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THURSDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2015

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 2 p.m.
Prayers.

BUSINESS STATEMENT

Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Leader of the House): Next week the House is in a 1-week adjournment. When the House resumes on Tuesday, 3 November, the Government will look to advance a number of bills on the Order Paper, including the Taxation (Bright-line Test for Residential Land) Bill and the Taxation (Annual Rates for 2015-16, Research and Development, and Remedial Matters) Bill. As agreed by the Business Committee, extended hours will be taken on the morning of Wednesday, 4 November for Government business, and, as indicated yesterday, the House will rise at approximately 5.45 p.m. or at the conclusion of the new Green Party member's speech.

POINTS OF ORDER

Leave to Move Motion Without Notice—Battle of El Alamein

DARROCH BALL (NZ First): I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I seek leave to move a motion without notice and without debate to honour veterans on the 73rd anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will just put the leave to see whether the members are happy. Leave is sought to move that particular motion without debate. Is there any objection? There is objection.

ORAL QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Limited Service Volunteer Programme—Support

1. DARROCH BALL (NZ First) to the Minister for Social Development: Does she stand by all her statements?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY (Minister for Social Development): Yes, when taken in context.

Darroch Ball: Does she stand by her statement in relation to the army-run Limited Service Volunteer programme that “as the total number of young people on benefits drops, so too does the number of suitable clients who are likely to benefit from attending the LSV programme.”?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: In relation to where it is an accurate quote from me, yes, I have said in this House that as we have seen the number of young people on benefits drop, we have refined the numbers of young people who are suitable to go into that course.

Darroch Ball: How can she guarantee that demand for Limited Service Volunteer programme places has actually reduced when she has admitted that the Ministry of Social Development does not even report on the number of applications for the course and she is just relying on the fact that “the likely number of young people at long-term risk of unemployment has reduced.”

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: I rely on advice from officials who are working with these young people every day. If the need arises and the demand increases, then we will have a look at it again.

Darroch Ball: If she honestly believes in a direct, evidence-based approach, then how can she prove that only 800 out of 25,000 unemployed youth are suitable for this course?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: As I said, I rely on advice from the officials and, also, from those who are working with young people on a daily basis. We are conducting those courses, we are paying for those courses, and they are having a great effect on the young people involved.

Darroch Ball: Will she admit that the Wellington Limited Service Volunteer course was not shut down because of a supposed reduction in demand but because the 5-year lease on its facility ended on 1 January this year, it was put up for sale in April, then, coincidentally, there was a cut to the Limited Service Volunteer programme in April, and the building was sold in June?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: All I can say is that all of that is news to me.

Darroch Ball: It should not be. Does she have any immediate plans to further reduce the number of places in the Limited Service Volunteer programme; if so, why?

Mr SPEAKER: The Hon Anne Tolley—either of those two supplementary questions.

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: No. We have allocated 800 places, and we are prepared to pay for 800 places, but we continue to look at whether we have the right young people going into that course, whether it will help, and whether that will then help them to get employment when they have completed the course.

Darroch Ball: How can the answer possibly be “No.”, and how can she explain the reason the Auckland-based programme is now being moved to a temporary site—a scout hall—and plans are currently under way to shut it down completely at the end of 2017?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: I do not know where this member gets his information from, but what I can say is that the Ministry of Social Development is working in partnership with the Defence Force to provide this course and to support young people who are suitable for undertaking the Limited Service Volunteer course—and not all are—in order to help them to gain motivation, to gain some physical skills, and to prepare them for employment. We will continue to do that, and the funding is in the 4-year plan out beyond 2017.

Darroch Ball: There are a number of documents I am seeking leave to table.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Are they documents that—[*Interruption*] Order! Before I put the leave, are they documents that are freely available to members?

Darroch Ball: No.

Mr SPEAKER: With assurance that they are not, then I will listen very briefly to the documents. If there are too many, I will deem that you are trying only to make a political point and I will then—[*Interruption*] Order! I am speaking. If there are too many, I will then decide not to put the leave. So I will invite the member to list the documents, and I will make a judgment.

Darroch Ball: The first is the Official Information Act document from the headquarters of the New Zealand Defence Force titled *Downsizing the Youth Development Unit*, dated 14 June 2015. The second is an Official Information Act document from the headquarters of the New Zealand Defence Force titled *Limited Service Volunteer Validation*, dated 2014. I have six Limited Service Volunteer operational group meeting minutes dated from 15 April to 19 August 2015, which state the move of the Limited Service Volunteer Auckland programme to a temporary scout hall and that considerations are under way to shut it down completely. Also, the last is the lease agreement between the New Zealand Defence Force and the Ministry of Education, dated 26 June 2010, showing the expiry date of that lease being 1 January.

Mr SPEAKER: I will put the leave. Leave is sought to table that quantity of documents. Is there any objection? There is objection.

Economy—Performance

2. GRANT ROBERTSON (Labour—Wellington Central) to the Minister of Finance: Is it correct that according to Statistics New Zealand figures, real seasonally adjusted GDP per capita growth in the first 6 months of this year was the worst it has been since 2010?

Hon PAULA BENNETT (Acting Minister of Finance): Statistics New Zealand reports that real seasonally adjusted per capita GDP, in the 3 months to June 2015, was \$11,924. In December 2014 this quarterly figure was \$11,964, the highest ever reading for this series. That is the smallest change for any 6-month period since 2010. However, I would note that most respected commentators use GDP per capita on an annual basis, and by that measure GDP per capita is growing. I would also point out that it is easy to grow GDP per capita when a stadium's worth of people are leaving the country each year, as they were under the previous Labour Government in 2008.

Grant Robertson: Can the Minister confirm that the first 6 months of this year saw a 0.2 percent negative GDP per capita growth, and is this reflective of a successful economy?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Yes, but annual GDP growth between June 2014 and June 2015 was actually 2.4 percent, and, as I say, most commentators would take it from an annual GDP per capita basis, and we are very confident that this actual calendar year will also see a growth.

Grant Robertson: How is it a sign of success for the New Zealand economy that we have now been added to HSBC's watch-list of nations that it has a concern about due to our overreliance on China, falling commodity prices, and the Auckland housing bubble?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: To quote from HSBC, it says "Although low risk, New Zealand may be one to watch.", so I think that needs to be kept in the context of what it actually is. I find it ironic that, when we are about to sign a Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement that actually sees us extend wider than just the Chinese market, Labour does not quite know where it stands on that and is not supporting what would be a real economic growth for this country across more than just the market of China.

Hon Gerry Brownlee: Does it surprise the Minister that the Opposition spokesperson on finance ties his credibility to a report from a foreign bank?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no ministerial responsibility there.

Grant Robertson: Is the Minister proud to be managing an economy that makes the global headlines that these are the economies that could run into trouble?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: What I am proud of is to actually have an economy that has had 18 straight quarters of economic growth, 11 straight quarters of job growth, with 69,000 more jobs just in the last year, and a stable outlook for moderate economic growth. What I will note is that most other OECD countries would like a Prime Minister like John Key, a finance Minister like our Minister of Finance, and an economy like ours. They would just like a stronger Opposition.

Grant Robertson: Does he think that unemployment of 6 percent, which some economists say will rise to 7 percent, is part of a successful economy?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: What I would also note, though, is that the Reserve Bank Governor just recently has said that the forecasting that he was predicting 6 months ago actually has not fallen as badly, that we are seeing growth in the manufacturing sector since a crisis was called by the Labour Party. We are seeing beef increase, and we have seen 69,000 more jobs just over the last 12 months. So what we are seeing is real growth in jobs. We have also got one of the strongest labour markets in the country as far as participation is concerned and a net migration, quite frankly, that is at an all-time high.

Grant Robertson: According to the latest household labour force survey, how many New Zealanders are currently unemployed?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Sorry, I do not have that at the top of my notes here and cannot remember the exact figure, but what I would say is that, actually, one of our highest rates of labour force participation actually shows confidence in the numbers of those who are actually in the workforce and looking.

Grant Robertson: How can the Minister judge the economy a success, when we are on an international watch-list of concern, housing is the most unaffordable that it has been in 60 years, exports as a percentage of GDP are the lowest since 1997, and, to help the Minister out, 148,000 New Zealanders are unemployed?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: I know that that member is making a career out of trying to talk down our economy, and actually does not have the view that we are growing, that we are sustainable. We are still looking at GDP growth of around 2 percent, which actually is considered low risk. They cannot actually get it together enough to recognise the benefits of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which will grow us beyond just that Chinese market and see other sectors, apart from dairy, also growing.

Economy—Performance

3. PAUL FOSTER-BELL (National) to the Minister of Finance: How is the Government's economic plan managing the challenges presented by low inflation and the outlook for the global economy?

Hon PAULA BENNETT (Acting Minister of Finance): The current mix of lower dairy prices, low inflation, and a weaker global economic outlook means lower expected growth in tax revenues for the Government, despite rising real wages for New Zealand households. The Government's plan in response to this weaker outlook for revenue growth is to focus on managing expenditure. We are working to make each dollar go further rather than cutting spending or services.

Paul Foster-Bell: What progress has the Government made in balancing its books in the past 5 years?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: The Government has made good progress on balancing its books and getting back into surplus. In 2010-11 the Government recorded a deficit of \$18.4 billion, or 9 percent of GDP, on the back of the global financial crisis and, of course, the Canterbury earthquakes. In the years following, the Government recorded smaller deficits each year, and last week the Government announced a \$414 million surplus for the 2014-15 year. This met the target, of course, that we set in 2011. This result is due in part to the Government's careful management of expenditure, which has fallen from 34 percent of GDP in 2011 to 30 percent of GDP in 2015.

Paul Foster-Bell: How will the Government's prudent fiscal management help New Zealand manage future uncertainties?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Like many New Zealand households, the Government has weekly obligations that it must meet and finances to balance. By analogy, if the Government were the average New Zealand household it would have had an income last year of \$90,900, expenses of \$90,500, and a \$400 surplus at the year end. This Government household would have debt of \$76,000 and it would be paying \$59 per week in interest. So we are reasonably well positioned to weather future uncertainties. What is important is that we continue to work towards paying down that debt while continuing to meet our commitments to New Zealanders.

Paul Foster-Bell: What recent reports has the Minister received on GDP per capita?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: The Minister has seen a report from one high-profile economic commentator—I think he means Grant Robertson—suggesting GDP per capita is falling. Not everybody knows that there is more than one measure of GDP or

that per capita GDP is generally measured on an annual basis. Like most statistics, per capita GDP will fluctuate from quarter to quarter.

David Shearer: Do you know what you're saying?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: You will learn something. On an annual basis, GDP per capita is growing, despite record high net migration. In the year to June per capita GDP at current prices grew 2.1 percent. In real terms it grew 0.4 percent. That commentator will also be assured by the—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That question is a marginal question. I suspect it was designed to attack the Opposition.

Social Housing, Minister—Community Housing Providers

4. PHIL TWYFORD (Labour—Te Atatu) to the Minister for Social Housing: Does she believe that community housing providers will have to be commercial in order to be sustainable?

Hon PAULA BENNETT (Minister for Social Housing): Yes. It kind of makes sense that to be financially sustainable into the future, as they are growing their portfolios, they may need to be commercial in their outlook as well.

Phil Twyford: Are chirping birds in the neighbours' trees a truly representative reason some people are turning down State houses, or is the real reason that cold, damp, mouldy houses are making their children sick?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: We have a number of declines—about 3,500 in any one year—and about 12 percent of them are not for good and sufficient reasons. So one would say that the other over 3,000 of them are, and some of them might be those reasons. We take that into consideration to make sure that we are keeping people in the types of houses they need to be in and that they are still connected to jobs and schools. But there are some who are turning down houses who should not be. In the meantime, we have people in dire need who actually need those houses, and they should have access to them.

Phil Twyford: Why does she constantly engage in snide attacks on the most vulnerable citizens when the reality is that under her Government there are more Kiwis than ever before living in campgrounds and garages while she leaves 2,000 State houses vacant?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Well, I just say: "Look in the mirror, 'Mr Snide'."

Phil Twyford: Is she surprised that community housing providers are cynical about her approach, given that she started off saying the State house sell-off was all about building up local community groups, and now the Government is courting property developers, merchant bankers, and Australian companies?

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Well, we have always thought it would take a consortium to help actually grow the community housing providers so that we can have a range of skills that are needed. As I said this morning to Community Housing Aotearoa, it is very good with people, and that is its strength, and its tenancy management. What it may need to do is to go into a consortium with banks so that it can actually see that portfolio grow, and that makes perfect sense. In fact, I have quotes from the member where last year in his speech he said: "Your members have shown you can build good-quality homes at a very affordable price. You can leverage private sector investment." And that was Phil Twyford.

Phil Twyford: Why should the public believe her spin about improving the lives of tenants when the Government has taken half a billion dollars out of Housing New Zealand, leaving 2,000 houses vacant while Kiwi families are living in campgrounds, and has cut the number of State houses by a thousand, in net, since it came—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is quite long enough.

Hon PAULA BENNETT: Well, we are housing more people in better-quality homes, and that is why the wait list is going down. We have spent \$600,000 to date on housing support products that help people into the private market. Just this year alone we have seen actually the amount that we are spending on the income-related rent go up by \$75 million, and that is making an absolute difference for those people. I know that the member would like it all to stay the same, and he thinks that the status quo is good enough. But it is actually not good enough for the people who need our help.

[*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! [*Interruption*] Order! Phil Twyford will stand, withdraw, and apologise for that remark. [*Interruption*] Then he will leave the Chamber.

Phil Twyford withdrew from the Chamber.

Housing Affordability and Availability—Productivity Commission Report

5. Dr PARMJEET PARMAR (National) to the Minister for Building and Housing: How does the Productivity Commission report support the direction of the Government's reforms to improve the affordability of housing?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for Building and Housing): The key message from the report is that the critical issue of land supply is undermining housing affordability. It notes that land prices have increased by fivefold in the past 20 years and that this is largely due to regulatory failure. It argues that councils have imposed planning rules on both greenfield and brownfield developments without properly considering the flow-on costs. The housing accords and special housing areas legislation was a short-term fix that has enabled 129 areas to be approved for housing outside the normal planning rules. This report will feed into the longer-term reforms, including a national policy statement on urban development and changes to the Resource Management Act.

Dr Parmjeet Parmar: What is the Minister's response to the planning argument that tools like metropolitan urban limits are needed environmentally so as to ensure that not too much of New Zealand's land area is used for urban purposes?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The Government considers that these arguments are very weak. The environment report out yesterday shows that only 0.8 percent of New Zealand land is used for urban purposes, despite it accommodating 80 percent of the population. That area of land is growing at a rate such that even by 2050 only 1 percent of New Zealand land would be urban land. The idea that we must constrain our cities because we would use up all the land is a nonsense. There are some valid arguments over infrastructure as to why we want a mix of both greenfield and brownfield growth, but artificial metropolitan urban limits that just drive up house prices—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The answers from the Minister are consistently far too long.

Dr Parmjeet Parmar: Does the Minister agree that councils' plans need to take into account economics and price signals, as recommended by the Productivity Commission?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Yes. The Productivity Commission's report recommends that where land prices are artificially high due to planning constraints there should be a requirement for councils to open up new land. This is a radical shift from the current planning ethos, but one that needs considering in response to the substantive report.

Julie Anne Genter: Will he act on the Productivity Commission's recommendation to remove the council regulations that require an oversupply of car-parking, given that they are a major driver of increased housing costs as well as traffic congestion and pollution?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The Productivity Commission report makes good points about things like parking requirements, about balcony requirements, and about adding

extra requirements over and above the Building Act. What we need to understand is that every time we put those sorts of rules in place they undermine affordability, and that is why this report rightly recommends reform. I look forward to the Green Party's support for the reforms backing up the recommendations from the Productivity Commission.

Julie Anne Genter: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. My question was whether he will act on the recommendations.

Mr SPEAKER: The difficulty I had was actually understanding the question. I invite the member to ask the question again.

Julie Anne Genter: Will he act on the Productivity Commission's recommendation to remove onerous council regulations requiring an oversupply of car-parking, given that they drive up the cost of housing and create traffic congestion and pollution?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: It is more complex than the member presents because, of course, the parking requirements are not in the Resource Management Act; they are in the district plans that are put in place by councils. So what the Government is planning to do—through both a national policy statement on urban development as well as reforms to the Resource Management Act—is to get the incentives right for councils to better take into account the cost that these sorts of regulatory impositions put back on to homeowners.

Julie Anne Genter: Why did he not act on this issue earlier, given that experts in the field and the Green Party have been raising these costly rules with the Government since 2009 because they have been standing in the way of affordable medium-density housing around good bus and train routes?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Quite the opposite. I have repeatedly seen the Green Party support metropolitan urban limits, which, according to the Productivity Commission report, have actually been at the core of the problem around housing affordability. In respect of the parking requirements and in respect of brownfield developments, the special housing areas legislation is enabling us to bypass some of those stupid requirements. I note the Green Party vigorously opposed the special housing areas legislation.

Julie Anne Genter: Can he confirm that according to the recent report on housing by Auckland city's chief economist, removing the planning barriers to high-quality, medium-density housing development in the inner suburbs around bus and train routes, as the Green Party has been advocating for years—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Just complete the question.

Julie Anne Genter: —is the most effective way to create more affordable housing in Auckland, not removing urban limits?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: This Government is of a view that good quality intensification of housing is part of the answer, but the Green Party cannot have it both ways. Take the heritage provisions that are blanketly applied in Auckland. They actually apply to many of the areas where there is the potential for greater apartment development. I note that that party has been opposing changes to those heritage requirements that actually get in the way of new and more affordable houses.

Julie Anne Genter: I seek leave to table a graph from this report that shows that removing urban boundaries is—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! [Interruption] Order! The report, I presume, is easily available to members if they want to source it. Yes, they can, so I will not be putting the leave.

Julie Anne Genter: I seek leave to table a letter from myself and other traffic economists from 30 October 2009 to Minister Nick Smith, raising the costly issue of minimum parking requirements.

Mr SPEAKER: It may be of interest to members. I will put the leave, as members may be interested. Leave is sought to table that particular letter. Is there any objection? There is objection.

Julie Anne Genter: I seek leave to table a letter from 12 August 2009 from the Hon Steven Joyce to myself, denying that councils require—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leave is sought to table that particular letter. Is there any objection? There is none. It can be tabled.

Documents, by leave, laid on the Table of the House.

Environmental Reporting—*Environment Aotearoa 2015 Report*

6. EUGENIE SAGE (Green) to the Minister for the Environment: What new policy initiatives, if any, will he be making in response to the *Environment Aotearoa 2015* report released yesterday in the areas of fresh water, biodiversity, and greenhouse gas emissions?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for the Environment): It is early days, and the Ministers and policy officials received the report only yesterday, but we have a very active programme in all three key areas. On fresh water, we are planning regulatory changes around the microvertebrate index, the fencing of waterways, and a new clean-up fund. The Land and Water Forum is finalising recommendations on these. On biodiversity, we are ramping up efforts with programmes like Battle for our Birds and the War on Weeds. The new Threatened Species Ambassador will also help this work. On climate change, we are working on new initiatives around electric cars and strengthening the emissions trading scheme. Obviously, on this issue, the Paris negotiations are crucial, and New Zealand will be taking a very active part.

Eugenie Sage: Among those regulatory changes, will the Minister improve the national policy statement objective A1 for water quality from a secondary contact standard, “suitable for boating and wading”, to “suitable for swimming”?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: No, and I will tell the member why. Even before human beings arrived in New Zealand, not every single body of water in New Zealand was swimmable. It is impractical to suggest that somehow we can override even nature. It is also true that during significant storm events, when there is a large amount of pollution introduced to the system, there are times when it is not practical to be able to have every body of water as swimmable. What we are committed to is an improvement in water standards, and I am concerned about that member’s repeated exaggeration about the areas in which it is unsafe to swim in New Zealand, because in the vast bulk of areas, it is perfectly safe.

Eugenie Sage: Is the Minister, effectively, saying that having rivers that are fit only for wading and boating, and not for swimming, will allow the dairy industry room to expand further?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: No. What I am saying is that the member’s proposition that Parliament can somehow pass a rule and magically make every body of water in New Zealand safe to swim in is false. Even before human beings arrived in this country, there were bodies of water that were not safe to swim in, and this Government is not going to impose regulations and laws that are impractical, as the Green Party would attempt to do.

Eugenie Sage: Does he stand by the Prime Minister’s statement that the environment could handle more dairy farming, even though the *Environment Aotearoa 2015* report says at page 10 that nitrogen levels are high enough to trigger algal blooms in 49 percent of monitored river sites?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: That is where the member does not understand the variation across New Zealand. In an area like Taupō, where there needs to be limits on nitrogen,

we are actually 3 years ahead of schedule, and it is not possible for new dairy farms in that catchment. There are other catchments where nitrogen limits are not needed and where there is expansion for dairying, and that is where the Green Party policy of a blanket ban on any more dairy farms in New Zealand does not make sense.

Scott Simpson: How does the *Environment Aotearoa 2015* report released yesterday match up with the Government's ambition of being a world leader in responsible management of our oceans?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The report is very encouraging and shows a decline in the number of fish stocks that are subject to overfishing, from 25 percent to 14 percent in the past 5 years. The global average is 28 percent of stocks, indicating that our fisheries are some of the best managed in the world. The report also notes that seabird bycatch over the past 5 years has almost halved, and since then, we have subsequently announced the Kermadec Ocean Sanctuary, which will be the largest no-take area anywhere in the world, showing how this Government is stepping up environmentally to the challenge of better ocean management.

Eugenie Sage: Will the Minister push to strengthen New Zealand's emissions reduction target when the report also says that ocean acidification caused by carbon dioxide emissions "poses the greatest threat to our marine habitats"?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: New Zealand's climate change ambition of a 30 percent reduction by 2030 is a big ask. What this Government will not do is what the previous Labour Government did with big, bold targets of carbon neutrality at a time when emissions were going through the roof. Actually, there has been less growth in greenhouse gas emissions under this Government than under any Government, and the emissions trading scheme and other measures such as, for instance, the announcement to close down New Zealand's biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions, the Huntly power station, show the progress that we are making.

Eugenie Sage: Why has he allowed the proposed National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity to languish since mid-2011 when the report says that the extinction risk for 42 land species worsened in the 6 years from 2005 to 2011?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: What the report identifies is that the biggest risk to New Zealand's native plants and birds is actually pests, and that is why this Government has launched the biggest pest control programme ever. Rather than 50,000 hectares per year being controlled with poisons like 1080, it will see that growing to 500,000 hectares—a huge lift. My question to the Green Party is: why do they oppose poisons rather than actually back the tools that will ensure that our species survive?

Eugenie Sage: Given that the biggest threat is pests, will he support a real increase in funding for the Department of Conservation in Budget 2016, rather than another cut, given that 81 percent of our land birds, 72 percent of our freshwater fish, 27 percent of our marine—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Bring the question to a conclusion.

Eugenie Sage: —mammals, and all of our frogs face extinction?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Budget measures will be resolved when the Budget is read next year. But I would say that with the amount of actual practical work that is being done, with the initiative that Maggie Barry took with the programme for Kiwis this year, the new Endangered Species Foundation Ambassadors, and the huge lift in the amount of pest control work that is being delivered, this Government is more interested in terms of the things that will work than just spending money willy-nilly, as is the practice of that party.

Meka Whaitiri: When will he accept that the decision to ignore Judge Sheppard's national policy statement on water quality is a primary reason why, under his watch, water quality continues to get worse?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The member is misinformed. Judge Sheppard never had a national policy statement. What I would point out to that member is that Labour promised a national policy statement on fresh water for 9 years straight and did nothing, and it was a National Government that put in place such a policy statement.

Primary Industries, Ministry—Biocontainment Laboratory

7. CHRIS BISHOP (National) to the Minister for Primary Industries: What recent announcements has he made regarding the new biocontainment laboratory at Wallaceville?

Hon NATHAN GUY (Minister for Primary Industries): Today I was proud to turn the first sod to mark the start of construction on the new Ministry for Primary Industries biocontainment laboratory at Wallaceville in Upper Hutt. This \$87 million investment will play a major role in protecting both our economy and our environment. It will be a state-of-the-art laboratory providing diagnostic support for animal disease investigations, and information confirming New Zealand's freedom from diseases.

Chris Bishop: Why is this new laboratory so important for our primary industries?

Hon NATHAN GUY: That is a very good question. The laboratory will be crucial for informing consumers and our trading partners and in helping to ensure market access for our exporters. It will also have better capacity to deal with a large-scale emergency, in the unlikely event that one should occur. Animal products make up around \$20 billion of our exports a year. This facility, and the report released by the Auditor-General yesterday that highlighted the strong progress that the Ministry for Primary Industries has made on biosecurity preparedness and response, shows that we are well placed to manage these biosecurity risks.

Police—Crime Resolution Rate

8. JACINDA ARDERN (Labour) to the Minister of Police: By what percentage has the crime resolution rate decreased overall since 2008?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY (Minister for Social Development) on behalf of the Minister of Police: Between 2008 and 2014 resolution rates fell from 46.7 percent in 2008 to 41.5 percent in 2014. Earlier this year the police Minister expressed his concern about that drop in resolution rates to the Commissioner of Police, and they are working to develop strategies to improve them. The way that resolution rates are recorded has changed in the last year. A range of measures are now included to give a more complete picture of crime resolution for different types of crime. I would also point out to the member that over the same period we have seen a 27 percent reduction in the crime rate, which is a testament to the New Zealand Police's Prevention First strategy and its focus on preventing crime before it occurs, rather than reacting after a crime has been committed.

Jacinda Ardern: Does he believe that police are adequately resourced when at least 90 percent of burglaries in Auckland went unresolved?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: I am sure that he believes that they are adequately resourced, as they gained an extra \$41.5 million in the last Budget. However, the lowest resolution rate is in the category of unlawful entry with intent for burglary—to break and enter—and the 2014 resolution rate for that offence category was 12.1 percent, down from 13.8 percent in the previous financial year.

Jacinda Ardern: Can he confirm that, according to the numbers provided to us by the New Zealand Police, general duty constable numbers—that is those who are on the front line responding to call-outs and resolving crimes—have decreased by almost 18 percent since 2009; and has that contributed to the decreasing resolution rate?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: I do not have those figures in front of me, and I doubt that that is the case. However, what I would say is I would repeat that we have seen a decrease in crime over the last few years, and that certainly has been as a result of hard work by our front-line police.

Jacinda Ardern: Does he believe that a decrease in resolution rates had anything to do with the fact that the Southern Police District has 75 fewer front-line police, the Wellington Police District has 115 fewer, the Waikato Police District has 58 fewer, the Waitematā Police District has 68 fewer, the Northland Police District has 27 fewer, and Southland has 45 fewer—has that got anything to do—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question has been asked.

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: We would have to identify whether those figures are accurate, but, in fact, the police numbers have been maintained at 8,907 right through the term of this National Government, and, in fact, we have provided them with technology that we know has enabled more front-line hours to be spent. So it would have nothing to do with those resolution rates, and I point out to the member that, internationally, resolution rates for those types of property crimes are at a very low rate, simply because they are often—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Bring the answer to a conclusion.

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: —presented later, and the people have gone.

Jacinda Ardern: I seek leave to table the Official Information Act response from the New Zealand Police confirming the figures I have used in this answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Leave is sought to table that particular information. Is there any objection? [Interruption] Order! I am putting the leave. There is no objection. It can be tabled.

Document, by leave, laid on the Table of the House.

Jacinda Ardern: Does he agree with the Police Association president when he pointed to the decrease in front-line staff as one of the things that will inevitably lead to “service failures”?

Hon ANNE TOLLEY: I am sure he does not agree, given the 23 percent reduction in crime, which is a huge testament to the work that the police have done. How could anyone agree with that statement from the Police Association president?

Injury Prevention Programmes—Driveway Safety Campaign

9. ANDREW BAYLY (National—Hunua) to the Minister for ACC: What recent announcements have been made to help reduce New Zealand’s high rate of children’s driveway deaths and injuries?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for ACC): Yesterday I launched a campaign with Safekids Aotearoa and ACC to reduce injuries to children caused in driveways. I am really pleased that ACC will invest \$300,000 in the Safekids driveway safety campaign. Most driveway incidents involve children under the age of 3. This campaign is about making sure people know where their little ones are before they drive in or drive out of a driveway. This partnership between ACC and Safekids is an important step towards turning round the unacceptable rate of child driveway deaths and injuries in our country. I want to acknowledge the mums whose children have died due to driveway injuries and who have had the courage to be part of the new campaign, called Check For Me Before You Turn the Key.

Andrew Bayly: What else is ACC doing to work with other agencies to reduce deaths and injuries in New Zealand?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: The driveway safety campaign is a good example of ACC partnering with other agencies and organisations. It is my expectation that ACC will be

forming more partnerships with a range of organisations and agencies as it ramps up its injury prevention work. Now that this National Government has ensured that the ACC scheme is fully funded and is on a secure financial footing, it is my expectation that ACC will give even more focus to injury prevention. I am pleased to tell the House that the ACC board has confirmed an increase in its injury prevention budget from \$30 million to \$50 million this year.

Sue Moroney: What research or evidence does the Minister have that spending \$300,000 on giving a key ring to parents so that they can put their child's photo in it will stop any child from being run over on a driveway?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Firstly, she got her numbers wrong. Although ACC is spending \$300,000, the total campaign is a million dollars. The campaign is broader than key rings. It is actually about public meetings. It is about television advertising. In terms of research, what she can note is there is quite a lot of research around the ability to affect behaviour by using a variety of multimedia channels and things like public meetings to get into the community.

Sue Moroney: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question was very direct—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! [Interruption] Order! The question has been addressed. Supplementary question—[Interruption] Order! If the member wants to stay for the balance of the day, I suggest that she accepts that ruling.

Andrew Bayly: What are ACC's priority areas for reducing deaths and injuries?

Mr SPEAKER: The Hon Nikki Kaye—[Interruption] Order! Unless I get some more cooperation from three or four people to my immediate left, I will be asking them to leave the Chamber.

Hon NIKKI KAYE: I am very pleased that the ACC board has put in place a new approach for injury prevention. It has now increased investment and a strategy that has clear priorities to drive reductions in the incidence and severity of injuries in the areas of violence, sport, community, falls, road, treatment injury, and workplace. In terms of the driveway safety campaign, can I also acknowledge that this is a partnership between Starship—Plunket has been very supportive—and ACC, and I am very surprised that the Opposition is criticising an organisation like Safekids Aotearoa and organisations like Starship.

Sue Moroney: I seek leave to table a document dated March 2014 showing the effectiveness of rear-view cameras in preventing driveway deaths.

Mr SPEAKER: Leave is sought to table that particular report. Is there any objection? There is none; it can be tabled.

Document, by leave, laid on the Table of the House.

Broadband, Rural—Speed and Roll-out

10. CLARE CURRAN (Labour—Dunedin South) to the Minister for Communications: Is she confident that her Government's \$300 million investment in the rural broadband scheme has been spent appropriately and effectively?

Hon AMY ADAMS (Minister for Communications): Yes, I am, because it is on time and on budget, it has seen a twentyfold increase in internet speeds for many rural users, it is part of improving broadband for 97.8 percent of New Zealanders, and it is delivering significantly better cellphone coverage across rural and provincial New Zealand. There is more to do, but the Rural Broadband Initiative represents an incredibly big improvement from the appallingly low base we inherited in 2008.

Clare Curran: Does she think that having a 55-kilometre fibre cable from Wairoa to Tūai that has one connection is delivering more connectivity to rural and regional New Zealand?

Hon AMY ADAMS: The fibre funded under the Rural Broadband Initiative is funded to provide backhaul to subsites. The Rural Broadband Initiative coverage is provided through fibring towers, which then provide fixed wireless services, and then the Rural Broadband Initiative fibres cabinets that then provide enhanced ADSL. If that member understood her spokespersonship portfolio, she—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! [Interruption] Order!

Clare Curran: Why should Genesis Energy get a 55-kilometre cable for its own purpose when nearby Tūai school cannot even get a connection to broadband?

Hon AMY ADAMS: I can tell that member that all New Zealand schools are going to receive fibre broadband—except for our most remote, which have a different sort of broadband programme. All our schools will receive broadband coverage. Otherwise, the rural broadband programme comprises two components: enhancing copper coverage, and fixed wireless connectivity to schools, businesses, hospitals, households, and libraries across rural New Zealand. It is a huge step forward from what we inherited in 2008, when the average connection was 0.2 megabits a second.

Jami-Lee Ross: What reports has the Minister seen that demonstrate the success of the Rural Broadband Initiative programme?

Hon AMY ADAMS: I have seen the latest TrueNet testing report, which shows that Rural Broadband Initiative broadband is 57 percent faster than standard ADSL and that Rural Broadband Initiative fixed wireless is more than 53 percent faster. Also, I have seen OECD reports that New Zealand has gone from being below the OECD average for broadband in 2008 to now being more than 12 percent above. I have seen reports that tell us that under Labour 41 percent of connections in rural areas were getting speeds of less than 0.2 megabits. That is now going up to 90 percent of rural connections having 5 megabits or more. It is a tremendous step forward from what we inherited.

Clare Curran: What is the point of a 55-kilometre fibre cable to nowhere when the local mayor, whose farm is just 75 metres from the cable, was told that it would cost him \$18,000 just to connect to his gate?

Hon AMY ADAMS: The Rural Broadband Initiative programme has never been designed to provide a Fibre to the Home service. That is the ultra-fast broadband programme. Fibre under the Rural Broadband Initiative is large-scale backhaul, which funds subsites. That member clearly does not understand the role of fibre under the Rural Broadband Initiative.

Clare Curran: If she is satisfied with the management of the Rural Broadband Initiative, why has she sacked the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment from managing rural connectivity after 5 years?

Hon AMY ADAMS: If that member had ever been in Government, she would know that Ministers do not sack ministries, actually. I can tell the member that it was the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment that suggested that for the next phase it makes sense, as we move into the less populated areas of New Zealand and as the fibre programme is going to rural New Zealand, to have a coordinated programme across the UFB2 and the Rural Broadband Initiative 2, to have one set of relationships with the telecommunications companies, and to best use our contracting experience.

Mr SPEAKER: Bring the answer to a conclusion.

Hon AMY ADAMS: It only makes sense.

Clare Curran: I seek leave to table two documents. The first is dated September 2015. It is the Wairoa District Council's digital enablement plan—two pages.

Mr SPEAKER: And the second document?

Clare Curran: The second document is a speech delivered yesterday by the Minister, which is not online—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Clare Curran: It is not available online; it is not available anywhere.

Mr SPEAKER: I will put the leave, accepting the word of—[*Interruption*] I will accept the member's word. Leave is sought to table a Wairoa District Council document and a speech delivered by the Minister. Is there any objection to those two documents being tabled in this House? There is none. They can be tabled.

Documents, by leave, laid on the Table of the House.

Tracey Martin: Kia ora. How can the Minister say that she is confident when Northlanders such as Matt Watson of the *ITM Fishing Show* are struggling to run their award-winning New Zealand businesses from towns such as Kerikeri, where there is snails-pace, slow, unreliable rural broadband that has dropped to speeds of 0.07 megabits per second?

Hon AMY ADAMS: I can give that member two aspects of that. The first is that Kerikeri is one of the towns that are in line to get a Fibre to the Home programme under this Government, under the next tranche. Having rolled it out to 75 percent of New Zealand, we want to go further. The second is that if that is the speed that the member quotes that that business is receiving, it should absolutely advise us, because that will not be a speed delivered under the Rural Broadband Initiative programme. I can assure it of that, and I am sure that we can provide it with a better alternative.

Offenders—Recidivism Rate and Three-strikes Legislation

11. DAVID SEYMOUR (Leader—ACT) to the Minister of Justice: Is she aware of data showing a 60 percent reduction in the recidivism rate for violent offences, from 3.8 percent to 1.5 percent, in the 5 years following the introduction of the Three Strikes law, compared with the 5 years prior?

Hon AMY ADAMS (Minister of Justice): Yes, I am aware of the very encouraging trends in serious violent offending that we are seeing following the enactment of the three-strikes law advanced by the ACT Party. The data the member refers to indicate a significant drop in the number of serious violent offences committed and an even bigger drop in the number of violent offenders who are committing multiple offences following the introduction of the law. The three-strikes law was designed to deter violent offenders from reoffending, and the information the member cites is an encouraging sign that the three-strikes law is having its desired effect.

David Seymour: Is the Minister aware that, ceteris paribus, if the recidivism rate for violent offending had remained at the pre-2010 level, then at least 123 New Zealand citizens would have been the victim of a violent offence, and does she agree that it is astonishing that some political parties continue to oppose the three-strikes law—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The first question is in order; the second question is not in order.

Hon AMY ADAMS: The information certainly does indicate that if serious violent reoffending had continued at the same rate as prior to the introduction of three strikes, there are likely to have been 123 more serious violent offences over the last 5 years. I do agree with the member that in light of this information it seems clear that three strikes is helping to deter and prevent serious violent offenders from committing crimes.

David Seymour: In the Minister's view have some of the concerns raised at the time the law was introduced that it would lead to California-style mass imprisonment borne true, or has it proved to be a modest and sensible three-strikes law by international standards?

Hon AMY ADAMS: In my view the evidence now shows us that the three-strikes law is having an impact in assisting with the deterrence of reoffending of serious violent

crimes, despite some of the scaremongering at the time. And I think that the House and this country is a better place the further that the serious violent reoffending rate drops.

Women, Employment—Science and Mathematics

12. SARAH DOWIE (National—Invercargill) to the Minister for Women: What statistics has she received about women's representation in science and mathematics?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON (Minister for Women): I have been very greatly encouraged by the recent Statistics New Zealand report *Women at Work: 1991-2013*. It shows that in 2013 women were almost equally represented amongst maths and statistics professionals—47 percent were women. In 2013 women were just as likely as men to have qualifications in the area of natural and physical sciences, and women working in life sciences doubled, from 22 percent in 1991 to 44 percent in 2013—that has doubled.

Sarah Dowie: What Government initiatives are under way to further increase the number of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics?

Hon LOUISE UPSTON: The Government is encouraging more women to study and work in science and maths as well as in engineering and technology industries to meet the growing demand for skills in these industries. Government initiatives under way to encourage more women into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects include the ICT graduate schools, the Women in Engineering initiatives, A Nation of Curious Minds, and a number of great initiatives that reach girls in our schools, such as the Skills Organisation's Bright Sparks programme, code clubs, the High Tech Youth Network, Kiwibots, OMGTech!, and Gather Workshops. The Ministry for Women is also working with others on initiatives to attract, train, and retain more women in occupations with high growth, high demand, and high wages.

URGENT DEBATES DECLINED

Dunedin Hospital—Asbestos

Mr SPEAKER: I have received a letter from Dr David Clark seeking to debate under Standing Order 389 the discovery of dangerous levels of asbestos at Dunedin Hospital and the implications for the provision of public health services in the Otago region. This is a particular case of recent occurrence and involves ministerial responsibility. However, the member's authentication shows that a press conference was held by the Southern District Health Board at 1 o'clock this afternoon. The board is doing further testing and getting advice, and no essential services are reported to be affected. In these circumstances I am not convinced that I would be justified in setting aside the business of the House today to debate this matter. The application is therefore declined.

GREATER CHRISTCHURCH REGENERATION BILL

First Reading

Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery): I move, *That the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill be now read a first time*. I nominate the Local Government and Environment Committee to consider the bill, and at the appropriate time I intend to move that the bill be reported to the House by 25 February 2016.

When we passed the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act in 2011, we were responding to a national disaster with significant losses of life and massive damage to houses, commercial buildings, infrastructure, and other property. The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act provided wide-ranging, although not absolute, powers to ensure a swift response to recovery barriers and issues. But almost 5 years on it is time

for this form of extraordinary legislation to be replaced. We are moving on from emergency and recovery to a time of regeneration. This is an exciting time. Much of the groundwork has been laid and many significant building projects, both public and private, are under way or have been completed, but there is still much to be done.

Regeneration of a city and its people's well-being is a mission that cannot be completed in a short number of years. Legislation, therefore, is still required to ensure a continuum of planning and land use provisions that support the regeneration of Christchurch and its surrounds beyond the narrow constraints of earthquake recovery.

It is essential that the momentum generated in the last 5 years is continued with local leadership resuming the role of shaping our region. The draft transition recovery plan was released on 2 July for public submissions, which were taken into account in the development of the final recovery plan released last week. There were two strong themes running through those submissions, and I received those submissions with the desire to put them into the legislative proposals that are seen not only in the draft transition recovery plan but also in this bill. The need for a shift to local leadership and Christchurch institutions in the next phase of Greater Christchurch's regeneration was a central theme to that.

I am delighted to report to the House that discussions between the Government and the Christchurch City Council and other councils involved have been extremely positive. At the beginning of this year I established an advisory board to give us advice about what we needed to consider in transition from a heavy role played by the Government to that role being assumed by local government. That board was led by Dame Jenny Shipley. The board consisted of 12 members who were all leaders from local government, Ngāi Tahu, and the community and business sectors. They worked extremely well and produced very good advice for me, which was able to form the basis for that constructive dialogue, particularly with Christchurch City Council.

The report of the board made a number of recommendations for new legislation, most of which we have been able to adopt in the bill before the House today. There is consensus that the step change needed is to deliver regeneration, not just to fix what was broken. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between actions that have a recovery purpose and those with a wider purpose. For the purpose of this bill, it is the regeneration of Greater Christchurch that is to the fore. This is defined as restoration, enhancement, urban renewal, and development. No authority should read any constraint into the bill by tying the provisions of this bill to earthquake recovery. This is deliberately quite different from the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act, which places a strong emphasis on recovery in its purposes. The bill must be interpreted as enabling regeneration and development that is not limited to recovery or building back just what we had before.

In a similar vein, Regenerate Christchurch will be squarely focused on regeneration and not limited to earthquake recovery. This bill establishes Regenerate Christchurch as an urban development authority to guide the regeneration of the city. It is an independent body that will provide independent advice. It will have a mandate to get on with the task, jointly granted by the Crown and the Christchurch City Council. It will be run by a board of appointees, made by both the Crown and the Christchurch City Council, with a mix of commercial and strategic skills. The board will also have a representative of Ngāi Tahu, and that person will be appointed in conjunction or in discussion with Ngāi Tahu, the Government, and the council. Its scope will include central Christchurch, the Christchurch residential red zones, and the New Brighton area. Other potential regeneration areas may be added to the schedules in the future.

After 5 years, Regenerate Christchurch will have become a fully council-controlled organisation, reflecting the ongoing transition to local institutions over those years. The

bill contains a regime that allows the development of regeneration plans that make broad changes to planning and land use rules, along with the power to directly change plans and by-laws by public notice. Local leadership will have considerable input into the development of regeneration plans. It is my view that the regeneration plans will be almost exclusively promoted by local interests. Local authorities, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and Regenerate Christchurch can all propose regeneration plans, and lead and consult on their drafting.

The new approach will ensure that these powers are exercised in a way that reflects locally driven objectives. These powers will, however, continue to ultimately vest in the Minister. This, I know, will cause some degree of concern, but I have discussed this extensively with the Mayor of Christchurch and with the advisory board, and it is an agreed position that it is the best thing to do, given the nature and significance of the powers that are granted under this Act. The bill also contains provisions that are intended to clarify the relationship between regeneration plans, the exercise of powers under the bill, and the powers available to the chief executive or Minister outside the bill.

The scope of powers in this bill should not limit or circumscribe the powers that are otherwise available to the Government, nor constrain the common law power of elected central government to make decisions. The decision of the Supreme Court in the *Quake Outcasts v Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery* invited this clarification, and these clauses make it beyond doubt and should be seen as removing any cloud that may influence the thought coming from the bench. The bill contains a number of powers relating to land, such as the power to acquire and dispose of land and to undertake work such as the demolition of buildings. These powers are necessary to support the regeneration of Christchurch.

The geographic scope of the bill is broadly consistent with the boundaries of the urban development strategy agreed by the affected local government councils—the Christchurch City Council, the Waimakariri District Council, the Selwyn District Council, and Environment Canterbury.

The bill will have a sunset clause and will expire on 30 June 2021. This is effectively the ultimate check. It will ensure that after this period any further bespoke powers will require consideration once again by Parliament. It is my hope that the Government of the day will receive from the strategic partners an advocacy for the flexibility provided in this bill to continue beyond 2021, as Canterbury further develops as a dynamic place to do business, to work prosperously, and to live well.

The process leading to today has been, I think, a very, very constructive one. I have very much appreciated the way in which the local authorities have worked with the Government: firstly, stating clearly the needs that they see they would have, going forward from this point, but also recognising that the landscape changed—literally, figuratively, and significantly—after the 2011 event, and that now is the time for the entire Greater Christchurch area, including the Waimakariri and Selwyn districts, to regenerate themselves. This bill gives them the tools to do that. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MEGAN WOODS (Labour—Wigram): It is my pleasure to take a call on this piece of legislation, and to signal that Labour will be supporting this bill at first reading. This is, as the Minister outlined, an important day for Christchurch, on our path back to normality after the events of the last 5 years. I would like to say to the Minister that I think he missed an opportunity in not introducing this bill yesterday. We could then have called it the “Back to the Future Day for Christchurch Bill”, and signified that special day. “Back to the Future Day” was the day on which Marty McFly signalled, in

a very significant movie, that the world was going to come back—for the Minister's edification. It was a day acknowledged worldwide.

This is an important day in terms of the return—[*Interruption*] If we can settle down. This is an important piece of legislation. I would like to acknowledge every MP in this House, on every side of the House, who over the last 5 years has worked for their constituents and for the people of Christchurch and the people of Canterbury. Some of those MPs are no longer members in this House. I myself, like some current Canterbury members of Parliament, was not an MP when the first Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation was passed. So I think we can all agree, despite the disagreements we may have had over the last 5 years about what was best for our city and for our province, that it has been quite a 5 years that we have all been through.

I would also like to acknowledge all the local government members who have worked tirelessly for their communities over this period, under very trying circumstances—and circumstances that probably no one imagined they were going to have to govern under when they signed up for the job. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the board and I would also like to acknowledge the many Cantabrians who took the opportunity to submit on the discussion document that was put out around what the future of Christchurch would be. There were very clear signals from the people of Canterbury around how they saw the future would play forward for them.

This is a bill about our future, this is a bill about what comes next, and it is a very important piece of legislation. It is my hope and it is my wish—and it is Labour's hope and wish—that what we put in place next captures something good out of what we have all been through in the last 5 years and that we manage to capture the creativity, the innovation, and the energy that is now so evident in Canterbury and in Christchurch. Terrible times do bring out the best in people sometimes, and we have seen some remarkable initiatives spring up in our city and in our province, and I want to see those people, their ideas, and their energy put back into the fabric of our reconstruction and in what the future looks like for us in Christchurch and in Canterbury.

When the initial Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation was passed it was a recognition that business as usual simply would not do—it would not be enough in a region and a city that had been through what they had just been through. It was an approach that was very much for the immediate aftermath of earthquakes. However, it is now more than apparent that the need for these kinds of extraordinary powers has passed. It has receded and the legislation that we have in front of us today is putting this up as the option of what we do next. It is not a return to what we had in terms of the governance of our province prior to February 2011; it is a transitional arrangement through to 2021, when we can put in place alternative legislation.

Over the last 5 years we have seen successful challenges to the exercise of powers that were contained in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation and there is a strong argument that now is the time to restore the recovery decision-making and regeneration decision-making to where it belongs—the community, in the hands of the people of Christchurch and Canterbury to once again be masters of their destiny. I have a huge amount of respect, a huge amount of belief, and a huge amount of admiration in the locals and I believe that the locals are more than up to the task, and that they are ready to face this challenge and to put in place governance arrangements and to make decisions that are for the betterment of their province. But I do acknowledge that there is a still a strong role for the Crown that is needed in the regeneration of Christchurch and that a strong Crown presence in Christchurch is still needed and a strong commitment from the Crown as to how it is that Christchurch and Canterbury are going to recover.

What I would like to raise—and I have tabled an amendment to this—is the submission period that we are looking through here. The Minister has indicated that this bill has a report-back date of 25 February. In effect, with the House not reconvening until 9 February, it is expected that we will see everything done and dusted, from submissions through to hearings, by Christmas, and I do not think this is adequate. I have put forward a submission, which I sincerely hope that the Minister and other parties will consider, that we extend this out to March. This would allow sufficient time for us to have the legislation passed in time for the expiration of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation. This would allow us to have this legislation in place when it needs to be, but most important for me is that this would allow sufficient time for the people of Christchurch to have their say, to have their voices heard, to make their submissions, and then to be heard.

I do not think this should be a rushed process. This is such an important process for Christchurch and Canterbury and I do not think we can hurry it. My natural inclination was to go for the 6-month period and put in an amendment to April, but I acknowledge that that simply cannot be done in this case because we do need to have legislation in place in time for the expiry of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation. But I do ask the Minister to consider that and to see whether that is something that he can do.

We are putting a statutory authority in place that will have control over the Christchurch central business district, the residential red zone, and all other non-residential land surrounded by residential land. This is a big thing for us to do. This is a huge amount of ministerial power that continues for the next 5 years in Christchurch, and we would be negligent in our job as the Opposition if we did not ask some serious questions about that power and the exercise of it. I think the select committee process is the right process for us to use to let Cantabrians and Christchurch people have their say, to say whether this is what they think is now necessary at this stage of recovery that we are in.

We have got questions that we would like to see answered through this process. One of them is exactly what we mean by “regeneration”. I think that will need some greater clarity in the bill that comes back to this House for second reading. We saw that the courts needed to define more what “recovery” was with the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation. There is also reference to “public engagement” in the bill, but there is no clarity or process around exactly what this means. I think that to make the next 5 years the best they can be we need to have clarity around that. We need to know exactly what it is that we are going to be doing.

As I have signalled, this is a process that is still almost entirely ministerially led and I want to know and ask questions and have a conversation with the people of Christchurch about whether this is the appropriate thing to be doing. Fundamentally, the question we Labour members will be asking when we listen to submissions is whether this bill that we have is genuinely the local-led recovery—[*Bell rung*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Trevor Mallard): I apologise—1½ minutes.

Dr MEGAN WOODS: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Is this genuinely the local-led recovery that the people of Christchurch and Canterbury have asked for? I would ask that we consider such things as the membership of the committee. At the moment clause 95 of the bill allows for both the Minister and the council to appoint equal numbers of members to the board of Regenerate Christchurch. If this is genuinely a piece of transition legislation, let us not just make it static; let us actually make it transitional. Could we have a ratcheting down of the Crown’s powers towards 2021 so we shift the balance of appointments in favour of the council as we move through the 5-

year period that is under control? The Minister is nodding; that is good to see. I think there are good conversations to be had.

But another question that needs to be asked is whether there are adequate checks and balances on power. If I can return to that philosophical touchstone, it is going to be another movie reference, Minister Brownlee—I do not know whether you will get it—and it is Spiderman, who told us that with great power comes great responsibility. When we are looking at something such as this bill, which puts so much power in the hands of one individual, we have to be assured that the correct checks and balances on that power are there. That applies to whoever is the Minister.

We also want to know why appeals are to the High Court, and whether that is still appropriate, and not the Environment Court when it comes to Resource Management Act decision-making—the point being that the High Court will make decisions on only matters of law whereas the Environment Court can actually ask questions about the evidence and have a more inquisitorial approach to what is happening. With Canterbury having a separate process we need to consider whether that is still appropriate 5 years down the track, and let us be very clear that by the time this legislation is finished, it will be 10 years after the event.

Labour is supporting this bill. We are looking forward to the select committee process, and we ask the Minister to consider extending that process out so that the people of Canterbury can have their voices heard. Thank you.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Trevor Mallard): Before I call the next member, I just want to make clear the process going forward. The Minister has indicated that he intends to move a particular date for the report back. The member has indicated that she has the intention of moving an amendment. Neither the Minister's motion nor that amendment will be debatable, so if members want to comment on it they should comment on it as part of this debate.

Hon NICKY WAGNER (Associate Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery): I rise to support the first reading of the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill, and I would like to thank Dr Megan Woods for her support and for her kind words. We need to make sure that the future brings the very best out of Cantabrians and that something not just good but very good comes out of our tough times.

The recovery, the redevelopment, and now the regeneration of Greater Christchurch following the Canterbury earthquakes are an ongoing challenge. More than 15,000 earthquakes resulted in mass devastation, the loss of life, strain on our communities, and damage to our built environment. The Government, facing a seemingly insurmountable task, made the Christchurch rebuild one of its four main priorities and committed over \$16 billion to support Christchurch and its communities.

In the last 4½ years the Government has acted not just to replace what was lost in Greater Christchurch but also to build back smarter and create more opportunities for Cantabrians, and I think we are making great progress. In December 2014 the cricket oval in Hagley Park became the first anchor project, and it is now fully completed. We are a proud sporting province, Canterbury, and hosting thousands of visitors to the February 2015 International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup was good for our soul. The Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct work continues along The Terraces and the new promenade. Already the environmental benefits can be seen in the precinct, and the riverside trail is being enjoyed by Cantabrians and visitors alike. More recently, the new bus exchange has become operational. It is built for the future and especially designed to be accessible to everyone. That interchange is expected to handle 70,000 passenger movements a day by 2041.

We have also recognised the need for a place to reflect on what occurred during our earthquakes and to pay our respects to the 185 people who lost their lives on 22

February 2011. A national earthquake memorial has been approved to do just that. Next year stage one, the more informal family-focused area, will be ready for the anniversary of the 22 February earthquake, and stage two, the more formal part of the memorial, will be ready for the following new year.

Although much is being achieved under the current Act, the time is right for a change of approach, a change to move the focus away from rebuilding and recovery and towards regenerating and creating a 21st century new city, with everyone working to develop new opportunities for the people of Christchurch. This is what the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill is all about. It is about finishing projects begun during the rebuild period but, principally, allowing Greater Christchurch communities to engage and embrace new opportunities for Christchurch to become fully functional again, not just with new buildings but also by engaging communities with new-found civic pride and entrepreneurial spirit.

The bill does feature some remnants of the current Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act, but only those necessary to allow continued momentum. Other parts have been designed to ensure more voices are heard in the decision-making process, and I look forward to working closely with the community and the councils. The bill allows local government to not only be involved in decision making but to actively direct regeneration activities. The Selwyn District Council and Waimakariri District Council have been active, working hard to provide new space for homes and industry, and they, along with Environment Canterbury, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and the Christchurch City Council will now be actively involved in ministerial decision-making in the form of regeneration plans. Regeneration plans will allow new ideas and even grand visions, if they are so desired by their communities.

The bill encourages the people of Greater Christchurch to have their say by providing for public input when regeneration plans are developed, or are amended, or are revoked. This bill also recognises that the out-of-the-ordinary and transitional role of central government in the regeneration of Greater Christchurch is expected to continue for the next 5 years.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Trevor Mallard): Order! I am just going to warn the member. She has read her entire speech to date. There are circumstances where members are allowed to read their speeches—when they are very technical, and especially when a Minister is introducing a bill, or where the member is relatively inexperienced. I am ruling that none of those apply to this member. She is an experienced member, she is not introducing a bill, and, frankly, it is not that technical. So I am now going to ask the member to cease reading her speech.

Hon NICKY WAGNER: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Yes, I will continue. As I have said, this bill will underpin the relationship between the council and local government for the next 5 years. But I think it will progressively move forward, so that we move the power from the Crown to local government and go back to a more business-as-usual relationship that is similar to that of any other place across the country.

This bill builds on the significant progress that has been made over the last 5 years, and it will allow for an orderly transition from the Crown to local government. It will be a good time for Christchurch. It will mean that we will be able to realise the expectations of the people of Christchurch. We will be able to build a city that is people friendly, that is smart, and that provides opportunities for this generation and generations going forward. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon RUTH DYSON (Labour—Port Hills): First of all, I just want to advise the Hon Gerry Brownlee to stay in his seat, because he otherwise might fall over. I want to congratulate him on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill. I cannot recall doing

that before. I did not want him to be standing, and collapse in shock. This is a really good next step in the recovery, moving from post-quake disaster response to recovery, and now to regeneration. I am looking forward to the opportunity to hear the submissions on this legislation from people of Canterbury, who I think will be generally supportive but will raise some concerns, in the same way as my colleague Megan Woods just has in her contribution.

The bill, from my point of view, has the real opportunity to now speed up activity in the city. I think everyone would agree, particularly in relation to the anchor projects and in relation to decisions that have not yet been made about some of the key projects, that they have actually slowed down other activity. I hope that this new body that is formed under this legislation can give some grunt, some commercial rigour, and some drive to the investment that we so badly need.

The second point I want to make about the legislation is that it finally allows local voices and local leadership. It has been a long time—since the September 2010 quake, and then the February 2011 quake—for us to feel as if somebody else is running our city. In some circumstances it was absolutely needed, but in others, I think, it was not necessary. We have had those debates in this House and other places in the past. There is no need to dwell on them now, but I think this is a good restoration of local voices, local leadership, and local decision-making.

The third point I want to make is, I suppose, about the area for which I have the most concern, and that is about the special powers that are retained in this legislation. I know that the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery will need to retain some special powers post - Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority. It is a delightful expression: “life in Canterbury after the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority”. I am so looking forward to it. But I am not convinced that all the powers that are being proposed to be retained by the Minister under this legislation are necessary, nor am I convinced that the checks and balances that you would assume would be part of giving Ministers special powers are contained in this legislation. The words are too high-level, and not specific enough for my satisfaction.

It is the same as it was in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation, actually. The Minister had special powers, which we understood would be needed, but they were to be granted if they were in the interests of earthquake recovery. Well, that is too broad a description, in the same way as “regeneration” is too broad a term. We need the Minister—whoever is holding the portfolio—to be able to be held to account by this Parliament and by the people of Canterbury when exercising special powers. I think that is a gap that would need to be filled. Actually, it would not take much to give more specificity to the “regeneration” term, as one way of doing it—but to make sure that we will have confidence in knowing that when the Minister does use any special powers this Parliament grants him, they will be for the purposes for which they were granted. That has not been the case in recent times. We have seen the use of section 38 of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act to demolish buildings, which was not in the best interests of earthquake recovery, actually. I think the destruction of the Majestic Theatre is an obvious example, but there have been more.

I want to commend the Advisory Board on Transition to Long Term Recovery Arrangements, which was, from the outside looking in—because we never got an opportunity to meet them formally, unfortunately—but the transition advisory board was, from all accounts, very competently and ably chaired by Dame Jenny Shipley, a former Prime Minister in this House and member of a National Cabinet. In my view, Dame Jenny conducted the activities of the advisory board in an inclusive way, where she listened respectfully but showed no fear at all when driving ahead with what the board agreed was in the best interests of Canterbury. I think that was a very good thing.

I also want to commend the other members of the transition advisory board. I think they have done a very good job in presenting us with a path and a way forward. I am not sure that the legislation will be 100 percent to their satisfaction, and I do not suppose they would feel they were in a position to make a submission, but I certainly think, from reading their commentary to the Minister, that the Minister has taken on board, in large parts, their suggestions and their contributions.

I also want to acknowledge our undemocratically appointed regional council, but with no offence to the appointed commissioners, because I think they have been playing an active role in preparing this transition plan. Dame Margaret Bazley was a member of the transition board, so I want to acknowledge them and I want to acknowledge our three councils, Waimakariri, Selwyn, and Christchurch. The three mayors, the Hon Lianne Dalziel, David Ayers, and Kelvin Coe were all also represented on that transition advisory board. Again, from the outside looking in, it appears that they made very strong contributions and comments on the future of the governance of our city.

I want to move on to two opportunities that I think have been missed in this legislation. That is not a criticism of the Minister. I think he has looked at what needed to be done, what the transition advisory board recommended, and he has got on with that task. But I would hope that there may be an opportunity during the select committee process—and I really urge the Minister, now that he has recovered from the shock of my congratulating him on the legislation—to consider two opportunities that I would grasp at, rather than miss, which is the current situation. The first one is in relation to transport as part of the regeneration of our city. We have a model that in a post-quake environment does not work to the best that I think it could do, so I would encourage the Minister to look at this legislation as an opportunity to have integrated transport planning for 50 years out, not for 5 years out. You know, what do we need in Canterbury, where has our population gone, and what opportunities are there? I know that the Minister is quite good at transport stuff. He has done a lot of work in a ministerial capacity on that, so he is certainly the right person to be thinking about that—possibly better than the current Minister of Transport, but who am I to compare? So I do think we have an opportunity to look at the integration, to look at the planning, and to look at what, if we had a blank sheet of paper, which we just about have in parts of Christchurch, we would do in terms of a transport system. So that is the first area that I would really encourage the Minister to look at.

The second area is one that I think we have missed the boat on almost entirely during the last 5 years, despite the best efforts of many people who are involved in the health system, and that is looking at the long-term psychosocial impacts of the quakes. What happened to families, what happened to residential living, and what happened to employment? The grief process, the trauma, the disruption that everyone went through—what does that mean for now, and what will it mean for 10 or 20 years' time? I know that we have got a psychosocial recovery plan, but it is so high-level that I do not think it will have any impact on what we need on the ground. I think we need a more specific plan. That is not a criticism of the actual plan. It just does not drill down enough.

I think we need a more specific plan that looks particularly at integration of all the different agencies that are involved in touching our citizens who have been impacted on negatively. That includes the health system, of course, but it also includes our housing providers, it includes our education system, and it includes all our social service providers. Everyone who touches our citizens should be part of the planning of a detailed psychosocial recovery plan. I think that the pressures in our city are going to remain. We know that, as Canterbury members of Parliament, and I do not think they are being recognised in the system. The current exercise that the Canterbury District

Health Board is being asked to go through is an example of the lack of recognition from the capital towards what impact the quakes have had on our delivery of services and our ability not just to do business as usual but to meet greatly excessive demands on what we would have formerly planned.

I just want to conclude with that commendation again. This is a good step forward. I have got some questions to ask about it. I have got some concerns that I have put on the record. I think there are two areas where we have currently missed an opportunity, but we could remedy that during the select committee process. I have looked at the bill, and I am sure that including transport planning and integration and including psychosocial planning would be within the scope—they are certainly within the regeneration space. There is also, of course, looking at making sure that those three concerns that I had—the special powers, the speeding up of activity, and the local leadership—are acknowledged during the coming stages. So I am looking forward to the submissions. I hope that we are able to have a decent length of time to hear them, by extending that time out. I commend the progress of this bill.

NUK KORAKO (National): Tēnā koe e te Mana Whakawā. It gives me great pleasure to be able to stand here and talk about the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill in its first reading. If we go back over 4 years ago, Rūaumoko visited the city of Christchurch, and we were ripped apart. Iconic buildings were destroyed and the face of our beautiful city was changed forever, but far more important were the 185 people who lost their lives. Even when we look to the future, it is also important that in the next phase of the regeneration of Christchurch we remember them.

We saw months and years afterwards that disaster brought out the best in Christchurch people. Students rallied together to help their city, neighbours helped neighbours, and search and rescue, police, fire, defence, and other services went well beyond the call of duty. The Government also stepped in and stepped up. In the week following the quake the Government acted quickly to establish the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, or CERA, as we all know it, and it was at that time that we needed those powers. Since then the Government has gone into two elections with rebuilding the city of Christchurch as a top priority, and committed over \$16 billion to the rebuild effort. The Government's response received the greatest endorsement possible, and the fact of that is the approval of Christchurch voters in two elections.

The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority structure put in place in 2011 has served our city very well. The ability to plan the rebuild centrally and the powers given to the authority have allowed a relatively quick rebuild, and excellent progress continues to be made. But it is now time for transition—transition from recovery to regeneration to a new phase. Although there is plenty of building still going on, this change is about putting the focus on regeneration of our city, and not just fixing what was broken. It is also important, as part of that process, that we bring local authorities back into the role of shaping our city and our region.

So this bill replaces the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority with a new entity: Regenerate Christchurch. This will be jointly controlled by the Crown and the Christchurch City Council until 30 June 2021, when it will become a council-controlled organisation. I think this is the essence here: that word “transitional”, and the fact that at the end in 2021 it will go back to full authority under the council. Regenerate Christchurch will be governed by a board of seven members. Three will be appointed by the Christchurch City Council, three by the Minister—and this one here I think is very important, particularly when we talk about partnerships and we talk about stakeholders, because there is a further appointment by the Minister after the consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

This bill repeals the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 that established the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, and consequently many of the powers that that Act gave the authority will cease to exist, but there will continue to be a number of powers that will support the regeneration of greater Christchurch. These include powers for the Minister, such as the power to suspend, amend, or revoke Resource Management Act documents, council plans, or other documents, and the power to amalgamate any land acquired under the bill or previously under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act. It also gives important powers to the chief executive officer of Regenerate Christchurch, such as the power to carry out or commission demolition of buildings, to restrict access to buildings and roads, and also to dispose of land. These powers are needed to support the regeneration of our city, but, just as important, they are limited. They must be exercised within the purposes of this bill. They must actually be necessary to achieve the purpose of the bill, and that is the regeneration of Christchurch.

Another important aspect of this bill is the way in which it acknowledges the key leadership role that Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu played in the emergency, the recovery, and the rebuild, and the role it will continue to play in the regeneration of Christchurch. After the earthquake I was part of Te Awheawhe Rū Whenua, which was a special committee put together by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, set up during the emergency to ensure that Ngāi Tahu was responding to the needs of our people and assisting all of the other mandated entities involved in the emergency response and recovery. Ngāi Tahu's role is recognised through the requirement for the Minister to consult with Ngāi Tahu before the appointment of one of the board members. So I think that is a very important part of this—that acknowledgment of the fact that Ngāi Tahu did stand up, Ngāi Tahu did understand that very important thing about partnership, or kotahitaka.

As part of the transition from recovery to regeneration, this bill introduces regeneration plans that set out the direction and details for regeneration in a particular area. These plans are intended to ensure that regeneration happens in a timely and collaborative way. It is really reassuring to hear the speakers on the other side of the House, Dr Megan Woods and also the Hon Ruth Dyson. The fact is that they do indeed have a job of opposition in this House, but I can feel, as we all do, I believe, on this side of the House, that there is a desire for kotahitaka—to work together for the benefit of the regeneration of Christchurch so we can then continue through to try to really come together with our people around the aspirations that they have for their city and also their region.

Collaboration and cooperation: local authorities, central government, and Ngāi Tahu all have something to contribute. Cooperation between all of us will ensure that we get the best structure for Christchurch. There are also many others—the opportunity for not just those major stakeholders but many other voices to be heard. There are community groups, there are businesses, and there are individuals throughout Christchurch with something to contribute. This bill ensures that they are heard by requiring the provision of opportunities for public comment before the Minister makes a decision on regeneration plans.

Christchurch is ready for its next phase. Although rebuilding work continues, now is the time for us to shift our focus to regeneration, to look ahead to what we want our city to be and look like in the future. This bill takes us on a waka on a journey from recovery to regeneration, and I commend this bill to the House. Kia ora.

EUGENIE SAGE (Green): Tēnā koe. I am pleased to take a call on behalf of the Green Party on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill. The Green Party will be supporting the bill at its first reading and referral to the select committee because we are very interested in hearing public submissions on it. That said, we do have a number of concerns with the bill.

I guess the options open to the Government were to allow the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act to expire and then to go back to the normal processes under the Public Works Act, in terms of land acquisition, and the Resource Management Act; or to amend the existing Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act and extend its time frame; or to go ahead with new legislation, which is obviously what this bill is doing.

We are certainly pleased that the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act is not being extended, because it is a very Draconian piece of legislation. It has centralised a lot of power in the Beehive and it had the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery making major decisions about the future of the city. Also, it has shut out the public from having significant input into the demolition of heritage buildings across the city, for example. It has significantly truncated the normal processes under the Resource Management Act for public participation in planning documents—the Lyttelton Port recovery plan is one. The Christchurch district plan review is going through under a different process from the Resource Management Act. So we are glad that the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act is not being extended and that we have got new legislation.

The concern is that the quite significant powers that are given to the Minister in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act are carried over into this bill. The Hon Nicky Wagner said they were remnants of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority powers. They are fairly significant remnants. They are significant because the powers available to both the Minister and the chief executive officer of the new agency—which, as others have explained, will be a joint agency between the council and the Government—include the ability to suspend, amend, or revoke Resource Management Act documents, council plans, regional land transport plans, and plans or policies under the Local Government Act. They allow the Minister to amalgamate any land acquired under this bill or the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act, and the chief executive of Regenerate Christchurch can carry out or commission works such as demolishing buildings, restricting access, and closing or stopping roads. So these are quite significant powers, particularly the powers to override existing Resource Management Act documents and policies and plans under the Local Government Act.

I acknowledge that the Government has put in the bill some constraints on those powers. They have got to be exercised in accordance with the purpose of the legislation and they have got to be deemed to be necessary by the chief executive or the Minister. There are other safeguards too, in relation to regeneration plans, that require the Minister to consult with the strategic partners—namely, the Christchurch City Council, Waimakariri District Council, Selwyn District Council, the Canterbury Regional Council, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu—and to have particular regard to their views.

That is a good test, because it does indicate that the Minister will have to take those views into real account. The agency is to be subject to the Official Information Act. We applaud that, but the scope of the powers is still very wide. It is a giant experiment, really, in urban planning that this bill is embarking on. The Government has not yet introduced its Resource Management Act changes. We suspect that those will significantly reduce opportunities for public input. And here, with this bill, the way in which it overrides the normal planning processes under the Resource Management Act in order to, theoretically, advance the purposes of regeneration and to have an attractive, liveable city, is an experiment.

What the experiment has been with the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, of course, is that the public is not always able to be involved and its views are not heeded as much as they should be, and we have seen that with the disastrous proposals by the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority for Victoria Square, and the major changes there. We have seen it also with the extravagant expenditure on the

Avon/Otākaro River project—\$98 million-odd being spent there. Again, nobody actually said they wanted that. We have seen it too in the squandering of the really strong support for a much more sustainable city that came through in that massive and innovative consultation exercise that the Christchurch City Council undertook with Share an Idea. Yes, we will be supporting the bill, but we will be very interested in the submissions that come through and in what Christchurch people think of having the Minister retain the power to sign off on all of these regeneration plans.

I will just make a point about the Crown company that is being set up under the bill to deliver the anchor projects. We had the chief executive officer of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority in front of the Finance and Expenditure Committee earlier this week, and the opaqueness that has surrounded the anchor projects continues. It was originally proposed that \$280 million would be spent on a new convention centre. That bill is skyrocketing, yet there is nothing available to the public in terms of the details about the business case. The chief executive officer was unable to tell the select committee even who would own the convention centre, despite the hundreds of millions of dollars of public money that is going into this project. So we have this Crown company that is going to be delivering the anchor projects, and we do not know whether it is accessible under the Official Information Act or whether there will be any increase in the transparency with which those anchor projects are being planned.

There are massive amounts of money being put into the anchor projects, there is the huge financial burden that they are on the Christchurch City Council, and there is the fact that the council has had to significantly change its long-term plan with the proposals for asset sales to generate revenue in order to fund its commitment to these anchor projects, for which we have yet to see any detailed business cases that show that they are justified, that they will generate revenue, and that they actually meet the needs of Christchurch citizens. They are, potentially, white elephants, and this bill, with the Crown company being proposed to deliver them, may not be any improvement on the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority and the opaqueness with which the authority has proceeded in terms of all of the anchor projects.

The prospect of the regeneration plans is certainly being welcomed by residents in places like New Brighton because of the major changes that the earthquake has caused there and the major loss of population, but these plans must be about sustainability. We have not seen that as a major thrust in the other plans that have been developed. With the port company plan, for example, we are seeing a major increase in the reclamation that the port company is proposing in order to deal with an increase in container traffic, yet we have not seen adequate attention being paid to the impacts that that will have on the loss of amenity values in the harbour, such as the major changes to the crater rim bluffs to provide rock for that reclamation.

We are seeing lost opportunities with a lot of the building that is happening in the central city. There are great sheets of steel, probably imported from China, when we have in the city of Christchurch world-leading expertise in the use of laminated wood for buildings, but we are not seeing the Government encouraging the use of that technology. We are seeing road widening and some cycleways being initiated by the city council. We have not seen a major increase in the frequency of bus services—Environment Canterbury has really dropped the ball—and the Green Party has proposed having an integrated transport agency to significantly improve public transport in the city, but we are not seeing that investment by the Government. Instead, it is going into major new motorways.

This bill has the potential to set a course for a much more liveable, sustainable city, but it needs—in terms of the way in which Regenerate Christchurch operates and the people who are appointed—to have a much more reflective look back at the ideas that

came through Share an Idea. We also have concerns that the board of Regenerate Christchurch is going to be appointed by both the council and the Minister. Members of the board need to be in communication with citizens, because they do not have the accountability that an elected mandate would provide. So we will be supporting the bill's referral to the select committee, but we will also be supporting Megan Woods' amendment so that the public gets a good chance to comment on the bill. Thank you.

DENIS O'ROURKE (NZ First): This is a very important bill for the future of Christchurch. Indeed, it may be the most important bill for the future of Christchurch that has ever been presented to this House, and it therefore needs thorough scrutiny.

I am happy to say that it does enable a transition from recovery—a recovery that is far from complete, of course—to regeneration. It does provide for a genuine partnership approach that I think is very pleasing, and that is now essential. It provides for a new entity in Regenerate Christchurch, as a vehicle that will concentrate council and Crown efforts and assets, and that, too, is positive. It also contains a number of extraordinary powers—perhaps too many extraordinary powers, and I am going to refer to those later.

New Zealand First does approve of the concept of this bill, but we do have one very particular reservation that I will describe later, so we will vote in favour of the bill to the select committee, but if that reservation is not later met or satisfied we will not then hesitate to vote against it if necessary. So I will refer to that later, but I want to go on and say this: I think the purpose of the bill is very well set out, and it focuses on two things—on regeneration and on local leadership.

I see from the dictionary that the word “regenerate” means “to recreate in a better form or condition”, and that is going to be the challenge for the new process. It is going to be a challenge, more than anything, in three particular areas: how the red zone is regenerated or recreated; how New Brighton is recreated, because it desperately needs it, having received far too little attention so far; and I agree with several other speakers who have referred to transport as a particular area in which Christchurch and Canterbury need a much better result. They need more options than just more motorways, bigger roads, and more cars. We do need to see better treatment for rail, light rail, cycling, and other forms of transport, and they do need to be integrated.

It is particularly positive that there is also a focus on local leadership, because the input of Environment Canterbury, the Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, of course the Christchurch City Council, and Ngāi Tahu is absolutely essential if we are going to take the people of Christchurch and the people of Canterbury with us in this process. That process has not, in fact, been well carried out so far under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act. It has been lacking in the past. Canterbury people need to be able to take ownership of this process, and unless that partnership is carried out genuinely and comprehensively we will not get that, so I hope that is the result of this bill. Regenerate Christchurch does mean recreation, and it is very important that that happens in a comprehensive way.

I am very pleased to see, therefore, that under clause 95 there will be a board of seven members: three appointed by the city council, three by the Crown, and one, effectively, by Ngāi Tahu. I do not think there will be any need to change that over the period that this bill will operate; I think that is a good balance, and it is good that they will have to agree on things. So I approve of that, but I also particularly approve of clause 97, which provides how that partnership will operate. It makes a provision for the city council and the Minister to “agree on how they will exercise their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to Regenerate Christchurch”, that the role of the city council and the Minister is to “jointly oversee and manage … the Crown’s interests in … Regenerate Christchurch;”, and, in particular, that the city council and the Minister may produce a “letter of expectations” as a means of overseeing and managing the

council's and the Crown's interests in Regenerate Christchurch. I hope and expect that we will see that letter not too far in the future, so we will know what they intend in that regard, but that is a good basis upon which a partnership should proceed.

This concept of regeneration, or, as I have defined it, recreation, is at the heart of the bill, and I note with some satisfaction that the Minister, in making decisions concerning those regeneration plans, must seek the views of the strategic partners—that is to say, Environment Canterbury, the city council, Selwyn, Waimakariri, and, of course, Ngāi Tahu. I am particularly pleased about the words "have particular regard to their views", because that means not just to listen to what they say but actually, effectively, to incorporate their views in whatever the plans are, so it will not be open to the Minister to simply decide what he thinks is best. He will, in fact, have to do as the bill says and have proper regard to the views of those stakeholders. I am very pleased about that, and approve particularly of that part of the bill. Those words "particular regard to their views", I think, are probably the most important words in the bill as a whole.

I want to move on now, however, to the powers that are contained in the bill. They are extraordinary powers, and they are really just as extraordinary as the powers that were in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation. And I have no difficulty in saying that, actually, those powers are needed. If we are going to get the recreation of Christchurch, particularly in the ways that I have mentioned, then, yes, there do have to be extraordinary powers to make sure that that can happen. There is a whole list of those about suspending, amending, or revoking Resource Management Act documents. I do take on board what Eugenie Sage said about that. There is some risk associated with that, but, on balance, I do think it is appropriate that those powers are there and there are other powers about amalgamating land; about the chief executive being able to commission works; about the chief executive being able to dispose of land, subject to the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery's approval; and, also, this very difficult question of the Minister being able to compulsorily acquire land. That is where, I think, the problem lies in this bill, and that is where New Zealand First has a serious reservation.

The Minister's power to decide compensation under this bill is far too wide, and I want to refer to clause 82(3) to (6), which says in subclause (3) "When determining the amount of compensation for the compulsory acquisition of land, the Minister must have regard to the matters in subsection (4)"—which includes the Public Works Act consideration, and those sorts of things—"but is not limited to determining the amount of compensation on that basis alone and may determine whatever amount the Minister thinks fit." If those words remain in the bill, New Zealand First will vote against it in the future stages. The reason I say that is simply this: I and New Zealand First have been appalled at some of the decisions this Government has made about compensation for landowners, especially those involved in the Quake Outcasts situation. I think some of those decisions were appalling, irrational, and unfair, and I do not trust this Minister or this Government to make future decisions about those issues under this legislation any more than I trusted them under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation.

So if those words are going to be there, then our vote will be against. If those words are removed, our vote will be for this legislation. So I ask the Minister to seriously consider whether he really actually needs those words there, because I do not think he does. I think the provisions in the bill otherwise are more than sufficient to ensure a fair regime for compensation for landowners whose land is compulsorily acquired. I want to make that a very, very important issue as far as New Zealand First is concerned.

Finally, I do think that the provisions, especially those in clauses 16 to 23, and clauses 16 to 22, in particular, relating to the development and amendment of plans, are

perfectly appropriate if we are going to have a recreation of Christchurch in the way that we all hope will happen under this legislation. And, again, I note with satisfaction that the Minister will have to have particular regard to the views of the stakeholders and also give a good opportunity for the public to be consulted. So, with that, New Zealand First will vote for the bill at this stage, and I hope we will be able to vote for it at later stages too.

MATT DOOCHEY (National—Waimakariri): It is an honour and a privilege to rise and speak at the first reading of the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill, a bill I wholeheartedly support. As a very proud born and bred Cantabrian, I am looking forward to its transition through the legislative process to the Local Government and Environment Committee, a select committee that is full of very energetic and able Cantabrians from all sides of the House who will be working very closely to ensure the quality of this piece of legislation. Can I say that, for me, I think this, personally, will be the most important bill that I speak on this year in the House—important for me and for all people of Greater Christchurch and Canterbury.

As I have always said, I am a very proud, one-eyed Cantabrian. I remember growing up in Christchurch in the old days, when Belfast was out of town. It was a day trip, and you would go over the Styx Mill Bridge. But now, after the earthquakes, Greater Christchurch has been redrawn and we have seen great urban movement to towns in my electorate like Rangiora and Kaiapoi. It is great that we are moving from recovery into regeneration, because many young people growing up in Christchurch, like myself, decided to go away and go on their OE, and a lot of the reasons I left Christchurch to go on my OE and see a bit of the world were the reasons that actually drew me back to Christchurch and Canterbury. It is a small town in the bottom of the world, and when you go out and see other countries and you expand your world view, you see how competitive the world is out there—but you see how fantastic, vibrant and dynamic other cities are.

I am passionate that through this regeneration bill we are going to be supporting Christchurch to be vibrant and dynamic and to be the best new small city in the world. I must say at this stage, though, talking about the future and aspirations like that—I must acknowledge that we are in a very difficult stage. International research around psychological and social recovery shows that years 3 to 7 post-disaster can be still problematic for some. I would urge any who still need help, or Cantabrians who know anyone—their friends or family—who still need help, to come and see their local MP. We are here to help and support and advocate on your behalf.

If I focus on this bill and around the purpose, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act will expire in April 2016, and we are moving from recovery into regeneration. I know from my own background—coming from a background in mental health and working in a model of recovery for a long time—it is about moving people through and transitioning them into a better quality of life. That is something I will be touching on in my call today, how this regeneration bill is about moving through the stages and transitioning the people of Canterbury from recovery into regeneration. It is a new legal framework to support the regeneration of Greater Christchurch over the next 5 years.

The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act was, probably, a bit wider geographically than this bill, which is looking at Greater Christchurch. I have a unique view on this, with my electorate covering part of Christchurch City and north Christchurch. There are residents of Christchurch City Council as well as residents of the Waimakariri District Council, which covers towns like Rangiora and Kaiapoi. The Greater Christchurch region will cover those towns, and around Fernside as well.

What we need to do is make sure we maintain the momentum, because what we are doing is rebuilding the city, regenerating it. Not only do we want to protect the past but

if I look at the definition in the bill—I did write it down somewhere—around regeneration, it is described as restoration and urban renewal and development. For me it is not only about restoring the past and protecting our history—as you know, Christchurch was deemed the most English city outside England—but it is also thinking about what the city will be used for in 20 or 30 years' time. My daughter, when she grows up—what type of city do we want for her in the future? That is what we are talking about.

I just want to acknowledge that earthquake recovery and regeneration is one of the top four priorities of this Government, and we are committed to the people of Canterbury. But when you look at this bill and the top five priority issues for the next 5 to 10 years that this bill will cover, it will be about revitalising central Christchurch, maintaining economic performance, improving people's well-being—and I would just like to acknowledge the work of the Associate Minister for Earthquake Recovery, Nicky Wagner, around her psychosocial performance plan—repairing and replacing housing, and repairing and replacing infrastructure and facilities.

I just want to acknowledge New Zealanders who have supported Cantabrians, who have stayed beside them and continued to support them. We have heard and talked about great stories, like the Student Volunteer Army, which came into a town in my electorate, Kaiapoi, straight after the earthquakes. But it is also about acknowledging Cantabrians who have got back up on their feet. In a region like Canterbury—we talk about the Christchurch earthquakes, but they were actually the Canterbury earthquakes. They were hard hit in the first earthquake—we lost about a thousand houses—and they have got back up on their feet, and it is great to see Kaiapoi doing so well.

I just want to acknowledge the role of this Government, which has supported Cantabrians and especially the earthquake recovery Minister. I say this not out of arrogance or complacency—now we sit on our hands—but the reason we won the party vote in the last election in Canterbury was that we put up a framework of policies that people believed in. We showed leadership, we made decisions, and we took action. And that is what people want. This Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill continues that momentum, it continues that leadership, it continues that decision making, and it continues that action to support the best new city in the world being rebuilt.

When we look at regeneration, there are some really good examples out there. Waimakariri is a fantastic example of getting on and regenerating its towns. We have opened the Ruataniwha Kaiapoi Civic Centre this year, the Rangiora Town Hall, the Oxford Town Hall, and the Ashley Bridge. We have got the health hub in Rangiora opening up in a few weeks, and retail precincts, and that is because we are investing into the local economy. But I must say for Christchurch, specifically in the central business district, a large part of which this Regenerate Christchurch entity will look at around anchor projects—they have had a lot more complexity to deal with. It is quite right that the focus will now be more constrained to the central business district, around things like anchor projects. That is what I spoke about before, when we look at what cities operate around, around the world—vibrancy and dynamism.

What we need is to ensure that over the next 5 or 10 years we implement and develop the anchor projects—the Metro Sports Facility, the convention centre—that will be an economic catalyst for the city, bringing better jobs and better incomes, and, of course, a stadium. We are very parochial in Canterbury. If you look at our Super 12 and Super 15 history, we are the best rugby region in the world, and we need a stadium that represents that. If you look at the Rugby World Cup at the moment, with the Cardiff stadium of 80,000 people coming in to watch a game—it energises a city. It is these anchor projects that we need to ensure that we guarantee and we move forward, to make sure that the city is regenerated for the next generation, as well.

Overall, I wholeheartedly support this bill. I look forward to following it through the legislative process, and I commend it to the House. Thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: A 5-minute call on behalf of the Green Party—Jan Logie.

JAN LOGIE (Green): There is a sense of honour, I guess, and responsibility in taking a call for the Green Party on this bill, the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill. I would like to add my voice to others in the House this evening acknowledging those who died in the earthquake, those who were harmed, the families who have been left behind, and all the people of Christchurch who are continuing that process of healing and recovery today. It was an event the consequences of which those of us who do not live in Christchurch cannot truly understand, but I have family in Christchurch and I know the impact on them, so I have some insight but do not pretend to have a total understanding of it.

The Green Party is supporting this legislation to the select committee. The bill repeals the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act and establishes a new legal framework for post-quake recovery in Christchurch from the period of July 2016 until 2021, and it repeals some earthquake-related Orders in Council, while retaining others. I think the Minister talked about remnants of that original legislation, but it does seem to be rather more than remnants. There are some very significant provisions of control from Wellington that are still present in this proposed piece of legislation. It will give a range of power to Ministers and the new entity Regenerate Christchurch, and it will also establish a Crown company to deliver the anchor projects.

I know that in Christchurch there is quite a lot of interest in the new entity Regenerate Christchurch, and there is a degree of support that we have heard so far for this. That body will have oversight of the progress of the central city, the red-zoned residential areas, and New Brighton. It is very pleasing to see New Brighton specifically in that organisation's planning oversight, because New Brighton has felt left behind. The state of some of the basic amenities out in New Brighton—it really is visibly left behind. It is incredibly important that that is not continued any longer and that there is an absolute step change and focus on ensuring their ability to recover and regenerate.

For us, what we in the Green Party want from this bill is a shift towards democracy and an assurance that the aspirations of the people in Christchurch are able to be realised. That is what I hope everyone in this House is going to work towards. Our focus in the select committee process will be on listening to the people of Christchurch—what do you want for your future—building on that amazing consultative process that happened around Share an Idea after the quake and whether this will help to realise those visions. If not, can it be amended to do that better? We will certainly be listening with great attentiveness to the ideas of people from Christchurch. I must say that we are disappointed at the shortened process. I hope that it will not affect at all the ability of people from Christchurch to participate and share their views with this House. Here, in this place, we cannot understand. We cannot know what is best for Christchurch. It must be that this legislation is focused and is delivering on the aspirations of the people of Christchurch. We will be supporting Megan Woods' amendment to extend that report-back time.

I would like to mention just a couple of things that the Christchurch City Council pointed out to me, as to the concerns it has about how things have been operating. The Minister, in the sense of Wellington, has come in and blocked the aspirations of the Christchurch people. They are mostly around environmental factors, around the protection of groundwater. If you know anyone from Christchurch, believe me, you will know that they are proud of the quality of their groundwater—that is so true. My mother

will not drink the water from my place. The Government is not protecting that from quarrying, and there is a real concern—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the member but her time has expired. I call the Hon Clayton Cosgrove—a 5-minute call.

Hon CLAYTON COSGROVE (Labour): As others have said, I too pay due respect to those who passed away during the earthquakes, both those who were directly earthquake victims and also those who subsequently, through stress and other things, are not with us. And also those folk who still—and I take Mr Doocey's point and I agree with it—grapple with the stresses and strains, physically, emotionally, economically, and mentally 5 years on from the quakes. I think his point about mental health was extremely well made. It is, however, slightly disappointing that the Government—even though Mr Doocey is right—cut the funding for that mental health support, as it is needed, even though it is 5 years down the track.

As my colleague Megan Woods and others have said, we will support this piece of legislation to a select committee. Like others, we would want to see full and open scrutiny and the opportunity for as many Cantabrians and others—because there are smart people all over New Zealand—to participate in the process. We are disappointed that it is a truncated process. I know the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery will say it is 5 weeks. I think that is the time. However, that does not take into account, of course, that the House rises on 9 December, we come back on 9 February, and the report-back date is 25 February. For those people, generally it is a protocol in this House, especially over pretty essential bills like this, that the Christmas period is a bit of a no-go zone because people obviously are focusing on families and getting away, and actually having a bit of time off, especially those in Canterbury.

Generally we normally give extensions to cater for that, so people can, either beforehand or after, make a contribution. My colleague Megan Woods has proposed an extended period, to 24 March. That should be no impediment to the Government, because it still allows an enactment prior to the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation expiring. So I would just ask the Minister to consider that as we go through. If he is genuine, and I take him at his word—there is reference to public engagement, and of course we would like to see how that is going to be practically manifest through this legislation—but if he is genuine in wanting Cantabrians to have as big a contribution as they can, then it would not be out of the ordinary and we would cooperate to extend that report-back period. If it is the case that we just want to do the usual, which we have had for a few years in Christchurch—ram it through and pretend that the Government has listened to the people, and that sort of thing—well, that will stand as it is.

I would also like to make a couple of comments on the Minister's powers. He retains very wide powers, as Denis O'Rourke has alluded to, particularly in respect of compulsory acquisition and compensation for land. I share Denis O'Rourke's concern about that. Yes, there may well be a need for the compulsory acquisition of land, of course, and under the Public Works Act and the various transport Acts when that happens there is proper, appropriate, mark-for-mark compensation. I dealt with some transport cases when we were in Government, and they are very diligent, I have say, generally, the transport folk, in ensuring that if a piece of land or an area or a dwelling is compulsorily acquired there is mark-for-mark, like-for-like market compensation. It does worry me, particularly with this Minister. He can make reference to the Public Works Act, but he can determine how many dollars there are going to be. I think that is inappropriate. I share Mr O'Rourke's concerns.

I would also say that in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation we, of course, did support—and I still support—voting for the so-called “wartime” or

extraordinary powers that we gave the Minister. We took a bit of flak—he shakes his head, of course. He is good at that. We took a bit of flak from our constituencies for doing it, but I was the shadow at the time and I think we did the right thing. The constituencies were a bit concerned that the Minister would overreach, but I have to say we were astounded that our concerns were that he underused those powers in certain cases, as problems arose when he could have intervened and we would have supported him. We wrote to him—I do not know how many letters I wrote to him—and supported his intervention to sort out—

Hon Gerry Brownlee: Two.

Hon CLAYTON COSGROVE: No. I know that the Minister can count only with five fingers of his hand; it was far more than two. We would have supported him using those powers, but he underused them, so it will be interesting as we go forward to see how the Minister will, indeed, use those powers.

I think that the people of Canterbury want to see this work. They have moved through extraordinary circumstances, they are people of good will, and they have been knocked around by both the earthquakes and the Government. The Government from time to time has done very good work—more often than not, I have to say—but I think the Minister struggled to strike a balance between the bull at the gate approach and the leadership approach and the consultation approach. I hope that he does not continue to confuse consultation with consensus. If you consult with folks, you will never get consensus, but people will feel they have had a fair shake and they will buy into the process. I hope as we go through this that the Minister will take note of that.

JOANNE HAYES (National): I stand to take a call on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill. My contribution is going to feature the regeneration of New Brighton. I was not born or raised in New Brighton; I arrived last year. I stood at the top of the mall at New Brighton and I looked down on a very dismal day, and any people who visited New Brighton on that day would have thought: “Oh dear! Things are going not too good here.” But I saw a New Brighton mall that had potential—potential for vibrancy, potential for growth, and, most important, I saw potential for regeneration. That is why I am very pleased indeed to stand and speak up for the people of New Brighton, for New Brighton, and the transition to regeneration plan released this month.

I want to thank Mr Brownlee for the work that he has done for the Christchurch earthquake recovery, and now through the Christchurch transition to regeneration. I want to thank him because he has done a marvellous job in a very difficult situation. He has come down back to his hometown and he has given all his time and his energy to rebuilding Christchurch and to ensuring that it is restored to an even better Christchurch—a world-renowned Christchurch that is much better than its former glory. In the brief time that I have been privileged to serve as a Christchurch list MP, I have continued, and I am determined, to immerse myself into this community, to give it a voice. In these hallowed halls of Parliament and Government, very rarely do we hear “New Brighton” or “Christchurch East”.

To date I have met with thousands of constituents within the Christchurch East electorate, with many businesses, and with many community groups. Over 92 community groups I have met with, and all of them—all of them—have told me about their concerns about the regeneration of New Brighton. What are we going to do? What are we doing to do with New Brighton? So, therefore, the transition to regeneration plan is a very great start to where we are heading off for the New Brighton area.

I have met with the New Brighton Business and Landowners Association manager, Mr Paul Zaanen, and just recently his contract finished. But this man continues—continues—in his work, in his drive, to make sure that New Brighton is regenerated back into a better and a more prosperous area. Although the funding is not there for

him, he continues, and some of the business owners are helping to support him along the way. I want to see this man, Mr Paul Zaanen, take a key role in the regeneration of New Brighton under the new urban development authority because he has a lot to give. He has done a lot of work, and I believe that through his careful leadership he will be able to help with the urban development authority.

The transition to regeneration transition recovery plan is not just a good thing for New Brighton; it is a great thing for New Brighton. It covers areas from Pages Road bridge, down Hawke Street, Keyes Road, Rawhiti Avenue, Marine Parade, south to Mountbatten Street, to Union Street, and north back up to Pages Road bridge. Some people can sit in here and can go: "That's not big enough. We want it to go from Southshore all the way up to Waimairi Beach."

This is a start. It is a great start for the people of New Brighton. It is a great start for New Brighton per se. I must say that when they do say that to me, I say to them "Let's start with small bits and let's start to grow it from there.", because I believe that once the New Brighton business district has been regenerated, it is going to build the economy and everything else will flow on from that. That is the way business development works. That is how the economy, and growing the economy, works: a little bit can develop into a big result—and that is what regeneration is all about.

The regeneration of the New Brighton area is a key investment for the Government and the city council. There is a real need for this, and for this Christchurch beach suburb, whose properties are worth less than those around the airport, we need to reverse that trend through this regeneration so that those property prices and values will actually rise.

I want to say thank you to our Minister down here. Thank you, Mr Brownlee, for the work that you have done. I want to thank the Canterbury councils. I want to thank the Mayor of Christchurch, Lianne Dalziel, for the work that she has done in working with Government to get us to this point. I want to say thank you to those in New Brighton who have kept the faith, who have kept the faith and said: "New Brighton regeneration is where we're going. We're sticking there and we're going to do it, and if you are a list MP who is going to help us do that, then kei te pai, welcome." And that is exactly what has been happening.

I look forward to the implementation of this wonderful regeneration plan to see a newer New Brighton—a newer New Brighton. That is where we are going to. I am very proud to commend the bill. I look forward to the submissions to our Local Government and Environment Committee, capably led by our chair here, Mr Scott Simpson, who will be visiting our wonderful Christchurch again to come and see the great things from start to finish as we start to move through this bill. As I said, I commend this bill to the House. I look forward to the results. Thank you.

POTO WILLIAMS (Labour—Christchurch East): Kia orana, Mr Deputy Speaker. Greetings to everyone in Christchurch, and particularly those in Christchurch East, who I know will be listening—

Grant Robertson: Who's the MP there?

POTO WILLIAMS: —I do not know; perhaps it is me—with great interest because we all know that the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill is an opportunity for us to transition from what has been to what could be. I want to spend a few minutes just reflecting not only on those who lost their lives but also on those who lost their homes, those who lost their communities, and those families who were displaced by the effects not only of the earthquake sequence but of what happened post-earthquake with regard to the red zoning of the land—people having to move from communities they have lived in for a long time, and the disruption that has happened in our communities, which will change not only their lives but our lives forever.

I want to say that I am concerned that the regeneration plan, the transition plan, misses out some significant voices. It misses out the voices of our children, who will be the people who take over the city in its new and shiny form once we have regenerated it. It misses out the voices of our communities and it misses out the voices of those who are most impacted. I urge the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery to reconsider the opportunity for our community voices to be heard during this process by extending the process to include those voices. I am concerned about the powers that the Minister does hold in this transition phase. The people of Christchurch are not being given the opportunity to take the power back into their hands. There is no doubt that the transition is required and that we cannot move from one organisation, one entity, one phase to another without a transition plan and without good thinking around that. However, 5 years is 5 years too long. We have good people in our city who can do this work and should be charged with taking care of their own and should have the power to do that.

I am concerned that the Minister has the ability to change plans that have already been set in place, plans that have been consulted on with the community, and plans that make sense to people who live in the city. I am concerned that the Minister also has the ability to acquire land and to set the compensation that may be offered to people who currently own that land. I remind the Minister that there are still some very disaffected people, like the Quake Outcasts in the eastern suburbs of Christchurch, where a decision that was made in the High Court has not been honoured by the Minister. I am concerned about the ability to dismantle the Resource Management Act. The Minister has the ability to change what is a very, very good document, and I am concerned that the appeal rights with regard to the Resource Management Act have to go to the High Court instead of going through the Environment Court. We have the ability to take evidence and to hear evidence.

I am concerned that the select committee is going to take evidence, complete its deliberations by the end of the year, and that the report-back date is February. I completely concur with Megan Woods—it is a sensible idea to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to present to the select committee and the process should be extended out to March. There will be lots of people who want to have their say. There have been decisions made by this Government throughout the last 5 years that have impacted on the way people have lived their lives because they have not had the ability to have their say—or, if they have had their say, it has been disregarded. I am talking about the thousands of people who had to leave their homes when their homes, their land, and their properties were red zoned. Minister Brownlee, I just want to remind you of the distress that is caused to people when they have to leave a place that they love behind. With regard to these processes, please take full regard of the fact that our communities want to have a say and want their voices to be heard. What is the input for our community? We would really love for you, Minister, to spell out how they can be engaged in this, and that you will give them the full regard that they deserve.

This plan should not be about just regeneration. It should be about aspiration. It should be about a city that we want to create together for the people who will live there, not only now but in the future. It should be about putting behind us the physical hurts, the emotional hurts, and the trauma and coming out of this process with something that is better than we currently have.

I want to speak particularly about what is happening in the New Brighton area, and I pay tribute to our local elected members and our mayor and councillors for their encouragement and, I guess, advocacy to ensure that New Brighton is part of the regeneration plan. If any of you have the opportunity to come to Christchurch, I urge you to come to New Brighton to see what remains to be done. It is a very, very visible

representation of what has not been achieved in our city. I urge you to come. I urge you to see what still needs to be done. So I am encouraged, Minister, to see that New Brighton is part of the regeneration plan. It has its own specific area. One point, though, that I am concerned about is that the area does include the Rāwhiti Domain and what that may mean for that domain.

Kris Faafoi: Talk about the golf course.

POTO WILLIAMS: The golf course is actually excluded from that.

Kris Faafoi: Oh, thank you. I just wanted to be sure.

POTO WILLIAMS: That is all right. When we look at the area that, in schedule 4, outlines New Brighton, included as the Rāwhiti Domain—I am sorry, there you go, Mr Faafoi. The Rāwhiti golf links is—

Kris Faafoi: It is a public golf course.

POTO WILLIAMS: It is a public course, yes. It is not part of New Brighton, apparently, according to schedule 4. But what is included is the mall. What is included is a small area at the southern end of New Brighton, which really is the heart of the revitalisation of our area.

If we get this right in New Brighton, it has the opportunity to lift the eastern suburb to be the gem of Christchurch, as those of who live there actually know that it is. We love the New Brighton mall, but I urge this Government to recognise that there has been significant work done on the revitalisation of New Brighton in terms of the master planning. Mrs Hayes mentioned Paul Zaanen, who is part of a wider New Brighton conglomerate of groups such as the New Brighton projects Renew Brighton and the Strategic Urban Rejuvenation Force, which have done an extraordinary amount of work to ensure that the plans for New Brighton include that the New Brighton master plan as devised by council has been consulted widely with our community. The vital piece that has always been missing from the revitalisation of New Brighton has been central government. I am heartened to see that New Brighton is part of this regeneration plan. I urge you to listen to the voices of local people. Please do not mess this up. New Brighton deserves much better than it currently has. I commend this bill. We will be watching it with great interest. I encourage you, Mr Brownlee, as Minister, to sit in on as many of the hearings as you can, to hear the voices directly from the people. Thank you.

SCOTT SIMPSON (National—Coromandel): As chairman of the Local Government and Environment Committee, it is a pleasure for me to be taking the last call in this first reading debate on the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill in the name of the Hon Gerry Brownlee. I want to commence my contribution to this debate by acknowledging the very measured and carefully considered contributions of members from across the House this afternoon, in what someone earlier on mentioned may well be considered perhaps the most important piece of Christchurch legislation to be brought into this House in many a long year. It is a piece of legislation that, when the history of New Zealand and Canterbury is written 100 years hence—the contribution that this House has made to the recovery and to the regeneration of Christchurch will be marked out by this piece of legislation. I am not a Cantabrian, I do not come from Christchurch, but over the years I have had a lot of business relationships in Christchurch, and I have visited Canterbury on many, many occasions. I think I speak on behalf of all New Zealanders when I say that we who are not Cantabrians have been sharing, albeit from a distance, the pain, suffering, and anguish that has occurred in Canterbury over these last 5 years. It has been a difficult, testing time. It has been a time when we have moved from crisis and pain and disaster into, now, a regeneration period.

I want to just quote from the Minister's speech, when he led off this debate. He said: "We are moving on from emergency and recovery to a time of regeneration. This is an

exciting time. Much of the ground work has been laid and many significant building projects both public and private are under way or have been completed, but there is still much to be done. Regeneration of a city and its people's well-being is a mission that cannot be completed in a short number of years." I want to, as I say, pay tribute to the Minister for his contribution, not only in terms of political leadership of all that has occurred in Christchurch over the last 5 years but also in terms of his personal contribution.

This bill has been well-received by most stakeholders. In fact, I cannot think of any who have expressed concern about it, at all. I wanted to pay particular attention to some comments that were made by the Mayor of Christchurch City, the Hon Lianne Dalziel, a former member of this House. She said, in the *Press* on 29 September, only a short period of time ago when this bill was first being spoken about publicly: "The new collaborative working environment the city council and the Government have created through the Regenerate Christchurch is a game-changer." And it is a game-changer. She said: "I haven't felt so optimistic for the future of Christchurch than I do today". It goes on to say, in this article: "Both Brownlee and Dalziel said that the new agency represented a unique partnership and offered a new way of thinking about how central and local government could cooperate in the future." Mayor Dalziel said: "To me this creates an extraordinary opportunity for the city where the council and the Government can work hand-in-hand".

Earlier on in this debate Denis O'Rourke gave a dictionary definition of "regenerate". I too had done a little bit of checking to see what "regenerate" meant. His dictionary definition was slightly different, but the same theme. As a verb, "regenerate" has a dictionary definition that says: "to grow after loss or damage, to bring new and more vigorous life." Indeed, this bill attempts and will actually do that. I am very confident that, as a Parliament, it is not going to be beyond our wit to ensure that the dictionary definition of "regenerate" is actually manifested in terms of the legislative definition and the legislative outcome that will occur as the process of this bill coming through the Parliament occurs.

I want to make a very strong commendation for this bill to the House, because it is becoming very obvious, as we move through the process of the change and regeneration in Christchurch, that it is difficult to distinguish between the actions that have a recovery purpose from those that have a wider purpose. We now need to move and transition from that emergency response, that recovery response, that took place in the initial stages, and the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority legislation that was set up to cope with that phase, into this transitional phase. This bill enables that regeneration and development, and it will not be constrained by reference to the disasters that were the earthquakes or by building back to what we had before.

It is a future-looking piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation that will encompass growth, regeneration, new growth, and an exciting future for Canterbury and Cantabrians. I do not want to continue on about the process for the select committee other than to say that I find it quite fascinating that members on the Opposition benches castigate the Government for not moving quickly enough and yet want to slow down this piece of legislation. I find that a very difficult juxtaposition. There will be absolutely every opportunity for Cantabrians and other New Zealanders to participate in the submission process.

As the chair I am going to make sure—as we always do in the Local Government and Environment Committee—that all submitters get a good and fair hearing. I encourage people to take part in the select committee process. It is a very important part of our democratic process and it is a part that I think New Zealanders can have a real

input into, if they choose to do so. My invitation, as the chair of the select committee, is for them to participate and to be involved in it.

I commend this bill to the House. It is a good bill. As the chair of the select committee, I am very much looking forward to guiding it through the select committee phase. Once again, I commend the work and effort that the Hon Gerry Brownlee has put into bringing this bill to the House with other stakeholders involved in Canterbury. I commend the bill to the House.

Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery): I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is somewhat unusual. I think we are about to vote on this bill—we have not started the voting process, so I am not interrupting it—and it would appear that there is widespread support for the bill, albeit that there have been a number of points that have been made quite constructively, I think, by parties outside the Government. I was, therefore, going to seek the leave of the House to make a very, very brief response to some of those comments, given the fact that this is a bill that is likely to get significant, if not unanimous, support.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leave is put for that purpose. Is there any objection? There appears to be none.

Hon GERRY BROWNLEE: There are four things that I will pick up on, in no particular order—in fact, there will be five things that I will make a comment on.

Firstly, with regard to the ministerial powers that have been spoken to by a number of people, it was interesting that the Hon Clayton Cosgrove noted that the powers extended under the other legislation were not all used, and they certainly were not used indiscriminately. The discussion about the powers will, I think, be interesting for the select committee, particularly hearing from the mayors of the local authorities, who are quite certain about what they expect. I think it will also become apparent during that process that those powers are going to be constrained by the types of requests that might come through.

I think that the next point about the psychosocial health of the city was well made by Megan Woods. There is a psychosocial health plan that sits outside this bill. I can arrange for people to become more familiar with what that is. It is not something that the Government is walking away from.

Mr O'Rourke mentioned the compulsory acquisition stuff. I agree with him that you have got to be very careful about all of that. We have not excessively used the provisions that have been there during the past 5 years, and there are some very interesting reasons that led to some of the compulsory acquisitions. What I would suggest is that before the select committee even gets into too many hearings, officials could, perhaps, have time with Mr O'Rourke so that there could be an understanding of why we think there is a necessity to have that there. That may help in some way with the concerns that he has. I am not diminishing those concerns in any way.

I welcome the suggestion about a transport agency. This bill would enable it, but if people are interested in doing something outside of that, then I think we are interested in talking about that.

The final point is the time factor. We will be voting for the 25 February report back. That gives a total of 15 weeks between now and the report back, when the House could expect it to be working—so 7 weeks between now and 18 December, and 8 weeks from 18 January to 25 February. On that basis, I think that we are not cutting the time short. What I am trying to indicate is that given the level of support, there is a lot of room to talk about the issues that are perhaps causing concern at the moment.

Bill read a first time.

Bill referred to the Local Government and Environment Committee.

Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery): I move, *That the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill be reported back to the House by 25 February 2016.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, Dr Megan Woods has moved an amendment to the motion replacing “25 February 2016” with “24 March 2016”. The question is that the amendment to the motion be agreed to.

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

Ayes 58

New Zealand Labour 32; Green Party 14; New Zealand First 12.

Noes 63

New Zealand National 59; Māori Party 2; ACT New Zealand 1; United Future 1.

Amendment not agreed to.

A party vote was called for on the question, *That the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill be reported back to the House by 25 February 2016.*

Ayes 63

New Zealand National 59; Māori Party 2; ACT New Zealand 1; United Future 1.

Noes 58

New Zealand Labour 32; Green Party 14; New Zealand First 12.

Motion agreed to.

RICCARTON RACECOURSE DEVELOPMENT ENABLING BILL RICCARTON RACECOURSE BILL

First Readings

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for Building and Housing): I move, *That the Riccarton Racecourse Development Enabling Bill and the Riccarton Racecourse Bill be now read a first time.* I nominate the Local Government and Environment Committee to consider the bills. At the appropriate time I intend to move that the bills be reported to the House by 7 March 2016.

The Christchurch housing market has been experiencing significant pressure from the time of the major earthquakes in 2010 and 2011. Rebuild activity is well under way, particularly in the residential sector. There is a parallel between this bill in the housing space and the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Bill that has just been introduced by my colleague Gerry Brownlee, who has been leading the huge recovery work in that city. Good progress has been made on the residential recovery. If we look at the building consent figures, we saw them soar to four times their normal historical levels. New supply, though, has been disproportionately in the higher price brackets, and this bill is aimed at not just increasing supply but also ensuring that we grow supply in the range that is more affordable.

Although I am happy with the overall progress of the residential rebuild, which has involved hundreds of millions of dollars of investment by Housing New Zealand, which has involved the use of temporary housing on reserves, and which has involved massive repair work and programmes, I am concerned that we need to do more to produce more houses at the affordable end of the market. The majority of the homes that were, in that classic Canterbury phrase, “munted” were actually homes that were older and in the more affordable range. It is typically the more affordable stock that actually provides an entry point for people looking to purchase their first home. We have worked with the Christchurch City Council on the Christchurch Housing Accord to help bring on stream

new housing developments. Just last week in the central city I was with Mayor Lianne Dalziel turning the sod on some of the residential development in the central business district, between the four avenues. There remains a further need, though, to increase the supply of housing at the affordable end, and also housing that is in reasonably close proximity to the city.

The board of trustees that governs the Riccarton Racecourse contacted me with a proposal to convert part of the racecourse into housing development. Its proposal involves building at least 600 new homes on the site, and in discussions with the Government it agreed that a minimum 30 percent, or 180, of these homes will be targeted at the more affordable end of the market. It also allows the land to generate additional income for the Riccarton Racecourse board. This income can be used to not only reinvest in the facilities of the racecourse but provide infrastructure assets that are important to the broader part of Christchurch and provide greater support for racing activities. This housing development will provide a significant number of new homes for Christchurch, and the Government's position is quite consistent that supply is actually at the core of addressing affordability issues. This is especially true, as I have said, for houses that are at the more affordable end of the market. The Government has its very successful HomeStart scheme that has had a very high level of pick-up in Christchurch, but we want to make sure that there are homes for those people who are eligible for those grants.

The Riccarton Racecourse is a reserve governed by both the Christchurch Racecourse Reserve Act 1878 and the Reserves Act 1977. These Acts pose a barrier to the board's housing proposal, and the best way to address that is through legislative change. Combined with the current pressure on the Christchurch housing market, this creates a unique situation, and we believe legislation is the best way in which to allow this housing development to proceed. It is worth reflecting on the fact that at the time that the Riccarton Racecourse was established and the legislation was passed by this Parliament, in 1878, the racecourse was a long way from the city. It was 20 years before the first car came to New Zealand, and nobody would ever have envisaged that the city would grow so much that the racecourse would now be well within the city limits. It is now only a short drive to the city. It is nestled within a vibrant suburb with good access to schools, to local shops, and to other communities and facilities. It is exactly the kind of location where new housing is needed, and I put to the House that to have this land underutilised, sitting vacant, is actually not the best use of this country's resources.

It is a long-established rule of this Parliament that any amendment to an Act that has been passed as a local bill must be promoted by the relevant local authority. I want to inform the House that the Christchurch City Council has agreed to support the development and to promote the local bill—the Riccarton Racecourse Bill—to make the necessary changes to the local Act. The Riccarton Racecourse is also subject to a right of first refusal under Ngāi Tahu's settlement legislation, and we have gone to some care with these bills to ensure that that right of first refusal is recognised and protected.

Finally, I do want to acknowledge the Business Committee for agreeing to consider these bills being developed as cognate bills. In fact, as an older member of the House for some time, the way in which the Business Committee is able to make pragmatic decisions of that sort to enable a single debate and process through the House and select committee just makes common sense. Given neither bill can achieve its aims without the other, it is appropriate that they are considered as a single legislative package by this House and by the select committee. This is pragmatic legislation that is designed in such a way that it will support racing in Canterbury. It supports the earthquake recovery and it results in more sensible use of this area of land, and I commend both bills to the House.

Dr MEGAN WOODS (Labour—Wigram): I am happy to take a call on this, as the member of Parliament in whose electorate the Riccarton Racecourse sits—an important part of the Wigram electorate. Labour will be supporting this legislation, and I am pleased to see that both of these bills have been put together into one package. I echo the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery's sentiments that it was a sensible decision of the Business Committee to package these together.

We know that in Canterbury post-earthquake we have had to open up more land for housing—that there is a need for us to develop new areas. What we have seen is the westward shift of the city—the southward and the westward shift—as well as some movement to the north, and with this comes great complexities.

What I would like to acknowledge in the course of this speech is the proactivity of the local residents who live around the Riccarton Racecourse, who, even before this legislation was introduced, had already held a number of meetings around this. I have been involved in a number of meetings with the local residents, the likely developer of the land, and the board and members of the Riccarton Racecourse itself to talk through some of the issues and some of the reservations that may be held by the present residents around what having a new development on their doorstep means. I think this is something that any community feels when there is a likelihood of a new development, and I would like to talk through some of those very local concerns that come through, but I would also like to acknowledge the site that we are talking about today.

It is the site of the Riccarton Racecourse, which, of course, is the home ground, if you like, of the Canterbury Jockey Club. It is the oldest and, for a long time, the most pre-eminent, of jockey clubs and racing institutions in New Zealand. It is a very important part of Christchurch's and Canterbury's history. If you look through the members of the club, they certainly were some of the power-wielders of Canterbury, in terms of its establishment and its set-up. What we do know is that very early on in its history the decision was made, on 4 November 1854, that a club was needed. I will note that that date is my birthday, although the year is not the same, so I would just like to establish a connection there—although I can assure everyone I was not born in 1854.

The club was taken to its present site in Riccarton, which was then very much on the outskirts of the city. It was very much removed from the city, as it stood in the 1850s. It was probably hard for many of the people who made the decision to place a racecourse that far from what was then Christchurch City to imagine that this would ever grow—for the city to meet it. But it has, and the earthquakes have very much hastened that process, as we have seen development spring up all over the western suburbs of Christchurch.

Hornby, Riccarton, Yaldhurst—these are all suburbs that are teeming and heaving with new subdivisions, and my concern is that the infrastructural needs of these suburbs, these neighbourhoods, and these communities are not being kept up with. When this development was first mooted, there was a lot of talk about it being put through, under what was a really good idea between the Crown and Christchurch City at the time, as an exemplar development. Christchurch, and Canterbury more generally, was going to be rehoused through what were going to be known as exemplar developments, where the highest standards of urban design were going to be employed, where there was going to be a good proportion of affordable housing, and where there were going to be well-defined transport links that would see these neighbourhoods and these communities be fit for the 21st century, and we would see that these would be neighbourhoods that would survive the test of time.

But, unfortunately, we in Christchurch have seen only one of these exemplar developments take shape and take form, in Halswell. I would have liked to see this Riccarton development take shape under that, because the residents do have real

concerns about what putting another 600 houses into this part of Christchurch with no consummate transport planning is going to mean for their neighbourhood. We know that many of the main roads around this area—Yaldhurst Road and other roads—are already at capacity. They are barely coping with the amount of traffic that they are having to carry post-earthquake, let alone putting another 600 homes into this area, which could see another 1,200 cars, feasibly, come on to this site. This is something that is of concern to the residents, and I would like to see that this is something that is considered through the select committee process as we hear those submissions.

One of the other considerations that the residents had was around what it would mean for them. They have bought their homes relatively near the edge of the city, by a racecourse. Some of them did that because they liked racing, but many of them did that because they would be next to a beautiful reserve, and they would have the use of that reserve and there were all the things that they could do in this space. The racecourse, over a period of time, has been very welcoming in terms of letting local people in to use the amenity that the racecourse provides to that community. So there were some concerns from residents that they were going to lose the capacity for dog-walking there, for walking themselves, and for all kinds of recreational use that the Riccarton Racecourse is used for. But I am happy to say that is something, through the proactivity of the residents of this area, that we have been able to talk through with the intending developer and with the management and boards of the racecourse itself, and residents have been able to see that allowing this development to go ahead is not going to impinge on their recreational enjoyment of the land that remains.

I know that there are number of people who are going to be very excited about buying a house that will literally look over the starting line of a racecourse, because some of the homes will actually have a view out to where the long races at Riccarton start. Grant Robertson might like to buy a home there. He tells me that Riccarton has never been a lucky course for him. On one of my very rare visits to the races I put a dollar each way on a nag from Burnham, and it paid four to one, Grant, so I might need to take you—

Grant Robertson: Four to one?

Dr MEGAN WOODS: Four to one. I might need to take you to Riccarton one day and show you what a lucky course that can be, Mr Robertson.

But one of the things that we really do have to consider in this is that the Government is talking about this housing development being part of the plan for affordable housing in Christchurch and in Canterbury. But this really comes back to not just Canterbury but to what it is that this Government thinks is affordable housing. The benchmark that is being set here is \$450,000. For many, many, many Cantabrians \$450,000 to get into your first home is simply unaffordable. This is a Government that is setting its definitions of what “affordable” is outside the reach of ordinary New Zealanders, and this is being encompassed in this bill. So when this Government talks the big talk about affordable housing being available on this site, let us bear in mind what that is and think about what the mortgage repayments would be for someone on an average wage, and whether that is affordable. For most people that will simply be out of their reach.

I am eager, as the local member of Parliament for this area, to keep the strong engagement that we have already begun before this legislation has even reached the floor of this House, with the local residents, with the racecourse, and with the probable developer around what it is that we can do to make this part of an already established and strong community. Because my part of Christchurch has had the opposite problems of many parts of Christchurch: it is not about people moving out; in my electorate, it is about people moving in. My challenge as a local member has been around how we can retain community, how we can retain strong neighbourhoods, and how it is that we can

make sure that as the need for development caused by the earthquakes occurs we do not lose the good that we have got.

I am really looking forward to the select committee process, where local people do get to come and have their say on this. We might even like to go and hold our hearings at the Riccarton Racecourse, in an area and a facility that would—

Grant Robertson: On race day?

Dr MEGAN WOODS: Not on race day, Mr Robertson. But it was a facility where, actually, court proceedings were held in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. As an undamaged facility in our city, over the last 5 years it has been very important. On a more sombre note, it was also the site where a number of the funerals of people who died in the February quakes were held, because it was one of the few large facilities that were standing in the immediate days after the February quakes. So it is an important part of the history of our last 5 years, it is an important part of the history of Christchurch more generally, and I want to see it be the best possible development it can be for the existing community. I am happy to commend the bill to the House.

SCOTT SIMPSON (National—Coromandel): We have been concentrating this afternoon on quite a bit of Christchurch legislation, and this is another piece of legislation—in fact, two pieces of legislation—that is going to further assist the regeneration of Christchurch after the dreadful earthquakes some 5 years ago. As chairman of the Local Government and Environment Committee, I am very much looking forward to going to Riccarton to hear submissions on these composite bills, because I think the Minister for Building and Housing, the Hon Dr Nick Smith, really set out in his introductory speech in these first readings what an elegant and sophisticated solution this particular series of bills is, in terms of finding a nice answer to achieve several things.

Firstly, the position of the land at the Riccarton racing club that the board now administers, when it was first established back in the 1800s, was, of course, right out in the countryside, and it was a long way from what is now urban Christchurch. So the club has, in fact, a very large area of land there, and these bills will enable some 40 hectares of that Riccarton Racecourse area to be developed for housing—much-needed housing. Notwithstanding the comments of Dr Megan Woods, housing is needed, and I am sure that she acknowledges that. There will be other infrastructural issues that will result, but I am sure it is not beyond the wit of Cantabrians and Christchurch people in this House, and the Christchurch City Council, to actually work their way around them in order to take advantage of the opportunity presented by these two composite bills being passed by this House.

So we have the potential to make use of 40 hectares of what is now prime land that can be developed for residential housing in what is an urban environment within the city bounds of Christchurch. It will provide an opportunity for some 600 new homes to be constructed on land that is currently locked up due to legislative provisions made more than 100 years ago in this House. The Canterbury Jockey Club, that venerable institution that Megan Woods made mention of in her speech, will be able to free up some funds in order for money to be reinvested in infrastructure for the racing club, and the board, I am sure, will oversee that in due course. So that is a nice finessing of a situation that could not be provided for unless this legislation passes its way through the House.

When we go to Riccarton—and, as chairman of the committee, I do not have any objection at all to having hearings at the jockey club, at the Riccarton racing club; I think that that is probably very appropriate, and we may be able to align that with a tour of the site, maybe. The select committee is well-known for travelling to Christchurch, and we will look forward to doing so once again. If that means that our thorough and

diligent scrutiny of this bill involves a trip to the racing club, then so be it from us to prevent that occurring.

So these bills will revoke the reserve status that is currently in place over the land at the Riccarton Racecourse. The Government has been committed for a long time—in fact, since the earthquakes—to ensuring that every possible avenue for imaginative, innovative thinking and solutions can be applied to ease and provide for the future of Canterbury and Canterbury people, and this is another step along that way. So when the racing club board came to the Minister with this suggested option, I am pleased that he was quick to pick up on it. He took advice and has brought these composite bills to the House.

And, too, I want to just acknowledge the role of the Business Committee and the common-sense approach that it has taken in order to facilitate that these two bills be treated, effectively, as one piece of legislation, involving one series of debates, one session of select committee hearings, and one process. I think that is a common-sense approach, and it is a credit to the members of the Business Committee that they have enabled that to occur.

It is no secret that the Christchurch housing market has been under pressure for some time. The construction of a further 600 residential homes on this 40 hectares of land will go some considerable way to easing that pressure and in a timely manner. Although there has been an awful lot of progress made over the last few years and building consent figures have been at record highs in Christchurch, there is still much new housing required. So the board of trustees that governs the Riccarton Racecourse Reserve has been seeking opportunities to better utilise the land that they have stewardship over for some time. This neat little use of legislative finessing provides an opportunity for the racing club board to free up that land and then, at the same time, have up to 600 new homes built. Most of those—many of them—will be in that affordable bracket, that price range that has been so elusive to so many people for so long.

I am conscious that the racecourse is subject to Ngāi Tahu's right of first refusal, and this right of first refusal will be acknowledged and established in Part 9 of the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. Acknowledgment of that is made under that legislation, and we will be considering those matters. My colleague Nuk Korako will be vigorously paying attention to matters that relate to Ngāi Tahu. He is a staunch and vocal advocate for the iwi, and I am sure that he will not be any less forceful in the keen scrutinising of this legislation as he is with every other piece of legislation.

This, on the face of it, appears to be what I think is a very good piece of legislation. It is a piece of legislation that has the ring of common sense around it, and I think that with the support of members across the House we should be able to find that a good result is achievable. The Government actually welcomes this proposal. It is an initiative that has actually come from the Riccarton Racecourse board itself, and it wants to use just part of its 123-hectare land bank in order to free up residential homes or the facility to build residential homes. The racecourse is going to benefit financially, Christchurch City will benefit via the creation of new residential homes, Cantabrians will benefit by having access to new residential properties, and it will be part of that regeneration of Christchurch that we have been talking about so much this afternoon. This is a bill that has all the hallmarks of good legislation about it. I am confident that as we go through the select committee process the committee will pay very careful and diligent attention to the detail of the bills, and we will, if fine tweaking and finessing are required of the legislation in any way, be giving very careful attention to those matters. I commend this bill to the House.

Hon RUTH DYSON (Labour—Port Hills): As I have commented before on Thursday afternoons, it is an increasingly good habit of this Government—and it has not got very many—to have bills talked about where there is common agreement. It is a very nice way to finish the parliamentary week in my view, so I am delighted to be standing in support of the Riccarton Racecourse Development Enabling Bill and the Riccarton Racecourse Bill. I am also really impressed with the number of members of the public who have come along to hear these two Christchurch bills. I am sure that they suddenly heard on the news—breaking news—that these bills were going to be debated and have come into Parliament to support the progress.

So these two bills, which—as the member who has just resumed his seat, Scott Simpson, correctly acknowledged—have been sensibly brought in tandem, propose to develop 38 hectares of the Riccarton Racecourse in Christchurch for housing. About 600 homes are proposed to be developed under the process set out under the bill. Can I acknowledge, first of all, the Canterbury Jockey Club. My colleague Dr Megan Woods is a historian and has outlined the history of this great club extraordinarily well, so I will not go into further detail on that other than to just acknowledge them. I also want to acknowledge Megan Woods as the local MP responsible for this area. She, clearly, has better luck in the racing business than her colleague Grant Robertson, and certainly better than me. My horse is still racing, I think, actually; since the last time I put a bet on, it has not quite completed the race yet.

But, also, I want to acknowledge the way that Dr Woods has led and supported the community discussion around this. This is not an easy thing for people to have just imposed on them, so she has ensured that local people have had their voices heard in the establishment of the plan that drove the need for this legislation. I am sure she will also be encouraging people to make submissions so that if there are changes that can be made, particularly in terms of people's access in and out of their own homes and the amenities that have operated within that area and in the future, that any of those issues can be resolved during the select committee process. I want to also acknowledge the Minister Dr Nick Smith for bringing this legislation to the House.

So the bill revokes the reserve status of this part of the Riccarton Racecourse. It enables the board to develop residential properties. It requires a portion of the residential development to be affordable, and I just want to correct Mr Simpson's maths. It is proposed that 30 percent of the houses are affordable, which is around \$450,000. I am not sure that "affordable" and "\$450,000" work for everyone—they certainly do not work for me. But, actually, Mr Simpson said that most of the houses will be affordable—30 percent is less than 50 percent, which is half, so it is not most. Most is more than half; 30 percent is less than half. So a third of the proposed 600 houses will be "affordable". I do not think that \$450,000 is affordable, and I would really be supportive of a larger percentage of this development being in the genuinely affordable area. And, as Mr Simpson again correctly pointed out, there is a process for the Ngāi Tahu first right of refusal provisions under the Treaty settlement to be dealt with as part of this move to have residential property allowed.

I just want to speak on a slightly tangential topic, but I would really encourage the Local Government and Environment Committee, which is where this bill is proposed to be referred, to consider the point that is also being discussed at the Government Administration Committee at the moment in relation to another bill in the name of Dr Nick Smith. It has exactly the same provision in this bill. So Dr Smith has brought two bills to the House that change or amend the status of a very old trust that has been established under a single Act of Parliament. That is how things were done in those days, and my proposal is that they need not be done in a continuing way by a single Act

of Parliament in the future. I do not think that it is any longer necessary to have Acts of Parliament to proceed with these issues.

So that is the challenge that I would put to the chairperson of the Local Government and Environment Committee, and we could have joint meetings with our select committee to discuss this point, because we are going to try and progress it. It raises the question of the legal status of boards of trustees. In these bills the board has been established under the 1878 Act, and it is simply continued under this legislation. There are minimal requirements for that board under clauses 5, 6, 11, and 12 of the Riccarton Racecourse Bill. In my view there is potential for the board of trustees to become an incorporated society. That way its actions would be within the established body of public law, rather than by a single Act of Parliament. In 1878, when this board was established, that was the way things were done, but my challenge to the Local Government and Environment Committee and to the whole of Parliament is to ask: is this still the best way to do things in 2015?

My research shows that there are about a dozen Acts of Parliament that have provisions in relation to racecourses. Most of them are in the South Island—heaven only knows why that is the case. But I consider that this bill should trigger a review of the status of their governance arrangements. With those concerns about the definition of affordability, about the low percentage of houses within this 600 house development that are required to be affordable, and with my challenge about the status of individual bills in Parliament, I commend and support the progress of this bill.

TODD MULLER (National—Bay of Plenty): I rise to take a short call on the Riccarton Racecourse Development Enabling Bill and the Riccarton Racecourse Bill. It is great to be able to speak to these two companion bills this afternoon. And what an afternoon we have had, an afternoon of Canterbury rejuvenation and recovery, and it has been great to hear the discussions from both sides of the House about the economic recovery that is occurring down in Canterbury, the rebuilding that is occurring at pace, and what that means for the people of Canterbury. It was a huge list of economic activity. We heard a lot about the positive attitude that is emanating from the region of Canterbury, and it deserves to be celebrated.

Before we acknowledge somebody else shortly, I would like to acknowledge Gerry Brownlee, because these bills are part of his vision for the future of Canterbury. I see him very much as a statesman of the South Island, and he should be seen as such—a man of huge vision, a man who understands that enabling frameworks are critical for the success of a view of the future to come to pass. He understands the value of that, the value of talented people, goodwill, and he has an inexhaustible energy for working for the people of Canterbury.

And it is in that context that these two bills are to be discussed. We have heard already today how they fit with part of our vision for delivering more housing for the people of Canterbury and working in an effective way to get a solution that works, not only from a Government perspective but also from the organisations in Canterbury—in this case, the critical organisation of Ngāi Tahu, of course, and the Canterbury Jockey Club working together to get a sensible outcome for the land that is on the table for development.

We do need more housing in Canterbury. We have a fantastic track record as a Government in terms of responding to the challenges that befell that community a number of years ago—4,400 homes built in 2014, three times more than the long-term average and, of course, up 73 percent on the previous year. But it needs to be done because 13,000 homes were destroyed in those two earthquakes. It is a long and focused campaign to be able to get those rebuilt, and this bill is part of our ongoing strategy in that regard.

So the specific purpose of the Riccarton Racecourse Development Enabling Bill and the Riccarton Racecourse Bill companion bills—together they will provide the necessary authorisations to enable close to 40 hectares of the 123 hectare Riccarton Racecourse Reserve in Christchurch to be developed for housing. It has huge interest in the communities around Riccarton. Based on the numbers here this afternoon it has huge interest in the House, in Parliament, as well! These bills will revoke the reserve status of the land at Riccarton Racecourse and enable the residential development to take place on the site. But from what we have heard already from the two or three speakers who have spoken to these joint bills, it still enables the amenity value of the Riccarton Racecourse to be maintained and, arguably, enhanced, because wrapped around that racecourse will be modern new housing at both ends of the spectrum, including a third set aside for housing at a lower end, which is good.

It is very important when you look at the array of messages that you could impart on a bill such as this to know exactly the one that you want to draw out, but the one that I do want to highlight, just to conclude, is that I am delighted that we have acknowledged here the right of first refusal and first option for Ngāi Tahu. I think that, working in development with the Canterbury Jockey Club, they will come up with a vision that will work for the people of Canterbury. They know how to build houses for the people of Canterbury. I have been to Wigram. I have seen that vision, and it just reinforces that it is not only Housing New Zealand that has a view of how houses can be built; there are others out there from the community who know how to build for the people and build for the people in a way that will endure over time. I am sure that that vision will deliver something fantastic for Canterbury. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate interrupted.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

TIM MACINDOE (Senior Whip—National): As determined by the Business Committee, Dr Russel Norman will deliver his valedictory statement shortly. With the agreement of whips from across the House and in the event that Dr Norman's address concludes before the scheduled time for the House to rise this evening, I seek leave for the House to rise at the conclusion of Dr Norman's valedictory statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Leave is sought for that course of action. Is there any objection? There is none.

VALEDICTORY STATEMENTS

Dr RUSSEL NORMAN (Green): I rise to pass a few comments and a few thanks at the end of my 7 years as a member of this Parliament and 9 years as co-leader of the Green Party. I want to start with a little story from Queensland. Some of you may know that I was born in Brisbane—if my accent does not give me away. The thing about Brisbane is that, aside from having a very right-wing Premier for many years, who was very anti-democratic, Joh Bjelke-Petersen—who of course was a Kiwi expat, but I have never held that against New Zealand—it also had a terrible history of the treatment of Aboriginal people. After the frontier wars Aboriginal people were locked up in concentration camps, called reservations. There was a reservation near Cairns called Yarrabah. In Yarrabah there was, of course, a lot of conflict between the Aboriginal people of the Yarrabah reservation and the white overseer, who also owned the store and sold rancid meat, amongst many other things. A conflict developed between Percy Neal, who was a leader of the Yarrabah community, and the white overseer, and Percy Neal, in this argument, spat on the screen door that separated the two of them. For this he was charged with assault and put before a magistrate, and the magistrate said he was

an agitator. He said Mr Neal was an agitator. The magistrate sentenced him to 2 months' jail with hard labour for spitting on the screen door. Percy Neal appealed to the Queensland Supreme Court, which, in an act of injustice, increased that penalty to 6 months' hard labour for spitting on the screen door. Eventually the appeal went to the High Court in Canberra, the highest court in Australia, and was heard in front of Justice Lionel Murphy.

The thing about Lionel was that he was a little bit of an agitator himself, and was appointed by the Whitlam Government on to the High Court of Australia. Lionel wrote a judgment about this case. I just want to quote a little bit of Lionel Murphy's judgment. He said, and I am quoting from Justice Murphy, "That Mr Neal was an 'agitator' or stirrer in the magistrate's view obviously contributed to the severe penalty. If he is an agitator, he is in good company. Many of the great religious and political figures of history have been agitators, and human progress owes much to the efforts of these and many who are unknown. As Oscar Wilde aptly pointed out ...: 'Agitators are a set of interfering, meddling people, who come down to some perfectly contented class of the community and sow the seeds of discontent amongst them.' That is the reason why agitators are so absolutely necessary. Without them ... there would be no advance towards civilisation." Lionel Murphy finished with a very famous quote, where he said: "Mr Neal is entitled to be an agitator."

I use this quote to tell a little bit about my story about Queensland and growing up in Queensland, but it is also about the value of activists and agitators—people who challenge the status quo and people who have the courage to stand up against the established order and try to win other people to those ideas. I believe that activists and agitators have a critical role in human progress. I have been very proud to call myself one of them—one of the many.

The other reason I bring it up is that democracy itself is never absolutely secure nor is it finished. Joh Bjelke-Petersen was a deeply anti-democratic figure. I believe that democracy is a lot more than voting once every 3 years. In fact, I think in some ways that is the least of it. It is all the institutions and culture that sits around it. I want to use my remarks to voice my concern about the state of democracy in New Zealand. Democracy is not a black and white thing. There are gradations of democracy. I mean, Putin has elections once every several years, or whatever; that does not make Russia a democracy. Some of the institutions I think we should be deeply concerned about. Access to information, and Government information in particular, is critical to the functioning of a democracy. In my view, the Official Information Act is relatively moribund now in New Zealand. It is very, very difficult to get information from the Government that the Government does not wish to release. That is a problem. There was the Jane Kelsey case recently, where the High Court found against Tim Groser, and the Chief Ombudsman, I mean, shamefully, supported Tim Groser in this illegal activity, under the Official Information Act, of suppressing information. I think we have got a problem with access to information in this country, and that is a critical part of our democracy.

Written questions—it is very difficult to get written parliamentary questions answered any more. It is hard to get straight answers. How do you have a proper democracy if you cannot access information? Question time—let me try to be diplomatic. Lockwood Smith said that a straight question deserves a straight answer. I loved question time with Lockwood Smith. It was one of the highlights of my parliamentary career, because he was electric. He made Ministers answer questions. Question time was answer time. It is no longer answer time, and I think that is a big problem for our democracy because if you cannot access information, it does not work.

The second institution that I think really matters is the media, the fourth estate. This is not a complaint about a status quo bias to the media. Sure, the media does have a status quo bias. Media institutions are large financial institutions, existing in the status quo, and no one should be surprised that they do tend to have a bias towards the status quo. That is not my gripe. My gripe is the resources available to journalists. Journalists used to have to produce one or two stories a week in some cases. Now they have to produce four a day. It is very difficult for journalists to do their role in our society, to hold the Government and powerful institutions to account, when journalists do not have the resources to do their job. I think this is a problem for all of us, and I think it is a problem for our democracy.

I also think we have developed a bad culture around dissent. When you look at what happened to Eleanor Catton, when you look at what happened to Nicky Hager and what he is currently going through after the police raided his house because he dared to criticise and get involved in the Cameron Slater issue—one of the Government's favourites. There is a bad culture around dissent, in my opinion, and it makes it difficult for people to speak out. The culture that exists matters in a democracy—whether we have a real democracy or not. That is important.

And, finally, there is the investor-State disputes settlement clauses. These are about placing restrictions on democratically elected Governments. That is why they exist. So I would say we can fix this. Democracy is an evolving institution. It is a living institution. But it will take a concerted effort from civil society groups and those outside of this institution, I suspect, as much as those within in it, in order to make our democracy healthier than it currently is. That is the first thing I wanted to say.

The second thing I wanted to say was around sustainability—[*Interruption*] Pardon me, I have got the lurgy. Finite resources, I think, is one of the key insights that the green movement brings to the world—that the small “g” green movement brought to the world. That is, resources are limited and the ability of the planet to absorb our pollution is relatively limited.

There is a connection between democracy and sustainability, and that connection became apparent in what happened to Environment Canterbury. The reason why the elected councillors were removed from Environment Canterbury was because the people of Canterbury started to vote for councillors who wanted to restrict the dairy sector. It is as simple as that. That has been stated pretty publicly by the agriculture Minister at the time. That, in my opinion, is very problematic because in order to protect our democracy and in order to protect our environment we need a functioning democracy. This is really important and I think that was a classic illustration of it.

But there is a bigger problem, and this came out in the environment report that was released yesterday, and that is around dairy intensification. We need to confront the fact that we have got a big problem now. It has been growing for probably 15 to 20 years but it is now an astronomically large problem around dairy intensification. It is causing massive climate change emissions, water pollution, water abstraction, compacted soil as the *Environment Aotearoa 2015* report said, biodiversity loss, and polluted aquifers. When you think about the fact that if you take water from the Canterbury aquifer—parts of the Canterbury aquifer—and feed it to infants, that water is so polluted that those infants will die. The medical officer of health in Canterbury has said this, and it should be a wake-up call that we have got a major pollution problem on our hands. It needs to be said that there are too many cows. We just need to say it because it is true. The world is finite. There is not infinite capacity to absorb our pollution. There are too many cows and I think we need to confront that fact and we need to deal with it if we are going to clean up our environment.

One of the great things about my job is that I went on this dirty rivers tour. You know, I went and paddled in lots of dirty rivers—dozens of them; not hard to find—and there are communities all around the country that are trying to protect their rivers. There are courageous people in rural communities who are speaking out about the impact of dairy intensification on their rivers and their communities and we need to listen to the voices of those people. I do not think that leadership is going to come from Government and I do not think it is going to come from the industry, because there has been plenty of time to fix this problem and it is not getting any better—it is getting radically worse. It is going to rely, I think, on the NGO sector and the community sector to speak out in order to save our rivers and to protect the natural environment of New Zealand, not to mention the climate change emissions that are coming out of the agriculture sector because, of course, the agriculture sector does not face a price on its greenhouse emissions, so what would you expect?

The third thing I just want to touch on briefly is about justice and inequality and poverty. I mean, we have said it 100 times but it has got to be said: there is too much poverty and inequality in New Zealand. Things got worse after the new-right reforms. The Gini coefficient got worse after the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, but things have not really got any better and that is a major problem. People say the Government cannot do everything. Well, that is true. The Government cannot mend a broken heart; but the Government can fill an empty stomach. That is within our capacity. We can do those things and I think we should, and I think we have a moral obligation to deal with the issues around poverty and inequality. Honestly, I think it strikes to the very heart of our democracy as well, because when you sit in a society that is highly stratified and you look below you and think: “Goodness me, that could be me if I speak out, if I do the wrong thing. If I lose my job, I can’t pay the mortgage or feed the kids—that could be me next.” It makes everyone very frightened and on edge and it does not give the peace of mind and the stability that a mature democracy needs, in my belief.

I would like to just give a few thanks in my closing remarks. Firstly, I would like to thank my partner, Katya Paquin. Katya has not only been a tremendous personal support to me but also a real political support as well. Katya used to be the political director for the Green Party before she got a much more important job, which is looking after our three beautiful kids: Tadhg, Frankie, and Stella. Aside from doing a fantastic job bringing up those beautiful kids, Katya has been a key political support for me and has provided me with enormous insight into politics. To Tadhg, Frankie, and Stella I would just like to say you have changed me in ways that I never expected—as having kids does to you.

But it was only possible, really, to bring up those kids because of the community we lived in and I would like to thank the people at playcentre, and at kindy, and I would like to thank Katya’s mum, Mary, who has been very, very supportive of us, and also my mum, Ollie May. My mum was one of those people who was very disrespectful to authority—still is—and I suspect that that was very, very helpful. I do think that those in power often have a vested interest in telling you lies. It is true—it is just true. So I think it is very important that people look at people in power and do not believe everything they say, take it with a grain of salt, and think for themselves, because the people in power are not always going to tell you the truth.

I would like to thank my brothers and sisters: Linda, Peter, Richard, Alan, and Sandra. I come from a big family. I also thank my friends. You cannot do the kind of work we do here or have a great life without great friends, and I thank Helen and Steve, Rebecca and Steve, John and Paula, Jeff and Roddy, and lots of other people who have been great friends of mine and great people to support to me during all of this.

In terms of my staff I have been really blessed with fantastic staff. I thank my assistants Joe Beaglehole, Anne Heins, Izzy Lomax, Charlie Chambers, and Simon Tapp. You have gone beyond the call of duty. To all the staff who have supported me over the years—there are too many people to mention. But I thank Ken Spagnolo, Robert Ashe, Babs Lake, Andrew Campbell, Holly Donald, Paul Bensemann, Scott Compton, Katya Paquin, Michael Pringle, Sarah Helm—there are more and more of them. The Green Party, I think, has been extremely blessed with very, very talented staff over the years.

I would also like to thank the members of the Green Party, and also kind of the members of all political parties. Democracy has survived only because people join political parties and get engaged with them voluntarily. So regardless of whether I disagree with people who might be members of other political parties, I certainly respect the fact that they get involved in democracy. I think it is really important. But I would particular like to thank the members of the Green Party, especially the Rongotai branch, who have been incredibly supportive to me. To the co-leaders I have worked with—Rod, who tragically died, Jeanette, and Metiria—and good luck, James—it has been great to work with you. I thank all the Green MPs. It has been fantastic to work with all of you—those of us who are here, and those of us who have come before. I think the Green MPs have made a huge difference.

I would like to really thank the green NGOs, or the environmental NGOs. Environmental NGOs often have to do the heavy lifting of protecting New Zealand's natural environment on behalf of everybody else in the courts, day in, day out, and everywhere else. Really, often they are doing the job that the Government should be doing to protect our natural world. It is the environmental NGOs that end up doing it. So I would really like to acknowledge their work.

I would also like to thank the voters, the 250,000-plus people who voted for us at the last election. Thank you for your act of faith in voting Green. I hope you got what you wanted, and I hope that you continue to support the Greens. I thank all the parliamentary staff: the cleaners, the messengers, the Clerk's Office, all the people who provide the food and the security, but especially the Parliamentary Library. Particularly when you are in Opposition, you know, without the Parliamentary Library it would be very, very difficult to do your job. So I would really like to thank the library staff for all their work over the years.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that my view is that humanity faces some really big challenges in the decades ahead, particularly around sustainability and climate change, and around inequality and poverty, but also around democracy. I think that democracy faces some big challenges globally, actually. But we also have huge opportunities. So, although I say that the world is finite—that is true—but human creativity is infinite. Human generosity is infinite. Human courage is infinite. So we have access to some fantastic resources. As well as facing these big challenges and problems we have inherited from the past, we have also inherited lots of great things from the past as well, and we have the opportunity to really create a world of abundance for everyone and for all of us living within the finite limits of the natural world. I think that it is an opportunity that we really should grasp with both our hands, because our children deserve nothing less.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my time here to the people who stand up for a better world regardless of the cost. We are all entitled to be agitators, as Justice Murphy said, and we should exercise that entitlement frequently, and I intend to do so. Kia kaha.

[Applause]

The House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.

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Thursday 22 October 2015

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

1R—First Reading
2R—Second Reading
3R—Third Reading
CWH—Committee of the whole House
S.O.P.—Supplementary Order Paper

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