infrastructure projects, so councils are filling the void by hiking up rates even more.

Administered inflation, the component of inflation that the Government directly has the ability to control, is one of the main reasons inflation is now back above 3 percent, and that is directly on this Government. It is the bit of inflation they can do something about. It is the bit that they have an ability to directly control, and it is one of the major things driving inflation above the 3 percent target band.

This is a Government far more interested in blaming everybody else for the country's problems than accepting responsibility for the fact that they are making things worse.

HŪHANA LYNDON (Green) (15:08): I'd like to acknowledge up and down the country where community has stood with iwi Māori for Te Tiriti o Waitangi, seen across community, across our peoples, celebrating the centrality of Te Tiriti, like we did at the Whare Rūnanga, like we did at the pōwhiri for our parliamentary colleagues as well as for community, as well as for Ngāi Tahu, who came to Waitangi this year. Māori and community stand up for Te Tiriti.

As we see the need for a dedicated Māori voice in Parliament, I have a member's bill that brings forth the ability for us to entrench that dedicated Māori voice. It is now time for us as community to stand up and address the constitutional inequality that Māori have suffered for generations. For 159 years, Māori have been here in Whare Pāremata with dedicated Māori seats. These Māori seats provide a space for inclusion, for, also, accountability for Māori to our constituents. That is different to the 33 Māori voices that we have in Whare Pāremata today. These Māori seats correct an opportunity for us as community and iwi Māori to be here at the tēpu of Kāwanatanga.

Dedicated Māori seats are important, and we need to entrench them. Why? Because from a simple majority, this House can abolish that dedicated Māori voice, the dedicated Māori voice that is essential for us to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I pay tribute to the many voices over the 159 years that we have had dedicated Māori seats in Whare Pāremata. That representation is *tuku iho—tuku iho*—and it needs to be dedicated today and now into the future. It's important for us as Aotearoa that, if we are going to have a thriving democracy, dedicated Māori representation is required here today and, also, into the future.

I hark back to the fact that this dedicated Māori voice is just one man, one vote—no different to any other seat that sits here. Māori have a choice to be on the general or the Māori electoral roll—and, in fact, it's getting harder for us, too. It's getting harder for us, too, to be able to change rolls, because there are restrictions on the way in which Māori can choose to be on the general roll or Māori electorates. That's the issue right now: we seek to entrench these Māori seats so that we have the ability to exercise that dedicated Māori voice in te Whare Pāremata. That's the challenge for us as iwi Māori: while we might have some 33 voices in the Whare that have Māori descent, it is the dedicated, accountable to Māori, constituency voice that is required. So I pay tribute to the way in which we all come with our whakapapa, we all come with our diversity, but, at the end of the day, if we don't correct this constitutional error that has come over our heads as iwi Māori for 159 years, then where are we as a country?

This is only a small step to democracy. The entrenchment of Māori seats is well overdue, and the ability for us, just as we did in local government, to see the way that communities stood up for Māori seats and Māori constituencies, and Māori wards in local government, is a tribute to the way that communities are standing up for Te Tiriti. Ultimately, a thriving Aotearoa benefits when Māori are at the table. What's wrong with having a Māori voice at the table in a dedicated way that is accountable to our people? For good or for bad, I am at the table too and I am here in a different capacity—I need the here [*tie*] back to our people, and that is what dedicated Māori seats offer us. He aha te hē o tērā—he aha te hē o tērā? [*Where is the wrong in that—where is the wrong in that?*]

If we want to see the way in which our country and our community can thrive, and if we can create a pathway for Māori to be able to be at the table, entrenched—*motuhake*—why can't we do that as a country? Why can't this House all get in behind a member's bill that has been around for a while, but also provide the voter choice for Māori to be able to change the electoral roll? We know that there have been changes right now in the

Electoral Act, last year, that will restrict the way in which Māori as new voters can come on to the roll.

Time is short, and if we want to see a Government that really genuinely upholds Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it's one where Māori seats are dedicated and entrenched.

Hon LOUISE UPSTON (Minister for Tourism and Hospitality) (15:13): This afternoon, I want to highlight an area where the National Party and the National Government, in coalition with New Zealand First and ACT, are fixing the basics and building the future. That, of course, is tourism and hospitality. Figures out last week, on Friday, showed overseas visitor arrivals reached 3.51 million people in the year prior to December 2025—an increase of 196,000 people. That puts us at 90 percent of pre-COVID levels. That is an extraordinary result in the year.

I want to just give you some reasons why we've seen that increase. Why is tourism and hospitality so important? It's our second-largest export. It employs one in 10 New Zealanders. So when we talk about growing tourism and hospitality, it is growing the employment opportunities of New Zealanders. That's exactly what it's all about.

An interesting fact from just yesterday, when I was focusing on a workshop with the Wellington Chamber of Commerce: 24 percent of those who work in tourism and hospitality identify as neurodiverse. So it's also a fantastic opportunity to ensure that a wider range of New Zealanders get employment.

Let's just look at the last week alone, a week when the New Zealand International Convention Centre finally opened, something that we talked about in this House in 2013, and, Mr Speaker, I know what an important role you played in that. To have it open last week, there is potentially \$90 million of economic impact—33,000 additional international visitors coming from that alone.

If you think about the other events we had last week: an amazing event on the water, SailGP in Auckland; here in Wellington we had the Women's Amateur Golf Championship; we had the Indigenous All Stars NRL match in Hamilton—wasn't that an amazing show? Of course, I have to say it again, what did we announce this week?

Tom Rutherford: Oh, State of O!

Hon LOUISE UPSTON: State of O—State of Origin, coming to Auckland, coming to New Zealand, moving outside Australia for the first time. I think, actually, more than just quietly, big rounds of applause around the House, because we know, in terms of events like that, it will have a massive impact on the number of visitors coming to New Zealand. It's only possible because we've changed the rules at Eden Park. We would not have got the State of Origin without those changes.

This is a Government that is really fixing the basics and building the future—change by change, investment by investment—by making decisions that we know have an impact. If I think about the announcements last Tuesday in Events Boost, supporting events across our regions from Ōpua, Nelson Tasman, AIMS Games in Tauranga, an extra boost to Wellington on a Plate—you name it. That's another 15 events that will mean more visitors spreading out into our towns, cities, and regions, which means those job opportunities aren't just concentrated in our cities but they are going to every corner of New Zealand.

When our Government talks about economic growth, we are taking the steps day to day, week to week, making decisions that we know will have an impact. As I said, those results, we are now at 90 percent of pre-COVID levels of international visitors. When I set the target a year ago to get back to the 2019 levels by the end of 2026, there were quite

a few naysayers, but, actually, it just shows that when you have a clear plan, when you have a Tourism Growth Roadmap, and you chip away at it, you work with the industry, you hear the sector, you absolutely roll out the decisions of what they know will work, you back them as an industry, you back them as a sector, and support them with Government investment, it pays off. That's exactly what we are seeing.

When the Government talks about economic growth, it's not about economic growth for the Government's sake. It is because we know that when we have additional visitors, it means that a shop will have more customers, a café will have more customers, there will be more customers going into a visitor experience and staying in a local motel. That means that the employer is able to take on more staff, extend the hours of those that they have working for them, lift their wages, and that is what makes an enormous difference to households up and down New Zealand. That is why we are absolutely doing everything to grow tourism and hospitality. That's why we have an ambitious target to increase the number of visitors, and it is working. We are building the future, and National is doing it.

Rt Hon WINSTON PETERS (Minister of Foreign Affairs) (15:18): The time has come for a decision on the future of the Māori seats. It has been said many times, but it's a vitally undeniable fact: the Royal Commission on the Electoral System in 1986 stated that with the implementation of MMP, it would create a more representative Parliament and the original justification for separate Māori seats would no longer exist. This point cannot be ignored.

The Māori Party themselves don't want the Māori seats. They say they don't want this colonial construct. They want a separate Parliament, separate laws, separate land. They hold the majority of the Māori seats and do not turn up to Parliament, disregard the rules and processes, and show utter disdain for the system that gives them the seats they hold. They represent no one. They have proven the seats they hold are no longer relevant and do not serve their original purpose. We have just had the referendum on local Māori wards. With the current Māori seat holders showing how much of a mess they are in, it has been proven that the time has come for the public to decide if they are effective, relevant, and if they are needed.

The fact is that we currently have a record number of Māori in Parliament and in Cabinet, with 27 percent of the House having a Māori background—far higher than the often-claimed 17 percent of the country's Māori population. Additionally, the proportion enrolled on the Māori roll itself has steadily decreased in recent years from around 60 percent of Māori voters 20 years ago to now only half of the eligible Māori voters being on the Māori roll. They are voting with their feet already. Between 1854 and 1978, there were only four Māori who held a general seat. Since the introduction of MMP, that number has massively increased to be, today, an overrepresentation. Between 1854 and 1978, there were only four Māori who held a general seat, but since the introduction of MMP, that number has massively increased, today, to be an overrepresentation. The arguments for a separate franchise based on race have become irrelevant. We have legislation ready to go right now. We don't have to wait until the next general election if we have the support of other parties in Parliament and we get this referendum completed at no extra cost and no waste of time and if we hold it in conjunction with the general election in November.

It's a simple referendum question—should there be separate Māori seats in the New Zealand Parliament?—with a simple yes or no answer. New Zealand First believes the decision should be put to a binding referendum where the people decide, not temporarily empowered politicians, because we believe in our democracy, and this issue needs to gain a true mandate from the New Zealand people so we can move forward together, united as

one—one law, one flag, one vote, one people, all equal. The House of Representatives has the chance to involve the New Zealand people in deciding the future direction of our country together. New Zealand voters are ready to have a voice and a choice.

Now, you've just heard from the Greens. It's fascinating how these people come here. They claim to be educated, claim to be steeped in Māori understanding, but don't even know that over 100 years ago, Sir Apirana Ngata ruled out what she just said. He said, over 100 years ago—of course, he got a law degree in two years flat; he holds the record for getting a law degree of anybody in this country, and he made the simple logical point—

Hūhana Lyndon: Huri te ao—huri te ao. [*The world has turned—the world has changed.*]

Rt Hon WINSTON PETERS: Here, she's shouting now, right? I know her type. She took a very profitable group called Ngātiwai, a committee that we set up all those years ago, where the total cost used to be \$22,000 a year, and it's now broke. That's her record. I've seen that type before—for Māori, by Māori; no, for Māori, for just some Māori—and we're not having that. Ngata pointed out years ago—and here's a chance for her to learn again, but, no, here she is. I'm one of the four that made this Parliament in all those years from 1854 to 1978. Only four of us made it, and it wasn't easy. Of course, she came here. Guess where she came here from! She didn't come here on a Māori seat, but, now, she wants to entrench it, even though Ngata said—and he said it so logically—“So you entrench it. It takes a simple majority to remove the entrenchment clause, and, now, you're back to a simple majority to get rid of it.”—said logical, plain—

Hon Shane Jones: Buck.

Rt Hon WINSTON PETERS: Buck, Pōmare, all of those who honour it, and here comes this new breed. They know nothing about the Māori world, know nothing about the conditions that we had to sacrifice for, know nothing of the strife that some of us had over all those decades, know nothing of putting money and time into great causes at great loss to yourself personally, and that's why they talk that way. They are not from the Māori people. They are not for the people of this country; they are for separatism and division, and they scream racism—they scream racism. It is their policy. Oh, and just to make sure that's not quite enough, they're communists, as well. Thank you very much.

Hon TAMA POTAKA (Minister of Conservation) (15:23): We've had a number of motivating and inspiring speeches today, but I'm here to talk about the economy and to focus on values and fundamentals—values like sustainable developments, equal opportunity, reward for achievements in limited government; fundamentals like fixing infrastructure; sorting out productivity of land and sea; jobs in the regions, Matua; certainty for businesses; and responsible management of our natural assets. That's exactly what we're doing as this Government.

Across my portfolios—conservation and Māori development—we're making practical investments that unlock economic growth while protecting what makes this country unique. We are not going to rely on the Treaty of Waitangi as a Trojan horse for red tape and green tape. We will not do that. It starts with a simple truth: the environment and the economy go together, but we will manage our conservation estate well, because it's 30 percent of the country. It's 30 percent of the country, and we are really focused on acknowledging and implementing conservation—and the land and the seas that go with it—as a cornerstone of economic infrastructure.

What have we done? We've approved concessions that actually unlock jobs and that actually drive the tourism that brings people to the country to watch games like the State

of Origin and to go on guided walks, to go and spend money in far-away places—even on State Highway 35, for the member from the Waiariki. We are making decisions that will enable businesses to operate, to employ people, to create jobs in the regions, and to invest in infrastructure—places like Milford Sound with the Milford Track and Milford Sound Tourism Ltd, the Remarkables, the Te Ānau glow-worm caves, and it was great to hear about Ngāi Tahu partnering up with those owners of Milford Sound Tourism to go and fix up that place, a beautiful place, Piopiotahi.

Economic growth that is predictable needs that certainty. It needs concession decision-making that has certainty and clarity, and at pace—no more waiting for seven or eight or 10 years for a decision to be made. These decisions sit alongside the wider work to modernise our conservation system and reduce red and green tape. Mining—yes. Tourism—yes. We are a coalition Government of yes, not no or, even worse, a long maybe.

Let me turn to Māori development, because if we want a productive economy, we must work harder and more effectively to unlock the potential of our communities and the potential of our land and waters. Māori land and Māori Enterprise: I was just there today, at lunchtime, announcing the finalists, some of whom are from Ngāti Hine: the Ngāti Hine Forestry Trust, Otama Marere Trust up in Bay of Plenty, and, of course, the Mātai Pacific Iwi Collective, one of the largest kiwifruit orchards in the country—the three finalists of the Ahuwhenua Awards. Know this: over the last 10 years, the amount of horticulture on Māori land has gone up by 50 percent—horticulture, aquaculture, viticulture, apiculture; all cultures are going in the right direction to boost this economy, and Minister Jones and others have been an instrumental part of this.

Whether or not it's the \$200 million in the stopbank or the work that Minister McClay is doing in order to unlock free-trade agreement arrangements to enable kiwifruit from Māori orchards, to enable seafood from all over the waters around our country, to enable places like the Bluff oceanside freezing works, which produces pāua, seaweed, and a whole range of other goods, including a bit of south gin, to be exported. That's what we are talking about.

Last week, or two weeks ago, we made an announcement around the Rangihamama and Oromahoe Trusts to give them some pūtea to lay down some kiwifruit orchards on Māori land that is underutilised in Northland. That's exactly the space that we want to be in. They will link up to the Matawii and Otawere dams that were put in by the Matua several years ago. Ngāti Hāua in Waikato, their berry farms, their asparagus, strawberries, blueberries, and commercial production of horticulture—we're supporting them with a repayable grant. Rukumoana Schaafhausen, Lance Rapana, and Muna Wharawhara—all those people doing hard work in the middle of Waikato to get their land back on track.

That's what we're about—supporting and partnering with Māori Enterprise to do good things. Eastland Generation in Kawerau: what they're doing on the Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau land is absolutely fantastic. It's all part of the geothermal aspirations that we as a Government have.

Housing supply: I will not go any further than a place like Ōwhata, where Ngāti Whakaue are building houses 50/10 to the dozen. But the Government cannot and will not do everything for everybody. We will partner with those that are credible to support initiatives on conservation land and waters and Māori land, to do good things for their community, to build the economy, to fix the basics, to enable jobs, and, importantly, to bring our country into the future. Tēnā tātou katoa.

Hon BARBARA EDMONDS (Labour—Mana) (15:28): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak in the general debate. It's been a really interesting general debate because, for once, in the last two years, you finally have Government Ministers talking about stuff that they're doing. Now, they must have had a caucus memo or something saying, "Dear National Party caucus, please talk about yourself. Yours sincerely, Research Unit.", because it's quite clear that this has been a change in tactic.

Obviously, New Zealand is not believing that things are better under the National Party Government. Clearly, New Zealanders weren't believing it, and every time the National Government Ministers come into the House, all you hear is a lot of deflection and gaslighting and blaming everybody else, including Donald Trump, including the merchants of misery, including bottom feeders and every other single person that is available in this community to blame except for themselves. It's quite interesting to see this political-strategy change by the National Party to be like, "Oh, we gotta talk about some good things, because people clearly are not believing us."

Also, what we saw in question time today was the Minister of Finance—who was struggling to defend some of her policy choices—talk about counterfactuals. The interesting thing about her counterfactuals—and it's all backed up by the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update. I went and found this on my shelf just for today's general debate, to show some different counterfactuals. Here's one, in particular: for the jobseeker benefit between June 2024 and 2026, there is now forecast to be 50,000 more people on the jobseeker benefit than when they took office, as set out in the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update. How's that target going?

Net debt: before the election, it was forecast to be \$102 billion in the 2026-27 financial year. Well, in December 2025, when they opened their books, that's now forecast to be \$128 billion. Again, just to make sure, because I know numbers can be confusing for that side of the House, that's more—that's definitely more—and that's a rise of 18 percent in just two years.

Another counterfactual: the surplus. When the Minister of Finance realised she couldn't make the surplus within the forecast period under the operating balance before gains and losses (OBEGAL), she changed the goalposts and brought in the operating balance before gains and losses, excluding ACC revenue and expenses (OBEGALx). Let's go back to OBEGAL, because, before the election, the forecast was set to have our Government books in surplus by the 2026-27 year, but ever since that Government took office, every single year, it has been pushed out—pushed out so much that, under the old measure of OBEGAL, it doesn't even feature in the forecast period. I acknowledge Treasury for still keeping that figure in, because no matter how much the Government wants to change the goalposts or their targets, and no matter how much they want to change it, the facts don't lie. That's the counterfactual that the Minister of Finance failed to address today.

The other counterfactual was GDP growth. Before the election, in the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update, it was meant to be 3.7 percent by this year. However, it is now only meant to peak at 3 percent. Again, for a Government that is, basically, targeting on economic growth, they have failed. They have failed based on the counterfactuals as set out in the Pre-election Economic and Fiscal Update.

Some members may ask, "Well, what does this actually mean to the economy? What does this actually mean for the everyday person?" What it means is that things have actually gotten worse: there are record KiwiSaver hardship withdrawals, almost double in two years—people are dipping into their retirement savings because they cannot afford

their everyday costs; business liquidations are up at a 15-year high—a 15-year high; 165,000 people are out of work and want a job—165,000 people. There are 32,000 fewer jobs since National took office. Despite the mumbling or whatever it was that the Minister of Finance was trying to answer today, the unemployment rate—and this is a tragedy for young people—has shot up since 2023. It's up 28 percent for people aged 15 to 19; it's up 57 percent for those aged 20 to 24; it's up 54 percent for 25- to 29-year-olds. It is no wonder why we are having record numbers leave New Zealand to go to Australia, because there are jobs there that are better paid.

This Government, despite all their gaslighting, can blame everybody else, but they have no one else to blame for their choices for making it worse, not better.

RAWIRI WAITITI (Co-Leader—Te Pāti Māori) (15:33): I take a phrase from a song by Luther Vandross: “A chair is still a chair, even if there's no one sitting there”. And so, we've got somebody who drops bombs and then takes off. I just want to say about the Māori seats: back in 1867, when they established the Māori seats, those Māori seats were put in place, and the purpose was to break down the Māori organisations who opposed the sale of Māori land. That was the original intent of the Māori seats. It wasn't out of the goodness of Pākehā hearts—who were running Government since the 1852—to give Māori representation in this House. Absolutely not. It was there to suit their agenda—it was there to suit their agenda.

Since then—let's just fast-forward to today—the Māori seats are in one of the most powerful positions they have ever been—they have ever been—and that frightens people like Winston Peters and New Zealand First. It frightens them because, since 1996, they have had the monopoly over deciding who is going to be the Prime Minister come every election, besides some of the others where they lost—well, they lost eight MPs back in 1998. In 1996, they won all the Māori seats. The next election after that, they lost all their Māori seats, plus all their Māori members, plus some. What we've got is a party who is absolutely threatened by the power of the Māori seats.

The Māori seats will be determining who the next Prime Minister is come 7 November. Every poll, every bit of statistic that is coming out at this particular time, is telling you—sorry, not you, Mr Speaker, but telling New Zealanders and Aotearoa—that the Māori seats are in the most powerful position they have ever been in. Why? Since 2023, there have been 14,000 more people enrol on the Māori roll than on the general. There are more Māori on the Māori roll than on the general roll. Somebody's been telling fibs—somebody's been telling fibs to the media; somebody's been telling fibs about the statistics. These are the real statistics: there are over 303,000 Māori on the Māori roll. Māori on the Māori roll outpopulate Māori on the general roll. This is the problem that this House is having at this particular time. They're in a quandary—they're in a quandary. Why? It's because Māori have matured so fast. Māori have matured so fast in the last five years, to give the power that they have and to realise the power that we have in regards to determining who the next Prime Minister is, come 7 November. That's just a reality—that's just a reality.

I can tell you what: there has only been one party—one party in this House—that has driven more people over to the Māori roll than any other party in this House. There's no other party that has actively campaigned to put Māori on the Māori roll. In the last five years, we have matured in that particular space—we have matured in that particular space. We have matured in this country's democracy, and that frightens people—that frightens people. It frightens New Zealand First because, for the first time—for the first time—they will not be sitting in that position, deciding who is going to be at the front.

That race-baiting that we saw earlier on today in the House is disgusting. If that Government can sit there and allow people in their Government to run that type of narrative, and it runs it just about every day in question time—you ought to be ashamed of yourselves; you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. My thing is also, to the Opposition parties: we've got to rule out that type of partnership—we've got to rule out that type of partnership. People have to now start standing up for people—standing up for people.

Jenny Marcroft: One-seat wonder.

RAWIRI WAITITI: One-seat wonder, she reckons. I got 17,000 votes—17,000 people put me here. I wonder how many put you here. Nobody knows who you are or who you represent. You don't have one. We should be running a referendum, maybe, on list seats—I don't know—or maybe on age. I don't know. We can have a list of things we can run a referendum on, but one of those referendums should not be about removing Māori seats from this Parliament. The only reason why you want to remove Māori seats is because they've become more powerful than they ever have been—more powerful than they ever have been. That's what scares this House—that's what scares this House. We are here with a 100 percent Māori votes mandate—100 percent. I can tell you that right now: 100 percent of the people that voted for me have whakapapa Māori. Absolutely. That is a fact. We have the mandate to represent those communities.

So my thing to this House is: National, rule it out; Labour, rule it out. Let's get this rubbish out of this House and ensure that the rights of te iwi Māori, under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, are entrenched. Kia ora tātou.

RYAN HAMILTON (National—Hamilton East) (15:38): It's a real privilege to speak in this general debate. There's been a lot of yelling this afternoon, gosh, and I guess it gives me cause to just reflect. I've been here—I'm a relatively new politician—only a little over two years and can only but see the cracks falling through the Opposition. We had Chris Hipkins, today, yelling in his general debate and his question time, asking about deflation and throwing tones of racism on us.

Rawiri Waititi: It's called passion. Try it.

RYAN HAMILTON: I like Rawiri, but he's going, so I won't be able to talk about him. We heard the Prime Minister's maiden statement. We were reflecting on that last week; I got to speak to that. I enjoyed hearing Kieran McNulty.

Hon Kieran McNulty: McNulty.

RYAN HAMILTON: McNulty. Thank you for that, sir. I enjoyed your leadership pitch. Obviously, Chris Hipkins is struggling, and you're making a leadership pitch.

I actually really like Peeni Henare, too—he's got a lot of mana. I've enjoyed playing parliamentary rugby with him, and I'm disappointed to see him go, but, obviously, he's seen the light. People are leaving and cleaving.

Rawiri Waititi: I quite like the man; I would have a drink with him, but, unfortunately, his party is dissolving before his eyes, too. I can't even remember how many people are left in Te Pāti Māori now. Is it four or six? Is it six, Tom? Is it four? There's a few that aren't quite sure. I guess my point is that New Zealand's tired of the fractionated politicking, and if they want a Government that provides stability, then they will look to a National-led Government with our coalition partners.

A little bit of a history lesson here that I saw my friend Dan Bidois put on his socials: 1972, Labour inherits a surplus from National; 1975, Labour bequeaths a deficit to National; 1984, Labour inherits a deficit from National; 1980, Labour bequeaths a deficit to National; 1999, Labour inherits a surplus from National; 2008, Labour bequeaths a

deficit to National. We go to 2023: Labour bequeaths a deficit to National. Once again, we're coming in, we're cleaning it up.

I look across to the Opposition, and they sit there completely unrepentant and they point the finger, but they don't realise that only a little over two years ago, they were the ones interfering with Kāinga Ora, rising debt, allowing unruly tenants, polytechs crumbling, no localism, hospitals—let's undertake a reform in the middle of a pandemic, infrastructure falling apart, no law and order, ram raids high, education—kids not even at level. It was a complete mess. I remind the thousands of viewers that have tuned in right now that this National-led Government, with our coalition partners, has had a heck of a job cobbling together that mess and putting it together and building the future. Barbara Edmonds said we always talk about them; we've got plenty to talk about, but it's about context. It's about just reminding people how far we've come in such a short space of time.

I'm really privileged to sit on the Environment Committee, and we've got the Resource Management Act reforms coming through over the next few months. Submissions have just closed, and there's going to be, I think, over 1,000 submissions from some very serious stakeholders in the community—councils, NGOs. We look forward to digesting those and making sure we come up with some really robust criteria, because this is a once-in-a-generation change. In fact, it was implemented in 1992, so it's nearly two generations, depending on how quickly people breed. The thing is, it's going to be huge. It's going to be exciting. We're saying yes to productivity in this country. We're saying yes to enablement. As Tama Potaka said, we're getting rid of the red tape and the green tape. We just want to get stuff done. It's just got too hard in this country.

Very quickly, I look forward to the opening of the garden arts festival in Hamilton Gardens this Friday—49 acts, 800 artists; Balloons Over Waikato kicking off; Homegrown, which is going to attract 30,000 people. It's all happening in New Zealand's fastest-growing city.

Can I just close by providing a message to all New Zealanders—in fact, to all New Zealanders, to all Māori, to all Indian, to all Filipino: if you want a stable Government that backs you, that will support you, then vote for this National-led coalition Government, because we're all about fixing the basics and building a future that's going to be bright, that's going to enable prosperity, where safety is paramount, education is esteemed, and Kiwis are adored.

TANGI UTIKERE (Labour—Palmerston North) (15:43): Kia orana, Mr Speaker. Well, that was a dud. I mean, that speech was an absolute dud. The one opportunity that members of the Government get as a backbencher to contribute in the general debate, and they spend most of the time talking about us and not talking about the real issues.

There is a cost of living crisis happening in our country. You wouldn't think that the members opposite are even aware of that, because they have not even referred to that. For many whānau all around the country, cost of living is not theoretical. Cost of living for them is when they get the bills and they see that they can't make things add up; when they get the power bill and they know that it's on the rise, on the rise, on the rise—and with a gas tax under this Government, that will continue; when they look at the rent and the mortgage payments and realise that it is simply unbearable for them; when they see that the grocery bills are stocking up, and it's not a \$60-a-week shop for households around this country; and when they, perhaps if they have a petrol vehicle, look and see that what's left in the tank after payday—is that going to last them to the next pay check or not? There

are families in our community that are living day to day, week to week, and this is a Government that is making it extremely difficult for them to make ends meet.

Transport is a direct cost of living issue: fuel, maintenance, insurance, parking—all of those things that drivers and owners need to turn their mind to. The simple question in the transport space is: are we as a country investing in transport in a way that lowers the pressures that are on households, or is it actually the Government that is adding to the pressures in households in terms of what's important?

We've heard recently about changes afoot in the money stream when it comes to the "Roads of National Party Significance". This was a Government that went to the last election and talked about the fact that this was something that was to be pitched as nation building—but when the focus is on building at any cost, New Zealanders are the ones, Kiwis are the ones, that get stuck with the bill at the end of the day.

Just last week in this House, we were talking about the fact that the cost or the shortfall is now at around \$56 billion for the "Roads of National Party Significance"—\$56 billion. Last year, Chris Bishop gave a speech and snuck in there that it was a \$30 million cost overrun, where this money was going to go—now ballooned out to \$56 billion. The Government need to be very clear in that space around how, at the moment, that \$56 billion, which they are prioritising—they are prioritising the spend on roads. Roads are important, but they are prioritising the spend on roads to the tune of \$56 billion, despite what the Infrastructure Commission has said as recently as yesterday. Is the Government going to increase transport taxes to meet that particular shortfall? Are they going to add debt, looking around \$40 billion, to meet that particular shortfall? At the end of the day, it is households who are going to carry the can, carry that particular cost. This is a Government that, when it looks at its priorities, have placed all its priorities in the wrong place.

In transport, what was really interesting yesterday was that the infrastructure plan for the country, a 30-year blueprint, identified that transport was a key player in that particular space. In question time today, we heard, via my colleague the Hon Kieran McNulty, about whether or not the Government is prepared to put those mega-transport projects through a process of independence to see whether or not they stack up. The suite of roads of national significance that are on the books at the moment, many of them only scrape through because the benefit-cost ratio has been changed in terms of how they are to be assessed by a different discount rate, but, also, the length of time is quite different, as well. What's really important is hearing from the Government about how keen they are around actually wanting to do something a little bit different.

It's very clear that simply burying one's head in the sand and saying "We're going to continue to deliver this suite of projects and programmes.", where the Infrastructure Commission has clearly said that they don't stack up—you need to go back to the drawing board. This is about priorities. This is about where this Government is choosing to place its priorities for households all around the country.

For households who are doing it tough right now, what we need is we need to have hope. We need to have hope in a Government that actually is going to get the basics right in the sense of knowing what the need is, and cost of living pressures are right up there right now. If you talk to anyone in the community, they know that them and their neighbours are doing it tough, but the reality right now is that under this National Government, they don't care. They have the priorities in all the wrong places, and that's simply not good enough.

TOM RUTHERFORD (National—Bay of Plenty) (15:48): I rise today with a heavy heart for my home of the Bay of Plenty. On 22 January, severe weather triggered catastrophic landslides in Mount Maunganui on Mauao, Welcome Bay, Pāpāmoa, and surrounding communities. Eight lives were tragically lost: Jacqui, Sue, Lisa, Max, Sharon Māns, Austen, and Yao Fang—lives that mattered, taken far too soon. To those grieving, to those displaced, and to those who still feel anxious every time the rain sets in, we stand with you. The shock of that day will not disappear quickly. Recovery will take time, but you are not facing it alone.

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our first responders—Fire and Emergency, Police, St John, and Civil Defence—who worked in dangerous conditions to search, recover, and support families. I also acknowledge local iwi, marae, businesses, neighbours, and volunteers who opened homes, provided food, and simply showed up for one another. In the worst of times, the very best of the Bay of Plenty was on display.

People are asking hard but fair questions: how did this happen, what warnings were in place, and could more have been done? Those questions deserve proper answers. The Government is establishing an independent inquiry to examine exactly that. It will engage directly with families, operate transparently, and take the time needed to get this right. We owe our community clarity, accountability, and practical steps to reduce the risk of this happening again.

In the middle of all of this, I married my best friend, Hannah. It was a week of deep sadness and personal joy, side by side. It reminded me that in public life, as in private life, what matters most is the people beside you, and for me that person is Hannah. People say that marriage is about finding someone you can live with. Well, I didn't do that; I've found someone I don't want to live without.

Even in difficult times, Parliament does not pause, and nor should it, because communities rebuilding after a disaster need more than sympathy; they need a Government focused on doing the basics well.

Next week, the Labour Party will deliver its state of the nation address. That is part of democracy, but New Zealanders—especially those trying to rebuild homes, businesses, and lives—will judge all of us on results, not rhetoric. When Labour left office two years ago, inflation had reached 7.3 percent; mortgage costs were biting hard; crime was trending up; educational achievement was declining; and, over six years, Government debt had increased by \$120 billion, leaving annual interest costs of over \$9.5 billion a year—money that now cannot be spent on hospitals, schools, or roads.

By contrast, the National Party got stuck in to fix the basics. We slashed wasteful spending, to bring inflation down and ease pressure on interest rates. We delivered tax relief, for the first time in 14 years, and introduced FamilyBoost to help parents with the cost of childcare. We restored law and order by banning gang patches, strengthening sentencing, and driving down ram raids. There are now 38,000 fewer victims of violent crime in New Zealand. We put classrooms back to basics, with one hour a day of reading, writing, and maths, and took cellphones out of classrooms to get rid of distractions. We removed burdensome regulations for farmers, we cut red tape to make it easier to build, and we fast tracked major infrastructure projects that will create jobs and unlock growth, and we are not stopping there. We're going to grow the economy through new trade opportunities, strengthening KiwiSaver, investing in roads, schools, and hospitals, and making it easier to build homes in New Zealand.

The people of the Bay of Plenty understand resilience, they understand responsibility, and they understand that recovery requires action. This is what our Government is delivering by fixing the basics and building the future.

Labour offers more tax, more spending, and more excuses. We offer discipline, growth, safer communities, better schools, and a stronger economy. We keep choosing practical solutions over ideology, we will keep choosing responsibility over recklessness, and we will keep choosing what is best for New Zealand.

Hon NICOLE McKEE (Associate Minister of Justice) (15:53): Submissions on the Arms Bill have now closed, and I would like to take this opportunity to give a huge thankyou to everybody that was a part of the process and gave their Arms Bill submissions to the Justice Committee. I did ask the Justice Committee to extend that process by an extra few weeks, recognising that it was actually meant to close in the middle of January, right at the time when the outdoors people are enjoying the outdoors and enjoying their summer break. We had the extension through to mid-February. That will have allowed more people to submit and have their say, and I'd like to thank them for taking that opportunity.

I also acknowledge the fact that we have a six-month select committee process for the Arms Bill, and that is something that has not been afforded the firearm community for a very long time, including the three-day submission period that they had back in 2019. We had early public consultation that shaped what this bill was going to look like to ensure that the people who use firearms within our community—the law-abiding people—actually have a say on the law that is going to define how they operate.

It's important that licensed firearm owners are heard, and I have seen on social media many comments from people saying, "Why should I bother? I've never been listened to before, so why should they listen to me now?", and it's really important that everybody feels that they can contribute to democracy and they can feel that they will be heard. I will say to them that the submissions that they have put in over the last few weeks will be heard and will be read, and I implore the select committee to actually go through those submissions and pick out some of the niche issues that the licensed firearm owners have raised, because by the committee doing their job and fixing those niche issues and listening to the community on how to make it work better, it means that we will have, once again, the best firearm laws in New Zealand, just like we previously have had.

The thing is, though, when we look at the current Act, it's over 40 years old. It's had so many bits and pieces added to it and taken away from it, it's become very hard to understand, and I have had numerous people, numerous professionals, say to me that they have struggled with it. It's been confusing for licensed firearm owners, it's been inefficient for the New Zealand Police, and it's been totally ineffective at stopping criminals. Public safety and respect for licensed firearm owners are not in conflict; they actually go hand in hand with each other.

One issue that I know some members are concerned about is the proposal to create a new firearms regulator that is independent of Police. Licensed firearm owners understand why this separation matters, but for others, it comes down to something quite simple: we need to allow the New Zealand Police to focus on crime, on gangs, on criminals, and on the misuse of firearms, and the regulator will need to focus on clear guidance and consistent administration. This is what both these agencies will be good at, and so, by separating them, we can ensure that we have the robust system, but passing the Act is only part of the job. We are also working on regulations which will define how it's going

to be implemented. It's an opportunity to build a modern, professional regulator from the ground up.

I've spoken about the committee, and I look forward to when they hear oral submissions and having them engage with the real-world examples that will be brought up for them. Submitters from the firearm community want laws that keep the public safe too, and their contribution will be extensive.

When it comes to sports shooting and exemptions, it's easy to get worked up about semi-automatics, or even about registry issues, but ACT believes that a sports shooting exemption can be done safely. Competitive shooting is one of the safest sports in New Zealand. It operates under strict range and safety conditions, and I implore, again, the committee members to listen to those making submissions with open minds: be prepared to be persuaded by evidence.

This bill is about balance, it's about safety, it's about fairness, and it's about practicality. It's not scapegoating licensed firearm owners any more. It's about ACT fixing what matters for those who work, enjoy having sport, and want to put food on the table for their families, and I encourage the committee to thoughtfully engage in that respect. ACT will continue to keep pushing for improvements through this process and beyond. We can do it, and we can do it together. Thank you.

Hon Dr DEBORAH RUSSELL (Labour) (15:58): As Ramadan begins, let us remember the 51 New Zealanders who were killed in a mosque. Ramadan will end around about the time of the anniversary of that killing, and I trust that each of us really understands the need to remember them, to respect and honour their memory, and to respect and honour what we must do to keep all of us safe.

As I stand and speak today, I also speak in the shadow of the storms that have crossed this country in recent weeks and years, and, very sadly, remember the people who have lost their lives in storms. I think that, since about 2023, since the Auckland Anniversary Weekend floods and the Cyclone Gabrielle floods, and now with the recent storm and the terrible landslide in Mount Maunganui, there seem to be around about 30 New Zealanders who have lost their lives in storms.

I want to pay particular respect to Tom Rutherford, who has been dealing with that in his own community, in the middle of having his own wedding planned, as well. It must have been a joyful day, Mr Rutherford, but also a very hard day as you were dealing with the strains in your community. It's not just the lives that are gone; it's the families who are devastated, the homes that have gone, the livelihoods that have gone.

This is no longer just storms; this is climate change. It's not just weather; it is climate change. It is climate change that is exacting a toll on our country, that is driving costs in our country that will have long-term costs for all of us. Professor James Renwick at Victoria University of Wellington—a specialist—has said that, actually, there are no more storms than there were when we were kids, but they are much more intense and there's much more water in them. That's because of the warming climate, so the storms we face will have much more severe consequences.

Here, he says, "In a Cyclone Gabrielle kind of a storm, in another 30 or 40 years, you could have rainfall amounts that are 50 percent higher than we saw with that storm, and mega-flooding anywhere a storm hits—terrible slips and deaths." It's coming for us. The costs of climate change are real and they are not in the future; they are here now in our own communities. It is us now who are having to deal with it, and it actually has cost the New Zealand Government an extraordinary amount.

Now, there's an analysis from Sapere, the economic consultancy, and it says, really, that we're pretty good at dealing with disasters. We get in there, we put the recovery funds in; we help our community, we help our citizens. In fact, we've spent something like about \$33 billion of Government money on recovery in the last 15 years, but what we are not good at, the report goes on to say, is planning our resilience for the future. That is what this Government must do, otherwise it will cost us even more.

Now, their own Ministry for the Environment has said, in their long-term insights briefing on resilience to hazards, that hard choices are unavoidable. We must stop hiding our head in the sand and pretending that climate change will not cost us. We actually need to do two things: we need to participate in the worldwide effort to get emissions down, but we also need to build resilience at home.

But what did that Government do? There was a \$6 billion fund for resilience that was sitting there, put aside by the previous Government, used to recover from Cyclone Gabrielle and the Auckland Anniversary winds, but, also, there was \$3 billion for resilience. What did that Government do? It folded it into tax cuts for landlords and tobacco companies.

That Government is not being serious about climate change. That Government is taking some short-term wins and it is imposing long-term costs on all of us. The cost of living is hard at the moment. It will get worse if we do not deal with the effects of climate change. It is time for them to stop hiding and to get serious and get real. Let's make the hard choices.

The debate having concluded, the motion lapsed.

Bills

ŌTAUTAHĪ COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST (TRUST VARIATION) BILL

First Reading

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Labour—Wigram) (16:04): I move, *That the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust (Trust Variation) Bill be now read a first time.* I nominate the Social Services and Community Committee to consider this bill.

It's a pleasure for me to bring this bill to the House, and I want to acknowledge the constructive engagement and support that I've had prior to bringing this bill to the House from across the various parties that make up this Chamber, because this is precisely the practical, community-focused measure where Parliament is at its best and where we can work together.

I'd also like to acknowledge the tenants in our Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust—or ŌCHT, as you'll hear me refer to it as we go through this first reading—the tenants that live across Christchurch and Banks Peninsula in our houses. I think what they've showed through their lives is what an exceptional model we can offer here. I'd also like to acknowledge the Christchurch City Council and to acknowledge the team at ŌCHT—to Cate, the chief executive, and to Darren, who heads the board, and their exceptional team of property managers who work tirelessly every day for the betterment of their tenants.

This is a modest bill in technical terms, but it has significant implications for communities right across Te Wai Pounamu, the South Island. Its core purpose is exceptionally simple. It's to remove an outdated geographical restriction in the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust founding deed so that a proven high-performing community housing provider can respond to housing needs beyond Christchurch and Banks Peninsula while keeping those communities as their primary focus of work.

ŌCHT was established by the Christchurch City Council in 2016 to manage the council's community housing portfolio and to help address housing supply and affordability challenges in our city. Since then, it's become one of the largest non-governmental providers of community and affordable housing in the South Island, with a strong track record of building and managing quality homes.

ŌCHT exists to bridge the affordability gap that the private markets cannot reliably fill, whether this is in ownership or in rentals. It provides social and affordable rental housing for people at different stages of their life and at different points on the housing continuum, from those with the highest housing need right through to low-income working households who are struggling to get by in the private market. In doing so, it delivers exactly the kind of integrated housing response we say that we want to see more of across this House, a system that stabilises people, supports our families, and strengthens our neighbourhoods and our communities.

Over recent years, demand for ŌCHT's model has grown beyond the Christchurch boundary. When I was Minister of Housing, I had a delegation of South Island or largely Canterbury mayors who came to see me, and Mayor Phil Mauger demanded to know why it was that they could not expand this model beyond Christchurch City and Banks Peninsula. I reminded the mayor it was his trustee and that it was within his purview to fix that—and that is exactly what we're here doing today. It's a great delight to be able to see this work through and to bring this bill as a local bill in order for us to make this change so we can expand this model beyond the boundaries of Christchurch City and Banks Peninsula.

Local councils outside of this area have explicitly asked ŌCHT to help provide and manage affordable housing solutions in their areas. The Greater Christchurch Partnerships Joint Housing Action Plan identified the need to expand the model to serve the city's regional neighbours, and Christchurch City Council has voted to back this move. I want to congratulate the council on that.

The trust's current deed has a clause that limits its work to this area, and the deed's own amendment provisions prevent changing that core purpose, and that's why we're here in the House with a piece of legislation. Legal advice is clear that neither a standard deed variation nor an application to the High Court is likely to succeed in varying the trust's purpose to expand its operating area. In other words, the object of this bill cannot be achieved other than by this bill, and this is why we are here.

Its purpose is to vary that trustee so it can expand. It does this by replacing the key purpose and geography clauses so that the trust can provide social and affordable rental housing and associated services in Christchurch, Banks Peninsula, and in "other areas as determined from time to time by the trustees". It gives the trustees the ability to expand beyond that geographical boundary. In doing so, it also updates relevant provisions including definitions, the wording of the board appointment panel clause, and the winding up clause so they align with the expanded geography, including ensuring that if the trust was ever wound up, remaining assets would go to organisations in any area where the trust had provided that service.

This is a pragmatic enabling bill. It does not change the trust's charitable purpose, its governance model, or its accountability to its founding community—the people of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. It does not create a new entity or, in itself, alter funding arrangements. Its job is simple but critical: to take the legislative padlock off the gate so that a strong community-owned organisation can respond to the housing need that councils and communities up and down the South Island are asking for.

I do, again, want to acknowledge Cate Kearney, the chief executive of Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust, and the trust chair, Darren Evans, for the clear strategic way they have set out the case for this bill. In explaining why this change is needed, Ms Kearney said that when the bill is passed, it will unlock the potential to help many more communities tackle the affordable housing challenge while strengthening our core operation here in Christchurch. Darren Evans, the trust board's chair, said the bill offers a practical way to address the urgent housing needs in other regions while ensuring ŌCHT grows as a strong asset for Christchurch. These are critical things for us to realise, that this can be a win-win for Christchurch and the South Island. Not only will the South Island get an excellent social housing provider providing a range of options but it will strengthen ŌCHT's operations within the Christchurch area.

These are the voices of the people on the ground doing the work. They're telling us why this legislative change is needed, because the ŌCHT neighbourhoods are microcosms of all of our communities. They include older people living on fixed incomes, and young families starting out, key workers and apprentices, people between jobs, many New Zealanders, new New Zealanders and long-time residents who have been part of their suburbs for decades. They include essential workers such as healthcare assistants, retail staff, cleaners, and hospitality workers—the people that make our communities run.

One of the things that we have seen ŌCHT do over the period of time of the last few years is it has been very willing to innovate. In Government, Labour was proud of the thousands of new houses that we introduced—around half of them were introduced by our community housing providers, and ŌCHT was a critical partner we had. Many thousands were added to the stock over our six years in Government—not only were they all income-related rent subsidy homes but we also had innovations like affordable rentals. We saw ŌCHT move into the progressive homeownership space. We've just had some of these hit the market in Christchurch. To see different ways in which people can access homeownership has been hugely encouraging.

I want to see this innovation not only up and down the South Island—although I do occasionally wear an eye patch and can be a little parochial when it comes to that—but across the country. I think we do need to see what ŌCHT can do when the padlock to the gate is removed and we can see the move beyond Ōtautahi in Banks Peninsula.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Teanau Tuiono): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Hon NICOLA GRIGG (National—Selwyn) (16:14): I rise on behalf of National very much in support of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust (Trust Variation) Bill at this first reading. It goes without saying that when Dr Megan Woods' email landed in my inbox asking for our caucus to support this bill, it was an absolute no-brainer, so I acknowledge the member for her advocacy of this.

It is a focused and enabling piece of legislation, which is what we like to see. It's not a bill that creates a new policy framework, and nor does it attempt to redesign the housing system. Instead, it's making that targeted change that the member spoke about to remove that geographic restriction that's been held in place for 10 years, and it no longer reflects the reality of that burgeoning housing need in Canterbury and, indeed, across the South Island.

The Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust was established by the Christchurch City Council in 2016 to manage its own community housing portfolio and to address the affordability challenges that had emerged around Christchurch and Banks Peninsula following the 2011 earthquakes sequence of events. At that time, I actually worked for

Sir Bill English, who was not only the finance Minister but also held the social housing portfolio. I distinctly remember the meetings with the council and his ardent support for the transfer of these assets to a community housing provider, which he has always said and always maintained—and thus has proven to be true—are far, far better managers of social housing than a Government department.

Here we are, 10 years later. We've seen this trust develop into a mature, well-governed, and financially robust organisation. I've actually, as a local MP, engaged a number of times with the trust over the years, given as much as I am the MP for Selwyn. There are parts of Selwyn which border Christchurch City Council, particularly in Yaldhurst and Templeton, and I've always found the management of the trust and the way they treat their people, their clients, has been absolutely class A.

It is now the largest provider of community and affordable housing across the South Island, as has already been acknowledged, and they do manage thousands of homes and support thousands of tenants and they do, as I just said, with real care and real conviction. It has demonstrated that it can deliver its scale, manage its assets responsibly, and partner effectively with local government as well, which is also key to its success. That is why I think other communities have begun to ask whether or not that particular expertise can be applied beyond the current boundary.

We know that that housing pressure doesn't stop just at council arbitrary boundaries or borders. In recent years, those districts neighbouring Christchurch in particular—as I said, in my patch in Selwyn and Matt Doocey country up in the Waimak—they have experienced massive population growth. The MP for Selwyn will always tell you that Selwyn is one of the fastest-growing districts in the country. As we know, while growth does bring opportunity, it does bring pressure on infrastructure and services, and particularly housing supply.

It is, of course—goes without saying—in those fast-growing communities, we do on occasion, and increasingly so, see households that fall through the gaps. They may be working families, they may be older people, they may be individuals on modest incomes who can, at times, earn too much to qualify for the traditional social housing, but not enough to compete in that increasingly tight and expensive private rental market. These are challenges that councils alone cannot address by themselves. At present, Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust is prevented by its deed from operating outside of the Christchurch and Banks Peninsula boundary. That restriction can only be removed by an Act of Parliament, and this bill does exactly that.

It's really important, I think, also to outline what the bill does not do. I think they're really positive in just saying that it doesn't require the trust to expand, it doesn't mandate projects in any particular district, it doesn't redirect funding away from Christchurch, and it doesn't dilute the trust's core mission. Any further expansion will obviously be undertaken carefully in partnership with the local councils and their communities and in a way that protects the trust's commitments to its home city. The trust itself has been very clear that its focus on Christchurch will not be weakened and will not deviate.

From the Government's perspective, it's a bill that fits very much with our own approach to housing. We've been clear that tackling housing need across the country is going to require a mixed delivery model. Whilst Kāinga Ora plays a critical role, it cannot and should not be the only provider of housing. Experienced community housing providers—also colloquially known as CHPs—are essential partners, particularly where they have strong local connections and proven governance and the ability to deliver effectively, like Ōtautahi Community Housing has proven. The Government's new

Housing Investment Plan makes it clear that community housing providers and CHPs will play a central role in delivering both social housing and affordable rental homes under this new framework. It also makes clear that providers who can demonstrate capability and scale and sound governance will be well placed to contribute.

Alongside that, we've taken steps to strengthen the CHP sector itself, and that includes clear and more consistent funding settings, improved operating support, and better access to finances, all for the public benefits. The aim of those changes is straightforward, and it gives providers the confidence and certainty that they need to plan and invest and deliver homes more quickly and more efficiently to those that need it. This bill, of course, complements the wider programme by removing the unnecessary legislative barriers that we've all outlined already today. It allows this particular proven provider to respond where communities are asking for support, and without forcing outcomes or pre-empting local decision-making. It's also avoiding duplication: rather than each district having to establish new structures from scratch, this bill will actually enable them the possibility of sharing expertise and achieving economies of scale, and, of course, therefore delivering better value for money.

I, like the previous speaker, the Hon Dr Megan Woods, also want to acknowledge that this proposal has been supported widely locally. It's emerged through the Greater Christchurch Partnership and has the backing of Christchurch City Council, which will remain as the trust's key strategic partner. Therefore, that gives a lot of confidence to us that the changes proposed in this bill will be responsible, deliberate, and well governed. It's a really tightly drafted bill; it's appropriately limited; it amends the trust's charitable purpose only to the extent necessary to remove that geographic restriction; it doesn't alter the trust's not-for-profit status or its accountability arrangements.

We all know that housing affordability is a complex challenge. There is no single solution, and no one sector can solve it alone. Whilst this bill is not necessarily the silver bullet, it is a very sensible and enabling step. It allows the successful model that we've seen for the last 10 years to be applied more widely, where communities are asking for it, to support those people in need of supported and permanent housing in Canterbury. For those reasons, I'm really pleased to be able to support the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust (Trust Variation) Bill at its first reading, and I commend it to the House.

KAHURANGI CARTER (Green) (16:22): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on behalf of the Greens to support this bill. I commend the Hon Megan Woods for bringing this really important issue to the halls of power. Everyone in Aotearoa deserves to have access to safe, warm, and affordable homes. Supporting community housing organisations like the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust is one of the ways we can meet the gaps that leave people living in cars, tents, and under bridges.

Housing security is a huge issue in Aotearoa. We know that the rates of homelessness are getting worse, and many whānau face housing insecurity. The decisions of this Government are making things worse. That's why we need to empower our communities and organisations to create the housing solutions that we need—because we can't rely on Luxon's Government to take the housing crisis seriously. At a time when so many are needing community-focused housing, this bill is a welcome move. It means more housing across Canterbury being built, with the wants and needs of our communities in mind. Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust is a not-for-profit, and Christchurch's largest community and affordable housing provider. Thank you to the crew, past and present, at the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust for your care, manaaki, and practical solutions that meet the needs of our communities.

This bill is a simple change to the trust deed to allow the trust to provide social and affordable housing beyond just Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. It's important that the trust works in collaboration with community housing providers already in these expanded areas. Luxon's Government has cut 212 Kāinga Ora developments this term, including in Canterbury. In Christchurch, the Holy Trinity Church saw a need and filled a gap left by cruel Government decisions. The church welcomed homeless community members to live in their parking lot. They were in tents, sheds, and cars, and had access to some services. Last year, the Christchurch City Council kicked them out without anywhere for them to go—so it's really good to see that the council is involved in housing solutions for community members.

I visited some of the homeless community who were kicked off the church land by the council. They have set up again in other areas of Christchurch, and they support each other and keep each other safe. The Christchurch City Mission, and other community housing supporters like Housing First, have said that law changes—especially to emergency housing—are making it harder for people to access the support they need so they're not left out in the cold.

Our Christchurch community cares about each other. We are seeing this right now through the state of emergency, with neighbours checking on each other and mucking in on the ground. Please, everybody in Christchurch, find that up-to-date advice on official Christchurch City Council sites.

The Green Party supports this bill, and we say thank you again to the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust and we look forward to hearing success stories about our community members in warm, safe, dry homes.

SIMON COURT (ACT) (16:27): Thank you. The ACT Party supports this bill, and commends the member the Hon Megan Woods for bringing this legislation to the House.

Just to set out the purpose of the legislation, it amends the trust deed of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust to allow it to provide affordable social rental housing and services outside of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula, where its current trust deed limits it to operate. It will enable the trust to operate nationally, rather than being confined, subject to its existing governance and finance arrangements. Why is this important? Well, the taxpayer spends about \$5 billion a year on housing and housing support for New Zealanders; it spends over \$2 billion on Kāinga Ora, and another \$2 billion or more through the accommodation supplement to people who qualify. It turns out that despite successive Governments' best efforts to channel \$4 billion to \$5 billion through the State to house people, actually, Governments can't solve all these problems, because they're not close enough to the people and communities where housing is needed and those important support services are needed. The ACT Party firmly believes in devolving decision making and funding to those closest to the problem. That is something that is in the core of ACT's DNA.

Major areas of change that this legislation will introduce are to amend the trust deed to remove geographic restrictions, as I mentioned, and expand the trust's housing model in line with the Greater Christchurch Partnership's Joint Housing Action Plan. This amendment does not alter the trust's charitable purpose beyond its scope, and Christchurch City Council's approval has been sought and obtained for this material change, consistent with existing financing arrangements. Expansion of the trust's services and delivery is intended to improve its financial resilience by diversifying income sources—because greater scale is needed to deliver economies of scale in providing housing for people in need, by spreading administrative and management costs across a

larger housing portfolio. Any operational growth outside Christchurch is intended to strengthen, rather than dilute, outcomes for Christchurch residents who currently participate in the trust's activities.

Now, all of this is important, but there's something going on behind this. For decades and decades, the Resource Management Act and other legislation has artificially created scarcity in the price of land, made it too hard to plan and zone for development, and made it too expensive and difficult to consent and connect the infrastructure to service land. This means that many people are experiencing housing hardship and household costs being far too great when it comes to paying rent or servicing a mortgage simply because the regulatory system, the planning system, has said, "We all want you to live in cities. We want to make it hard to develop new land, even though it might be a paddock growing nothing but rusting farm machinery and thistles. Couldn't possibly allow people to live there when they should really be living close to a bus stop."

All of these ideological constraints have been manifested through the resource management system, leading to New Zealanders in places like Auckland facing the cost of buying a home roughly 10 times greater than their annual salary. Housing affordability is not just an issue for people who earn low incomes. Even in our biggest cities, it can be a problem for people on good incomes, on two incomes, who rightly feel that they should be able to get on to the housing ladder, actually bank some wins in terms of building an asset base, and create equity in a home.

Now, this bill will go a long way towards providing support and services for people in immediate need, but the long-term fix is replacing the Resource Management Act with a system based on property rights that makes it easy to build, easy to deliver infrastructure, and, ultimately, will make generations of Kiwis much, much wealthier. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

ANDY FOSTER (NZ First) (16:32): It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of New Zealand First to support this bill. I want to start by congratulating Megan Woods, congratulating the Christchurch City Council, and congratulating the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust, or ŌCHT, for the bill which we've got in front of us.

I also want to say congratulations to ŌCHT for the great work that they do. They were set up in 2017. It's quite an extensive process to get to that point. I think you can see from the process that they went through that it has a very, very strong community and service ethos. The Trustee Appointments Committee—right back in those days—shows that. That's included the Rata Foundation, the Methodist Mission, the Canterbury District Health Board, and Age Concern Canterbury. The trustees are a mix of independent trustees and city councillor trustees. It started as four and three; it's now six and three. As you heard, Darren Evans is the trust chair and Cate Kearney has been the chief executive throughout the entire journey. I think that, together, they and their team do an absolutely fantastic job.

So what's the job that they do? They build, they maintain, and they manage a large and growing portfolio of safe, warm, dry homes for people on low incomes. It is, I think, now the biggest portfolio of houses, outside of Kāinga Ora in the country; certainly in the South Island. By 2023, they had built enough homes to replace all of those that they had lost in the Canterbury earthquakes, and of course, they are still going. They provide support services for tenants who need them, and their occupancy, according to the latest annual report, is running at over 98 percent. That's pretty impressive. They also provide a pathway to homeownership through a progressive homeownership scheme, so I think this is a really great operation. They also provide integrated communities. Financially,

with Government support—obviously the accommodation supplement and income-related rent subsidy are critical; it more than washes its own face. It made almost a \$6 million surplus last year.

Christchurch and Wellington have the largest social housing portfolios in New Zealand outside of Kāinga Ora. When I was the Mayor of Wellington, we recognised that we had a problem with our portfolio, that financially it was basically going into an abyss and we had to do something about it. Previous administrations hadn't done that. One of the organisations that we spoke to to get their experience and their knowledge was ŌCHT, because they had a lot of experience which really helped us on the journey that we needed to make.

It was also great to work there with Megan Woods as the Minister of Housing, to start that journey for Wellington City in establishing its own housing trust and to start digging itself out of a very, very large hole. I also met with ŌCHT as an MP, and as the New Zealand First housing spokesperson, and they were very, very clear in their desire to expand their geographical remit. That was about 18 months ago, so they've been on this journey for a little while. I also met with the Selwyn District Council a couple of times and they noted that they didn't actually have any Kāinga Ora houses in their entire district—or virtually none, I think is the case. I'm getting a nod there from the local member. They had no houses in their district at all, and they said, "Well, hang on, you need to look after us as well." I did point out to them that trying to evict the good folks from the Upper Selwyn Huts at the same time, many of whom would have then ended up on the social housing register, wasn't the smartest move. They kind of realised that a little bit late in the piece. That council's definitely changed since those times a few months ago.

I want to congratulate also the Mayor of Christchurch, Phil Mauger, the Christchurch City Council, and also its neighbours Selwyn and Waimakariri for the way they've been working together in the Greater Christchurch Partnership. That's both on transport and on urban development, and housing is obviously a very, very important part of that.

One of the things they did say specifically was they wanted to investigate the ability to extend ŌCHT's remit beyond Christchurch City and the Banks Peninsula. That is exactly what this bill is doing. When I met with ŌCHT, I also noted that they said they had—and this was 18 months or so ago—approaches from the likes of Ashburton and the West Coast, saying, "Please can you come and help us and provide social housing in this area?". This bill will enable that and I think that is a great thing to do.

Look, if I can just finish off by saying that they certainly signalled in their annual report in 2025—this is very, very clear—that this is exactly the pathway that they wanted to go down. They were reaching out to Government—so this is what we're seeing in front of us at the moment—so that they can deliver the fantastic service that they're delivering at the moment for the people of Christchurch, which includes, now, the Banks Peninsula, and that they can deliver that in a much wider rohe, potentially across the South Island. That is a fantastic thing. It's common sense, and New Zealand First is delighted to support this bill.

TĀKUTA FERRIS (Te Tai Tonga) (16:36): E tū ana ahau, mema Pāremata o Te Tai Tonga, ki te tautoko i te pire nei. Me te mihi tonu ki a Megan, nāna tēnei pire i hāpai ki te Whare.

[I stand as the member of Parliament for Te Tai Tonga, to support this bill and to acknowledge Megan, who has brought this bill to the House.]

The Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust is the largest provider of community and affordable housing into Te Wai Pounamu. That's not a title; that's a track record of houses built and whānau housed. Today, this House, our Whare here, faces the simple question of will we back them or not?

Hon Member: Absolutely.

TĀKUTA FERRIS: And yeah, it sounds like we absolutely will.

We were fortunate enough to spend some time down there last year with general manager Bob Hardie. He took us through all of their operations and it is truly quite a significant and well-run organisation. So, to Matua Bob and the team, tēnā koe.

At the 2023 census, over 100,000 people were living in severe housing deprivation. That trend is moving in the wrong direction, unfortunately, with negative impacts compounding year after year. Affordability has slipped beyond the reach of thousands of people, and when incomes cannot keep pace with rents, the inevitable burden and shortfall lands with community providers like the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust. We owe them a debt of gratitude. For three decades, we've not built enough homes in the right places at achievable price points. Regional supply gaps have accumulated, particularly where population growth has been the strongest. Expanding the trust is how Ōtautahi closes that gap faster, and it also provides opportunity for the rest of Te Wai Pounamu.

The bill removes the outdated geographic handbrake that has confined the trust to Ōtautahi and Banks Peninsula alone—and to all of our whānau who were affected by the floods recently in those locations: e mihi ana, e mihi ana [*I acknowledge you*].

Housing need does not stop at a boundary line on a map, and neither should good, proven solutions. We know Māori are overrepresented in housing hardship. Many of our people live on the edges of Ōtautahi and Banks Peninsula, in areas where growth is outpacing supply. It reflects where whānau experiencing housing hardship actually are.

This proposal did not appear overnight. It grew from the Greater Christchurch Partnership, including mana whenua, because durable solutions are built with communities in mind, not imposed on them. Smaller regions often lack the workforce, the capital, the organisational structure, and the scale to deliver housing at pace. The trust has this capability in droves, and if we delay the expansion, we create bottlenecks, we slow construction, and we leave whānau waiting. This bill enables partnership with iwi and hapū in new regions, and that will enable many opportunities for many iwi around Te Wai Pounamu who have set out on papa kāinga development, much like Ngāti Huia, who only next week will open their latest papa kāinga development.

So we completely support the bill. The bill enables partnership with iwi and hapū. As I've said, it enables housing to be shaped by kaupapa Māori and centred on whānau wellbeing, not just on balance sheet. This is how true intergenerational stability is created.

The Greater Christchurch Partnership Joint Housing Action Plan identified expansion of the trust as a priority. This bill turns that strategy into action. It operationalises a regionally backed, iwi-inclusive solution. That's what smart Government should do and should look like. Community-based providers have proven they can build, manage, and sustain housing and housing development, so let's back them and make sure that the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust gets the resources that it needs.

It is true to say that the answers are already in the communities. So all we need to do, e te Whare, is back them, fund them, trust them, get out of their way, and watch them deliver.

Nō reira, ki ngā whānau ki roto o Ōtautahi: tēnā koutou. Kei te Pika, tēnā koe. Huri noa, tēnā tātou.

[Therefore, to the families in Christchurch: I acknowledge you. Mr Speaker, I acknowledge you. To all those here, I acknowledge you all.]

Hon Dr DUNCAN WEBB (Labour—Christchurch Central) (16:41): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a good bill—a relatively simple one, so I won't spend too much time on it. But I will, if I may, just reminisce, because I like to think that I had a small part to play in the creation of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust. I think it was in 2015 when I and a team of other socially conscious lawyers sued the Christchurch City Council for not consulting on rent increases for its housing portfolio. What it demonstrated was that the politicisation of social housing was a bad idea. Having different councils coming and going, as Andy Foster said earlier, wasn't good for the maintenance of the houses, wasn't good for ensuring that rents remained affordable, and wasn't good for the people who occupied those houses or, indeed, the people of Christchurch.

So in its wisdom—and it was a good move—the city council placed its entire social housing portfolio into the management of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust. That's, essentially, the legacy issue that the trust created, because it was a city council asset that was placed into the trust. It kind of was a very sensible thing to say that if we're placing our assets into this housing trust, then it's to be used for the benefit of the people of Christchurch, including Banks Peninsula, that owned that asset. That was the right thing to do at the time, but, in fact, homelessness and housing affordability do not recognise municipal boundaries. As is well put in the select committee report, there are advantages to be gained in terms of scale and just in terms of opportunities for making people's lives better by expanding that in appropriate circumstances.

So this is just an evolution of something I like to think I started, but at least had a bit of a role to play in making housing solutions, particularly for the people of Canterbury, better. I absolutely endorse this bill. Congratulations to the member for promoting it, and I hope we'll see it through this House as soon as possible.

Dr HAMISH CAMPBELL (National—Ilam) (16:43): Excellent. Before I start talking on this bill, I do just want to take a moment to acknowledge the flooding that has gone on in Christchurch and particularly Banks Peninsula. Although the rain has gone, there's still massive amounts of water around, and it's impacting those around the Heathcote River, around Little River, and also Akaroa. I do just want to wish my colleague Mark Mitchell, the Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, and my colleague Dr Vanessa Weenink, the local MP, very well. They're there to do their utmost to support those communities that are affected.

I also want to take this time to actually thank the team at the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust, specifically the hard-working chief executive, but also the 55 other staff who help provide housing across the city. You all do an amazing job and should be proud of the work that you do and you have done in the past.

With that said, I do rise to speak in strong support of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust (Trust Variation) Bill. It's great to be able to stand in this House, and I think we've had support from every party represented in this House. This is a straightforward piece of legislation, but it is a very important piece, because it empowers one of the most successful housing providers to do what they do best: provide quality affordable housing to those who need it the most.

The Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust has already proven its value as one of the largest providers of community and affordable housing in the South Island. This bill

ensures that their expertise is no longer restricted by outdated geographical boundaries. I will just also point out this stops the need for needless duplication for other community housing providers to have to be stood up in those very close-by surrounds of Selwyn and the Waimakariri.

To understand why this bill is necessary, we must look at where the trust has actually come from and how it was formed. Of course, we've heard that it was established back in 2016—so 10 years ago. The trust was designed to manage the social housing and the Christchurch City Council's housing portfolio to address the issues of supply and affordability of housing. Of course, since then, Banks Peninsula was added to that, but it has become a central part of our social housing in Christchurch. I have had many great interactions with the team as we've helped some of our local residents into housing.

It is a registered charity, providing clean, warm houses. It has a clear charitable purpose, ensuring that surpluses are reinvested back into the community. Because of that success, we're now in a position where that trust model can be spread out, not just for Christchurch but for a greater regional solution.

The core purpose of this bill is to amend the deed trust. It's not overly complicated, but it has restricted the trust area of operations to the limits of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. We're not standing here today on a whim. It is in direct response to the Greater Christchurch Partnership's Joint Housing Action Plan, which was adopted in December 2023. This partnership includes the Christchurch City Council, Selwyn, and the Waimakariri District Councils. It's identified a clear need to expand the trust's successful model.

I do just want to acknowledge that some of the most popular mayors in New Zealand do come from that area. That, of course, is Phil Mauger, Dan Gordon, and Lydia Gliddon. So I do just want to thank them for the work and leadership they do in Christchurch, Selwyn, and the Waimakariri.

We have seen rapid growth in the areas. After the earthquake, of course, Christchurch has gone through a rebuild and we have opened up land for housing in the Waimakariri and Selwyn, and that has had a great effect on the local region. But, unfortunately, there is going to be demand for community housing with that population growth.

So, simply, beyond just building more houses, this expansion makes strategic and financial sense. It extends the operations of the trust. They will be able to achieve economies of scale, diversify their revenue streams, and enhance the overall trust's financial sustainability, which is good for the trust, it's good for the tenants, and ultimately good for all of New Zealand.

So, therefore, I commend this bill to the House. I look forward to it being passed. This is the only way in which we can fix this problem. By doing so, we can actually extend the trust's good work, not just to the boundaries of Christchurch but to the surrounding areas and beyond.

REUBEN DAVIDSON (Labour—Christchurch East) (16:48): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's great to have an opportunity to stand and speak in support of this bill as well. It's been good to hear so much support for this bill and what it will enable the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust to do.

Now, we know that they are the South Island's biggest non-Government community and affordable housing provider, maintaining more than 2,400 homes and serving more than 2,700 community and affordable housing tenants across Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. As a number of members have in their contributions, I did also want to

acknowledge the adverse weather that Christchurch and Banks Peninsula have experienced over the last couple of days, and hoping that as that weather eases, so the recovery can start to take place for those people as well.

Now, since 2017, the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust has returned more than \$136 million in lease payments and about \$29 million in annual operating surpluses to the Christchurch City Council. So, on behalf of the council, Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust has invested more than \$55 million improving council-owned units, and more than \$70 million of its own capital into more than 360 new homes. These are very important for us to have in Christchurch, where I'm lucky enough to be the member of Parliament for Christchurch East. We have a number of Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust properties, and the work that they do in our community to provide warm, dry homes for tenants and members of our community cannot be underestimated.

Now, we also know that we're facing severe homelessness issues across New Zealand and we see these, particularly, in Christchurch East. I've spoken in other speeches that I've made in the House recently about some of the issues we've seen with people moving back into parts of the Bexley Red Zone, an area that was deemed to be unfit for people to live in post the Christchurch earthquake and now has people living in tents and cars and vans. We've also seen people moving into doorways of New Brighton and also Hampshire Street. Just this week, I spoke with a parent who—on their own, with six children—was moving into a tent in a friend's backyard in Christchurch East, because there simply wasn't a home available for them and their children.

We really ought to be doing everything we can in this House to work constructively together to find solutions to address the very real homelessness challenges that we see, because I know that these situations exist beyond Christchurch East, beyond Christchurch, and beyond Canterbury. They exist around the country, and that's why the opportunity to bring the experience, the expertise, and the capability of the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust into action to solve these issues is so important. I want to acknowledge my colleague Dr Duncan Webb, who in his contribution alluded to the role he had played in the important conversation around community housing in Christchurch, and also to my colleague the Hon Dr Megan Woods. It's our duty to do all we can to address homelessness. This goes some way to addressing that.

TIM COSTLEY (National—Ōtaki) (16:52): Ah, that renowned Cantabrian Tim Costley stands up! The honourable Cam Brewer just accused me of thinking that Canterbury was the name of a sporting brand, but I have heard of it. In fact, my father is a Cantabrian and he would love to know I'm speaking on this bill.

Of course, this bill will, no doubt, end up in the Governance and Administration Committee, and we've received a number of local bills over this term of Parliament. I think many—including Mr Brewer—will be thinking of the Allan McLean trust variation bill, which was another trust from Canterbury that provided housing, and it's been well traversed in this House. I don't want to use up too much of the House's time to go over that one again, but we all remember those stories.

I guess one of the questions that a bill like this raises, notwithstanding the great work that the trust does, is: do we need to keep using up the House's time to go over these bills and these variations that maybe could have been handled in another way when there are other great bills that we're waiting for? I think of the Modern Slavery Bill in the name of Greg Fleming; I think of the life jacket bill that Cameron Brewer is promoting, to see people wearing life jackets—saves lives in our water. There are some great bills coming through the biscuit tin, the tin where every non-executive member can put in their one

idea and it gets drawn out. There are some great bills on the Order Paper, and yet we stand here doing this. This is not to say that this is not a good bill, that this is not a good thing to be doing—in fact, I would say it's a great thing to be doing. It demonstrates that the Government doesn't have to hold the answer to every problem that we face.

It is great to see a local charitable trust set up by a council that is providing housing for almost 3,000 people; 2,400 long-term sustainable rentals in Canterbury. It's a great model, and it shows us that the Government doesn't have to—yes, we're building more houses; yes, we're making it cheaper and easier and faster to build houses, we're speeding up consents, we're getting more building products. But, actually, there is a community responsibility, a community approach, to tackling a lot of these issues, and it's great to see that. But the question continues to be raised—and I will ask as we work through the select committee process: can we fine-tune this so that we don't have to keep coming back?

This is not the first time in the 10 years that this trust has existed that we've had to come to Parliament. They wanted to clarify, the first time, that Banks Peninsula is part of Christchurch. Now, we're saying that it is broader areas. I like the fact that, in Part 1, it uses the phrase "other areas determined from time to time by the trustees". We're not just saying, "Well, it's Matt Doocey territory, it's down in Rangiora.", or "It's Nicola Grigg and James Meager territory, as you work your way South.", but, in fact, we are putting the onus on the trustees. Well, if we trust them to make these decisions, why wouldn't we trust them all the time? Do we need to have this bound in an Act of Parliament rather than trusting the trustees to do what they have been put there to do?

I always think we're better to write—and this was the advice I had when we set up the Missing Wingman Trust, which is the charity that supports air force families when someone's killed, injured, wounded, or ill—but the advice that Mark Sinclair gave us, a great lawyer in Palmerston North, he said, "Make the deed broad, and then pick good trustees and trust them to make good decisions." I just think we should be looking at those kinds of issues as we continue to come up against these. We just had the Auckland Future Fund: because of the supermajority in that bill, they needed an Act of Parliament to set it at a 75 percent majority; otherwise, by law, it would be only two-thirds. We had the "Takapuna Ice Cream Bill"—it had a more technical name, but, effectively, it allowed them just to make a small amount of commercial money to upkeep a building at the Takapuna Boating Club. But, again, we just keep coming back to Parliament, using up this time. So I think it's a fair question.

The other question I'd like to ask—I don't want to drill into the nitty-gritty: everyone's talked about what a great thing this trust is; let's take that as read. But I just noticed in Part 4, which is the replacement clause for 25.2, it says that the assets of this trust, if the trust is wound up, can be given not just to Christchurch and Banks Peninsula but any other areas for which the trust provides services. I think that Cantabrians, represented by people like Hamish Campbell and Vanessa Weenink, would want to know that if the majority of assets are held in Christchurch—which it says it will be: the majority of assets will be held within Christchurch; that's where all the houses will be—shouldn't the majority of assets, if they were at one point in time funded by ratepayers, be going back to that area? Have we got the right settings in place to provide some surety—some assurance to ratepayers and to anyone involved with the trust—that they will be returned, in that case, back to the right place?

So I think there's a couple of questions. I broadly support it; I think there's some work to do in select committee, but I commend this bill to the House.

Hon Dr MEGAN WOODS (Labour—Wigram) (16:57): I'd like to thank colleagues across the House for the contribution they've given and for the broad support we've got for this issue. It's much appreciated.

I think a number of issues have come up in the course of this debate that will be useful when we go to select committee to tease out. I think that one of the things that we've heard is the appreciation across the House that people hold the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust in, and the long history that many members have with it. Duncan Webb, I can beat you: in 2007, 2008, I organised carloads of tenants down to the council chamber to protest about council rate rises. I think, in Christchurch, we were the first city in the country to have social housing; in the 1930s, it was our city that pioneered councils providing social housing. It's something that we hold dear to, and it is critical to who we are as a city.

I think the question that we had raised in the last speaker's contribution about "Are there other ways to do this?" is a fair question. I would like to point out, and really congratulate the trust on—this was their last-resort measure. They wanted to find a way to amend their trust deed through other ways. They sought legal advice. Their advice was that going through the High Court or seeking to amend it in other ways wasn't a goer, and this was their only option. But I think it's something that should be drawn out at select committee.

The question around assets and where they go—believe me, wanting to make sure the citizens of Christchurch are well served was top of mind when putting this in place. The purpose of that clause in the bill is that, for example, if social housing is built in Ashburton or Timaru or in Rangiora, and then the trust winds up, those assets wouldn't then revert to the ownership of Christchurch City Council; they instead would revert to ownership in the communities in which those assets rest. Making sure we've got that watertight and making sure that, where assets belong to a community, if, for some reason, the trust was wound up, they would stay in the community for which they've intended, is the intent of that clause—to ensure that that is the case. And we nearly got there; we nearly got there in the spirit of bipartisanship.

I do have to point out that, against any claims that this bill is evidence that we don't need central government in terms of the provision of social housing, in our time in Government, more community housing provider houses were built than in any point in history. It is not either/or; it's and. It's about Kāinga Ora and working with the community housing sector. If we're going to solve a housing crisis, we have to do that. We have to put in place provisions so that we can have innovations like we've seen. We've put in place the upfront funding and the long-term contracting to give the ability for these organisations to leverage their balance sheet. This is the kind of innovation that we want to see continue, that we want to make sure endures, and that we want to see spread across the South Island. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Select Committee

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Teanau Tuiono): The question is, *That the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust (Trust Variation) Bill be considered by the Social Services and Community Committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Bill referred to the Social Services and Community Committee.

JURIES (AGE OF EXCUSAL) AMENDMENT BILL**Third Reading**

CARL BATES (National—Whanganui) (17:01): I move, *That the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill be now read a third time.*

This bill has now completed its passage through the House, and I'm pleased to rise at the third reading to reflect on what it seeks to achieve, how it has been improved through parliamentary scrutiny, and why it deserves the support of this House.

This has always been a modest bill but also an important one. It proposes a straightforward update to the Juries Act 1981 by raising the age at which a person may automatically be excused from jury duty from 65 to 72. It does not compel service. It does not remove discretion. It does not diminish compassion or common sense. What it does is it brings our jury system into closer alignment with the realities of modern New Zealand. At first reading, I spoke about the changing nature of age, work, and the contribution people make in our society. At second reading, I addressed the practical pressures within our justice system and the unintended consequences of the current law. At this final stage, I want to focus on what this bill says about civic responsibility, fairness, and confidence in our system of justice.

Let me now begin by acknowledging the Hon Paul Goldsmith, whose engagement in this issue was critical from its origin. It was during a visit to the Auckland High Court—back when I was hopping around the House on crutches—with the Minister of Justice that the court staff raised with us, in very practical terms, a difficulty they were experiencing in assembling juries. They spoke about the volume of age-based excusals and the administrative burden that followed them. That conversation stayed with me, and it ultimately led to this bill being drafted and introduced. I thank him for his support and his willingness to listen to officials on the front line and his encouragement to bring a practical solution to this House.

This bill rests on a simple proposition that civic duty does not expire at 65. When the age-based excusal rule was first introduced, it reflected a different time: life expectancy was lower, workforce participation among older New Zealanders was markedly different, and expectations around retirement and public contribution were not what they are today. Put simply, the law has not kept up with those changes. Today, many New Zealanders in their late 60s and early 70s are working, volunteering, caring for family and whānau, running businesses, and contributing actively to their communities. Many hold positions of responsibility that require judgment, patience, and experience, yet under the current law, we tell that same group that they may automatically opt out of one of the most fundamental civic roles in our democracy, simply based on their age. We provide a legal cover that says it's OK not to participate. That inconsistency matters. Jury service is not simply an administrative function; it is one of the ways in which the public participates directly in the administration of justice. It is how community values, common sense, and lived experience are brought into the courtroom. A jury system that unnecessarily excludes a large and growing cohort of capable citizens is weaker for it.

This bill does not, however, force anyone to serve where they cannot. Let me be absolutely clear about this: grounds for excusal based on health, caring responsibilities, employment pressures, or personal circumstances remain unchanged. They apply at every age. Compassion and discretion remain central to the jury system—I should say discretion rather than direction. What changes is the automatic opt out, which currently applies, as I say, purely based on age—regardless of capability, capacity, or willingness. The automatic threshold is what this bill updates.

The select committee process has been an important part of the bill's journey, and I want to acknowledge the work of the Justice Committee and thank my colleagues for their engagement. The committee considered submissions carefully, tested the assumptions in this bill, and ensured that it was drafted and implemented in a way that was fair, clear, and workable. Some submitters raised some thoughtful concerns. They asked whether efficiency alone was a sufficient justification for change, and they questioned whether public confidence in juries could be affected. Those concerns were listened to, and they deserved to be taken seriously. The committee's response, which I support, was to ensure that this bill remains balanced and proportionate. The amendments recommended by the committee, practically, are focused on the transitional provisions to ensure clarity for those who receive jury summons and to avoid confusion during the implementation of the change. The committee, ultimately, recommended the bill unanimously, and I thank members across the parties in this House for the constructive way in which they approached that task.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this bill's progress has been the support it has received from across the House. Let me acknowledge my colleagues on my own side who have supported the bill consistently. I also want to acknowledge members from other parties who engaged openly with the proposal, tested it through debate and committee scrutiny, and indicated their support as the process unfolded. In some cases, members and parties have been prepared to reconsider their initial position in light of the evidence and the submissions received. That is exactly how this House should work. We often say that Parliament is a place of debate, but it is also a place of learning. When members are willing to listen, reflect, and, where appropriate, change their views, the legislation we produce is stronger. This bill reflects that.

It also speaks to fairness. At present, the effect of the law is that a relatively shrinking pool of younger New Zealanders carries a disproportionate share of jury service. They are, essentially, being asked to shoulder a responsibility that should be shared more evenly across society. By modestly widening the pool of New Zealanders who are expected to serve, we make the system fairer, not just more efficient.

There is also the issue of reflecting our society. Juries should reflect the communities they serve. That includes age diversity, and senior New Zealanders bring with them perspective, patience, and life experience that can be invaluable in complex or sensitive cases. Their presence strengthens deliberation and enhances the legitimacy of verdicts.

This bill does not diminish anyone's contribution—it affirms it. It does not say that people over 65 have not done their share. It says that where they are able, they are still valued participants in our democratic institutions. That is a positive message, not a punitive one. As this House considers the final passage of this bill, I also note that it aligns sensibly with other age thresholds in public life. We already recognise that people can and do serve in demanding public roles well beyond the age of 65. This bill simply ensures that jury service is treated with the same respect and realism.

In closing, I want to thank the court staff who first raised this issue with me; the officials who provided advice and data; the submitters who engaged constructively; the Justice Committee for its careful scrutiny; the Hon Paul Goldsmith for his support and early engagement; and colleagues across the House who have supported the bill and strengthened it through debate. This is a careful, measured reform; it modernises the law, it improves fairness, it supports the effective functioning of our courts, and it reinforces the principle that civic duty is shared, ongoing, and valued. I commend the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill to the House.

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

Hon Dr DUNCAN WEBB (Labour—Christchurch Central) (17:11): Members' bills are a real opportunity to change New Zealand for the better. It's a privilege to get a member's bill into the House, and that member over there has a member's bill that will change New Zealand—it will transform New Zealand. It will, in fact, save lives. That's Cameron Brewer's member's bill about lifejackets.

This bill, however, changes the age of excusal for jury service. If you scan the whole of New Zealand, and you think "How can I make New Zealand better? How can I transform New Zealanders' lives?" Here it is: "replace '65 years' with '72 years'." That's it. You know what—Hon Paul Goldsmith must be a bit lazy, because that's the sort of thing you do in a revision bill any day of the week, but he's like, "Oh, look, you do it for me. Put that in as a member's bill. I can't be bothered doing my own admin." That's what we've got.

It's not a bad bill. It's a little bit lowbrow. It's like, is that really the best you can do? We're going to vote for it, just like we would if it was part of a revision bill. Really, he had an opportunity to transform New Zealand, and that member chose to "replace '65 years' with '72 years'." We'll support it—good on ya.

Dr LAWRENCE XU-NAN (Green) (17:13): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Green Party does support the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill. We would like to thank the member Carl Bates for the conversations that we've had in scrutinising this bill, both at the select committee stage and also in the committee of the whole House.

Like the previous speaker said, although this bill does change the age from 65 to 72, it fills a niche in terms of what we're seeing in the judicial system, particularly when it comes to juries. It is important to note, however, the misunderstandings I think some of the submitters had around this bill: that when you are at 65, you are automatically not eligible to perform jury duty. That's not the purpose of the age of excusal, nor the purpose of this bill. If you are 65—or, now, if you are 72—it simply means that if you would like to be excused from jury service, you could be, without having to give a specific reason or additional evidence for that. But if you would like to continue participating in jury service, you can continue to do so, even though you are 72-plus. I think that's a really important clarification to be made about this bill.

It is also important to note that there are additional things juries are currently facing. I do agree, in some ways, with the previous speaker, the Hon Dr Duncan Webb, in the sense that when it comes to juries, we do have a bill currently going through the House—the Regulatory Systems (Courts) Amendment Bill—which already touches on certain quality of life improvements to jury service. This is something that could have been a part of that, but we haven't quite seen that bill yet. We're also seeing system improvements such as the ability to have the initial selection process for juries being conducted electronically as opposed to everyone having to be physically in a court scenario or court precinct. It also allows those who are potential jurors to only be called when required, as opposed to all jurors being called at the same time. All of those are important.

Fundamentally, what we're not seeing in this bill—and I really hope that there is additional room or scope for improvements when it comes to jury service—is the kind of diversity that we are seeing within the court body. Understandably, when it comes to jury service, we want to see a broader representation of our communities, particularly in a trial scenario. While we are able to have maybe a bigger pool of jurors to pull from when it comes to a bill like this, it doesn't necessarily correct the fact that younger people, people of colour, Māori, and Pasifika are less likely to perform or participate in jury service because of additional barriers such as a lack of remuneration if you are on a jury and an

inability to take time off work, etc. I think there is more scope for us to look at a really equitable situation and scenarios when it comes to the way that our jury service—which is an incredibly important and a core part of our judiciary and democracy as well—is made up. That is something, I think, I’m hoping for future members or Ministers to consider as part of the broader update in terms of our juries.

Overall, this is a bill that the Greens support, and, again, there is really not much more that we can say about this bill, other than the fact that we want to thank, once again, the member for proposing it.

TOM RUTHERFORD (National—Bay of Plenty) (17:17): Madam Speaker, thank you very much. It’s a privilege to rise and speak on behalf of the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill in the name of my friend and colleague Carl Bates.

I want to actually protect the name of Carl Bates after some of the shade that was thrown on him from the Hon Dr Webb over there on the far side, down the back. He said that this wasn’t an important piece of legislation, or that this change that Carl Bates was bringing to the House wasn’t imperative. Actually, this is exactly what members’ bills are intended to do. They aren’t to be the biggest grandeur or to change the world in this Parliament; they are to sort out things on the edges, make pragmatic, reasonable changes to make New Zealand a better place to live, to work, and to play. That’s what this piece of legislation does. It says: no longer at the age of 65 can you be excused from a jury; it increases that to 72.

Now, members opposite might say, “Where are your priorities?” or “There are much bigger things to focus on.” Well, actually, I think this is a really good change, and it is a really good priority, and I credit Carl Bates for doing that. We have people living longer in this country, and serving on a jury is one of your fundamental rights and responsibilities—a jury of your peers.

If you were to ever find yourself in the court, and you want to look across at that jury—hypothetically, if you were 68 years old, for example, and then you didn’t see any other 68-year-olds on that jury, you might go, well, that’s not necessarily a jury of my peers, per se. That’s why this change by Carl Bates is a very, very pragmatic change. I know my colleague Grant McCallum is going to have a lot to say about this with a bit of lived experience. He’s going to have a lot to say on this, because it’s something really close to home for him. But I just credit Carl Bates for listening to the feedback he had received on it, for listening to concerned members of the community who had raised this with him, and for him not dismissing it, but saying, “Hey, we need to do something about it. We need to change it, and I’m going to introduce a member’s bill.” I credit him for doing that, and for getting it drawn out of the ballot.

On the Justice Committee, we had a number of submissions on the legislation, with almost all of them in favour of the change. Some people were questioning the rationale around moving the age from 65 to 72, and asking why 72 was set as the number. Some people were saying, “Do we need to have a figure altogether?”, and others were asking whether it could have been 67, could it have been 70, or could it have been 75—and there were a range of views shared on the committee to us, as members of the Justice Committee. Ultimately, 72 was considered because that’s the—and I’m going to check with my colleague here, but I believe it’s because it’s the Ombudsman’s retirement age, right?

Stuart Smith: And judges.

TOM RUTHERFORD: And for judges, as well.

Stuart Smith: Yeah, the judges should be judged and—

TOM RUTHERFORD: Well, Stuart Smith is going to take a call if he's going to keep interrupting, because it sounds like he's got a lot to contribute in the debate, as well. I might yield my call to him, if he's interested.

Cameron Brewer: Oh, that's the leave gone—that's the leave gone.

TOM RUTHERFORD: Yeah, no more leave—no more leave. But you are correct that 72 was decided on because it's the Ombudsman's age of retirement, but it is also for judges, as well, and Stuart Smith is quite correct in that space. That's why it was really important to listen to the feedback that we'd received on the Justice Committee from the people who had taken the time to write the submissions and then present orally in front of the committee as well, in order to hear what they thought about this change and how it would impact them.

Some of the feedback we received was also around what it would mean for those people who get their call-up to come on to juries, for example. I think that Lawrence Xu-Nan was referring to it a little bit in his contribution, but at present, you don't automatically get excluded now if you are 65 or 66 years old, for example. You don't automatically get excluded, but as soon as you receive that letter in the post, if you say, "Actually, no, I'm not really that interested in doing it.", you can go back and say straight away, "I'm 66 years old and I'd like to be excused.", with no other reason needing to be given—and you're excused, full stop.

We on this side think that people who are 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, and 72, and even people who are beyond that age as well, are actually cognitively in a really good position and can be engaged and involved. Many people over the age of 65 have retired and, in many cases, have more free time on their hands to, potentially, be involved in the judicial process and be able to serve on our juries. I think that that's a really good point. I can understand the rationale that Mr Xu-Nan was trying to make with his contribution, but what we're trying to say is that we're now lifting it to 72, and so if you get a letter and you're 68 years old, you won't have any reason to be able to decline it.

Obviously, we've got considerations in our system around people who have work and other personal commitments. If they've got health issues or health challenges, then of course they can apply to be excused, but we've also got to remember that we want to ensure that our juries are a jury of our peers and that they are wide-ranging, they are diverse, and they represent the New Zealand population. So it is really important that when people receive their jury summons, they consider it and, if they can, they make it possible to serve on a jury.

I want to speak about my firsthand experience, because, at 21 years old, I got a jury summons—would you believe it? I was 21 years old and I had been in the system for only three years, and I got a jury summons. I went down to the Wellington District Court on the day I had my summons and I thought, "Well, there's no way they're going to pick a 21-year-old.", and then my name got drawn. I moved from the back of the courtroom and walked my way up to the jury box, and I didn't get challenged.

Hon Dr Duncan Webb: What?

TOM RUTHERFORD: I didn't get challenged, Mr Webb. I saw you in the dock, but I didn't get challenged! I didn't get challenged.

I sat on that jury for a week. I sat on that jury for a week, and what I have to say is that that was one of the most fascinating and enlightening experiences I've had to date. I sat

around that table. I had formed my views of what I thought, based on what was presented to us by the lawyers and in the court—

Ricardo Menéndez March: Tell us about the bill.

TOM RUTHERFORD: —and it was interesting to listen to the contributions of the 11 other people who were on that jury with me. We reached a unanimous verdict in that situation, but I think it's really important for New Zealanders to be a part of being a part of that process.

Now, Ricardo Menéndez March says to talk about the bill. Well, this is literally what the legislation is about. It's about serving on juries in New Zealand and the experience for people, because it's really important that when New Zealanders get their summons in the post, they actually take that responsibility seriously. Take that responsibility seriously because this is your responsibility as a good New Zealander in this country. That's why I think it's really important that we move the age of excusal—as we're doing with this legislation—from 65 to 72. I think it's really important that when New Zealanders are out there, day to day, they know that if they are to find themselves in the court and in the dock, they will look across to the jury and see a jury of their peers based not on an excusal that is solely based on the age of 65 any more.

Now, it is important to know that if you are, let's say, 73 or 74 and you get your jury summons in the post, you will have a right under this change to apply for the excusal, but there's no obligation. If you're 73 or 74 years old and you receive your jury summons, you can still perform your duty on the jury, and I say to those people that it's really important that you do so. It's really important, if you are available and you want to be involved in the process, that you take it and you turn up to court on that day.

We've got lots of challenges in the courts space that we are working through, as a Government, around ensuring that victims can get access to justice as quickly as possible. It's a really big priority for us. One of those things we can do is to speed up the process and make accessibility to justice quicker and fairer for New Zealanders, and that's what this piece of legislation does. It says that no longer will we exclude people who are 65 years old. No longer will we give them an easy out to say, "I do not want to serve on a jury of peers across New Zealand." We will now say that if you are 72 or older, you will have the ability to apply for excusal, but what we're saying is that it's really important for New Zealanders to take their jury service duty seriously. If you're 65, 66, or a few years older and you get your summons, then we say to you: please do turn up to court, please play your part in the judicial process, and please be a contributing member to the New Zealand society.

I credit Carl Bates and I thank him for his work in this space. I commend the bill to the House.

JAMIE ARBUCKLE (NZ First) (17:27): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on behalf of New Zealand First to support the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill, and this is the third time I've had the opportunity to speak to this bill. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Carl Bates for seeing this through the process of the House and through the select committee process with the Justice Committee. The way you've proceeded with this bill was something spectacular, really. It was well presented to the committee, and when we did receive those 31 submissions, the committee was able to analyse those and go through, and, as we've heard already from some other speakers, the majority of those submissions were in favour of the bill.

Also, as we went through the committee of the whole House process, I think that that night of the committee of the whole House process was one of the more enlightening

debates that we do see in this House. There was, obviously, that debate around the reasoning for landing on the age of 72, and I remember that Tom Rutherford, I believe, fiercely debated the different ages, whether it was 66, 67, or 68, and so on. But in some ways, whether through the submission process or through the committee of the whole House process, where we've landed and where the sponsor of this bill started, with the age of 72, is where we've landed. There was discussion around the age of 70 and, as I say, those other ages that it could have been, but 72 did tie in to the retirement age for the appointment of the previous Ombudsman, and that has survived that contest of discussion through the select committee and the committee of the whole House.

The Justice Committee—as I said, we took the time to analyse those submissions. One change that the committee did make, and it also survived through the committee of the whole House process, is that this only applies after the date the bill commences. So people watching at home that have already been summonsed, they will still go through the process that they've received. It won't be until this gets through Royal assent that the new excusal date of 72 will actually apply.

Through the reasons for excusal, there is that thing of being 72 now, where you won't be able to excuse automatically if your age is under that. But it is heartening that there are plenty of other reasons. There are the reasons around medical or health issues and personal circumstances. Just recently, my son actually received his first summons to be on a jury. Unfortunately, where he is in his life at the moment, he is moving—he's moving from where he's been living in Nelson to Christchurch. Unfortunately, because of that move, that was actually a reason to be excused from the process. That just shows that there are reasons—and for people that are in between the age of 65 and now 72, where you will be asked to sit on the jury, if you have medical conditions that is still a reason to be excused from the summons. So as I'm trying to explain, there is still a mechanism there for people.

I've also, as I brought up in the first reading, had the experience of being summonsed—*[Interruption]*

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, I have been trying hard not to interrupt the member, but there is a lot of noise going on downstairs in this House on both sides, and lots of chatter. I know there's a special occasion coming up, but I'd just like to have the speaker being able to be heard in terms of the speech that we currently have.

JAMIE ARBUCKLE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I realise this speech is probably one of my magical moments, and most people have tuned in so much—but, yes, we do have probably a more magical moment happening at 5.45 p.m. today. But my experience with the times I've been called to be on a jury service, as well, is, unfortunately, being either a Marlborough District Councillor and having to be excused on those grounds; or, in my last experience, is actually now standing here as an MP and actually realising for that, too, you would be excused from being on the service.

I did have some concerns I raised in the first reading around the section 15(2)(aa), amended by clause 4, around the particular occasion where you can be excused from jury summons; then section 15A(2), amended by clause 5, where you're permanently excused. I think, through the first reading, it was a little bit unclear how those sections actually worked. Again, through the clarity through the Justice Committee, being able to understand that someone can, on a particular occasion, for a health condition—if we go back to those situations: being excused or permanently being excused. So in the situation now, someone, once they reach the age of 72 and beyond, they could actually—let's say a 74-year-old—on a particular occasion, they could ask, under amended section 15(2)(aa),

and on that particular occasion be excused, but you could also be permanently excused if you go through the other amended section 15A(2).

A lot of the discussion I've heard—and it's great that, on both sides of the House, there is support for the bill. It does give some trust and confidence. We have heard around giving juries a balance. There is, I believe, good sense in having people from all age groups on a jury service—so of your peers, and when you're on a jury and you've been summonsed, actually having a range of age groups. We've heard in Tom Rutherford's case there, being 21, or in my son's case—you would have been a very similar age—to being someone who is more experienced in life experience. That, in a jury service, can be really a great element, for that panel to actually have some older, experienced people on there.

The bill, as I say, it has gone through the process. New Zealand First does support it through the readings. There has only been minor changes, as I say, through the select committee process. I think, on that, I will commend the bill to the House.

LAURA McCLURE (ACT) (17:36): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill third reading. I see the House is getting nice and full, ready for Georgie's speech. Some of them are probably wondering why Government members are filibustering 10 minutes out of a member's bill speech. So what is happening? We all know, but for those up in the gallery, it's quite common on members' day for the Government to attempt to slow down business and for the Opposition to speed it up. But I'm about to throw a spanner in the works, because I have a member's bill that I'd really like to get read for its first reading that's been drawn from the tin. So I'm going to be relatively brief in this.

Look, I support this bill. Listening to all the contributions, I've thought about my parents. My mum's 65, and dad's 72. I think about the time that they have—other than taking care of my kids—and what kind of contribution they could make to being on a jury. They're at that time in their life when they do have a little bit more time and their contribution is really valuable.

This bill doesn't say that you have to 100 percent do it after 72. You can still excuse it. But basically, after 65—well, up to 72—you can't just say, "Oh, because I am actually now 65, I don't want to be considered for jury duty." So there may be things like physical ailments. You may have an awful lot going on. You still, actually, could be employed. So there may be reasons in which you might actually think, "This is a good idea."

I want to say that I think—while this bill may seem a little bit inconsequential to some people across the House, it is really important, because our ageing population is changing. Yeah, I'm not looking at you, Duncan Webb; just thinking about some people that are heading to retirement in this House that might find themselves on a jury at some point. But actually, look, this is an important thing, because the boomers are coming through, you know. They've got more time. People are living longer. People are more able. I think it's really just fit for purpose. I commend this bill to the House, and I wish the member well in her maiden speech that is coming right up.

RICARDO MENÉNDEZ MARCH (Green) (17:38): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's quite different to be hearing the members from the Government side do anything other than just saying, "I commend this bill to the House." It's interesting to have just heard the ACT Party member admit that, perhaps, they were doing a bit of filibustering, which is interesting, because we just heard the National Party MP talk about how important this member's bill is. You would think, therefore, they would want, in their interests—if they

thought this bill was really important—to make it an expedient process, so that it can actually become law.

The Green Party is supporting this bill. Our colleague Dr Lawrence Xu-Nan already explained our rationale. I do agree, though, with the comments from the Hon Duncan Webb around the realities that, actually, if you're a Government MP and you're thinking about a member's bill to put in the biscuit tin, and you know that this is something that the Government could do really easily—and I'm assuming, based on the contributions from the three coalition party members, that the numbers are there—perhaps you would think of something a bit more substantive.

Dr Lawrence Xu-Nan already covered the fact that, at the end of the day, this isn't about automatically excluding people, but just simply giving people that option based on age and extending that to 72 above and beyond what already exists. For that reason, we think that this bill is non-controversial and we're quite happy to continue supporting it.

But I do note that members' bills can be used to do far more than minor tweaks, compared to what others may have mentioned. We have had significant reforms that have been brought by members' bills—including legalising same-sex marriage, for example; that was a member's bill. I think I do encourage members from the Government to be a little bit more ambitious when it comes to the members' bills that they're proposing. But I agree with the contributions from my colleague from the Green Party. I commend this bill to the House.

INGRID LEARY (Labour—Taieri) (17:40): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have the pleasure of—

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would just like the member to know that the debate will be interrupted. When it is, the member is entitled to complete her speech at the next—

INGRID LEARY: I'm sure I don't have that much to say on this very, very important bill, but there is, as you have rightly said, a bit of excitement in the House. For people who are picking up on that at home, it is because we have the presence of a large number of people—particularly union friends—in the House to support Georgie Dansey. But I do not want to take away from the man of the hour, Carl Bates, who has this terribly important bill! There are only so many times we can talk about changing the age of 65 to 72, or 72 minus 65 and the threshold. We've had that well traversed.

I just want to pick up on a quick point that was made—quite a serious point, actually—by the Hon Duncan Webb. When I think about the number of hours that we have spent as parliamentarians, and the taxpayer money, for something that really could have been tidied up in an omnibus bill, it is great to see the level of process that has occurred with this bill and I wish that would happen with all bills.

But when we look at the urgency that's been afforded to things like the Employment Relations Amendment Bill or other pieces of legislation that are hurtling through the House under urgency, and then we see the disproportionate amount of time spent on a member's bill, I do question whether we have that balance right.

Having said that, I do congratulate the member for getting the bill drawn and for convincing the Minister that it wasn't his job to tidy this up and to let him do this bill. It has been very thorough and it does serve an important purpose. So no disrespect to that member, but I think that it behoves the House to think a little bit more carefully about what we spend time on and what we don't spend time on. With that, I will leave my comments and commend this bill, congratulate Carl Bates, and also wait with bated breath and congratulations for our newest Labour member, Georgie Dansey.

Debate interrupted.

*Maiden Statements***GEORGIE DANSEY**

SPEAKER: Thank you. As agreed by the Business Committee, we now have the maiden statement to Parliament by Georgie Dansey.

GEORGIE DANSEY (Labour) (17:43): Ka tangi te tītī [*As the muttonbird calls*]—
[*Applause from public gallery*]

SPEAKER: Well, I guess that applause means it's all over! Thanks very much.

GEORGIE DANSEY: My time hasn't started!

Ka tangi te tītī, ka tangi te kākā, ka tangi hoki ahau. Tīhei mauri ora. Ko Ranginui ki runga, ko Papatūānuku ki raro, tēnā kōrua. Ki te Kuini Māori, Nga wai hono i te po, paimārire. Ki ngā mate, haere, haere, haere atu rā. Ki ngā ora, tātou kua tae mai nei, nau mai, haere mai ki Paremata.

I te taha o tōku māmā, nō Ingarangi ōku tūpuna. I te taha o tōku pāpā ko Tūwharetoa te iwi, ko Raupatu te hapū, ko Nukuhou te marae. E noho ana au ki Kirikiriroa. Ko Georgie Dansey tōku ingoa. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

[*As the muttonbird calls, as the kākā calls, so too, do I. I claim the right to speak. To Ranginui above, and Papatūānuku below, I acknowledge you. To the Māori Queen, Nga wai hono i te po, peace and goodwill. To those who have passed on, go well. To the living, and all who are here, welcome to Parliament.*]

On my mother's side, my ancestors are from England. On my father's side, my tribe is Tūwharetoa; Raupatu is my subtribe and Nukuhou is my marae. I live in Hamilton. My name is Georgie Dansey. Greetings to all.]

Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker. It is an honour to stand as a member of this House today. I come here to work hard for all New Zealanders. My dad was born in New Zealand, but he left when he was three years old for the UK. He met my British mother in the 1980s and she said to him, "You've got a New Zealand passport. Let's move there." So my dad returned home at the age of 40. My sister and I were born soon after and we are for ever grateful that Mum dragged Dad back to his whakapapa.

My upbringing was very British. I know this because most of my known family were in the UK and at school I was teased for saying "yoghurt" instead of "yogurt". My journey, like many New Zealanders, into my Māori whakapapa, started as an adult. It's a lifelong journey of learning, whanaungatanga, and kotahitanga. It's feeling whakamā when you're asked to do your pepeha and then doing it anyway.

Along the way, I found out that I have some quite impressive tūpuna, one of whom is Harry Dansey, the second race relations commissioner in New Zealand in 1975. Matua Harry held the belief that New Zealand would find our own unique culture, drawing on the strength of both Māori and Pākehā. Well, it's 50 years later and there's still a lot of work to do in that space. As I enter this space, I will work hard towards a New Zealand where Te Tiriti o Waitangi is honoured, where Māori have tino rangatiratanga, and where there is a true partnership between Māori and the Crown.

When I was eight, we moved to Katikati at the foot of the Kaimai ranges. School holidays were spent packing biersticks and salamis in my stepdad Bill's venison salami small-goods business. I don't remember talking about politics with my parents, but what I do remember are long conversations about the financial stability of the business. What I learnt was that owning a small business is hard and that it took constant work to keep the business afloat and support employees, while also supporting our whānau.

I must have forgotten the hours of conversation about the business because 20 years later, against the advice of my mum, I bought my own business, a gym under the franchise Body Fit Training. It wasn't long before my family conversations revolved around the business. We were determined for our business to thrive. We wanted it to be a great place to work for our 10 staff while also being financially stable. We were the first gym in New Zealand to become living wage - accredited.

Gym communities are a good example of the benefits of small business. They create jobs, build communities, bring locals together, and give them a sense of belonging while also supporting health and wellbeing.

When I was 22 years old, three important things happened to me that have shaped my life. These events were a turning point. They set me on a path of service and, 17 years later, have led me to this place.

The first thing that happened was that I got a job as an English and drama teacher at Te Awamutu College. What really struck me when I started teaching was that students didn't enter my classroom on equal footing. Those who hadn't had breakfast, those who had parents who hadn't had success in mainstream education, and those who lived in households with addiction present often didn't do as well as the other kids, no matter how hard they tried. I had never seen this kind of inequality before and it was really jarring.

What I have seen on the front lines of education in this country is that one size does not fit all. We need different pathways to success for our rangatahi and our tamariki. I want to see a system that supports all learners, a system that celebrates the uniqueness and gifts of our neuro-spicy kids, one that provides wraparound social support for our most vulnerable, and a system that recognises creativity and the arts as a cornerstone of being human.

The second thing that happened to me was that I attended my first political event. It was a women's meeting at a local hairdresser's with the then Labour candidate for Hamilton East, Sehai Orgad. As a young person at the time, it was the first time I had seen someone like me represented in politics. It showed me that representation matters and a diverse Parliament is crucial to our success as a country.

The third thing that happened was that my head of department and mentor, Kathleen West, asked me to join the union, the Post Primary School Teachers' Association. I became a delegate and then, like what usually happens in volunteer spaces, I went to a few meetings and ended up being the national co-convenor for the youth wing for the Council of Trade Unions—the CTU.

Growing up, I don't remember any discussion of unions, and Basecamp venison salamis was certainly not a unionised workplace. But I do remember the way my parents treated their workers. They recognised that beyond the work day, their workers had families to support, hobbies, goals, and dreams. However, unfortunately, the way that our system is currently set up encourages employers to value profit over people and use the employment power imbalance to exploit workers.

We need strong employment laws that balance the scales within the employment relationship to ensure all workers get a fair deal. Over the past 15 years, I've worked in the union movement, eventually becoming a leader of a union. I even met my wife at a union conference. Any success I have had within the union movement, I attribute to the bold leadership of people like Erin Polaczuk, Yvonne Oldfield, Rachel Mackintosh, Annie Newman, and the thousands of courageous everyday workers I had the fortune of meeting.

Most recently, I have worked with E tū union. In this mahi, I have had the privilege to advocate for some of our most vulnerable workers: security guards and cleaners. I am devastated that this Government does not value the work that these hard-working people do by repealing fair pay agreements. Letting the market decide does not work. In a competitive industry where employers must bid for contracts, it becomes a race to the bottom for employee conditions and wages.

This Government has taken a range of policies and laws that have made life harder and more expensive to be a worker in New Zealand. Widespread cuts across the public sector are linked to rising unemployment and a reduction in effectiveness of Government services. The cancellation of pay equity has left over 100,000 workers underpaid. One of the sectors who have had their pay equity claim thrown out by this Government are care workers. These are the workers who care for our elderly, those that work with our disabled people, and those who support those struggling through poor mental health and addiction. These workers are essential to our communities, yet they are undervalued for the exceptional work that they do. Well-paid workers with steady jobs put down roots in our towns and cities. In a fast-growing city like Hamilton, good jobs are vital to support local businesses, contribute to the economy—contribute to the community and grow the economy. There, I got it!

I am in this House as a voice for all the people who live in Hamilton Kirikiriroa, a place which has been my home for 20 years. My elevator pitch for this epic little city is that it's not too big and it's not too small, and it has the most playgrounds per capita of any city in New Zealand. Innovation is a big theme in New Zealand's fastest-growing city. Three recent projects—the Ruakura Inland Port, the Waikato Regional Theatre, and the Pasifika Fale—were born under the sixth Labour Government; initiatives which gave us jobs, built community, and grew the economy in the Waikato.

But at a time where homelessness is growing in Hamilton and it's getting harder and harder to afford to live, I want to see a Hamilton where everyone has access to secure, dry homes, whether they are buying a house, finding an affordable rental, or accessing State housing; a Hamilton where the Government takes serious action on climate change and builds infrastructure that is resilient and future focused.

I am proud to be Labour under the leadership of the Rt Hon Chris Hipkins. To the Labour caucus, to our president Jill Day, and members of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, and the wider Labour movement, thank you for putting your trust in me.

To the Rt Hon Adrian Rurawhe, former Speaker of the House—he kōtuku rerenga tahi [*a white heron of single flight*—you put the people we represent first. I am honoured to follow in your footsteps and aspire to serve with the extraordinary values, dedication, and leadership you have shown to our motu.

To the members of Hamilton East and West local electorate bodies, who have volunteered and donated over the years of my candidacy: thank you. To Norbert and Jenny Abel, Wendy Lee, Gaylene Bobsien: thank you. To Hayden Munro and Holly Snape, for getting me through the 2022 by-election; to previous Waikato-based Hamilton MPs, some of whom are here today: thank you for your wisdom and your aroha.

Finally, to my family: to my dad, who would be so proud of seeing me here today, even though he spent many years delivering leaflets for the Conservative Party in London. To my mum: for teaching me resilience by example, kindness by action, and love without condition. Thank you for your constant belief that I could do more than I ever imagined. To my stepdad Bill, and my bonus parents Libby and Jeremy; to my sister, Kushla, for being the only person that I can truly rely on to give an honest critique of my outfit; to

my children, Fallon, Johnny, and JJ, who give me hope every day and a vision for a future where all New Zealand kids are loved and can thrive. Finally, to my gal pal and wife for life, Ruby, for giving me the courage to go to mahi every day and fight for our communities.

I leave you with a whakataukī that has been used to describe the actions of my great-grandfather Roger Dansey, a captain in the Māori Battalion of World War I. He served our country proudly overseas. This whakataukī is a strong message of encouragement, urging one to be courageous, determined, and persistent; never giving up in the face of adversity, no matter how difficult the struggle. As I start my journey in this House, for as long as I am privileged to be here, may I walk in the courageous footsteps of my tūpuna for a fair and just society. *Kaua e mate wheke, me mate ururoa. [Do not die like an octopus, die like a hammerhead shark.]* Kia ora.

Waiata—“Tirotiro”

[Applause, hongi, and harirū]

SPEAKER: The House is suspended for the dinner break.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Bills

JURIES (AGE OF EXCUSAL) AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Debate resumed.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Maureen Pugh): Good evening, members. When we broke for the dinner break, we were debating the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill. The call is No. 9—a National Party call.

RIMA NAKHLE (National—Takanini) (19:30): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise as we come to the end of this bill before it becomes a law, before it becomes enacted in the history of legislation. I was sitting here before the break, when we heard members from the other side joking and mocking the substance of this bill. It saddens me because, essentially, what they are mocking is our support of seniors. We're all supporting this bill. Thankfully, many people came to their senses, but what it said to me was "We're mocking the idea that our senior citizens still have a role to play in civic duty." Well, that's not a joke to me. It's not a joke—

Dr Lawrence Xu-Nan: Because you could do it under the old law.

RIMA NAKHLE: Someone said, across the House, "Why didn't the Minister make a revision bill.", and something or other, and it made me think about Dr Duncan Webb's bill that's in the ballot box right now, the regulatory standards repeal Act. Not only that—I say this fondly—but Dr Duncan Webb has really got this reputation from us on this side of the House as opening a bar called "Webb's Whine Bar". Quite simply, this just fits into it. He wants to whine about things that are good, but what has he shown in response? I digress, and I don't want to digress too much, because this is a very important subject.

What we're doing here, in essence, is we are amending the Juries Act 1981. That's the principal Act that Mr Carl Bates, the excellent local MP for Whanganui, is aiming to change with his member's bill. I reflect on how Mr Bates spoke to us about where he got this idea to submit a member's bill where we change the age of excusal—the automatic age—from 65 to 72. I remember quite clearly my colleague and friend Carl Bates

explaining that it was when he accompanied the Hon Paul Goldsmith to a district courthouse—district courthouse—

Carl Bates: High Court.

RIMA NAKHLE: —High Court—and he listened to the staff talk about what changes we could make as a Government—well, actually, they answered questions along the lines of what changes we could implement as a Government to make things work more smoothly and to help them with their court load, because that is something that's very important to our Government. Since we came into Government two and a little bit years ago, we've been focused very much on how we work on the court load that we have, which has been colossal. We've been making excellent changes there that have resulted in excellent results. Lo and behold! Mr Carl Bates, my colleague, who is a very good listener, heard their pleas—well, it's pleas to them—saying, "Please, this is something that you can do because we need more people to be there for jury duty." What was happening is that our fellow citizens at the age of 65 were able to have automatic excusal from jury duty.

Now, we've heard across the House about what effects this has had. Different people have shared different stories and different opinions and opinions about things that are not even about this bill in substance. These staff members at the High Court alluded that this would be something that would help with the workload. Mr Carl Bates thought, "You know what? Let's make this into a member's bill." Yes, this type of change can happen in other ways as well, but one of the avenues available to us backbenchers is members' bills. To his good fortune, it was pulled out of the ballot, just like mine was pulled out of the ballot in the beginning in the early stages of 2024, where we changed the rules around people in jail contacting the victims of their crime. Yes, that's a small change, with a ripple effect. This here today, what we're going to be passing—and thank you for the support across the House—will be a small change with a ripple effect, as Carl Bates heard from the staff themselves at the High Court.

Now, as I was saying earlier, this bill amends the Juries Act 1981, and, interestingly, before the changes in 1945, if I recall correctly, to change the age to 65, the age of excusal was 60. It just goes to show how we're following the trend where we are changing and adjusting with the modern world. Life expectancy has gone up. In 1981, when I was one year old—but Dr Duncan Webb was probably 103 in 1981; no, no, he's 27 at heart—the male life expectancy was about 70 years old, and for females, it was about 76 years old. Fast forward to today, and men live to approximately 80 years old; women to approximately 83 years old. As we've heard Carl Bates mention a number of times, life expectancy is changing, and so we should change with it. New Zealanders are living longer and are living, for the most part, healthier lives, and so we should be encouraging our older and wiser New Zealanders to contribute to their communities well beyond what some people think is the traditional retirement age.

I think of my beautiful mother. She's about 73 years old right now, and, just over the weekend, when it was St Valentine's Day, she was, once again, in the family florist going hard, preparing flowers for about a week for that special day. Our older people's lives and contributions to society do not stop at the age of 65, and that's something, for me, that is really important. Honouring our seniors and respecting and valuing our seniors is something that's extremely important to me, and something I've learnt through this journey is that it's extremely important to my colleague Carl Bates as well.

Now, the MP for Whanganui said in his third reading speech today, and has mentioned before, that this bill does not compel anyone between the ages of 65 and 72 to serve if

they have valid reasons not to serve. Under the Juries Act, the principal Act, individuals may still apply for excusal or deferral for health reasons. They may seek excusal due to their caregiving responsibilities and due to employment hardship. These all remain valid grounds. The discretion is with the registrar. This bill, as we've tried to encapsulate a number of times, simply removes the automatic entitlement to opt out of jury service at the age of 65 and lifts it to the age of 72. The expectation becomes participation unless there is a legitimate reason otherwise.

In thinking about what I'd like to contribute on this bill and in this reading, of course, one goes to the history of juries and jury service and what it means in our society. It really is something to be proud of. We are part of a system where jury service is one of the foundations and the cornerstones of our justice system. If we were to zoom out and think about it in a practical way, it, essentially, ensures that serious criminal matters are determined by a cross-section of our community. Some of us in this House have been around in those legal arenas where we've witnessed, ourselves, when jury members are chosen. It's quite interesting, and it's quite fascinating, the different components that are taken into consideration when different members of our society are being chosen to contribute to jury service.

This is a good bill. This is a simple bill that goes a long way. This is not about compulsion; it's about expectation. For me, it's a lot about saying I love our seniors—I make no secret about that. I learn a lot from our seniors, and they can contribute a lot to our civic society with their civic duty. Congratulations to my friend Carl Bates, and I commend this bill to the House.

Hon GINNY ANDERSEN (Labour) (19:40): I have two brief points to make on this bill. We fully support this bill. It's a good bill; we're in strong support of our seniors being more involved. But if there's anyone out there who's over 72—73, 74, 75—get out your pen and paper, type up an email to carl.bates@parliament.govt.nz and write him a letter and ask him why he's being age discriminatory against those 73-, 74-, 75-, 76-year-olds—80-year-olds. My dad's real sprightly; he could definitely get on a jury. I reckon there's a whole lot of people out there that should write a letter to Carl Bates and ask him to widen his bill.

The second point is—Rima Nakhle said: what changes can we make to improve lives? Well, I think they could do better—I think they could do better. There are many older people out there—people over 65—who can't afford a doctor right now, who can't afford to buy food right now. There are many pensioners right now who live on soup and they don't have decent nutrition because they can't afford to feed themselves under this National Government and this cost of living crisis that they live under. They can't maintain their own properties because of the increase in climate change and the inability to pay for insurance—

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Maureen Pugh): As it applies to this bill.

Hon GINNY ANDERSEN: —on a fixed income. Those are the problems that seniors are facing. But don't worry: if they're worrying about that, they can sign up to a jury and it'll be good as gold!

PAULO GARCIA (National—New Lynn) (19:41): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to contribute to the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill in the name of Carl Bates, MP for Whanganui. The bill changes two aspects of the Juries Act 1981. It allows for the registrar to move the age of excusal from age 65 to 72, and it changes the age of excusal from 65 to 72. For those people who are just tuning in to Parliament TV live, they

would probably have experienced someone in their families or they themselves would have been summoned for jury duty.

The changes that this bill makes accomplish a few good things. One of them is that it recognises the value of our seniors in that it shows the belief in seniors that they can continue to perform jury duty and contribute to the civic duty of being engaged and involved in the process.

The bill also enables the system to access a wider range of people, which allows for a more diverse jury in situations where they are needed. The idea of excusal, essentially, is that, by age alone, people who used to be 65—now it's moved to 72—could ask to be excused from jury duty. It does not mandate that they must excuse themselves—for people who continue to want to be involved and contribute, they can always do so. But the changing of the age allows for people to continue to be involved. I think that's an important thing for seniors: to have that opportunity to continue to be involved and contribute. At the same time, it allows them to also consider to be excused by valid reasons that they may have, but not have to explain and just use their age to excuse them from jury duty.

The change also simplifies the complexity of the summons process, where people who are summoned may be summoned beyond the age of excusal—which used to be 65—and then they would just return and say, “I am not able to go because I'm already 65.” The sending of a summons will become far less complicated because it will widen the age where that excusal will not be as quickly used and as simply available to everyone. It also makes the process much more stable in the sense that people can be relied upon to be able to carry on and be involved and contribute in a jury, even if they have already reached 65.

That openness to a larger pool of jury members will be good for the system, and it will facilitate the hearing of cases with this wider pool of jury members. This is a good bill, it makes good changes, and I commend this bill to the House.

VANUSHI WALTERS (Labour) (19:46): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Firstly, congratulations to the member. It looks like your bill's going to get through and it is one that we support.

I did just want to note that at the Justice Committee there was a lot of conversation about whether we were discussing a right or a duty. Of course, this is one of those areas where it's both. But in truth, this bill doesn't create a new right—there was always the ability of people to serve beyond 65. What it does do is impose a new duty on our older New Zealanders, and so I do think we need to recognise that that is indeed what this bill does—for all those older New Zealanders who might want to write to Mr Bates. Potentially, the other issue here is that there might be an additional administrative burden for those people between 65 and 72 who now need to go to the trouble of persuading, essentially, that they have a health-related matter by which they should be excused. It is a new obligation that's being put on our older residents, and one that might result in more administration.

I've said I'm voting in favour of this bill. There's a reason for that. For me, there was a time in 2024 when the Government considered increasing the threshold for juries. That's because we already have a large number of people serving—we have an increased amount of time that people serving on those juries are there for, so we do need to solve that issue. This is one of the ways in which we can do that. While it is an increase in duty, I do think it's warranted. Again, congratulations to the member, and I commend this bill to the House.

GRANT McCALLUM (National—Northland) (19:48): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Well, it's with great pleasure that I rise to take the final call on this bill that was brought into the House by my very good colleague Carl Bates, the member of Parliament for Whanganui. It's a great achievement, mate. It's quite an achievement to get a member's bill through the House.

But in the bill, obviously, the official name is the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill. Well, I kind of was thinking, actually, I'm just wondering if it's really more about a "Bring Back the Boomers" bill. Honestly, we're finally going to be able to get a broader range of very successful, intelligent contributors to our society on juries.

Tom Rutherford: Back to the committee stage.

GRANT McCALLUM: We're getting a lot of advice here from behind me, over my shoulder. The member of Parliament for Mt Maunganui—it will be, shortly—Tom Rutherford, who is—you know, I just have to correct a few things. He was alluding to the fact that we would be struggling to contribute. But really, actually, the boomers are the ones that have built this country, right?

I want to give some examples of the sorts of people that are now going to be eligible, potentially, or will go onto juries and contribute—some really, really famous people. I mean, probably one of the most defining moments of our boomer generation was I think it was called the under-arm experience, when a bloke called Brian McKechnie—he would be great. Just think what he'd be like on a jury. He was a man under pressure. He had to face a ball under-arm, made huge headlines around the world, and it was great to see. He would be outstanding on a jury.

Another thing, actually: Brian McKechnie was involved—how good would he be—in another very famous incident for his generation to add to jury service, because he was the man who kicked the winning penalty against the Welsh in 1978 after Andy Haden dived out of the line-out. Another great boomer experience—great boomer experience.

But actually, I googled famous baby boomer politicians, right? Unfortunately, for some reason, my name didn't make it. There must be something wrong with the Wikipedia search. But anyway, if you were going to put together a jury of famous baby boomers, I mean, just imagine this for a jury, right? We would have Dame Jenny Shipley, the first female Prime Minister of New Zealand. What a great achievement. What an absolutely outstanding achievement. She would make a great juror—she would make a great juror.

But then, actually, the next quite famous lady—it would be interesting to see how these two would get on in a jury—would be, of course, Helen Clark. I mean, the Opposition would have to acknowledge that she wouldn't be too bad on a jury, right? She was number two off the rank in terms of being female Prime Minister, right?

Then another famous politician that would fit that bill would be a bloke called John Key. He wouldn't be bad, would he? What a great Prime Minister he was. He would be a great juror to add to show why this bill is so important. It's so great to be able to extend that age to allow people like Sir John Key to contribute to a jury service.

Then you would have Bill English, of course. Bill—the guy that actually knew how to run an economy. He would do a great job of running a jury, unlike some finance Ministers of more recent times who had no idea about running an economy.

But then the person to unite the jury who had that special skill of uniting groups of people is a bloke called David Cunliffe. His name's popped up as famous. Just imagine

him trying to unite and work together in a jury situation. Now, that would be interesting. That would be quite a mix.

That's quite a collection. In all seriousness, though, it's important that we allow people with experience and knowledge to be on juries and that's what this bill will do. I must commend my good colleague Carl Bates for that, because when you've got some tough decisions to make, some of the people I've mentioned with that life experience would be invaluable to bring to jury service, to actually really consider and think about it. I mean, it would be outstanding, actually.

Actually, it's interesting: some of the people that have shaped our society more than anyone are famous baby boomers. They might not qualify, they're from overseas, but a couple of people called Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and Jeff Bezos. Their ability to bring these sort of things to the jury would be amazing, but unfortunately they don't qualify.

I just wonder, as we work through passing this bill—it's really going to allow people in this country of that age group to continue to contribute to society, which I think is really, really important—really, really important in a way that helps make great decisions around people who turn up in front of juries. I think it's really important. The whole purpose of it is outstanding.

One person I would like to mention is a colleague of mine who seems to take a lot of pleasure in denouncing my contribution in his radio show. That's a bloke called Jamie Mackay. When I went to see him the other day, I actually mentioned this bill. I thought he would make a good juror, Jamie—a very good juror—but unfortunately—

Rima Nakhle: The jury was out.

GRANT McCALLUM: Well, actually, the jury just might be out on him at the moment because he then proceeded to give me a hard time on his radio show because when I went to stay with him, I unfortunately wasn't able to actually deliver him a nice bottle of pinot gris, which is his preferred drink, but I did give him a screen cleaner. These are very useful things. Baby boomers were the first to bring these into the House and utilise them—absolutely outstanding pieces of addition. That would be very helpful in a jury space when you're in there and you're trying to work through all the evidence and your screen got a bit dirty and you could have one of these screen cleaners, right?

Suze Redmayne: Show us how they work.

GRANT McCALLUM: You want to know how they work? The member for Rangitikei—it's very simple. See, only boomers can do this. So you squirt it on and then you wipe it off and it does the job beautifully for you, OK?

Look, I really do feel that the member for Whanganui has had a really great achievement with this bill—great achievement. Many people will go through their time in Parliament and actually never get a bill drawn out—never get one drawn out at all. Unfortunately, it's not very fair. But the member for—where are you again? Is it Upper Harbour? He's got a life jackets bill. Congratulations to him because that's a very, very good bill that really does need to be proceeded through because society will benefit hugely from that.

I just remember the really good opportunity here for those people who have got time to give themselves and contribute to juries—that boomer generation, the ones that really have helped build this country. When you think about it, it was the baby boomers who have done so much for this country. After the war, they helped rebuild it with all the various great sporting achievements, all the great economic achievements. The baby booming farming generation have done a fantastic job. I mean, after all, back in the day, it was all about the sheep's back and shearing, and then we moved into the dairy booms

and that kind of lines up—the baby boomers helped lead all that. They’ve really helped define our country’s success and they deserve the opportunity to continue to serve, if they wish, on juries, which I think is a really, really good thing.

I’m looking forward to the day when I might even get invited to be on a jury. I’ve never been invited to be on a jury. I’m very disappointed. I heard that my young colleague, at the back here, Tom Rutherford made it on to a jury. That was a great achievement, Tom. Just imagine how much better your decision making would have been if you were a boomer. Just imagine that. You would have made much better decisions.

Look, ultimately, thank you to my fellow colleagues, thank you to the Justice Committee who clearly did a great job with this bill—an outstanding job—to bring it into the House and pass it all the way through. We’ve now got the situation where we’re about to pass this very important bill. Some of the members on the other side actually made fun of it. Well, for those of us who are boomers, this is a serious matter. It gives us the opportunity to actually contribute to the legal system because we can bring that level of common sense and knowledge and experience all the way. It is with great pleasure that I commend to the House the Juries (Age of Excusal) Amendment Bill. Thank you.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Maureen Pugh): That was a very long bow, Mr McCallum.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

SALE AND SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL (SALES ON ANZAC DAY MORNING, GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER SUNDAY, AND CHRISTMAS DAY) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Maureen Pugh): Before we start, this is a timed debate, so we’ve got two hours—120 minutes—or until we’ve exhausted all the speakers. What I would ask the whips to do is to let me know who wants to speak from either side and I’ll try and get a balance of support and opposition speakers, so if you could indicate which way they’d like to speak. Thank you.

Hon KIERAN McANULTY (Labour) (19:59): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, *That the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.*

I’m really pleased that we have got to this point. There have been many attempts previously to have a bill that looks to adjust the rules around liquor licensing at Easter that have not made it to select committee and therefore have not made it to a second reading. I want to start this contribution by acknowledging the work of the Justice Committee, the chair, Andrew Bayly, and members from across the House who contributed to consideration of this bill in the exact spirit that I think the general public would like to see. There were those that supported it, those that didn’t, and those that were on the fence, but everybody actually contributed. They listened to the submissions with respect and they took on board the feedback, and, in fact, I, as the member sponsoring this bill, support every single recommendation that has come through that process.

I also want to start by acknowledging Cameron Luxton because, of course, he had a similar bill that was put to Parliament that did not progress to the select committee and did not progress to a second reading. This bill, of course, is a lot narrower than that, but nevertheless he engaged with parliamentarians across the House and put a lot of work in, and I think it’s probably fair to say that the arguments that he put forward were in people’s

minds when they came to consider this bill. So fair's fair; I want to acknowledge the work you put into that.

The reason I put this bill forward is because I've always felt uncomfortable with the idea that for the majority—the vast majority—of the year, liquor licensing in this country is determined on health grounds, but for 3½ days of the year, it is determined for other reasons, and for three of those 3½ days, it apparently appears to be determined by religion. Now, regardless of whether people are religious or not, that is an interesting situation to be in. So the question that I think we all need to consider is why that is the case and, really, the only answer is because it's always been that way, and is that really a reason to keep something? Is it appropriate for liquor licensing to be determined on the grounds of religion, rather than health, which is the reason for every other day of the year?

Now, the argument about religion is one that came up in submissions quite regularly, and whilst I disagree with the positions put forward, I want to acknowledge and respect those that contributed through that process. The irony from my perspective is that the vast majority of Christian religions actually don't prohibit the consumption of alcohol on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, or Christmas Day, and yet we have these rules almost assuming that it is sacrilegious or blasphemous, if you like, to do so, despite that being contrary to the practices and the rules.

It is also important to note that this bill does not propose anything other than simply treating the days that are mentioned as any other day of the year. Now, when you consider those that work in the hospitality industry, which has had a hard time of late and which supports this change and hopes that it can be in force by Easter—and, by the way, there's a chance that that might happen.

If the bill passes today, there are two more members' days scheduled. As long as there isn't another bout of urgency that pushes that out, there is a chance that this bill could come into force the day before Good Friday. That would be a really good boost for those hospitality businesses that are looking forward to a good trading Easter, where their staff and those business owners won't have to go through the farce that they do every other Easter, where not only are they doing their normal job but they are monitoring what people are eating, at what time, and how many drinks they can serve relevant to the number of meals that they have had. Does what they've ordered constitute a substantial meal—is a pizza a substantial meal? A roast probably is, but what about a plate of wedges? What about loaded wedges versus wedges? This is where we're at, and this is what people that are working in the hospitality industry are having to deal with every Easter.

Members will note that the bill as recommended—and, as I've indicated, I accept all recommendations that have come through the select committee process—is more narrow in scope than was originally proposed. The original proposal was that those businesses that are already able to operate on those days would be allowed to do so under normal conditions. The rationale for that was a pragmatic one in that all previous attempts to change any other aspect around trading at Easter have not passed. If we want to change the liquor licensing, I wanted to keep it as narrow as possible, and so I wanted to avoid a debate around where do off-licences sit, etc. The reason I originally proposed those that are already able to operate is because off-licences like your bottle store can't open, but supermarkets can.

But once we started looking into it, it was actually far more complicated than I had anticipated, which is not uncommon with members' bills. We don't have the resources as members to get people to go out and do the research and all that sort of stuff.

Hon Dr Duncan Webb: Leave that to the Justice Committee.

Hon KIERAN McANULTY: That's right, the Justice Committee sorted that out for us. But what became apparent was that with the off-licence delivery service—which is a relatively new thing—currently, the rules are that you can order it on these days, but they can't deliver it until another day. Now, even though I was saying that the intention of the bill was for those businesses that can already operate, they can already operate, and so we'd actually be allowing delivery of alcohol on those days, but off-licences still couldn't open, and it was getting very complex. Now, it is straightforward: on-licensed premises—bars and clubs—will be able to operate under normal conditions on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, and the morning of Anzac Day.

The reason I've included the morning of Anzac Day is because whilst RSAs are allowed to operate on the morning of Anzac Day between 4 a.m. and 1 p.m. to allow veterans, after they've attended an Anzac service, to come and have a drink with their comrades, those RSAs can't sell to members of the general public unless they apply for a special licence. Now, in many smaller communities, this is a real community event, where everybody comes—not just members—and being able to save RSAs the hassle of applying for a special licence so that veterans can share a drink with their comrades as well as their family and as well as their community will save those RSAs a lot of work leading up to Anzac Day and it will save them having to do it every year.

For those that might fear that this is loosening things too much, I want to make one point, which is that one of the recommendations is that we are also adding an additional requirement for RSAs. Clubs are allowed to operate without a duty manager, and it's an exemption that exists only for clubs, but what we've said is that given that we are proposing to allow RSAs to operate to the general public between 4 a.m. and 1 p.m., on that time frame only, because they're serving the general public, they should be required to have a duty manager like any other on-licence. I think that is a fair trade-off. That was something that came through the select committee work, and I support that.

The key thing here for me is that the advice we got at select committee was that the proposed changes will not increase alcohol harm. If anything, having a consistent approach to the sale of alcohol not only will add consistency but will ensure that the rules are being applied from a health perspective, like they are for all the other days of the year.

I respect those that feel that these days are extremely important and I respect those that feel that we shouldn't make any changes, but I would just ask them to consider the pragmatic approach that we have taken as a committee to make the changes to apply to those businesses that are already operating so that there won't be more workers working that are already working, and they'll just be able to do it like they do every other day of the year. It'll be a massive boon to the hospitality industry, who are fully supportive of this bill.

I thank those that have supported this bill at first reading and I hope that they will again, and I would encourage members, respectfully, to consider whether they would support it at the second reading. Thank you.

RIMA NAKHLE (National—Takanini) (20:08): Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is the first time I've stood up to speak on this bill so far, and I want to say from the outset that I will be voting no again. I want to start off by talking about a personal, blanket rule that I decided when I became an MP because I'd thought about a number of situations that I'd be fluffed into, and this is one of them, which is when we're voting on bills in respect of access to alcohol.

I drink alcohol. I enjoy a drop of wine here and there, and other things as well—I like ouzo. I'm not the alcohol police and I'm not the fun police, but coming from South Auckland and seeing the harm that access to alcohol does to many of our families in South Auckland, that's what drove me to this decision that as an MP, as a blanket rule personally, I will be voting against bills that allow extra access, or more access, to alcohol. I'm grateful to the National Party for allowing me, because we are a broad church, to have this conscience vote as well.

I would like to say to the member—interestingly enough, one of the strongest points I got from the member's kōrero just now is that apparently the lack of access to alcohol on these days appears to be determined by religion. Yep, I've got the ash on my forehead. It's Ash Wednesday for Catholics and for Anglicans—we observe this. I want to say that although I practise my faith personally and I know about my relationship with God, for me, overwhelmingly, my decision to vote no is about extra access to alcohol.

About these days that are apparently religious days, who are we trying to kid? About 66 percent of people in New Zealand don't observe these days, because they're Christian, religious days. They happen to be originally formed on those beautiful foundations, but it's OK. We're in a society where most New Zealanders don't necessarily observe them for those Christian values, but they are observed. They're observed in a sense that they, for the most part, are public holidays.

When I was reflecting on this bill—and I discussed it with some close family members—I remember one of them got particularly frustrated and said, “Why do we have to, on these few days, give extra access in earlier times to parents? Why can't they just hang out with their kids fully engaged, 100 percent, instead of thinking, ‘Where can we go now to get an early drink?’ ” That really resonated with me. I thought that's kind of hitting the nail on the head for me. Not only, in South Auckland, do I see the harm that that access to alcohol brings, but I also see children that oftentimes are neglected by their parents. I'm not saying the parents are inherently bad people, but they come with their addictions. They come with their abuse—whether it be alcohol or drugs, and as a result, their children are neglected. This is why I feel very strongly about access to alcohol and access to drugs because I've seen, firsthand, children that are neglected because their parents are in a very unfortunate situation where they're addicted to these substances.

I didn't grow up like that. I'm very blessed that my parents didn't have these addictions. We had alcohol openly in our home. The first time I tasted whisky, Dad gave me a sip. I was five years old, and I didn't like it, so I don't drink whisky.

Glen Bennett: Holy moly!

RIMA NAKHLE: Yes. That's what Lebanese people do. The Christians allow their children a little bit of access, so it's not a big deal to us—“Oh my goodness! When I turn 18, I'm drinking alcohol.” Other families are not like that, and so I do not support this bill, because I want the kids to have full access to their parents on these little few days that are left where there are some restrictions on buying alcohol and alcohol consumption. I want the parents to be fully engaged, instead of thinking about leaving or going somewhere earlier so they can have a drink. I don't want extra access to alcohol. I'm sorry for the businesses that find this frustrating and tedious, but, for me, what's more important is kids having their parents fully engaged.

I'm sorry to the member across the House—I know you're fighting fervently for it—but for me personally, I do not commend this bill to the House.

CAMERON LUXTON (ACT) (20:13): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise in support of this bill, and I want to start with the select committee process, which I personally

wasn't a part of, not being a part of the Justice Committee, but my ever-reliable colleague Todd Stephenson did listen to submitters and did the hard work, engaging and working through these issues carefully. I know that he engaged well with Kieran McNulty, the honourable member—we won't go down that track again—who has been extremely helpful in conversations about how this is going through the committee.

Submitters came forward, Todd informs me, with strong support for the bill, but they also raised quite a few concerns. A lot of that is focused on the distinction between on- and off-licences and how this would be affected by the proposed changes. I think the member whose bill this is has outlined that quite well, his thinking through that, in his speech given just now. There were concerns raised about whether having off-licences trading on restricted days would increase harm, given that involves unsupervised consumption—because who could trust adults to operate in this world and grow a sense of responsibility and be punished when they abuse that? As a result, the committee recommended amendments that removed changes to off-licences. In short, these reforms that happened at select committee narrowed it significantly, and I think that that narrowing was unnecessary and quite disappointing, actually. Todd Stephenson made it very clear during the process that the original intent of the bill was the right one, and it has already been signalled to the honourable member in charge that ACT is putting forward amendments at the committee of the whole House stages to restore the intent of the original bill, because if we're going to fix something, we should just fix it properly.

Now, stepping back from the select committee, I'll talk about the broader ideas of this bill. The member has acknowledged religious concerns and also concerns being made about health. Now, it's not unknown to this House that I've previously had a member's bill on this topic. In fact, it's been alluded to. The health concerns about people having access to supply—the member in his speech didn't quite say what I want to say right now, which is if you restrict people on days from buying alcohol, they stock up. There is no drop in the amount of alcohol consumed. People stock up beforehand. I don't know about you, but during the COVID madness, there was a certain run on toilet paper. Now, I didn't partake in this run on toilet paper, but people overbought toilet paper. We had houses up and down the country full of toilet paper. Do you think that it is healthy and helpful for someone who's got a troubling connection or relationship with alcohol to have piles of alcohol? I don't think that is healthy. I think we can make a pretty good supposition that that isn't an outcome that we want to see. Allowing a stable and predictable supply, I believe—and there is evidence to show this—leads to less harm. I think the member whose bill this is might like to take a stronger stance on that in his defence of it in the future.

The restrictions are relics from our past. They reflect an era when it was considered normal for the Government to micromanage adults who could legally purchase a product. Judging by some of the commentary—again alluding to the bill that I brought through this House and the first reading speech—that is still alive and well in New Zealand. There are those who would quite happily go back to the times of micromanaging New Zealanders' lives. Thankfully for the people of New Zealand, and unfortunately for those who hold on to relics of the past, New Zealand finds archaic laws, and we have the ability to change them.

Today, licensed premises are allowed to open on these days and serve food. They can serve non-alcoholic drinks, and they can, essentially, operate as usual, but alcohol is restricted in ways that just don't make sense—adults being treated like children, told what they can eat, when they can eat, and how they can eat. I talked to many people up and down this country during my engagement in the communities that are affected by this

type of legislation, when I was working on the Easter-trading restrictions bill that I was working on, and I heard from people saying, “I don’t feel comfortable having to go up to people and say, ‘That’s enough. You haven’t eaten enough.’ ” You’ve got people who are working part-time jobs, university students or young people on their first job, having to go out and talk to a family who are out to enjoy themselves and spend time together on Easter, and wider families, and say, “No, that’s enough. I can’t let you have any more. It doesn’t make any sense. Let me explain this crazy rule to you.” It’s not something that a young person working one of their first jobs or a part-time gig really wants to be going through.

It’s arbitrary, it creates compliance headaches, and it places unnecessary burdens on small businesses. It’s not the big supermarket chains that feel the constrictions and constraints of these rules; instead, it’s the local cafes, it’s your favourite restaurant on the corner, and it’s the family-owned bottle store that you go to. It’s the hospitality operators who are already navigating on extremely tight margins. Most Kiwis who had ever run a business or dealt with compliance have a pretty low tolerance for rules that don’t serve a clear purpose. This archaic rule that we have in place right now does not serve a clear purpose. These rules are very hard to justify in 2026, in a modern, mature, liberal, democratic society. We trust people to vote, to drive, to run businesses, to raise families, and to pay taxes, but for a few specific days of the year, apparently we don’t trust them to buy a bottle of wine.

I’m interested in something that’s at the core of this bill: it’s freedom. It’s allowing people, when you’re licensed, to engage in commerce and operate responsibly. This is something that we should be able to do under normal conditions, even on restricted trading days. If we can find common ground across the House on cutting unnecessary red tape and trusting adults, I genuinely don’t care where the ideas originated, because ultimately it’s about practicality. But we do need to be honest; this bill is only a small change. It’s part of an issue that needs wider reform. It nudges the settings in the right direction, but it only trims around the edge of the problem. It cannot end this conversation here.

When I brought to the House the aforementioned bill that I did, it wasn’t just about alcohol service conditions; it was about the wider issue of restricting trading hours themselves, because they are a route of inconsistency. Across the country, different rules were constraining the way businesses could operate with no justification, other than, “I want to stop somebody doing something.” If we want this to mean something real in the real world, not just on paper, we need to be honest about the scale of the problem. Hospitality businesses are already stretched; a minor tweak is not going to fix that. Unless we’re willing to take a proper look at trading laws as a whole, we’re just nibbling at the edges. We need consistency in this space—consistency between shop trading hours and alcohol law—up and down this country. This bill is a step, but it’s not the destination. As a Parliament, we cannot pat ourselves on the back for passing this while we ignore a wider trading regime that still creates confusion and unnecessary restriction. That conversation has happened but still needs to happen.

Overall, I’m pleased with this bill, and I hope it passes through the House today. It moves in the right direction. I urge all members to support it, and I look forward to the committee of the whole House, where ACT will be proposing amendments to restore the original intent and make New Zealand just that little bit freer. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

KAHURANGI CARTER (Green) (20:23): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Congratulations to the member the Hon Kieran McAnulty for having their bill pulled from

the biscuit tin. This is a personal vote, and our caucus are all on the same page, and we will be opposing this bill.

The Greens have long fought for workers' rights. This bill would increase trading days, meaning workers have fewer public holidays, which means less time off with whānau, especially for low-wage workers in our hospitality and retail sectors. Although workers can refuse to work on Easter public holidays and Christmas, refusal to work in our current system where workers have less power compared to their employer is riskier than having a day off.

As the Green spokesperson for mental health and addiction and drug law reform, reducing alcohol harm is something I'm dedicated to. The select committee submission from Alcohol Healthwatch had three key points: one, this bill could further perpetuate the harm caused by alcohol. There is extensive research that tells us that alcohol-related harm in Aotearoa is at unacceptably high levels and causes harm to some of our most vulnerable communities. Two: this bill would increase access to alcohol. This would further promote alcohol availability, contribute to off-licence harm, and could negatively impact our communities. Three: the submission noted that the amendment bill should seek to minimise alcohol-related harm across New Zealand and prevent further harm from happening, where applicable. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MILES ANDERSON (National—Waitaki) (20:24): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to take a call on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill. I'd like to congratulate the member for having his bill brought this far, which doesn't happen often. Congratulations there, Mr McAnulty.

At the first reading of this bill, I voted in favour of taking it to the select committee, but I did have some concerns as to some of the content of the bill. I've had a good look at what the Justice Committee has recommended. I am happy to see that a number of my concerns have been addressed, particularly around off-licence trading during those specified times.

I think, in an electorate such as mine, where there is a big tourist influence and we have enormous events over Easter in particular—one coming up is Warbirds over Wanaka. In the past, the hospitality providers in the area have not been able to serve alcohol with any of the food that they provide. This will go some way to addressing some of the concerns that a number of my constituents have raised with me. I've been lobbied by both sides of the argument, as I'm sure most of the House has. I've given it a lot of thought. I believe that, really, if you can't be organised enough to have your off-licence purchases organised prior to these few days, you probably shouldn't be drinking at all, really.

As it stands, I think the amendments done by the select committee address a number of the issues that some of my constituents had. They certainly address the concerns that the hospitality providers throughout the western side of my electorate and the southern part of my electorate had prior to this bill being introduced. For example, I guess, there are some differences in my electorate—compared to one of the previous speakers talking about hers—where a big portion of those that would be seeking hospitality during these days are tourists and are generally used to, in other countries, receiving a full suite of what's available from the hospitality providers, in the countries they come from or a lot of the countries that they travel through.

I guess I'm happy to commend this bill to the House, and congratulations to the member.

TOM RUTHERFORD (National—Bay of Plenty) (20:28): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just want to commence my contribution by firstly saying, I personally don't drink alcohol. It's not that I've never drunk alcohol; it's just that—

Hon Erica Stanford: You're not old enough!

TOM RUTHERFORD: I'm not old enough, says Erica Stanford! Point of order. Ha, ha! We'll carry on. It's not that I've not ever drunk alcohol but that I've just made a conscious decision that it's just not something I want to do at this time in my life. But it doesn't mean that I can't look at a piece of legislation and think, "It's not about me; it's about we, and it's about New Zealand, and it's also about my community."

Conscience issues like this are a little bit of a dilemma sometimes for local electorate MPs, because there's the weigh- up between "Do you stand based on your own individual principles and who you were elected to be in this place, as a member of Parliament?" or "Do you stand based on the views of your community"—or do you try to find some sort of hybrid in the middle and try and do that. It's a little bit of a challenge you sometimes face on conscience issues like this.

I took the approach to go down a different avenue, and I put out to my local community. I said, "This piece of legislation is coming up for debate. It's going to be a conscience issue, and I'd love for you to get in touch with me to share your views on both sides of it." It's not that I was running a popularity contest locally—"I got 30 views one way and 25 the other, so I'm going to vote that way."—but it's actually to ensure that the final position I landed on was in tune with how I thought the majority, or most, of my community was feeling. For the most part, the people who got in touch with me said this is a pragmatic change that needs to happen.

The way we operate at present in New Zealand is incredibly frustrating. It's, frankly, outdated for 2026, and the argument of a substantial meal, as the member in charge of the bill, the Hon Kieran McAnulty, rightly says—a "substantial" meal—is very, very ambiguous in many, many cases, and rightly so. I was thinking about it while I was sitting here. I was thinking, "What are some examples you could give in that case?" You could go to a pub and have fish and chips, and that probably qualifies as a substantial meal, but what about, rightly so, if you had wedges? Then, if you just had wedges, would that qualify? Probably not, but if you had bacon and cheese and sour cream and sweet chilli on them, does that then count because you've added to it? That's the issue that many hospitality providers face across New Zealand, and I believe it's, frankly, outdated.

On the Justice Committee, we heard from hospitality groups, business sectors, restaurants, cafes, and bars, who got in touch and said, "We'd love for you to bring about this change." I credit the member in charge because he was very pragmatic about what may work, what may not work, what the intention was. I do recall him saying something along the lines of "I'll do pretty much anything to get the bill passed, as long as we can get it into the right shape to make that feasible." That's why I think the off-licence change and having that removed is something I'm actually really supportive of.

When I stood for my first speech, in the first reading, I said I'd support it to the select committee and I'd be interested to hear the submissions that were made. After listening to them, I came to the view that I wasn't supportive of allowing off-licences to operate under these circumstances. I might not go as far as my colleague Miles Anderson, to say you should be more organised or maybe you shouldn't drink at all, but the intent of the legislation is for our RSAs, our restaurants, and our bars, on long weekends, to be able to serve to their patrons an alcoholic beverage if they so wish. Let's just remember it's a choice. Nobody is saying that on Easter Sunday or Good Friday, or whatever it might be,

that because this may well be legalised, you are now required to consume alcohol. We're just providing patrons with the choice to make for themselves, and I think that's a positive step.

One of the ones that really hits home for me, though, is the operations that our RSAs face every year on 25 April with Anzac Day. Many of them either already have special licences or they have to apply for exemptions, and it's a bureaucratic and onerous task that they have to undertake. These are the men and women who served our country, and actually just yesterday, we passed legislation that allows Anzac Day to now recognise everybody who has served New Zealand in conflict, which is a really positive step. Isn't it only right that, if they want to recognise their service to New Zealand on 25 April, they should be able to do so in a way that they feel comfortable? We've also put in a really pragmatic step, through the Justice Committee, which is to say that, for RSAs to be able to serve alcohol on Anzac Day, they must have a duty manager present. I actually think that is good practice and good lawmaking because we're saying: if you're going to allow alcohol consumption, it is really important that you have someone there who is, effectively, responsible for the facilities that are operating and allowing that consumption to take place. In my view, this clarifies the law and makes it quite black and white, quite clear for people across New Zealand, what now can happen and cannot happen.

As I said I would support it to the select committee, and I was comfortable with the changes that we made on the Justice Committee. I actually have to say it was one of the most enjoyable pieces of legislation I've sat on with a select committee so far, because I felt the work of the committee really worked for the benefit of the legislation. It wasn't a political game of back and forth, trying to get wins and scores on the board. It was actually about what was best for the legislation and what was best for New Zealand and to try to get this right. I actually respect people like my colleague Rima Nakhle, who, even though she's a member of the Justice Committee and has an entirely different point of view to me, still engaged in trying to get the legislation to some place that she might have been able to see workable. I actually think that's a really important and healthy part of our democracy and the way we legislate in New Zealand: that we can have members of the committee who may not have agreement with the legislation but still want to engage in the process, rather than just saying, full stop, "I don't support it, so I'm not going to bother or put in any time." I credit Rima Nakhle in particular for the way she worked on the legislation, even though fundamentally she didn't support it.

The member in charge made a really good point around why it's important to differentiate between on-licences and off-licences, because, in 2026, Uber Eats, DoorDash, and many other food or drink delivery services are available to us today on our phones. Why is it that you may prohibit, for example, supermarkets from being able to operate and sell alcohol but you could, hypothetically, have Uber Eats deliver it to your own home address and you could be able to collect it there? In trying to sort that out and make it clearer, I think we've done that through the select committee.

Just in my last couple of minutes, I want to acknowledge those who made the time to submit to the select committee, who made the time to make their voices heard and to get in touch with us and to share their views. I actually found it really worthwhile because many of them had worked their way through the legislation and said, "Just from what we've picked up or what we've seen in it, we don't think this may work the way you think it may work or that you had intended for it to work." They provided some really pragmatic solutions, which I think we endeavoured our best, as members of the committee, to take on board and to bring about pragmatic and practical change.

As I said at the start of my contribution, my role as a local electorate MP is, I feel, to listen and understand the views of my local community, to be their representative in this place, and to stand up for their views that they shared with me. The overwhelming feedback I heard was from people in support of this legislation. That's not to say that I dismissed those who got in touch around their opposition, particularly those who got in touch based on religious points of view and how they feel around alcohol consumption, particularly on days like Christmas Day, for example. It's just to say that this enables people to have choice. These people are adults. It gives them the opportunity to make a decision based on the circumstances for them.

We recognise the harm that alcohol plays in our communities, and that's always something front of mind with this legislation, but this is ultimately about allowing people on days like Anzac Day and Good Friday to just make their own individual choices around whether they would like the opportunity to have a beer or a wine or something else if they like to enjoy the hospitality of our community. I support and commend this bill to the House.

JAMIE ARBUCKLE (NZ First) (20:38): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to speak in this personal vote on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill. Some of the views that I'll express through this speech are some that also would be expressed by my colleagues if they were here to speak tonight.

First, I congratulate the member the Hon Kieran McNulty and the way he dealt with this through the Justice Committee—being a member of the Justice Committee myself. It was highly skilled, in a way, your experience of just trying to manage this the best you could. It is a subject, in thinking about it today and how I would even speak to it, that kind of pulls at your heartstrings, because you're torn in different directions.

My reading on this has been a little bit different from what some of the other members have spoken to. My feeling through the select committee process was that we actually heard the majority of people oppose this legislative change. We heard, yes, from hospitality in particular, and their support for the bill. But through agencies, such as the Salvation Army, it was very clear how they opposed this extension to these 3½ days.

I want to say, from the start, that there is a significance around these days, and I would never stand in this House and say that I'm a very religious person at all, but I respect the fact of where the tradition, especially around Easter and Christmas, comes from. I think, regardless of religious background or beliefs we have, and I know from my childhood, we believe through tradition, even if it's not religion, just that those days hold significance. And for those thoughts, especially when I think around Christmas Day, it's, for me, family day—it's as simple as that. It's around families spending time together.

The one disappointing thing I did take from, as we did try to massage this through the Justice Committee, was whether the bill was too wide or too narrow. I've heard the sponsor of the bill say that this is a more narrow approach, but I'd actually say this is still quite a big bite of the cherry here because we are talking Easter, Anzac, and Christmas Day. I thought, maybe, the member, through select committee, may have gone to the approach—and, maybe, if it got to this point of the committee of the whole House—of actually dropping out Christmas Day and Anzac Day. Not saying that would still get my support, but I think it would have been a slightly different discussion if we were discussing just Easter and some of those anomalies around the meals and trying to get the hospitality side around Easter sorted out.

But, at the moment, as we sit, the legislation as we have it, and in this bill, was really touching on on-licence, and I think that got confused. I, again, to the member, that off-licence stuff—obviously, on Christmas Day we're not going to see supermarkets and that kind of stuff opened anyway but it was trying to massage it through on the on-licence and on those businesses that were already opening. But, again, I would say, through our legislation that we've got at the moment, even though it may frustrate some people, there is a balance between practicality and serving tradition. In that sense, I think, as much as some hospitality owners may struggle with aspects of the legislation, it does give that balance. At the moment, at least on on-licence, you can have a meal, and you can serve and can buy alcohol. It's not like there isn't a way not to get that scenario. This scenario here, basically, opens the floodgates a lot wider than what we already have.

If we go to something like Anzac Day: on Anzac Day, their members already have the ability to consume alcohol, and there is the ability for RSAs to have that special licence. We heard, through RSAs, actually, quite a concern—even though the member was trying to do the adjustments—that RSAs got into a routine of already doing that special licence and managing that situation. I think, for a lot of Kiwis, a lot of New Zealanders, that 4 a.m. to 1 p.m., how important—if the licence can be obtained, the fact is I don't think you're going to see many people wanting to sit in those situations consuming large amounts of alcohol anyway.

To the hospitality industry—there has been a lobby around this. I think all MPs would have seen that email today. I understand what they are asking for, but you've got to ask yourself, too: you've got 361½ other days of trade; where do you draw the line? I think where I stand is you draw the line in our tradition and in our values. We already have, as I say, the balance of the legislation that is already in place.

I do want to touch on, again, the Salvation Army around some of the other submissions we've heard around addiction and harm. No one can take it away that alcohol is the number one drug for causing harm in our communities. I think, over time, we understand that, and trying to add that opportunity for a lot of members of our community, this would actually make that situation—especially for those organisations that are dealing with this at the coalface; they are the people that are picking up and having to look after and treat people and help people. So, again, I don't think that that is the way to go.

On summing up, I personally oppose this bill. I know the member has tried very hard to massage this through. But again, I just want to make the point that this bill has not narrowed; it has, actually, widened. If you actually read it, even around the cellar door exemptions, we've now gone from restricted days being on Easter Sunday to actually opening that up to every day. So the restriction hasn't got narrower; it's actually got wider. On that, I think the legislation as we have it at the moment, there is the balance, there is the practicality, and we are serving our tradition. It is significant days that we are trying to muddle with here, and from my point of view, we should keep what we've got and use that the best we can.

STUART SMITH (National—Kaikōura) (20:47): Well, thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to speak on this sale and supply of alcohol on special days—we call it in shorthand. Everyone's been congratulating the Hon Kieran McAnulty, and he deserves the congratulations. It's a great bill and it fits very nicely with my cellar door bill. I think, for me anyway, and I do respect the views of others—that's why we have conscience votes—this debate has been approached in a very adult way. I think it's fantastic to hear the different views, and we should celebrate that. But, in my view, I support this, not only because it actually assists wineries and cellar doors, and broadens it out a bit, but, for me, the practicalities, which have already been touched on, are really quite important. If

you've ever been in that business, you find out how difficult it is to actually manage. We are a tourist economy—one of our big export earners is international tourists—and they don't know what Anzac Day is, mostly. It's not disrespectful; that's just what it is.

While we are a country built on Christian values, we still are a Christian country, and I really respect and celebrate those values. But, over time, things change and it's not as strictly observed by people as it has been in the past—some other Christian countries have quite liberal alcohol laws, so I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think this bill has been, obviously, very well thought out. I note that the member in charge has, I'd say, bent over backwards to make sure that this has been successful. The select committee has done fantastic work on this and it's been cooperative—it may be tightened a little more than, perhaps, the member would like, but I think it's in pretty good shape.

I just want to give you one small example, which I know that Miles Anderson, my colleague from Waitaki, touched on in terms of the major event that's coming up at Easter in Wānaka. In Marlborough, the classic fighters at Easter—it's very frustrating for international tourists who've come around the world to celebrate these classic fighters in a wine region, our biggest wine region in New Zealand, and they're not able to go to a cellar door or a winery to have a glass of wine on Easter Sunday. So it's frustrating from that perspective, and you can explain it all you like to them, but basically it's impacted on their tourist experience while they're here, and I think this is going to fix that. I don't need to take up any more time in the House. I just want to congratulate you, Kieran; I know I'm supposed to use your full name—

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Thank you, Stuart.

STUART SMITH: —and I think it's a great bill and I'm supporting this with great pleasure.

RACHEL BOYACK (Labour—Nelson) (20:50): Thank you, it's a pleasure to take a short call on this bill which I will be supporting, and I did just want to make a small contribution to explain why I'm supporting the bill and also just to correct a few comments around what the bill actually does and doesn't do.

Can I congratulate my colleague the Hon Kieran McAnulty on a bill, hopefully, tonight getting successfully through its final reading. I just want to take a short time to speak to it. I've supported this bill all the way through. There was one concern I had at first reading, though, which has been addressed, and I probably wouldn't have supported it tonight if this hadn't been addressed. That was around—it's been mentioned by others—the off-licences, particularly supermarkets. That is where real harm can be caused; when we hear from people who have to mop up the mess as a response to people who have consumed too much alcohol. The ability for people to buy large amounts at a supermarket is a big part of that problem, and I do not support extending to supermarkets when they currently can't sell alcohol. So I think there has been a really good change and that is why I'm continuing to support the bill.

I just want to be clear, though, what the bill doesn't do: it doesn't extend trading days. I just want to be really clear that those who can operate and sell alcohol will be able to continue doing that. Those that currently can't operate and sell alcohol won't be able to. There has been some concern raised from some members tonight that this is going to extend out those trading days. It's not. Again, if it did, it would also lose my support for the bill. I want to be really clear about that. All it does is say that if you want to buy a beer at a pub, you don't need to buy a massive, large meal to go alongside it. If you're a person who has literally decided that you want to pop in for a drink and you don't actually

want to buy the enormous, big roast, you're now going to be able to do that. It's a small pragmatic change which to me makes sense.

What really makes sense is the changes around Anzac Day. I do have to disagree with the members from New Zealand First. Attending Anzac Day events every year, as I'd say probably all of us in the House do, an important part afterwards is actually having the yarn and we drink. It's a day of the year where I normally leave my car somewhere and take a taxi home. I won't be this year—it's election year so it's a non-drinking year for me—but it is a tradition and, actually, it's one day of the year where RSAs won't have to apply for a special licence, and I think that's quite a pragmatic, reasonable response that will ease some administrative burden on our RSAs, on a day that's really important for veterans and those who support them and where we acknowledge them. So, to me, that's a really good change in the bill. I don't need to take up any more of the House's time and I commend it to the House.

TIM COSTLEY (National—Ōtaki) (20:53): Thank you, sir. Look, bottom line up front, I'm standing to support the bill and more wholeheartedly than my vote indicated at first reading. I voted for it at first reading but I didn't get the chance to speak, mostly because I think votes that come down to a personal vote like this that have a range of opinions deserve to get tested at select committee. I had some questions and here's the day I'm agreeing with Rachel Boyack, particularly around the off-licence—

Hon Member: A lot of agreement.

TIM COSTLEY: Easy now. I didn't think it was that bad! I'm agreeing with you: it's fine, very cordial. [*Interruption*] But I think—easy now. I think they deserve to be drawn out and the off-licence was of particular concern.

Now, I guess, cards on the table; if I go back two Easters, two years ago, we were away for the night with the family on Good Friday and went out for dinner, took the kids out for dinner and it was a bit early to eat and we said, "Oh well, we'll just have a drink while we're waiting." And they said, well, "You can't have a drink." I said, "Well I'm going to have a meal in half an hour but can we get a drink?" "No." I said, "Well, we were after some garlic bread as well, so—". "Well, that's not really enough." And then we came into this weird negotiation where I was like, "Well, what about two garlic breads?" "It's not really because you're getting two drinks." "Two garlic breads and fries for the kids." "Well, they're not drinking."

I just thought, this is crazy; you're going to sell me the drink eventually. I'm going to have a quiet gin on Good Friday, eventually, with my dinner. Does it really matter? So it seems crazy that in a country where tourism is one of our biggest exports—and we heard Stuart Smith speaking about the local experience in Marlborough, certainly on the Kāpiti Coast where we love seeing visitors come in and spend their tourist dollars in our region. It seems crazy that we will be putting people off.

Now, I get that we want to hold some days as sacred and I agree with that. I am right into Christmas and Easter being special days, and it was one of the reasons, again, I wanted to see Cameron Luxton's bill to select committee; I didn't support shops just being opened every Christmas and Easter, but I thought there were bits that were worth teasing out in there for the same reason. So I do want to keep these days as special, but as other members have said, if they're going to be open anyway and they're going to be selling a drink anyway, what are we actually gaining by doing this?

The point of difference I would make is I was less concerned about the supermarkets and more concerned about your other off-licences—the Bottle-O down at the shops that was open. I would argue that potentially there's harmful drinking that can come out of

there, but if harmful drinking is the reason not to do it, I get that that's a good thing; we don't want to see harm that comes from alcohol. I fully understand that. But if they're going to do that, they could have bought it the night before; they can buy it the next day. I'm not convinced, and, in fact, when I read the select committee report, the evidence that they were presented—and it's written in the select committee report—says that actually the impact on harm by passing this legislation is negligible, if any.

Please correct me if I've read that wrong, but, actually, there is no impact to harm here. It was kind of maybe to make ourselves feel better and they go and cover it up in the supermarkets and we feel like we've suddenly hidden the problem for a day, but I'm not convinced that pragmatically it actually made a difference.

Now, I support the change. In fact, removing the off-licence in total is something that gets my support for this bill because I was worried about people—on Anzac Day morning, I don't think you need to be going down to the local bottle shop to buy a drink, but I do think that it's completely reasonable that people would be able to have a drink on Anzac Day when they're at the RSA. Look, maybe it's a means for another member's bill to go into the tin, but it seems crazy that every RSA around the country—where it's an official RSA—has to apply for their special licence. Couldn't we just write in legislation? Maybe it can't fit in this, I don't know. If I get advice that it can, I'm happy to put an Amendment Paper on the Table at the committee stage, but couldn't we just say that every RSA is allowed by law to sell drinks between Dawn Parade and whatever the time is—1 p.m.?

Hon Kieran McAnulty: This sorts it out.

TIM COSTLEY: But they still need a special licence, I believe?

Hon Kieran McAnulty: No, no.

TIM COSTLEY: Oh, they won't even need a special licence. That is fantastic. I vote for it twice, in that case, because it seems so nonsensical and it's kind of our tradition; it's an Anzac thing—maybe not in the liberal way that Australians might like to celebrate it, but it's the right thing to do and it's the way that a lot of people will actually spend time to remember their mates. Certainly I think of going to Anzac Day parades as a kid and seeing the old diggers in there reminiscing over a beer. Maybe it's a generational thing, maybe it's not, but over a beer, people relax, they unwind, and maybe can share some of those memories and let their guard down just a little bit.

So I think there is a pragmatic balance that we can find between recognising a day, keeping it as sacred, whether that's because of our Christian beliefs and wanting to support Good Friday and Easter Sunday—

Hon Member: Christmas.

TIM COSTLEY: —sorry, and Christmas Day—and say that these are special days for us, but at the same time acknowledging the reality that, actually, the bar's open anyway, the shops are, the restaurants are open anyway. You can buy the drink. There were just kind of rules that maybe at one point in time made us feel better about it, but didn't make a meaningful change. I think this is a sensible way to address that issue.

The other perspective, which is the Anzac Day perspective, is it just feels like the right thing to do. It doesn't change—what I like about this compared to, say, the member's bill that ultimately didn't pass a few months ago is it's not *carte blanche*, it's not every shop can open, it's not tackling everything; it's very focused. Ultimately, that's what I think should earn the support of all members in the House, but certainly of our communities. The consistent feedback I hear is there are some rules that just don't quite seem to make sense, and if we can work together and address that, then that's fine.

I hear a few members down in this corner that maybe take a different view, and that's fine. That's the great thing about a rare bill like this, where we get to have a personal vote, come and share our perspective, speak truly on behalf of the community that we represent, but also to speak as members that were elected here sometimes just to have an opinion and to stand up for the things that you believe in, to draw the line where you think it should be drawn, and in that process to work across the House to deliver good legislation. The Easter trading bill didn't get through, but the more nuanced, focused bill about drinking—based on the speeches I've heard in this House—looks like it is set to progress, and I think that's a good thing.

I want to leave time for others to contribute as I know there are a number who are keen, but I just want to reaffirm, as I think I probably won't get the chance to speak again on this bill as it moves through the stages, that I'm giving my support to it not because I don't hold these special holidays as sacred—as a serviceman, I hold Anzac Day as sacred; as a Christian, I hold Easter and Christmas as special days—but I believe that people that are going out anyway to a restaurant should be able to have a drink, whether or not the dinner has been served. I believe that you should be able to drink responsibly, as you would for any other day, noting that you have to have a responsible manager at the RSA on Christmas and noting that it's really targeting what you can do. Most critical for me was the removal of the off-licences. I didn't want to see that; that went too far for me.

I commend the work of the Justice Committee in refining this bill, and it's now something I can stand with and put wholehearted support behind. I'll be voting in favour of this bill and I commend it to the House.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Greg O'Connor): Can I recommend the member only vote once. There is a Standing Order against plural voting.

CARL BATES (National—Whanganui) (21:01): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on the bill this evening. I want to start off by just acknowledging the process that we have been through through the Justice Committee, and the rational improvement to the bill that that process delivered. I think my colleague Tom Rutherford spoke very well about what that process was like. I think when we are in select committee—when we aren't in our party colour corners, where we are able to ask questions and work towards an objective as a team—we end up with better legislation. I felt the select committee did that. I felt the member Kieran McAnulty approached the select committee and engaged in that process really well and I just want to acknowledge the member for that. I certainly learnt a thing or two about taking a complex—in that it isn't unanimously supported across the House—bill to the select committee and being willing to negotiate changes that would make it more palatable to the House.

I think the RSA component of that is part of the bill that clearly has support across the House and maybe as a standalone would unanimously find its way through the House, because I'm sure members have all been at RSAs on Anzac morning where drinks have been consumed—and that is part of Anzac tradition here in New Zealand.

I take, potentially though, a slightly different view to my colleague Tom Rutherford about being elected an MP and what the role of an MP is to do on a conscience issue. That's not to say that he's right and I'm wrong or vice versa. It's that I take the view that we are elected to this House as representatives, with people knowing who we are, what we stand for, where we come from, and the sort of approach that we're likely to bring to a discussion. I think anyone that knows me in my part of the world knows that sometimes I bring the contrarian view to the table, but also that I am, at heart, a traditionalist. I think that there is somewhere in the conversation about Christmas and Easter that I get nervous.

I get nervous that while it is rational, potentially, to make some of these changes, and while it is broadly acceptable to many members of this House, it's one step further towards views that have been expressed as part of this debate about why have any restrictions, ultimately, around Easter and Christmas Day at all. That is a concern to me.

I think that there is a respect that we can have for differing views, for different perspectives, around what built this nation. On Monday afternoon and Monday evening, I spent time taking letters around to Chinese constituents and businesses wishing them all the best for Chinese New Year. It was really clear in some of the conversations I had with business owners of Chinese descent about what they would be doing if they were with their family, potentially in other places around New Zealand where family members were, or back home in China if they'd headed home. A couple expressed to me that this was the time of the year that normally they would like to have travelled home and been with family.

It made me take pause around what some things do in the context of being at the fabric of a nation, and part of the fabric of this country is Easter and Christmas. There's something special about Easter and there's something special about Christmas. Now, for some of us, that specialness comes from a view we have as Christians. For others, it comes from a view of that being part of the fabric of New Zealand. As I'm sure other members in this House have, I've been lucky enough to spend time overseas to have Christmas overseas and experience Christmas in other places, and I was sharing this with a colleague earlier this evening. I remember one Christmas Day when I was living in South Africa, where I met my wonderful wife and we had our eldest son Angus. On Christmas Day we'd forgot something we needed for Christmas dinner and I hopped in the car and I went down the road and I bought it at Woolworths. While I was standing there in Woolworths looking at the team at the checkout—not many people in the Woolworths at the time—I just took a pause and went, “If I was in New Zealand right now, I wouldn't be able to do this. And, actually, that's a good thing.”

There is a good thing about us having times where we as a nation say, “This is part of the fabric of our country.” I know that this bill is not allowing that to happen, and I understand that. But there are New Zealanders who are legitimately concerned that any changes around Easter and Christmas taking us a step further to the views being expressed while I'm standing speaking in this House, trying to be respectful about something that I know different people have very different views on—and we should be allowed different views on. But there is a place, I believe, for us to say this is the way things happen, have happened, and will continue to happen here in New Zealand.

Without going over the details of the bill that have been traversed widely by members already this evening, what I wanted to make sure was added to the discussion is that in my view, and in the views of constituents that that I've talked to about this issue and in the view of many New Zealanders, you can't—“you shouldn't” maybe is a better word—stand up in a debate in this House and simply say Christmas and Easter should be open slather.

I acknowledge that the member Kieran McAnulty has been very respectful about the way he has traversed this part of the question through the select committee. But there are other members who have expressed the wider view on where this should lead. I feel uncomfortable not standing up in the House this evening, along with some of my colleagues who share this view, and saying there is a line and it is OK for us in New Zealand to draw that line and say, “This is the way we do things here.” I therefore do not commend this bill to the House this evening, and I think I'll leave it there.

LEMAUGA LYDIA SOSENE (Labour—Māngere) (21:10): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to give a contribution. For the past hour, I've been listening really closely to members across the House to provide a view according to the wishes of their constituents or their beliefs or their own personal circumstances. I really appreciate that we've had a really wide view of contributions. I do want to acknowledge my colleague the Hon Kieran McNulty for bringing this forward. In the first reading, again, I listened and also had discussions with colleagues in terms of my own community.

I'm just going to give you a little bit of background as to working in the space of listening to contributions when I was with council, and also just give you an illustration of what it's like in South Auckland, of what it's like in Māngere when we've had to deal with alcohol consumption, alcohol harm, workers' rights, and especially with our young people who unfortunately have had too much wide access. Some of the young people have been quite creative as to how they have purchased alcohol, even though they're minors. Then, there have been a number of issues that they've had because of consumption and other things that they've taken home, problems in the home, getting police involved. So there's a whole sort of raft of issues.

My experience with alcohol off-licences and on-licences in South Auckland and in Māngere is we actually have a big business community who are very responsible for the product of alcohol around trading laws and also the restrictions and when you have to request identification. So there's been a raft of issues.

I was really interested in listening to members' contributions and understanding the conscience vote, because there is a place for alcohol. The community that I serve, that I come from, is quite religious. That's how I've been raised: in the church, in the community with very strong views from parents, and then I've grown with a lot of professionals. I just wanted to give a little bit of an illustration of where I've come from and the strong Christian background and also religion. The reason why I say that there is a place for alcohol is because people in my family and people in my rohe enjoy a bit of happy juice, whether that's low alcohol beers and the like. Once upon a time, I was in that case, but I no longer consume alcohol; I'm having a few health challenges.

I wanted to get up and raise the strong beliefs that I hold as a member of Parliament and that some of those views are not reflected by members of my community. I've had quite a wide conversation as to the impact of the legislation. I also was interested in the select committee and just listening to some of the contributions, but also the amendments.

I really appreciate that my colleague Kieran McNulty has had a very open conversation and I've listened also as to why he's brought this bill forward. I really appreciate that there is always another viewpoint. I will be voting against the legislation, in particular because of my strong views. I arrived here in Parliament because of the support from my community and also just the different things I've done in my journey to get here.

Unfortunately, alcohol has been quite an awful topic to deal with in my local community. I've seen far too many bar fights. I've seen far too many young people in my local community really affected and really impaired in their decision making. But I do stand because members of my own family really like happy juice. We call it happy juice because we restrict our young people that are not of age to consume.

I welcome the contributions that I've heard from across the House from members that do support and from members who will be voting against. I welcome that, in this process of a conscience vote, members get to have the opportunity to say their views in a respectful way. Up and down the country, it's really helpful to listen to those views

because not everyone lives in South Auckland, so it's really helpful to understand the pros and cons and then be able to come forward and stand and be able to give a contribution because of my personal beliefs and because I've listened to the wishes of constituents.

Māngere has a very high youth population, and members of the police do an amazing job in my local community. Last weekend, I attended the Pacific Wardens dinner to acknowledge the service that they do. The Māngere Pacific Wardens has been going for nearly 40 years. One of the things that the wardens shared with me last weekend was the severity of our young people in terms of when they've had alcohol consumption and the like. It's not just that type of substance that they are taking; there's much more things worse than alcohol. Listening to them in terms of safety of our community members—and it's actually quite unfortunate that in my electorate, we've still got a number of off-licences which we seem to have the biggest issue with in my electorate office.

But I really appreciate and I want to acknowledge the work that my colleague, the Hon Kieran McAnulty has done. I've really appreciated listening to all the contributions. However, one of the things in my local community is I have an obligation to serve our young people, and our young people have got some big challenges in terms of their decision making, in particular when they consume alcohol. That might not be relevant for the bill, but I wanted to stand and just acknowledge every contribution in the House tonight, and acknowledge my colleague for all of his work in the community and also for talking to our members as to why he has brought forward this bill and his views. It's really helpful to understand. However, given that I have quite strong religious beliefs, I appreciate getting the opportunity to stand up and give my contribution. Thank you.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Greg O'Connor): I just want to clarify for members—I think the previous Speaker mentioned that this was a two-hour debate. Every second reading is a two-hour debate. Being a personal vote, there was an allowance made for sharing of the speeches to make sure everyone got the opportunity to speak who wanted to speak. It doesn't have to go for two hours, it's not a timed debate—just so if members were keeping an eye on the clock. But, of course, the two hours will mean that we'll be voting at about 10 o'clock, from the time we started. So, members, just to make sure we're all working off the same knowledge base.

TODD STEPHENSON (ACT) (21:17): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Look, it gives me pleasure to rise tonight and speak on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill. Quite a title, Mr McAnulty.

I want to say, first up, you will be getting 11 votes from ACT in support of this bill tonight. I hold the proxies for our entire caucus. So, again, you should take some delight, maybe, that ACT will actually be voting for a Labour member's bill tonight. Again—

Hon Kieran McAnulty: Like the good old days!

TODD STEPHENSON: Thank you. Yeah, Roger Douglas would be proud.

I want to say, again, I was lucky enough to be on the Justice Committee. Again, I actually sat by Mr McAnulty quite a few times when he would come to the select committee when we were hearing evidence and discussing his bill. I do want to say he engaged constructively. Again, I think earlier in the night my colleague Cameron Luxton obviously talked about the disappointment that he didn't get his own bill up, but we do see this as an opportunity to advance freedom and advance, actually, making New Zealand just a little bit easier to do business and live your life the way you want to. So that's, again, why we'll be supporting it as we indicated in the select committee report.

Again, as Cameron Luxton said earlier, we will be putting in some amendments at the committee of the whole House. Mr McAnulty, I know we already signalled that earlier, and that's, of course, our prerogative because we do have a concern about this off-licence, on-licence issue, and that's been well canvassed tonight. In fact, during the select committee process, we actually discovered—because, again, last year we actually passed Stuart Smith's bill related to wineries, and them being able to sell alcohol—

Tom Rutherford: Cellar door!

TODD STEPHENSON: Yes, the cellar door bill. We actually discovered that if we didn't make some changes, we would actually undo the good work that we had done last year. So we're actually in the situation where the bill that is coming before the House tonight does allow off-licences in very limited circumstances related to wineries. Again, being from Central Otago and Southland, that's obviously a great advantage.

But I have the concern—and, again, I think many towns and communities around the country have the concern—that a supermarket that sells alcohol will have a problem, because, again, in Queenstown, it can trade on these days, but it will have to kind of close its alcohol section just on these days. So, again, that's where we see some issues. We'll see what we can resolve in the committee of the whole House.

Another thing I picked up tonight, and I just want to make sure people are crystal clear—and I'd actually ask the Greens to maybe reconsider their position—that no one is going to be forced to work any more or any less than they already are. Again, we talked about this in select committee: these are businesses that are already opening. Employees are already turning up to work. They're already going to be there serving their community, and that might be a restaurant or a pub that is already going to be open.

So they're already there. They're not being asked to work any more. But what it does mean—and, again, Cameron Luxton talked about this, as did others tonight, and in fact the member in charge of the bill talked about it—is that they're not going to have to make arbitrary decisions about whether people ordered enough food or didn't order enough food. So I just want to be clear: no one's going to be working any more or any less than they already were, and so we're just trying to make it easier for these businesses to operate under fewer restrictions and actually just carry on like any other day of the year.

The other point I would make is that there's been a bit of talk tonight about respecting people's beliefs and what they think. And, look, in ACT, we totally agree with that, right? It's what our party is actually about: people living the lives the way they want and being able to think about things differently maybe to others. But having your own views doesn't mean you should actually impose those views on others, and that's where we obviously have issues with these restrictions. We're saying: absolutely, if you don't want to go out for a drink on Christmas Day or Easter, that's absolutely your choice. But if I choose to, or my colleague Cameron Luxton chooses to, or someone else in this House chooses to, they should have that option. If a business chooses to be open on those days and serve people who want to take that up, they should be able to. So, again, we very much see this as being about freedom and choice, and it doesn't mean we're going to be disrespecting the way others think about issues or want to approach issues. But we don't think you should be forced to live a particular way.

The other thing I just want to cover off too is, again, obviously we're not dealing with trading restrictions, but in Cameron Luxton's bill we actually didn't touch Christmas Day and Anzac Day; that was actually out of scope for his bill while it's in scope for this bill. It was literally around trying to sort out the Easter holidays—it's actually Good Friday and Sunday—which is very confusing across the country.

Again, in a sense, Mr McNulty's bill actually goes a little bit further, which we're quite comfortable with, in terms of dealing with Christmas Day and Anzac Day. Again, there's been a bit of talk about Anzac Day. A lot of us in the House will actually attend our local Anzac Day commemorations and turn up for a drink, which is all great, but, again, I think people are choosing to actually partake in that, and I think that's actually a really strong illustration of why we want more freedom. Interestingly, obviously, Anzac Day has now become a really great celebration across the country, and people choose to partake; we don't force them to partake. What we're doing is actually allowing them also to enjoy a drink on that really special day.

I'm not going to go on too much more, because I've kind of ensured that ACT's position is on the record. You know, we are for more freedom, this bill is in the direction of more freedom, and so we look forward to continuing its debate through the Parliament, and we look forward to delivering you 11 votes tonight, Mr McNulty.

Dr VANESSA WEENINK (National—Banks Peninsula) (21:24): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wasn't certain that I would take a call on this bill, the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill—or “special days” is another way of putting it—because I actually found myself quite torn around this, initially. Part of my instincts as a medical professional is to immediately try to think of every way we can to restrict people's access to alcohol because of the harm that I've seen through my professional career, even just for everyday people who you wouldn't expect to struggle with their addiction to alcohol—and then we see the impact in the community.

However, this bill is not about this; this bill is about personal freedoms and choice. That is actually one of the underlying values of the National Party and one of the things I hold very dear. It is what brings me to this side of the Chamber, because I believe in autonomy and that the individual should be able to make their own decisions.

When it comes to choices around alcohol, for people who are adults, even though they may make decisions that we don't agree with or approve of, and even if we think that they should be making different choices, the key thing is that it is their choice to make. The imposition of the moralistic views of other people, whilst I respect people's values and the position that they hold from a religious or other point of view—for me those have benefits in their own way. But applying those perspectives to other people's choices in a society where we consider ourselves to be not actually that bound by religion—although it is a part of our society, we are a secular society, and that's something that we value, and that's something that I've always valued. Even though I would consider myself a Christian, I would not consider myself a particularly good practising Christian all the time, and I wouldn't hold those positions over anybody else. Having the ability to make your own choices in life is a key part of being an adult and a human. It is strange for me to be agreeing so much with Cameron Luxton over here—we often disagree on many things—but, again, this is a really interesting debate where we do get to see where people stand.

Another reason that I was a little bit torn on this debate is, of course, around the Anzac Day thing. I personally have never bought a drink on Anzac Day.

Tim Costley: You've had a couple.

Dr VANESSA WEENINK: I've had quite a few, though, so to me it's not about—I've never been aware of whether there's a licence or not a licence or what's going on.

Hon Member: How many did you have?

Dr VANESSA WEENINK: Well, we start at, you know, dawn with the rum and coffee, and it goes from there!

Tim Costley: Do you remember much after that?

Dr VANESSA WEENINK: I don't have many good stories that I can tell from Anzac Days because not all of them are worth telling and, you know, I can't remember all of them. That's not necessarily a good thing.

We do have a culture within the Defence Force of overconsumption sometimes, and so I have been tossing up where I stand on this. But when it comes down to it, ultimately, for me, it's about personal freedom and choice. It is about respecting the autonomy of individuals to make those choices for themselves. It's about the fact that this bill is not going to increase alcohol-related harm. It's not something where making these restrictions in this way has done anything about alcohol behaviour. It doesn't do anything about the amount that people consume. It doesn't do anything about the fact that in our society, we have a poorly set up response to the medical problem that is addiction in this country, whether that be through alcohol or other drugs. We have insufficient services to be able to deal with people with chronic addictions, and that is not going to be fixed or influenced in any way by this bill. So when it comes to talking about the harms of alcohol, I don't believe it's a relevant point to this question.

When I think, "What does my community think?", well, my community of Banks Peninsula is extremely varied and a cross-section of New Zealand. It's also a really engaged electorate and we had the highest enrolment at the last general election and one of the highest turn-outs. I know there will be many of my constituents who will be interested in what's going on and watching these debates and wondering where their local MP sits. I will be voting in favour of this bill this evening. Although nothing relating to alcohol is simple, this is a bill where I think it's more clear to me where the direction should go, and I hope that there's enough support around the House to be able to get this bill through this evening.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Greg O'Connor): I've decided to take two more five-minute calls and then we'll go to the vote.

Hon MARK PATTERSON (NZ First) (21:30): Look, at one level this seems to be a fairly innocuous bill, taking a bit of the sand out of the gears of commerce at Christmas, Easter, and Anzac Day morning. So you could look at it that way, but to me that is a very esoteric way of doing it. Freedom of choice—this is about more than this. Is nothing sacred any more in this country? Is there no day that we're not prepared to commercialise to the hilt? Are we making that much sacrifice under the status quo? We are a nation built on Christian values. We do have reverence around Anzac Day and remember it's there, as we absolutely should, but these days, whether you're religious or not, these are the values that we've inherited and we're cultivating and are the stewards of now.

Carl Bates made the point earlier about the slippery slope element to this. There will be bracket creep. I recall the debates in this House over the End of Life Choice Bill, where, of course, the stakes were much, much higher. But, inevitably, we've now got a member in here wanting to expand the scope of that legislation. This is what will happen. This is bracket creep. For me, it's a line in the sand. I don't see that there's any major imposition with the status quo. I like a drink as much as anyone else. In fact, the member bringing forward this bill—we've enjoyed the odd tippie; only an orange juice with you, Mr Speaker, but that's not the point. It's not a great sacrifice that we make under the status quo. I think our values are worth more than that. There are those 3½ days where the world

doesn't stop but it slows down a little bit, and I think that's a good thing. I think that's something we should cherish and it's something we should protect.

I think that to grease the wheels of commerce just a little bit more or to take some esoteric freedom of choice argument is completely missing the point. It may be moralising, but I make no apology for that. I will stand up for what I believe is an essential part of New Zealand's culture and values, and certainly my values. So despite knowing the good intention of the member, I will be voting against this bill. I will be moralising and I make no apology for it. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

CAMERON BREWER (National—Upper Harbour) (21:33): Mr Speaker, thank you very much—I know there are a lot of people keen to talk on this tonight. I think that with a surname like mine, Mr Speaker, I come in here with a very open mind to this debate. On balance, I see this member's bill as pragmatic, moderate, sensible, and, frankly, as overdue.

I know that some of our very good friends over here have talked about open slather and commercialisation to the hilt, but this is fixing up a couple of anomalies that have been there for too long, particularly pertaining to our servicemen and women and Anzac Day.

One thing I would like to commend the Justice Committee on, other than all their hard work and conscientiousness, is that they have "recognised submitters' concerns about the potential increase to alcohol-related harm. ... We therefore consider that the existing off-licence restrictions should be retained." So we are very much talking about the on-licence operators here and that they are still able to operate under their normal conditions, that it removes the substantive meal requirement, and it supports RSAs with costly and often time-consuming special-licence processes. Frankly, given the often ageing membership of them and given the often ageing state of their assets and the soaring operational costs to run our RSA clubs up and down the country, they need every help that they can get. The last thing they need to be is tied up in knots trying to get a special licence every year just to have a tippie on Anzac Day.

This is long overdue, and it's part of the spirit of members' days, and I think it joins the suite of members' bills recently that have helped to tidy up our sale and supply of alcohol legislation. We reflect back to Ian McKelvie, a great member for Rangitikei and a former National Party MP, and his picnics at race courses amendment bill, and that people could BYO to country race courses for those courses that have three meetings or fewer every year. And, of course, Stuart "Sauvignon" Smith had his cellar door bill, which too was pragmatic, moderate, and sensible.

So, again, this bill is tidying up the sale and supply of alcohol legislation. There has been obvious support in the sector for this tidy-up, clarifying trading restrictions and service restrictions across those last four restricted trading days, not opening it up but just enabling those that are open anyway to serve their patrons in a sensible way. Let's not forget that this is one of the most, if not the most, regulated sectors that we have, and, frankly, if people are drinking, we want to encourage them that arguably the safest place to be in many instances is at an on-licence, and all those restrictions of normal trading days remain.

Hospitality New Zealand have said that the current restrictions and anomalies are not fit for purpose and are a point of frustration and confusion, and they have urged parliamentarians to support this bill, and I suspect that a clear majority will tonight and we will go on to the third reading.

As others have mentioned, there is other work to be done around tidying up legislation on these four restricted days so there are not so many inconsistencies and anomalies. As Cameron Luxton from the ACT Party has alluded to and tried with his own member's bill—

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Greg O'Connor): The member's time has come to an end. Members, just a reminder that we've been operating, shall we say, on the edge of the Standing Orders for some speeches now. I determined, as I said before, there would be two more five-minute speeches and, unfortunately, I will be sticking to that.

I have determined that the subject of this vote will be treated as a conscience issue. In this case, I know there are members who want a personal vote and I am prepared to accept one. This is the process we're going to follow. I'm going to put the question, I'm going to announce the result, and at that stage any member can ask for a personal vote.

A personal vote was called for on the question, *That the Sale and Supply of Alcohol (Sales on Anzac Day Morning, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Christmas Day) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.*

Ayes 67

Andersen (P)	Bayly (P)	Bennett (P)
Bidois	Bishop (P)	Boyack
Brewer	Brooking (P)	Brownlee (P)
Butterick (P)	Cameron (P)	Campbell
Chhour (P)	Collins (P)	Costley (P)
Court (P)	Dansey (P)	Davidson R
Doocey (P)	Ferris (P)	Fleming (P)
Halbert (P)	Hamilton (P)	Henare (P)
Hipkins (P)	Hoggard (P)	Jackson
Kapa-Kingi (P)	Kirkpatrick	Kuriger
Lu (P)	Luxon (P)	Luxton C
Luxton J (P)	MacLeod (P)	McAnulty
McCallum (P)	McClay (P)	McClure (P)
McKee (P)	Meager	Mitchell
Mooney	O'Connor D (P)	O'Connor G
Parmar (P)	Radhakrishnan (P)	Redmayne (P)
Reti (P)	Russell (P)	Rutherford
Seymour (P)	Simpson (P)	Smith
Stanford (P)	Stephenson	Tangaere-Manuel (P)
Tinetti (P)	Upston (P)	Utikere
van Velden	Verrall (P)	Watts (P)
Webb (P)	Wedd (P)	Weenink
Willis N (P)		

Noes 54

Abel (P)	Anderson (P)	Arbuckle
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Bates (P)	Belich (P)	Brown (P)
Carter	Cheung	Costello (P)
Davidson Ma (P)	Davidson Mi (P)	Edmonds (P)
Foster	Garcia (P)	Genter (P)
Goldsmith (P)	Grigg (P)	Hernandez (P)
Jones (P)	Kaipara (P)	Leary (P)
Lee (P)	Lyndon (P)	Maipi-Clarke (P)
Marcroft	McLellan	Menéndez March
Nakhle (P)	Ngarewa-Packer (P)	Nimon (P)
Patterson	Paul (P)	Penk (P)
Peters (P)	Pham (P)	Potaka (P)
Prime (P)	Salesa	Simmonds (P)
Sosene	Swarbrick (P)	Tuiono (P)
Twyford	Uffindell (P)	van de Molen (P)
Wade-Brown (P)	Waititi (P)	Walters
White (P)	Williams (P)	Willis S (P)
Wilson	Woods	Xu-Nan (P)

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Greg O'Connor): The House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow. Have a good night, everyone.

The House adjourned at 10.03 p.m.