



*Sixth Youth Parliament, 2010*

**NEW ZEALAND YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

***Parliamentary Debates***

***(HANSARD)***

**7 July 2010**

# MEMBERS OF THE SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF NEW ZEALAND

7 JULY 2010

*Speaker*—HON DR LOCKWOOD SMITH

*Assistant Speaker*—HON RICK BARKER

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**PRINCIPAL OFFICERS**

*Clerk of the House of Representatives—MARY HARRIS*  
*Clerks at the Table—LOUISE SPARRER, CATH ANYAN, ELIZABETH WOOLCOTT*

**WEDNESDAY, 7 JULY 2010**

**Mr Speaker** took the Chair at 11 a.m.

**Prayers.**

**QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER****QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS****Youth Affairs, Ministry—Funding**

**1. GARETH POWER-GORDON (Taranaki - King Country)** to the **Minister of Youth Affairs**: Do you intend on making any future cuts to the budget of the Ministry of Youth Development; if so, how will you ensure that the Ministry of Youth Development is able to address youth issues effectively?

**Mr SPEAKER**: Before I call on the Minister to answer the question, I remind members that when asking their questions, when they are addressing the Minister they say: “Does she intend?”, not “Do you intend?”. Every time members say “you” they are referring to the Speaker, and the Speaker is not intending to do anything along these lines.

**Hon PAULA BENNETT (Minister of Youth Affairs)**: If the member is referring to the 2009-10 Budget documents, I say that this was a funding reprioritisation within Vote Youth Development. I can confirm that there are no plans at this stage in regard to further funding. I believe that the Ministry of Youth Affairs is working very hard to deliver a greater range, reach, and relevance to young New Zealanders by, for example, doubling the number of places available to young people through ministry funding programmes and services from 2,500 to 5,000.

**Tessa Farley**: How will she involve youth in decisions about youth issues?

**Hon PAULA BENNETT**: That is a challenge all the time for the ministry, and certainly for us as members of Parliament and as Ministers, to make sure we are actually reaching young people, hearing their voices, and making sure that their opinions and viewpoints are put forward. One of the things we have done is advance the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa. We used to have only 1,600 people involved in it; already, in my short 18 months as Minister, I have got that at around 4,000 young people actively involved in having their opinions sought and looked after.

**Youth Unemployment—Strategies for Improving Job Prospects**

**2. MAXWELL SCOTT (List)** to the **Minister for Social Development and Employment**: What are her strategies for improving job prospects in the next 5 years for young New Zealanders entering the workforce?

**Hon PAULA BENNETT (Minister for Social Development and Employment)**: Youth unemployment is a very serious concern, and it has been a key focus for this Government to date. In August 2009 we announced \$152 million of new Youth Opportunities funding to provide young people with work experience, training, and education to help them to get into work. In Budget 2010 we went further and invested another \$26.7 million to provide 6,000 more places for young people in Job Ops, and we also extended the successful Community Max programme just recently to another 1,500 places. But there is always more that we can do.

**Ben Keren:** How much are Community Max participants projected to contribute to the economy and their communities, compared with the amount the scheme has cost the Government?

**Hon PAULA BENNETT:** That is an interesting question, and quite a detailed one. Certainly, when we looked at Community Max, part of the focus at that point in the heart of the recession was to have young people become more actively involved, and to have them moving off the benefits and gaining skills and training. Treasury has done quite an analysis of how much it thinks the spend will go into young people creating jobs and working towards New Zealand's GDP. To date, 80 percent of the people who have finished their Community Max programme have not gone back on a benefit, and we are incredibly proud of that outcome.

### **MMP Electoral System—Relevance**

**3. ALLANAH COLLEY (List)** to the **Minister of Justice:** Does he believe that the MMP electoral system is outdated; if so, what changes does he intend to make?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON (Attorney-General)** on behalf of the **Minister of Justice:** The Government is holding a referendum in conjunction with the 2011 general election, and that referendum will give New Zealanders an opportunity to decide whether MMP is still the preferred voting system for New Zealand. It will ask a number of questions. Firstly, it will ask whether New Zealanders wish to retain the MMP voting system or change to another system; and, secondly, voters may choose the alternative voting system they would prefer if there is to be change. If at least 50 percent of voters opt to retain MMP, then MMP will be retained. The independent Electoral Commission will then undertake a review of that particular voting system. If the review is triggered, it will include matters such as thresholds for a party to be represented in Parliament. During the course of any review, the Electoral Commission will undertake a public consultation process and report to the Minister of Justice on whether changes to MMP are necessary or desirable.

**Justine Crabb:** What process does he propose to educate and inform New Zealand youth, most of whom will be voting for the first time, on their choices of electoral systems in the 2011 referendum?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON:** A public information programme will be conducted by the Electoral Commission, and I believe it will play a key role in informing young New Zealanders on the kinds of options that will be available to them at the time of the referendum.

### **Imprisonment Ratio—Measures to Address**

**4. AMANDA EGGERS (List)** to the **Minister of Justice:** Does he have an opinion on why New Zealand has such a high imprisonment ratio; if so, what options is he considering to change this in the future?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON (Attorney-General)** on behalf of the **Minister of Justice:** There is no single or simple reason why New Zealand's imprisonment rate has risen steadily since 2002. In fact, overall crime numbers are dropping. The police are solving more crimes, so the numbers of crimes resolved, prosecuted, and resulting in convictions are all increasing. Many of these increases are as a result of policy decisions, such as increases in the number of police and changes to the law—for example, the Sentencing Act 2002. The Government is focused on improving public safety rather than reducing the prison population, but, more important, the Government has also adopted a new approach to reducing offending and victimisation, and that is the programme called Addressing the Drivers of Crime. Rather than waiting to respond to crime after it has happened, Addressing the Drivers of Crime

seeks to target the underlying causes of offending. Over the long term, hopefully this approach will contribute to reduced crime and fewer people being dealt with in the criminal justice system.

**Callum Bell:** Does he believe that harsher or tougher prisons would act as an effective deterrent for potential or repeat offenders, thus lowering our imprisonment ratio?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON:** I suppose that it all depends on what one means by harder or tougher prisons. If the member is suggesting that we should go back to prison hulks, I would have to disagree. If the member considers that people should walk around with balls and chains, I would have to disagree. What we are seeking to do in a prison system is to punish offenders, because punishment is part of the process. But there is also rehabilitation, which is a very important element, so that when people have served their sentence they can move back into society and make a positive contribution.

### **Prisons, Privately Managed—Profitability and Outcomes**

**5. ROBERT WHITEFIELD (List)** to the **Minister of Corrections:** Does she have any evidence that the private Auckland Central Remand Prison will be more profitable and produce better outcomes than a centre run by the Department of Corrections; if so, what is that evidence?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON (Attorney-General)** on behalf of the **Minister of Corrections:** I can say confidently that contract management of the Auckland Central Remand Prison will lead to better outcomes and greater efficiency across the entire New Zealand prison system. Certainly, Australian experience has shown that private prisons can be run more cost-effectively. In New South Wales private prisons cost 32 percent less per prisoner than public systems, and in Victoria they cost 11 percent less. However, the biggest advantage is the injection of innovative thinking into the system so that there can be a range of long-lasting improvements.

**Ella Borrie:** Given the importance of rehabilitation, is there any evidence that private management of prisons reduces reoffending; if so, what is that evidence?

**Hon CHRISTOPHER FINLAYSON:** In an earlier answer I emphasised the importance of rehabilitation. The primary purpose of private prisons is in terms of cost-efficiency. Rehabilitation programmes continue to be of the greatest level of importance, whether one is dealing with private prisons or public prisons. It is an essential part of the punishment process.

### **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—Delivering on Commitments**

**6. RAWIRI BIEL (Hauraki-Waikato)** to the **Minister of Māori Affairs:** How is the Government going to deliver on the commitments as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

**Hon GEORGINA TE HEUHEU (Associate Minister of Māori Affairs)** on behalf of the **Minister of Māori Affairs:** Ko te tautoko o Aotearoa he whakaū i te ahurea Māori ki roto i te Kawenata nui o ngā tangata whenua o te Ao. He waitohu tēnei e pūmau ai te kāwanatanga me te iwi Māori ki te kimi huarahi whakatutuki i ngā tirohanga nui i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi.

*[New Zealand support for the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples represented an opportunity to acknowledge and restate the special cultural and historical position of Māori as the original inhabitants, the tangata whenua, of New Zealand. It reflects our continuing endeavours to work together to find solutions and underlines the importance to the relationship between Māori and the Crown under the Treaty of Waitangi.]*

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**Eden Webster:** The Hon John Key referred to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as non-binding and aspirational. How will the Government work towards these aspirations?

**Hon GEORGINA TE HEUHEU:** The aspirations are entirely consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi, and acknowledge the role of the Treaty in New Zealand's past, present, and future. The Government's support reflects our continuing endeavours to work together to find solutions, and underlines the importance of the relationship between tangata whenua and the Crown. The Government is committed to settling all Treaty of Waitangi claims by 2014. We are working with iwi leaders to review the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004, and we will continue to invest in programmes in education, health, and social development that will contribute to improving outcomes for Māori.

### Schools, Secondary—Student Achievement

**7. CAMILLA HOLMES (Waikato)** to the **Minister of Education:** What initiatives does she envisage implementing in secondary schools that will encourage motivation in students to improve their educational achievements?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Tertiary Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** A number of initiatives will be implemented in secondary schools to encourage motivation and improve educational achievements for students. In 2010 Youth Guarantee courses will provide up to 2,000 young people with an opportunity to participate in a range of vocational courses at polytechnics and private training institutions throughout the country free of charge. At least five trades academies are ready to open in 2011, and the Ministry of Education is currently working with organisations to establish those. The academies will provide education in new and engaging ways to students motivated by a trade career. The He Kāhano programme will commence in selected schools at the beginning of term 3 this year. That programme will lead change to enable Māori students to enjoy success as Māori. And funding has been appropriated to provide for the expansion of Te Kōtahitanga into 15 new schools this year. There are now 49 secondary schools in that programme.

**Jiixin Zhou:** What initiatives is he considering to increase secondary school teacher numbers?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** There are no direct plans at this point to increase the numbers of teachers in secondary schools across the board. The focus at the moment is on the secondary-tertiary interface, and adding resources to make it easier for people to move from, particularly, secondary education to vocational-based and foundation-based tertiary courses. That focuses particularly on offering different pathways for young people for whom traditional school is not working out. That is where the extra resources are going at the moment.

### National Certificate of Educational Achievement—Skills-based Curriculum

**8. JACK WATLING (List)** to the **Minister of Education:** Does she believe that preparing students for their later lives should be an important focus of the New Zealand curriculum; if so, why are important skills such as referencing not required within NCEA national standards?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister of Transport)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education**: Yes; and the New Zealand curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education in schools. It takes as its starting point a vision of young people as lifelong learners who are confident, creative, connected, and actively involved. The NCEA achievement standards are currently being aligned to reflect this. The curriculum is designed so that individual schools can meet the different needs of their students. There is a vast array of knowledge, skills, and understandings that young people may require to prepare them for the pathways they choose. The New Zealand curriculum stipulates key competencies, which are capabilities for living and lifelong learning. They include thinking ability; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; and participating and contributing.

**Vainga Pahulu**: What subject knowledge and skills does the Minister think should be a part of the New Zealand curriculum to prepare the youth of today not only to contribute but also to benefit from the opportunities that will be available to them in the next 20 years?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE**: There is a mix, obviously, of knowledge areas and particular skills. I think research skills, for example, are very important, and those are particularly strong in courses such as English, geography, history, and the sciences. But I think there is a range of competencies, and it is hard to be too prescriptive about those. Things like personal goals, working with other people, and community knowledge and values are the competencies young people need, alongside the specific subject areas. I think it is important, and I think it is a continual process, to work to ensure that all those things are provided.

#### **Drink-driving—Zero-tolerance Blood-alcohol Levels**

**9. LISA HANSEN (Wairarapa)** to the **Minister of Transport**: Does he consider that the proposal to reduce the youth blood-alcohol limit to zero should be restricted to drivers under 20, or would a zero tolerance for all drivers be a more effective measure to reduce the road toll?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister of Transport)**: Alcohol impairs the ability of drivers of all ages, but I think it is important to recognise that the risks multiply for younger drivers aged between 15 and 19. For example, a driver aged over 30 with a blood-alcohol level of 0.03 is slightly more likely to have an accident than if he or she were sober; however, a young driver aged under 19 is 15 times more likely to have a crash at that alcohol level compared with when he or she is sober. For some young people, a blood-alcohol level of 0.03 is reached by drinking as little as one glass of wine. If we have a zero blood-alcohol limit for young people because of their heightened potential to have accidents, then it becomes a really simple calculation: if one drinks, one cannot drive. I think that is an important message for young drivers.

**Billy Clemens**: If the Minister is truly concerned with reducing the road toll caused by drink-driving, then will he promise to act against repeat drink-drivers who are sometimes caught multiple times behind the wheel?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE**: Yes, that is an important part of the programme Safer Journeys, which is the road safety strategy we announced just a short time ago. We are taking some initiatives in that area, including looking at things like alcohol interlocks, and penalties for repeat drink-drivers. Of course, one of the challenges is that there is not a police officer around every corner. There are some pretty strong laws now against repeat drink-driving, but of course, if they really want to, many people can have access to a vehicle and go out on the road, and many of the people who are caught drink-driving repeatedly have already lost their licences. So the challenge is to come up with

effective measures that allow them to drive sober but do not allow them to drive drunk. That is the challenge for legislators.

### **Human Rights, International—Youth Awareness**

**10. NATASHA PRATT (List)** to the **Minister of Foreign Affairs**: What initiatives is he undertaking to educate and equip young New Zealanders to promote and protect fundamental human rights internationally?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister of Transport)** on behalf of the **Minister of Foreign Affairs**: Every secondary school library in New Zealand has a copy of our handbook on international human rights. This is produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade every 5 years. It contains a history of human rights, chapters on the major themes in human rights, and also the full texts of the major international human rights treaties. In addition, the Government is the major source of funding for the Human Rights Commission, which has the lead role in educating people, including young New Zealanders, about their own rights and how those fit into a global human rights system.

**Abbey Kendall**: Given how few students use school libraries in this technological age, will the Minister consider making the study of universal human rights a compulsory part of the secondary school curriculum?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE**: Of course, the Minister would like to have the ability to set the secondary school curriculum, but he has to defer to his colleague the Minister of Education, Ms Tolley, who I suspect gets constant requests for additions to be made to the curriculum, including from such luminaries as the Minister of Transport, who occasionally likes to talk to her about adding driving lessons to the curriculum. There are lots of other requests besides that. The issue is challenging. I think that it has to be an education question, not a foreign affairs question.

### **Health Care—Costs Comparison**

**11. FLEUR SCHOUTEN (Nelson)** to the **Minister of Health**: How does the cost of health care for the elderly compare with the cost of accidents and illness related to alcohol?

**Hon TONY RYALL (Minister of Health)**: A joint Ministry of Health and Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) report commissioned in 2009 costed alcohol-related health costs in 2005-06 as approximately \$343 million, and this compared with health care costs for the same year for over 65s of approximately \$3.4 billion. I have information that advises that ACC estimates that up to 22 percent of all accident compensation claims have alcohol as a contributing factor, suggesting that alcohol-related claims to ACC alone cost around \$690 million per year.

**Sharanya Sankaran**: What initiatives does the Government propose to reduce the cost of accidents and illness related to alcohol?

**Hon TONY RYALL**: Quite a number of initiatives are under way at a whole raft of levels. Not only are there educational campaigns being managed by ACC itself but the Minister of Transport has a number of initiatives in respect of alcohol that will soon be announced, as does the Minister of Justice.

### **Healthy Food, Consumption—Promotion**

**12. JILL CAMPBELL (Wellington Central)** to the **Minister of Health**: Is he committed to promoting consumption of healthy food and healthier lifestyles in order to reduce obesity rates; if so, what measures, if any, is he taking to promote healthy food and healthier lifestyles for families on limited budgets?

**Hon TONY RYALL (Minister of Health):** Yes, the Government is committed to promoting the consumption of healthy food and healthier lifestyles, and the Minister of Transport, Steven Joyce, is a perfect example of that. Unhealthy weight is an important issue, and the Government takes it very seriously. We are spending more than \$70 million a year on nutrition and physical activity programmes, taking a balanced approach with a greater role for physical activity in sports programmes for schoolchildren in curbing the obesity problem. New Zealanders are actually a lot less physically active than they were 20 years ago, so the Government wants there to be a much greater focus on both eating and action.

**Sarah Darroch:** If, as he says, he is committed to promoting the consumption of healthy food, then why has he removed Sue Kedgley's healthy food in schools proposal, which would have helped to support both healthy food and lifestyles?

**Hon TONY RYALL:** The Government says it is the power and the responsibility of parents and boards of trustees to decide what is sold in a school cafeteria. There are still guidelines that schools should promote healthy food, but we think that boards of trustees and parents should make the decisions about what is sold in school canteens, and not the Minister of Education in Wellington.

### **National Certificate of Educational Achievement—Current and Future Developments**

**13. NADIA ALI (Pakuranga) to the Minister of Education:** What are her views on the development of the current NCEA system and what future developments does she think should be undertaken?

**Hon PAULA BENNETT (Minister for Social Development and Employment) on behalf of the Minister of Education:** The year 2011 will see the introduction of a number of improvements designed to increase student engagement and support students to gain worthwhile qualifications. Course endorsement will be introduced so that students are able to gain Merit or Excellence for their courses studied, as well as for the NCEA certificate. The alignment of achievement standards based on the New Zealand curriculum has included the removal of duplicate standards and ensuring credit parity. It will also implement the principle that no more than three standards should be assessed in a 3-hour examination—good news, I am sure. This was based on evidence from assessment experts.

**Monisha Singh:** Why does she think these future developments should be undertaken, and how does she intend to make these developments?

**Hon PAULA BENNETT:** I know that the Minister is very staunch on making sure that they are evidence-based. We have an opportunity to look back at how NCEA has been doing over the years and to make changes as necessary. It is most important that we look at the evidence of what those changes should be—basing it on that then making them. Another change that the Minister is making is new unit standards in literacy and numeracy, which will be introduced in 2011, as well. These have been drafted to be available not only to schools but to the workplace and tertiary education, and provide a base for students to demonstrate skills in everyday life, which this party thinks is very, very important.

### **Education, National Standards—Effect on Māori Student Achievement**

**14. TE NIWAI MUTU (Te Tai Tokerau) to the Minister of Education:** How does the new national standards framework introduced this year benefit Māori students, especially those who attend kura kaupapa Māori and work under Te Aho Matua?

**Hon GEORGINA TE HEUHEU (Minister for Courts) on behalf of the Minister of Education:** The national standards framework comprises two sets of standards: ngā

whanaketanga rumaki Māori for Māori-medium settings, and national standards for English-medium settings. Ngā whanaketanga will benefit Māori students by establishing clear and consistent expectations for kōrero, oral language; pānui, reading; tuhituhi, writing; and pāngarau, mathematic skills, which students in years 1 to 8 need to learn at different stages of their schooling. They signal important points to watch for, to guide teaching, learning, and assessment practices in all Māori-medium settings. That is so that students can access all areas of the curriculum and raise achievement, so that these same young people leave kura or school with the qualifications they need to succeed.

**Tihema Baker:** What else is being done in New Zealand schools to aid Māori students and to maximise academic success for Māori in particular?

**Hon GEORGINA TE HEUHEU:** The implementation of ngā whanaketanga includes developing plain-language reporting to parents, families, and whānau; developing literacy and numeracy assessment tools for the Māori medium; and professional development for teachers, principals, and boards of trustees. It is imperative that young Māori attending Māori-medium schools have the same opportunities to succeed and to be able to participate in New Zealand's growing economy. Māori, along with Pacific youngsters, will form a significant part of New Zealand's workforce, and the National Government is committed to ensuring that all young people—in particular, those in Māori-medium schools—have the tools and the skills they need to succeed in their future.

#### **Light Armoured Vehicles—Reduction**

**15. JAVIER MIHAERE (List)** to the **Minister of Defence:** Is the Government reducing the number of light armoured vehicles in operation by the New Zealand Defence Force; if so, does he believe this will reduce our capability to assist in regional and global security?

**Hon Dr WAYNE MAPP (Minister of Defence):** The previous Government purchased 105 light armoured vehicles, which were intended to provide mounted infantry capability for the New Zealand Army. Currently, 30 of these are in long-term storage. As a consequence, the defence review will be looking at the question of the number and, indeed, the mix of the vehicles, given that right at the moment, for instance, only three are deployed in operations in Afghanistan. That mix, for instance, could include engineer variants, command-and-control variants, ambulance variants, and fire support variants. I note that any reduction in number or change in mix would not reduce our capability to support regional and global stability.

**Timothy Robinson:** Does he prefer methods such as CIMIC, which is civil-military cooperation, rather than direct force, to support regional and global security; if so, why?

**Hon Dr WAYNE MAPP:** I recently gave a speech in the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, which set out that a key role of the New Zealand Defence Force is to provide humanitarian assistance and regional stability. The defence forces have to have a range of capabilities, depending on the nature of the operation that they are in. Obviously, it is always the preference of the Government to have a non-combat role where possible for our defence forces, but, unfortunately, from time to time combat roles are necessary to preserve regional stability or global stability, as has been seen with the deployment of the SAS.

#### **Mining in Conservation Areas—Economic Benefits Versus Effects on Tourism Industry**

**16. JOSHUA HARVEY (Mt Albert)** to the **Minister of Energy and Resources:** What economic benefits does he believe will be gained from proposals to mine our

national parks, given the potential impact on New Zealand's clean, green image and tourism industry?

**Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Minister of Energy and Resources):** I should, first, point out to the honourable member that the Government is proposing that only a very, very small sector of our national park area may be made available for exploration and then possible mining. That said, there are a lot of economic benefits for New Zealand from mining. It was a \$2 billion industry in 2008, with over \$1 billion in exports, and jobs in the mining sector pay very well and are very productive. In relation to tourism, let me be very clear. I think it is possible to have a clean, green image with a mining balance. Between the years of—*[Interruption]* I thank members for the endorsement of popular policy; I do appreciate that. In relation to this issue, let me make it clear that between 2000 and 2008, when the Labour Government was in office, the mining industry expanded quite considerably—by some 37 percent. What is more interesting is that tourism also expanded during that time. Numerous countries throughout the world balance these things. However, my advice to the member is that if he does not like the idea of mining, he should give up all the products that come from it. For example, he might like to give up his Walkman or his—not his Walkman; even I have given up my Walkman! He should get rid of his iPod; it is full of those rare earth elements—very expensive minerals. The other one, of course, would be to get rid of his cellphone.

**Joel Walsham:** Does he agree with the statement that mineral wealth belongs to all New Zealanders; if so, what royalties will mining companies pay to the Government of New Zealand with schedule 4 land being opened up for commercial gain?

**Hon GERRY BROWNLEE:** I think the first point is that New Zealand has 3.5 million hectares protected under schedule 4. The Government has engaged in a discussion with New Zealanders about an area of 7,000 hectares possibly being made available for exploration and eventual mining. When it comes to the royalties, they accrue generally to the Crown, but if the minerals are on private land—and this is an important point—then they accrue to the owner of that land. New Zealand is a country that has considerable mineral wealth, but at the present time it does not take full advantage of that. It is New Zealanders' choice in the end about that. That is why we have engaged in the exercise of having a public discussion about this matter, and in due course we will make a decision.

#### **New Zealand - Australia Migration—Government Response**

**17. VISHAKHAM JOSEPH (Whangarei) to the Minister of Labour:** How will the Government respond to the 20,000 Kiwis who emigrated permanently in April 2010 for higher wages and better life conditions?

**Hon GERRY BROWNLEE (Minister for Economic Development) on behalf of the Minister of Labour:** I would like to clarify that 20,000 Kiwis did not emigrate permanently in April of 2010. The figures referred to in the question show that in the year to April 2010, New Zealand had a net inflow of 20,000 migrants. Regardless of that, the Government is conscious of the need to provide an attractive labour market in order to retain our best and brightest, so that we can help to build a more prosperous New Zealand. To this end, the tax reforms outlined in Budget 2010 will reward effort, encourage savings, and help New Zealanders to get ahead. Additionally, lower personal tax rates will provide an increased reason for skilled people to stay in New Zealand, or for skilled people to move to New Zealand. Budget 2010 significantly reformed the taxation system in order to make it fairer, more sustainable, and better able to support economic growth. Economic growth is vital in order to provide all of the services that New Zealanders and their families want to experience as part of our living standards.

**Lisa Nyman-Ambrose:** My supplementary question is for the Minister of Labour, the Hon Kate Wilkinson, but I will settle for the Hon Gerry Brownlee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member will resume her seat. When members ask questions, they do not make that kind of comment. It is totally the Government's responsibility as to which Minister answers questions.

**Lisa Nyman-Ambrose:** Is the threatening future challenge of an immense flood of climate change refugees into New Zealand, effectively looking for better life conditions and higher wages, being considered in the focus on the flow of people to and from Aotearoa's labour force and systems, given that it would be very likely to minimise the brain drain in question; if so, how is she addressing and/or, ideally, preparing the Department of Labour for this?

**Hon GERRY BROWNLEE:** The proposition that the member puts forward is an interesting one, but there is no evidence that that is either happening or about to happen. We had, as I said earlier, in the April year a net inflow of 20,000 migrants. But that is not unusual for a country like this; our population is growing at a steady rate. If we were to see an increased number of people wanting to come and make their lives in New Zealand, then quite clearly the system that we have at the moment to assess the eligibility of people to immigrate here would ensure that we had an inflow of very highly qualified migrants. In the long term that would be good for our economy.

#### **Sign Language Interpreters—Funding and Training**

**18. BENAZIR KUMAR (Port Hills)** to the **Associate Minister of Education:** Will she provide the money and training for more signing interpreters, so that deaf students can have equal access as hearing students to learning, information, opportunities, and services?

**Hon HEATHER ROY (Associate Minister of Education):** The Government currently provides funding for up to 32 sign language interpreter training scholarships each year. Twelve are funded by the Ministry of Education and a further 20 by the Ministry of Economic Development. These scholarships are currently undersubscribed. For example, last year only 19 of the 32 were taken up. So for the Government to provide more funding for training at this stage would be ineffective. I have asked the Ministry of Education, however, to develop a range of alternative approaches to complement the use of sign interpreters to support deaf students to access learning, such as optimising the use of new technologies.

**Hayley Gilchrist:** What other programmes are currently in place to create equality and connect able and disabled students?

**Hon HEATHER ROY:** A number of initiatives are under way. New Zealand has signed up to the United Nations obligation, as have other countries, and this is a base document that we frequently refer to. There is also the New Zealand Disability Strategy, and all decisions are made taking both of those things into account. In relation specifically to deaf students, last month I released the *Deaf Education Discussion Paper*, which seeks feedback on how services might better meet the needs of deaf and hearing-impaired children and young people. All of those interested, including students, can comment on how we can provide services more efficiently and effectively in the future. I also currently have a Special Education review under way. Submissions were called for and have subsequently closed. The feedback received from that consultation process is being used to make decisions for all students with disabilities into the future.

## MOTIONS

### Youth MPs—Thanks to Ministers

**DANIELLE MACLEAN (Auckland Central):** I seek leave to move a motion without notice thanking Ministers for making themselves available to answer questions.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Is there any objection to that course of action? There is none.

**DANIELLE MACLEAN:** I move, *That this House thank Ministers who have made themselves available to answer the questions of Youth MPs in this session, and hope that they have gained insight into the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of young New Zealanders.*

Motion agreed to.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before we go on to the general debate, I thank members for the great courtesy with which you asked your questions. I cannot help but note that both the senior and the junior whip of the Labour Party are present in the gallery observing this; I hope that they have seen how good members of Parliament should behave during question time, and endeavour to have their members behave with your great courtesy. I also noted that it was the Leader of the House who managed to provoke some reaction from members during his answer to a question. One can always rely on the Hon Gerry Brownlee to provoke some reaction in this House. He once answered a question in the House that is on the Parliament website, and it has had the most hits in terms of people wanting to see what he said in answer to that question. I will not say any more about it, but it is worth looking at because he had the House in stitches, in hysterics, I can tell you.

## GENERAL DEBATE

**GIOVANNA SUA (Manakau East):** I move, *That the House take note of miscellaneous business.* I was born, raised, and educated in the warm community of South Auckland, a place that I love, and a place that is nothing like the way it is portrayed or perceived. An issue that I feel is affecting youth, and more specifically the youth of my constituency, is a perception that the public have of the South Auckland community. It is nothing new that we see and hear in the media the portrayal of South Auckland as a place that holds the most crime, if not the worst. Most of all, it has been labelled in some cases as a ghetto—the international definition of a section of a city that is inhabited by a socially and economically deprived minority.

In our communities at present it is hard to be considered for a job if the address on your CV reads “South Auckland”. It is awkward to be in an environment with people from Epsom or the North Shore and not feel intimidated. It is a menace to always have to come up with an argument to defend the fact that I am from South Auckland. It should not be a mission for the community of South Auckland to try to prove the goodness and the warmth of the region.

Facts and statistics tell us that South Auckland is the location of the most criminal activity and gangs. It has higher statistics for unemployment and low-income families than—where? The answer? Most places. Those statistics should not be the facts, and as it stands these facts are not truly representative. But why are these facts used as a portrait of the community? It is unfair that when incidents happen, the nature of them becomes a reflection on the entire region. This is why I feel that it is essential that the public change their beliefs about South Auckland. It is understandable that a perception will always be there, but if a balance between the positives and the negatives was more frequently portrayed by the media, then the public would get a chance to see the qualities of South Auckland.

I would like to use this opportunity to do something that does not often happen: speak directly to the people of South Auckland from the House of Representatives. There will be a time when we will no longer have the word “dangerous” attached to our name. But until that time, we should all take aside the names and the labelling and remember the reasons why we love it there. We should grasp our Ōtara, Manurewa and Māngere markets, our Polyfest, our vibrant diversity, our talent, and our uniqueness, and embrace them. We should not equal the perception but prove to people that the canvas they paint our picture on has more colour and life to it than any point of view can think of. Thank you.

**JENNY ZHANG (List):** “Where you sit in the cafeteria is crucial. You got your freshmen, ROTC guys, preps, JV jocks, Asian nerds, cool Asians, varsity jocks, unfriendly black hotties, girls who eat their feelings, girls who don’t eat anything, desperate wannabes, burnouts, sexually active band geeks, the greatest people you will ever meet, and the worst. Beware of plastics.”

Although we in New Zealand may not necessarily be aware of what ROTC guys or JV jocks are, this definitive scene from *Mean Girls* should be familiar to all of us in the Youth Parliament. If we replace the unfriendly black hotties with Māori and Pacific Islanders, we have a typical New Zealand high school, full of cracks and divisions, and judgments and exclusions based on race, class, and appearance. And we wonder why we have problems with discrimination in New Zealand.

I ask those of you who live in Auckland why is it that Indians are concentrated in Mount Roskill, Tongans in Grey Lynn, and Europeans in Ponsonby? Those who call Howick “Chowick” may actually have a point, and there may be some truth to the Facebook group “Welcome to Korea LOL jk, Your in albany”. Of course, these ethnic enclaves exist due to a wish to feel a sense of belonging, but they also exist out of a fear—a fear of being judged and excluded, the very reason why at any of our schools an Asian nerd would never go and sit with the Pacific Islanders.

The problems of discrimination in society are not limited to segregated housing areas. The reluctance to accept those who are different from ourselves hinders our ability to live and work alongside others, ultimately impairing our potential to lead fulfilling lives and achieve economic success. It becomes a barrier to fully appreciating the benefits of diversity, as there is a great deal of enjoyment to be found in experiencing firsthand the traditions of other cultures. It is the enjoyment that tourists get when they see the haka performed at Waitangi; it was the smiles on the faces of those watching when a group of international students gave a performance of Korean hip hop at our school’s culture day.

From that very first day at high school, discrimination becomes a part of being a New Zealander, and the result of being a judgmental teenager is growing up to be a judgmental member of society. The problem of discrimination towards those who are different from us is a problem no amount of legislation can fix. Each of us has to be responsible for our own attitudes. Our generation will shape the future of New Zealand. The present divisions in schools will become the future divisions in society unless we—high school students—change the way we think and act. Only we can make the change for ourselves. Tolerance and understanding begins in the cafeteria.

**JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN (Christchurch East):** How come homework has become an essential part of school life? Personally, I feel that homework has become a glorified task that teachers bestow upon their students for no reason. For example, why should I spend an hour of my own time after school doing activities that I have just done in class hours beforehand? If I do not do it, why should I be punished for not doing something in my personal time—the time in which I get to choose what I want to do? Alfie Kohn said in a lecture: “Are kids like vending machines, where you put in

assessments and get out learning?”. Is homework truly beneficial for students in today’s era?

Some teachers say that homework helps to develop independence and is character building. It would be far more beneficial for me and my fellow students to gain part-time employment outside school hours, so that we can gain life experience and independence while supporting our future. What is the better option: to work towards an independent future, or slave over an endless supply of meaningless effort? Research has shown that homework is not beneficial when it is repetitive. A lot of Aranui High School students pride ourselves on our achievement in sport. Between training, working, and other commitments, there is simply no time to do any homework.

Let us face it: we are not the only ones affected by homework. Let us think about our parents. Let us think about how stressed out they become when we ask them a question, and they simply do not know how to reply. Education has come a long way since they were at school.

Is it not the whole point of going to school that we are taught by trained professionals, and that we are taught how to problem-solve and how to avoid mistakes? How does being expected to do work outside of school enhance our learning? Let us just think about this for a moment: we have no teachers to help us if we make a mistake, and no teachers to keep us motivated and on track. Plus, let us consider this: how about having a work-life balance? Should we not be learning to work more efficiently in school, so that we can do things outside school in order to be well-rounded individuals, not slave-driven drones who can never get away from their work?

I know that not everyone is taking me seriously, but if we do not do something now to sort out this problem, homework will keep ruining the lives of future generations of Kiwis. A good teacher once told me that when children are sent to their room to do homework, they often feel punished and excluded from the family. Let us never make another child feel like that again.

**KATARAINA TUATINI (List):** Kia ora, Mr Speaker. The fact that I am speaking here today in English is no accident. I actually grew up speaking Māori. It was my first language, as it was for my sister and brother, both of whom have given speeches in this House. We were taught Māori at kōhanga, and our parents supported us in our learning. Sadly, when we moved south we lost the opportunity to be educated in an environment that supports Māori language learning. Even though we spoke the odd Māori words and phrases around home, eventually my fluency was lost. My sister went to kura kaupapa before we moved south, but when we got there none of the schools had long-term Māori teaching available. There were only a few classes here and there—including some taken by my mum, who did her best to teach the locals kapa haka and waiata. I attended intermediate and secondary schools that offered Japanese and French, but no Māori.

What does this say about our schools? It is not good enough. I know there are many schools around the country where Māori is taught, but this should be the case in all schools! Every child should have the opportunity to learn the indigenous language of this country. Members might ask why they would. My response is to enrich themselves by having a bilingual base. Research shows that when someone grows up learning more than one language, it is easier for them to pick up other languages. Māori is a beautiful language, too, and it is so boring being monolingual.

I want to highlight to my fellow Youth MPs that there is a need to do more to promote the teaching and use of the Māori language in our schools and society in general. Māori Television is a huge step forward. Kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa are also doing great things. But it is not enough. If the Māori language is to prosper and become one that is not just pulled out for ceremonial occasions, like the pōwhiri we had at the start of the Youth Parliament, then Māori needs to be taught in all schools

throughout New Zealand. Language is a fundamental part of our history and identity, and, whether or not we realise it, it is actually the Māori language that makes us unique—not English. What makes the All Blacks stand out on the international stage, aside from their greatness at rugby? The haka! And what language is that performed in? Likewise, with our national anthem: the first verse is in Māori, and so it should be.

Unless we want to live in a society where we give only token acknowledgment to the indigenous language, we must support people to learn Māori. This must happen in our schools. I urge the Government to do more to train more teachers to learn Māori so that they can teach their students and start a cycle where learning Māori is the norm for all New Zealanders. *Kia kaha tātou ki te ako i te reo Māori.*

**HARRY LUSK (List):** My speech is based on one simple question: should the New Zealand people not have the right to elect whoever holds the highest position in our land? I speak to you, my fellow youth parliamentarians, concerned with the fact that none of you could ever be our head of State. Supposedly many people in this room will be the leaders of tomorrow, but that is only to a certain extent. I think it is absurd that the current head of Aotearoa New Zealand is someone who was not born here, who has not lived here, and whose children have an automatic right to rule over us. How many of you think Prince Charles could even perform the haka, let alone at Kate's party? New Zealand should become a republic and move on from our ailing links with the so-called motherland, a land that is becoming further distant from our own culture and identity down here in the South Pacific. How is it fair that young New Zealanders cannot aspire to work in the highest office of the land, and how is it democratic that only one member of one family will always be the head of State of our nation?

The closest a Kiwi can get to becoming our head of State is if she pushes Kate Middleton aside and marries Prince William. New Zealanders should be able to choose someone who represents their values—someone truly Kiwi and someone we can identify with. It is our time, our responsibility, and in our best interests to push for a new chapter in our country's identity. I mean no disrespect to our parents' generation, but they have left this issue in the too-hard basket when it is not that difficult.

I understand the argument "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And do not get me wrong; the Queen is a highly regarded world leader, but do we seriously think there is no New Zealander who can step up to that role? Shame on anyone who has that view. We have to stop underestimating ourselves.

I know that some people have a concern that the Treaty of Waitangi will be affected by any move to a republic, but that is bollocks. We do not require the Queen to keep us in line. The Government has an obligation to honour the Treaty, with or without the Queen, and it would be a very silly Government that chose to dishonour the indigenous people of this land.

I respect that there are many differing views on the republic issue, but I do not accept the argument that it is not important for us to deal with. Who our leaders are is an important question because it shows the world who we are and what we stand for. Gone are the days when we were the little brother of Great Britain. Aotearoa New Zealand has its own unique identity, and I live in hope that in my lifetime one of the people in this very room will be our head of State.

**RORY McCOURT (List):** Today I rise in this House declaring what I am proud of and what I am ashamed of. I declare in this House that I am proud of the work done by the Ministry of Youth Development and the Minister of Youth Affairs herself. I commend their work in giving youth representation a voice across this nation in this Youth Parliament.

However, that is where my praise stops for this Government. I rise in this House to say that thousands of families across this nation face certain financial annihilation with

the next envelope they open. There are children across this nation who starve every morning before they go to school. There are families who struggle to make ends meet in New Zealand. What this Government is not doing with its neo-liberal agenda is helping those New Zealanders who need it the most. I am not ashamed to say that my family is one of those, one of the most vulnerable in our nation, like the children, elderly, and minorities across this nation who are being pushed to the side by a Government that is more concerned about privatisation, tax cuts for those who do not need them, and a wrong agenda.

I rise in this House to say that I am ashamed of a Minister of Education who will enforce national standards, which will harm my brother's education. I rise in this House today to say that I am ashamed of a Minister for ACC who will deny my nan a hearing aid while reporting a \$2 billion profit the very next week. I am ashamed of a Prime Minister who reveals more about his nether regions than his real agenda.

What I am proud of, however, is the last Labour Government. I am proud of Prime Minister Helen Clark and her whole Cabinet and her whole party, which stood with my family when we needed it. So I would advise the Ministers and members who usually sit opposite that before you stand and criticise those 9 wasted years you should consider that for some of us who need the support of the State at times in our lives there was nothing better, nothing more caring, nothing more socially just, and nothing more right than those 9 years of the Labour Government. Thank you very much.

**JACK McDONALD (List):** He mihi nunui ki te Whare Pāremata e whakawhaiti nei i te tangata. He mihi hoki ki ngā tangata whenua o tēnei rohe, ōku whanaunga o Te Āti Awa nō runga i te rangi. Ki a tātau ngā taiohi huiui mai nei i tēnei rā ki te tautohetohe i ngā take whakairaira o te wā, kei te mihi, kei te mihi, kei te mihi.

*[A huge acknowledgment to the House of Parliament, which has drawn the people here. Acknowledgments, as well, to the local people, my relatives of Te Āti Awa, from above. And to us the youth gathered here to debate the important issues of the day, I salute, acknowledge, and commend you.]*

It is the greatest honour to speak in the House today. I would like to inform the House of an issue very important to the constituents in my area. In the Kapiti region we have been at the striking end of this National Government and its Minister of Transport, Steven Joyce. He has announced a four-lane expressway through the very heart of our community, with little consultation, and what consultation there was was extremely flawed. This expressway destroys diverse ecology, including sand dunes and wetlands. It bulldozes right past two primary schools, right past many residential properties. And to me what is worst of all is that it bulldozes right through extensive wāhi tapu areas. These are burial grounds of Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai and Takamore.

How can the Government justify this? The supposed benefit to taxpayers is a reduction in the time to travel from Levin to Wellington of 12 minutes. This development is not in the name of Kapiti but in the interests of the trucking industry. In the words of Shakespeare's *Richard III*: "Thus I clothe my naked villainy." This is the approach National is taking. Yet around 75 percent of people in my region are opposed to this expressway.

The broader concept of the roads of national significance project is also flawed. It fails to address climate change and our dependence on foreign oil. We know we cannot continue to pillage Papatūānuku without end. Continued economic growth at the expense of the environment is not sustainable. The environment and the economy are interdependent. This is basic economic theory—and I thought National was the bastion of economics. What we need is frequent and efficient public transport not only in Kapiti but throughout the country. This will solve transport issues while heeding scientific advice on our climate and our resources.

I implore the Government to see the error in its ways and reverse this detrimental policy. The solutions are green. That is why the Green Party will continue to rise and gain above 10 percent in the next election. The Green Party will continue to change the political landscape for the better, and I am a proud member of the Green Party.

E ai ki te whakataukī, “Toitū te whenua, whatungarongaro te tangata”—according to the proverb, people disappear, land remains. Oti anō, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call the next member, I want to apologise in advance if I mispronounce some names. I had been through everyone’s names, but I left my list in my office, because I did not expect the general debate to start until after lunch. So I do apologise if I mispronounce some names.

**THORAYA ABDUL-RASSOL (List):** Youth violence is a major issue in today’s society. Sure, we might pinpoint the cause of these problems as being abused at an early age, family issues, or drug and alcohol abuse, but not many people seem to realise that not having social, entertaining, and affordable activities to partake in largely contributes to the reasons behind youth violence. With the most entertaining things to do these days costing money, which youth do not have much of, such as going to the movies, bowling, or going ice skating, youth are forced to “make their own fun”. This is where fights and gang association, drugs and alcohol, and theft and vandalism come in. Youth need hands-on activities that they are interested in. Without these options, youth turn to alcohol because it gives us a “good” time. Being involved in fights allows youth to get their hands on something and unleash the anger within them.

In West Auckland, we have a youth leisure centre called Zeal Global Cafe. Zeal is pretty much the most fun and affordable place to relax, hang out with friends, and socialise. The local council helped fund some of Zeal along with other organisations. The main reason behind the council supporting the creation of the global cafe was that the council had a lot of interest in helping youth and reducing youth violence. Youth have a lot of energy they want to release. Leisure for youth helps keep them out of trouble. Sure, we have other leisure centres where youth can play sport through the schools and clubs, but what about the youth who do not go to school or cannot afford the club fees? With the prices being so high for camps, holiday programmes, and clubs, it is not easy for everyone to get involved. Especially with the average family having at least two children, the prices are way too high. Also, not everyone lives near youth centres; they live outside the region, or they do not have transport to go to youth activities.

If youth had a place to play their very own music, play sports with their friends, not necessarily in a team, get in touch with their artistic side, or just have somewhere to let out their energy and express themselves however they wanted, it would help decrease the amount of youth violence, as they would have something to do. We could get the local council or organisations to help fund a youth leisure centre. A youth centre would not only help reduce youth problems such as vandalism and violence but it would also provide a fun safe place for youth to hang out in, and encourage youth to follow their dreams and aspirations by making so many wonderful opportunities available.

If almost every town in New Zealand, or maybe even just the small towns with the most population of youth, had a leisure centre for youth or a youth hang-out area, it would help decrease the problems of youth violence. Because having a youth leisure centre would help reduce youth violence, I see it as a very smart solution to this problem. Obviously it will not get rid of the problem completely, and it will not happen overnight, but it will most definitely be of great help to the solution.

**KATYA CURRAN (List):** Fifty years ago one of the greatest political and social leaders said “The thing that we need in the world today is a group of men and women

who will stand up for right and be opposed to wrong, wherever it is.” Martin Luther King Jr was a man who did not bow to conformity. By his words and actions he fought for equality and inspired a nation to change. Or let us take William Wilberforce, a British politician who led the campaign to abolish slavery. He fought hard for the freedom of others and, against great opposition, succeeded. Martin Luther King and William Wilberforce are two of my favourite people in history. Their goals were huge and seemingly impossible. Both had a dream and carried it wherever they went, and in both cases their radical dream became reality.

What about us here in New Zealand? We too have issues of injustice, and we too have key people in our history who have gone against the norm and succeeded against the odds—for example, Kate Sheppard, who gave women the vote; David Lange, who campaigned for a nuclear-free New Zealand; and Sir Edmund Hillary, who conquered Everest and helped the Sherpa people. It has been said “There is no history; there is only biography.” The great events of our past did not just happen; they were made by passionate individuals who were willing to go against the flow. This year our great country is ranked at No. 1 in terms of global peace, and we are also the least corrupt nation in the world. Our image is not accidental; it is earned. And it needs to be strengthened by every generation.

When I was gathering young people’s thoughts to present as a Youth MP, the main response was: “I don’t know anything about politics.” We need to consider this: in 20 years’ time we, the youth of New Zealand, will be part of making the big decisions. For that to happen, politics needs to be more accessible to us young people, so that we are better equipped to shape the future. MPs can help us with this. They can visit us in schools, talk to us, ask us for our opinions, and encourage us to dream. This will help us to gain political understanding and use our voices.

One practical way for the New Zealand Government to facilitate action would be to offer a new type of youth award, not an award for personal achievement but an award given to young people for outstanding social action. Community-centred initiatives provide the opportunity for community-wide change. Awards that recognise this would give confidence and support to potential future leaders. Perhaps the implementation of these awards could be discussed in future senior and Youth Parliaments.

I have a dream that in years to come New Zealand will be famous for being a little country with a big heart, a big soul, and a great social conscience.

**THOMAS MAHARAJ (Hutt South):** New Zealanders love to refer to New Zealand as the great green country, showing our purity and our diverse scenery. However, the green image for part of the youth population living in New Zealand can be misinterpreted as referring to a plant called cannabis and commonly referred to as weed.

From doing a survey of young people at the Hutt Valley Youth Conference 2010, based on 50 students from eight schools in my city, I discovered that 94 percent of young people had been in the presence of somebody who has been stoned, baked—in other words, high—from the use of cannabis. That helped me decipher a realisation that in our community drugs is a serious issue, and is affecting the capability of young men and women to be successful in our ever-changing modern society. This could even be a general trend sweeping across our great nation of Aotearoa, as it is backed up by the Ministry of Youth Development’s website, which states that cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug, at 28 percent of all illegal drug use. The Ministry of Youth Development also states that 30 percent of young people aged 16 to 24 have reported using an illegal substance in the last 12 months, and that does not include tobacco or alcohol.

I surveyed 10 of my friends who are regular users of cannabis, and asked them key questions such as “Do you think cannabis should be made legal?”. The overall response,

of course, was “Yes, so I wouldn’t get snapped when I smoked it. Hallucinations help me escape from the distortions of reality, so if it can make me feel better about my life, why wouldn’t I want to give it a go? After all, it is a plant, and once upon a time this plant was legal.” Young New Zealand, is this telling us that the message of the effects of cannabis is not getting through to the youth population? Are they not understanding the true facts that excess use of cannabis can cause serious addiction and slow down the functionality of brain cells when transcribing knowledge from the short-term memory into the long-term memory?

From checking out local shops, such as the \$2 and \$5 shops and the “discount tobacconist” in the Hutt Valley, you can purchase apparel advertising cannabis, and selected items for use with cannabis showing the common icon for weed, the marijuana leaf, such as containers referred to as the tins for keeping your tinnies. Personally, I believe the sale of these items is encouraging the use of illegal substances such as marijuana, and they should not be available for purchase on the shelves of Aotearoa as they influence people to smoke cannabis as well as other illegal substances.

Young New Zealand, the question is should you be allowed to purchase items that influence the illegal drug trade of cannabis, such as a tin for your tinnies, or necklaces showing cannabis leaves—marijuana? With a Government against the use of illegal substances, one should think not.

**DENISE MATARIKI CRIBB (Waiariki):** Tēnā koe e te Māngai o te Whare. E te hunga matatini, e te hunga matarahi, tātau kua whakaōpeti mai ki tēnei o ngā hui e whakarangatira ai i a tātau anō, ngā taiohi; ngā mihi maioha, ngā mihi matakuikui ki a tātau katoa.

I te tau 2009, i tuku ai e te Hōnora Anne Tolley, te Minita Mātauranga, i tētahi marautanga hōu mō te reo Māori ki ngā kura auraki. I whangaia e tēnei kaupapa i ngā rauemi me ngā whāinga ki ngā kaiako o te reo Māori. Nā māua tahi ko Āperahama Hurihanganui i whakanui tēnei kaupapa, me te pōhēhē, kei te akiaki, kei te poipoia i ngā tauira e ako i te reo Māori. Ka hē, ka hē katoa māua. I kite tahi māua i te heke tere rawa o te taumata o te whakaako i te reo Māori ki ngā kura auraki. Horekau rawa ngā kaiako e mārāma tika ki ngā rauemi, kāore anō rātau e mōhio kia whakamahi i ngā rauemi hei poipoia i tō tātau mātauranga Māori.

Pōhēhē katoa au ka tini te mātauranga, kia pai ake, hei akiaki i ngā tauira. Kāore au i paku whakaaro, ka heke te taumata. Ko taku aki ki te Kāwanatanga, hei whakatū i ngā whare ako mō ngā kaiako, e poipoia i te mātauranga ki ēnei tamariki, kia piki ake te mōhio, kia piki ake te māramatanga o ngā rauemi hou. Nā wai rā, nā wai rā ka āhei mātau te whakataka i ngā tauira ki te hē o ngā kaiako o te Kāwanatanga. Ko te kaupapa nui mā mātau, ko ngā tamariki, ko ā rātau mātauranga nē? Hei akiaki i ā rātau kia poipoia anō ki ngā rā o āpōpō. Me eke panuku tātau katoa nē? Kia ora.

*[Greetings to you, Mr Speaker. To the many, many of us gathered at this sitting to celebrate and honour ourselves, the younger generation, fond and joyous greetings to us all.]*

*In 2009, the Minister of Education, the Hon Anne Tolley, introduced a new curriculum for the Māori language in mainstream schools. This initiative contained resources and goals for Māori language teachers. Āperahama Hurihanganui and I applauded the new curriculum, assuming that it would encourage and nurture students learning the Māori language. Far from it, we were absolutely wrong. We both saw how quickly the standard of teaching the Māori language in mainstream schools plummeted. Teachers did not fully understand the resources, how to apply them effectively and nurture our Māori knowledge.*

*I totally believed that there would be an increase in the knowledge, it would be better, and students would become motivated. I did not think for a moment that*

*standards would drop. I urge the Government to establish learning centres for Māori language teachers who are responsible for these children's education, so that they become better informed and have an increased understanding of the new resources. In time, we will be able to address the problems suffered by the children as a consequence of teachers poorly prepared by the Government. The huge responsibility for us is the children and their education, right? Encourage and nurture them for the future? For us all to reach the top, right? Thank you.]*

**HOLLY TULLETT (Waimakariri):** New Zealand: a country of equality; a democratic society favouring the common New Zealander, no matter what race he or she is—an international image to be proud of; an international image that is somewhat not true. Let me ask, are we a society that embodies equality? Are we a country that follows the notion of one rule for every citizen? It is the belief of many people that the answer to these questions is no.

New Zealand is dangerously close to drifting into becoming a society based on racial separatism. We are one country with many peoples, not simply a society of Māori and Pākehā. However, it seems that this is the only conflict facing us regularly.

Growing up, I was never confronted by discrimination based on the colour of one's skin. When I sat down with my dad to watch the All Blacks, I did not cheer for a player based on his ethnicity. I cheered because the players were all New Zealanders; they were all Kiwis. When the Rugby World Cup comes to our shores next year, it is not with racism that people, nationwide, will flock to the All Blacks' games. And it is not with racism that we will proudly wave our flags and cheer. It is as a country, for our country, that we will support our national team. Why is it that there is no discrimination when it comes to a rugby field, but there is discrimination on an average street?

Let me now delve into our past. If you look at it from afar, you see that self-interest and greed played their part in our history. However, this was on both sides of the fence. Pākehā tried, and succeeded, in separating Māori from their lands, at various points adhering to and not adhering to the Treaty. Despite this, the collision of the two cultures was often welcomed by Māori people. Yes, there was a war between the races in the 1860s, but did that mean that over 100 years later New Zealand was a country strife with intense racial hatred? No. New Zealand and the Treaty survived its people's past. Māori and Pākehā were all given full employment well before the time of the black civil rights movement in the USA during the 1960s, as well as Government and State help and the right to vote. Māori people were treated unjustly and they do deserve compensation, but as Don Brash once said: "What worries me about the current Treaty debate is that we find ourselves now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, still locked into 19<sup>th</sup> century arguments."

As a result of these arguments, we now find that Government legislation is increasingly becoming influenced by ethnicity, when it should not be. Why is it that when it comes to our national parks, our schools and universities, our health care system, and our welfare system, or when roads and buildings are being put up, a person's or people's ethnicity overrides that of others? Most of it is based on the perception of relative Māori poverty, and the compensation is a result of this. However, it has been proven by people such as sociologist Simon Chapple that Pākehā income distribution is not much different from that of Māori. Being of a certain ethnicity does not determine one's destiny, does not determine one's future lifestyle, and does not determine one's potential intelligence.

**JOSEPH XULUÉ (Botany):** Before I begin I would like to acknowledge my fellow members, who have brought to the forefront the needs of the indigenous people. Without these people, in a country as such, the heart and soul of our land will be forever lost. Kia ora.

My name is Joseph Xulué and I am the proud Youth MP for the Botany electorate in the eastern part of the great city of Auckland. Today I will address the House on why smoking is good for New Zealand. As a recreational activity, smoking is given an unfair and harsh image. It seems that what is said about smokers and smoking in general is sometimes either over-exaggerated or inaccurate. If people realised what smoking can do for them, and its convenient truths, maybe then will they be aware of the goodness of smoking. When people think of smoking, they generally link it to poor health—for those who smoke and those who do not. On the contrary, smoking has been proven to help prevent the onset of human ailments, particularly in terms of mental health. Dr Roger Bullock, a specialist in dementia, and director of the research centre in Swindon, England, said that nicotine has a preventive effect on averting dementia. Furthermore, studies have shown that smokers are 60 percent less susceptible to getting Alzheimer's disease than their non-smoking counterparts. So they may get lung cancer, but they will never forget it.

Smoking also has the ability to fight against international health problems such as obesity. Jodi Flaws of the University of Maryland School of Medicine said: "In many studies, you find smokers are slimmer." That is in relation to their non-smoking counterparts. So there it is, proof that smoking is good for your health.

When smokers benefit, our nation's economy benefits, as well. A report carried out by the New Zealand Smokefree Coalition and Action on Smoking and Health in 2007 estimated that the New Zealand Government receives up to \$1 billion in tax revenue from taxes on cigarettes and tobacco. In addition, the recent increase on tax on cigarettes, coupled with the rise in GST, will add almost \$200 million per year extra to Government tax revenue. This revenue can be spent on improving infrastructure, particularly our public transport system, as we look forward to addressing sustainability. Youth initiatives can benefit also, such as the Limited Services Volunteers programme. You can see that New Zealanders will be better off with their health, they will get more jobs, and they will have a better standard of living. Thank you.

**KELSEY ILLING (List):** In the past 20 years youth unemployment has been an immense problem for the New Zealand Government. The target population—those considered as youths—is aged between 15 and 19 years old and generally have no school qualifications or work experience. Due to these reasons, this group of youths struggle the hardest to find employment. In 2009 the youth unemployment rate for 15 to 19 year olds hit its highest in the past decade, at 26.5 percent. That can in part be attributed to the fact that New Zealand was hit by a global recession, but the blame cannot all go on the recession, can it? In last year's economic downturn, cuts were made in every business throughout the country. When push came to shove, youths were the first to go as businesses desperately searched for the money they needed to stay open.

Labour, in the 9 years it held Government, did more than enough to keep the unemployment rate of youth down, at an average of 14 percent. This was achieved by giving funding to Work and Income New Zealand, or WINZ. Work and Income is an organisation that helps youths and adults trying to find jobs by giving them the extra money they need. Due to the new Budget cuts, much of the funding for Work and Income was lost.

Increasing the budget for the education sector will provide a better service, attracting better teachers etc., which will in turn provide young New Zealanders with a better education. However, the National Government has now made it increasingly difficult to get into tertiary education, so those fortunate enough to get in will find that their costs have increased as there has been a decrease in student loans, an increase in course fees, and let us not forget the increase in the rate of GST. No disrespect, but I believe that certain Ministers are ignorant in that they think they have invested in tertiary education.

But, in the real world, what they have managed to do is to cut back budgets that, in my opinion, the youth of New Zealand need.

The National Government has also made a \$250 million cut to early childhood education, or ECE. Not only does this affect the young mothers and fathers; it affects the hundreds of adults and youths who want to enter the early childhood education workforce. The Government, again, is cutting back the budget of, in my opinion, the workforce most often entered by youths in this country. High-school programmes like Gateway have been cut back as far as their budget goes, yet it is a major course used to help students work out possible career paths. It is one of the very few courses that actually gives youths a chance to get out and get work experience. There are other courses outside of schools that youths can attend to get National Certificate of Educational Achievement—NCEA—levels and work experience, but these courses do not have the funding to provide enough tutors for the thousands of youths and young adults wanting to get a second education.

Youths are New Zealand's next leaders, and the National Government is taking away the funding and education that, in effect, will help us to reach our highest abilities. The Government needs to start thinking about the people who will be running this country in a matter of years. The cuts to tertiary education and the budget cuts to Work and Income and early childhood education all affect the growth of New Zealand's youth, and will hike up the unemployment rate of 15 to 19 year olds.

*Sitting suspended from 12.29 p.m. to 1.15 p.m.*

**KIERAN WELSBY (List):** I am here to speak today on an issue that is very close to my heart; an issue that, in the past, I have been extremely proud of New Zealand's stance upon. However, it now seems that New Zealand's brave stance is crumbling at its foundations, in an effort to please our overseas counterparts. The issue is New Zealand's stance on whaling.

New Zealand has made itself famous for standing up to the giants in this world. We said no to nukes, and in 1978 we said no to whaling. Our active stance on issues such as these defines New Zealand as a nation. We fight for what we think is right and we do not let anybody trample over us and tell us what to do. A strong, definitive stance goes a long way. However, it seems that our Government of the time cannot make its mind up on the issue of whaling, first proposing a negotiated return to commercial whaling, then throwing that idea into the ocean, as it were. It is now considering joining Australia in taking Japan to the International Court of Justice over its continuing flouting of whaling rules.

Prime Minister John Key stated in January that he had a "bold new initiative" to resolve the issue of whaling. We later learnt that the National Government was backing an International Whaling Commission deal that would have seen a return to commercial whaling by Japan, Norway, and Iceland. The Government justified its position by saying that it would reduce the number of whales being killed each year by capping each country's kill limit. It also said that backing the deal was critical to ensure that the International Whaling Commission did not fall apart. Surprisingly enough, despite New Zealand supporting the deal, the International Whaling Commission talks in Morocco did fall apart, with nothing being achieved.

To me, although no deal was struck, this still does not change the fact that the Government was willing to allow countries to return to commercial whaling. The situation could be likened to the Government approaching murderers and saying: "Well, we can't stop you from killing people, so we'll just make it legal—but you can't kill more than five people a year." Whether or not less whales will be killed annually under the deal is irrelevant; we would still have been allowing countries to kill whales in a

legal manner, which, in my opinion, is outrageous. And not only is it outrageous; it is damaging to our international reputation. Australia's Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, has been quoted as saying: "I am alarmed and very concerned that New Zealand would support a proposal that is flawed and represents a huge compromise to pro-whaling nations".

Following the failure of the International Whaling Commission meeting in Morocco and the presentation of an anti-whaling petition signed by 53,000 Kiwis, the Government shifted to a stronger stance, opposing commercial whaling. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Murray McCully, backtracked and announced that New Zealand may now support an Australian bid to take Japan to the International Court of Justice, despite announcing earlier that New Zealand would not support Australia, although he made no promises. The National Government has proven that it does not take the issue of whaling seriously.

If we do not act now to protect these spectacular creatures, the children of tomorrow may not have the pleasure of enjoying whales in their world. The Government needs to stand up and take an active stance now. We should be trying our absolute hardest to have whaling banned outright, and the opportunity to join forces with Australia to take Japan to the International Court of Justice presents a perfect starting point for that. Thank you.

**ALEXANDER SUMMERLEE (List):** Today we are all, young and old, faced with an issue that requires only a somewhat ambitious Government to ignite it into a divisive debate. One hundred and fifty years on from this nation's birth, New Zealand continues to hold the constitutional monarchy at the centre of her political system. Given the persistence of some republicans to remove the monarchy without any need, I feel it important that we clear up a few myths surrounding the monarchy.

One of the greatest misunderstandings thrown about is that because of the monarchy New Zealand is not an independent country, and that consequently we need to throw off the yoke of colonial oppression. This is ill-informed nonsense. Ever since the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act 1947 New Zealand has been a self-governing country, and from that moment on has had its own distinct monarchy, separate from the monarchy of the United Kingdom. It merely happens to share the same royal family.

Another misconception is that the monarchy does not have any real power. Again, this is quite incorrect. The sovereign has powers ranging from dissolving parliament to dismissing a Prime Minister to denying royal assent to bills.

Perhaps one of the most recent myths to come into fashion is the "inevitability" of our becoming a republic. Even a National Certificate of Educational Achievement—NCEA—graduate can see how flawed this is. Just as one can push for republican policies, one can push for monarchist reforms. There is nothing inevitable about it! One reason people claim it is inevitable is that the monarchy is anachronistic, with no place in the modern world. Of course, any reasonable person would be inclined to appreciate a centuries-old institution for standing the test of time.

The greater issue that concerns people about the monarchy is the hereditary principle, which seems to contradict the very foundation of a democratic society. But consider the role of a head of State. A head of State should perform a unifying function that encompasses the entire populace. They should be an embodiment of the State, they should be a check on the power of the Government, and they should be non-partisan. The monarchy clearly achieves this. A republic model would differ by opening up the head of State to the brutal arena that is politics. So what it really comes down to is how much one values the office of head of State. Is it something that should be regularly contested, with someone appointed by virtue of winning a popular vote, which is necessarily divisive as it excludes those whose preference does not win, or should it be

inherited? The monarchy installs someone who, after being trained their entire life for the job, has a mandate to hold that office maintaining the popular support of the entire citizenry.

Finally, I fail to understand those who are bent on republicanism in the hope of developing our national identity, when the monarchy has always been a part of it, being there as we moved from colony to dominion to independent realm. Why not continue developing and “kiwifying” a system that has been an impeccable example of service to our nation? It is a system that we should cherish and value. How lucky we are to have it. God save the Queen!

**SYLVIE ADMORE (Helensville):** Youth Parliament—we are the future. There is no escaping it, especially not here in Parliament, sitting in this seat. If there is anything that I have learnt in these past few days, it is just how much we have gained from being here. I am sure all of us have been forced to re-evaluate our views and see things from different perspectives at some point during this event. And the importance of the resulting social and global awareness is undeniable. Sometimes it is hard to admit that we do not know everything, but this kind of admission and acceptance is so important in any kind of relationship, political or personal. But I think that the biggest change in each of us here is not in skills or knowledge; it is in the motivation to go that bit further.

Every New Zealander, as a member of a democratic nation and of a global community, has an accountability. Many of the decisions we make throughout our lifetime will have an influence not just on our country but on the world. The things we buy, the information we share, the two ticks on the ballot paper—all these things shape, to some extent, the world we live in. Youth Parliament will, for many of us, build on the motivation to educate ourselves, so that we are able to make an informed choice. My concern is about how we can make this a national attribute. We are lucky enough to live in an age where information can be obtained at the click of a mouse. We should be the most well-educated, informed, on-to-it generation of young people in the history of the human race. Then, when I check out Facebook and I am invited to join the latest group—“Mum, I don’t care if you think my turban is too revealing. I want to wear it!”—I begin to think that we have our work cut out for us.

There is no doubt that the continued funding of initiatives such as Youth Parliament, New Zealand Model United Nations, and Just Focus are great ways to start. But these opportunities are open to a relatively small number of people, and mostly to those who are already motivated. I would like to propose an inquiry into the best way of raising global awareness and creating the beginnings of a feeling of international citizenship within the school system. Should we look at elevating the social sciences of history and geography to core subjects within our curriculum? Could we find a place for philosophy, and for critical and creative thinking? Instead of the focus being on teaching our youth, let us start to educate them.

I want us to look at the opportunity we have been given: an opportunity to examine national and international issues and their effects; an opportunity to have our views defined, broadened, and challenged. We have had the opportunity to strengthen our motivation and make the best choices that we possible can. Now let us find a way to give every single young person in New Zealand a chance to do the same. We are the future, and so are they.

**AKASH RAMPAL (List):** It is an honour to be speaking in the general debate. I feel proud to be sitting in the Chamber today representing Mr Kanwaljit Bakshi and the community of Manukau East in Auckland. As a Youth MP from Auckland, I believe that this is the perfect opportunity for me to be talking about Auckland issues. More than 15 percent of the population in Auckland comprises youth, and, as the city grows, it becomes important for us young people to understand that the decisions being made

in the economic heart of New Zealand are ultimately going to affect our future. Over the past year, Auckland's new governance structure under the super-city bill has been put under a lot of scrutiny by the media. A lot of this has been negative. However, in my speech I will focus on the positives of this bill and explore how such changes can make Auckland a better place to live and do business in.

The Royal Commission on Auckland Governance was announced in July 2007 by the Labour Government to investigate local government arrangements in Auckland. It was identified that the way Auckland was run made it difficult for the city to grow as a modern international centre. Endless red tape, a public transport system stuck in the 1950s, and delayed development have been making daily life difficult for many Aucklanders. One of the biggest reasons Auckland's decision-making is so problematic is that there are too many organisations involved, often with incompatible priorities and differing agendas. At the moment, there are several local councils, which cannot agree on anything; 30 community boards; and a number of public and non-public agencies making all sorts of planning decisions for one city.

Recent examples of mismanagement in Auckland include Queen's Wharf, where development is yet to occur because different organisations have different views on what should be done. The new accommodation block at Mount Eden Prison is another project that has caused controversy. All this has occurred because there is no set vision for the region as a whole. There are seven councils, but they are all operating in a different manner.

The super-city bill will change all that by providing Auckland with one unitary council, which has one agenda and one vision for the region to take it into the future. Twenty-one local boards will ensure that communities are able to deal with local issues in individual areas, but at the same time there will be one district plan and one voice for Auckland issues. No longer will Auckland be paralysed by ineffective decision-making, and it can move ahead as a super-city driven by strong leadership. As young people, we want to live in a city that is visionary and progressive, and I believe that the new governance structure for Auckland will enable it to become a truly world-class city that embraces its diverse communities, but at the same time has its own unique Auckland identity. Now Auckland can finally think regionally, plan strategically, and act decisively. Thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call Carolyn Henry.

**FREEMAN LAMBERT-EHU (Hamilton West):** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. My apologies, but it seems that you have missed my name a couple of times to speak, and being the true politician that I am, I will fight for my right to speak here.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do apologise. Let me just—

**FREEMAN LAMBERT-EHU:** That is fine.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Just one moment. I have not called the member at all, and the member cannot speak unless the Speaker calls him. I am just checking on what has happened to make the member think that I have missed him out. I will ask the Clerk to check for me. I beg the member's pardon. I did miss the member out. I absolutely beg his pardon. I do indeed apologise to the honourable member.

**FREEMAN LAMBERT-EHU (Hamilton West):** Kia ora koutou katoa. I am here to speak to you all about an issue that has plagued our society for generations. It is a problem that has tainted our communities and a problem that has already been mentioned here today, which obviously shows the popularity of the view among youth that this issue is not just something that we want to be solved but that we need to have solved by now. The issue I would like to talk to you all about is youth violence.

Youth violence has been around for generations. Since the dawn of time, man has worshipped the warrior—from Roman gladiators to Japanese samurais, and to Goku

when he turns Super Saiyan, level 3. Unfortunately, this problem has a devastating impact on the youth of today. It has infected our schools, our playgrounds, and our shopping malls, and it has greatly saddened me to witness on a daily basis the children and teenagers of our society committing violence towards one another. People may not think that seeing a fight here or there will affect us at all, but unfortunately violence is a very traumatising act.

My first point as to why I believe that youth violence needs to be sorted out right now is for the sake of education. It has been proved that children respond and learn better in school when they feel they are in an environment that is safe and happy for them. Unfortunately, such safe environments cannot be provided when, every day, children are under constant scrutiny and are being exposed to violence in their everyday life. To put it simply, children cannot learn if they are not at school, and violence plays a major reason as to why children are just not present. I am on a mission to remove violence from my school, Hamilton's Fraser High School, but I encourage all of you to get out there in your communities and schools and work to provide a safe environment, not only for us but also for future generations.

The second reason why I believe that youth violence should be tackled by our New Zealand Government is for the sake of our future generations. If our tamariki are exposed to violence at such a young age, it will have a devastating, negative impact on them for the rest of their lives. It will affect their children and then their children's children, as violence seems to be a never-ending cycle. In accomplishing this mission, we can obviously break the chain. Children's brains are like sponges. At a very early age, they soak up every bit of information they see, hear, and are exposed to. Reducing the amount of violence that our children are exposed to will increase our chances of giving them a life worth living and will give them a more positive outlook on today's society. By letting our children witness violence on TV, in movies, and in music, we are eventually just letting our children see it every day and, therefore, accept it. They will then go on to live a life where they accept violence and do not see the negative impact that it has on others.

I strongly believe that if we can solve this problem, we can give our children a decent beginning in life in the first place, and they can then go on to live a long and happy life. To encourage our future generations, our future tamariki, our future leaders, we need to make sure that they have a decent society to live in.

In concluding my speech, I say I am truly passionate about removing violence from our country, and I believe that with strong leaders, such as ourselves, we can accomplish this mission by preaching the words of peace and equality. For too long have I sat back and let violence abuse my mother community, and for that I will stand up and will not let that happen any more. What if, right now, we just sat back and asked these questions: what if Martin Luther King Jr had not dreamt that night, and what if Rosa Parks had caught a taxi home, instead of the bus? Simply, the world would not have stood up to its insecurities and people would not have learnt to accept one another as individuals. In 50 years' time I want the youth of tomorrow to look back on us and ask similar questions. I want them to ask, what if the leaders of today, who are here right now, had not been able to accomplish the mission of diminishing the violence in our communities? Hopefully, they will never need to know the answer to that, because we will have provided a safe world for them to live in. Thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Again, I apologise to the honourable member. I allowed the time for his speech to go on a little longer to make up for my mistake. I do apologise to him.

**CAROLYN HENRY (Northland):** The issue I would like to highlight today, which I feel greatly affects the youth of Northland, is health care. As I am sure it is for many

other small communities, the health care we receive seems very limited compared with the health care received by bigger communities.

For Kaitiāia certainly, the health care we now get is much less and more limited than what we used to get. Kaitiāia Hospital holds the most medical resources north of Whangarei, and because of this, many Northlanders feel that it should have the ability to provide the best possible health care. In 2003 the district health board stopped 24-hour surgery at Kaitiāia Hospital because it felt that the operations that were going on were unsafe and endangered the lives of the patients. Health care professionals who were working in the hospital at that time felt that was unfair, and because of this, they wrote to the Minister of Health at the time and requested an independent investigation. Obviously, as the restrictions are still in place, the problem has not been resolved yet.

I do not believe these restrictions make the far north communities safer. Northland is a large area, much of which is rural. Often, if someone is seriously hurt in an accident, they will be airlifted by helicopter from the scene of the accident to Whangarei Hospital or Auckland hospital. The severity of their injuries dictates to which hospital they will be taken. An added complication is the availability of helicopter services. With Northland being one of the first parts of New Zealand to receive any tropical storm, this service may not be viable. This can result in travel times in excess of 3 hours, and for an injured patient this is not practicable. This situation also presents problems such as financial pressure, mental anguish for the families, and emotional stress for the patient.

Although these issues are important, they are only minor compared with the possibility of their dying while travelling to a larger hospital. If the paramedic feels that this patient cannot survive the flight to one of the larger hospitals, they will be airlifted to Kaitiāia Hospital, where trained staff will stabilise them. They have to undergo specialist training in order to do so, which means that they are qualified to do intubations, clamp arteries, etc. Not only is Northland a large area but it holds one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in New Zealand.

I believe that Kaitiāia Hospital should be reviewed, so that it can be readily accessed and can offer a wider range of surgery options in an effective and safe hospital. Thanks.

**JOHNY O'DONNELL (List):** Young people are citizens of Aotearoa, and a fundamental right of a citizen is to have access to democracy. Tēnā koutou katoa. I speak my first words in Parliament. I chose to make those words a representation of our right to democracy, because I believe it is still unrecognised. I appreciate and acknowledge this opportunity to have our voices heard in this House. We still have a long way to go in the fight for fair representation of young people, and it is that issue that I will focus my kōrero on today.

Does our legislation effectively acknowledge young people as equal citizens? Our local government legislation still does not require local authorities to have a youth council. And judging by our current Minister, there is not much hope of that changing any time soon. Yet the youth councils that do exist are more often than not underfunded, under-supported, and in reality have little or no say in any decisions. The super-city bill has been recently passed—another act of our current Minister of Local Government. It is a bill that has deliberately not acknowledged young people as an essential part of the new structure. What an insult! The voting age remains at 18, and young people still have the poorest turn-out in all elections. Is this a fair representation of the hundreds of thousands of young citizens across Aotearoa?

While I acknowledge we have been given this opportunity to have our voices heard in this House, even this event raises some concerns for me. First of all, we were told what to wear. As a young person, I am proud to represent the diversity and uniqueness of young people across Aotearoa. If so many other rules were relaxed for this event, why was this one not? Because we have been told to conform with a dress code that is a

poor representation of our diversity, just to have the right to be heard. Why should we conform on parliamentary terms just to have our voices respected. Are our rights to be heard determined by what we wear, or our fundamental human right to be heard?

Second of all, Youth Parliament 2010 has suffered from significant budget cuts and a shortened event. As if 3 days every three years were not already a huge shortfall in the need for our representation, this year's committee decided to shorten the event and take the axe to its budget.

Lastly, our select committee report, and our mock bill, in reality are going to have no effect on legislation in New Zealand. In essence, I believe it is not OK for us to ignore these shortfalls. As young people involved in youth leadership we must speak out when we see young people being poorly represented, and in this case I have chosen to do so. As young people we still do not have fair access to democracy, and we must continue to fight for that right, because not only are we tomorrow's leaders, but we are also today's. Kia ora koutou.

**TANIA TAPSELL (Rotorua):** E ngā reo, e ngā mana, e ngā rangatahi o te motu, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou.

*[To the languages, the all-powerful, and the youth of the nation, greetings and salutations to you.]*

Today I am going to tell you about the need for youth involvement, and how three groups of young people from Rotorua got out into their communities, got the youth off the streets into fun activities, and got \$600,000 of funding from the local council. These are the youth who told me they can walk down their street and point out every house they can buy drugs from. These are the youth who live in an area where they go to the shops and there are youths smoking; where they walk the streets at night and there are other youths stumbling around causing trouble, drunk.

From these areas, though, came the groups who took a stand and made positive changes in their community. These groups are part of a project called E Oho, which means "rise above". E Oho is a partnership project between the Rotorua District Council, Te Waiariki Pūrea trust, and three suburbs of Rotorua. These suburbs are the trouble areas. They have a long history and reputation of gang affiliation, and drug and alcohol abuse. But the young people there have had enough. They held meetings and found that the cause of this problem was a lack of activities.

That brings me to my next point: parks and reserves. When was the last time you used one? Been a little while, eh? The current parks and reserves are not sufficient for youth aged 11 to 18. Instead of slides and swings, what if there were basketball and netball courts? What if there were a skate park? A glow-in-the-dark park? What if we youth could go down there and enjoy ourselves too. The physical and social benefits are obvious, but we could also build a sense of community by all sharing the same area.

The E Oho youth group met with councillors and told them straight-up how it was. And as a result of that they received \$600,000 of funding for their parks and reserves, to upgrade them to how they want. What an achievement; what an inspiration! They were even awarded the supreme award winner at the Youth in Local Government Conference. Now 70 percent of the members had never ever done an extracurricular activity before. They are the troublemakers, and they still achieved it.

So what changes do you want to see in your community? Do not hesitate to express the needs of our young people. Yes, we are youth, and, yes, we may be limited in some of the decisions we can make, but do not let anyone tell you what you can and cannot do. If you feel passionate about something, do it, change it, and most importantly, be it. We have a right to be involved, because we are the future. Surpass low expectations and achieve in full what you believe in, because although our future may lie beyond our vision, it is never completely beyond our control.

Nō reira, e hoa rangatahi mā, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

**BENJAMIN CARPENTER (List):** Teenage drinking is merely a symptom of a widely accepted culture. I believe it is hypocritical that many New Zealand adults say: “It’s a terrible thing.”, when young people are just reflecting what is an accepted way of life in this country.

I suspect that there are a number of drinking cultures for the multitude of cultures, subcultures, and various worlds that people live in within New Zealand. However, there is a general tendency towards over-drinking, and it is not just among youth. Adults right across the country are abusing alcohol, despite saying that it is really bad for the kids. Around 700,000 adults, or 25 percent of the adult population, frequently binge-drink, while 2 to 4 percent of the population are alcohol-dependent, according to Dr Geoff Robinson, the Chief Medical Officer for Capital and Coast District Health Board.

Young people learn by example, and while the culture around them normalises and condones excessive consumption, it is maybe unrealistic to expect change. Education begins at home, and it includes the behaviour of the educator. Demanding that the Government does something about the problem means that our parents abrogate their responsibility towards their children. Parents need to be a lot more accountable and involved in their children’s lives.

Imposing stricter guidelines and penalties on liquor sales to younger people would, hopefully, go some way towards reducing the risk. But, at the end of the day, kids will obtain alcohol if they are determined to do so. We have recently heard of cases where teenagers have been supplied alcohol by adults, or where teenagers have stolen it from their parents’ liquor cabinets. How will the Government stop that?

Although there is no denying that there is a problem, it must be addressed through education, not legislation. Criminalising behaviour does not prevent it; it merely makes it criminal.

To change this drinking culture, the rules for all New Zealanders need to be universal, regardless of age, and adults need to be role models. Therefore, I encourage you to consider, firstly, having a zero tolerance of alcohol for all drivers on New Zealand roads, regardless of the driver’s age. Secondly, the purchasing age for alcohol should remain at 18, because the rights conferred to young adults at 18, such as the right to join the army, vote, and get married, require a level of responsibility that I believe to be enough to grant the right to purchase alcohol. Thirdly, and finally, the Government should focus on education for young people on safe drinking practices at an appropriate time for young people. Thank you.

**BRITTANY KERSHAW (Tukituki):** E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā hau e whā, tēnā koutou katoa. My name is Brittany Kershaw, and amongst the many problems I face I have only one that I wish to bring forward today: I believe we are not instilling the proper values our rangatahi, our young people, need to sustain a culture of pride and dignity. Because of this, I put to you these questions: what place, if any, does Te Ao Māori have in the future of New Zealand? What can be done to encourage its success and to ensure its survival? How can we, the current generation, influence a positive change?

Too many Māori are failing to reach their full potential in life, and this is expressed no more so than in our current statistics. From those, I can tell you that fewer Māori are leaving school without qualifications now than 10 years ago, fewer are being arrested, and more are owning their own homes. In essence, those are positives. However, as a leader of a primarily Māori community, I see youth constantly lowering their standards to fit the stereotype that all Māori are uneducated, ill-mannered, and a criminalised people. Being Māori has now become a conviction—a conviction that originates from mindless remarks like “Oh, you dumb Māori!”. Is that why we have a younger

generation of superficial, unaware youth? I believe so. The way we change this is through our own personal reflection. I believe that if we take the stance of creating a positive culture, then in turn Māori youth will reflect our attitudes.

I have seen and I have heard members speak with integrity and pride about the numerous, topics and issues that link us all, so it is you guys I look to for you to make a personal change in your own perception of Māori, be it to take up te reo or to follow tikanga—whatever way you please. I encourage you to take that stance so that our younger generation, the ones who are following us, do not go down the path that prior generations have left for us, because that is not a positive look for the Māori culture; it is not a positive future, so far, that we are creating. Thank you. Kia ora koutou.

**CHELSEA TORRANCE (Rimutaka):** I begin with warm birthday greetings to the Labour Party; 94 years is pretty impressive, in my opinion.

On the night of 24 April 2010 I was at my aunt and uncle's house watching the Hurricanes versus the Highlanders. It was not really what I prefer to be doing on a Saturday night, but there I was, staring at the TV and pretending to understand what was happening. After half-time I noticed something: on the rotating banner around the sidelines a beer advertisement was managing to stay permanently in sight. In the ad break I saw one of my favourite westies on TV promoting yet another alcoholic beverage. My first thought was that it was a great ad. It was witty, dry, and endorsed with a Kiwi celebrity of sorts. But then I thought about it for a little longer. I was fairly certain I was not the only teenager watching that rugby match, and I wondered whether those other teenagers too thought it was a great ad and, consequently, felt more inclined to consume that product. I know that I did.

We are all victims of consumerism, in one way or another, and a big part of that is advertising. A company does not advertise its goods and services for our benefit; it does it to meticulously persuade us that we should, indeed, buy its product. Advertisements are not innocent; the motives for them are those of greed.

In a period of 40 or so minutes, I consciously witnessed two forms of alcohol advertising. As a result, I set myself a challenge. Armed with only a camera phone, I set out to record exactly how many alcohol advertisements I encountered in 1 day. The result was slightly disturbing. Over the course of 30 days I took 283 pictures of different alcohol advertisements, whether on a bumper sticker, a billboard, or the T-shirt of a builder at school. That works out to 9½ ads per day; in my opinion, that is 9½ ads too many. Alcohol companies may try to argue that their advertisements are not intended for minors. I have two words for them all: Yeah, right! Thank you.

**HINETEARIKI PARATA-WALKER (Ikaroa-Rāwhiti):** Tēnā koe, e te Mana Whakawā. Tēnā hoki tātau e noho hei kanohi, hei reo, mō te hunga rangatahi. E te Kaikōrero, e toru ōku take e pā ana ki a mātau te hunga rangatahi hei whakaarotanga mā te minenga i tēnei rā. Ka tahi, me matua mōhio te tangata ki tōna tuakiri, ahakoa te aha. Mehemea ka mōhio te tangata ki a ia anō, ki ōna mātua, ki ōna tīpuna, tae atu ki tōna tūrangawaewae, ka tū rangatira ia ki roto i te ao. Ki roto i tēnei Whare i tēnei rā, ka kitea te tūmanako o Aotearoa e muramura ana. Me pērā hoki te katoa o Aotearoa whānui.

Ka rua. Ko te reo. Ahakoa he aha te reo - te reo pānuī, te reo ā-waha, te reo tuhituhi, te reo whakarongo, me tohunga, me ruku hōhonu te tohungatanga o ēnei tūmomo reo. Whāia, ākona ngā reo katoa o te ao. Ko te reo Māori te reo taketake o tēnei whenua nā reira, ki taku titiro, ka noho koia hei reo tūāpapa mō Aotearoa.

Ka toru. Whāia te mātauranga ki tōna mutunga. Kia whakataukitia ai, “Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōna te ngahere, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōna te ao”. He nui nga huarahi o te mātauranga. Whai haere, ahakoa he maunga teitei, kakea. Ki te whai mātauranga koe, ka whiwhi mahi. Ki te whiwhi mahi, ka whai ōranga te whānau.

Nā reira, e ngā whanaunga, ka tū au hei mema pāremata mō Te Ikaroa-a-Rāwhiti-ki-Te Tai Rāwhiti. He pōhiri tāku; hei te tau e tū mai nei, haramai rā koutou ki Te Tai Rāwhiti ki Tūranga-nui-ā-Kiwa; ki te whakanui i te Matatini o te Rā, ki te whakanui i ngā taonga o te reo Māori, i ngā taonga o te ao Māori hei ōranga ngākau mō te katoa. Kia ora.

*[Greetings, Mr Speaker, and greetings to all of us seated here today as representatives of youth. I have three matters that relate to us, the young people, which will provide food for thought for those assembled here today. Firstly, one must know one's identity, no matter what. One who is able to identify with oneself, one's parents, one's ancestors and one's traditional homelands, will stand proudly in this world. Today in this House bears witness to the shining hopes of Aotearoa. And that is how all youth should be.*

*Secondly, we must explore the complex nature of our language to achieve excellence—whether it is read, spoken, written, or listened to. Pursue and learn all of the languages of the world. Māori is the indigenous language of this country, therefore from my perspective it must take its place as the foundation language of Aotearoa.*

*Thirdly, pursue education. As the proverb states, “The bird that partakes of the miro berry reigns in the forest. The bird that partakes of the power of knowledge has access to the world”. There are many educational pathways. Pursue them, even though they may seem insurmountable. With education, one finds employment. With employment, the family becomes sustainable.*

*So in conclusion, I stand as a member of Parliament for the Te Ikaroa-Rāwhiti electorate, and invite everyone to next year's Te Matatini Festival on the East Coast, which celebrates the treasures and the language of Māoridom for the spiritual sustenance of us all. Thank you.]*

**CALEB JAGO-WARD (Ōtaki):** If I were to ask every young person in New Zealand who attends secondary school whether they have planned their future, how many of them would answer affirmatively? It is impossible to plan the entirety of one's life path, but is the Government ensuring that we as young people are supplied with the sufficient support to make informed decisions about the future? Perhaps the unemployment statistics of young people can give us the answer. More than 70,000 young people aged between 15 and 24 years of age either are without a job or are in education or training. That is a frightening figure, one that I believe calls for some assessment. And it is this that I would like to bring to the attention of the House today.

There needs to be an educational intervention. The last place the youths were before they became part of the statistic was in the classroom of our educational providers. This is where the problem grew; this is where the intervention needs to take place. It needs to be an intervention that allows students to gain a sense of life direction in terms of their career through applied goal setting and educational preparation. For students to make informed choices they need to have experiences in the real workplace, environments of jobs that they are interested in, in order to acquire knowledge of their chosen field and see how the knowledge base built at school—which may for some seem useless—will relate to the workplace so they can create a future of success.

I propose a scheme that incorporates goal-setting and workplace experience in the curriculum, which would fit around secondary school life. It will be a scheme for all students, whether or not they plan to take on tertiary education. It will involve them in a taste tester - type program that builds knowledge and allows them to get a grasp of what they will be expecting and experiencing outside the classroom and beyond the textbooks. By involving the students in this they will be able to find areas and specific careers they are interested in and then can be advised on appropriate subject choices and

extracurricular activities that they can get involved in to further lead them into their interest area.

This scheme will not only benefit those who are struggling in all educational aspects and who are in need of a significant amount of support but it will also support those who have not left school and who need assistance in exploring post-secondary education in universities, polytechnics, or apprenticeships. It would be a scheme without a view of being only for the best or worst students at school. It would be an attempt to erase those labels, and would be for all students of all abilities who are working towards a common goal of success. From this scheme we would expect to see a decrease in unemployment and a significant boost for the New Zealand economy as an increasingly skilled economy comes through in the form of high-achieving students walking proudly through the doors of our educational providers.

So it is this challenge I would like to bring to the honourable members today. Do not let your friends and the people of this country fall through the cracks. We have identified a problem; now we shall fix it. Let us give a chance to the people around us and build positively contributing members of society in order to build a positive New Zealand. We can approve and develop an educational system that nurtures students to create brighter futures for the youths of this nation—our New Zealand. Thank you.

**KIEREN GERA (Ōhāriu):** Tēnā koe Mr Speaker, and I am sorry for standing up just before when it was not my turn. New Zealand as a country is becoming more multicultural by the minute. Gone are the days when Asian, Pacific Island, Indian, Middle Eastern and other peoples were outsiders and distinct minorities within our communities. We have been home to these cultures for many years, the population of these minorities has risen distinctly, and many are fully integrated into our society and are now part of our country's identity.

The city that contains possibly the most cultural diversity in New Zealand is Auckland. With its soon-to-be super-city shaking up the media, the expected debate concerning Māori representation within this council quickly arose. My question however is how well other minorities will be represented, as well as Māori, as several of these ethnicities represent a larger population than that of Māori within Auckland. It is most likely that the new council will consist of mainly Pākehā. Although they will have been democratically chosen by the people, many voices will still not be heard. If these ethnicities unite together to influence the polls, then, yes, they could make a difference. However, alone they are still a minority, thus leaving their influence far less great.

One proposed solution is the idea that there should be a quota of representatives of a certain race, mainly Māori. We already have an example of this in our Parliament, with Māori list MPs. But should this extend to every minority whose voices should be heard—especially to Asian peoples, whose population is far greater than Māori and, whose way of life, views, and beliefs can differ greatly from Pākehā? However, we could also question the appropriateness of such quotas within a council or Government. Are we not living in a time where there are capable diplomats, affiliated to other cultures, who are making their own way into these positions? And is it morally fair that we must place them in; should they not be democratically appointed? Whether or not it is, each answer has its downfalls—one of which being that many Māori and other minority cultures often do not have the capabilities to largely influence elections, should we not aid them in doing so.

Another option could be assigning a portfolio to at least one council member to confer with groups of different races and cultures within the community, to ensure that their voices are heard. This, however, will be very difficult for council members as they try to begin to understand new cultures, values, and beliefs. They will also not have to follow these views, as council members are individuals who have a right to their own

opinion. Also, whether or not a representative of a certain culture is undemocratically placed in the council, this will be only one representative who does not necessarily have the power to make change without the majority vote of other council members.

It seems there is no answer. But whether or not we like to admit it, a super-city council could be in store for many more cities in our nation. In only a few years from now, our nation will be closer to 50 percent Pākehā and 50 percent other nationalities, and it is about time that we began to discuss how we can best cater for the “other” in the equation.

**MARK CURRIE (Dunedin North):** Good afternoon. When I spoke to young people in my local community in Dunedin about what to speak about here today, a recurring issue became apparent. That issue is how racial discrimination has affected our education system in what I feel to be a negative way. I am, of course, talking about race-based quotas for students of Māori descent that are now commonplace in New Zealand universities. One example, of many, is at Otago University’s Faculty of Law, which has the policy that at least 10 percent of those accepted into the otherwise competitive-entry second-year course must be Māori or a descendant of one. In other words, that means a Māori can advance on a C+ average, while the remainder require a B+. This is a racial—

**Youth Member:** How many Māoris in Otago?

**MARK CURRIE:** What does that have to do with it? This is a racist system that has wrongly been labelled as positive discrimination. Try explaining that positivity to a non-Māori who has achieved higher grades than a Māori, yet has failed to advance. How is that fair? It is racist and intolerable.

It became evident in my research that the key reason for that is apparent obligations to the Treaty of Waitangi. I say “apparent”, because, in my reading of our country’s founding document, I find absolutely nothing to support having an intolerable, race-based policy. It somehow comes from the idea that as one country we should be striving for multicultural representation in all facets of society. Wanting this, I agree, is admirable, but I feel that in the education system, the cream should be allowed to rise to the top.

In fact, the quota system fails to adhere to the Treaty at all. Article 3 talks about how Māori and all races will enjoy equal rights irrespective of racial background. Does not a quota system fly in the face of that principle? Of course it does. A country that had a raft of such racial policies is now hosting the Football World Cup. It was called apartheid and we condemned it.

But the question still remains: why is a quota system needed? Surely the opportunities would still be there? Yes, in general, Māori families have a harder time of it. However, that alone is not a reason to retain this unacceptable discrimination. Even still, the quota system fails to address the social problems that some Māori may face. Sure, they might get an easier ride through uni, but what is stopping the next generation of young Māori finding themselves in exactly the same predicament? Nothing. Thank you.

**NEELAM HARI (Hunua):** What I will be speaking to you about was not the easiest subject to Google on the Internet or read about in books. If you want to understand the truths of this topic, you need to search, to place yourself in other people’s shoes, and, most of all, to listen. My name is Neelam Hari, and I would like to speak to you all about the sensitive and emotional issue of broken families in our country.

Not just in New Zealand but all around the world divorce rates are rising and the marriage rate continues on its slow downward trend. It is in the movies, it is in the media—it is everywhere. Families are breaking more than healing. Where is our sense of commitment? If we look at New Zealand as a whole, we see that it is made of

communities that have come together. Communities are made of families. Therefore, families are the foundation of our nation. Why are we letting one of the core strengths of our nation die away?

We say that youth are the future of our country. Therefore, we need to bring up strong youth to lead the way. But to bring up strong youth, parents need to teach youth what is right and what is wrong. We need a good upbringing. Youth are fragile. We are still learning. In these years of our lives what we experience is what moulds who we are in the future.

We look up to certain people; most youth look up to our parents. Our family is our support and where our trust lies. At the end of the day, they are our own blood. They are our sense of security, and when our sense of security is gone, whom do we turn to? Every situation is different, and I understand that everyone will react differently. Some will not care, some will emerge as stronger people, and some will feel down and think they are alone in all this. Some will even blame themselves for all the mess going on. But most of them will become confused about their own life.

There is a lot of evidence that children brought up in unstable families are adversely affected in a range of outcomes, which include academically failing, exposure to violence, poor health, poverty, and emotional distress.

Once, New Zealand was regarded as the best place for bringing up children. There was a national pride in Plunket and the well-being of mothers and children. I challenge our parliamentarians to enter into a national debate as to how the strength of our families can be restored so that New Zealand as a country can be proud of the way we bring up our youth. Broken families are a chain reaction: it just keeps on going. As a national community can we break this chain?

**BEN PORTEOUS (Rodney):** Too many lives are being lost on New Zealand roads. In 2008, 331 people died because of fatal crashes on New Zealand roads. The previous year the number was even higher—376 people died. We cannot let this continue. New Zealand needs to find ways to stop such needless deaths from occurring.

Better drivers mean fewer accidents, and professional driver tuition creates better drivers. Therefore, professional driver tuition should become mandatory for all New Zealand drivers. Professional driver tuition would ensure superior, further-educated, and increasingly skilled drivers, resulting in safer roads and a reduction in crash and death rates.

Large numbers of parents take it upon themselves to teach their children how to drive. However, the vast majority of parents are not qualified to teach their children how to drive. There are also many parents who are incompetent drivers yet they still teach their children how to drive. That means that their children, too, will be incompetent drivers, and that sets up a cycle of inept drivers. We need to stop the cycle.

Professional instructors teach skills that many parents will not be aware of, such as how to handle a car if it enters a skid. Many drivers would not know what to do if they were in a situation where their vehicle entered a skid. Knowledge such as this is vital for any driver who drives on New Zealand roads.

In order to keep our drivers and pedestrians safe we need drivers who have the skills and knowledge required to be able to drive a vehicle safely. Professional tuition can provide this. Professional driver tuition has been proven to create safe and knowledgeable drivers. Drivers who have had professional driver tuition are superior to those without such training and, consequently, have lower crash rates.

In Germany, 25 hours of professional tuition are required before a person can attain a full car licence, but New Zealand has no requirements of such. In 2004 New Zealand had 1.5 crash fatalities per 10,000 vehicles while Germany had only 1.1 crash fatalities per 10,000 vehicles. Those statistics illustrate the superiority of German drivers and

demonstrate the need for New Zealand to enforce professional driver tuition in order to create the better drivers we so desperately need.

The Ministry of Transport is currently working on developing a road safety strategy to ensure safer roads through to 2020. This strategy, Safer Journeys, has many schemes aiming to improve road safety throughout New Zealand. Mandatory driver tuition as a part of licence requirements should be included in the Ministry of Transport's strategy as it would benefit every member of New Zealand, from pedestrians to drivers, and would enhance the success of the road safety strategy. Thank you.

**KĀTENE MORRIS (Te Tai Hauāuru):** E te Māngai o te Whare, tēnā koe. Ka tautoko ake i ngā mihi kua utaina ki runga i a koutou katoa. He ika ukiuki te reo nō tuawhakarere, nō te kāhui atua tonu. He taonga te reo kua takoha mai e ō tātau mātua tūpuna. Ko te reo Māori te reo anake e whakatinana ai i te hunga Māori. Kāti, he mea mau i te reo i ō tātau nei tikanga Māori. I te rautau tekau mā iwa, ko te reo Māori te reo e kōrero kaha ana i Aotearoa. Hei te tīmatanga o te rautau rua tekau, kapia katoatia e te motu i te āwangawanga mō te ngarohanga o tō tātau nei reo. I te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, waru tekau, i tīmatahia te whakaora i te reo i ngā kakama i whakauru hei whakaoho i te tangata ki te ngarohanga o tō tātau nei reo. I whai take te Ture Reo Māori, ā, i whakatauria ko te reo Māori tētahi o ngā reo rangatira o Aotearoa.

Nō reira e rangatira mā, me mau kaha tātau ki ēnei kakama, kia noho ora, kia tū rangatira ai hoki te reo Māori. Ko mātau ngā rangatira mō āpōpō nō reira, kei a tātau te kawenga kia whakarangatira ai te mana a ō tātau tūpuna, kia rangatira hoki te kawē i te reo Māori. Nō te tau kotahi mano, iwa rau, whitu tekau mā rima, kua whakarangatira ai e Aotearoa i te Wiki o te Reo Māori. Hei te mutunga wiki o Hōngongoi te wiki o te reo i tēnei tau tonu. He wā tēnei mā te hunga Māori, te hunga Hapanihi, te hunga Pākehā, me ngā tangata huri noa i te motu, kia whakanui i tō tātau nei reo Māori. Nō reira e hoa mā, ko tātau ngā kaihapai, ngā kaiako e whakaora i tō tātau nei reo Māori. Me mau, kia toka, kia tū, kia whakamana i tō tātau nei reo, kia tutuki ngā wawata a ō tātau nei tūpuna. Ko tōku reo, tōku ohooho, ko tōku reo, tōku māpihi maurea. Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātau katoa.

*[Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to endorse the acknowledgments expressed to everyone today. The Māori language hails from ancient times, from the gods themselves. The language is a gift handed down from our ancestors. Māori is the only language that embodies the Māori people. It upholds the traditions of Māori. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Māori was the dominant language in Aotearoa. However, by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was widespread concern over the loss of the language. The revitalisation of the language began in the 1980's, raising awareness amongst the public over the potential loss of the language. The Māori Language Act confirmed Māori as an official language of Aotearoa.*

*As leaders, we must be alert so that the Māori language survives and thrives. We are the leaders of the future and it is our responsibility to honour the mana of our ancestors and the language. Since 1975, the country has celebrated Māori Language Week, which takes place at the end of July this year—a time for Māori, Japanese, non-Māori, and other ethnic people throughout the country to celebrate it. Therefore, my colleagues, it is up to us to nurture and teach our language. Hold fast to the language until it endures and the ancestors' aspirations are fulfilled. My language is my awakening, it is my precious adornment. Thank you.]*

**BETHANY MATHERS (List):** As students we learn many important things at school. At primary school we learn our ABC and how to write stories. We learn about dinosaurs and Vikings. At high school we learn about atoms and rocks. We decode Shakespeare, and we learn how to draw parabolas. But in all this learning do we ever learn how our country is run? Do we learn about the New Zealand political system here

and now? Do we learn how we can have a say in our future? For most New Zealanders the answer is no, we do not learn that. We do not learn it, because civics education is not in the formal curriculum.

Civics education is about learning how we can have a say in our own lives. Civics education means learning about democracy at a local, regional, and national level. Civics education is about learning how MMP works, how our Government is elected, and how our laws are made. Civics education is basic knowledge that every New Zealander should have. Civics education teaches young people how to enrol to vote, and the importance of getting out on election day and having a say in our future.

As citizens of New Zealand and future voters, civics education is relevant to all New Zealand students. Ensuring that every student has access to civics education will benefit New Zealand in many ways. More young people will get out and vote on election days, making our society more democratic and our Government more representative. A sound understanding of our democratic system will give young New Zealanders a greater understanding of how we can contribute positively to New Zealand society on a local, regional, and national scale.

So why is civics education not mentioned in the New Zealand curriculum? Everyone has the right to it, so why is it not there? It is not there, because a few teachers opposed it, saying that it was covered in some schools by social studies and history, and that the curriculum was too full anyway. Basic knowledge of how to have a say in our own lives is taught only in some schools, and some students miss out because their teacher decides that something else is more important. That is a serious gap in the curriculum. It needs fixing so that no student misses out on the basic knowledge of how to have a say in their own future and the future of their country.

**ANDREW COUTTS (List):** Today I will be giving an explanation and reasons as to why New Zealand should become a republic.

**Youth Members:** Woo hoo!

**ANDREW COUTTS:** Thank you. For 170 years New Zealand has been ruled by the British Sovereign—a Sovereign who does not live in this country, but on the other side of the world. British Sovereigns do not take an active part in the running of our society, nor do they have an appropriate understanding of our society, our people, and our ways. The position of Governor-General of New Zealand—the Sovereign's appointed representative—is an ineffective head of State, as the position holds no real power and, therefore, would be of no use in a constitutional crisis. A New Zealand republic would solve these problems, with an effective and local head of State making New Zealand a more independent and democratic nation.

Our country has a long tradition of democratic reforms. We were the first country to give women the vote. We have a mixed-member proportional representation system, which makes our democratic system a lot fairer than other places in this world. Yet our head of State is not chosen by the people or through a democratic process; our head of State is chosen through birth, because he or she happened to be the son or daughter of the last head of State. Is that fair? No, it is not. Monarchists try to argue that Sovereigns are trained for their entire lives for this job. They are not. Look at Prince Charles. Do you think he would be a decent head of State? Do you think he knows how to run a country, let alone the entire Commonwealth? No, he does not.

**Kerri Duthie:** Do you know him?

**ANDREW COUTTS:** No, I do not know him, but I can tell you that he does not know how to run a country. Just look at him—look at his choice of wife.

The fact is that the Sovereign does not have any real power over this country. Monarchists try to argue that they do, but they do not. They try to say that Sovereigns have, if they wish to, the power to dissolve Government and dismiss Prime Ministers,

but it is actually the other way round. The Prime Minister is the one who chooses the Governor-General.

**Alexander Summerlee:** What did the Governor-General do in Australia in 1975?

**ANDREW COUTTS:** That is one scenario.

**Alexander Summerlee:** So it can happen?

**ANDREW COUTTS:** Yes, it can happen, but it is unlikely to happen. The fact is that the Governor-General—[*Interruption*] Excuse me, I am trying to give a speech; thank you. The fact is that the Governor-General is appointed by the sovereign. However, the sovereign always acts on the advice of Parliament. I seem to have run out of time. Thank you anyway.

**SHAIL KAUSHAL (List):** I strongly support raising the alcohol purchasing age from 18 years to 20 years. Research from around the world has provided evidence of the negative effects of alcohol consumption on teenagers.

**Johny O'Donnell:** On everyone.

**SHAIL KAUSHAL:** Yes. There is plenty of evidence that liquor causes too much pain in our society, from family violence to driving accidents and disorderly behaviour. It is true that a glass of beer or wine in the company of parents or close members of the family may be healthy, but allowing teenagers the right to purchase alcohol at such a young age encourages binge drinking, which has become a menace in today's society.

Drinking alcohol comes with responsibilities. I support responsible drinking by 18-year-olds, but this needs to happen under parental supervision. [*Interruption*] Hey, guys, I am speaking. Such supervision provides parents with opportunities to help young people develop good and responsible habits. Without supervision, poor habits, including binge drinking, are easily formed during teenage years, when there is a lot of peer pressure to conform.

I also support education programmes, alongside increasing the purchasing age, to help young people learn about the dangers of alcohol and develop responsible drinking habits. I believe any reasonable person who is aware of the harm alcohol causes would also support these measures. To make our roads safer, to protect our families from violence and abuse, and to develop responsibility among teenagers, I believe that the purchasing age has to be increased.

**Nathan Jones:** Look at the good youth.

**SHAIL KAUSHAL:** Yeah, cool. I agree with the recommendation of the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia to delay the start of drinking as much as possible, because alcohol is a highly addictive drug. There is also a strong argument to limit the availability of alcohol through limiting the number of outlets and the hours they are open. It is our responsibility as parliamentarians to make good laws. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make these changes, and we must take it, lest we be judged as irresponsible by future generations. Thank you.

**MICHAEL HAWLEY (Hamilton East):** I ask you: what has been the only consistent push that has moved humankind forward, and that has improved our lives and the lives of others to come? Technology, knowledge, innovation—from the wheel to the wheelie bin. Cellphones, cars, and modern medicine are inventions that improve our lives. The production of this, or a new law that will help that, although all very important, is all temporary. The single thing that will last for ever and make this world a better place is knowledge. We have cars and light bulbs, and people fly around the world every day—concepts unimaginable to people of the past. In the future we will produce concepts unimaginable to the people of today.

Knowledge has brought us here today; where will it take us tomorrow? So why are we not investing more in this? We came here to make a difference; this makes a difference. For the next generation, we are leaving a world of knowledge, but equally

we are leaving a world of problems. Far better, we should also have a world of solutions. The answers are out there. Laws and regulation, aid for struggling countries—these are temporary solutions. Most of the Government's Budget and business spending goes on short-term things. In 50 years, will our dollar still be working?

What lies yet to be discovered? Unlimited power, cures for cancer, robotic limbs—even growing new limbs—computers, communication, travel, and space travel. The people of today will be amazed at what we will have. The fact is we do not know until we look. All we know is that when we find these answers and this knowledge, it is for ever. Governments normally focus their attention on laws. Laws deal with the symptoms of a problem, but not necessarily the cause. A law is a response to a problem, but it is not the answer.

If there is a problem, you should look for a technical solution. A law is a solution when you do not have to solve it. A law is a band-aid for a problem when the solution is unknown, impractical, or too expensive. Drink driving: why not make cars that drive themselves? Roads: all roads are slippery, so why not put abrasive on the roads? There are limits to this, of course, but we should be looking to find technical solutions to our problems because the law is a temporary band-aid, whereas an answer is forever.

This change is happening, and as a country we should capitalise on that. It puts us ahead as a country. Every country that invests sees the benefit in the long term. The wealth of Japan is based on the massive investment in technology. They have become world leaders in the last 50 years. Investing in technology will increase the efficiency of production and our economy, boosting wealth for everyone. It puts us in competition with the world. What happened to that traditional Kiwi attitude of the man in his shed? We came here on the back of inherited technology, so let us send the future on with ours. Making this change makes a difference, and the difference is forever.

The debate having concluded, the motion lapsed.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The time for this debate has expired. I will now vacate the Chair in favour of Mr Speaker Ben Porteous. I expect members to extend precisely the same courtesies to Mr Speaker Porteous that they have extended to me.

## INQUIRY

### Copyright Infringement—Consideration of Report of Commerce Committee

**AMELIA MacDONALD (List):** I present the report of the Commerce Committee on its inquiry into whether copyright infringement is hurting New Zealand music, and how artists can use new media to get their music sold rather than stolen.

The Commerce Committee discussed deeply the issue of copyright infringement. During discussion the perspectives of committee members were very much in line with one another and recommendations were unanimous. We heard evidence from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Creative Freedom Foundation. Discussion focused on the growth of the Internet and digital media, especially its effects on the changing music economy in this digital era.

We agree with submitters that the growth of the Internet and other new media technologies provide both opportunities and challenges for New Zealand artists. Pros include the fact that artists can easily get their music heard and that consumers can easily and quickly access a wide range of music. The cons are basically that artists cannot make a living and may give up trying to make good music. We could not gather clear evidence that economic loss is all due to illegal downloading factors. Other factors can include competition from other entertainment forms such as DVDs and games.

So what do we want to do about it? Overall we recognise and acknowledge the following facts. Young people want music, they want easy access to get it quickly, and

they want it at the lowest price possible. Illegal downloading is bad and wrong, but young people obviously still want to do it. New Zealand artists want to get their music heard by as many people as possible the way that the Internet allows them to, and technology keeps changing. Trying to cut off downloadable music is like cutting off your nose to spite your face. New Zealand did not really agree with the global entertainment industry in the past when it said that radio was going to destroy the music industry.

Therefore, the Commerce Commission makes the following recommendations to the Government. We did not feel that passing new legislation would promote the moving forward of, or reflect positive changes in, technology and the needs of consumers and artists. We also recognise that illegal downloading opens up many risks to consumers, including viruses, other forms of malware, and loss of privacy. We think this risk is not adequately understood by many teenagers, and we would like to see more public education about it.

We recommend that the Government acknowledge that further legislation is unlikely to be effective in preventing the dissemination of music through the Internet and other new forms of media, that it seek instead to encourage the music industry to develop new business models to balance the interests of artists with those of consumers, that it contribute to increasing public education about the risks inherent in peer-to-peer file-sharing and the benefits to be gained for both artists and consumers from respecting copyright and accessing music legitimately, and that it investigate measures to make it easier for artists to enforce their rights at a lower cost that is more proportionate to the level of harm suffered.

Rather than fighting the trend, we consider that the Government should encourage the music industry to develop new business models that combine new media and create new ways to make money from music. On behalf of the Commerce Committee, I thank members. I hope to not see them on LimeWire tonight.

Report tabled.

### **Entrepreneurship Education—Consideration of Report of Education and Science Committee**

**PORTIA ALLEN (List):** I present the report of the Education and Science Committee on its inquiry into whether entrepreneurship education should be a compulsory subject in secondary school. The committee heard evidence from the Ministry of Education, the Youth Enterprise Trust, and Creative HQ, and advice was received from the Ministry of Youth Development.

Our recommendations are as follows. First, we recommend that the Government make it compulsory for secondary schools to offer entrepreneurship education as a topic within social studies for year 9 and 10 students, but make it voluntary for the students in years 11 to 13 who take these classes as a discrete subject. Secondly, we recommend that the Government ensure that entrepreneurship education is a part of the social studies curriculum, that the current subject of business studies is merged into the new subject of entrepreneurship education, and that teachers have access to outside mentors so that they have support to assist with the delivery of the programme, if required.

We defined the term “entrepreneurship” as being related to one who undertakes innovations and who uses finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits. We used this definition because we wanted it to be inclusive of more than just those who make business for personal profit. This definition includes social and environmental

entrepreneurship, such as fund-raising for a cause, via which entrepreneurial learning can be achieved while one also contributes to a community or a cause.

The first recommendation means that it will be compulsory for secondary schools to offer entrepreneurship education. In years 9 and 10, we have included it as a topic within social studies, which is usually compulsory in mainstream schooling, but in years 11 to 13, we suggest that it be a separate subject that is optional and not compulsory. We in the select committee agreed that a subject like entrepreneurship would be better if students opted to take it instead of being forced to.

The second recommendation means that business studies and entrepreneurship will be merged, as they are similar subjects, but entrepreneurship adds an innovative and also practical and experiential element to it as well. Another element in this part of this report is that we recommend that boards of trustees decide what type of entrepreneurship will be taught in their schools, depending on what is relevant to their communities and the students within their schools. A lower-decile school may want to focus on fund-raising to help its community.

We were also of the view that by adding a separate subject of entrepreneurship education, this will encourage entrepreneurship being weaved through other subjects, as well as being promoted within other subjects. We see entrepreneurship education as upholding the current curriculum, as it states that it wants New Zealand students to be creative, energetic, and enterprising. Therefore, I recommend that this report be adopted as part of the proceedings of Youth Parliament 2010. Thank you.

Report tabled.

#### **Millennium Development Goals—Consideration of Report of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee**

**SYLVIE ADMORE (Helensville):** I present the report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on its inquiry into whether New Zealand should be supporting the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals are part of an agreement that was come to at the United Nations millennium summit in 2000. A total of 189 countries, including New Zealand, pledged their support to confront the problem of extreme poverty.

The goals target poverty, education, gender equality, child mortality, health care, environmental stability, and development. These goals are also supported with targets and measurable indicators. The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee proposes the following recommendations regarding this issue: that 0.7 percent of New Zealand's gross national income be allocated to official development assistance by 2015; that New Zealand's delivery of aid be programme specific to maximise efficiency; that New Zealand's aid programme include a focus on human development; that an advertising and education campaign be initiated to raise awareness of the millennium development goals and New Zealand's intention to meet them during the 2011 Rugby World Cup tournament; and that the Government build a more positive relationship between itself and non-governmental organisations.

The aim of many of these recommendations is to increase transparency and cooperation, which help to improve aid efficiency. Definite concern was expressed over the seeming lack of communication between the Government and non-governmental organisations, and a feeling that greater cooperation between the two would increase aid efficiency. The committee also condemned the donation of aid for purely political purposes, and called for there to be a focus on humanitarian aid rather than economic.

The economic benefits to New Zealand, created by improving the situation of our Pacific neighbours, were also considered as a motivation for reaching the 0.7 percent

target. The committee believes that currently New Zealand stands in a fantastic position to be a world leader in the millennium development movement. With events like the Rugby World Cup bringing us under the light of the world stage, now is a fantastic time to take our involvement in poverty eradication to the next level. The committee recommends that this House supports these recommendations to allow our country to continue to be at the forefront of global humanitarian development.

Report tabled.

### **Tobacco Consumption—Consideration of Report of Health Committee**

**TUREI-HAAMIORA ORMSBY (Te Tai Tonga):** Ko te pūtakekanga ake o te taki he Kōmiti Hou Ora, he kara wehiwehi i te taki nei, ko te auwahi kore.

*[I present the report of the Health Committee on its inquiry into creating a smoke-free generation.]*

The Health Committee found that around 5,000 New Zealanders die from diseases caused by smoking every year, inclusive of 350 deaths caused by second-hand smoke. We were interested to hear that smoking and other health risk factors, including obesity and alcohol abuse, are more prevalent in disadvantaged socio-economic groups. A New Zealand survey in 2008 established that the average age at which 18 to 19-year-olds first tried smoking was just 13. For Māori, the average age of uptake was around 11 years old.

Some of us considered that increasing the price of tobacco products will have unfair repercussions, as people in disadvantaged socio-economic groups, who are more likely to smoke, will be penalised for their addiction. However, the majority of us felt that the health benefits that are likely to result from tax increases outweigh the economic disadvantages.

We were concerned to hear that tobacco companies deliberately target their marketing towards teenagers. We were also concerned about tobacco companies targeting young women's vulnerabilities by presenting their products as aids to weight loss. The Health Committee was advised that the contents of cigarettes were inclusive of a substance commonly used as toilet cleaner.

The Health Committee makes the following recommendations: tax increases should continue to be implemented as an effective tool to reduce smoking uptake, increase cessation attempts, and decrease consumption; tobacco displays should be banned; plain packaging should be introduced for all tobacco products; placement of an ingredient list on all packaging for tobacco products should be investigated; cessation services should be funded and promoted, and nicotine replacement therapy products should be widely available at low cost; and a licensing system for tobacco outlets should be investigated.

On behalf of the Health Committee, I thank you.

Report tabled.

### **New Zealand Flag—Consideration of Report of Justice and Electoral Committee**

**AKASH RAMPAL (List):** I present the report of the Justice and Electoral Committee on its inquiry into the process for deciding whether to retain or change the New Zealand flag. The committee met yesterday to consider the inquiry. The committee received and heard three submissions. Evidence was heard from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Morrison and Co., and the Returned and Services' Association. We heard from the manager of heritage operations at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage that the flag is an important symbol and is more than just a national brand, that there is no obligation to retain the Union Jack as part of the flag, and that there is no need to wait for Australia to change its flag.

Morrison and Co.'s general counsel told us that the current flag is tied to a single element of the country's current diversity, and that a good flag would be a national symbol that was not tied to any particular sector of society.

The chief executive of the Returned and Services' Association told us that although the Returned and Services' Association is strongly attached to the current flag, its policy is that the flag should be changed if a substantial majority of people are in favour of the change, and that that could be tested by way of a referendum.

Based on submissions, the committee makes the following recommendations to the Government: that an indicative referendum on whether the New Zealand flag should be changed should be held in conjunction with the 2014 general election; that the enabling legislation for the referendum include terms of reference for a royal commission of inquiry to be established if the majority of voters in the referendum are in favour of the question; and that the terms of reference include the consideration of candidate designs, including the current flag, and how to choose between them; and the form of any further referendums.

A minority view held that a royal commission of inquiry should be set up before the referendum to determine any public mandate for a referendum. That would ensure impartiality in the question. Thank you.

Report tabled.

### **Rugby World Cup 2011—Consideration of Report of Local Government and Environment Committee**

**RORY McCOURT (List):** Today I present to the House the report of the Local Government and Environment Committee on its inquiry into how we can maximise the economic benefits and our green credentials for the Rugby World Cup in 2011.

The Rugby World Cup promises to be a great event for New Zealand. We have a chance economically, socially, and culturally to showcase our South Pacific nation. Our select committee heard from a range of submitters, including Local Government New Zealand, the Rugby World Cup 2011 advisory board, and the Ministry of Economic Development. The Rugby World Cup will include events across the nation, in 12 regions and 13 venues. It will feature up to 85,000 visitors from across the world.

There were a few issues that arose during the submissions and the consideration by our select committee, including maximising the economic potential of the Rugby World Cup. We discussed how this can most be taken advantage of by the Government. We looked at things such as using infrastructure for the future, after the Rugby World Cup. We stressed the urgency that we would like the infrastructure developed for Rugby World Cup to also be used for community and other sporting events after the Rugby World Cup.

We talked about the green credentials of the Rugby World Cup and how we can maximise New Zealand's image. There was significant debate in the select committee around that. We came to the view and the recommendation that Government policies should accurately reflect the "100% Pure New Zealand" campaign, and that those policies should be aligned to be sincere with international branding.

However, we are conscious that policies that relate to the Rugby World Cup should not negatively affect our long-term economic growth. Specific recommendations within that include dropping any proposals to mine national parks, as a majority of our—*[Interruption]*—please let me finish—

**Jack McDonald:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. For the chair of the committee to provide an in-depth and accurate report to the House, the member needs to recognise what the majority of the committee agreed to.

**Gareth Power-Gordon:** Yes, but they do need to recognise the fact that it is the majority, and not say “all”.

**Jack McDonald:** Well, that is for the chair to decide.

**RORY McCOURT:** I will continue.

I did state that, after a lengthy debate, the majority of the select committee found that dropping any proposals to mine schedule 4 land was an example of how the Government could align policy, but I stress that that was a majority and that there were some members of the select committee who were not in favour of it. We identified it as a major issue. We must make sure that we are sincere to our visitors and that our policies across a whole range of Government departments, ministries, and regulators reflect accurately our “100% Pure New Zealand” image, not “87% Pure New Zealand”.

We looked at the issue of marketing around the Rugby World Cup. We found that the current work being done by the promoters of this event was very good. However, we would also like, in addition to rugby stars from New Zealand, international stars featured in the campaigns, as was the case in the FIFA World Cup. This was a great topic to work with. I very much thank select committee members and the clerk who assisted us. Bring on 2011.

### “Mozzies”—Consideration of Report of Māori Affairs Committee

**DENISE MATARIKI CRIBB (Waiariki):** Kai a koe te Māngai o te Whare. Kai aku whakatamarihi ki te raro, ki aku whakateitei ki te runga, tēnā tātau katoa. He mihi tēnei ki tā mātau tiamana, a Tihema Baker, wā mātau mema a Rawiri Biel, Siale Mann, Kātene Morris, Te Niiwai Mutu, Shameela Nassery, Hineteaiki Parata-Walker, me Eden Webster.

*[To you, Mr Assistant Speaker of the House, and my bold colleagues to the north and lofty ones to the south, acknowledgments to us all. I extend this, as well, to our chairman, Tihema Baker, and fellow members Rawiri Biel, Siale Mann, Kātene Morris, Te Niiwai Mutu, Shameela Nassery, Hineteaiki Parata-Walker, and Eden Webster.]*

I present the report of the Māori Affairs Committee on its inquiry into how we can better tap into the talents of “mozzies” (Māori young people living in Australia). It is estimated that one in six Māori currently live in Australia. By 2020 it is predicted that much of the Māori populace will never have lived in New Zealand, let alone in their own tribal rohe. Australia is by far the most popular destination for New Zealanders, with over 77 percent of New Zealand’s expatriate populace living there. This is enough reason for our Government to take action. Sixty-four percent of Māori enter the workforce directly after secondary school education. We are concerned that immigration to New Zealand might be reducing employment options for young Māori in New Zealand—practically pushing our rangatahi to Australia. Although ultimately having “mozzies” return to New Zealand would be ideal, forcing them to do so is unrealistic. Although moving to Australia results in material gain for Māori, it results also in a cultural deficit.

Therefore, the Māori Affairs Committee makes the following recommendations to the Government: that it supports efforts by iwi to develop stronger links with the “mozzies”; that it takes innovative steps to strengthen Māori in Australia; that it focuses on encouraging rangatahi to remain in New Zealand—for example, by providing bonded scholarships; that more research is done into why Māori stay in Australia, their iwi affiliations, and other important data; that it consider Ngāti Rānana in London as a potential model for promoting te reo and tikanga in Australia; that it establish an Australian-Māori seat in Parliament; that it supports the Māori Television Service to broadcast in Australia; and that it supports a hui for “mozzies” to discuss the issues raised in this report.

Tēnā tātau e te hunga taiohi, tēnā koe e te Māngai.

Report tabled.

### **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Financial Performance and Current Operations—Consideration of Report of Primary Production Committee**

**PHOEBE BALLE (List):** I present the report of the Primary Production Committee on its inquiry into the financial performance and current operations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and a review of factory farming versus free-range farming. We heard submissions from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Federated Farmers, and the group SAFE—Save Animals from Exploitation.

We found the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's financial review satisfactory. We suggest further clarification in the allocation of the ministry's funds, but we were pleased to hear of its emphasis on education and prevention, in terms of animal welfare.

With due consideration we concluded, as young New Zealanders, that factory farming is not the direction we wish to see, for the future of our country. Currently, our agricultural export industry is largely founded on New Zealand's clean, green image. Using the example of eggs, we learnt that a vast majority of the international market for this product is free-range. As the growing, large-scale, intensive farms overseas erode any economic advantage in producing bulk commodities, we strongly recommend that funding be allocated to the development of the free-range farming market. Being a more labour-intensive process, free-range farming provides a greater proportion of employment opportunities, which is exceedingly important in the current employment climate.

We were concerned that subsequent costs for the additional labour from free-range farming would result in rising produce costs. Although this has not been the case with pork produced from free-range farming techniques, we recommend that independent research be commissioned to investigate this concern. We acknowledge that financial realities challenge the immediate transition from factory farming to free-range farming, so we propose an initial investment from the Government to aid this process of conversion, sourced from revenue obtained through the development of our free-range agricultural export industry. We believe that this will have a long-term benefit on the New Zealand economy, and on the national mentality surrounding animal welfare.

We discovered inconsistencies in legislation between the treatment of species within the agricultural industry. The treatment of factory-farmed chickens and pigs is substandard in comparison with sheep and beef, and decidedly more so in comparison with domestic animals. We must redefine the legislation in respect of what is acceptable treatment of farm animals. We must begin to define and specify what is normal animal behaviour under the current Animal Welfare Act. We feel that under this Act farmers are led to believe that the inhumane treatment of factory-farmed animals is acceptable. Free-range farming, not factory farming is the future of New Zealand. On behalf of the Primary Production Committee, I thank the House.

Report tabled.

### **Alcohol Safety for Young People—Consideration of Report of Social Services Committee**

**TALIA ELLISON (Dunedin South):** I present the report of the Social Services Committee on its inquiry into how to support young people to be safe with alcohol. It is not what we are drinking; it is how we are drinking. This message is blasted through advertising, but do we really listen? Members of the Social Services Committee feel that in order to support young people to be safe with alcohol, the question of how we

are drinking needs to be not only identified but changed. We feel that introducing age-based legislation is not enough, and that legislation will not change attitudes or bring about change.

The recommendations that we have formed from our various submissions are as follows. We recommend that the Government raise taxes on alcohol to curb consumption. We feel that by raising taxes it will make alcohol less accessible for youth, without restricting the right that adults have to purchase and consume alcohol. We recommend that the Government prohibit the sale of alcohol in supermarkets. We feel that by disallowing alcohol to be bought in bulk and sold cheaply, we will remove some of the desire and the casual attitude people feel towards purchasing alcohol. We also feel that by prohibiting the sale of alcohol in supermarkets the availability of 24/7 access to alcohol will be reduced significantly. We recommend that the Government introduce a zero blood limit for drivers under the age of 20, to prevent the unnecessary deaths of young people. We also feel that it would be beneficial for youth, as well as for New Zealand, if the blood-alcohol limit is reduced from 0.8 milligrams per hundred millilitres to 0.05 milligrams for people over 20. We recommend that the Government promote advertising campaigns on safe alcohol use that specifically target, and appeal to, young people and their parents.

We also recommend that the Government promote support-based education programmes in schools for young people. We feel that if youth are engaged and encouraged by their peers and role models whom they identify with, then youth will be more receptive to change. Finally, we recommend that the Government does not raise the age of alcohol purchase, unless the recommendations explored have no effect on the New Zealand binge drinking culture. We urge the Government to take actions to change New Zealand's drinking culture and to not introduce age-based legislation in order to take the easy way out. Thank you.

Report tabled.

#### **Young New Zealanders Returning from Overseas Experience—Consideration of Report of Transport and Industrial Relations Committee**

**JENNY ZHANG (List):** I present the report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on its inquiry into how we can attract and utilise the skills of young Kiwis returning from their overseas experience.

Our committee was in agreement that New Zealanders going on overseas experiences gain benefits valuable to the New Zealand economy. This report makes nine recommendations to the Government that highlight important ways that New Zealand can create ways to emphasise and encourage young Kiwis returning to New Zealand. We found the presenters really interesting and youthful, especially Simon Swallow from Global Career Link, which works with specific groups but is applicable in a broader sense to all New Zealanders.

The recommendations are as follows. We recommend the provision of information and support about issues facing young people returning to New Zealand, such as finding out that their skills are too specialised for the New Zealand economy, and the cultural withdrawal they will experience amidst New Zealanders who tend to be more localised in their thinking. We recommend that information is provided to New Zealanders before they leave, and accessible support is provided after they return. We recommend that networks that improve support for Kiwi expatriates are essential and that the Kiwi Expat Association, which currently comprises high net worth New Zealanders, is expanded to blue-collar workers as well, with more of a focus on links between New Zealanders abroad and those at home, instead of creating a New Zealand community outside of

New Zealand. We recommend facilitating the provision of jobs for those returning to New Zealand, and offering greater job visibility for those with a lack of experience in the job market.

Employers should encourage the contribution of Kiwis who have worked overseas. We looked into professional qualifications for overseas experience, and we wish to encourage employers to value more the skills and work ethics, over specific knowledge, to improve flexibility in the job market. The Government should have discussions with organisations such as Global Career Link to structure young Kiwis' overseas experiences and maximise their opportunities, as well as looking at the long-term benefits to New Zealand before they go, and continuing contact with them while they are overseas.

We have also recommended that the Government promote market research into industries with a high percentage of Kiwis working abroad, such as accountancy and finance. We recommend that the Government promote expansion of such industries and create jobs in those industries, being part of the long-term expansion and development of the New Zealand economy. We also discussed wage rates, but agreed that we could not influence those, as there are implications for other Government policies. Implementing these recommendations and the others listed in the report will benefit both young Kiwis and New Zealand. I commend this report to the House.

Report tabled.

## **ADULT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (AGE OF MAJORITY) BILL**

### **Third Reading**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** Before we start this debate, I remind members that speeches are for 3 minutes, a bell will ring at the end of 3 minutes, and that terminates the member's speaking time. The member must stop immediately and sit down. Speeches are to be relevant. They should be about the purpose and the content of the bill. The rules for this debate are set out in the Youth Parliament Standing Orders 24 to 34. These are the rules that apply. The normal procedure is that when we start this debate, the member listed will take a call and say "Mr Speaker", and then I would recognise the person by his or her name. But I guess we will start the easy way, and I will call the first speaker.

**REBECCA QUANSAH (List):** I move, *That the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill be now read a third time.* What we are trying to decide today, in my understanding, is whether a single age would be suitable for an individual to obtain full adult privileges. I think this is absolutely preposterous. It may seem like a practical and logical solution at first, considering its simplicity. However, this is an overly simple proposal.

New Zealand's current age of majority is 20. So I went out into my community to do some research of my own, and to see what people in my community around the ages of 17 to 21 had to say about their transition into adulthood. I asked them whether they felt ready to take the responsibility of being a legal adult. The majority of people whom I talked to said that they did not feel that they had reached adulthood; nor did they feel prepared for the responsibilities that accompany that title. This, I will admit, frightens me. I am fearful for the youth in my community, as they are becoming adults before they feel able to bear the responsibilities of adulthood on their own, which leaves them vulnerable and overwhelmed.

The concept of assigning all these rights to an individual on one day, essentially forcing them into adulthood overnight, I find wrong and immoral. Should we not be supporting our youth and easing the transition into adulthood as much as possible? After

all, we are the future. Why not give us the best start to adulthood as possible? We are on the same team.

In my opinion, the best way to evolve from a child to an adult would be to introduce a gradual process whereby adult rights are gradually introduced in an age-appropriate order, over a wider period of time. For example, at 15 years old one would receive the most easily manageable or partial adult rights, so that by the time one reaches 20 years of age he has all his adult rights assigned to him, and he would be in full control of his person. It is my opinion that a process would be better, rather than a sudden change. This way, youth are learning to be responsible and are not overwhelmed by their sudden freedom. One cannot simply be told they are an adult and have it be true. It is through life experience, gathered over a period of time, that one gains the life skills to manage adulthood. Transition phases a way that New Zealand's leaders could control teens during this transition, and still recognises youths' ability to be independent and responsible. Mistakes will be made. They are a part of learning. We need to protect our youth from falling on their own sword, whilst giving them enough room to experiment and be their own person. It is a difficult balance, but a necessary one. This balance of protection and exposure could not be achieved by giving the young people of New Zealand their adult rights on one day. It is a recipe for disaster, to be honest.

In conclusion, all adult rights should not be given to an individual at one time, as, even though this would be simple, it would create a habit of indulgence amongst our youth, and could potentially lead them down a path of self-destruction. Youth need time to make the transition from minor to major, as it does not happen overnight. It will happen at a different age for different people. We need a time period, and not an age.

**RICK ZWAAN (List):** Kia ora. I strongly support the intentions of this bill to lower the age of majority and remove age-based discrimination. This bill, as you know, is not about the age at which one may legally have sex, drink, or drive. It is the age at which we are classed as adults. By definition, the age of majority is the age at which someone becomes an adult. In various cultures and societies around the world, this happens at different times. There are many countries that still follow traditional rites of passage that determine whether a child is worthy of adulthood. Unfortunately, such rituals are no longer commonplace in our society today.

The age at which someone becomes an adult will be different for every single person, and there is no way of determining when someone may reach that age. But we must determine at which age we think we can be classed as responsible and worthy of adulthood. I truly believe that if we want to alleviate the issues that are commonly associated with young people, such as excessive drinking, we must have trust placed in us as young people. Youth Parliament is just one example that shows that not all young people spend their lives drinking and driving erratically.

I am privileged to know hundreds of people my age around the country and the world who are passionate about something that motivates them to make a positive difference in their community. Education initiatives, such as Enviroschools, have given me the chance from the age of 14 to meet and collaborate with likeminded young people around the country, coming from an amazing variety of different backgrounds, and all have a passion to enhance our environment in general. We have had trust placed in us to come up with solutions to major issues that face our global community, and we have succeeded.

There are thousands of people, like you and me, who are taking action to have a positive impact on our society and where we live every day. Usually demeaned with the label of "reckless youth", these inspiring individuals and groups not only have to face up to the challenge of overcoming this prejudice, but also manage to create better local communities by taking personal responsibility and considering its impact in everything

they do. We are able to do this because we have been entrusted with the responsibility of it. Having the knowledge that someone trusts you is an extremely motivating and inspiring feeling. With this, we are far more likely to succeed in our pursuits.

As Youth MPs we must send a strong message to the House of Representatives and the New Zealand public that we need to be given the opportunity to become responsible adults at a younger age. I personally think this age should be 16.

**GEORGIA ROBERTSON (Rangitata):** My name is Georgia Robertson, and I represent the Rangitata electorate. The opinions from everyone I have talked to there are basically universal. The idea that 20 remains the age of majority in New Zealand is both redundant and patently ridiculous in our modern world, so I am here to speak in support of the reduction of the age of majority from 20 to 18.

In our country 18-year-olds can go to war and potentially die for our country. They may also be conscripted into doing so, and importantly I note that they may also vote for the Government who will make that decision for them. They may desire to enter into the realm of parenthood. They then may choose to marry and, by the way, purchase alcohol to celebrate with at their wedding. They may also choose to stay sober and drive home from the venue. So what is really left?

We readily give these life-changing, and in some cases life-threatening, responsibilities to young adults, and in discharging these responsibilities we also convey the expectation that they are performed to the highest standard. There are no stronger reasons to reduce the archaic and fine legal distinction of an age of majority from 20 to 18.

Furthermore, it is appropriate that we abolish the prohibition law against age discrimination. The reason is so startlingly obvious: the Act itself is absolutely discriminatory upon age, which therefore proves that the Act itself is flawed. In the same way, we strive to be consistent across all of our human rights legislation; we try to establish what is considered the norm, in conjunction with United Nations conventions related to children's rights. We are entitled to freedom from discrimination, and we cannot have existing laws teaching otherwise when that freedom is not applied across the board.

We live in a world inherently different from that of the past, and our legislation needs to reflect that, even if we have to drag it kicking and screaming into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, I would like to see the modernisation and reformation of these age-related laws, and to have that done so on the basis of their own merits. Thank you.

**DANIELLE LUCAS (Tauranga):** How do we define an adult? Becoming an adult is a long process. It is not something that happens all at once—overnight. Time is needed to gain life experience and to mature from those experiences. Why should our law reflect the change to adulthood as if it was like that—overnight? If the 1970 Age of Majority Act is amended, our law will be doing just that. Overnight, one will become 18, and go from being a minor with hardly any legal responsibilities, to being an adult.

The current staggering system of laws in New Zealand is one that accurately reflects our path to adulthood. As we grow older and become more responsible, we are trusted with more legal responsibilities. This allows us time to mature and grow into the new legal privileges we receive. At age 16 one is deemed mature enough to consent to sex, learn to drive, and leave home or school. Two years later, at 18, one can legally purchase alcohol, vote, buy cigarettes, and fight for New Zealand.

Although one may legally partake in these “adult” activities at the age of 18, according to New Zealand law, one is not an adult. Two more years are needed to gain the legal status of an adult. Those 2 years are essential, as without them we would not have the maturity of an adult to use them wisely. At 18 one is deemed mature enough to receive many legal privileges. But is one truly mature enough to use those privileges

wisely? An 18-year-old is old enough to buy alcohol, and I agree that he or she is mature enough to do so. But is one mature enough to undertake the implications of selling this alcohol to others? Amending the 1970 Age of Majority Act would enable 18-year-olds to do so.

Eighteen is the age when we can legally take of ourselves, but are we ready to take care of others who are not our legal partners or relatives? If we decrease the age of majority from 20 to 18, 18-year-olds will be able to gain legal responsibility for another human. If we amend this Act, I myself will be legally able to adopt a child. There may only be 2 years' difference between 20 and 18, but for many teenagers more than 2 years of growing up is done in that time. Those years will be the first years away from home for many, and for all of us they will be the first years of more legal responsibilities. Those 2 years are needed, just like the 2 years between 16 and 18, to obtain the necessary maturity to be classed as an adult.

Different maturity, and therefore age, is needed for different responsibilities. Therefore, I ask you to consider the true effect of amending this Act. Reducing the age at which persons attain their legal majority from 20 to 18 could create a generation of adults who are not given the time to gain a sufficient maturity and capacity to understand the full effects of their decisions. Thank you.

**JORDAN ANDERSON (Napier):** I stand in support of the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill. As the law has developed, a gradual alignment of adult responsibilities has been created by the staggering of lawful age thresholds. The Age of Majority Act comes into effect in the absence of specific legislation—currently this age is 20. This system was created decades ago—40 years ago—to ease young people into the rights of adulthood through law. However, young people were different then. You could say that they were better prepared for the harsh realities of adulthood: they left school earlier, they had financial independence sooner, and they married younger. This system was created for them, yet it remains in place 40 years on.

The “instant gratification generation” that we are all a part of has a very different life structure, which tends to prolong adolescence. I believe that we should be promoting the participation of 18-year-olds—who are legal adults—within our society. The age of majority being set at 20 in conjunction with a hugely varying set of age restrictions stunts the transition of young people like us into adulthood. If you are legally an adult, you should possess all adult rights and responsibilities; therefore, the age of majority should align with the legal age of adulthood. The series of age thresholds we have for drinking, sex, driving, medical decision-making, and voting are generally created for our own protection. They are defining moments in our development of maturity when we are properly equipped to deal with those situations. They are not perfect: you can get a library card, but you can get a driver's licence the year before, not to mention the fact that voting, which is possibly the least personally harmful endeavour, has one of the highest age thresholds of all.

The lowering of the age of majority from 20 to 18 would foster consistency in legislation and ease its application. I am not talking about lumping every responsibility into one grand age of our 18<sup>th</sup>. We would be continuing the recognition of different levels of responsibility that come with these rights through varying age restrictions, while keeping the maximum general age threshold at 18, the age of lawful adulthood. It is logical that if we are legal adults at 18, we should be legally considered mature at 18 in the absence of specific legislation.

The lowering of the age of majority should not be considered to be a dangerous or revolutionary step for young people at all, but a step in the direction of our society catching up with the rest of the world. Thank you.

**BENJAMIN HINGSTON (List):** The Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill is a bill that is of great concern to us all. It stands as a monument to the age at which we go from being a child to an adult. It is an age that must reflect the opinion of our society as a whole, which is why we cannot allow this bill to be passed.

The reasons why this bill must not pass are numerous, and I will do all that I can to outline them for you. Traditionally, 20 is an age that is noted throughout history, in various cultures and civilisations, as the age of majority at which a man or woman comes into their own. The reason behind this is undoubtedly without flaw. It has been universally accepted, right up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that the age of 20 is representative throughout the world as the age at which people gain full adult rights and responsibilities. Governments, society, and people have understood the need to allow for time between the age at which someone becomes eligible for a law, and then becoming responsible to that law.

Just because young people, those who are aged 18, have been given more responsibility over the past 40 years it does not necessarily make them any more responsible. The idea that just because young people have attained a number of rights and responsibilities that are symbolic of adulthood therefore makes them responsible at a younger age is ridiculous. We must remember that there is an immense difference between people who have been given responsibility, and those who are responsible. Furthermore, the idea that there can be a gradual alignment of ages of adults' rights and responsibilities, as stated within the third amendment to this bill, for all legislation relating to youth and youth issues is absurd. We must retain individualised age specificity if we are to acknowledge the individuality and uniqueness of varying situations with varying people of various ages.

Are we not a world in which every individual is unique? If we are to accept this legislation, we will be denying the right of recognition that every individual in varying situations and circumstances deserves. It is imperative that we acknowledge the fact that different situations, in which there can be no one-size-fits-all age of adult rights and responsibilities, deserve their own individualised age-specificity, and with the passing of this legislation we would be sacrificing that right. As stated in subsection 11, under alignment with other jurisdictions, to align New Zealand with international frameworks for youth age thresholds, quite frankly, is insulting. Our nation has always prided itself on being the shepherd countless times in the past, ranging from the vote for women to our non-nuclear stance; never before have we prided ourselves on being the sheep. Why then must we conform to the age thresholds dictated to us by foreign organisations? What we must do is retain our independence and uniqueness. It is time that we reaffirmed this role, for if we do not the integrity of our nation and our nation's youth will be gone for ever. That is why we cannot afford to pass this bill. Thank you.

**SEINA ABERA (Mana):** Kia orana tātou katoatoa. My name is Seina Abera, and it is my privilege to be here today representing the Mana region of New Zealand. I support the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill, which will decrease the age at which a person attains full age from 20 to 18. At the age of 18, youths in general are on their way to becoming adults. It is about this time that we leave the secondary schooling system and move towards employment or tertiary education. At this stage in life we venture into the world of the adult.

At the moment New Zealand has a progressive system in place. Some examples of this include these facts: at 15 we can sit for our licence and may drive a vehicle; at 16 we may have sexual intercourse, and we can also be married with our parents' consent; at 17 we are eligible for free dental care; at 18 we may purchase alcohol and cigarettes, and we also may have a voice in who will lead our country in Government. Yet we still are not considered of full age until we are 20. Perhaps this is due to the minority groups

in our communities: the growing culture of youth gangs, and the out-of-control teenage party-goers we all hear about. I can hear many arguments about why the age of majority should perhaps remain at 20.

There are social issues for all age groups within our communities. What is important is that we address issues as a community for the benefit of the community. It is vital for us to learn and make mistakes about life with the support of family and friends; providing youth with firm boundaries, personal identity, and education from a young age will produce strong, well-rounded members of society. We need to set a steady foundation of teaching, and to enforce boundaries. We need to teach values like having respect and learning how to cope with responsibilities; therefore, we can make the transition into adulthood a smoother ride. If we nurture our children and install the necessary values in our youth today, they will evolve into mature young adults, and when they reach 18 they will be better equipped to be a positive influence, and be able to contribute in various ways to our community and society.

I also support the second amendment this bill would make—that is, to disallow age-based discrimination for people under 16, as defined by the Human Rights Act. As mentioned earlier in my speech, we already have benchmarks in our society that indicate when someone can or cannot do certain things. As a society we accept these things, and they are supported by the law of this country. A child legally becomes a young person on his or her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, and can take responsibility for supervising children, but until the age of 16 he or she can be discriminated against based on his or her age.

Rights and responsibilities should come hand in hand. The bill needs to acknowledge that young people today need to be treated as equals regardless of their age. Kia orana e kia manuia.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** I say to members that time has a strange effect in this place. When someone else is speaking the clocks run slow, but when you are speaking they run full speed ahead.

**PAIGE MUGGERIDGE (New Plymouth):** New Zealand is a young country, and this young country must not exclude its young people from the rights and responsibilities they deserve. The Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill should be passed in the House today. As members of Parliament, we must trust 18-year-olds. We trust them to drive safely on our roads and to consume alcohol safely, both of which have the potential for harmful—or even fatal—consequences to themselves or those around them.

Furthermore, 18-year-olds must be trustworthy if we allow them a vote in the parliamentary system. That vote influences the political, social, economic, and environmental challenges and resolutions that proceed right here in the House, and it has significant effect within our country, yet the Age of Majority Act 1970 declares that a person attains his or her legal majority at the age of 20. The youth of this country need to know where they stand, which could be achieved by reducing the inconsistencies in age that currently exist in legislation. If the age of majority was decreased from 20 to 18, then, parallel to this, the age at which the youth of today mature and act responsibly may also decrease. If this bill is passed today, no longer shall those aged 15 years or under be treated differently, and thus they would not be considered as discriminated against under the Human Rights Act 1993.

Today we live in a world that promotes human rights, equality for all, and non-discrimination. New Zealand has been a world leader in abolishing discrimination; we gave suffrage to women in 1893. We must continue to prove that our country is one of acceptance and social equality for all. This amendment to remove the age specificity of 16 years of age is yet another step towards our true New Zealand culture, one that

values each and every one of its citizens despite differences such as age. In addition, as a committed member of the United Nations, New Zealand can maintain its positive image on the world stage, with this bill acting as a movement towards a more holistic approach to age-related legislation. We need to hear the voices of our youth, including those aged 18 years. They are the young, educated, and fresh voices that have the potential to bring about innovative change in New Zealand, and our future depends upon them. Thank you.

**CAMERON PRICE (List):** I stand today in support of the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill for three reasons. Firstly, I believe that a decrease in the age of majority from 20 to 18 is necessary because the existing legislation is outdated. In 1970, when the original Age of Majority Act was passed, 20-year-olds measured in feet and inches, watched TV in black and white, had never heard of the Internet, and listened to their Walkmans. In the four decades since, 18 has become the new 20. Today's 18-year-olds measure in metric metres, watch high-definition colour TVs, use Google and Facebook daily, and listen to iPods. In short, the youth of my generation are different from the youth of your generation, Mr Assistant Speaker. Although people will try to put us down, the extra responsibilities that today's 18-year-olds are faced with deserve to be rewarded with the right to legal majority.

Secondly, I believe that the current legislation is confusing for young people. As a 17-year-old, I am very confused. When it comes to knowing what rights I have and at which ages I gain them, I simply do not know enough. I know that I cannot smoke, drink, or vote. I also know that I can have sexual intercourse, and I can get free dental care and my driver's licence. But if I want to be a blood-donating, minimum-wage earning, pornography-watching, gambling real estate agent or security guard or prostitute with a tattoo—not that I do—I have no idea how old I have to be. I believe that setting the age of majority at 18 will send a clear message that once you reach that age, you are an adult.

Thirdly, I stand in support of this bill because I fear that without the support of Youth Parliament, calls for clarification of age thresholds may fall on deaf ears. A review of age in legislation has already been deemed to be of little benefit by our not-so-youthful MPs, and that may be because they will not be affected by such change. Mark Twain once said: "Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." When it comes to the age of majority, I do mind because it does matter. It matters because 40 years is a long time, it matters because I should not be confused any more, and it matters because age is too high a price to pay for legal majority in this country. Because it matters, I commend this bill to the House.

**MEAGHAN LI (List):** In 1 month's time I will be turning 18. I will be crossing what many deem to be the much-anticipated threshold between childhood and adulthood, ignorance and wisdom, and exemption and accountability. As a youth parliamentarian I will inevitably make some clichéd, politically correct statements to the media that I cannot wait to vote and have a political say. But we all know that there are lots of other, more fun things to look forward to when you are 18.

This is the inherent flaw in the mindset of New Zealand youth. As we approach adulthood, we as 21<sup>st</sup> century youth celebrate the ability to gamble and drink, rather than to vote and to donate organs. We treat these responsibilities as rewards, and thus we abuse them, to the state of sheer recklessness. This is the inherent flaw that today's bill does not address, and thus will not resolve.

Lowering the age of majority should be the result of perceptible improvements in the state of youth responsibility. But simply assuming that doing so will be the catalyst of these improvements is illogical, and, frankly, idealistic. Irresponsibility, immaturity, and the abuse of legal privileges are now ingrained within the mindset of some Kiwi youth.

Some of the most devastating social issues, especially those pertaining to alcohol abuse, are especially relevant within our own country; thus we should not be striving to emulate other countries and align our age-based laws with theirs.

Additionally, I must urge all parliamentarians in attendance today to exercise caution in their judgment regarding Part 2 of today's bill, as discrimination in exceptional cases does not necessarily breach human rights. Age discrimination is unique, in that a person's gender, race, religion, and sexuality do not affect their intellectual maturity or social responsibility. When discrimination is contextualised by a child's deficit of mental development, when a child possesses a lack of judgment and is wholly dependent upon adults, a rationalised exception must be made. I dread the creation of an over-protective State, where parents are deprived of their authority, where 14-year-olds are entitled to the same employment rights as working fathers triple their age, where children must watch what they say in the playground, and where you and I can be prosecuted for infringing human rights by celebrating Hug a Ginga Day.

I implore my fellow youth parliamentarians to reject this bill. We must exercise realism, not idealism, and we must draw the line between pragmatism and these vain attempts at political correctness. Thank you.

**ROBERTA FAITELE (Manurewa):** The Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill amends two Acts, with the intention of moving the age of majority from 20 to 18. I agree that the age of majority should be 18—when one is considered to be an adult—but I do not agree with the overall idea of having an age of majority.

The youth of today is different from the youth of generations before us. With the rise of technology and with more opportunities open to today's youth, we as youth are more in control, more informed, and more aware of the world around us. With our broader knowledge we should be given rights and responsibilities at particular ages, instead of having an age of majority of 20, or 18 if it is lowered. If we were to have one age for everything, our youth would find the huge load of responsibilities too overwhelming. I believe that we as youth are more in control, but we can take only so much. By not having an age of majority, we can give youth rights and responsibilities from the age of 16, so that by the age of 21 our youth will be aware of their rights and responsibilities and will be prepared to take on the world and its problems.

So instead of having an age of majority, I would prefer to break the age into three major age groups—16, 18, and 20. At the age of 16 youth are given the right to drive, to leave school, to get a job, and it is the legal age of consent. These responsibilities are important at the age of 16, as students are surrounded at school with education about drink-driving, teen pregnancy, and unemployment. So giving youth these rights will teach them to make smart decisions in relation to driving and education. If we were to have an age of majority of 18, the percentage of teenage pregnancies may rise and students would have to wait until the age of 18 to leave school. This may be a problem for those who are intent on leaving school to take up apprenticeships or out-of-school courses, or to get a job and begin working. School is not for everyone, and some people prefer to learn in a more practical way.

With these rights and responsibilities and the correct education, our youth will then be able to take on the new rights and responsibilities that will come with the age of 18. Once we reach the age of 18, we are given the right to marry, to join the army without parental consent, to buy a lottery ticket, and to purchase alcohol. Even with the huge amount of talk about raising the age to purchase alcohol to 20, I do not believe that raising it will do anything, as we need to change the drinking culture. As quoted: "It's not the drinking; it's how we're drinking."

We all know that times have changed, and we consider the age of 18, as opposed to 21, to be a major milestone in our lives. Without one age of majority we would have

more responsibilities. We would all have hectic schedules. Overall, our youth today, even with the negative perceptions about alcohol and drink-driving, are strong, opinionated, and wiser in making decisions. Having one age of majority will not help youth, as we have different ideas and dreams in life, and overloading us with rights and responsibilities will not benefit us. We should start learning the meaning of responsibility at a younger age.

**SHRUTHI VIJAYAKUMAR (Mt Roskill):** I stand for the bill we are addressing today. Firstly, I am 18. I can purchase alcohol, I can vote, I can fight in the army and kill people if I like, and I can make my own medical choices. But, still, under the legal system I am viewed as a minor. I am looked down upon by the legal system. I stand here to represent youth from around the country who are in a similar position—aged 18, with an abundance of rights, but still looked down upon by the legal system.

The UN compiled the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. New Zealand agreed to this convention; it is committed to it. This convention defines a child as someone under the age of 18. New Zealand is inconsistent with this. We define a child as someone up to the age of 19. If we look around the world, the average age of majority worldwide is 18.27, yet here in New Zealand we stick with 20. Does the current Act imply that we Kiwi youth are less mature than youth around the world? I think not. I look around the Chamber. We are a very mature bunch of youth at Parliament.

The New Zealand curriculum is very focused on independent learning. Right through school we are taught how to make our own choices and how to take responsibility for the choices we make. I believe that at 18 we should be accountable for our own choices. It is not our parents and it is not our legal guardians who should be responsible; it is us. We are 18. We are mature enough. When we finish our schooling this is the time when we enter further study. It is the time we enter the workforce. Surely we are fit enough to be viewed as adults. Surely the age of majority should be reduced to 18.

I turn to the second part of the bill, which amends the Human Rights Act to remove the right to discriminate against under-16-year-olds. Right now, it is legally justified to discriminate against under-16-year-olds—to deny them a job, when they can do it just as fine as someone who is older. Racial discrimination is illegal. Sexual discrimination is illegal. Yet why in New Zealand is it legally justified to discriminate against someone under 15, just based on a generalisation of maturity?

Once again, the UN prohibits discrimination. It is not in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. Canada, UK, and countries of the EU do not have age specificity in their own human rights' documents. But here in New Zealand we do. We fail when it comes to this point of human rights. In New Zealand we have led before. We have led with nuclear disarmament, and we have led with women's rights. Why can we not lead with age rights as well? Why do we have to fail this time and allow ourselves to discriminate against under-16-year-olds? It is just equality; it is just morals; it is just. We have to vote for this bill.

The final part of the bill works towards establishing a committee to work towards the alignment of all ages. I do think this is quite controversial. I think having the driving age, the drinking age, and the gambling age all at one age is quite controversial. But never mind—the bill should pass.

**EDWARD McKNIGHT (Epsom):** This legislation is not just about the changes that it creates. It is about signifying an ongoing commitment from the Government to align the rights that young people deserve and the responsibility that they already show. Honourable members have discussed this bill generally already, so I will focus on alcohol. It is very topical, in terms of youth rights and the age of majority, that the drinking age cannot increase if this legislation is passed. It sets a precedent for this bill.

I will attempt to explain why there is pressure on the Government to increase the purchasing age, why those pressures are not necessarily sound, why this is a good precedent for this bill, and why the purchasing age for alcohol should not increase, which would keep this consistent with the bill.

Alcohol restrictions have been put in the spotlight recently. Knee-jerk media reactions caused by the widely publicised death of James Webster have put pressure on the Government to increase the alcohol purchase age.

Too often in New Zealand, we get into a nanny State, where age-based thresholds are set not on majorities, but on the few outliers that come to public attention. In some cases—

**Rick Zwaan:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I do not believe that this is relevant to the bill.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** I do not have a copy of the speech notes.

**EDWARD McKNIGHT:** I have amended my copy slightly from the one that you have.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** A point of order has been made that the member is not speaking to the substance of the bill. The member is making some comments about age. I am prepared to tolerate a little bit of latitude where a member wanders off on to another subject, but it has to tie back with the age of majority. If the member wishes to continue on this, he will be challenged by the House. He must be talking about the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill, not specifically and lengthily on alcohol.

**EDWARD McKNIGHT:** Mr Speaker, my speech is mainly on alcohol and the precedent that it sets.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** If the member can tie it to the bill, he can carry on.

**EDWARD McKNIGHT:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is where age-based thresholds are set not on majorities but on the few outliers that come to public attention. In some cases, these outliers are not even representative of the circumstances that legislation would control, and we have heard about this over the past few months. The case that has surfaced is indeed tragic, but any changes to the liquor purchasing age would not have prevented it, as the alcohol might have been stolen. You see, often in New Zealand we want to do something about a tragedy, including changing ages, just so that we feel that we have done something about it, when, in actual fact, it may not have solved the tragedy anyway.

It is pretty clear that the pressures on the Government are not necessarily guided. The 1999 decrease in the purchasing age of alcohol is a good precedent for the alignment of youth rights and responsibilities. For increased rights there needs to be increased responsibility and maturity. This has been shown over the past 11 years of the decreased alcohol purchase age. I have found that young people are responsible in general; young people are responsible with alcohol. We, as young people, see this every weekend from our friends and our older siblings, and this does set a precedent for giving young people more rights.

If an 18-year-old is mature enough to drive, to be tried in an adult court, to have sex, to get married, and a whole hoard of other rights and responsibilities then it is illogical to say that an 18-year-old is not mature enough to have a simple drink. The media portrays alcohol as the sole cause of some behavioural problems. If that is true, which I do not believe for a second, then it is not the alcohol that needs to be dealt with but the behaviour, for it is not the drinking, it is how we are drinking.

Laws should be made for the majority and not made for the outlier percentage, as a certain King's College mother would have you believe in her knee-jerk letter to the right honourable Prime Minister, John Key, which was full of emotive words. It attempted to guilt trip him into increasing the purchasing age of alcohol. This piece of legislation is not about just the changes that it creates but about signifying an ongoing commitment from the Government to align the rights that young people deserve and the responsibility that they already show. Thus, I give my support to this bill. Thank you.

**LYDIA McKINNON (List):** Like many of the members in the House today, I am 17. At the moment I can get married with my parents' consent, I can get my driver's licence, I can own a firearm, and I can consent to sex. In less than a year, I will be able to buy alcohol, rent pornography, get married of my own accord, buy cigarettes, and buy a chainsaw. However, it will be another 2 years after that before I could become a security guard or a private investigator, or could actually be considered an adult.

A vote to amend this bill would let a biennial review process look into these inconsistencies and seek to change the fact that by the time I am 18, I could be married with a family, living in a house that I bought with my mortgage, driving to my job—but not as a security officer—in my car, with my cigarettes, and voting for a council that will decide how and when I can use my chainsaw. But will I be an adult? Of course not.

I say to the House today that keeping the age of majority at 20 simply does not make sense, given the rest of the laws in New Zealand, or even given the culture in New Zealand. The age of 20 has no traditional significance. But, think: at 18 you finish school, a lot of people move out of home, and it is an age when you can both vote and fight for your country. A case can be made for having to be 20 to be a welfare guardian or to possess an on-licence to sell liquor, but these things should be the exception, not the rule. The majority of activities with an age-limit are accessible to 18-year-olds. In light of that, is there any good reason for keeping the age at 20?

Things have changed since 1970, when the bill was made. People have more legal responsibility at a younger age and are expected to act as such. Today, 40 years later, we are faced with a conscience vote. The question needs to be asked whether the age of 20 appeals to common sense and, in the other amendment, whether New Zealand's conscience agrees with the fact that our Human Rights Act says that you cannot discriminate on the basis of age unless someone is under 16, in which case it is OK. Not only does that seem to be an oxymoron but also it does not fit with the principles of a free and equal New Zealand.

To remove the age line in this bill will not create a free-for-all, where people are forced to hire and entrust those under 16; it would mean simply that this is a law that benefits all New Zealanders and is for all New Zealanders to follow. So here are the questions that I pose today: is it befitting to have a spaghetti junction of laws overlapping and cancelling out each other? Is it befitting of New Zealand, a country once called the social laboratory of the world, to stay the same in light of the changing face of our nation?

What befits New Zealand is up to the individual, but it is certainly not the same as what was right for our country 40 years ago. Thank you.

**PHOEBE BALLE (List):** In this debate I have heard comparatively little spoken concerning the second amendment under consideration today. Perhaps this apparent aversion is due to the difficult pronunciation of the word "specificity"—but, do not worry, I have been practising all week.

I speak specifically on the suggested amendment to the Human Rights Act 1993. This amendment to remove the age specificity of 16 or older attached to the prohibition against age discrimination should be passed. Age-based discrimination is an unnecessary disadvantage to children and young people who are aged under 16. At the

foundation of age-based discrimination is the social convention of “adulthood”, which defines immaturity and maturity and places adults in a dominant position over youth. As children we are conditioned to treat adults with obedience and respect; they are the caregivers and protectors. Initially, we do not question their treatment of us. However, as we become more perceptive—one might say, more mature—we notice inequalities in our relationships with adults. Parents can make unfounded accusations, teachers can belittle us, and coaches can humiliate us. Children under 16 can work as hard as adults, without receiving a minimum wage. They can be beaten, sexually abused, assaulted, and exploited by those who are meant to be their protectors. These experiences evolve into a realisation that the allegedly systemic division in maturity between those either side of the 16-year-old barrier is a social convention, not a reality.

In the boundless variation of humanity, age is the one unifying element. With the exception of Benjamin Button, ageing is a linear path upon which we all travel. When it is universal, it seems paradoxical to allow discrimination on the grounds of age. Age in itself is an unreliable gauge for maturity. It has been scientifically proven, for example, that females generally mature, physically and emotionally, years before males. It is financially unviable, however, to judge maturity on a case by case basis, and vis-à-vis, I recognise the necessity of the age of maturity bill in setting a standard gauge to determine legislative maturity. What I do not agree with is that this standard, so liable to variation, needs be used unnecessarily and in a way that disadvantages youth, as age-based discrimination does.

No other legislation condoning age-based discrimination exists in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, or the European Union. The 1993 Human Rights Act prohibits age as a ground for discrimination. In not passing this amendment, this legislation will remain contradictory and inconsistent. Age thresholds work both to empower and to protect young people, yet age-based discrimination serves only to disadvantage and to disempower. Thank you.

**SHAUN WELSH (Rangitikei):** I fully support this bill. By lowering the age of majority from 20 to 18 in the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill, we are finally giving young New Zealanders the chance that they deserve to go out and make their mark on the world with full adult rights and responsibilities. At the age of 18 years, over 85 percent of New Zealanders have just finished, or are just finishing, their final year of secondary school, and they are equipped with skills and knowledge that they need to make mature decisions. They are already given rights and responsibilities that are going to affect them and those around them, like being able to buy alcohol and tobacco, being able to vote in governmental elections, being able to fight for their country, and being trialled as an adult if they commit a crime at the age of 17. In already giving them these rights, we are showing our vast trust and confidence in them to make mature and reasonable decisions. In some cases, yes, the age of 20 may be a more appropriate age, such as in cases where a person wishes to be a legal welfare guardian. But that is not to say that if each case was judged on individual merits and attributes, an 18-year-old is incapable of doing that.

We currently give young New Zealanders so many rights and responsibilities that everyday 18-year-olds are forced to make choices that affect not only themselves but also those around them. If we give New Zealanders the right to buy alcohol, and they then drink-drive, we charge them as a full adult in court, and that shows that we are already treating 18-year-olds as full adults. And the rights and responsibilities that we have given them affect everyone they know and all of those around them.

We are a new generation of New Zealanders. We are more mature and more reliable and everyday we have to make more and more decisions that require us to think

maturely. We should be giving more appreciation to people of 18 years of age, and we can do that by lowering the age of majority.

This bill is now marking its 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary, which just shows that the age of 20-years-old is outdated. By having 18 as the age of majority, we provide a strong age for which our country can thrive on knowing that we are mature enough to make the required choices in life.

But if this bill gets passed today, will it have any effect on other Government legislation that will affect people of that age, relating to, for example, the drinking age? If the Government continues to consider raising the drinking age to 20, then how will that create a single age of majority? Will the Government continue to keep the drinking age at 18 if it passes this legislation to lower the age of majority? I am unsure, but I fully support this bill for both amendments. Thank you.

**TALIA ELLISON (Dunedin South):** Tēnā koutou katoa kua tatū mai nei mō tēnei takunetanga.

I stand to support the recommendations to amend both the Age of Majority Act 1970 and the Human Rights Act 1993, because I believe that these amendments are in the best interest of both my electorate, Dunedin South, and New Zealand as well. I feel that the Age of Majority Act 1970 is outdated and demeaning. As an 18-year-old, you are given close to all the rights and responsibilities of an adult, yet in the eyes of the law you are still a minor. You pay taxes, you can get married, and you can go to jail. You can buy and consume alcohol and cigarettes, both of which have multiple negative health consequences.

Let us face it: the Age of Majority Act 1970 is outdated, and no longer is 20 a sensible age for someone to attain the legal age of adulthood. If 18-year-olds can hold the future of their lives in their hands through the decisions that they make, then why are they not identified as being responsible enough to attain the status of adulthood?

My electorate, South Dunedin, is ranked at No. 10 in terms of the index of deprivation. South Dunedin is the most deprived suburb in Dunedin. This is the reality for 16 percent of the under-18-year-olds in my community. Now, does this really relate to the Age of Majority Act argument? Absolutely. By allowing 18-year-olds the simple recognition of being adults, I believe that the people of my electorate and New Zealand will benefit. When youth are valued and recognised, we allow youth the opportunity to grow and to develop into the strong, confident leaders that our country needs. As a representative of my community and as a youth of New Zealand, I believe that these amendments will improve the quality of our lives and the lives of New Zealanders.

In terms of the Human Rights Act 1993, I believe that it is in the best interest of anyone under the age of 16 to remove the age specificity of 16 years or older as attached to the prohibition of age-based discrimination, in order to abolish discrimination that is based squarely on age.

Nō reira, e hoa mā, rā kotahi mā, me pāhekoheko tātau me te mārewa o te mana o ngā rangatahi. Kia ora.

*[So, fellow colleagues, together we must change and lift up the self-esteem of youth. Thank you.]*

**ALASDAIR MacLEOD (Rongotai):** We have removed discrimination against race, we have removed discrimination against gender, and we have removed discrimination against religion. How is it that we still allow discrimination against the youth of New Zealand? Every day, people under the age of 16 can legally be denied employment, irrespective of their personal circumstances. A 15-year-old can be denied a job just because he or she is 15. This is wrong. Jobs give the youth of New Zealand more independence and freedom over their lives and choices. When young people get jobs

they show that they are taking steps in a positive direction towards adulthood. Yet we are not protected by the Human Rights Act in employment-related issues.

Society wants us to learn to take responsibility for ourselves, but as the law currently stands we are denied any opportunity to take such an initiative. The powers that be expect us to know what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is bad. They want us to know the boundaries of civilisation. They want us to know exactly what we can and cannot do, yet they give us inconsistent signals.

At the age of 14 I could be tried and convicted as an adult for serious crimes, yet I would not have any of the rights and responsibilities of an adult in my predicament. At 16 I could leave school and enlist in the armed services, but I would not have any of the rights of older servicemen and servicewomen. When I turn 17 I could be sent to fight and die to protect the freedoms and democracy of New Zealand, which is ironic, because at 17 I do not have any say in who governs my country. At 18 I could stroll down to the local and grab a pint, but I am not allowed to step foot in any casino until I am 20.

It is no wonder, with all those different age-limits, that the youth of New Zealand are confused. We need consistency and we need it now. I support this bill, but a biennial review of age-based laws to gradually bring the adult rights and responsibilities into line is a waste of time, money, and effort. To clarify these issues we do not need another bureaucratic talkfest that will never deliver anything except more reports to an already paper-logged system. We need clear guidelines now so that youth know when they make their ascension into adulthood.

The ages at which society expects us to be rational, responsible, and reliable are different from the age outlined in the Age of Majority Act. We know the issues that need to be addressed, and resolution requires immediate change, not just a promise to talk every 2 years, with no urgency to change these age-related laws. We can address this today. We must address this today. We need to support positive change to align age-based laws to benefit tomorrow's young men and women.

**ANNA RUMBOLD (Iam):** This afternoon I will speak on Part 1 of the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill, particularly pertaining to the addition of new section 4A, "Biennial ministerial review", to the Age of Majority Act 1970.

When I asked my friends, peers, and family members what they believed the age of majority should be in New Zealand, the overwhelming response was a look of perplexity, followed by the question: "the age of what?". As New Zealand currently has specific legislation covering many age-related issues, such as the alcohol purchase age, driving age, voting age, marriage age, etc., I believe that the establishment of a biennial review process would encourage the creation of legal ages more suitably tailored to the constant progression of today's youth in society.

This year, we have seen reviews by the Law Commission and the Ministry of Transport. The reviews recommended amendments to age-based legislation, regarding the alcohol purchase age and the driving age. In the future, we are likely to see more reviews, both of those pieces of legislation and the numerous other pieces of age-based legislation in New Zealand.

If the addition of a biennial ministerial review process was made to the Age of Majority Act, I believe that the consequences would be beneficial to both the Government and the youth of New Zealand. The frequent review process proposed would mean that a less time-consuming and more comprehensive review of age-based legislation would be able to be undertaken by Government departments. It would allow for changes in policy to be made more easily and with fewer complications. The impact of this review process could also allow for greater understanding of Government

legislation by youth about the laws that affect us, and some of the reasoning behind the decisions being made by others who decide upon our rights and responsibilities.

The importance of the addition of new section 4A of the bill to the Age of Majority Act is only emphasized by our presence here today—the freedom to talk and to act on the things that affect us as young people. I believe that this addition would be beneficial to all of New Zealand’s youth. To me, it is only logical that the age of majority should be lowered to 18. However, the process of age-related legislation and policy review seems far more complex and something open to and requiring change now. Thank you.

**LINCOLN DAM (Te Atatū):** It is a great honour to rise this afternoon to speak on the third reading of the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill. Before I get into the technicalities of the bill, I thank all those who met with me to discuss this legislation—in particular, the students from Waitakere College, Rutherford College, and St Dominic’s College in my electorate.

I will be supporting this bill at its third reading, but I will just touch on a few parts with regard to clause 4. Clause 4 substitutes new section 4. It lowers the age at which a person in New Zealand is regarded as being an adult from 20 to 18, unless specific provisions are made for an age limit to apply. We need to remember that it is not age that is significant per se, but rather ageism, which is the culturally and socially prescribed norms of society attached to the meanings of age. Moreover, we also need to remind ourselves that youth—adolescents who are denied access to the adult world, yet are attempting to distance themselves from the world of the child—are the principal targets of this bill.

When dealing with bills of this nature, we need to ask ourselves whether prima facie applies—that is, whether we can judge this legislation at first sight. Age provisions need to be taken in context, both in alignment with other jurisdictions and with international frameworks. Setting the default age of majority at 18 will align us with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which refers to a child as being all those aged 18 or younger. Considerable changes have occurred in society since 1970, particularly with young people becoming more independent at a younger age. Setting the age of majority at 18 would bring provisions into line with the responsibilities that young people face in other areas, such as drinking, voting, and military service.

To conclude, I say that perceptions and characteristics of generations are always changing, and it is time that we reviewed this legislation, 40 years after it was passed into law. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle once said: “Even when laws have been written down, they ought not always remain unaltered.” On that note, I commend this bill to the House.

**TUREI-HAAMIORA ORMSBY (Te Tai Tonga):** Kei te manu kōrero. Ko te pūkōhohi, he taki i ngā āhuatanga inu waipiro o te pīpīwhākao, nāna kua karapoti ai i raro i ngā o kuru o te whakamatuatanga pakeke. Ko tā tētahi māitiiti o te Whare nei, he taki i ōna e kīa nei he mana i a tātou kia whakawehengia ai ngā āheitanga inu waipiro o te tangata. Ko te pakeke i te pia me te waina he tuki ake i tēnā o ngā wai-ikeike. Kia tirohia whānuitia ai ngā papakōrero i te rata o te whakaaro, i ā ia tātou kite atu ai i ngōna hapa. Kua hangaia toitoi te tinana ki te aha? Ki te wai. Ka whakawehea teretia te tinana i te aha? I te wai. He waipiro rahi ake kai te inu-ikeike, he aha o te paku? He wai. He aha hai ake i te waipiro i ngā inu pākiki nei? He wai. Kia mahuki hoki mai ki te pounemutanga ki te pakeketanga e pounemu ai ngā unu-ikeike i ngā unu-pākiki, he taimaha nō te tangata i ngēnā mahi. He manahua pai nō te whakaaro nei, arā, ko te whakamatuatanga pakeke, ērangi i a au, me whakatē.

Kāore e taea ana i tō te māitiiti inumiahanga, ērangi kei whakaaetia ai, ko te tautoko o te māitiiti ki ēnā kua whakatakotoria hai pou māna. Kia noho tonu nei te āhei ki te

hoko waipiro ki te ngahuru-mā-waru. Kia tuhirewa ai te pakeke o te matua ki te ngahuru-mā-waru. He peti noa te panonihanga ki te whakamatuatanga pakeke ka riro mai te whakanene i ōna pakitaha. I te ngahuru-mā-warutanga o te tangata ēnei mahi e mahia ai: he taraiwa, he momi, he inumirihanga, he tā moko, he whakaae ki te rata, he taumou, he hoko whare, he hono ūniana. I tō rua tekautanga kua tukua koe ki te peti nui o roto i te whare peti. I te kūare o te tangata i roto i tēnei matapapa, kāore rātou e mōhio ana ki ngā āhei kua riro ki a rātou, ā, ko te whakapae o te hunga nei - he noho ngahuru-mā-waru te pakeke matua. Kia huki ai ngā manaaki ki ngā mahi. Kia huki ai ngā pakeketanga. Ngā mihi ki te Whare.

*[Greetings, Mr Assistant Speaker. I wish to address the matter of alcohol consumption as it relates to the Youth Parliament age of majority legislation. One youth member stated that it would be essential to differentiate between the ability to drink spirits and substandard alcohol such as beer and wine. Using the following logic, one would find that spirits are actually as harmful as the common beer or wine, if not more. The body is made up of mostly—water. The body at the fastest rate processes—water. In spirits there is more alcohol, and less—water. In beer and wine there is more—water. We must be mindful that age differentiation is a difficult thing when one wants to differentiate between drinking substandard alcohol and spirits; and while age of majority is brilliant, I disagree, however.]*

*Youth drinking is unavoidable; save money and time, and just allow youth to drink with restrictions, and you will actually find that most will respect the decision and abide by the restrictions. Definitely, the age for purchasing alcohol should be kept at 18. The only real effect of bringing the age of adulthood down will be on those who gamble at casinos. Right now, if they are 18, they can drive, smoke, drink, get a tattoo, consent to medical treatment, get married, buy a house, join a union. When one turns 20, one can gamble big-time in casinos. Some argue that hardly anybody knows that you have to be 20 anyway, and assume that the age of consent is 18. There need to be contrasting activities and contrasting ages. Greetings to the House.]*

**HANNAH SINGH (Selwyn):** Our current laws in New Zealand regarding the age at which we can drive, drink alcoholic substances, and cast an electoral vote, then finally be seen as an adult in the eyes of the law, are set on the ladder of life in different places. This makes for a gradual transition into adulthood. If the age of majority is set at 18, then young adults will be immersed in amplified pressures. The order to suddenly grow up all at once is daunting. Being thrown in a pool of expectation rather than gradually being lowered in could cause quite a shock—a shock most young adults do not need at such a vital stage in life.

Recent studies prove that we are still adolescents up until the age of 25. Between the ages of 15 and 18 we are forced to experience many life-changing events. We make decisions that dictate the majority of our lives. We know that we are not fully matured physically or mentally until the age of 25. If this law is passed, young adults will be given full responsibility as adults at 18 years of age. Recent events and studies show that there is far too much risk with the level of immaturity at this age range and stage of adolescence. Under the current law, which states that the age of majority is 20, the risk is minimised.

I have been in Wellington for only 3 days. On page 4 of Wellington's *Dominion Post* on Tuesday, it stated that a young man, aged 18, died after consuming alcohol and falling off a 16-storey building. Whether that was an accident or a deliberate act is not known, but the item is typical of news items throughout the media every day.

In a minority of cases, the maturity of young people under the age of 20 can be shown. Youth Parliament is a prime example of maturity at a young age, but that alone is not enough to prove that discrimination is rampant for this age group. In a majority of

cases the media, along with recent academic peer-reviewed studies, clearly shows that the risk is too high. We have a collective responsibility to keep our society, our communities, and our people safe. Lowering the age of majority to 18 is not in our best interest. Imagine if we allowed this bill to be passed. The media would be cluttered with examples of today's new adults taking advantage of, and breaching, the responsibilities that had been awarded to them. One potentially very dangerous example would be the situation where they had the right to gain a licence to sell and supply liquor. The possibilities for abuse of that right are endless.

I strongly disagree with the age of majority being lowered to 18. There is already enough legal responsibility given to young adolescents from the age of 15. This is not discrimination; rather, it is a responsible, considered, and safe approach to look after our society and our young people. To lower the age of majority to 18 would be irresponsible. The risk is simply too high. Thank you.

**NATHAN JONES (Wigram):** I wish to address the first amendment to the Age of Majority Act 1970, as put before the House today. I strongly support lowering the age of majority from 20 to 18, so that an 18-year-old can be called an adult. This is a positive step forward for the youth we are representing, and I feel that the majority of these youths will respect and live up to the responsibility given to them. There will always be the minority who abuse the system, the laws, and human morals, but we should not dwell on those few and disadvantage the rest of the youth.

If members are against this bill because they feel that youth cannot act responsibly, then I challenge them to think of the stereotypes that they hold of teenagers, who are mostly portrayed—by the media, no doubt—as being intoxicated minors, boy racers, thieves, and future criminals. We see these stereotypes without fail on the six o'clock news. Instead, I urge members to look past those few citizens and to pass this bill, to reward the good majority with the responsibility entrusted to them. The bad press that youth gets has been embedded into us, but I am sure that the youth members of the House will agree with me in stating that only a very few young New Zealanders are in that scene, and they are ruining it for the good, mature, fun-loving people whom I am representing here today.

Our older generation often thinks badly of someone who is young. For example, a young person driving on a full licence with passengers is a stereotype that fits with what the press has told the public. I ask that in voting on this bill, we look past the image of youth and really think about who the real youth are in our country and in our electorates.

Teenage social behaviour has changed since 1970, when this legislation was established, and it is considered today that at 18 you are an adult. If you can vote, drink, smoke, and be tried as an adult in the criminal justice system, then why is it that under this piece of legislation you are not deemed to be an adult? Lowering the age of majority would clear up that vague area, and the age should be decreased to 18 to match the rights that 18-year-olds already receive.

In conclusion, I say that the rights already given to 18-year-olds should run parallel to our calling 18-year-olds adults. I support lowering the age of majority in this bill, as we, the House, should think of the real youth: the ones who respect the law, respect the people who enforce it, and respect people in general. These are the real youth, the youth who should be on the 6 o'clock news. The legislation would be considered a legislative marker for further bills to be presented, and I feel strongly that the time is right to make this change and for 18 to be the age that future policies are based on.

**CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY (List):** I support the Adults Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill. Before I explain why, I would like to briefly look at the apparent effects of its two amendments.

The first decreases the age at which a person attains full age from 20 to 18. In practicality, what does that do? Currently, 18-year-olds can buy cigarettes and alcohol, get married, and start a family. Society already considers them to be adults. Also, the bill's explanatory note also states that Clause 4 "does not affect any legislation where there is specific provision made for an age limit to apply." So 18-year-olds would gain hardly any significant new rights through the bill. In that respect, the legislation seems to be purely symbolic recognition.

The second amendment removes the age specificity of 16 years or older attached to the prohibition against age-based discrimination. Although that seems like a logical step, what real effects would that change have? Once again, it seems very little.

There are very few cases in which the current legislation has been exploited. There is not really a problem that needs to be solved. However, this bill is important for other reasons. New Zealand has long been striving for the rights of women and indigenous people, but little attention has been paid to the rights of our youth. Child abuse and youth violence are increasing concerns, and we have one of the world's highest teen pregnancy rates.

We are one of only 24 countries in the world to have an age of majority higher than 18. Although this bill may have little effect on paper, it makes a statement: it says that we are tidying up our legislation, and beginning to make steps to modernise youth rights. There are already a number of pioneering initiatives under way to recognise our youth. This event is one of them. However, we must catch up to the rest of the world with our legislation before we begin to lead it. Passing this bill will be a foothold to greater things. Thank you.

**ALICE MARKIE (Northcote):** Age-based divisions in law should empower young people. In my area, we fully believe that youth play an important role in society, and that we are capable of contributing a lot more to New Zealand than we are given credit for. However—

**Robert Whitefield:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. In accordance with the Standing Orders, I think it is appropriate that the member address the Speaker before beginning her substantive speech.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** Well, I say that we can be picky about these things, but when I am in the Chair I like to see the debate flow. I would much rather that people get up and speak, and speak with some passion and authority about the topic, rather than worry about other things. The member makes a fair point, but I will not hold the person in error.

**ALICE MARKIE:** However, we believe that age-based legislation must always protect young people. An age threshold should always reflect the time of life when a person is mature enough to make rational decisions in a specified situation. For this reason, we do not believe that the age of majority should be lowered to 18.

There are times when a young person may be required to make a decision that will seriously affect others, and at those times it is obviously necessary to possess an adult level of maturity. With the age of majority resting at 20, a person in New Zealand must be 20 years of age to hold a liquor licence to sell and supply liquor. No one under the age of 20 years is permitted to be a welfare guardian for someone who cannot make decisions for himself or herself.

We have found that 20 is a logical and appropriate age. At 18 one simply cannot make decisions regarding another's welfare. A lot of us in my area felt that we would not be able to cope with such responsibility ourselves, and that we would not feel safe having youths so young in control of our friends and our family. We felt that it would be detrimental to young people's initial progression into adulthood to allow them to carry such a huge responsibility when they are still learning how to look after

themselves. We must consider that that could be dangerous, not only to those surrounding us but to our own self-image and confidence. Though we acknowledged the importance of recognising capable New Zealand youth, we found that it is more essential that the law is there to protect us.

Aristotle once said: “Youth is easily deceived because it is quick to hope.”, and we hold this to be true. Although it is nice to think of ourselves as fully-fledged adults at the age of 18, it is dangerously hopeful to trust that every youth is mature enough to make an adult decision that could result in the endangerment of another’s health. People here must realise that this law will affect everybody, not just the mature young adults in this room.

Although those under 16 will always maintain that age-based discrimination is wholly unfair, those who are older can see a certain aspect of reason behind it. As our information pack states: “when the Government makes a distinction between young people based solely on their age, the Government is essentially saying it considers that persons below the specified age lack the maturity to access a particular benefit ...”.

Again, youth in my area tend to agree that there should be a heavier emphasis on our safety before our over-empowerment. Therefore lowering the age of majority is a bad idea, as there is too large a risk that it will be damaging to give a youth who is only just beginning to mature into adulthood such a great responsibility that could, in many cases, end in the forfeiture of another’s well-being. Thank you.

**RAKAITEMANIA PARATA GARDINER (List):** Tēnā koe e te Mana Whakawā. I have three points to make. Firstly, the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill is a control mechanism for accessibility. So the question stands: do we want there to be more access to alcohol, marriage, voting, etc.? If so, we should lower the age from 20 to 18; if not, leave it as it is.

Secondly, what I think we as the youth of today think is important when referring to certain age-based activities is the right to drink, to drive, to have sex, to marry, and to vote, which, among other things, we obtain at the age of 18. Other more obscure rights that we obtain at 20 include the ability to become a private investigator or a security guard, and the right to enter a casino. In all practicality, this law is fundamentally redundant. Functionally, today’s age of majority is 18, so why do we not just legislate for reality?

Thirdly, we live in an ever-changing world. We are global citizens, and we are exposed to far more at a far younger age than young people were exposed to 10, 20, or 30 years ago. Becoming the eligible age—in this case, turning 18 or 20—means we can drink alcohol or vote, etc., not that we must.

Age does not equate to maturity. We do not all reach maturity at the same time, but we have to have a way of organising our society. We have to have a stab at when we think the majority have reached maturity. We need a proxy for that. The age of 20 worked for our parents in their world, but our world is different. I think 18 is our best guess. Thank you.

**CAITLIN WISEMAN (Coromandel):** The Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill seeks to reduce the age for accepting full legal majority from 20 to 18. When we turn 18 we can potentially be high-flying business people who travel the world and make decisions that affect not only us personally but thousands of our peers and others around us. When still in our teens we can buy addictive drugs such as tobacco and alcohol, which both have life-changing, and indeed life-threatening, effects. We are able to vote MPs into Parliament, and in fact become a member of Parliament. We can serve in the armed forces without the permission of a guardian, yet we are not deemed adults in New Zealand society today. We make important decisions, independent of guidance, yet by law we are still considered to be minors.

As things currently stand in New Zealand today a person is a child until the age of 18, so until we turn 20 we do not have either the rights of a child or the full rights of an adult. What is the point of having the age of majority at 20 if we are given the ability to make informed and serious decisions 2 years before we legally become adults—decisions that in today's world would be classed as adult judgments? Setting the age of majority at 18 makes clear and logical sense. The inconsistencies and exceptions in the laws governing minimum ages mean that many New Zealanders are unsure of the rules for certain legal entitlements.

Today's society is not what it used to be in 1970. Young people are moving out of home and making lives of their own earlier; hence New Zealand law needs to take this into consideration. If the age of majority stays at 20, it will gradually lose more and more significance as more pieces of legislation are brought in to enable young people—those younger than 20—to make decisions and assume responsibilities. We must remember that with privilege comes responsibility. What are we really teaching the 18-year-olds of New Zealand, by letting them do as adults do but not giving them the legal responsibilities that go with those privileges?

I seek leave to table a research paper entitled *A major decision: Considering the age of majority in Namibia* by Rachel Coomer and Dianne Hubbard. This is a research paper that backs up what I have said in my speech today.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Hon Rick Barker):** Leave is sought to table a paper. Is there any objection? There is no objection. The paper will be tabled.

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

**SHAMEELA NASSERY (List):** The age at which a person is given adult rights and responsibilities is known as the age of majority. It is a specified age at which the rights and privileges of an adult are legally granted. In turn, it abolishes the legal responsibilities and controls that parents and guardians have. The age of majority in New Zealand is currently 20. However, the driving age stands at 15 years, the legal age to consent to sex is 16, and the drinking age and the voting age is 18. The new initiative proposed by the Government is that New Zealand should create a single age of majority, meaning that different youth-focused activities will become lawful all at once—for example, at 18. However, I do not agree with this process. I propose that the Government raise the driving age from 15 to 16, lower the age of majority from 20 to 18, keep the legal age for consensual sex at 16, and keep the drinking age and the voting age at 18.

On April 15 this year Cabinet approved raising the driving age from 15 to 16 as part of the Government's 2010-20 Safer Journeys project. Raising the driving age higher than 15 is essential because at that age people are generally not mature enough to understand the consequences of being on the road in terms of safety. Under-age drivers have feelings of youthful invincibility. This is proven by the fact that teens have the lowest rate of seatbelt use and are more likely than older drivers to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns, ride with an intoxicated driver, and drive under the influence, which contributes to 30 percent of crashes that kill young people. Sixteen is an appropriate age to begin driving because it does not deprive youth too long of the independence of driving.

Another persistent dilemma for the Government has been the issue of raising the drinking age from 18 to 20. This is due to the ever-growing binge drinking culture that we have, as well as a rise in fatalities and casualties due to drink-driving. Raising the drinking age to 20 will not solve this problem. Teenagers usually get their supply of alcohol from parents or older friends, and they usually start drinking as soon as they start high school and begin socialising with older people. Raising the drinking age will

not stop this; it will have the reverse effect. The panic caused by this change will motivate youth to drink more heavily and possibly start experimenting at a younger age. Therefore, 18 is the most suitable age to drink, as the person would have reached adulthood and therefore be more mature in his or her decision making.

The voting age should also remain at 18, because that is the universal time at which a child is defined as becoming an adult. An average 18-year-old would be working or attending a tertiary institute, so it is assumed that they are mature and informed enough to know what they want in terms of their own welfare and the future of their country. They will have had enough life experience to be more aware of what options would best benefit their position in society, and how they would benefit from change. Also, the age to legally consent to sex in New Zealand should not change; it should remain at 16 years. We must lower the age of majority from 20 to 18.

**KERRI DUTHIE (Papakura):** Becoming an adult is a transition that is made over a period of time. You do not simply reach a certain age or pass a certain milestone and then have the same mentality and maturity as an adult. The proposition of lowering the age of majority and using it as a marker against which to compare and align other legislation is interesting.

Currently youth are given a new right or responsibility every few years. Imagine the chaos that would occur if they were all aligned to the age of majority. How would one cope with the freedom? Is it really a realistic goal to restrict youth from all the things that have come to define adolescence until the age of 18? The youth of today demand more rights and more freedom. They protest that they are mature and responsible and are being held back by the restrictions imposed by the Government. However, their behaviour and attitude towards the rights they currently have do not reflect their reasoning or back up their desire for further liberty.

The laws set to protect and support us are broken hundreds, if not thousands, of times every day by young people of both genders and of all racial and socio-economic groups. Does this rebellion highlight a lack of development and education in our youth? Admittedly, the current age-related legislation seems to be rather incoherent, making it probable that this illogical system is the reason behind the proposal to align it all to the age of majority. However, the rights we are given have varying degrees of nature and cannot be treated in the same manner.

Let us compare the ability to legally drive a car with the ability to legally purchase alcohol. It would be impractical to raise the driving age, as many young people are dependent on a licence to be able to transport themselves. In contrast, there is a huge amount of disapproval regarding the way young people consume alcohol, and the behaviour that follows. Clearly, the current drinking age of 18 is not appropriate and should perhaps be raised to an age where the consumer has reached a higher level of maturity. However, in both cases the legislation does not fit within the 18-plus age bracket set by the proposed age of majority.

It is everyone's understanding that the rights and responsibilities of young people need to be reviewed and amended, as currently they are not addressing the situations of concern or meeting the needs and requirements of our youth. When we consider the lack of respect young people have towards the current laws, we can see that lowering the age of majority and then aligning other legislation to it will not change young people's attitude towards legislation relating to age restrictions.

Why should we at 18 be given more rights and responsibilities? Our young people have already shown that we will not obey current laws, mostly because we can get away with not doing so, and also because many laws are unclear and hard to understand. Perhaps there should be greater effort on attempting to simplify laws and set them at a

more appropriate age, or educating our youth about what is acceptable and what is illegal.

**STUART KRUGER (Invercargill):** It is absolute nonsense to even begin to think that the age of majority can be a stepped process for different milestones in the life of an individual. You are either an adult or you are not. Keeping things simple is best for everyone. Young people will not be confused about their rights and responsibilities, and parents will not be left scratching their heads about when they are or are not responsible for their children.

Arguments suggesting that 18-year-olds should be able to drink alcohol but not buy it at a liquor store, or should be able to bet at the TAB but not enter a casino, are all red herrings and should be set aside in this debate. Surely if you have the ability to go to war, marry, vote in an election, stand for Parliament, and even theoretically be the Prime Minister of New Zealand, then you should be able to enjoy all the rights, and face all the responsibilities, of any other adult. Compared with the 1970s, we are now in an information age second to none. This generation of young adults has easy access to a wide range of knowledge and support, which makes entry into adulthood far less daunting.

Society nowadays also has stronger consumer protection systems in place, with a plethora of formal and informal Acts and initiatives that support consumers to make informed choices and protect consumers from being ripped off. For example, recent changes to financial and property legislation see compulsory full disclosure up front, which protects consumers more than ever before. Then there are TV programmes like *Fair Go* and *Target*, which keep service providers honest. All of these things together see young adults today exposed to less vulnerability than they were in the 1970s and earlier. Consequently, the risks to 18-year-olds entering the big, wide world are vastly reduced.

As for New Zealand's drinking culture, no legal action to increase the drinking age is going to change this situation. Our drinking problem is not a problem of age; it is an issue that pervades the whole of society, with young people emulating the behaviours and values of the older generation. What we need is to make drunkenness morally unacceptable. Societies and groups that place a high value on sobriety and a low value on intoxication do not need legal controls. I am referring to the likes of Italy, Spain, and Greece.

Let us be clear here: education and social marketing are the ways to deal with our drinking culture, not complicating the age-of-majority laws. In supporting bringing the age of majority down to 18, it makes good sense to amend the Human Rights Act 1993 so that 17-year-olds are not left stranded between two pieces of legislation. It also brings New Zealand into line with United Nations recommendations and the wider international community. Any vote against what is being recommended today is a vote for a nanny State. Let us not go there, people; let us make 18 the age of majority. Thank you.

**EMILY BOWDEN (Clutha-Southland):** We are debating adults' rights and responsibilities legislation, so we are talking about adults, right? Wrong. According to the Age of Majority Act 1970, full age is attained at 20 years of age. This bill proposes to lessen this legal adulthood milestone by 2 years, to 18. But I do not consider people aged either 19 or 20 to be adults; nor do my constituents. I was curious about youth opinion on adulthood in my electorate, so I conducted a survey of students. One question I asked was: "What age do you consider an adult to be, and why?". To that, I received surprising results, but the average was obvious. The most common reply, the average reply, was 25—not 20, and most definitely not 18. This was honestly not what I had expected, but the justification of opinions was valid. Many people mentioned that

they did not consider 18-year-olds as adults as they are too young and irresponsible, and for the most part they still rely on their parents. If 18-year-olds are not considered adults in the eyes of the people, why should they be treated as adults in the eyes of the law?

One of the students who participated in my survey said: "You are who you are by the age of 18. If you're crazy at 18, you'll be crazy at 50." That comment got me thinking. The age at which an individual becomes who they really are varies from person to person, due to many different factors throughout their lives. For some this age may be 17, and for others it may be 18, 19, 20, or older. It is very hard to say that all 18-year-olds can handle this or that. I feel that to ensure a high maturity level for those assuming adult rights and responsibilities, 20 is the best age.

Growing up in New Zealand is a progression of responsibility. This is a good system, as it enables us to build up our accountability as we mature and age, instead of being burdened with responsibility in one fell swoop. This is shown at the age of 15, when we are entrusted with the privilege and freedom of beginning our driving careers. At 18 we are given the opportunity to buy and drink alcohol. Finally, at 20 we are considered an adult in all aspects of our lives. To bring the age at which a person attains their legal majority down from 20 to 18 shortens the length of time for responsibility and maturity from other facets of young people's lives to sink in. Therefore, I think this bill should not be passed.

**CORY DIXON (Bay of Plenty):** So what defines an adult in today's society? Is it to be able to have sex, drink in a pub, or vote? I would say not. Adulthood is an age when people become independent, self-sufficient, and responsible. This is something that cannot be defined by the number of candles on your birthday cake; it is a gradual and lengthy transition. But when does this process of transition begin and when does it end?

The Government's actions to move towards a gradual alignment of ages of adult rights and responsibilities does not reflect this gradual progression. The age of majority is not celebrated in our culture. In fact, no youths I talked to could tell me the current age. So by reducing this age, are we just decreasing the protection offered to our young people?

The bill is also a matter of social expectations. If the country expects less from young people, they seldom fail to disappoint. Reducing the age to 18 will reduce expectations. Being an adult is about accepting reasonability, not numerical achievement.

The resources given to us refer to people staying in education for longer, being financially reliant on their parents for much longer, and getting married and having children later in life. This is contrary to the argument for lowering the age of majority.

The age at which someone is seen as competent to perform certain legal acts is a lot different from when a person is considered mature enough to be viewed as an adult. Therefore, I believe that your rights and responsibilities should be implemented at a series of ages, as levels of maturity and responsibility are reached. After our schooling years, independence is required for us to become individuated persons and useful citizens for the nation. Presently, although we achieve this status at 18, our parents are still responsible for us until age 20 and for paying our tertiary fees until age 25. Does the Government really want to be responsible for the incurred costs of another 2 years that young people are reliant on the Government?

In the modern world the processes of transition to adulthood and the world we young people are entering are undergoing fundamental transformations. Therefore, I propose that the legal age of maturity remain at 20, because I believe that at 18 years of age a large number of youths are still in the process of physical, emotional, and mental maturation. Thank you.

A personal vote was called for on the question, *That the Adult Rights and Responsibilities (Age of Majority) Bill be now read a third time.*

**Ayes 64**

Abera	Gera	McDonald	Sankaran
Ali	Halligan	McKinnon	Schouten
Allen	Hamer-Adams	McKnight	Sua
Anderson	Harvey	Muggeridge	Tullett
Borrie	Henry	Nassery	Vijayakumar
Campbell	Holmes	Nyman-Ambrose	Walsham
Carpenter	Illing	O'Donnell	Welsh
Colley	Jacob-Sauer	Ormsby	Whitefield
Coutts	Jones	Packer	Wiseman
Crabb	Joseph	Parata Gardiner	Zhang
Curran	Kennedy	Parata-Walker	Zhou
Currie	Keren	Porteous	Zwaan
Dam	Kruger	Power-Gordon	
Darroch	Lusk	Price	
Donnelly	Maharaj	Robertson	
Ellison	Mathers	Robinson	<i>Teller:</i>
Farley	McCourt	Ropeti-Iupeli	MacLeod

**Noes 49**

Abdul-Rassol	Duthie	Lucas, D	Scott
Admore	Eggers	Lucas, E	Sharma
Baker	Faitele	Mann	Singh, H
Balle	Hansen	Markie	Singh, M
Bell	Hari	MacDonald	Tautari
Biel	Hawley	Mihaere	Torrance
Bowden	Kaushal	Morris	Watling
Brown, H	Kendall	Oh	Welsby
Chamberlain	Kershaw	Pahulu	Xulué
Chen	Kumar	Pratt	
Clemens	Lai	Quansah	
Cribb	Lambert-Ehu	Rampal	<i>Teller:</i>
Dixon	Li	Rumbold	Summerlee

**Abstentions 2**

Jago-Ward	Webster
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Bill read a third time.

**MOTIONS****United Nations—65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of New Zealand's Membership**

**AMELIA MacDONALD (List):** I move, *That this House note the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New Zealand's inauguration as a founding member of the United Nations in 1945.*

Motion agreed to.

**New Zealand Bill of Rights Act—20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**CAMERON JACOB-SAUER (List):** I move, *That this House note the 20-year anniversary of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, which sets out the rights and fundamental freedoms of all New Zealanders.*

Motion agreed to.

**Age of Majority Act—30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**HAZZEL BROWN (List):** I move, *That this House commemorate the passing of the Age of Majority Act in 1970, lowering the age of majority from 21 to 20 years of age.*

Motion agreed to.

**Māori Land March—35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**SIALE MANN (North Shore):** I move, *That this House note the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Māori land march, which, led by Whina Cooper, presented a petition signed by 60,000 people to Prime Minister Bill Rowling on 13 October 1975, the primary aim of which was to call for a halt to the alienation of Māori land, and reassert Māori identity.*

Motion agreed to.

**Emissions Trading Scheme—Reduction in Emissions by SCA Hygiene Australasia**

**EMMA LUCAS (East Coast):** I move, *That this House recognise the achievement of Bay of Plenty company SCA Hygiene Australasia in reducing its carbon emissions by over 50 percent by using geothermal steam instead of natural gas for paper drying, in line with the global requirement to reduce carbon emissions, the objective of the emissions trading scheme, which is strengthening New Zealand manufacturing and employment.*

Motion agreed to.

**Rainbow Warrior—25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sinking**

**KIERAN WELSBY (List):** I move, *That this House note the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior on 10 July 1985, and acknowledge the continued effort to keep the Pacific nuclear-free.*

Motion agreed to.

**Football World Cup—All Whites**

**LORNA DONNELLY (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate the All Whites for qualifying for, and playing so well in, the FIFA World Cup 2010 being held in South Africa at present.*

Motion agreed to.

**Queen Elizabeth II—Diamond Jubilee**

**MARIETALINI ROPETI-IUPELI (Māngere):** I move, *That this House note the impending diamond jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, as Queen of New Zealand, in 2012.*

Motion agreed to.

**Green Party of Aotearoa—20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Founding**

**PORTIA ALLEN (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its formation in 1990.*

### **Corporal Willie Apiata VC—Congratulations**

**TONY JOSEPH TAUTARI (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate and acknowledge Corporal Willie Apiata VC on his continued service to the New Zealand Army, and bravery in extremely dangerous conditions in Afghanistan.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Youth Parliamentarians 2010—Commendation**

**SARAH OH (List):** I move, *That this House commend the members of Youth Parliament 2010 on gaining selection for this extremely auspicious event, and for their input and conduct while representing the youth of their constituencies and the whole of New Zealand.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Young People—Participation in Communities**

**BRITTANY PACKER (List):** I move, *That this House emphasise the importance of young people understanding and participating in decision-making processes, and that members return to their communities committed to being active citizens and encouraging others to be likewise.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Presiding Officers—Thanks**

**AMY HALLIGAN (Kaikōura):** I move, *That this House thank Mr Speaker and the Assistant Speakers for making themselves available to preside over Youth Parliament 2010.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Members of Parliament—Thanks**

**ANNA HAMER-ADAMS (Palmerston North):** I move, *That this House express sincere thanks to all members of Parliament for providing the youth members of Parliament with the opportunity and privilege of participating in Youth Parliament 2010, and note that we are fortunate to live in a country that enjoys freedom of speech and adheres to strong principles of democracy.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Minister of Youth Affairs—Congratulations**

**SUNIL SHARMA (Waitakere):** I move, *That the sixth New Zealand Youth Parliament congratulate the Minister of Youth Affairs and the multi-party parliamentary steering committee on a successful 2010 New Zealand Youth Parliament.*

Motion agreed to.

### **Youth Parliament Staff—Thanks**

**LYNN CHEN (List):** I move, *That this House thank the people who have worked to make Youth Parliament 2010 a success, including staff from the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Clerk, the Parliamentary Service, Bellamy's, and the Ministry of Youth Development.*

Motion agreed to.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, before I adjourn the House I congratulate you on your performance as New Zealand's Youth MPs for 2010. It is a very special thing to take your place in this debating chamber. The seats you sit in many people have sat in over many, many years. In fact, when I came into this place bright-eyed and bushy-tailed none of you were born. It is to the month 26 years since I entered this place and sat in a

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seat somewhere way up in the back corner up there where some of you people are at the moment.

I share this one thing with you: by being selected for Youth Parliament, you are all outstanding and well-educated young New Zealanders. I have been so impressed by how articulately you have expressed your views here today. But one thing I would not mind betting is that over the years you will change your views. I urge you to keep an open mind. Believe me, what I thought was best and made sense when I came into this place 26 years ago, I disagree with now totally. If you keep an open mind and are prepared to go on learning, you just learn so much. So I urge you to always keep an open mind, and always go on learning, because life is a great educator and there is so much to learn.

I hope you have enjoyed your time. Again, I thank all the staff, my staff, the Minister of Youth Affairs, and all members who have been involved with Youth Parliament. I say to all of you to go well, travel well, go safely, enjoy yourselves, and have a great 6 months as our Youth MPs.

**The House adjourned at 5 p.m.**