

Youth Parliament 2016

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For presentation to the House of Representatives

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TUESDAY, 19 JULY 2016

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 11.30 a.m.

Karakia.

ORAL QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Mr SPEAKER: The House comes to questions for oral answer. Before I start, members, I remind you that the rules for questions to Ministers are set out in the Youth Parliament Standing Orders, numbers 57 to 61.

Schools—Māori Boarding Schools

1. **CHAEI MANUEL (Youth MP for Adrian Rurawhe)** to the **Minister of Education:** He aha ngā whakaritenga kua whakaritea e koe mō ngā kura ā-noho Māori, pērā ki a Hato Pāora, Te Aute, Hukarere me ēra atu o ngā kura mō ngā tau kei te heke mai nei?

[What considerations have you visualised for Māori boarding schools like Hato Pāora, Te Aute, Hukarere, and other boarding schools like that in years to come?]

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** Our vision for Māori boarding schools in New Zealand is to ensure that all young tamariki have equality of opportunity. That means ensuring that we raise Māori achievement under this Government. Since 2008 we have seen a dramatic shift in Māori achievement, from approximately 44 percent of all Māori 18-year-olds with National Certificate of Educational Achievement level 2 in 2008 to 71 percent this year. Our vision is to continue that achievement, but it is also to invest in scholarships for young Māori, and we have put more money into Māori scholarships.

Kiwa Erueti-Newman: At the heart of democracy, there should always be learning, and if we are to find pathways forward as a nation, one must continue to learn and carry this on throughout his or her life. We pride ourselves on leading the world on indigenous legislation. Therefore, it makes sense that we encourage the growth of focus for those things that we deem crucial for our nation—and Māori boarding schools fit well into this category and model. So this is my question: what resources do you guarantee Māori boarding schools will receive in order for them to grow as a part of this nation, Aotearoa New Zealand?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Firstly, we guarantee some basic resources that we have been given over several generations in terms of basic education costs. That includes property costs. I think it is about \$3 million that we spend on about 600 students to ensure that they have access to scholarships.

Political Studies—Role in Curriculum and Voter Participation

2. **DANI CLEMENTS-LEVI (Youth MP for Hon Maggie Barry)** to the **Minister of Education:** Given the decrease in voting percentages amongst young people, why is a form of political studies not included in the education system from an early age?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** The member is actually not correct. A form of political studies is taught in schools throughout time at school. Social studies, history, and geography are taught by most schools in most years. It is also important to understand that we also support civic education. The Minister knows that

her colleague the Hon Nikki Kaye, the Minister for Youth, is doing a huge amount in the area of civics education, including funding youth organisations to support the curriculum more so it is not just about the work we are doing in terms of political studies but also about civics education.

Ellen Travis: What are some other possible ways we can integrate the topic of politics into the youth community so that young people have an understanding of the importance of voting?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: I think there are three or four things that we can be doing. The first thing is that there are a lot of young New Zealanders whom we talk to who do not know enough about our political system. That is why it is very important that every 3 years we hold the annual Youth Parliament. We expect that youth parliamentarians will go back to their community and lift the level of education in our communities about what happens in Parliament. Secondly, the Electoral Commission is ramping up its resources to make sure that more young people know about our political system. Thirdly, as I have said in my previous answer, we need to do more in the area of civics education to ensure that every young New Zealander in school has more of an understanding of our political system. Finally, I think all New Zealanders have a responsibility to educate young people about what the changes are that they can make in society. That means, whether it is representation at every single level in the community or whether it is education in schools, it cannot just be about those community organisations and leaving it up to the teachers.

Education System—Public School Accountability and Parental Involvement

3. JENNY WU (Youth MP for Mahesh Bindra) to the Minister of Education: What is being done to ensure appropriate and quality education in public schools, and that every parent is aware and committed to the education of his/her children?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the Minister of Education: We are doing a lot, in terms of parents, to ensure that more parents have access to understanding, firstly, how their young person is doing in achievement through the implementation of national standards—that has been crucial to ensuring that every parent has a stake in the achievement of their child. Secondly, we are investing in something called a parent portal, which is also about ensuring that that data is not just about achievement but that parents have access to other rich and meaningful information in terms of young people. Thirdly, we are reviewing our funding system, and part of that is about saying that if we are going to raise the quality of life of every young New Zealander, then we need to make sure that they have access to equality of opportunity. That means that our funding system needs to support the needs of every young person. By doing that, we will empower more parents, because they will have more confidence in our system.

Jaimee Thomas: Does she stand by her decision to allocate funding and support to digital technology programmes in schools, when last year 305,000 children were living in poverty and 148,000 Kiwi children went to school without necessities such as food and clothing?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Yes, I do stand by our decision to fund critical programmes in terms of digital technologies, but it is not an either/or. Let me walk you through what this Government has been doing for our most vulnerable young New Zealanders. We have funded breakfast in schools. That means that over 500 schools now have access to breakfast in schools as a result of our Government. We have increased Fruit in Schools, which is a programme to ensure that more young people have access to fruit during the day. We have also done a range of things in terms of young New Zealanders to lift their quality of life, including the insulation of hundreds of thousands of houses, with the Green Party. We are ensuring that—whether it is immunisation—we are doing a whole lot more in health. So it is not an either/or.

But let me come back to why it is important to invest in digital technologies. Separate to the well-being and all of the investment that we are making for those young people—whether it is Food in Schools—we also believe that the future of our young people will be determined by their being able to participate in a 21st century economy.

That means that we have funded \$200 million to enable every school in New Zealand to have access to uncapped data and fast connections. We are one of only a few countries in the world that will deliver that, and we stand by that decision.

Child Poverty—Information for Public

4. CREEDENCE CABLE (Youth MP for Hon David Parker) to the **Minister for Social Development**: What measures are being taken to ensure that New Zealanders understand how many children are living in poverty?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the **Minister for Social Development**: I refer the member partly to some of my previous answer in terms of what the Government is doing to invest in young people—whether that is fruit in schools, whether it is breakfast in schools. But what I can say to you is that we believe that the measurement of poverty is quite a complex issue. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) does produce the household incomes report each year, which looks at a range of measures, and MSD and the Department of Statistics have worked together to improve data collection on the hardships that children experience. This information, we think, is likely to be available in the 2017 incomes report.

Setareh Brown: In New Zealand, a large proportion of children are living in poverty, so I would like to know what measures we have in place to ensure that those children who have been living in poverty are leaving high school with at least one National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) qualification.

Hon NIKKI KAYE: There are two areas that we are working on. As I said before, we are doing a huge amount that is separate from all of the initiatives I have already mentioned. We are also the first Government in 42 years to raise benefits, and we are very proud of that. We have also increased other measures, including hardship grants for those parents who may be living below the line, and we want to ensure that their children have access to greater resources. In terms of NCEA, as I said before in answer to question No. 1, no Government in the last 15 to 20 years has been responsible for enabling such a lift for Māori and Pacific students in particular. We have seen huge numbers, as I said in answer to the first question—45 percent on average to 70 percent for Māori achievement. So we are investing both to ensure that every young person has access to resources and so that we have fewer vulnerable children in poverty. We are also very, very focused on achievement—because that is a key passport for those young people—to ensure that we have real generational change in those families.

Child, Youth and Family—Adequacy and Foster Care

5. AMY PALMER (Youth MP for Joanne Hayes) to the **Minister for Social Development**: Does the Minister believe that the measures put in place for the care and protection of vulnerable children by Child, Youth and Family are properly adhering to the needs of these children, and is the foster system as good as it could be?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Economic Development) on behalf of the **Minister for Social Development**: No. I believe that New Zealand's care and protection system is broken, which is why Cabinet has agreed to a major overhaul of the system. Instead of focusing on crisis management, the new operating model will have five core services:

prevention, intensive intervention, care support, transition support, and youth justice. There will be a stronger focus on the participation of children and young people in all the processes that affect them, so that they know what is happening and that their views are heard. It will allow for the direct purchasing of services, better support for caregivers, and national care standards so that young people know what to expect from a placement. The age of care is also being raised to 18, with work being done on what support can be provided up to age of 25. If we are going to get better results for children and young people in care, we need a system that supports them much better.

Charlie Wang: How does the Minister plan to fund foster caregivers in the Child, Youth and Family programme who are facing challenges such as rising housing prices, as a high proportion of caregivers are in low-income families and households, and 42 percent of the caregiver population is currently receiving a benefit? How will the Minister make sure that the foster care families' incomes keep up with costs in order to maximise the potential they provide to vulnerable children?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: We do, of course, work with caregivers in a number of ways, including the direct provision of the benefits and the additional support they receive. Budget 2016 also included just under \$350 million for care and protection, and I have always said that further funding would come as more detailed design and costing work for the service is completed. The member raises some interesting points around cost pressure: the Budget allocates \$145 million over 4 years to meet cost pressures and increased demand for services, and \$199 million over 4 years for the transformation programme and the new operating model for these services.

Youth Engagement—Youth Service

6. HOPE SEXTON (Youth MP for Ron Mark) to the Minister for Social Development: Does the Minister stand by her statement that the Youth Service has been very successful with 86.5 percent of clients engaged in education, training, or work; if so, where does this figure come from given the rate of unengaged youth has climbed above pre-2008 levels for 8 years and is now over 12.4 percent, the highest level it has been for more than 3 years?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Economic Development) on behalf of the Minister for Social Development: I do stand by this statement. It is important to ensure that young people are engaged in education, employment, or training. We want to ensure that all young people have opportunities to contribute their talents to our country. We know people are more likely to stay on benefits if they enter the system before the age of 20. Seventy-five percent of the future cost of all the current benefit-system clients is attributable to those who actually go on to a benefit before they turn 20, so the Youth Service targets young people who are at risk in this way. It pairs young people up with a youth coach, who helps them to find, or stay, in education, training, or employment, and that youth coach also works with them to manage their budget and meet their obligations. The engagement figure of 86.5 percent relates to the group of young people enrolled in the Youth Service. There is also a wider range of work across Government to ensure that all young people are supported to remain in, or engage with, education, training, or employment through initiatives like the Youth Guarantee programme, trades academies, and Limited Service Volunteers, which are the work of my fellow Ministers Hekia Parata and Steven Joyce. In terms of the 12.4 percent of all young people aged between 15 and 24 who are not engaged in education, it is important to note that, of course, this was significantly affected through the global financial crisis. Although it is still higher than we would like, it is considerably better than most countries around the OECD.

Josh Gill: Ka aha Te Minita kia urupare ki te ripoata *Unconscious Bias in Education*, i taea i tēnei marama te whakaatu, anā, ko te ngākau kino o ngā kaiako ki ngā tauira Māori, te tino take mō te tau wehi o ngā taiohi Māori ki ngā hua o ngā tuihana auraki i Aotearoa?

[What will the Minister do in response to the report Unconscious Bias in Education, which was able to reveal this month that it was really the unconscious negative attitude by teachers to Māori students that turned off young Māori from mainstream institution outcomes?]

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: On behalf of the Minister for Social Development, this is possibly a question better directed to either the Minister of Education or the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment—but I happen to know the latter. In this case, right across the education system, we are doing a lot of work to ensure that education providers, whether they be schools or tertiary providers, tailor more of their services for Māori students. The way we measure that is to look at the performance of those schools and tertiary providers for Māori students—and we are seeing significant improvements. For example, we look at things like achievement of National Certificate of Educational Achievement level 2, or level 3, or a university entrance; and at the university and polytechnic level, we look at the rate of qualification of young Māori. We are seeing significant improvements, but I think we have still got some way to go yet, and our absolute goal and determination is that the rates of achievement for young Māori students are as good as for every other New Zealander. That is something that all the Ministers are very focused on.

Mr SPEAKER: We move now to question No. 7, and my notes show it belongs to Kiri Crossland, who I understand is having difficulty travelling from Hamilton to be with us. Would somebody please be asking question No. 7, which is to the Hon Michael Woodhouse?

Paris Climate Summit—Public Participation

7. SKYLAR TANGIORA (Youth MP for Meka Whaitiri) to the **Minister for Climate Change Issues:** How will ‘the average New Zealander’ be able to help our country in reaching the environmental goals created at the Paris Climate Summit?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (Minister of Revenue) on behalf of the **Minister for Climate Change Issues:** There are lots of things the average New Zealander can do to help. At home, we can reduce our use of electricity through energy-saving initiatives such as those suggested on the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority website—for example, insulating our houses and switching to energy-saving lightbulbs. We can buy an energy-efficient or electric car. We can reduce the waste we send to landfills, because landfills produce the harmful greenhouse gas methane. We can use public transport, cycle, or walk as much as possible. We can plant trees, and we can raise awareness amongst our families, schools, and communities.

Stephen Jones: How is the average New Zealander expected to step up and deal with climate change when our own Government does not have a plan for meeting our Paris climate target?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: On the contrary, the Government has a comprehensive plan to meet our global responsibilities, but, as has been said on many occasions, this is a global problem that requires a global solution. We have one of the most advanced emissions trading schemes in the world. We are also seen as leaders in the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, one of the few very good things to come from the Copenhagen summit. Although our own profile of emissions is 0.16 percent, agricultural emissions globally are over 14 percent. If we can reduce agricultural emissions right across the planet through those initiatives, we will be making a significant contribution to reductions in greenhouse gases.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are proceeding with this question time well ahead of schedule, so I am going to give the opportunity for additional supplementary questions to be asked. I will give them, in the first instance, to the person who has asked the first supplementary question, if that person feels that the Minister has not given a satisfactory answer. If that member does not wish to take a supplementary question, I will look elsewhere in the House. The procedure then is for you to stand on your feet in an orderly fashion and call for my attention by calling “Mr Speaker”, and I will allot an additional supplementary question. I now give you the chance to give some thought to what those supplementary questions might be, and I do point out that, in adherence with the Standing Orders, they must relate to the original primary question. If they are substantially away from the primary question, you risk the Speaker deciding that he will rule them out of order.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions—Increases and Initiatives to Reduce

8. CHARLOTTE CUMMING (Youth MP for Eugenie Sage) to the **Minister for Climate Change Issues:** Why have climate damaging greenhouse emissions only increased under this Government and what measures, if any, does the Government have in place to combat these emissions by 2030?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (Minister of Revenue) on behalf of the **Minister for Climate Changes Issues:** Although our emissions have gone up by around 1 percent per year since 1990, the emissions intensity of our economy—that is, gross emissions per unit of GDP—has actually decreased by 34 percent since 1990, suggesting economic growth is decoupling from emissions. Our economy is growing faster than our GDP. Gross emissions per capita have decreased by 4.4 percent since 1990 and New Zealand is moving very firmly towards a low-emissions economy. A range of actions are being undertaken across the Government that will help reduce New Zealand’s emissions in the future.

Callum Findlater: Would the Minister be willing to suggest to the Finance Minister that these initiatives that the Government is undertaking be funded using Reserve Bank credit, as was done so successfully in the 1930s for the creation of State housing; if not, why not?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: No. I do not believe that would be necessary or appropriate. What we do have is a monetary policy system that is quite different from that which existed in the 1930s. What we will continue to encourage, though, is a mix of incentives and disincentives for people to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and, in particular, the emissions trading scheme, which has been reformed so that emitters will pay the full cost of their emissions by 2019. We are also banning the cheap overseas credits that have kept the price of carbon low, and already that is seeing a more market-based price for carbon at the moment. So I believe we are doing what we need to do to ensure that greenhouse gas emissions do reduce.

Mr SPEAKER: Are there further supplementary questions from—

Stefan McClean: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just ask that when I call a supplementary question, you give your name. It is not as if I have had the opportunity to know you all at this stage. So in calling you, then start your question by just saying who you are.

Stefan McClean: Stefan McClean. Seeing that overall carbon emissions have increased and seeing that New Zealand’s primary producers, such as dairy, are major contributors to that increase, would the Minister then consider further regulations on industries such as dairy that are, perhaps, not as regulated as much as they could be?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Well, there are a number of strands to that question. I will address the growth in greenhouse gas emissions first. We have increased our population by about 25 percent in that same period, so it is not surprising then that greenhouse gas emissions on a gross basis would go up. However, what we are also doing is making sure that the output is as efficient as possible, and dairy farming does have an important part to play in that. Methane gas reduction strategies are very much at the forefront of that agricultural alliance. I am also aware that Fonterra, which takes the majority of our milkfat, also sets very high environmental standards for our dairy farmers, and they, of their own volition, are working extremely hard through things like riparian planting and better water and nitrous usage to ensure that their carbon footprint is as low as it can be.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, can I just take this opportunity on your behalf to welcome our three Youth MPs who have just arrived and, I understand, were interrupted by flights, again, from the Hawke's Bay—Daniel Kelly, Rebecca Newman, and Abby May. Welcome.

Childhood Obesity—Initiatives to Reduce

9. NGAHUIA MURU (Youth MP for Hon Anne Tolley) to the **Minister of Health:** What is the Government doing in order to help young people maintain healthy eating habits and exercise given the growing rate of obesity in New Zealand, and what, if any, success have actions already put in place had?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the **Minister of Health:** We have a very comprehensive plan to tackle childhood obesity that includes, I think, about 22 initiatives. One of them is around sport in schools, for which we are investing \$8 million to improve the number of young people who are active. Another one is around 150 new decile 1 to 4 primary schools being part of the healthy promotion of food in schools. In terms of success, I can tell you we have another initiative called Raising Healthy Kids and the B4 School Checks, and I can tell you that about 1,400 children have been referred through their B4 School Checks to clinicians, to support them in terms of their healthy eating.

Chantelle Cobby: Given that obesity is contributable to type 2 diabetes and this is increasing predominantly in our Māori and Pacific Island population, is the Government adopting extra measures to help assist in reducing these rates?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: I cannot get you the exact figure now, but the Government is investing significantly, both, obviously, in the healthy food and promotion of tackling childhood obesity, but we are also investing additional funds around those New Zealanders who have diabetes and in the prevention and community education programmes—particularly in Māori and Pacific communities—to encourage healthy eating so that we have fewer of those people who actually get it as a result of particular environmental factors. We do know that there is a group of New Zealanders—in fact, I can say that one of my family members has had diabetes from other means. It is, in part, from a transmission of a virus. That is partly how some people get diabetes. So I think the point is that we absolutely need to continue on our plan in terms of tackling areas like childhood obesity. We do need to target communities like Māori and Pacific communities around community education. We need to invest more in terms of our health system around supporting those people who have diabetes, and we also need to recognise that some people do not get it from issues in terms of food.

Katrina Sneath: How is the Minister planning for the success of these programmes to continue in the future?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: The way that we will ensure that these programmes continue in the future is not just by having the initiatives that I have announced; it is also by having, I think, a

cross-party approach to this issue. I know that there are many members of Parliament in this House who agree we need to be doing more in terms of tackling obesity. It is also about ensuring that it is not just parliamentarians who have this view but that all New Zealanders are taking responsibility for their own health. That will happen through education. That will happen through education from parents, but also through a commitment at the community level.

Mental Health Service, Canterbury—Funding

10. HUIA JACKSON (Youth MP for Steffan Browning) to the **Minister of Health**: Does the Minister believe that the Government has offered sufficient mental health funding and facilities to the people of Christchurch following the earthquakes; if so, why?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the **Minister of Health**: Yes, but we continue to do more for the people of Canterbury. This Government has a proud record of supporting Cantabrians as a result of the earthquake. Not only have we invested billions to fix the physical infrastructure of the city but also we are investing in psychosocial services. This year the Government announced an additional \$20 million—I think it was in March of this year—to support, particularly, young people and their mental health issues. That is on top of the district health board (DHB) funding, which is about \$150 million. So although we are doing a huge amount—and this Government is absolutely committed to enabling the recovery of those Cantabrians—we also plan to continue to review this and continue to do more in this area.

Danielle Carson: Can the Minister explain his reasoning and justification behind the average Southlander receiving a 6-week waiting period to gain the vital first appointment in our Southland mental health system despite one in four people suffering from a mental health issue and the fact that there has been a reported five suicides in Southland of youth in recent months?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: I would have to go and check those exact figures that the member has quoted in terms of waiting times, but what I can tell the member is, firstly, in terms of funding, if you even look at some of the DHBs—and I am aware that in terms of Canterbury, there is an additional increase of about \$300 million. So we are spending more than ever. The second part is that it is not just about funding; it is actually about ensuring that it is not just our core mental health services that we are funding but that we are also doing more in the prevention of areas like self-harm and the prevention of suicide. That is why I know my colleague the Hon Nikki Kaye, who is the Minister for Youth, is doing a huge amount with youth groups to look at the prevention of youth suicide. An example of this is the LGBTI youth community. LGBTI youth are five times more likely to self-harm. Minister Kaye has funded a range of initiatives—in fact, Rainbow Youth has the first contract ever in New Zealand's history to enable us to get into those target groups and ensure that those people who may be most at risk are getting prevention programmes. So it is not just the ambulance-at-the-bottom-of-the-cliff stuff.

Jaimee Thomas: If he stands by his answer to the primary question offered shortly before, is he able to offer clarification on the decrease in funding when an increase in dependent people has come about following the Canterbury earthquakes?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Firstly, we are spending more. That is an absolute fact, so any assertion that we are not is absolutely incorrect. There is an additional \$300 million in the Canterbury area—the initiative this year, in terms of \$20 million more. So we are spending more. Secondly, I think it is important to have a global context here. I know, again, I am quoting my colleague the Hon Nikki Kaye a little bit, but she is Minister of Civil Defence, and if you look at situations across the world, you will find that it is not uncommon to find huge mental health

and psychosocial issues that emerge as a result of such a large-scale event like this. So of course we are investing more, but this is hard, and we are alongside many other nations that have found, from huge events like earthquakes or tsunamis or other events like that, that you have really challenging issues in terms of mental health. We will continue to do more.

Mr SPEAKER: Was there an additional supplementary question from Huia Jackson?

Huia Jackson: Yes, there was. Does the Minister believe that increasing funding by \$20 million over 3 years, as referred to in her answer to my previous question, is an example of sufficient funding when the amount requested by the Canterbury District Health Board was in fact \$45 million over 10 years?

Mr SPEAKER: That is certainly not a patsy question.

Hon NIKKI KAYE: The member has his figures wrong. What I can tell the member is that if you listen to my primary answer and if you check *Hansard*, you will see that I said we have increased funding by \$20 million earlier this year. What I can actually tell the member is that the DHB will spend about \$150 million on mental health services, and that is an extra \$26 million compared with 8 years ago. With regard to the go-forward, in terms of the next 10 years, I am confident that if the member supports the National Government, then he might just see some additional funding.

Youth, Rural—Employment Opportunity

11. BEN HENDERSON (Youth MP for Ian McKelvie) to the **Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment:** What is the Minister doing to ensure rural young people have all of the tools necessary to access employment opportunities and subsequently gain a position in the workforce?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment): The Government has a range of initiatives to ensure that all young people, including those in rural areas, gain the skills and information they need to enter the workforce and succeed in a modern economy. In particular, the range of initiatives under the Youth Guarantee help improve the students' transitions from school to work by providing a wide range of learning opportunities, making better use of the education network, and providing clear pathways from school to a career. These include the vocational pathways programme, trades academies, service academies, fees-free places at tertiary institutions for levels 1 and 2, and other secondary-tertiary programmes. In addition, with all of the career and study options available, the Government is introducing a range of additional tools to allow and help students to make informed decisions on their options. These include the *Occupational Outlook* app, which I would recommend members to download on their smartphones, iPhones, or other phones. That provides employment and income information on 60 key occupations and, also, the employment outcomes for tertiary education, which provides information on income and job prospects for a range of study options, and there is a new MyPath website, which helps students map out their study options towards a career. The Government has a range of initiatives under way around information pathways and as many study opportunities as possible for students in rural areas and around the country.

Grace Holmes: Have you thought about increasing transport opportunities such as implementing driver's licence programmes for youth in rural areas in order to increase access to employment opportunities?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: This would possibly not be the time to admit that, under a former portfolio, I might have had something to do with lifting the driver age to 16 instead of 15. But in terms of the member's question, there is a range of programmes actually being piloted at

the moment under the auspices of the Minister of Transport. It can be quite challenging to provide all the different driving opportunities that a driver trainee needs to be able to successfully obtain a licence in some rural areas, where you have, perhaps, low levels of traffic, for example. So there is a balance between providing licences everywhere and making sure that student drivers get the opportunity to experience all the different driving conditions. So there is some work being done, there are some pilot programmes, but I think the member makes a very good suggestion, and I am looking to see that developed further, wearing my tertiary education hat.

Charlie Wang: What Government plans and benefits can be put into place to attract more international talent to work in New Zealand?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: We have a comprehensive programme to attract international students to study in New Zealand. We have about 125,000 to 130,000 of those young people studying in New Zealand each year alongside Kiwi students. That brings lots of benefits for New Zealand, including the ability for Kiwi students to be able to experience different cultures. It is an opportunity for the economies of each region where those students are studying, where they, obviously, buy products and services in those areas, and, probably most importantly, when the students go home to their country once they graduate, they most often have a very strong and positive view of New Zealand, which lasts through their whole adult lives and means that in much bigger countries than New Zealand we have advocates and, effectively, ambassadors for our country in those countries. I have met many young Chinese, many young Malaysians, and others who have studied for a period in this country and then gone home and are passionate advocates for our country. So we are very aware of the benefits of bringing those people to New Zealand—not just to work here, as the member raises but also for the interconnections that we have with the wider world.

Ben Henderson: Will regional growth strategies being formulated, such as the one for the Manawatū-Rangitikei region, contain strategies to retain populations of young people in the regions?

Hon STEVEN JOYCE: Yes. Most of the regional growth strategies have a section devoted to that, because it is, from their perspective—and I completely agree—important to retain as many young people as possible. However, in regions like the one I originally came from, it was also a tradition for many young people from Taranaki to go off to university, whether it be Massey, Victoria, Auckland, or Otago, or so on, and the trick, then, to attracting those young people back, and others, once they have completed their studies is to encourage the growth and investment in that region to ensure that there are exciting businesses for them to come and work for. All these things have to work together. So, yes, you want to retain as many as you can in the region and provide them with opportunities, but you also want to have the sorts of opportunities that attract them back.

Refugees—Quota

12. BIANCA BAILEY (Youth MP for Rt Hon John Key) to the Minister of Immigration: Why will the Government not increase New Zealand's refugee quota in the time of the biggest humanitarian crisis in decades?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (Minister of Immigration): It is an excellent question, and the member will be aware that since her question was lodged, the Government has committed to increasing the refugee quota for the first time in nearly 30 years, to 1,000 places annually from 2018-19. Last year we committed to resettling an additional emergency intake of Syrian refugees over the next 2 years, effectively taking our intake to 1,000 from now. So we are permanently increasing that base quota to 1,000 from 2018-19. Furthermore, the annual refugee quota is supplemented by other refugee programmes,

including the family reunion category, and an additional nearly 175 asylum-seeker places that have their claims approved every year. Summing all of that up, we are presently taking nearly 1,500 refugees each year, and I think that reflects the contribution and commitment from New Zealand to the resettlement of refugees at this very, very restless time.

Veronica Manning: What steps has the Government already taken in support of refugees entering New Zealand, such as housing, education, health, and infrastructure?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Accepting refugees under the quota programme is the very first step in a long programme of ensuring that they settle well and become effective and productive New Zealanders. On arrival into New Zealand, all quota refugees will spend 6 weeks at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre in South Auckland, which has recently been the beneficiary of a \$21 million building upgrade. It is now in a very, very good condition to be able to assimilate the children into schooling and help adults into English as a second language, with vocational training, and with understanding things that we take for granted—such as the simple use of an ATM machine, or understanding that in New Zealand a person in a police uniform can be trusted. Once they are settled into the six refugee cities around New Zealand, they will be supported for the next 2 years by the Red Cross, which is engaged by the Government to provide housing and social support—or liaison for those supports—and to ensure that they settle well and connect with their communities, because it is only then that I think we will have achieved the full benefit of the tremendous contribution that they can make to our society.

Tei Driver: What does the Minister have planned to get young people involved in being the future of our country, which is currently sitting on the Security Council, if the young people cannot bring people from other cultures into their own; are there any other such initiatives that can make this happen?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Yes. There are a number of initiatives and opportunities for young people to be able to engage, particularly with our refugee community. One of the things that I want to trial in this next 3-year period of the quota programme is a form of community sponsorship that harks back to a couple of generations ago when New Zealand extended its hospitality to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees by ensuring that those families were settled into church groups and communities around the country. What was really important about that was that it was not left only to the Government to be able to assimilate those refugees. What I would encourage all young people to do is to connect and offer their hospitality to refugees and their family members if they are to be settled into their schools, their sports clubs, and their communities.

Cameron Wright: What is the Government doing long term to look after newly arrived people of refugee backgrounds given that it extends funding with the Red Cross to help look after those refugee families for only 2 years?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Yes, it is true that the Red Cross is directly engaged for 2 years in a liaison role, but that is not the full picture. Indeed, the taxpayer invests around \$100,000 per refugee per year for the first 4 years of their arrival into New Zealand. When the Government looked at the settlement outcomes for refugees in 2012, it was surprised and very concerned to note that of adult refugees of working age only 40 percent or so were in paid employment 10 years after they arrived. Their children were not doing as well at secondary school or university and they were lacking the basic skills to connect into society—like English language—and connections with their communities. So we have invested very heavily through the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy to ensure that those statistics are turned round. It is early days in that strategy—3 years is not actually a very long time to be able to judge the effectiveness of it—but we are seeing, even at this

early stage, signs of improvement in those key health, education, and social outcomes that I think we need to continue to persevere with.

Charlie Wang: How does the Minister think the support to refugees will be beneficial given that our own support to vulnerable children, such as through Child, Youth and Family, has huge problems?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: It is a very good question, and it is one of the dilemmas that face Governments every day—the question of either/or. As Minister Nikki Kaye said on behalf of the Minister of Education in an earlier question, it is not a case of either/or. I am quite satisfied that we can do both: we can fulfil our international humanitarian obligations while ensuring that the same sort of charity and support are extended to those vulnerable families here in New Zealand. What worries me from time to time is the small—and, hopefully, diminishing—group of New Zealanders who see migrants generally, and refugees in particular, as some of the problem that we should not have to deal with. We do not accept that. We are an important contributor—albeit a small country—to addressing a global problem, and I think that we need to continue to pursue our efforts to support as many people as we can, but, in doing so, ensuring that they achieve good outcomes and become excellent New Zealanders.

Alofa So'olefai: How can we guarantee that refugees from this humanitarian crisis are able to grow academically and physically alongside our New Zealand citizens given their cultural differences?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Oh, that it were as easy as guaranteeing it. What I can reassure the member of is that the Government is redoubling its efforts to ensure that every support is put around refugee families on their arrival to ensure that they understand the opportunities that exist here, and that education is an important part of their settlement outcomes—and not just for their children. I do not think that we should have to wait a whole generation for our refugee families to do well. I am very interested in ensuring that adult education, particularly English as a second language, is imparted to the parents as well as their children, and that they settle well. The member can be confident that there is a significant programme to ensure that refugees' education needs are being met.

Environment—Plastic Bags

13. KATRINA SNEATH (Youth MP for Mojo Mathers) to the Minister for the Environment: What steps are currently being taken to ensure plastic bags don't create a problem in our environment?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for the Environment): Back in 2009 we introduced a waste levy that charges \$10 a tonne on all waste going to landfill. That generates an income stream of \$30 million a year, which we then use to fund programmes to more appropriately deal with waste. The latest initiative we have taken in the plastic-bag area was announced last year: a grant of \$700,000 from that funding. It introduces a soft-plastics recycling scheme, which is currently being rolled out in retail stores through Auckland and Hamilton. The ambition is to cover 70 percent of New Zealanders in terms of having a drop-off facility for soft plastics within a period of 5 years. I do emphasise that our classic plastic shopping bag actually makes up only 0.2 percent of waste going to landfill and about 2 percent of total plastics. That is why it is important that this programme is focused on all soft plastics, including the bread bags, the frozen-food bags, and all those other plastics that are equally important.

Jake Hoffart: Is it not true that you missed a golden opportunity to reduce the consumption of the more than 3 million plastic bags that are used in this country every day? Why did you

not follow the waste hierarchy that the ministry promotes and put a 10c levy on every plastic bag, which worldwide research shows leads to an 80 percent reduction in use?

Mr SPEAKER: There are two supplementary questions.

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The first thing is that it is open for stores to put a 10c charge on plastic bags, and some choose to do so. I can remember my own experience at the supermarket counter at one of the stores that did introduce the 10c charge, and the consumer went completely ape at the poor person who was serving the groceries. They actually walked out of the grocery store and left their big lump of groceries on the store counter, showing that one of the reasons that stores do not do so is that consumers resist extra charges unless they are well justified. I go back and say that we must base our environmental decisions on good science. The reality is that plastic bags make up 0.2 percent of the waste stream, and there is not a robust case for separating them out from the wide range of other recycling activities that actually make a far bigger difference.

Jake Hoffart: In the past 8 years since the introduction of the Waste Minimisation Act, as Minister for the Environment, you have never used Part 2 of the Act to declare any priority products. Even China banned single-use shopping bags several years ago. What will it take for you to finally use regulation under the Act for problem waste materials, such as plastic bags, end-of-life tyres, and electronic waste?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: First up is that if you actually look at the waste stream, there are countries—Bangladesh, China—that have a large volume of those plastic bags that end up in the marine environment, in waters and streams, and cause a substantial environmental problem. The good thing is that New Zealanders are far more environmentally responsible—actually, the vast number of people use their plastic bags as waste liners in their bins; that is actually quite hygienic, and they end up being used properly. We are not totally opposed to the sensible use of plastic in that regard. In respect of the provisions of the Act around accredited schemes, there have been nine schemes that have been approved in my time as Minister, covering a very wide range of goods. Rather than using the compulsory powers, our Government would much rather work with industry. Can I give a good practical example? Many of our rural communities today use plastic for wrapping the silage for their farm community. Big Brother Government could come along and impose a levy or a regulation, as the member proposes, but, actually, our Government's approach is to work with that industry, and that is where we have an accredited scheme that is on a voluntary basis with that sector, and it is working very effectively.

Housing Market, Auckland—Affordability and Quality

14. CHRISTOPHER OLEVA-TANUVASA (Youth MP for Su'a William Sio) to the Minister for Building and Housing: What, if any, incentives does the Government have in place to ensure that young people are able to live in affordable and quality homes in Auckland?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for Building and Housing): The first thing we must do is address the core issues that have made houses so unaffordable in Auckland. Effectively, what council rules have done is not allowed Auckland to grow either out or up. There are people who are opposed to urban sprawl, so they have opposed the city growing out. There are those people who are opposed to the intensification—more townhouses, more apartments—and so have blocked that because they do not want that change in their neighbourhood. Economics is simple: if demand exceeds supply, prices go silly. For that reason, our Government has passed special legislation to allow Auckland Council to bring in a new plan that works. That is due to be delivered this Friday. It is absolutely crucial for all people, including those in Auckland, that that new plan adequately addresses the issue of supply. On the demand side, the Government introduced a very specific programme that is

important for young people in getting access to a home, and that is KiwiSaver HomeStart. With KiwiSaver HomeStart, any person working on the average wage, in KiwiSaver, is able to save up \$50,000 for their first home, and the Government will provide a \$20,000 grant to assist that and to assist a person to get a deposit. We are on target to assist 90,000 young New Zealanders get into their first home with that KiwiSaver HomeStart scheme.

Ilene Lei: In February this year Auckland Council voted against considering changes to zoning that would enable more homes to be built in urban areas. The most likely possible outcome of this is that Auckland will continue to build too few homes for its population, and prices will continue rising. What are the implementations of the Auckland Unitary Plan in the coming years to ensure that youth from different socio-economic backgrounds have a range of quality and affordable housing in areas that are accessible to jobs, education, and transport?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The member's question is totally on the money in respect of the issues in Auckland around housing and the importance of the Auckland Unitary Plan. The decisions that were made in February by Auckland Council to withdraw key evidence from the Auckland Unitary Plan Independent Hearings Panel around intensification were driven by people who have got homes, who want the status quo to prevail, and who do not want their neighbourhoods to change with additional housing. I actually have confidence that the independent hearings panel that our Government set up, which is due to report to the council this Friday, will nail that issue that you are rightly concerned about. The question then becomes whether the council will accept the decision of the independent hearings panel. I am an optimist; I am hopeful that common sense will prevail. I commend some of the young people who have spoken out strongly in Auckland of the importance of the council landing in a sensible place. We will know the answer to that in the next month. The Government has said that if the council is not able to resolve these issues, then the Government will need to step in and do so. *[Interruption]*

Mr SPEAKER: Now we have livened up.

Nathan Wilson: Does the Minister believe that investors buying and selling property for profit is a factor contributing to house pricing issues; if so, how has the Government tightened tax rules for such investors?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: People buying and selling houses, like any other commodity, will do so in a market, but I would stress the differences in Christchurch, where, for instance, we have house supply and demand in balance—where rents have actually dropped by 9 percent over the last year. This shows you, actually, that the best way in which to stop speculation in houses is to ensure that supply and demand is in balance, and that is where our primary effort needs to be. The second issue, from a tax point of view, is that if you invest in property with the purpose of making a buck, then the current law requires people to pay tax on any gains they make. The practical difficulty is that if you are the Inland Revenue Department (IRD), actually finding the people to make sure they pay their tax posed some difficulty. That is why the law changed on 1 October last year so that every property transaction is now required to provide the IRD number for both the buyer and the seller. The Government has also provided tens of millions of dollars of extra money to the IRD to make sure that people who are investing in property do pay their fair share of tax.

Christopher Oleva-Tanuvasa: If everything is jolly and good, and the Minister has put in special legislation and laws, would he please care to explain why 42,000 Kiwis are reported homeless, living in crowded houses, homes, parks, and cars; would he please care to explain why policy has been ineffective?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Firstly, I think the 42,000 number is political rubbish. In claiming that 42,000 people are homeless, that includes people who are staying with their families. Well, actually, those are not people who are homeless—people who may be staying with a flatmate or others. My view is that we should not exaggerate the figures of those who are homeless. We should use figures that truly connect with a common-sense definition of people being homeless. The second feature is this: New Zealand's population is growing very strongly because New Zealand is doing very well. We have got a record number of Kiwis coming home. The big thing that has changed is that New Zealand's population is growing more quickly today than at any time in our history. That is putting pressure on the housing markets. That is why it makes it so important for us to grow housing as quickly as possible. The good news is that more houses are being built in this term of Parliament than in any of the 150-odd years prior, and we need to continue to grow that so there are not people who are in high housing need.

Keegan Phipps: Given that Auckland Council will not “build up or build out” and, as the Minister said, the supply and demand effect causes house prices in Auckland to increase, what does the Government plan to do to reduce housing demand and lower house prices in Auckland and to encourage people to move to other cities such as Nelson, given that the last idea that the Government had was to pay homeless people to move out of Auckland?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: He is my own Youth MP!

Mr SPEAKER: I think most of us realise that, Mr Smith.

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Indeed. Well, the first thing is we have got to tackle the issues head on with Auckland, and that is why we have said, with the national policy statement that is out for consultation right now, that we are not going to give councils the easy choice of saying they do not want to go up or out. We are actually saying it is a decision for councils to decide what that balance might be, but they actually have to deliver a plan that matches population growth in that balance of up and out. Do I think it is a good choice for some people to leave a high house-price area like Auckland and move to the gorgeous area of Nelson?

Well, actually, yes I do, and we should let people make those choices. And where housing is less expensive, in communities like Invercargill or Southland—providing we can also ensure that there are jobs and opportunities—I actually think that it is a perfectly rational choice for people to move out of some of those main centres and make a life choice to live in some of the gorgeous parts of our country, like Nelson.

Aaron Dahmen: Would the Minister care to comment on the notion that Budget 2016 makes Auckland uninhabitable for young people, as \$100 million worth of surplus Crown land was released for residential development and at least 750 more social housing places promised? Is this really the right move when more than 33,000 Auckland dwellings have been classified as empty, with unaffordability, not space, the key issue?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: This is another classic case of statistics not being used in a very well-informed way. So, for instance, the last census in Auckland showed that there were 30,000 houses empty on census night, and people are saying: “Well, this is the sign of a crisis. This is something that is really concerning.” Well, actually, when the census taker does their survey and identifies those 30,000 houses, if the family was away for work or away for a holiday, that counts that home as being unoccupied. If you take the average, that says that there are 23 days per year that homes are unoccupied. I suspect that while some of you are at the Youth Parliament, particularly if others are here, your house might be vacant. That does not indicate any particular crisis. So, in my view, those numbers—actually, in Auckland, the number of unoccupied homes in the 2013 census was actually less than what it was in the previous census and the census before that. So the idea that just because people are

having a holiday, or the fact that people might be away on work, or the fact that there may be a small gap between a house being sold or rented, in my view, is a bit of a sideshow and is not one of the core issues that we need to address if we are serious about helping young people aspire to own their own home in a city like Auckland.

Javan Rose: Why has the Government stated that it is going to give Auckland homeless people money and send them to smaller towns such as Palmerston North, which has one of the highest unemployment rates in New Zealand, including youth unemployment?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: Because, actually, in some provinces of New Zealand we do have houses that are owned by the Government that are not occupied. I dispute the fact that unemployment in the regions of New Zealand is high, actually. If you take a community like mine in Nelson, the current unemployment rate is about 4.5 percent. If you take Southland, it is very low. If you take the West Coast, it is very low. If you take Canterbury, unemployment is very low. So for the Government to pragmatically say “Hey, look, we’re building houses as fast as we can in Auckland, but, actually, we’re under population pressure there.” and actually provide a grant for some people to be able to relocate to other areas is, in my view, a pragmatic policy. It is not suitable for everyone, but for some people, it is the right choice. I could give you examples of families who have taken up that grant scheme, who have welcomed it, and who are having a better quality of life as a consequence of that initiative.

Prisons—Privatisation and Serco

15. BETH CLEARWATER (Youth MP for David Clendon) to the Minister of Corrections: Does the Minister believe that private prisons still have a place in New Zealand after the events of Mt Eden prison with Serco?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister for the Environment) on behalf of the Minister of Corrections: Yes, and whether or not a prison is public or privately run, both types have problems with violence, with drugs, and it is far too simplistic to simply say that because it is a private prison, then those problems will be greater. In fact, international experience is that private prisons are able to provide greater innovation and are able to be more successful around issues of innovation.

The Auckland South Corrections Facility, which is a 960-bed men’s prison, is run by the private sector very successfully. The Government has a goal of reducing reoffenders by 25 percent in our prisons, and having a mix of public and private prisons is a good way to achieve that.

Favor Nweke: What measures are being undertaken to ensure accountability in private prisons, especially in situations when allegations of misconduct arise?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: We need to ensure that there is strong accountability for those running our private prisons, but equally so for those who are responsible for our public prisons, because it would be a misnomer for this Parliament to assume that the only problems that there are with violence and the only problems there are with drugs are in the private prisons. I know from my own period as Minister of Corrections that there was an almost daily incidence of problems occurring in the public prison sector. The Government is looking to strengthen those accountability requirements, but wants to ensure that they are equal for both, because there are problems in both sorts of prisons.

Beth Clearwater: Does the Minister agree that there is a perverse incentive upon private prisons when they are running benefits from greater numbers of inmates, particularly from recidivism?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: No, I do not accept that. That would be an argument to say, for instance, that funeral directors have an incentive in people dying. They do not, but funeral direction is predominantly a private sector business. So I think the same is true in respect of corrections. As long as the contracts that we have with those private prison operators put the right emphasis on ensuring improvements in reoffending rates, that is a better way of doing it. I am also of the view that big, amorphous State departments, like the Department of Corrections, actually have an awful record in terms of reoffending rates. Actually, to have some innovation in the private sector able to bring new ideas to the way in which we can better rehabilitate prisoners is one of the smart things that we should do, in exactly the same way that in the education sector a bit of innovation from the independent sector does not do the education sector any harm either.

Favor Nweke: Does the Minister believe that better run public prisons would reduce the need for private prisons?

Hon Dr NICK SMITH: The Government's view is that we need to demand better performance from both public and private prisons. The key focus for the Government is that so often we put people in prisons, we throw away the key, and we invest little in respect of re-education and the other programmes that will actually get those prisoners rehabilitated. Because the vast majority of them are going to re-enter the community, the key focus of both our public and private prisons needs to be on reducing reoffending by providing appropriate rehabilitation programmes for those who have offended against the law.

Family/Whānau and Sexual Violence—Potential Criminal Offence for Strangulation

16. JULIA WIENER (Youth MP for Julie Anne Genter) to the **Minister of Justice:** What is the Minister's view on the case for specifying strangulation as a distinct offence in New Zealand's criminal law, given arguments that existing legislation criminalising 'male assaults female' and 'assault' provide adequate protection for victims of domestic abuse?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (Minister of Immigration) on behalf of the **Minister of Justice:** Strangulation is an abhorrent form of domestic violence that our criminal law does not respond to well. That is why I asked the Law Commission to consider this issue amongst a broader range of family violence law reforms that are aimed at reducing the depressing rate of family violence incidents in New Zealand.

Treating it as an ordinary criminal assault does not properly reflect the full harm to the victim, nor does it adequately recognise the significant risk factor that we know a non-fatal strangulation to be, with strangulation victims seven times more likely to go on to be murdered than other victims of domestic violence. The Law Commission makes a number of recommendations for specific offences around strangulation, and my colleagues and I are considering these as part of a broader legislative review. My recommendations will be taken to Cabinet soon.

Gabriella Keys: If the Government is so committed to the protection of domestic abuse victims, then why has the funding for women's safe house centres dropped dramatically under the National Government, given that safe housing can prevent strangulation in the first instance?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: I do not have the figures with me, but I do reject the claim that funding for women's refuges across the country has been cut under this Government. It is quite the opposite. Indeed, this Government takes family violence extremely seriously. What we know is that although violent crime has reduced significantly under this Government, all of the reduction appears to have come in public place violence. What we know is there is an increase in private place violence. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not

that is because there is a greater incidence of private place violence or a greater propensity for women—mostly, because it is overwhelmingly women who are the victims of these violent offences—to have the confidence to speak up and contact police. I am satisfied that with the range of initiatives that we have put in place, both in prevention and in prosecution, we are seeing a greater level of prevention and confidence of women to speak up.

Gabriella Keys: Given that it costs only around \$120,000 to run a women's safe home for 1 year, would it not be more logical to introduce more safe homes rather than create more legislation in order to prevent domestic abuse?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: Yes, which is why funding has been increased and not cut, as the member claims. But what is really important is that that be part of a range of initiatives that prevent the offences from occurring in the first place. I am aware from the previous Minister of Police, the Hon Michael Woodhouse, that research has taken place that indicates that a victim of family violence will wait for the 21st incident before she picks up the phone and contacts police. That is why it is really important that when she does contact authorities, there are the right tools and supports in place to make sure that that is the last time she is the victim of violence. On-the-spot protection orders, which were brought in by this Government in the 49th Parliament, have been very effective in creating a cooling-off period and providing the opportunity for police and other social service agencies to work with both the victim and the perpetrator to ensure that that ends the cycle of violence. We are a long way away from achieving that, but I think we are starting to make positive strides in that direction.

Syria, Internal Conflict—Government Response

17. CONNOR McCORMICK (Youth MP for Andrew Bayly) to the **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** What steps has New Zealand taken in order to re-establish the security and safety of Syria and its people?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE (Minister of Immigration) on behalf of the **Minister of Foreign Affairs:** New Zealand has contributed to the security and safety of Syria and Syrians through our humanitarian contributions, our leadership on humanitarian work at the UN Security Council, and our support for global counter-terrorism efforts. However, safety and security will not be restored in Syria without a political resolution to the conflict and an end to the fighting. We have used New Zealand's seat on the Security Council to push for intensified efforts to resolve the conflict in Syria. This will remain a priority for the remainder of our term on the Security Council.

Emma Tompkins: Although New Zealand has taken steps to re-establish security and safety in Syria, what more can New Zealand do to support the Syrian people in regard to what Minister Woodhouse—yourself—said, according to a *Critic* article, that “allowing [the Syrian refugees] to come into New Zealand and then just leaving them to their own devices, exacerbating the social isolation that they experience is not humanitarian. The humanitarian thing to do is to support them; that's humanitarian.”?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: I strongly agree with the comments by the Hon Michael Woodhouse about the importance of ensuring that those whom we do take, Syrians or those from other global conflicts, do settle well. But anyone who has spoken to former refugees will likely hear that the one thing that they want is peace in the country of their home. It is very important that New Zealand does contribute to—yes—good settlement outcomes, but to ensuring that the conflict that led to their fleeing their countries in the first place does cease. We have provided \$21.5 million in aid for the Syrian conflict, mainly in the countries surrounding Syria and southern Turkey, where we have built schools and refugee camps, and also in Lebanon, where we have provided support. We have also taken a leadership role

in the Syrian humanitarian issues at the UN Security Council, particularly pressuring the Syrian Government to allow humanitarian aid access into besieged and hard-to-access areas. Last December New Zealand led the renewal of a Security Council resolution re-authorising cross-line and cross-border humanitarian access. We are involved in global efforts to counter terrorism, including groups destabilising Syria like Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and al-Qaeda. New Zealand is chair of the al-Qaeda sanctions committee at the UN Security Council and is participating in a building partner - capacity mission in Iraq.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take one supplementary question because we are on time.

Jacob Lerner: Does the Minister believe in upholding the principles of liberal democracy; if so, why does he not give more backing to the Middle East's only liberal democracy, Israel?

Hon MICHAEL WOODHOUSE: New Zealand recognises the sovereign right of Israel to self-determination, as it does the rule of law across the Middle East. It takes no sides in respect of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, except to say that what will ensure a sustainable and lasting peace is dialogue, and we encourage all parties in the Middle East conflict to continue those efforts.

Cycle Trails—Initiatives to Improve

18. STACEY ROSE (Youth MP for Denis O'Rourke) to the Minister of Transport: What is the plan to improve the open roads for cyclists to be able to safely cycle to and from cities and towns (such as from Palmerston North to Levin)?

Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister for Youth) on behalf of the Minister of Transport: The Government has a comprehensive plan to improve cycle safety, particularly on open roads. We are investing \$300 million in the urban cycleway project. That is about investing in a network of cycleways. It also includes segregated lanes for open roads. You mentioned Palmerston North in your primary question. Palmerston North has some of the highest commuter cycle trips in the country, and the Government recently, I think, opened Longburn cycle path—a shared path. So we are doing a huge amount in the regions to invest in cycling and safe cycling.

Finnian Galbraith: How can we be sure that the Government will deliver on the things that you have just said that you are going to do; for example, how far away is it and what is the proposed time line leading up to being able to cycle safely from Palmerston North to Levin?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: You can be very sure that this Government will deliver, and I will give you a couple of reasons why. Firstly, there is no Government in our history that has invested more in cycling. Can I take a moment to acknowledge our Prime Minister, John Key, the Minister of Tourism. We have invested in 2,600 kilometres of cycleways in the great New Zealand Cycle Trail. That is one example where investment has already happened. As I mentioned before, we are investing \$300 million in the urban cycleway network, and in the electorate of the member of Parliament for Auckland Central, the Hon Nikki Kaye, alone there are \$88 million worth of cycleways being opened. So not only are we opening them now—you can see that investment—but also we have a very clear plan that will see, I think, more than 10 other cycleways opened in the next 4 to 5 years. So you can be very confident not only that have we invested more but also that at the highest levels of this Government we are seeing huge promotion and investment in cycleways.

Kiwa Erueti-Newman: What can the Government guarantee will be put in place to combat congestion in New Zealand's largest cities, such as Wellington and Auckland?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Let us take Auckland as an example. There are several things that we are doing. Firstly, as I mentioned before, if you take the cycleway network, particularly around the central business district, there is about \$80 million worth of investment. That is about getting people out of their cars. The second thing that we are very focused on is being a lot more intelligent in terms of data around the times that people are travelling. The Government has said that it is potentially open to considering a congestion charge. That is another thing that we are looking at. We have invested in the electrification of rail. So our Government has partnered with the Auckland Council. I think we have put a billion dollars into the electrification of rail, which is getting people into rail. The other thing—the big project that the Government has announced that is very important—is the central rail link. We are looking at fast tracking that. Recent costs have that at about \$3 billion. Also I can say to you that the Victoria Park Tunnel was a great project that we have delivered—\$340 million—which has taken 10,000 cars off the road.

Nathan Wilson: Does the Minister agree that this regional cycle policy is just a way to help the Greens get from town to town in the 2017 election? [*Interruption*]

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The question is in order. The Hon Nikki Kaye, and a short answer please.

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Lots of political parties love cycling. In fact, I think I can name a good 30 National MPs who get on their bike.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take Charlie Wang—only because he represents Murray McCully and today he has asked more questions than Mr McCully has asked whilst I have been in Parliament.

Charlie Wang: How does the Minister plan to change and develop the public transport service in some major cities in New Zealand such as Auckland transport?

Hon NIKKI KAYE: Again, we have got a range of initiatives under way in our major urban centres. Some of them obviously include the investment in urban cycleways. The other thing that I would mention to you, in terms of public transport, is that we have a huge programme around rail. I have mentioned the rail investments in Auckland, but we are undertaking significant rail investments across other cities in New Zealand. In terms of buses, I can tell you that we have massively increased the capacity in Auckland alone, and I do not have the figures for you, but I am happy to get them for you after parliamentary question time, around the increases in capacity in terms of bus networks in some of our cities. In terms of Canterbury, I can say to you that as part of the regeneration plan as a result of the Canterbury earthquakes, there is a huge programme under way, in terms of public transport, around the city of Canterbury.

Mr SPEAKER: That concludes questions for oral answer today. I only wish we did have more time, but can I thank all members for their cooperation and good behaviour. Take some suggestions back to your real members of Parliament. Before we adjourn for lunch, I understand there is a notice of motion.

MOTIONS

Members of Parliament—Expression of Thanks

TIM RYAN (Youth MP for Stuart Smith): I seek leave to move a motion without notice or debate thanking the members of the 51st Parliament for electing the youth parliamentarians, and Ministers for their participation.

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

TIM RYAN: I move, *That the House thank the members of the 51st Parliament for electing us, their youth parliamentarians, which has provided us with a once-in-a-lifetime experience that we will remember for ever, and that this House thank Ministers who have made themselves available to answer the questions of Youth MPs in this session, and we hope that they have gained insight into the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of young New Zealanders.*

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.03 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2016

Mr Speaker took the Chair at 10.45 a.m.

Prayers.

SPEAKER'S OBSERVATIONS

Ngahuia Muru

Birthday of Member—Acknowledgment

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable youth members, before I start proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the birthday of Bianca Bailey, who is the Youth MP for the Prime Minister.
[Applause]

ACCESSIBLE WEB PAGES AND APPS BILL

Third Reading

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call members, I just want to remind you of the rules of engagement. You may speak each for 3 minutes. I will ring a bell at 2 minutes—in other words, giving you a minute's warning—and then move to wind up your speech, with a signal such as this hand gesture towards the end of that minute. We need to be relatively strict on time, so members who go over will have their speech curtailed. I remind members that their speech must be relevant; it must be about the purpose and the content of the bill. The rules of this debate have been given to you in the Youth Parliament Standing Orders, numbers 19 to 31.

BELLA BIGGS (Youth MP for Alastair Scott): I move, That the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill be now read a third time. After being told by my cousin, a current member of caucus, that getting a speech at Youth Parliament is the best possible outcome, I did not really think much about it. Nor did I think I would actually end up here standing in front of you all, but in the simplest answer to the question: yes, I believe we should make web pages and apps more accessible for those with disabilities.

This is something that I did not even have to think twice about when answering, because as a person who believes we are all created equal, why should those who were not born with an impediment have a greater and more privileged life than those who were? I believe making web pages and apps more accessible is a high priority in our vastly technical world, because, being born fully abled, it is easy for us to get caught up in ourselves, our own being, and forget about how other people live their lives—especially those who are at a disadvantage to us.

When I first discovered that this was our mock bill, I was pretty perplexed. It took me a while to figure out what I wanted to start to say, and while I sat at my desk stumped about what to write, I thought “I can read what web pages say, and I can listen to what YouTube videos are orating.”—I kind of just thought everyone could. But then it hit me: it hit me that we can be so naive and think only about ourselves, because, as humans, I am afraid to say, that is the one thing that we do best. It hit me that even if we have the opportunity to do something that others cannot, that does not mean that everyone who cannot do it should not have the opportunity to give it a go.

We need to make web pages and apps far more accessible because in New Zealand our population is always growing, a population of migrants, immigrants—you name them, we

have them, or, in some cases, not as many as we should. But with a growing population this also means that there is a growing population of disabled people. In 2013, 24 percent of New Zealanders disclosed that they are disabled; that is 1.1 million people out of our 4.4 million population who do not necessarily have the same access to things that you and I do, like memes, Pokémon GO, and the Hon Nikki Kaye's weekly updates of her cute British blues, Lily and Charlie.

Mr SPEAKER: One minute to go.

BELLA BIGGS: As young people, there are so many complaints that we should be the ones who are in charge of our future and our world. So this is our chance to start making these changes for our future that belongs to us—"us" being everyone, and "everyone" being every single person on our land, whether they are mentally or physically impaired, or mentally or physically capable. Everyone should have the right to access our future in our world, which is so heavily centred around technology. That is, again, why I will reiterate that I believe the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill should be passed. Thank you.

DHARMA BRATLEY (Youth MP for Mark Mitchell): I rise today to discuss several points regarding the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill. As previously stated, this bill is intended to improve accessibility and digital technologies, including the internet, social media, and apps for people with disabilities.

In this generation, nothing seems to be more important than the internet. Social media dictates our lives. In some ways, the internet is a great thing. We have the ability to change the world right from our own homes. I cannot stand here and deny that having access to the internet and general uses of digital technology would be bad for the future technological and general societal advancements of today.

In 2014 it was shown that the number of mobile devices was 7.22 billion. Furthermore, gadgets like tablets, smartphones, and not-so-smart phones are multiplying five times faster than we are, with our population growing at a rate of about two people per second, or 1.2 percent annually. The chairman of Spencer Trask and Co., an advanced technology development company, stated that no other technology has impacted us like the mobile phone. It is the fastest growing man-made phenomenon ever—from zero to 7.2 billion in three decades.

It is a simple fact that digital technologies are quite possibly the most significant aspect of westernised culture today. The technological world is growing exponentially. New features and uses for digital technologies are growing by the day. I would argue that there are already many means of access for disabled people and would further argue that this will only increase in the future. I will agree that this bill is of good intentions and that, yes, it may be of benefit to the disabled community.

However, I feel that there are far more pressing matters that need to be addressed—for example, homelessness. It is estimated that there are around 42,000 people who do not have permanent accommodation and are living in places such as garages, garden sheds, cars, and caravan parks. Night shelters, emergency housing, and city sidewalks are the places where New Zealand homeless people seek some sort of shelter, and yet no one has found a solution to the ever-growing issue.

What about the rising obesity levels? The New Zealand health survey found that almost one in three adults aged 15 years and over was obese, and a further 35 percent of adults were classed as overweight. That is almost two-thirds of the country suffering from unhealthy lifestyles and weight-related issues. But what are we doing about that?

To conclude, I am voting against this accessibility bill. Although I am sure that accessibility to digital technologies is an issue to the disabled community, I do not feel that it holds enough importance to the progression of New Zealand's current position. Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER: In calling members, I am just going to call them by their name and announce also the real member of Parliament whom they are representing. I think that would be of interest to all of us in the House.

ANTHONY BUNNIK (Youth MP for Sue Moroney): Good morning, fellow Youth MPs. Today I will be presenting my argument about why the mock bill should be supported. New Zealand is currently in the midst of a technological revolution. The number of people who use mobile devices has exponentially increased, from 8 percent in 2007 to 69 percent in 2013. The vast majority of people are connected to the internet, using it enthusiastically every day to shop online, pay their bills, do research, and more. It has become an essential part of many people's lives.

In 2013, 28 percent of people used online banking services daily, and 51 percent of people paid fines and ordered licences from the Government over the internet. Yet people who are impaired by disabilities, especially visual disabilities, often miss out as public websites and apps are not designed to accommodate them. This bill will provide guidelines on how New Zealand - hosted Government and non-Government web pages can improve to become fairer and more accessible to those who are disabled.

The people it will help the most are those who are visually disabled. By redesigning and adding features to websites and apps, there will not be any negative effects on the other groups of people who use them. In the same way that ramps are built to help those who are in wheelchairs, and tactile paving is installed at intersections to help those who are blind, we should do something to help the disabled navigate the internet effectively. It is the role of the Government to make sure that disabled people cannot miss out on New Zealand websites and apps. By doing so, it will be easier for impaired people to use the internet, so they will not be held back by their conditions and can have the same opportunities as those who are not affected by disabilities.

New Zealand businesses and the Government would need to pay to improve access by contracting experts who can design more accessible pages and apps that follow the guidelines. It would be a hassle, but the benefits are obvious, as more disabled consumers will be able to use their services online.

New Zealand has a proud history of being inclusive and fair to those who may feel left out or unrepresented because of their disability. In 1999 Ruth Dyson was appointed as the first Minister for Disability Issues. Currently, Nicky Wagner has that role, and her job is to look out for the interests of the disabled. In 2006 New Zealand Sign Language became an official language of New Zealand, and in 2011 Mojo Mathers became New Zealand's first deaf MP. By supporting this bill in the conscience vote, you would be continuing the Government's long support of the disabled, and it would be a moment that is looked back on with pride. Thank you.

ALEXANDER CROFT (Youth MP for Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman): This bill is a rather wishful yet scary piece of legislation in the eyes of industry around the country. The pernicious costs associated with its implementation and with its regulation and self-admitted financial ignorance is bound to be the bane of small business around this country—for those attempting to set up a simple web page, start-ups endeavouring to market their new product, and the kid down the street taking the basics of web page coding.

Clause 28 of this bill states: “There are potentially significant costs associated with implementing accessibility of websites and apps, including costs of assessments pursuant to the provisions of the proposed bill. More work is required to determine detail on costs, including on how they might be mitigated.” Why on earth would I or anyone in this House who knows that small enterprises are the backbone of our economy vote to force more regulation on them without any detail and cost of implementation and how it might be mitigated?

However, when it comes to Government-owned and operated websites, I do think there is a responsibility by the State to ensure that all citizens have access to their own services, but I do think that the potentially high cost of implementation could be better spent towards inventing a solution that would be able to automatically interpret any web page and application that has not had any improvement on its usability for those with disabilities. This would enable all those who need it to be able to interpret any web page or app to their desired need. This would end the frightening prospects of more uncoded regulatory costs on industry, would ensure that all websites are accessible to those who need them, and most of all it would be a sustainable solution—one that could be adapted to our technological surroundings. Something that is missing in most legislation is sustainability, as we are not able to predict future trends. Therefore, I cannot support this bill in its current form.

AARON DAHMEN (Youth MP for Simon O’Connor): We are one—together. A democratic society—at least, in an ideal world. Currently, not enough is being done for those New Zealanders, those so-called Kiwis who struggle every day with their disabilities in an ever changing world. As online and social media usage rapidly increases in convenience and popularity—internet on hand-held devices has grown from 8 percent in 2007 to 68 percent in 2013—we are leaving a very important part of our society behind.

What does this mean for those who cannot hear, who cannot speak, who cannot see, and those who are unable to communicate as society demands them to? In 2013, 24 percent of the New Zealand population identified themselves as having a disability—that is 1.1 million people. That is 1.1 million people who are being left in the dark each time our technological globe turns. Simply put, it is being treated as equals that people with disabilities say matters most to them.

This bill can benefit whole communities, both economically and sociologically, and contribute to improved educational and employment opportunities for many New Zealanders, including those without disabilities—because we are one, after all.

Oh yes, I can already hear the people shouting from the rooftops “We could be spending this money elsewhere”—and, admittedly, there are costs involved—but the way it currently stands, something must be done, and it is not as though we would be losing much more than we are already. Aotearoa is being deprived of valuable income and workforce through the drastic impacts of 1.1 million people who do not have the tools to access websites or apps—1.1 million who are, as a result, left unemployed, uneducated, and in social isolation.

At the end of the day, we can have all of the statistics, all the information, all the surveys we want, but if we forget who we are and where we came from, if we forget that these are people just like you and me, who deserve equality and who deserve a normal life, then there is no point. This debate is a conscience vote, and we must recognise that it most certainly is a conscience issue.

I am voting in favour of this law reform bill, as I believe it is an ethical obligation. I believe it is our duty to extend the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and further support it by actively looking to pass related legislation in the future. I do not believe it is a matter of choice but a matter of social and democratic responsibility. If, today, we vote

against this bill, we must be ready to stand and watch as 1.1 million New Zealanders are let down by our ignorance and abuse of power. Because, are we really one, together, or is that only in an ideal world?

TEI DRIVER (Youth MP for Hon Nicky Wagner): This is a sentimental speech, because this is an ethical and moral issue. For if this is simply fulfilling human rights, why is it even being debated? All the same statistics will come up; I do not wish to repeat them. I am for this legislation passing. There are parts of this legislation that could be hard, however. It must be debated now, but why was it that accessibility for all was not considered from the start?

The bill reads, at clause 12, that there is a cost to inclusion. I ask: what cost? We are helping people move into the technological world, and if there are enough people who care about this, who really feel strongly about this, use them to make the technological world accessible. No one loses; there is only gain—a gain of jobs and a gain of a stronger economy from more people working in a technological world, a stronger New Zealand and access to more economies and technologies for everyone. It would broaden our horizons. Like I said, a stronger New Zealand. I see why the bill is in place, but I am mad that it had to be now. It should have been several years ago. New Zealand is world leading and world renowned in the programmes that we set out towards all forms of inclusion, and I see no way that any sane New Zealander can be against the way this bill is debated here or the way this bill is inclined. I am for inclusion, as I assume many others are. I find that the lack of mock bills, or the lack of more controversial topics for us to debate, is a little astounding.

Back to this bill. I have talked with Minister Wagner, and not getting hired is seemingly the biggest problem for the disabled community. But, like I said, this could aid it along. We could have more people in jobs—for small businesses, big businesses, and even within the Government. Only some are affected by the lack of access to resources and technologies, but their main issue here is jobs. That is all they want—jobs. Like the rest of us, in this wasteland of an economy. See, we all want the same thing. Thank you very much, House.

JIA DUA (Youth MP for Hon Phil Goff): A disabled woman named Stella Young once said “My disability exists not because I use a wheelchair, but because the broader environment isn’t accessible.”, and, to me, her words have never rung truer. To me, New Zealand is a country that takes pride in accounting for and being accepting of human difference—a place where support is given where needed, such that disabled does not mean “less abled”.

That is why we have regulations around ramps, for example, right? So that buildings are safe and accessible for everyone, and the same goes for signage and services in public areas. But it completely stumps me that these efforts suddenly completely diminish when it comes to the large portion of our lives that we spend online. The internet, unfortunately, simply is not one-size-fits-all, which means that for the massive 1.1 million Kiwis who identify as having a disability, every single day inaccessible web design makes for an uneasy—or even an impossible—online experience, with endless challenges waiting behind every single URL.

What is even more shameful is that this group has told us time and time again that the one thing that matters to them the most is being treated as equals, with equal rights to participation—that is what matters to them the most. Frankly, everyone on either side of the house today understands that a bill like this does not just magically become successful overnight, right? The recipe for success includes a lot of time, and, yes, a significant amount of money.

So, as has been brought up, money definitely is a factor, but I do not believe it is the issue and the context of this bill. There will always be costs of inclusion of a new bill, especially

one that requires different parties to work with the Government. But what I think easily outweighs these costs in this situation is the cost of exclusion that our society pays every single day. The impact of not being able to properly access a great number of websites and apps has a major flow-on effect to the unemployment faced by people with disabilities in New Zealand, when you consider just how many workplaces rely so heavily on technology today—not to mention the growing low-learning struggle with so many schools incorporating bring-your-own-device programmes that, in their current form, simply do not work for people with disabilities. And then there is also the social isolation that comes from being rejected from social media platforms, many of which simply do not cater for people with disabilities.

This is the sad reality we perpetuate every single time we shove this issue under a rug, simply because it is easy to do so and easy to forget people with disabilities. Each day we stall this bill, we further disintegrate them from our society and make their lives harder than they already are. Disabled people need our support, and this bill allows us to give it to them. All you need to do is vote yes, to ensure that we overcome the only major disability that New Zealand faces today—and that is a bad and unproactive attitude.

HOLLY FLETCHER (Youth MP for Matt Doocay): The ability to see, hear, and move are often things people who are fully abled take for granted. However, for one of the estimated 1 billion people in the world living with some form of disability, not having these things can hinder their everyday life. Whether it be safely crossing the road, ordering a hot chocolate when out with friends, or accessing the internet and apps using technology, for disabled people these simple, everyday tasks can often be impossible.

With around 24 percent of the population suffering from some form of disability, New Zealand needs to be a good place to live for people with disabilities. Internet and app accessibility is about enabling people with a disability to perceive, navigate, understand, and interact with the technology that they are using. In today's society, when more and more things are done on our smartphones or laptops, it is a must for all people to be able to do this. Education, health care, and recreational activities are just some important aspects of life that are now using the web or apps as their main platforms. For people living with a disability, an accessible internet is what is needed to remain active in our communities and not get left behind by increasing advances in technology.

By introducing this bill and making it law for websites and apps to make their platforms disability-friendly, New Zealand would be taking steps in the right direction towards ensuring an inclusive society. According to mashable.com, there are simple ways to make the internet a disability-friendly place. These include using ALT tags to allow the information to be read aloud by the computer for people with visual impairments, controlling the colours used so people with colour blindness can easily read the information, increasing the size of clickable links for people with mobility impairments, and using an accessible guide that changes the website or app depending on what disability the person has. These are just some of the examples of what could be done that would make the internet a more accessible place for people with disabilities.

For New Zealand to become an inclusive society, we must first put in place laws that make it necessary for companies to make their resources disability-friendly. We need to make this law a reality so that people living with a disability are able to interact with our communities and have a fulfilling life. We have a chance to do this, so use your power wisely and vote for the best option for New Zealand and all of its citizens, which means voting “yes” for this bill to be passed.

NGAHAKI GARDINER (Youth MP for Hon Te Ururoa Flavell): Tēnā koe, *Mr. Speaker*, ā, tēnā hoki ki a koutou ōku hoa mahi o tēnei Whare rangatira, tēnei Whare Pāremata, ā, Te Pāremata Rangatahi o Aotearoa, o te tau 2016.

[I thank you, Mr Speaker, and acknowledgements to you fellow colleagues of this illustrious House, this House of Parliament and indeed Youth Parliament 2016.]

What is the most valuable asset in our generation's arsenal in today's interconnected, digital, and ever-changing world? I believe it is this: smartphones, because these things have revolutionised the way we go about our everyday lives. With a smartphone, I can download an app that lets me listen to music, watch movies, keep up with my favourite TV shows, play games, or more studious activities like preparing an essay for class, preparing for an exam in school, or simply downloading a book through Kindle for research purposes.

Using one of a hundred social media apps, I can keep up with friends, organise parties, or simply keep up to date with what the people in my life are doing. And it is not only the volume of tasks that can be achieved that is incredible but also the ease and the speed with which it can be done. Each and every one of you here today can, right now, go into your phones, find the App Store, find an app you want on it, find an app you like, download it, and be using it before I have even finished my speech. That is amazing.

Unfortunately, I do not merely stand here to espouse my praise of what smartphones have done for us; I am also standing here with a far more solemn purpose: to point out what is, for me, a bewildering but obvious failing in current Government policy. Under the current law, the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard, only certain parts of the State sector, like the Ministry of Social Development, are obliged to adhere to the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard, and the private sector does not have to at all. What that means, in a nutshell, is that some of our most vulnerable citizens—the ones who suffer mental and/or physical disabilities—do not have the same ease of access that all of us have. It is not easy for them. That is wrong by any standard of the word, and that is why I support this bill today.

With all due respect to all my colleagues who have stood and opposed this bill so far, we should not be asking whether this is over-regulation, we should not be asking how much this will cost, and we should not be asking how hard it will be to implement. The only question I feel need be asked is: is this bill right? Is it ethically right? Yes, it is. That is why I stand before you and say that it must be passed. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, ā, otirā, tēnā rā tātou katoa!

[Acknowledgements, salutations, and congratulations indeed to us all!]

We must all stand as one, regardless of whatever political colour you are. Red, blue, green, or yellow—we must stand and pass this law with all due haste. I ask you: can this bill be passed? Yes. Should it be passed? Yes. Shall it be passed? Hell yes. And with all of that, I thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank you all for listening to me. Me tū tātou kia kotahi kia pāhi tēnei pire!

[We must stand as one so that this bill is passed!]

SELENA GORDON (Youth MP for Jenny Salesa): No two people are exactly the same, and in the family I come from being different has never been a bad thing. We have to face, as we grow up, that everyone gets a different hand—a different life. The Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill is a policy that will help New Zealand to assist our disabled citizens in accessing and applying new skills to digital technologies.

New Zealand has legislation that aims to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities, but we need to aim to enforce this in all aspects of a person's life, including technology. As we move further into the 21st century, the world is becoming more technologically advanced. Sixty-thousand apps are added to the App Store every month,

and every year the number of internet users increases by 10 percent. Our world is having to adapt to new technologies that are created every day. With house sales being advertised online and events being organised through social media, there is an increasing amount of pressure on the population to adapt to digital technologies.

People in our society who suffer from processing disabilities such as dyslexia and Irlen syndrome will struggle when it comes to accessibility to some of these digital technologies. Disabilities that impact the processing of information can cause tasks to take longer than average, and many of the new technologies that we face in everyday life, such as online banking and purchasing, have a time-out window, which can be increasingly frustrating for people who suffer from these disabilities.

We know that not all people learn the same way, but also they do not process information the same way. It varies from person to person, and schools and universities are not always structured to suit the needs of a person with disabilities. Schools in New Zealand need more funding to help diagnose and detect disabilities earlier. By diagnosing disabilities earlier in younger children, not only can provisions be put in place that will help them learn and function at a level equal to their classmates but also these early provisions and support systems will help people with disabilities to learn about technology and how best to access and utilise it in the future.

Clothes do not come in one-size-fits-all, and neither does technology. There is no small fix to the problem of accessibility of digital technologies for people living in New Zealand. There are so many different disabilities that inhibit people in different ways, and people living with disabilities should not be excluded from the development of technologies but instead need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis in order to create and provide an increased level of accessibility to digital technologies.

We can build ramps at the entrance of every building and create more disabled parking, but these gestures do not make a large enough impact on the development of resources for our disabled community. Being disabled can often become a person's label because it helps us to define who they are and what their limits are. If we have the opportunity to break down limits for people who already face so many challenges in life, why would we not take that step? I rise today to stand in favour of the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill. Thank you.

JUSTICE-TE AMORANGI HETARAKA (Youth MP for Kelvin Davis): Ngā mihi ki a koe, Mr Speaker. Tēnā koutou e Te Whare. In a race with time, we are faced with issues that our country urgently needs to address. I, for one, believe it is not essential for this bill to be passed, due to the social crises that are present in our country but are not significantly recognised by Government decisions.

Firstly, I do not intend to disrespect or ignore the rights of the disabled community, but my research proves that many apps and websites can already sustainably support the needs of the disabled, from visibility deficiencies to transport and accessibility aid, although I agree they are limited. For example, Apple and Windows computers are capable of enlarging text, screen reading, and creating New Zealand Sign Language versions of documents. New Zealand companies like Adaptive Technology Solutions and Pacific Vision are suppliers of adaptive technology devices, providing systems that support online accessibility for the disabled. The Government could possibly invest financial support in private companies to develop more apps and web pages that are easily accessible for the disabled, yet there is already a thriving technology sector that can produce these apps and devices. It is not the job of the Government to provide these technological resources.

In this time, I believe that Government interests should be focused primarily on health, housing, education, and the environment. Taxpayers' money can be spent on more urgent

issues like the burgeoning housing crisis and child poverty, which have largely been ignored by the Government. In turn, these issues are in the hands of people like whānau and hapū from Te Pūea Marae when the Government does not adequately support the parents of our generation to reach their full potential. A Government policy about accessible apps and web pages is fine, but what real difference does it make to an individual's life when they have no home? A child raised in poverty may have all their limbs and faculties, but their growth, development, and education will always be disabled by poverty. Poverty may, in fact, be the greatest disabler of human potential and development.

The existing regulations of the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard are adequate at this time and do not need urgent revision. App and website corporations are responsible for making their products user-friendly, and possibly make a profit by doing so without Government assistance. Therefore, I do not believe that this bill should be passed, due to the lack of the urgency of the situation and on the basis that taxpayers' money can potentially aid 305,000 children who live below the poverty line here, in Aotearoa. A bill of this fashion should not be a priority until more pressing issues are confronted. Ngā mihi ki a koutou.

VIVIEN HUANG (Youth MP for Jian Yang): For better or for worse, technology has become integral to our lives. We network on social media and conveniently foot our bills online. But for the 1.1 million people in New Zealand with a reported disability, who may find it difficult to access web pages and apps, these conveniences and advantages are lost, and digital technology simply becomes an empowerment tool that does its job only halfway.

By passing this bill, we will help bridge the gap and allow everyone in our community fair access to what we as a generation rely so heavily on. There are many underlying benefits to extending the scope of the New Zealand Web Accessibility Standard to cover wider State sectors. By including schools, health boards, and other local and non-governmental sectors, we will be increasing accessibility in areas that are most relevant to the consumers—areas that are used more frequently on a day-to-day basis.

A couple of days ago, I was fortunate enough to have a chat with some lovely people at the Blind Foundation, who shared their experiences with digital accessibility in their everyday lives. They described the frustration of encountering poorly formatted websites that did not factor in basic functions like zooming in and that made screen reading a monstrous chore in itself. However, as one of the people pointed out, practically, there is not some insurmountable barrier preventing developers from making these digital technologies more accessible. If accessibility is taken into consideration from the very get-go, it is fairly easy to incorporate. Rather, we need an attitude shift. Developers of all sectors need to recognise the prevalence of this issue, and that it is not just the responsibility of people with disabilities to advocate for better accessibility; it is a collective responsibility of us as a community, as a family, a friend, a classmate, and a neighbour of those who are affected. Easier navigation and more user-friendly interfaces help create opportunities for everyone—so there are a lot of crossover benefits. It is a truly win-win situation.

We need to have a framework, which this bill provides, to ensure the relevant parties and businesses are held accountable for their website accessibility and to ensure that it is not just another tokenistic gesture with good intentions but little practical benefit. I have spoken to people in my community, and we all share the opinion that New Zealand was built, fundamentally, on the belief in equality and diversity. The issue of accessibility is not often in the spotlight, but with so many affected people, our actions—or, rather, our current inaction—will have severe impacts on the rights and well-being of a whole 24 percent of our population. Although there may be costs associated with implementing this bill, it is the price of opportunity that we should be more than willing to pay for.

Fellow Youth MPs, I think it is clear that this bill points us in the right direction in terms of where we should be as a country, and I strongly urge you all to vote in favour of this bill. Thank you.

SAMIR LOUMACHI (Youth MP for Jono Naylor): I rise to support the passing of the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill. I would like to begin by addressing why I believe having accessibility options within our Government is important for our nation's population.

Right here is the Youth Parliament of 2016. It is here because of you guys submitting your applications. But included in our population here are some people with impairments. These people got here today because of, literally, what this bill is supporting. So for you to be against this bill would be to say that all the initiatives that have been made to get people with impairments right here in this House today are wrong, and I do not know why you would think that is wrong, because your opportunity to come here today is as equal as everyone else's.

Taking note of our country's voting turnouts, the last two elections have seen some of the lowest turnout rates in New Zealand's general elections, and there is no surprise. No matter how much we try to push youth to vote when they have turned 18, you are going to have a bunch of the population who just feel left out because they cannot even read a legislative text on the legislative website. We are talking about a website from the Government that is not even responsive to mobiles and tablets. I myself tried to zoom up, but all I got was pixels. Is this the answer, then, for these people? Is this honestly something you find respectful?

Taking a look at senior people in my community, I talked to them about what struggles they find with keeping up with Government news, and it seems like they are just trying to use their mobile phone, but they cannot even use it, because they go on to a website and it is just scaled completely out of their mobile's view. These people are already trying to get to grips with technology, and this is an embarrassment in the world market. I believe that we need to make sure that this accessibility is not just for Government websites; this is for any website that represents New Zealand on the world stage.

So, to conclude, bringing this accessibility to Government web pages and apps is something I believe will greatly benefit the wider society in New Zealand. Not only would this include the benefits of this for those with disabilities but also it would include benefits of general accessibility for the wider New Zealand population, because if I have a tablet or a phone, I deserve to be able to read what is on the legislative website. I stand to encourage other members in the House to vote in support of this bill.

ABBY MAY (Youth MP for Barbara Stewart): Mr Speaker and fellow Youth MPs, the disabled community of New Zealand is significantly disadvantaged, economically and socially, as a result of inaccessible technological advances in recent years. In 2013 a total of 1.1 million, or 24 percent of people, identified as having a disability of some sort. Although I recognise that not the whole 24 percent have this issue, the 24 percent is representative of our ageing population, with those with blindness or who are hearing impaired making up a large proportion of it. It is a lot of people to alienate from the progression of technology in everyday life as we know it.

Firstly, the bill allows for future adjustments to policy, which is both innovative and practical in a technological environment that is augmenting by the day. Secondly, I understand that the economic burden of this environment could be too much for some small businesses. However, it is stated that compliance is needed only where reasonable. Thirdly, the move to online shopping, banking, and communication of all sorts is in full swing. It is unfair, imprudent, and unjust for the Government to not support an initiative that will have positive implications for all Kiwis, both those who identify as disabled and those who do not.

We cannot predict what the future of New Zealand society will look like. The advancement of technology is so rapid that it is impossible to plan for all contingencies. We can, however, use the statistics that we have got in order to make informed decisions, to cover as many contingencies as we can. We know that our disabled population is increasing. In 2001 it was 20 percent, compared with 2013's 24 percent. Why, then, would we, as a democratic country that prides itself on egalitarianism and basic rights, deny the disabled community access to what is quickly becoming an integral part of the workplace and the home? Stereotypically, MPs have no conscience. To prove that you have got one, I highly suggest that you support this bill today.

EVE McCALLUM (Youth MP for Hon Michael Woodhouse): I rise here today to speak against the mock bill. The easy thing to do would be to stand up and agree with this bill because, in principle, it is allowing people a human right. However, in practice, this bill is simply unworkable.

The statistics say that 24 percent of New Zealanders identify as having a disability. However, what are these disabilities? Are they really all ones that will prevent them from being able to use web pages and apps? I have a disability: one leg is shorter than the other. But does that mean I cannot use web pages and apps to the best of my ability? The web pages that we can guarantee people need to use are the Government ones. However, this is not an issue, as the Government already has in place the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard, which ensures that people of all abilities can use them.

New Zealand is meant to be in support of small business, but if we force this legislation on them, they will have to spend money on ensuring that their websites are up to standard, even though no one with a serious disability may ever use their site.

Are we going to make the small patchwork shop in Kaiwaka spend thousands to implement something they may never gain a benefit from? Contrary to this, what about overseas websites and apps? How are we going to make them implement New Zealand legislation? Being a small country, we need them more than they need us. All these regulations would do is drive them away.

Another major issue with this bill is the cost. The implementation cost will likely be placed on the businesses themselves, which is already an issue. But what about the costs of assessing the websites and apps to see whether they are up to standard, to find out what does and does not need doing? Which Government agency is going to have to sacrifice money in order for this to happen? Money just does not come out of thin air despite what the left may have you believe.

With technology changing as frequently as it is, how does the Government intend to keep up with both the practicalities of ensuring these websites are up to the correct level and, once again, the cost factor of having to continually check them? Currently, New Zealand does not allow people with disabilities to conduct other activities. Blind people are not allowed to drive a car. However, in time, technology may change through the invention of things such as driverless cars. So instead of the Government passing a bill and forcing society to deal with it—like it usually does—we would be much better off giving grants and subsidies to help incentivise researchers to find a solution to this problem.

Fellow youth MPs, I urge you all to vote against this bill because it is simply unnecessary, the statistics do not add up, it goes against New Zealand's strong policy of supporting small business, and the money just is not there. There are many other ways to solve this issue. Thank you very much.

CARRAGH McKAY (Youth MP for Hon Clayton Cosgrove): New Zealanders are enthusiastic users of technology in our everyday lives, and it would be only right and just to improve the accessibility of web pages and apps for those with disabilities and impairments. We are one of the most digitally advanced Governments in the world, and so many of us use technology every day, whether it is purchasing clothes online, online banking, or even, potentially, paying fines.

Websites and apps are typically created to make our lives easier. However, these apps are making it somewhat more difficult for those with disabilities. Although internet usage has become a part of everyday life for most New Zealanders, the experience of people with disabilities can be very different. We have come to expect instant access to entertainment, social media, news, information, and shopping. However, people with disabilities often face extra obstacles that may deny them access to all the information, services, and entertainment online. As mentioned by other members, 1.1 million New Zealanders identify themselves as having a disability. That is 1.1 million people who face these obstacles of limited web access.

The power of the web is in its universality; access by everyone, regardless of disability, is an essential aspect. Many people who live with a disability like to be somewhat independent; however, it has been proven to take people with disabilities two to three times longer to navigate websites and apps due to their poor design. The impact of disability is radically changing on the web because the web removes the barriers to communication and interaction that many people face in the real world. However, when websites—and apps, for that matter—are badly designed, they can create barriers and exclude people from using the web.

There are multiple benefits from this legislation being passed, as not only does it increase positive opportunities for people with disabilities but also making New Zealand's web pages and apps accessible for people with disabilities is a way in which New Zealand can support improved educational and employment opportunities in the long term. By passing this bill, we are opening doors and creating opportunities for those with disabilities. These opportunities include jobs and further social practices.

To conclude, people with disabilities deserve to have opportunities equal to those of well-abled people—and if improved accessibility of web pages and apps can do that, then why not? All in all, I support this legislation, and I personally believe it should be passed.

CRYSTAL TE MOANANUI (Youth MP for Hon Nanaia Mahuta): Much like every other person gathered in this Chamber today, it is with great mana and pride that I stand up here to represent my community. Today we are here to debate a bill of great magnitude and relevance to us as rangatahi of Aotearoa. I will start off my speech by immediately declaring my opposition to the bill.

I rise to stand as a very passionate supporter pertaining to this year's subject, improving accessibility of websites and apps for people with disabilities. According to the information stated in the Ministry of Social Development documents we were provided with on 1 June 2016, the mock bill is intended to increase positive opportunities for people with disabilities. To my understanding, that would definitely require a few changes to be made to the currently standing web accessibility standards. Improving the access to websites and apps for people with disabilities would almost indirectly make casual things such as online banking, shopping, and services easier to purchase. For many people living in New Zealand without disabilities, these things may not be troubling, but they are for people who can neither understand nor use certain websites and apps because they are too advanced for their knowledge.

In 2013, 24 percent of the New Zealand population was identified as disabled—a total of 1.1 million people. I think that raises enough relevance for us as people to feel the need to alter parts of the current standards to better suit the needs of people with disabilities. I do understand that there are several websites and applications that do seem to be quite sympathetic in terms of installing auditory players, which allow people with blindness disabilities to listen as opposed to read. But my question to you is: what makes you think that is enough?

When consulting with a peer of mine, she stated: “Auditory processing is a common challenge for people with Down syndrome. For me, having auditory processing difficulties means that it takes time to process the words and messages I am listening to. When listening to a fast conversation or listening to unfamiliar vocabulary, it can be quite difficult to keep up.”

Also, when reading Part 1, the preliminary provisions, I stumbled upon the initial purpose of this bill. Just to clarify, it firmly stated: “The purpose of this Act is to ensure that New Zealand Web pages and apps are accessible to people with disabilities.” As you may know, there are plenty of underlying issues associated with this bill, but there is also a massive number of benefits of this legislation. There are also many economical gains involved. It is just a matter of taking advantage of the fruitful opportunities that we are overly lucky to have in New Zealand.

In conclusion to these findings, I would like to once again state the fact that I am evidently in favour of improving the accessibility of websites and apps for all residents with disabilities in New Zealand. Thank you.

WILLIAM MUIR (Youth MP for Hon Gerry Brownlee): This is a needless and pointless bill. Do we need a law for something that is sensible? Do we need to pass legislation at the highest levels of Government, covering up far more important issues to New Zealand? As one of the 1.1 million people in New Zealand who identify as disabled, I do not think that this bill has the far-reaching implications that those who are for it would imply. In fact, I think it will have quite the opposite implications.

It is far-reaching, in a totally negative and destructive way, on the businesses that it will affect. The bill states, in clause 7(1), that “The non-government sector must ensure its Web pages and apps meet the standard where it is reasonable to do so.” This is far too broad, and it could potentially stifle innovation and entrepreneurship with needless regulation. The goal to have this done in 5 years is totally unrealistic and fanciful. New Zealand does not have the people in place to achieve it, and we would have to get them from overseas at exorbitant cost to the New Zealand taxpayer.

The bill is superfluous and ridiculous, and it has no real benefit for those people of New Zealand. This issue has an effect on a tiny proportion of the New Zealand population. Those who are for the bill have kept quoting the 1.1 million figure, but, in effect, this is not true in the slightest. It does not affect 24 percent of the New Zealand population. This figure counts anyone in the country who identifies as having some form of disability, from allergies to mental illness. We need to be realistic about the huge cost that trying to implement this bill will have, and it will not have any major benefits for a huge number of people.

Online services have already done huge amounts for disabled people, having given them a voice and a place in online communities. We could lose many of these services if they are forced to become compliant but cannot, even though many people identifying as having a disability have no issue with them. Trying to futureproof this bill will limit its usefulness in the future. Who would have thought 10 years ago that the blind would be able to drive in

driverless cars? Technology is moving at an incredible pace, and trying to think forward 10 years in the future—who knows what we will have?

This bill is trying to push through unnecessary and bulky legislation that will have costly effects on private businesses. I fully support, and am empathetic to, disabled people, and I would never deny disabled people a better quality of life, but I do not believe that this bill will be able to implement that in the best possible way. It could do massive harm, both economically and also to those affected. I urge every member in this House to vote against this bill.

KARAN KALSI (Youth MP for Hon David Cunliffe): We often say that the internet is the greatest invention of our time, and we herald it as a great equaliser and enabler of opportunity for all. It is incredibly easy to buy into that narrative when we live in a New Zealand that has become more digitally advanced than ever. But we also often forget that for far too many Kiwis with disabilities the internet is anything but that. Rather, the internet is failing them. Whether it be used for accessing Government welfare schemes, contacting work or family, or simply being the library of the 21st century, the internet is not only an enabler of human rights but also access to it is a human right in and of itself. However, thanks to outdated web infrastructure and the inefficient design of crucial apps and online services, access to the internet for the most vulnerable in our society is severely restricted or non-existent.

As a country that prides itself on being a global technological innovator and a leader in human rights, it is unjust that we shut off tens of thousands of Kiwis from the internet simply because they happen to be born with a disability. That is why I urge all members today to support the bill presented to us, because our current measures in ensuring accessibility are simply ineffective and narrow. Hence, it is crucial that we set a precedent of enshrining accessibility through creating concrete regulatory frameworks and standards that are all-encompassing and that both the private and public sector must follow within reason.

May I stress to certain members that a viability clause is included within the bill whereby companies that are unable to afford the costs immediately will not be forced to do so. We are not bringing an apocalypse on small industries, ladies and gentlemen. Although some may argue that the costs associated with implementing the bill are too great, I ask them whether that cost is greater than denying Kiwis their fundamental human rights. Moreover, studies have also shown that it makes economic sense to invest in web accessibility, as it allows for the expansion of a consumer base and economic opportunity for so many businesses. It makes sense. Today each and every single one of you sitting in this room has the opportunity to vote for a bill that makes social sense and economic sense, but, more importantly, it allows each Kiwi to be a part of the digital age with the opportunity and dignity that they deserve. The internet may have failed them, but we have not. Let us not fail them too.

ISAAC PROCTOR (Youth MP for Jami-Lee Ross): President Franklin D Roosevelt, who was disabled by polio, said: “We are trying to construct [a society where everyone is included]. We are going to make a country where no one is left out.” Today we discuss whether our Government should pass legislation to improve the accessibility of web pages and apps for those with disabilities—legislation allowing less discrimination and more opportunity, where education and social opportunities of the disabled matter. Today we vote on legislation that carries all this meaning but just goes by the title of the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes promoting access to new information and communications, including the internet. New Zealand ratified this convention, and, as a result, the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard was

introduced. However, the UN convention is an ongoing responsibility, not just a check box. Evolving technology and new challenges mean the current standard is proving ineffective, and at this time no Government agency is fully compliant and only a few websites are actually required to meet the standard. What we must keep in mind is that New Zealand has a duty.

Next, the education system—it is moving toward an e-centred approach. However, when a teacher asks her students to google information about Anzac Day, how fast, how robust, how accessible do you think that information is going to be for the disabled student? Failure to improve the accessibility of web pages and apps means disadvantaging every disabled student in the schooling system. The Ministry of Education's key principle of inclusive education is defined as "the full participation and achievement of all learners", yet steps have to be taken to ensure this.

Still, there are problems with the proposed bill. Arguments can be made that the costs are too high. However, web accessibility expert Karl Groves writes an article on how to combat accessibility costs over time rather than all at once. He says that if you handle accessibility costs right, they can be minimal, and the proposed bill has a grace period of up to 5 years, allowing the competitive market to handle these costs in an effective way.

It all comes down to this: we have to do something. We cannot risk the social, economic, and educational consequences of this technically advancing country advancing without them. When Roosevelt dreamt of a country of inclusion, he should have jumped on a plane to New Zealand, because this is who we are and this is what we strive for in our education, in our curriculum, and in our commitment to human rights. So today I urge you, parliamentarians, to take another step towards inclusion and vote to improve the accessibility of web pages and apps.

JAVAN ROSE (Youth MP for Hon Louise Upston): Apologies to the Hon Louise Upston for taking over her job for the past 2 days. Today I will be speaking in favour of passing the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill. In this speech, I will be outlining what this bill includes, whom it is directed at, the opportunities that it will create, and how this legislation will make a positive difference in the lives of those New Zealanders living with disabilities.

As New Zealand's use of technology has increased exponentially in the past 10 years, it is pivotal that we, as a country, ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to online accessibility. In 2007 the use of mobile phones was only 8 percent, and in 2013 that rose to 69 percent. This is an indication of New Zealand's reliance on technology and why we need to ensure that everyone is keeping up with the rapidly increasing use of technology.

As these channels—such as social media, email, internet banking, or digital components of *The New Zealand Curriculum*—increase, non-digital alternatives diminish, making it much more difficult for people with disabilities or slow internet connections, or for the elderly, to access these important resources that the internet provides. This, in turn, hinders their access to education, work, or the social element of their lives.

This has been mentioned previously by a few of the youth MPs, but according to the 2013 New Zealand Disability Survey, 24 percent of the New Zealand population identified themselves as having a disability—that is 1.1 million people. This is a large number of people who could potentially be missing out on the services that the internet provides. This bill will have a hugely positive influence on the lives of New Zealanders. It guarantees that all New Zealanders have equal opportunity to feel connected and engaged. It encourages disabled people to use the internet to their advantage, to teach them life skills that they would not learn otherwise.

In conclusion, I am in full support of this bill. It is a modern law that will benefit generations to come. This bill ensures that New Zealanders have equal opportunity and that everyone has all the resources at their fingertips to be able to learn, communicate, and further develop their life skills, perhaps to prepare them for employment, for education, or for a family. I urge you all to support this bill. Thank you.

STEPH ROSS (Youth MP for Todd Barclay): I rise today to stand in favour of the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill, as I believe that every person, no matter what physical adversities they face, has the right to access all web pages and apps with relative ease.

Technology is now at the forefront of modern-day society. It is part of every job and school, and it is the main form of communication for most people. I know that I myself rely largely on technology in my tertiary studies—especially the internet. Without access to the internet, I would be unable to stream lectures, submit assignments, and do extra reading. Until I met a young partially blind girl at my hall of residence this year, I did not realise that the tasks that I do every day at university—easily—she struggles to complete; and some of them she cannot even complete at all. Therefore, I cannot stand here today, as someone blessed with no disability, and deny disabled people this basic right—their right.

There are up to 1.1 million people who could potentially have issues accessing web pages and apps in New Zealand. This is why I believe that, as a country, we need to make a conscious effort to futureproof our technology so that no matter what one New Zealander's physical abilities are, they should be able to access all web pages and apps. My auntie was partially deaf for about 20 years of her life until she underwent surgery to have cochlear implants fitted. She struggled to hear people talking to her, and her life was hugely limited. Then, when apps and smartphones were invented, she purchased one, and to quote her, she felt like she had a whole new lease on life. The apps that she now has access to mean that she can have increased communication with her friends and family. She is a prime example of someone who benefited immensely from apps and web pages being accessible, and there is still more work to be done.

Seeing the way my auntie struggled with basic communication and how positively her life was impacted when she was introduced to web pages and apps, I believe that we need to prioritise futureproofing all web pages and apps so that disabled people can have the same opportunity as everyone else. It is of the utmost importance that New Zealand meets its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The only way that we can continue to do this is by making web pages and apps accessible to everyone, including disabled people.

To conclude, I am voting in favour of the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill because I believe that every New Zealander has the right to be able to access the technological tools available—including web pages and apps. For that is the key to an inclusive and efficient future.

KELLY STITELY (Youth MP for Dr David Clark): Mr Speaker and members of the House, this legislation would have you believe that there are currently no provisions for disabled people to access apps and web content. In reality, that could not be further from the truth. Most video players have the option for closed-captioning, software has provisions for people with limited fine motor skills, and there are options to use programs in a way that does not discriminate against colour-blind people. The current economy for technology is producing more innovative solutions for people with disabilities, but this legislation threatens that continued innovation.

There are 1.1 million New Zealanders who have some sort of disability; so if you are a producer, that is an enormous market that can make you very competitive and successful

against other companies that do not cater to disabled people. This competition fuels innovation that results in meaningful results for disabled people, and it is constantly improving. Ladies and gentlemen, we are not there yet, but we are getting there. The status quo is not broken.

The thing that made the app industry so revolutionary in the first place was that it was so accessible. But at the point in time that there is regulation that means that you have to be assessed by one of only seven people in the country who know how to assess that technology, that industry becomes closed, apps take longer to be developed, and people may not choose to produce an app in the first place. Having to jump through all these extra hoops means that the whole process becomes more expensive, which further reduces the degree to which people can participate in the app-producing market. Importantly, that means the innovation that will result in meaningful technology for disabled people will be reduced in effectiveness at the point in time that innovation is disincentivised. The technology that has allowed for closed-captioning might not have happened if the developmental process that it went through was an incredibly subjective and expensive bottleneck. If the goal is to improve the situation for disabled people, this does the exact opposite.

What is more is that regulation is incredibly vague. It is impossible to determine whether an app is disabled-friendly when the range and severity of disabilities is so large and multifaceted. Where the line is drawn for whether an app is disabled-friendly or not is so vague that it is not inconceivable that unreasonable requirements will be put on apps. For Government technology, however, it may be beneficial to have regulation, simply because Governments are not subject to the same competitive incentives that businesses are. Some governmental services are invaluable to disabled people, and so they require easy access to those services, and making them as easy to use as possible is very important to ensure that all disabled people can access the services that they need to access and that they have the right to access. This legislation has the right goal but not the right mechanisms, and, thus, it does not have the right outcomes. I cannot stand by this legislation. Thank you.

KATIE OSBORNE (Youth MP for Gareth Hughes): Firstly, I would like to thank my fellow members speaking on this bill this morning for their passion and sometimes interesting views on this bill. They allow us to see all points of view.

For me, the topic of internet accessibility was one that I initially had no idea about. The internet, for me, is something that I have easy access to, something that I use on a regular basis, and something that I never give a second thought to. But what about those who are disabled? How is it fair for me, one person, to use the multitude of websites and apps that I use daily while another person physically cannot access any? For me, providing better internet accessibility to the wider State sector, and following this with implementation regimes and futureproofing, is a no-brainer.

In 2008 New Zealand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and with that we created a promise to uphold the aims within this convention. Passing this bill and implementing these guidelines would be a huge step in fulfilling the goals of the CRPD and improving the rights of those living with a disability in New Zealand. If we were able to create websites that are easier to navigate and manipulate, surely this would benefit not only those with a disability but also every single person who visits the site. Companies want as many people as they can to visit their websites. This is not a social factor but an economic one.

Creating better access may see commercial companies receive more sales, educational institutes get more enrolment, and page views for companies that use online advertisements as revenue see increases. Internet accessibility might also close the gap for those who are disabled and unemployed, which is hugely important and can increase a country's GDP. The

Australian Network on Disability proved this in a research model done in 2012. Although the Department of Internal Affairs estimated a \$10,000 cost per agency website to adhere to these standards, these costs can be significantly lessened during the early establishment of websites.

How are disabled people really affected? In a survey of disabled peoples undertaken by the Blind Foundation, comparing accessibility within native apps and web pages, only half the users could book an airline ticket themselves and only half again could successfully order a pizza. These are activities I would hope anyone would be able to achieve, and it is no wonder the Blind Foundation and similar groups seek to push legislation into Parliament to increase internet accessibility. We must speak and act on behalf of the estimated 1.1 million people living in New Zealand with a disability.

Do we value the unknown costs of this bill over the detrimental cost of social exclusion? I think not. We must vote in favour of this bill and create a country of equality that we can be proud of. Thank you.

BRITNEE TAPARA (Youth MP for Chris Bishop): I was born on 27 June 1999. Why is that important? I was born legally blind. I cannot read the small-sized print that you have all got sitting in front of you; I have pieces of paper with size 24 font that have had to be printed out especially for me, just to have access to these pieces of legislation that have been presented to us today. I am legally blind, and I am proud of it, and if I am going to stand here, the one message that I am going to give to you is that this is the most important piece of legislation that I have been presented with. Being visually impaired and having to live with this visual impairment every day since I was born, I can tell you the struggles and the stories that I have had to go through just to get what I need to make a difference in this country. This is my opportunity, and I am going to take it.

I am standing here today supported by the Blind Foundation members. The chief executive Ezekiel—everyone is here supporting me because they know how important that is, and they would not be here today if they did not believe in this bill. I am here because I have wanted to prove, my entire life, that being disabled is not a disadvantage. I am here because I am completely able, and this bill to make internet accessible not only to people like me but also to others—the elderly, people for whom English is not their first language, the hearing impaired—is important. Not only is this going to make a huge difference in my life—only one of the 1.1 million—but also it is going to make a difference for so many other people. That is why today I am going to stand here and I am going to vote for this bill. Even if this is not passed, I am going to continue fighting for something to change so that it is accessible for people like me.

HUGO THOMPSON (Youth MP for Hon Simon Bridges): It is high time that this legislative body addresses the issues that many New Zealanders face when accessing web pages and applications. However, this bill is, in fact, the incorrect way to address this substantial issue.

This bill raises a number of key issues that would severely reduce its effectiveness, including the viability of alternative measures to tackle this issue, a lack of concrete incentive to improve accessibility on New Zealand web pages and applications, and, thirdly, the massive level of impracticality in the implementation of this bill.

Legislation and funding would be more effective if they targeted those unable to function without streamlined use of the internet or applications in the immediate, and they should establish a governing body for those more pressing cases in the immediate short term that look at a more individual or a small-group approach to deal with the issues that we face at face value and improve assistive technology such as modernising the current system of smartphone screen readers that we currently have for blind New Zealanders.

Although the Department of Internal Affairs may advise as to the ability of Government to use tax incentives and generate assistance programmes for private firms, there is a concrete lack of tangible evidence as to how these changes would be received by firms both large and small accessing either applications or websites. I would stress that although subsidies have been suggested, currently the status quo is obviously working for most firms at this time. If there were a true economic incentive for more disabled persons being able to access any, and all, New Zealand - run applications or web pages if they were more widely accessible—as claimed by other members of the House many a time—then the free market would already be moving in this direction at a far, far more rapid pace, which we are not currently seeing.

Although clause 7(2) of the bill proposes that non-government entities meet the standard within a short, 5 years' time, this standard is not in fact given, nor is there actually a punishment for entities that do not comply with this particular legislation. Further, there is no indication that this supposed standard will be able to encompass the extreme range, size, and profitability of New Zealand websites and applications. In short, there is no ability for a governing body to address each website and application on an individual basis and determine the reasonability of this. For these reasons, I am extremely proud to oppose this bill. Thank you.

NATHAN WILSON (Youth MP for Hon Maurice Williamson): I would like to briefly, if I may, bring this House back to reality, because although some members like to subscribe to ideology, I prefer to subscribe to the facts. The fact of the matter is that although this bill's intention is admirable, the provisions and consequences of this bill are simply uncalled for. I think we can broadly agree that access to online platforms is harder for disabled members of our society. We would also agree, I am certain, that where we can make positive and tangible differences in the lives of disabled New Zealanders, we should. A level playing field is everybody's right. However, is this archaic legislation, in the form of increased regulation, really the answer?

This is a bill that aims to regulate an entire economy of flourishing online businesses, restricting them with unnecessary standards. Furthermore, this bill aims to regulate the internet, which is fundamentally wrong. The idea that the Government, in all its inefficiency, can come in and wave a magic wand by passing legislation and setting up large regulatory bodies is ludicrous. Perhaps it is this kind of fantasy magic that Labour will use to build 100,000 State houses!

This bill would establish an agency that would ensure that all public and private entities are conforming to the Web Accessibility Standard. I ask this House: how can such an agency exist when there is a clear lack of accessibility experts in New Zealand? This bill would then put a constantly developing economy in the hands of a small and very inexperienced agency with vast powers. A redundant yet powerful agency that will have the paramount task of regulating an ever-growing internet is not the answer to ensuring opportunities for disabled people.

Instead of providing people with a costly compliance standard, the Government should allow and encourage the free market to provide for accessibility issues. We already see examples of this: Apple and Samsung have comprehensive accessibility functions across their entire product range. In fact, you can get on your phone and there is a screen reader that will read out whatever is under your finger. Perhaps the Opposition could use this to read the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement.

The internet has thrived because it has existed with very minimal regulation. Why would we want to place expensive and restrictive regulations on our internet? The Government needs to support the market—

Stacey Rose: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I come to the House today—[*Interruption*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Members will sit. You state your point of order. Points of order are about process—nothing else. What is the point of order?

Stacey Rose: I come with information from the mock bill that states the changes—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): No, no. This is a debate. [*Interruption*] The member will sit. These are debating points, and although one may disagree with what the member over here has said, this is a debate. It is not a speech contest; it is a debate. The member is entitled to say what he thinks. You may disagree with that, but that is not a point of order. Points of order are about process and nothing else. I am coming back to Nathan Wilson for the few remaining seconds.

NATHAN WILSON: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. To reinforce what I have said, the internet has thrived because it existed with very minimal regulation. Why would we want to place expensive, restrictive regulations on our internet? The Government needs to support the market, work with the country, and not restrict it and choke it into submission with overbearing legislation reminiscent of the Muldoon years—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Order! The member's time has expired.

GRAHAME WOODS (Youth MP for Hon Todd Muller): With over 1.1 million disabled people living in New Zealand, the time has come for us to improve our web-inclusiveness. However, this bill is not the solution. Although the intention of the bill is clear, it poses a few key issues: firstly, the lack of clarity over the impact on the private sector; secondly, the large unregulated power it invests in the executive; and, thirdly, the lack of clarity over the standard the bill will enforce.

New Zealand is a nation of innovators, of people starting small businesses as a way to meet their fiscal goals, and it is the duty of the Government to ensure that those businesses can thrive. This bill will hurt those firms. Clause 7 of the bill ensures that all firms in the non-Government sector must comply with the standard when it is reasonable to do so. This will put an astronomical strain on firms as well as generating more red tape that start-up firms must meet.

Although my fellow members may argue that there are exceptions when reasonable criteria are met, this is not defined within the legislation—something that goes against paragraph 23 of the Cabinet papers. This additional cost will hinder New Zealand firms and make it harder for them to start trading.

The second issue is the large amount of power this puts in the executive. Part 3 of the bill allows the Minister to create an agency to enforce the legislation, amend the standard without parliamentary or select committee approval, and create regulations that control the process by which the bill is applied. By placing so much power in the executive, we give it the ability to create any standard for website applications as well as decide the process by which the standard is enforced without any form of parliamentary approval. Nor is there any form of set advisory body, as advice must be sought only by organisations that the Minister deems appropriate—his mum, for example!

The final issue is the lack of clarity over the standard. The bill gives no indication of what the standard will entail, only that the Minister in charge will have the power to set it. Instead, the Government needs to consider a different approach. A set of guidelines already exists for firms to follow. The Government should instead update its guidelines and make them more widely available to the public, increase its awareness, and place the choice with the private

sector. I encourage all of my fellow members to oppose this bill and close by thanking the Ministry of Youth Development, Todd Muller, and the Bay of Plenty electorate for this glorious opportunity today.

KRYSTAL WRIGHT (Youth MP for Hon Nathan Guy): I stand here in front of you today because I support this bill. The social benefits of this bill could be endless. As noted by the New Zealand Disability Action Plan, the 24 percent of New Zealanders who are identified as having a disability want to be treated as equals with the same rights of citizenship and participation as other New Zealanders. This bill is taking a step in the right direction by increasing the accessibility of web pages and apps, which are a part of our daily lives. It provides a platform for those in the disabled community to reach higher education and employment, and to have increased levels of social interaction.

As somebody who lives without any disabilities, I do not believe it is up to me to decide how much web pages and apps should be improved, but I do know that they need to be improved so that they can be designed appropriately to provide equal access both for those who are disabled and for those who are not. A most obvious example for me of this is our school websites. If you go to a level of secondary or tertiary education, you will find that you have a website connected to your particular place of learning. This is one of the easiest ways for us to access work, and it also has an infinite number of resources to help us complete this work. If these websites are not modified to be accessible to those with disabilities, then the ability to go online and receive these resources suddenly becomes a more daunting task for those who have disabilities.

Although I do not believe that the economic benefits are the most important part of this bill—I do believe that the social impacts are more important—they are applicable in this case because I can see a clear pathway for these economic benefits. An example of this would be providing more work for those who create web pages and apps, as they will have to be modified, and many will have to be re-created to allow for this accessibility. This bill also gives me a chance to connect with those whom I do not know because of their disabilities. It gives me a chance to go on to social media and talk to new people: 1.1 million people whom I do not know yet.

I believe that the compliance element to this bill is also incredibly important because—did you know—no Government agency at the moment is fully compliant with the current bill. This is incredibly important, and therefore this bill aims to have an enforcement regime with clear accountabilities and reporting requirements that enforce that they must comply with the existing standard as well. They give a 5-year transition period, which I believe is a large enough amount of time for this to happen.

At the heart of this bill, I believe that it is taking a positive step in the right direction for improving the accessibility of web pages and apps. So when you are placing your vote for or against this bill, I ask everybody in the House to remember that these are real people. These are people whose lives would greatly benefit from the passing of this bill. I am the last speaker, so please remember your morality and vote for this bill. Thank you.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): The Speaker has decided that a personal vote will be held. Ring the bells.

A personal vote was called for on the question, *That the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill be now read a third time.*

Ayes 89

Amuera	Galbraith	McDonnell	So'olefai
Bassett	Gardiner, N	McKay	Sutherland
Bell	Gill	McKenzie	Swinburn
Biggs	Gordon	McLeod, M	Tangiora
Boniface	Gotlieb	McLeod, R	Tapara
Bridge	Gough	Muller	Te Haara-Barr
Bunnik	Harrison	Muru	Te Moananui
Busch	Henare-Heke	Newman	Thomas
Cable	Hetaraka	Niyonzima	Tompkins
Carson	Holmes	Novell	Walters
Chew-Lit	Huang	Nweke	Wang
Cobby	Jackson	O'Dwyer	White
Crossland	Jones	Oleva-Tanuvasa	Wiener
Cumming	Kalsi	Osborne	Wilson-Leahy
Dahmen	Kelly	Palmer	Wright, C
Daya-Winterbottom	Keys	Proctor	Wright, K
Destrieux	Lee	Rose, J	Wright, R
Driver	Lei	Rose, S	Wu
Dua	Loumachi	Ross	
Duncan	Mahoney	Rowe	
Erueti-Newman	Manuel	Santos	
Farrell	Marshall	Sexton	
Findlater	May	Small	
Fletcher	McClellan	Sneath	

Noes 29

Bailey	Hoffart	Muir	Travis
Bratley	Lawes	Parshotam	Tubbs
Brown	Lerner	Phipps	Wilson
Clearwater	Manning	Reid	Woodhouse
Clements-Levi	Mataio	Ryan	Woods
Croft	McCallum	Smith	
Henare	McCormick	Stitely	
Henderson	Monigatti	Thompson	

Bill read a third time.

Sitting suspended from 12.32 p.m. to 1.40 p.m.

REPORTS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Members, the House is resumed. Members, we will follow the same procedure as we did with the previous debate. The speeches are 3 minutes, and I will ring the bell at 2 minutes. That means there is a minute to go. If speeches go for longer than the 3 minutes, I shall then stand, and that is the time to terminate the speech.

Consideration of Report of Commerce Committee

CHARLIE WANG (Youth MP for Hon Murray McCully): I present the report of the Commerce Committee on its inquiry into how New Zealand's information technology can be developed to help and support the wider information-technology economy.

The bill we just passed cannot be implemented for 1.1 million disabled people in New Zealand if we do not have enough—and fast enough—connections. Therefore, the Commerce Committee has three suggestions to make. The first is that we make a commitment to accelerate rural internet access. We agree that the delivery of these services to rural areas is key, but we also recognise that speed must be maximised in a cost-effective way. This could be done by working with internet providers to review cellphone tower placement to optimise rural area mobile access, committing to a substantially higher quality of connectivity in the country.

We were advised by a worker in the agriculture sector named Grant McCallum that the Government should focus more on providing innovative ways to resolve the current issues and rural area limitations. The Government should also consider off-the-wall solutions, such as considering Google's innovative and low-cost air balloons, which provide faster Wi-Fi connections in the area. This has already been successfully trialled in New Zealand.

A second suggestion is digital inclusion and adoption by businesses. We were advised that New Zealand businesses should invest their resources in information technology, and that they could be 30 to 40 percent more productive if they did. We were told that the weakest adopters are small businesses. The Government could, and should, do more to support small businesses. This could be done by investing in the promotion of existing educational services, and the Government should improve employment pathways for students pursuing computer science and the training of digitally challenged and digitally illiterate people.

Suggestion No. 3 is to establish programmes that create partnerships between schools and businesses to upskill the workforce, utilise local talent, and encourage businesses to embrace new technologies, including by (a) offering National Certificate of Educational Achievement courses that place high school students with local businesses, and (b) by placing tertiary students with IT-related knowledge or skills into internships with businesses to encourage the usage of available technologies.

Our generation, as young people, are surely the most digitally literate generation, and it is the older generation of workers who have limited contact with IT. So we believe that using such internships is a case of "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day, but teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life time." Thank you.

Consideration of Report of Education and Science Committee

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): The procedure with these reports is that you know when you are going to be seeking the call. So rather than my calling you first, the best process would be for you to stand and to call out "Mr Speaker", and then I will acknowledge

you, and then you start. So the next person up is—do you know the order? It is actually you. So you call out “Mr Speaker.”

Karan Kalsi: Mr Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): I call Karan Kalsi.

KARAN KALSI (Youth MP for Hon David Cunliffe): We are just reporting back from the Education and Science Committee regarding our inquiry into whether schools should be required to be more accessible to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) students.

We have come up with six main recommendations after rigorous debate, the first being that the Human Rights Act 1993 should be amended to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of gender identity. We currently do not think that prohibiting discrimination just upon the basis of sex is enough, and we do not think schools should have that loophole to do so.

Secondly, we think that we want to require all State schools and State-integrated schools to improve their LGBTI-inclusive approach by such actions as implementing gender-neutral facilities, peer support groups, and allowing same-sex partners in all school events so we create a comfortable and safe environment that is conducive towards the learning of LGBTI students.

Thirdly, we want to instruct the Education Review Office (ERO), as part of its usual review process, to evaluate and report on the gender inclusiveness of all schools and their treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) students. Most schools are able to get away with the poor treatment of rainbow students because the ERO does not really measure it as part of its recommendations. So we think that once the Education Review Office actually rates schools and takes into account how they treat LGBTQIA students, there is actually an incentive for them to be more accountable and improve and have better policies.

Our fourth recommendation is that we would require all State and State-integrated schools to carry out annual, anonymous surveys to evaluate how accessible their schools are to the LGBTI community so that all students are empowered and are able to give an honest opinion to the Education Review Office on how their school is treating their peers regarding their sexuality. We would use that and use the data from that as the means to evaluate schools.

Our fifth recommendation is that we would encourage the Ministry of Education, the Human Rights Commission, and people from the LGBTI community to work together to develop an education programme that can be integrated into other current teacher programmes—so having a sex education programme that is not heteronormative and is inclusive of all genders and sexualities—one that teachers also learn whilst they are at university as part of their teaching course, and have that continue on whilst they are teaching.

Lastly, we recommend making sure that we integrate gender and sexual diversity as a compulsory part of the school curriculum and that it is taught consistently across all State and State-integrated schools. This is so that, in particular, religious schools that are State-integrated do not have that exemption or the excuse to deny their students the fundamental knowledge and information that they have and the ability to learn in an environment that is safe and allows LGBTI students to be able to study without fear of being themselves.

Consideration of Report of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

WILLIAM MUIR (Youth MP for Hon Gerry Brownlee): I am very pleased to report the recommendations from the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, and I would like to thank the members of the committee for their input and the submitters for their insight. The committee came up with six recommendations in the inquiry into whether New Zealand's international obligations lie in the Pacific or wider afield.

First, we discussed the idea of international aid and where it was needed according to the geographical focus. Although New Zealand's focus on aid in the Pacific is largely due to proximity, it is also where New Zealand's resources can be best spent. New Zealand is a relatively large, wealthy, and developed country in the Pacific, meaning its aid has a real impact on the development of small Pacific Island nations. Given the vast size of other underdeveloped regions and New Zealand's small population and limited resources, we feel they would have an insignificant impact elsewhere.

Next we discussed the dependence on aid of these Pacific States. We heard that Pacific countries themselves seek economic independence and would prefer to rely on trade instead of aid. We believe that there are opportunities in this area that could be further explored.

Next we discussed cooperation with other actors. Firstly, we heard that as a small island State, New Zealand has a comparative advantage in making a difference in the Pacific and in understanding the issues facing the region. We also see that we do not have the largest of funds, and that if we are able to combine with other State or non-State actors, we would be able to make much more of an impact in applying our regional knowledge and experience.

We next heard about climate change and the suffering of the Pacific Island nations, in which they are often coming to be detrimentally affected by climate change, and the role that New Zealand will play in that. We recognise that most Pacific States have played little or no role in climate change, and New Zealand should continue to play a leading role in ensuring larger greenhouse gas - emitting countries are held accountable.

In the Pacific, we are looking to have more trade with these developing nations. At the moment, we ship several billion dollars of trade to them and receive only several hundred million back, which is quite a big discrepancy, and we are looking to further bolster that. We are also looking globally to have more free-trade deals with as many countries as we can have, as we feel that this would be far more beneficial for New Zealand in the long run. We also think that it will help, rather than hinder, the economic growth of other Pacific Island nations.

Lastly, we heard about refugees. This committee is supportive of this change of bringing more refugees into New Zealand, and we recommend that the priority for refugees comes to Pacific Island nations, as they are being affected and are close by.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Just before the member speaks, could I just ask that when you are presenting, you read out what is on the sheet here, because you are actually presenting a report of the committee. And the previous speaker—you mentioned only the first line and a bit; you never finished off what the report was about. Although you covered it in the substance of the report, that was not the substantive matter of the report—what you were doing. So I did not pull you up, but from now on we will make sure it happens.

Consideration of Report of Health Committee

KRYSTAL WRIGHT (Youth MP for Hon Nathan Guy): I want to just let the House know, to start off with, that 310—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): No, no. I have just explained. You have to read what is on the sheet here.

KRYSTAL WRIGHT: Our recommendations?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): No, no. “I present the report”—have you got that in front of you?

KRYSTAL WRIGHT: No.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): You just sit for a moment. I am asking the Clerk for some clarification. Why I mentioned that was that the first two presentations did read exactly what should have happened. William Muir started off with the first opening line as per the report, but then delved into other things. I am informed by the Clerk that if you have not got this, you can come up here now and get what you have to say. I am going to call Krystal Wright—see how we go.

KRYSTAL WRIGHT: I want to present the inquiry into how we can better deal with mental health issues and suicide prevention in schools. I will just let the House know that 310 youths have died from self-inflicted deaths in the past 5 years, so the Health Committee decided to make recommendations to better help mental health issues and to provide suicide prevention within schools.

Our first recommendation is that the House provide more resources to schools to promote communication between schools, students, and parents about mental health. Our second recommendation is that it direct the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education to identify which isolated areas require additional support for youth mental health services.

Our third recommendation is that the House establish a combined task force comprised of the Ministry of Education and Te Puni Kōkiri officials to create a strategy that encourages relationships between local iwi and hapū and schools that can support the well-being of Māori youth; that it ensure that all guidance counsellors are appropriately qualified and schools are sufficiently funded to afford to hire qualified guidance staff; that it provide additional funding to promote alternative forms of education and resources about mental health; and that it request the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to partner with schools to investigate ways to make school workloads more manageable for students and to incorporate holistic mental health education into the required curriculum between years 7 to 13.

So to open the communication channels, we were informed that there was often a lack of clear communication between schools and parents about the well-being of students, which can influence family bonds. We stress the importance of providing funding to allow for workshops and information evenings to take place regularly so that parents can be advised on how to manage and prompt open conversations with their children about mental health.

In the last 5 years 188 youth identifying as Māori or Pasifika have died by suicide. This contributes to over 60 percent of the total suicide deaths among New Zealanders from age 12 to 19. Therefore, we recommend a task force comprised of the Ministry of Education and Te Puni Kōkiri, to develop a strategy that encourages relationships between local iwi and hapū in schools to support the well-being of Māori youth. We also understand that in rural

areas they are far more isolated. Therefore, we want to allocate funding to these rural areas, to provide more support.

We also believe that all guidance counsellors should hold a professional qualification, and to do that, we would like to also allocate additional funding so that this can happen, and we want the Ministry of Education to oversee a transitional period. Two youth authors came to talk to us about a book that they wrote called *When life gives you lemons*. It is about dealing with anxiety and depression when being a student. So we wanted this book to be distributed to schools and also for the authors to travel New Zealand and talk, as they are really good role models. We also want NZQA to lessen the workload by communicating with schools, and also for the health curriculum to place particular emphasis on hauora and for it to be through years 7 to 13. Thank you.

Consideration of Report of Justice and Electoral Committee

HANNAH MONIGATTI (Youth MP for David Seymour): I present the report of the Justice and Electoral Committee on its inquiry into the decriminalisation of recreational drugs. First of all, I would like to congratulate the committee on coming to a consensus after 2 days of intense discussion and debate and thank the submitters for the insight that they provided on this issue.

It became evident very early on that our current system of total prohibition is not working. Half of New Zealand adults between the ages of 16 and 64 have used a recreational drug at some point in their life, the vast majority when they were young, beginning at the ages of 15 to 17. A fifth of these actually began at the age of 14 or younger, so it is a problem affecting our young people. Bearing in mind the array of harmful effects that substance abuse has on our health, education, and society as a whole—especially in regard to the link to crime—we believe that we do need to take a new approach to addressing this issue; one that is based on health.

Therefore, we recommend that the Government (1) change regulation of class C cannabis to prohibition with civil penalties and cautioning, rather than total prohibition, and that it (2) monitor the outcomes of the use of these interventions and, if successful, consider decriminalisation. This could be extended to other recreational drugs or classes of drugs. We recommend that the Government (3) promote a health-based approach to recreational drug use, and (4) that funding be increased for schools and communities to provide greater education about recreational drugs and their potential harms. And we recommend that it (5) adopt a tiered approach to legislative reform based on the models that are used in some areas of Australia.

Essentially, what this will do is divert those caught with small amounts of cannabis for personal use away from prison and towards education and support programmes. It is using civil penalties such as fines and community service rather than jail time. We emphasise that this applies only to that which is for personal use—15 to 50 grams—and that it does not include the manufacture, supply, import, or export of these drugs.

In a system dominated by a criminal justice response, people in possession of a small amount of cannabis for personal use do face disproportionate punishment, with lifelong implications. Not only does having criminal convictions make it incredibly difficult for them to reintegrate into society, and perpetuate the marginalisation of individuals, but also it is an incredibly expensive process involving the police, the courts, and eventually prisons, as well as reducing their access to treatment and not actually solving the real issue.

So what taking this broad, health-based approach does is recognise that cannabis is actually not the problem but is more often a symptom of greater problems such as disadvantage,

poverty, trauma, and co-existing mental health issues, and what it is doing is not judging these people. It is not punishing them; it is actually giving them the help and the support they need. You would not send an alcoholic to prison. You would make sure they got the support that they needed, and so that is what we would like to achieve here. We believe this is a step in the right direction for New Zealand drug reform, and we urge the Government to take these recommendations into account.

Consideration of Report of Local Government and Environment Committee

NINA SANTOS (Youth MP for Hon Nikki Kaye): I present the report of the Local Government and Environment Committee on its inquiry into how much the retail industry is doing to improve New Zealand's embattled environment, and into whether regulation on the cost of usage of plastic bags is required. We were fortunate enough to hear from a good range of submitters, including a representative from the Ministry for the Environment, independent community organisations, and Retail New Zealand.

The committee has reached a unanimous agreement that soft plastic carrier bags impose negative environmental externalities both during their production and improper disposal. As individuals, it is easy to overlook the wider impacts of plastic carrier bags. Although, according to the Minister for the Environment, plastic carrier bags make up less than 2 percent of our total waste, the committee agrees that we can definitely do better.

After much deliberation, the committee has submitted a report, and I will now outline the recommendations: that the House introduce legislation to create a 10c point-of-sale tax on all plastic carrier bags, that it consider incorporating environmental sustainability education into The New Zealand Curriculum, that it support the efforts of organisations and local government entities to improve sustainability education and awareness in New Zealand, that it form a working research group to assess and rate the environmental impacts of retail companies' packaging, with a view to introducing unnecessary-packaging regulations, that it introduce subsidies for New Zealand - based companies that use sustainable packaging alternatives to soft-plastic packaging, and that it initiate research into the subsequent development of sustainable packaging alternatives for New Zealand.

There are two major aspects that need more attention: the improvement of recycling schemes and the reduction of plastic consumption in the first place. One of the main things the committee would like to emphasise to the House is the importance of education for sustainability in paving the way for a cleaner and greener future. By going to the grassroots and teaching students about sustainable development and negative impacts of plastic usage, we hope that this will shift their mind-sets and, hopefully, reduce the demand for plastic products. Knowledge really is power, and when dealing with a matter that may initially seem simplistic but is actually causing detrimental damage to our biodiversity, it is important that we let them know why we are doing what we do and what direction we are heading towards.

Another major point is the importance of Government intervention in the regulation of plastic bags. As lawmakers, we have the unique power to shape the nation and, through our policies, present our people with a vision. Through the point-of-sale tax, working research groups, and incentive schemes, we hope to decrease plastic consumption in the long run.

A final point discussed by the committee is the importance of collaboration between the Government and our communities. We have heard about some pretty inspiring recycling initiatives, and we believe this is the way to go—Kiwi ingenuity. Kick-starting the research into more sustainable alternatives is a positive direction, and the committee is hopeful that we can retain our "100% Pure New Zealand" lifestyle and reputation. Thank you.

Consideration of Report of Māori Affairs Committee

KII WINSTON SMALL (Youth MP for Rt Hon Winston Peters): Kia ora koutou, ko Te Kaikōrero Matua, ngā tai rangatahi o tēnei Paremata, tēnā koutou mai i te taha o Te Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Māori.

[Acknowledgements to us all, Mr Speaker, the youth of this Parliament, greetings to you on behalf of the Māori Affairs Committee.]

That is enough. I am not going to speak any more Māori. I present the report of the Māori Affairs Committee on its inquiry, “Should te reo Māori be compulsory in primary and secondary schools?”. As the chairperson of this committee, on behalf of my colleagues, we would just like to thank the people who came in and gave us their thoughts on it, and I would also like to thank my committee members for reaching a unanimous decision in 2 days.

In our analysis, we analysed the Welsh nation in 1975 and its tactics to normalise and authenticate the use of its native language. We analysed the cultural, social, and cognitive benefits, as well as the linguistic benefits, of revitalising te reo Māori and putting it in into primary and secondary schools. We were presented with various opinions on this matter: (1) it should be compulsory because this is the only way to revitalise and normalise the te reo Māori language; (2) it should not be forced, but it should be a core subject; and (3) it should not be put in schools at all. We have come to a decision.

The recommendations that we make in the report are: (1) that te reo Māori be made a core subject in school until the end of Year 10 of high school. We have defined a core subject as “a compulsory subject within an early childhood centre or school”. (2) That te reo Māori be integrated into the daily classroom life in early childhood education, and primary and secondary schools so that students are more likely to learn it later in their schooling. Each school could have a 1-year start to implementing this, as we realise it may be difficult to gain the resources in order to properly teach the students te reo Māori. (3) That each school has a tohunga to represent the Māori culture and to be a te reo Māori expert. Each school could have a time frame of 3 to 5 years to implement a tohunga. (4) That schools are required to offer opportunities for students to visit marae and other culturally significant places to learn more about the culture outside of the school. These visits should occur at least once a term.

In saying that, my committee has also developed a minority report. It is the view of the Māori Party member Te Paki McKenzie that te reo Māori should be a core subject in addition to the seven core curriculum subjects. It is our belief that te reo Māori is a unifying face of nationhood and has the ability to reduce unconscious bias in New Zealand society, thereby improving the incidence of equitable outcomes. We know that Kii Winston Small—me—Te Puawai Wilson-Leahy, Josh Gill, and Katie Gotlieb also agree with this minority view. Committee members—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): I understand a waiata has been—
[Interruption] Have you finished?

KII WINSTON SMALL: I have not finished. Heoi anō, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa!

[So I acknowledge, salute and congratulate you collectively and us all indeed!]

Waiata

Consideration of Report of Primary Production Committee

BEN HENDERSON (Youth MP for Ian McKelvie): I present the report of the Primary Production Committee on its inquiry into what primary industries must do to capitalise further on New Zealand's reputation as a producer of high-quality, safe, and trusted foodstuffs to the world. Firstly, I would like to thank the committee members, presenters, and staff. Our productive and engaging discussions about the importance of the primary sector were very enlightening for me, a country bumpkin fresh off the farm. I will briefly explain what we have covered.

Quality over quantity: in addition to the quality of production New Zealand develops for its overseas markets, we think that targeting niche markets in countries overseas will continue to ensure that the quality of the product New Zealand produces is sustained.

Free-trade agreements (FTAs): we recommend that the Government pursue more free-trade agreements, as they open new markets for the primary sector. We also emphasise that agreements of this nature need to be environmentally and economically sustainable for New Zealand and the primary industry. FTAs must also be mindful of New Zealand's cultural heritage and values, such as the Treaty of Waitangi.

High quality in overseas markets: we emphasised the importance for the primary industries of valuing food safety, traceability, and origin of product, especially when conducting business overseas.

The New Zealand brand: we are concerned that brands such as "100% Pure" risk corrupting New Zealand's image overseas, as this brand does not accurately represent the needs of primary industry exporters. We think that all industries marketed overseas need to be involved in the discussion about the New Zealand brand.

Genetic modification: we think that genetic modification does not fit into New Zealand's current reputation. We are, however, always open to new technologies that are proven to be safe.

The use of technology: technology plays a part in giving New Zealand an edge over its competitors. We see the value in the Government supporting and leading investment and research across the industry.

The committee presents to the House the following recommendations: that it help focus primary industries on high-quality exports; that it pursue free-trade agreements to open up more markets for exporters; that it develop a brand strategy for New Zealand in consultation with all of the various industries; that it support the primary industries to conduct research and development to help further technology and innovation; that it support education for exporters on what products will sell overseas and how to maintain high standards; and lastly, that it support educating students on the primary industries to encourage more students to take up jobs in the primary sector. The primary sector is important to New Zealand, and we believe that the Government should support any ways necessary to help its growth. Thank you.

Consideration of Report of Social Services Committee

RUBY BRIDGE (Youth MP for James Shaw): I present the report of the Social Services Committee on the inquiry into what can be done to ensure that children of teen parents have good outcomes. Before beginning, I will note that although the focus of this inquiry is on the outcomes of the children of teen parents, it is often difficult to separate the outcomes of the

teen from the child. Hence, we have also considered how teen parents can be supported so they can provide better outcomes for the child.

The first of our recommendations is that education services for teenagers, teen parents, families, and whānau should be better promoted, targeted, and strengthened. Education should be a priority for all those affected by teen pregnancy and should be targeted, accessible, and free. Teenagers should receive sex education that is comprehensive, innovative, and free from negative connotations, including broader issues such as relationships, consent, contraception, and self-awareness, with all schools being pushed to more effectively incorporate them into their health education curriculums. The provision of education services for whānau and families of teen parents is also crucial to ensuring that their children grow up to achieve good outcomes. Perhaps most important is the continuation of the education of teen parents after they have children. It is critical and, therefore, must be strengthened.

We consider that there is still room for improvement in the delivery of all suggested services. For example, many teen parents have reported feeling singled out due to negative preconceptions of their suitability as parents and withdrawing from the services provided.

Our second recommendation is that mental health services and community support networks for teen parents must be strengthened too. Cultural accessibility is also an important consideration in this respect, because Māori principles are also an important consideration and values play a central role when evaluating what works with Māori parents and whānau. Creating strong community support networks will positively affect the children of teen parents by entrenching them in their community and removing the negative impact of transience. This will be especially critical when a teen parent is isolated or where whānau are absent.

It is also important that appropriate support is available for teen fathers to be involved in positive parenting. Support services that encourage teen fathers—including mentoring, advice, and fostering confidence—can help young fathers play a positive role in their child's life.

Finally—our last recommendation—we believe that having a child at a young age should not necessarily be regarded negatively. This view often has damaging effects on how young parents relate to themselves, their families, and, ultimately, their children. So we would like to see a focus on the parenting rather than the age of the parent. In order to change this perception, we ask to see a concentrated nationwide effort involving education and sensitive media portrayal to raise awareness about the services provided for teen pregnancy and parenting.

Consideration of Report of Transport and Industrial Relations Committee

TERESA LEE (Youth MP for Jacinda Ardern): I present the report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on its inquiry into what the barriers are to young people entering employment across New Zealand workplaces and how these can be addressed.

Right now, 16.3 percent of youth are unemployed in New Zealand. That is 16.3 percent of young people who are falling through the cracks. Evidence suggests that unemployment among young people can have negative effects on well-being and increase the risk of poor life outcomes—for example, disengagement and isolation from society; reductions in essential spending, such as food, housing, and health care; and increased uncertainty, leading to delays in developmental markers such as starting a family.

The main issues that we recognised were demographical bias, particularly for Māori and Pacific Island youth; people who have risk factors, such as having a mother with no formal

qualifications; and also just the perception of youth in general, as many employers do not correctly perceive our attitudes and our skills. The second issue that we were exploring was a skills mismatch. Because of the changing job market, what education is providing is not what employers might be looking for. The third issue is the inaccessibility of opportunity. It might be a lack of awareness of the opportunities or the fact that youth cannot find transport for it or find the resources to take on jobs.

The first recommendation that we have in this report is that the Government subsidise a programme that reduces the risk for employers taking on apprentices, because we want to make sure that apprenticeships are out there for youth to take, as typical schooling is not for every single person. This is supported by our second recommendation: that we provide information for school-leavers on apprenticeships and trade opportunities. However, we do, of course, think there does need to be a change in our educational system for those who are school-leavers. So that is our third recommendation: that we provide education on driving, CV skills, interview skills, entrepreneurship, and other essential life skills. Obviously, this is not really integrated in a lot of our curriculum, and a lot of youth need these to successfully apply for jobs confidently.

To support this, we should have an online digital hub of job opportunities available exclusively to young people. That is kind of like a SEEK for young people, so that employers can find youth to fill their jobs, and vice versa. My last recommendation is that we encourage school careers advisers and local business communities to strengthen links with each other. That is all. Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER: I thank all members and congratulate those who have reported. The reports of the select committees are adopted as part of the proceedings of Youth Parliament 2016.

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr SPEAKER: We come now to the general debate. Members can speak for up to 3 minutes on a topic of their choice. I will ring the bell at 2 minutes, signalling to members that they have 1 minute to complete their contribution. The rules of the debate are set out in the Youth Parliament Standing Orders, and the relevant sections 19 to 31 apply. Would some honourable member care to move that the House take note of miscellaneous business?

KANE BASSETT (Youth MP for Hon Bill English): I move, *That the House take note of miscellaneous business.* I would like to bring your attention to the issue of subconscious racism in relation to foreign investment and the role it plays in New Zealand today. This issue has a clear and evident ripple effect on Asian race groupings, and it is my belief that our media is not aiding the situation in the slightest. It is, in fact, my personal belief that we adhere to the second aim of Goal 10 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in order for this problem to be rectified before it creates an overarching layer of permanent racial inequality within our society.

I would like to offer insight into the area of foreign investment and how this very evidently contributes to the problem of subconscious racism at the forefront. According to a survey conducted on 500 Clutha-Southland youth, 430 listed their top two biggest foreign investors as Asian countries. Our biggest foreign investor is not China and it is not Japan. Our two biggest foreign investors are Canada and Australia. I ask the House: why are Kiwis so quick to affiliate foreign investment with Asian racial groupings? Simply and unjustly so, it is because those of Asian descent are the easiest to differentiate as foreign. In New Zealand, we hold this warped misconception that New Zealanders have to be white.

In addition, New Zealand media institutions have given foreign investment a well enriched negative connotation as well. There is never an article about Canadian foreign investment,

there is never a newspaper article about Australian foreign investment, but there is always an article about Asian foreign investment. This portrayal of foreign investment in our headlines has in no way aided subconscious racism in our nation as a whole. Thus, our Government needs to take steps and work in conjunction with the second aim of Goal 10 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for the empowerment and promotion of “social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”, in order to progressively combat this issue of subconscious racism within New Zealand.

I recommend that this be done by establishing an apolitical body to mediate and abolish discrimination within our media resources and by introducing compulsory apolitical civics education into our New Zealand high school curriculum, with a core focus on foreign investment and tackling the idea of instinctive racism.

I will stand with my friends, my Asian family members, and, more importantly, the multicultural society of New Zealand as we tackle this issue, both holistically and coherently, as members of society who want to enact positive change. This level of inequality is indicative of the unfairness of our society, and something needs to change. Thank you.

LEAH BELL (Youth MP for Barbara Kuriger): Hōmai te rā. The New Zealand Land Wars were pivotal in our nation’s story and have created the face of race relations today. Do we, as a Youth Parliament, understand the living impact of the Land Wars? Can we say that we know why the Land Wars were our most significant event, leading to such immense loss? Can we understand the significance of the Treaty settlement process when we do not know our shared history of the New Zealand Land Wars? We have living and shared histories of epic and dramatic proportions, with named ancestors on all sides of the New Zealand Wars that have shaped us into who and how we are today.

In an attempt to raise awareness of the New Zealand Land Wars, to introduce these local histories into The New Zealand Curriculum, and to memorialise Māori and Pākehā who lost their lives on New Zealand soil with a statutory day of recognition, a petition of more than 11,000 signatures was tabled in this very House by the Hon Nanaia Mahuta. It was brought to the steps on 8 December last year by hundreds of people, representing the commitment of Aotearoa to this youth-driven kaupapa. We thank them.

Waimārama Anderson and I, as signatories to this petition, made our submission to the Māori Affairs Committee in March. It is the hope of the signatories that the petition will be one key to unlocking our suppressed story and will heighten the awareness of our nation to its history and build our nationhood. With cross-party support and \$4 million recently secured by the Māori Party to commemorate the Land Wars, we have the possibility of a comprehensive communications plan to accompany this recognised day.

In my electorate, which embraces the heart of the long-fought Land Wars, many of us believe that New Zealand cannot afford to ignore our history. It has taken over 150 years for us to even get to this conversation. With every political and economic move made in our great nation we are forced to practise historical amnesia. We need to develop a national historical consciousness that balances healing and knowing, empathy and ambition, and leaves us all on the same page.

I ask that the House pass legislation seeking a statutory holiday dedicated to the commemoration of the New Zealand Land Wars and to the sacrifice of the families, soldiers, and warriors on the plains, coasts, hilltops, and valleys of our great nation. In the “Ode of Remembrance” we say “Lest we forget.” Today and forevermore, we say “We must remember. Me maumahara tātou.” Kia ora tātou katoa.

JESSICA BONIFACE (Youth MP for Jonathan Young): Mr Speaker and honourable Youth MPs, I would like to speak about the declining number of young people in my electorate, New Plymouth. New Plymouth is starting to become more of a place to retire than a place to bring up young children, and this is largely due to two main factors. These, to me, are job opportunities becoming scarce for young people without the proper experience, and—the biggest reason—that we have no on-site access to a university education.

What I believe to be the most significant reason for young people leaving New Plymouth is the lack of a university. Although there is talk of a university expanding to New Plymouth, it still will not be for a few years into the future. We have the Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT), which, as a polytechnic, does not offer the extensive range of degrees that a university does. For example, from 2010 to 2014 Auckland University enrolled, on average, 43,056 students for 11 different programmes. That statistic does not include those students who already reside in Auckland, although many students prefer to move away from their families to feel more independent.

I feel that the fact that many young people from New Plymouth have to move away from home puts a major strain on families because their student loan builds up, and, therefore, they have to pay more in the end. If they do not qualify for a scholarship, they choose to stay and study at a polytechnic or go straight into the workforce, which causes young people to lose the drive that their teachers put into them from such a young age.

As a teenager currently in New Plymouth, I have found it very difficult to acquire part-time work, especially recently, along with other young people who are wanting to move back after finishing a degree at a university institute. There are many reasons for this, one being the fact that the older generation of inhabitants in New Plymouth are retiring far later than they used to. For example, in the education workforce, teachers are not required to perform a physically straining job, so they are able to stay in that job for much longer. This often means that students coming from a university institute will find it very hard to get a job.

In conclusion, the declining rate of young people in New Plymouth can be broken down into two main points: the difficulty of attaining a job, and the lack of a university in New Plymouth. Scholars are predicting that in the next 5 years the number of people over 65 years old is going to be greater than that of people under 21. To change some of these things, our city council and the office of the MP can get involved and be proactive to help the cause. In doing so, some of the more congested cities may become less so, as the influx would become less—not significantly, at first, but over time. Thank you.

RUBY BRIDGE (Youth MP for James Shaw): Why should young people become engaged in civic affairs and politics? This year youth parliamentarians will be considering this question, but today I want to address a slightly different one: why are we all so disengaged in the first place? Voter participation is in steep decline in New Zealand, particularly with youth, suggesting that we believe our participation cannot make a difference.

But why should young people become engaged? What difference would it really make? I mean, I never cared much about politics when I was in school, because I could never really see how it affected me. I know now. These days, when I think to myself about why it is important, I like to imagine this: New Zealand is a place where all people have access to the knowledge that explains how politics affects their entire world, where there are more effective Government services because they are informed by youth's opinions and concerns.

But do we have access to this knowledge? To some extent we do. Although civics and citizenship is not taught as a separate subject, it is integrated into the criteria of a number of subjects, and that is great. So it is there. But if it is there, then why is there still a decline? Perhaps it is not so much an issue of what we learn but more of an issue of how we learn.

Learning citizenship cannot be fulfilled by any set criteria. No, learning citizenship is about nurturing each child's individuality and complex understandings of the world, because that is what citizenship is. It is the development of their own values, beliefs, and identities that allow them to feel and remain engaged in their society. Thus, learning citizenship cannot be a product; it is a process.

I left school a year early because I was tired of feeling like my worth was measured by how marketable the products of my brain were. I left school a year early to learn basic concepts at university that I wish I had been made aware of far earlier—like, what the Government actually does, and what the word “democracy” means. Even if I was told, the problem was that knowing these things did not get me credits or help me get a job. Students need to feel empowered as individuals, as opposed to rushing to fulfil the criteria of an institution that does not understand them just as much as they do not understand the institution.

I ask that we—as in all youth, as stakeholders—are included in the conversation of what constitutes our education system. There needs to be a shift in focus from product to process to make this possible. Humans are not products or commodities, but citizens and individuals, who need to be treated as such. The Government needs to make solving this crisis of widespread disengagement a priority before we lose the right to call ourselves a democracy.

MICHAEL DAYA-WINTERBOTTOM (Youth MP for Hon Judith Collins): Tēnā koutou katoa, i hui mai nei i tēnei wā, ki ngā kaumātua, tēnā koutou, ki ngā rangatira, tēnā koutou, kaikōrero mā, kaiwhakarongo mā, koutou katoa i hui mai nei ki te tautoko i tēnei kaupapa, tēnā koutou katoa.

[Acknowledgements to you all gathered here at this point in time, elders, esteemed ones, speech makers, those listening, every one of you assembled here in support of this occasion, I acknowledge all of you.]

Good afternoon, Mr Speaker, distinguished guests, and, most importantly, members of Youth Parliament. Today we are gathered here to celebrate two things: the democracy in which we live and our contribution to it as youth. I feel deeply honoured to be part of such an amazing and inspiring group of young people, and to be able to speak to you here today on a topic that is close to my heart: the rights of the LGBT community, both historically and today, with a view towards the future.

As a nation, New Zealand has a proud history when it comes to recognising the rights of the LGBT community. In fact, this year marks 30 years since the legalisation of homosexual sex between men, a landmark in the fight for equality. This was an important stepping stone in the LGBT rights movement in New Zealand and, having reached the 30-year anniversary of this momentous reform, there is no better time to repeal the convictions of men convicted for having had consensual gay sex before the implementation of this law.

The next landmark in the protection of LGBT rights came in 1993 with the passing of the Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexuality and sex. Without demeaning the importance of this, it is important to note that as the trans community still faces marginalisation within society, we must also legislate against discrimination on the basis of gender identity. Such concerns are reflected in a report by the Human Rights Commission entitled *To Be Who I Am: Report of the Inquiry into Discrimination Experienced by Transgender People*, and are yet to be fully addressed by Parliament in legislation and other initiatives.

The final step thus far has been the introduction of the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013. This was built on attempts stretching back over a decade, beginning with the case of *Quilter v Attorney-General* as well as the introduction of civil union

partnerships for same-sex couples in 2004. Importantly, this reform gave same-sex couples not only the right to marry but also the right to adopt children once married. This is undoubtedly one of the most progressive and forward-thinking pieces of legislation that has been produced by Parliament, with New Zealand being one of only 20 countries worldwide to have legalised same-sex marriage nationwide.

Reflecting on the progress in LGBT rights that has occurred through legislation, one can only have an overall positive view of New Zealand. However, it is important to note that we must not simply rest on our laurels as a progressive nation; instead, we should aim to constantly challenge discrimination within society, not only against the LGBT community but also throughout New Zealand as a whole, setting an example for the world to follow.

CHLOE DESTRIEUX (Youth MP for Louisa Wall): My electorate area of Manurewa is an infamously multicultural, young, low socio-economic area. My community sees the effects of hardship in its own backyard. As part of my tenure, I held a youth forum with the three high schools in Manurewa in order to be a true representative of my area. We created mission statements that offer possible solutions to the issues that young people face, including poverty, education, discrimination, and employment.

These issues, I believe, are related, forming a multi-dimensional puzzle that needs to be solved. Our solutions are the key ideas of community, education, and stability. “We want to see the needs of youth identified and met through the promotion of positive attitudes and community initiatives.”

The positive influences of community are best seen in the leadership of Te Puea Marae and our own Manurewa Marae in embracing the most vulnerable people—the homeless. Manurewa Marae board member Rangi McLean said: “I hold to the teaching of my elders, who said if I can’t help my community I may as well not do anything at all.” We do not have time to choose the latter. Empathy is one of the most important values any member should hold, as ensuring the well-being of all people is the key function of a democracy. This sense of empathy is something to be learnt from communities like my own.

Relating to education: “We want to see a raised awareness of school scholarships and effective mentoring programmes, which create greater opportunities for struggling learners.” As much of a cliché as it is, education is power, but there are still disparities between ethnic groups in terms of academic achievement—ethnic groups that are prevalent in my electorate. According to the 2014 statistics, Māori students made up only 11 percent of school leavers with National Certificate of Educational Achievement level 3 or above. Pasifika students were even lower, at 8 percent, compared with Europeans, making up 67 percent. By fully recognising this issue and promoting initiatives to aid these students, I am hopeful we can break the cycle of low achievement among disadvantaged groups and empower all young people to be actively involved in society. We need to take continuous action to ensure that all young people are engaged with education, employment, or training.

Finally, on stability: “We want to see the Government providing the basic necessities to those who are vulnerable.” This rests on the expectation that all young people live in a home with food on the table. Having a stable home means connecting to school and engaging in education. It means embracing a sense of community. Without getting into the woes of the housing crisis, I believe housing should be of the highest priority to ensure stability for people throughout New Zealand, especially youth. There is no quick fix to this country’s issues, but within the community I call home, I see shining examples of leadership that provide a small glimpse of hope for our future. With a focus on community, education, and stability, I am sure that this generation will do a world of good.

I seek leave to table a document. The source of this document is the Manurewa Youth Summit that I held on 13 May 2016. The nature of this document is to present the findings of this event, which was a forum for student leaders to come together and discuss issues that affect young people in the community. The reason—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The document has now been well described. The procedure is I put the leave and if the leave is given, the document will be tabled. Leave is sought to table that particular document from the Manurewa Youth Summit, as described by the member. Is there any objection to it being tabled? There is none. It can be tabled.

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

HAMISH DUNCAN (Youth MP for Clare Curran): Kia ora all. Over my tenure as Clare Curran's Youth MP, I have created and run a survey to gather information on the impact of cyber-bullying and how it affects my peers, young men. I believe cyber-bullying is more than just a media buzzword; it is a real threat to this country's youth. Cyber-bullying is an issue that is increasing with the increase in technology. Experts believe that cyber-bullying has profound adverse effects: depression, anxiety, suicide, and other antisocial behaviours. Many of my contemporaries are at risk.

With over 700 responses to my survey, I found some very worrying trends. The first is the sheer number of young men being cyber-bullied. One quarter of all guys surveyed from year 9 to 13 have been cyber-bullied. Think of this extended to the thousands in every year group across the country and you begin to see the magnitude of the problem.

The next worrying statistic is those who have witnessed bullying online. In every single year group, the majority have seen cyber-bullying. My peers have observed bullying and have been bullied on apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many more. In some cases, up to three-quarters of a year group have witnessed cyber-bullying. When asked whether they would tell anyone if cyber-bullied, the majority of every year group said they would not tell anyone.

The Government's advice if you are being cyber-bullied is to, first, tell somebody—reach out for help. But young men are incredibly reluctant to do this. We have people being cyber-bullied, and we have people seeing cyber-bullying, but we have a majority refusing to open up about the problem.

One of the most worrying statements is on whether young men believe that the police and this Government understand the current nature of cyber-bullying. No group had a majority that thought the police and the Government understand the issue. Most did not even know the Government's stance on cyber-bullying. Last year the Harmful Digital Communications Bill was passed with the goal of criminalising causing harm through digital communications. My peers have little to no understanding of this law or trust in the Government to protect them from cyber-bullying.

My survey shows that young men are seeing bullying, being bullied, and are afraid to ask for help. My peers and I believe this Government needs to do more to solve this issue. What they have done is simply not enough. The problem is huge and will only keep getting bigger. The negative impact of cyber-bullying is clear; the danger of inaction is far too great. Young men need Parliament to get more done. Thank you.

LEVI FARRELL (Youth MP for Carmel Sepuloni): I move that the tragedy of a young person dying because of overwhelming hopelessness or frustration is devastating to family, friends, and the communities we live in. Parents, siblings, classmates, coaches, and neighbours might be left wondering whether they could have done something to prevent that

young person from turning to the treacherous outcome of suicide. Learning more about what might lead a teen to suicide may help prevent further tragedies. Even though suicide is not always preventable, it is always a good idea to be informed and take action to help a troubled teenager.

Suicide is a serious health and social issue. Suicide rates are a sign of the mental health and social well-being of the population of a society. Every year approximately 500 people in New Zealand—500 people in New Zealand—take their own lives. This does not include the number of people attempting a suicidal act, experiencing levels of distress that place them at high risk of suicide. In New Zealand, suicide rates are highest for males, whom I can see sitting in the House; also for Māori, whom I can see sitting in the House; and, lastly, for youth, whom I can see sitting in the House.

According to Statistics New Zealand, Māori are accountable for 15 percent of New Zealand's 4.5 million people, 50 percent of New Zealand's prison population, can expect to die 7 years younger than non-Māori, and have an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent compared with the 5.9 percent for non-Māori. From the suicide prevention framework, these factors mean that they are a high-risk group.

However, it is also believed that the staunch male Māori culture is to blame. It is widely claimed that a man in the Māori culture is to be staunch, to be the protector, to be the provider, and to show strength at all times. A depressive or suicidal thought will not kill you, but holding on to that thought and trying to battle through it alone—that is the killer.

So what we need to do is to create a society that makes it OK for men—or anyone, for that matter—to talk about their problems. Teen suicides stem from trying to escape feelings of pain, rejection, hurt, being unloved, victimisation, or loss. Teens may feel like their feelings are unbearable and will never end, so the only way to escape is suicide. As described previously, cyber-bullying, bullying, financial problems, homelessness, relationship conflicts, family issues, and inequality are all problems throughout New Zealand that are immediate causes of suicide.

To prevent suicide in New Zealand it is vital that everyone—individuals, communities, employers, the media, and Government agencies—work together to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors known to influence suicide. Reflect the positives and not the negatives in New Zealand and maybe those negative externalities will decrease or ultimately—

Mr SPEAKER: Bring your contribution to a conclusion.

LEVI FARRELL: —cease to exist in New Zealand.

KATIE GOTLIEB (Youth MP for Metiria Turei): Parliament has more or less become a playground—a place for the high rollers to throw their toys out of their cot until they get their way. Nowadays it is a relatively ridiculous notion to expect a well-informed, honest debate in Parliament, and that, in itself, is one of the many fundamentally dysfunctional things about our democratic system. In Parliament, throwing insults is more commonplace than conscientious decision-making or well-informed debate, and—may I say—the insults are pretty below average.

In my opinion—and I know that many others agree with me—there is a certain level of respect that must, and should, be upheld by the leaders of our country. But it seems that instead of this happening, our Government has just become the butt of a few too many jokes. I will agree, we are a mile off Donald Trump - levels, but the fact of the matter is that if the general public are no longer shocked when these playground insults are thrown around

so casually, or when we discover that Parliament has again been hiding some dodgy dealings behind its \$30,000 kauri doors, you would think that there should be some questions asked.

One of the things I find so unprofessional about Parliament and its actions is the lack of respect shown to opposing parties. You would think that everyone would at least listen to and respect the opinions of the people they are supposed to be working with to make Aotearoa a better place for us New Zealanders. Supposedly, the opinions expressed by these parties in our House represent our views and beliefs and what we want for our future, our children's future, and Aotearoa's future. In my opinion, throwing around insults is not representing my views and insulting the very people you are supposed to be working with is not respectful, and completely disregarding your colleagues' views, even if they are in opposing parties, is not only showing a massive amount of disrespect to them but also showing a massive amount of disrespect to the people of Aotearoa.

I will agree that often what I have been saying does not apply to some of the members of Parliament. Some of our politicians are brilliant people who really are invested in creating the best future for Aotearoa and act accordingly. But, unfortunately, a few apparently seem to regard Parliament as playtime, and this creates an environment that is very hard to escape no matter how many good politicians we have and how hard they try to escape the cycle. What I will say is this: every single time I have talked to someone about something that has happened on Parliament TV, the conversation without fail ends up being about how disappointed they are about the lack of respect shown and how ridiculous some of the behaviour is. I am just saying that if so many people from different walks of life actually share this opinion, that kind of points towards there being a wee bit of a problem.

I know that all of us here today have very different opinions, we all have very different views, and we all support different parties. We all come from different places or have been brought up differently and have all experienced different hardships. Perhaps you do not agree with some of what I have said, but I think that we can all agree that asking our Parliament—the people who are supposed to be representing all of our differences—to show some respect towards our views and the people who are representing them is something that should not have to be asked of them; that should be in the damned job description. Thank you.

SOPHIE HARRISON (Youth MP for Richard Prosser): When asked to consider what is the most pressing issue young people face, a multitude of things come to mind: rising house prices, climate change, education—the potential of a Trump presidency. These topics all worry me, and I am sure they worry every person in this room. However, what I would like to spend my 3 minutes talking about is a far more pervasive issue—one that often slips out of view of the mainstream media. I would like to address the topic of sexism in New Zealand.

While writing this speech, I thought about that line and considered maybe going down a different route, anticipating eye-rolling and “Oh no, here we go again. Is this another speech about sexism?”, because, yes, we have all heard this speech before—be it a viral video on social media, an enthusiastic classmate, or a socially enlightened teacher. But although we have all heard points raised about sexism before, what concerns me is that the issue is not one that the New Zealand public as a whole is engaging with enough. The apathy demonstrated by many New Zealanders is appalling.

During the opening ceremony, both the Speaker and the Hon Nikki Kaye mentioned how in this very building history was made in 1893 when New Zealand became the first country to give women the vote. We are very proud of that history, and rightly so. However, it is foolish to assume that we currently live in a society that is beyond sexism. The truth is: we do not, and this is reflected in the fact that the word “feminism” still makes some people cringe. It is reflected in the prevalence of gendered insults, in the lack of positive female representation

in the media, in our appalling domestic violence statistics, and in the fact that a gendered wage gap indisputably still exists.

One particularly abhorrent issue that is present in New Zealand is a culture that shames women and fails to take crimes like rape seriously. As a nation, we have had high-profile cases of victim blaming, such as the infamous Roast Busters case. I am disgusted to think that the State does not do all it can to both prevent sexual assault and protect victims of it, and believe that this failure to look after women stems from attitudes that must be challenged.

Our generation is exposed to more opinions and perspectives through the internet and mainstream media than our parents ever would have been at our age, and I think that as a result, it is our duty to remain open-minded and progressive. We cannot place any blame for societal norms on young people, as it has not been up to us how systemic discrimination has occurred previously—but it is up to us to challenge the status quo going forward. It is the job of everyone in this room to ensure that when our generation is the one in Parliament, googling “sexism in New Zealand” will not result in related searches that are simply the names of female politicians. We cannot remain complicit in behaviours that disadvantage 50 percent of the population. Thank you.

HAVEN HENARE-HEKE (Youth MP for Marama Davidson): Tēnā koe e Te Māngai, tēnei au e tū ana hei māngai mō tōku rohe, mō tōku takiwā e pā ana o te hunga kāinga kore. Kua riro ngā tamariki, ngā whānau o tēnei motu, kua riro ki tēnei kaupapa o te kāinga kore puta noa i a Tāmaki-makau-rau, otirā, Te Motu katoa. Nā te aha? Nā te koretake o te anga whakamua o tō tātau nei Kāwanatanga, o tātau nei Pirimia e noho nei i roto i tōna tūru, taupatupatu ana, e karo ana i ngā kōrero o rātau mā kua riro ki tēnei kaupapa. Ko wai atu kua riro ki tēnei mea te kāinga kore, ko ngā tamariki e noho rawakore ana, hauwhā ngā tamariki e noho ana, e moe ana ki roto i o rātau motokā, e noho rawakore ana, kore kai, kore hū! E uaua ana te haere ki te kura ki te ako, e patu nei i te hauora o te tinana, o te hinengaro, o te wairua, otirā, te wai, te hauora o ngā whānau katoa. Me pēwhea rā e whai i tētahi hua? Haere, kanohi-ki-te-kanohi ki a rātau mā kua riro tēnei kaupapa ki runga i a rātau. Haere ki te kōrero, whakawhitiwhiti kōrero kia mōhio ai he aha ngā raru e pā ana ki runga i a rātau. Me pēwhea atu? Me tū au ki ngā marae kua whakatūria, kua huakina i ngā tatau mō rātau. Haere ki ngā marae o Te Puea, haere ki te marae o Manurewa, nā reira, ka kite i ngā hua hei whakaanga, whakamua ki roto i tēnei kaupapa o te kāinga kore. Mai i ēnei mahi kua kitea te painga o te mahi tahi. Ko te kōrero o tō tātau nei Kīngi Māori a Tāwhiao, “ki te kotahi te kakaho ka whati ēngari ki te kapua e kore e whati”. Me tū ngātahi ai, tātau katoa ēhara mā Te Pāti Kākāriki anakē, ēhara mā Te Pāti Reipa anakē! Mā tātau katoa, tātau te hunga o Aotearoa e whakamutua tēnei mea te kāinga kore ki roto i o tātau nei kāinga, ki o tātau nei hoa, o mātau nei whānau, nō reira, ka mutu ōku kōrero i konā. Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rawa tātau katoa!

[Thank you Mr Speaker, I rise as spokesperson for my region and district in regard to the homeless. Children and families of this country have inherited this issue about homeless and throughout Auckland, but at the same time the whole nation, and why? Because the way forward by our Government and this Prime Minister of ours has been useless. He sits here on his seat, debating and avoiding comments from those who have inherited this thing about homelessness? Children living in poverty, a quarter of them live and sleep in their cars, live in poverty, without food and shoes! It is difficult for them to go to school to learn. It affects them physically, mentally, spiritually, but at the same time, it affects water and health of all families. So how will an outcome be achieved? Go and engage with those who have inherited this matter that is upon them. Go and talk, and communicate with them face to face to understand what the related issues are that they are experiencing upon them.

So, what else can I do? I must stand on the courtyards that have opened up their doors for them. Go to the Te Paea courtyards, go to the Manurewa courtyard and there one will witness progressive outcomes in regard to this concern about homelessness. From these actions will be seen just how beneficial working in unison is. The saying of our Māori King Tāwhiao is this: “Alone we can be broken but standing together we are invincible”. All of us must stand united! It is not just the prerogative of the Greens and of the Labour Party alone! It is the prerogative for all of us, those of us from New Zealand to end this thing homelessness in our very own homes and in those homes that belong to our friends, our families, and so I leave my sentiments there. Therefore, I acknowledge, commend and thank you collectively and us all.]

DANIEL KELLY (Youth MP for Hon Craig Foss): Mr Assistant Speaker, youth parliamentarians, and the rest of our passionate and optimistic youth of New Zealand, today I stand before you to say that young people’s futures do not have to end at the steps of failure and unemployment—no. I stand before you to say that I believe that the Government needs to support young people and help them prosper and want to get a higher and more purposeful education. Barack Obama sums up the importance of higher education, which I think our Government still needs to catch on to: “We have an obligation and a responsibility to be investing in our students and our schools. We must make sure that people who have the grades, the desire and the will, but not the money, can still get the best education possible.”

Let us be honest. Let us be completely honest here. The Government is not doing enough to help us want to do better. There is nothing and no one saying to any of us: “Go. You can make it.” No one? No. Instead, students are left astray once they finish school—if they even get to finish high school. I mean, does university look that appealing? Does anyone want to drool over the sights of more study? Why do we perceive it like this? Is education not going to benefit us in the long term—a career, income, a home, a car, a family, a life? Youth parliamentarians, can we not all agree that this is the Kiwi Dream? So what is stopping us? That is right—student loans, minimum wage opportunity, and National Certificate of Educational Achievement failure. Has the Government done anything about this?

Hon Member: Yes.

DANIEL KELLY: No. It prefers to leave it up to the schools, the families, or even the individuals themselves. The Government needs to step in and say: “Well, hold on a minute here. Let me help you.” What I am trying to say is that there is a problem. Students are leaving school because they cannot be bothered or cannot afford it, or because there is no support or help at all. The Government needs to step in.

I suggest that the Government make it its top priority to support universities, polytechnics, and institutions that take people’s education further. If we can afford to spend \$350 million by overpaying for management roles in schools, could this money not at least go towards helping students with fees or helping those who are struggling financially? Are we not supposed to be a getting-down-to-business kind of people, Kiwis who get straight to the point?

So let us get straight to the point. If the Government has set in place an education system that is supposed to help us learn and become better members of a society that is well-educated and well-mannered, what are we waiting for? Government, if you want higher-educated youth with a better chance of surviving in this cold, dark world, people who can pay their student loans and get a job, home, car, and life, then I will say this: inspire, nurture, and help to prosper your youth today. Thank you.

KEZIAH LAWES (Youth MP for Hon Steven Joyce): We live in a world where health is constantly occupying our thoughts. We diet, go to the gym, keep food diaries, and watch our calorie intake. We think that our weight is the only thing that determines our health, but, as a matter of fact, it is not. Why is it that we care so much for our physical health, but our sexual health is such a taboo subject? Why do people attend the gym on a daily basis, but refuse to go to a sexual health clinic for a check-up? There is a negative stigma present in our society regarding sex and sexuality. It needs to be addressed, and it needs to be fixed. We may not be able to change the opinions of the adults of today, but we can open the eyes of the adults of tomorrow, and we can do this by improving and enhancing education provided in schools.

Education about gender diversity, personal identification, and general sex education need to be more widely taught and available to reduce this negative stigma present in our society. From talking to fellow young people, the general consensus is that although as a society we have made improvements as a whole, regarding sex and sexuality, it still seems to be a majorly taboo topic. Many schools seem eager to skip right through the lessons and move on to easier topics, such as healthy eating. I will not deny that we do have schools that provide brilliant sex education. However, I am not here to bring attention to these schools. I am here to criticise the fact that we have no list of topics for schools to follow when teaching students.

The curriculum has a guideline of topics that could be covered, but it actually allows schools to interpret it however they want. This means that they can teach as little as they want. This is majorly problematic. We have schools throughout New Zealand that rely on a strict abstinence policy. We have schools that disregard any sexuality that is not cisgender and any orientation that is not heterosexual as sinful or made up. These ideas are harmful and nurture negative, close-minded opinions. New Zealand has the second-highest rate of teen pregnancy in the OECD. This makes you question why this is. If we are teaching kids to abstain, how is it that they are getting pregnant? The cold hard truth is that what we are teaching and how we are teaching it is not working.

As diverse as we are in skin colour, we are also extremely diverse in terms of sexual health and sexuality. Students deserve to know about sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They deserve to know how common they are and how easy they are to fix. Students deserve to know about contraception, where to get it, how it works, and how much it costs. Students deserve to learn the difference between sex and gender. They deserve to be given information that will enable them to open their minds. Gender fluidity and a multitude of sexual orientations are real and are a part of our lives, and this needs to be acknowledged.

I understand that schools are conscious of parents' wishes and religious standings, but, (1) New Zealand is secular and we do not run on religious teachings, so neither should schools, and (2) if we asked parents how they would feel if they found out that they were no longer going to be grandparents because their child was sterile because they had an untreated STI that they were too embarrassed to go to a sexual health clinic about, I am pretty sure that the parents would regret not giving their children access to information.

It is a controversial topic, but do parents really know what is best for us? Schools need to stop building their programmes based around parents' desires and what they believe will benefit their child, and begin to acknowledge students' needs and assist them in learning what they need to be able to function in our continually changing society. Thank you.

TERESA LEE (Youth MP for Jacinda Ardern): New Zealand is fourth on the Global Peace Index, ninth on the Human Development Index, and in the top 10 of several human rights indices. We seem to do pretty well in the big, adult world—that is, if you turn a blind eye to the fact that we are 10th when it comes to income inequality on the normalised Gini index. Thirty years ago, New Zealand's wealthiest 10 percent were earning around four times as

much as the average person, but now they are earning eight times as much. The myth of the trickle-down effect has obviously not happened, due to our Government actively introducing policies that disproportionately benefit the wealthy, such as halving tax rates in the 1980s. But why is this disparity so pressing that even my dear friend Obama labelled it “the defining challenge of our time”?

Real data collated by Professor Richard Wilkinson highlighted how income inequality correlates with life expectancy, homicide, imprisonment, infant mortality, teenage births, obesity, mental illness—including drug addiction—bullying, and even economic growth. Think of the expense as the pool of substandard lives, and taxpayers have their money drained into paying for avoidable consequences. Income inequality hits hard all the way along the social hierarchy.

What truly irritates me is the “you earn what you deserve” myth that comes hand in hand with income inequality—the mentality that everyone is born with the same spoon in their mouth. But put yourself in the shoes of a 9-year-old girl living in a damp room with five other family members, walking to school in the rain with red, leaky, Warehouse shoes, who cannot remember the last time she ate breakfast. Currently 305,000—or 30 percent—of New Zealand children live like this. Will they be offered the same opportunities as everyone else? Essentially, we have a system where wealth is dispersed as a lottery of birth.

Luckily, you have me to tell you a means to an end. Firstly, we are signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals, so we can be held accountable. Now we must relentlessly demand three things before anything else: (1) that we increase overall standards of living by pegging the minimum wage to inflation and, hence, adopting a living wage; (2) that we allow for rewarding opportunities for the disadvantaged by raising welfare benefits to the same level as superannuation; and (3) that we create a fairer tax system, such as by implementing a comprehensive capital income tax that will feed back into cutting pay-as-you-earn tax.

We have an obligation to be a voice for those without by advocating for an equal, and therefore sustainable, New Zealand. The amount it would take to lift everyone out of poverty is just \$800 million, yet we let income inequality continue to be detrimental to our society’s health, our community spirit, and, most importantly, the lives of individuals filled with potential. What hurts that girl with red, leaky, Warehouse shoes hurts us all. Thank you.

JACOB LERNER (Youth MP for Hon Paul Goldsmith): Mr Assistant-Speaker, thank you for calling me today in this general debate. It is a privilege and an honour to represent Paul Goldsmith and the youth of Epsom at Youth Parliament.

The United Nations is broken. It is impotent. It is ineffective. It does not fulfil its own codified objectives: namely, maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights, fostering social and economic development, protecting the environment, and providing humanitarian aid in cases of famine, natural disaster, and armed conflict. It is timely to discuss this given the current election for Secretary-General, in which our former Prime Minister the Rt Hon Helen Clark is participating.

To begin, how is the UN failing? Take Saudi Arabia, a country where women cannot drive, cannot leave their houses without a male chaperone, and where an unmarried woman was gang-raped, refused an abortion, and then sentenced to a year in prison and 100 lashes for adultery. This country was elected a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Or what about Muammar Gaddafi, chair of Durban II, a conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance? The same Muammar Gaddafi confiscated all the property of Libyan Jews, cancelled all debts owing to Jews, and then prevented Jews from leaving the country. Let us face it—this is not a great track record for an organisation promoting human rights or fostering social and economic development.

So to my second point: why is it that these farces occur? I believe that the answer is simple. The UN works on the principle of the majority of countries being right. Unfortunately, the majority has been hijacked by special interests that represent a minority of the world's population but control large voting blocs at the UN. Dictatorships and theocracies have a majority at the UN, while democracies have been pushed into the back seat.

Take the Freedom House rankings of countries' political freedoms and civil liberties—89 free countries, 55 partly free countries, and 51 countries labelled not free. This means that the free countries number 89 and the not free countries number 106. Consequently, the UN's "one country, one vote" system causes problems. Too many countries are not free—they are dictatorships—and they can dominate the free States.

Another way this problem manifests itself is in appointment to UN committees. Dictatorships and illiberal States can vote other dictatorships and illiberal States on to important UN committees by forming voting blocs and strategic alliances. There are such egregious examples of this as Cuban, Chinese, Congolese, and Saudi Arabian membership on the UN Human Rights Council. All those countries are human rights violators according to Human Rights Watch.

The "one country, one vote" system also leads to oddities and bias in resolutions passed. For example, in 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted 26 country-specific resolutions. Twenty-two of those were about Israel and four were on the rest of the world—one each on Syria, Iran, North Korea, and Burma. Whatever your views on Israel and Palestine, this is disproportionate given the number of humanitarian issues worldwide.

In summary, if Helen Clark wins, she has her work cut out for her, reforming an organisation that has failed to meet its own goals.

DION MAHONEY (Youth MP for Hon Ruth Dyson): I stand here today using New Zealand Sign Language, which most of you know became an official language in 2006 here in New Zealand. Because of this we should be able to use our language to access education or have it interpreted into sign language so that we are able to access what is said in sign language. We do not ask for much. You are delivered education in fluent English, and we would like to be able to fluently access our education in New Zealand Sign Language so that we can access The New Zealand Curriculum on an equal basis with others.

In 2013 the Human Rights Commission delivered a report to the Government called A New Era in the Right to Sign, which talked about the barriers Deaf people face when using their language—barriers that limit their quality of life and impact upon their enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

Last year a new project was initiated, which was the development of sign language National Certificate of Educational Achievement. It was the first time that we were able to actually formally take classes in our language and achieve credits for the language that we know and own. This year I got credits at level 1, and next year I am working towards level 2. Deaf and hearing students are now able to take this as a subject to get credits, and potentially pursue such careers as sign language interpreters.

In terms of mainstream and special schools, interpreters are really key for Deaf students to be able to access the curriculum and achieve their potential on an equal basis with others. I will talk a little bit more about the role of interpreters and how critical it is. I ran a survey where 85 percent of the students talked about the need that they had to access their education in New Zealand Sign Language; the other 15 percent used residual hearing. My question is: how are those 85 percent of students being supported in New Zealand Sign

Language? We have teachers and teacher aides, but they are not fluent in sign language, and it is often hard to understand what they are signing to us.

So you may be thinking “There must be a way to help Deaf students.”, and there is. The barrier we face, however, is funding for interpreters. It costs between \$60 and \$140 an hour to pay for interpreters. People do not always see the benefit in investing such large amounts of money, but for us it is critical to be able to access education.

In closing, I would like each of you to be a voice for the Deaf community. Deaf people have a right to access education. We need to access education so we can be equal citizens with you. Kia ora, thank you.

TIM MARSHALL (Youth MP for Hon Amy Adams): The future of New Zealand lies in an alternative form of Government. “What’s this?”, you ask. “Don’t we have a perfectly stable, consistent and effective form of Government already? Why change what isn’t broken?”. This last one concerns me especially—the “don’t change what isn’t broken” mind-set. It is dangerous, it is lazy, and it lets our guard down. We are a leading nation on many frontiers, but we are in danger of letting this precarious position slip. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to propose to you: communism.

Hon Members: No.

TIM MARSHALL: I will just let it go. This has nothing to do with the Russian family, I swear. A semi-communist society would end many issues today—a flat tax system with 50 percent income tax and a Government-provided weekly citizen payout would begin to address the growing inequality issue in New Zealand. A similar proposal to this was drafted by Labour, but I believe a tax reform is also necessary. I say “semi-communist”, because complete socio-economic equality would result in a lack of skilled workers. Nobody would train to be a doctor if they were going to earn the same as a supermarket worker.

I propose this concept because we live in an age of ignorance. Those in the middle to upper classes do not realise the state our more unfortunate fellow citizens live in. A shooting in an Orlando nightclub with 50 deaths gets more attention and sympathy than those 305,000 school children in poverty. We would empty our pockets into a World Vision bucket in the mall, but dismiss those who have to beg in a City Mission queue to feed their children as “dole bludgers”. The media focuses on trivial nonsense—an example of this while I wrote this speech being the Stuff headline of the Lotto ticket that blew away, or the one this morning about formal dresses and spray tans. Ignorance, as the United States and their conflicts repeatedly show, is one of humanity’s greatest faults—besides the existence of Nelson.

If we implemented a form of social communism, we could change this. Outlawing international aid programmes would leave more cash in the New Zealand trade market, and giving financial aid to our own neighbours in poverty at least keeps the flow of cash within our domestic market. A Parliament catering to this semi-communist society could implement a new Act regarding financial foreign aid collection. Media would be required to show only local issues of a particular severity for at least 50 percent of its content.

In sum, ladies and gentlemen, a communist Government has the ability to significantly reduce the income inequality gap, a problem that has been plaguing the world for decades now. We can take steps towards ending ignorance amongst New Zealanders and become a more socially aware country. Let us all play a part in the growth of the middle class, and the diminishing of the extreme upper and lower classes and the absorption into the middle class, or bourgeois. Let us embrace communism and the bourgeois. Thank you, and до свидания.

JAISTONE MATAIO (Youth MP for Hon Hekia Parata): We have moved into a new and advanced digital age. In this digital age, we have helped all New Zealanders with regard to connecting people with families, with keeping Kiwis in the know with regard to social media, and with countless other positive things. But to what extent can we, time and time again, label this advancing digital age positive?

Cyber-bullying—it should not be taken lightly. In this advanced digital age, youth are blessed with the ease of utilising the internet to help them access information, social media, goods and services, and countless other digital services. Unfortunately, with this ease of access to the internet, there is also an ease of access to the harsh realities of social media. Social media provides a platform on which anyone can post anything—from how their life is going to, potentially, bad mouthing, taunting, mocking, and teasing anyone they want, without the remorse or worry of punishments that can be handed down.

One of my best friends has recently broken up with his girlfriend this year, and all their fighting and arguing ended up on a social media page. It went into a group chat. He was spam-called. He was so insecure that he called all of us to come over to his house to stay over. When he was talking to the police officers, he got that feeling that it was more of a case of “harden up” rather than taking the case seriously.

I believe that the Government needs to acknowledge that there is a lack of acknowledgment of cyber-bullying cases, the seriousness of them, and how negatively they affect us, the youth of New Zealand. Personally, I strongly believe that the Government should, as well as advancing digitally in the world, advance the severity of punishments and laws in this digital age. The Harmful Digital Communications Act has helped the cause, but when it is not taken seriously and, rather, these issues are cases of having to harden up, that does not help, especially when last year, and in the last 5 years, 310 suicides have been of youth.

The prolonged abuse and mocking of someone has so much more effect when considered. We need to recognise quickly that in this digital age more problems may arise from easy and prolonged cyber-bullying. We are all here representing youth in our area, and it would be a shame if I did not stand here and argue about a situation so relevant to my community and to us as a whole, as youth, especially considering last year’s youth suicide statistics being at an all-time high. So how can we continue to represent you when there is not youth around? Thank you.

STEFAN McCLEAN (Youth MP for Brett Hudson): It is funny, is it not? I was wondering why the Opposition was so quiet, but now I know. And it is funny—that is what being in Opposition does to you. It is funny, even, that the Opposition thought it was still in Opposition in the 1980s—it is like Rogernomics was brushed on to us. Like my fellow colleague, I would like to talk about the UN, but in a more positive approach, and I would also like to congratulate former Prime Minister Helen Clark on putting her name forward to become Secretary-General, and I would really wish a real wonderful round of applause—and we are all gunning for her.

The United Nations is critical to New Zealand’s foreign policy strategy. We are a founding member, and now we sit on the United Nations Security Council. I stand here, and I stand here always in the knowledge that I am in a war memorial. The battles shown around me show the intense sacrifice New Zealanders have made, and that shows New Zealand must continue to strive for peace and security. The United Nations is one of New Zealand’s many strategies in order to achieve peace in our time. Through the charter of the UN, we have achieved great things as a country; however, there is always a need to do more.

One way is for youth to become involved. Youth can become involved through the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, through the United Nations Youth Delegate

Programme, if this Government gives its consent to that programme. Youth can become involved by trying to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, by trying to promote human rights, by involving themselves in civic education, and by really going out into their communities to improve the world around us. The world around us is not only our communities but also fellow nations; it is also people and cultures from around the world.

I would like to talk more about the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme. I believe it is a fantastic programme. Australia is involved, the UK is involved, Canada is involved, likeminded Commonwealth countries and Western countries are involved, but New Zealand is not. Why not? We just have not got round to it. I do not think we have looked at it. I think we should look at it. I think it is a really good idea. Why do I think it is a great idea? For this reason: Youth Parliament is a great idea, because young people promote and give great ideas, and when young people can contribute to society, perspective is broadened and we can achieve fantastic things, like we have done in our select committees.

I think our select committees today are a fantastic way of showing how we can improve the Government by positive means and by always becoming involved within our institutions.

KASEY McDONNELL (Youth MP for Grant Robertson): Recently, as a Youth MP, I have been talking to youth in Wellington Central about their views on mental health services in New Zealand. Mental health is an issue that we really need to address, because it can have some really serious effects on core parts of life for young people, like education and their social life. What I aim to do with their views is take their priorities for improvement to the Government for review. What I would like to talk about today is three main problems that I see in mental health services currently. These need to be addressed, I feel, before we can make significant headway in treating every young person in need with their mental health.

The first issue that I found when talking with students was around public understanding. The student leaders whom I talked with were concerned that whānau and the wider community did not have enough knowledge to be able to help young people with their mental health needs, and they told me that although things are better, there is still a stigma around getting help with mental health. This is a big problem because even though the Government promotes well-being and funds services, young people can be driven away from making use of these services if they need it. In order to help everyone with their mental health needs, we as a nation need to dispel the stigma and encourage young people to get help before it becomes a serious issue.

In my work as a Youth MP I also visited Evolve in Wellington, a one-stop shop for youth mental health services. A big problem in its sector is that it just simply does not have enough funding to meet demand. Kirsten Smith, the manager at Evolve, told me that it cannot advertise its services, because, unfortunately, the number of people who would come is not treatable under its current budget. I asked the Ministry of Health, and it told me that the number of under 25s who have sought specialist mental health treatment over the past 9 years has gone from approximately 30,000 people to over 60,000 people. This can be attributed to population growth, increased reporting, and increased funding, but it also shows that there is a very real chance that we are not helping everyone in need.

Improving the robustness of the system at the mild to moderate treatment level is important in preventing a young person's mental health becoming a serious issue. If we put more focus on expanding to meet demand, we can help more people in need.

Lastly, the consensus with students whom I talked with was that there is poor knowledge amongst students themselves on how to deal with mental health issues. The health curriculum, in their opinion, is not good at teaching students how to deal with common mental health issues like stress, anxiety, and feeling down. They would like to see the

guidelines around mental health and the health curriculum improve and expand, and that way young people can get the knowledge that they need to deal with the mental health issues that face them. Better mental health education would assist in reducing the stigma around mental health, as well as providing easy ways to access services without having to search extensively for help.

There are a lot of great ways the Government is helping to improve youth access to mental health services, but expanding the capabilities of services that youth rely on, eliminating the stigma, and making the health curriculum more robust are the next steps that we need to take. By doing these things we can get much closer to reaching every young person in need and helping them improve their mental well-being. Thank you.

MICHAEL McLEOD (Youth MP for Andrew Little): We are the elders of the future. We are the tomorrow of the world. One of the greatest gifts that any person can receive after they have gone onward is to be remembered—remembered by their great deeds, achievements, and, of course, their effort to make the world a much more happy environment to live in.

My fondest wish for each and every one of you Youth MPs here today is to find something in your lives worth fighting for. More specifically, I challenge you to fight for the future—however, this is no easy task. The future of our world and our generation is something that we must treat with great care.

I often refer to my peers as “the leaders of tomorrow”. Among our number today may be the future Prime Minister, the doctor who discovers the cure for Alzheimer’s, the architect who designs one of the greatest monuments in the world, and the teacher who dedicates his or her time to the betterment of young learners.

We can make a difference, but when do we start? The answer to that question: we are already too late. The future, and the possibility of its greatness, is diminishing into a void filled with emptiness. But we can stop the eradication, the emptiness, and the terror of the future. We can make change. Let us build a world for the future to thrive in, free of climate change, poverty, sickness, war, and terror. Let us all fight for something.

The Irish tell a story of a man who arrived at the gates of heaven and asked to be let in. St Peter said: “Of course. Just show me your scars.” The man said: “I have no scars.” St Peter said: “What a pity. Was there nothing in your life worth fighting for?”

I urge you, with all the passion of my voice, with all the courage of my conviction, with the strength of my body, with the intelligence of my mind, and with the kindness of my heart, to fight for the future, for we are the elders of the future. We are the tomorrow of the world. I ask all of you not to leave here as strangers, but as friends and comrades in this great mission put before us today. That is how we will be remembered—by showing the world that we care. Fellow youth, be a lion and have no fear, for we serve the world. We are the elders of the future. We are the tomorrow of the world. Thank you.

ROSE McLEOD (Youth MP for Hon Jo Goodhew): Vanuatu needs Air New Zealand to resume flights to their country. This Government can change the lives of our Pacific neighbours dramatically. In early May, a group of 36 students from the Rangitata electorate went on an educational trip to Vanuatu. Due to Air New Zealand no longer flying there, we flew with Air Vanuatu, arriving safely in Port Vila.

This trip was eye-opening, as we got to see firsthand how much hardship and poverty our close neighbours face. With Cyclone Pam hitting Vanuatu on 13 March 2015, the villagers’ homes and crops were destroyed. They have nothing. Seeing Vanuatu a year after this devastating natural disaster occurred—they are still recovering. The Vanuatu people rely on

tourists to bring in money to help them survive. The lovely local people we talked to told us how important it was to them for us to return to their country and encourage others to return also. The majority of the local people's only source of income is through tourism, so tourists injecting their money into the economy helps them. They need our help.

Thirty-six students from the Rangitata electorate have seen how desperate these people are for tourists to come into their country. As many of you will have heard, Air New Zealand is no longer flying to Vanuatu until it is assured that if damage occurs again, the runway will be repaired. However, at this stage, repairs have been completed by the New Zealand firm Fulton Hogan. The airstrip is safe. If the runway was not safe, then Air New Zealand would have every right not to fly there. However, this is not the case. Air New Zealand is 53 percent Government owned, which means the Government can strongly influence the decision to fly there, and the Government can help the Vanuatu people by resuming the service and, therefore, bringing in money from the tourists again.

The living conditions in Vanuatu are atrocious, so why would we not do something so simple that can help our close neighbours dramatically? In the Rangitata electorate, we educated the youth about the awful living conditions people in Vanuatu face. This caused a large interest in helping them. We all have a strong passion for helping these people. The runway is fixed, so please, Air New Zealand, fly there. It will change the lives of those in need. Thank you.

HANNAH MONIGATTI (Youth MP for David Seymour): In the lead-up to Youth Parliament, I spent a lot of time thinking about the biggest issues facing young people today, and there was one I just could not go past—the one thing that, despite being guaranteed to affect every single one of us, the vast majority of politicians will not touch. On behalf of millennials and young people everywhere, I think it is time we had a conversation about superannuation.

With a rapidly ageing population, the cost of superannuation is soon expected to balloon by over a billion dollars every year. In our lifetime, the number of taxpayers to each recipient is going to decrease from five to two, which means that by the time current university students retire, the Government will be in debt by 198 percent of GDP. For a bit of context, Greece is currently sitting on about 176 percent, and guess what, it is our generation that is going to be forced to fund superannuation through higher taxes and through harsh service cuts, and with no guarantee of getting the same benefits ourselves when the need arises. One thing is certain: an adjustment is inevitable, and the longer we wait, the more drastic it is going to be.

So what do we do? Well, for one, the policy must adapt to changing demographic trends, like longer life expectancy. One such proposal is to raise the age of eligibility to 67 or 68 over the next two decades, similar to what Australia is doing. This would not affect current retirees or those close to retiring, and it would give people time to plan for their retirement in the future. But the thing is, our options are not limited to just that. We also have to weigh up issues like provisions for those unable to work past the age of 65, means testing, whether we introduce more flexibility allowing people to access payments at a reduced rate earlier or at a higher rate later, its relationship with KiwiSaver, those new migrants and citizens returning home—there is a lot to do. I am not going to stand here and tell you my opinion on all that—there is just not enough time.

The issue is that we need to talk about it. It is not politically popular, but we cannot continue to kick the can down the road. At some point, we are actually going to have to do something, and it is only by taking a long-term perspective that Parliament can actually fulfil its duty to ensure the sustainability of New Zealand superannuation and ensure intergenerational fairness.

We do need to have an open conversation, and because of that, I actually believe that the best thing to do is to take it away from the politicians, put it to the people, establish an expert committee on this, identify the workable options, and let New Zealanders decide their futures. I have full confidence in the common sense of the New Zealand voter to pick an option that works for them that will ensure the sustainability and intergenerational fairness. This is about the New Zealand we will leave for generations ahead. To older people, it is not about you—your retirement is secure. It is about your grandchildren, not those currently retired. We must be proactive on this issue, we must do something now, and we need to make sure the public has a say, rather than forcing the future generations to deal with this massive fiscal headache.

GEORGIA MULLER (Youth MP for Phil Twyford): What do you want New Zealand to look like in 10 years? I hope my sisters and I will not be disadvantaged or stereotyped in any way because of our gender. I hope that there will be an accurate, proportionate representation of men, women, transgender, Pākehā, Māori, Pacific Islander, and all other ethnicities in positions of leadership and socio-economic status. I hope that our lives will be defined not by matters that are only skin-deep but by the content of our character. Yes, there are countries that are a lot worse than New Zealand in this regard, but, also, we could be a lot better. On a daily basis, I hear sexist, racist, and homophobic comments.

Today women are paid, on average, 11.8 percent less than a man. It is 2016 and it is simply not good enough—we are all New Zealanders, and we are all human beings. But these disproportionalities exist for a reason. Society indoctrinates us to perceive ourselves and others as our stereotypes. For example, from the moment we are born, we are told that girls like pink and princesses. It is thrust upon us by society, creating an image of what girls should be/are when, really, there is not much apart from physical attributes that separates us from men.

The media play a key role in dictating what the social norm is. For example, can you think of any women scientists in the media at the moment? No? There is Bill Nye the Science Guy and MythBusters, but there are no women scientists. So if little girls are seeing only men in that profession, they are going to think that science is not for them. I think there are about six girls in my physics class of 30. The same goes for anything—if people do not see a representation of who they are in a field, it is likely that they will not consider it for themselves. We need to give social issues thorough thought and discussion as to how they can be improved, just as we need to be considerate and compassionate towards people suffering from these issues.

I want New Zealand to be an entirely safe place, where one can be themselves with no discrimination or disadvantages. Yes, it is idealistic, but when you get 3 minutes to speak in Parliament, why not go big? The mind-set of our society needs to be changed, and as the future leaders of New Zealand, we are the ones to change it. We need to take action collectively. Let us abolish stereotypes portrayed in the media, provide the minorities with opportunities and resources to put them on a par with people already ahead, and be more compassionate and considerate of issues and towards one another. I know that we can do this, and once we do, living in New Zealand will be greater than it already is. Thank you.

REBECCA NEWMAN (Youth MP for Stuart Nash): A few weeks ago, I got my full licence, and it got me thinking. I am lucky enough to have had my parents fork out to get me through the licensing process. However, not every family is able to provide this financial support, especially with the extremely expensive prices. Today I want to address the fact that the high prices associated with gaining your driver's licence are a huge, long-term burden on financially disadvantaged youth.

We all want to be safe on our roads—there is no doubt about that—and so I believe that the current pass rates of 61 percent and 69 percent for the restricted and full practical tests, respectively, are appropriate to ensure that we have only the very best drivers on the road. However, when up to 40 percent of people are failing, the financial burden on these families just grows and grows. I have a friend who failed her restricted test three times—not the normal case, I know, but, in saying that, this scenario is not entirely uncommon. This means that by the time she finally got her restricted, she had paid \$488.50—and she has not quite got her full licence yet. So that is 35 hours she has worked on minimum wage in order to get just to and from school each day.

But even if you never fail, to get from your learner's through to your full licence, you will pay \$338.20—not to mention how much you will be paying for all of those lessons that get you to this point.

Why am I so adamant that everyone needs to get their licence, even if it is so expensive? Those who may be put off getting their licence are the people in lower economic groups, or even the 29 percent of children who have grown up in poverty. These are just the kinds of people who need their licence the most. By getting their licence, it will open up a range of greater employment opportunities, not just in jobs that directly require driving but also in jobs that are greater than a 20-minute walk or cycle from their home. Greater financial support or lowering of the price of driver licensing will allow youth to gain their licences, opening up employment opportunities, and, as a result, reduce inequality across our nation.

Driver's licences can give hope to financially disadvantaged youth, and it is a shame that money is acting as a barrier to this. Getting your driver's licence, to many of us, is seen as a rite of passage, but to many young people it is a far-fetched luxury. The undeniably high prices of driver licensing are simply not equitable, and a change must be made. Thank you.

NOELLA NIYONZIMA (Youth MP for Chris Hipkins): The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that anyone under the age of 18 has a right to know about their rights and responsibilities. Now, think about this for a minute: how do we learn about these rights? Who teaches us about our rights?

I am here today because I think it is important that children and young people of New Zealand actually understand their rights. I believe that children's rights should be incorporated into the education system—or at the very least, promoted in all schools. Schools should teach about children's rights, and education should include learning the provisions and principles of the convention. We, together with adults, should be able to take action to advocate and make sure that children are protected at home, in schools, in our communities—in fact, everywhere.

So what are we, the youth, doing about this? I am a Save the Children youth ambassador, and we advocate for children's rights by raising awareness about the convention and by influencing Government decision-making and policy by writing submissions through the voices of young New Zealanders. For example, opinions of Save the Children youth ambassadors were included in a submission made by the Office of the Children's Commissioner on the review of the Education Act. We have also, together with Unicef youth ambassadors, written a report on the rights and well-being of children under the age of 18. Pupils across New Zealand told us what they knew about children's rights, where they had learnt it from, and what they will do to make a difference for the country.

Children's rights can be divided into three categories. The first is provision rights: the right to adequate health care and standards of living, and the right to free education, legal, and social services. Then there are protection rights: the right to be protected from abuse and neglect, bullying, discrimination, and the right to safety within the justice system. And then

there are participation rights: the right to freedom of expression and the right to participate in public life.

I believe that giving young people an opportunity to learn about their rights actually puts them in a better position for the future and makes them more aware of what is right and wrong. I think it is also vital that help services are strengthened so that young people can actually seek help when needed—services such as Child, Youth and Family, the It's Not OK campaign against family violence, and the Youth Service. Strengthening these services will provide young people with the right tools to assist them.

Our report will be considered by the United Nations along with other reports from Government and non-Government organisations. The Minister of Education is still working on the review of the Education Act. We look forward to continuing working with the Government not only to improve the rights and well-being of children but also on ways in which they can learn about their rights. Children are the future. By investing in the children of New Zealand, we are investing in the future of our country.

I think it is also crucial that young New Zealanders such as myself—such as you—actually make an effort to learn about their rights, because at the end of the day it is our responsibility as well. Knowing our rights will empower us to take action and will create a more aware environment that is inclusive and sensitive to everybody's different needs and wants. Thank you.

SUMMER O'DWYER (Youth MP for Paul Foster-Bell): Money is important. Not only is money how we achieve goals like flash cars, fancy houses—or the dream of one day paying off that student loan—it is also how we achieve goals like having breakfast in the morning, warm clothes in the winter, and a stable roof over our heads. Elaine Kempson, keynote speaker at a summit held at New Zealand's Commission for Financial Capability last year, described financial capability as knowing how to manage money in day-to-day affairs, planning for future needs—both unexpected and expected—choosing and using appropriate financial products, and informed decision-making regarding finances.

Financial education is a nationwide issue that affects all people of Aotearoa, but a particularly vulnerable group is the 15- to 18-year-olds, as, statistically, this is when the majority of mātātahi leave school and begin to work or study and, consequently, begin to take charge of their income. Presently in Aotearoa, financial education is not nationally established in secondary schools—yet neither is it something inherently known. I firmly believe that students should leave school with some knowledge of finances and, particularly, how to manage them well. The millennium mentality is all about empowering the youth of Aotearoa via education, and financial education is just as important as academics, at least in terms of long-term well-being of the individual and the economy. We are finding ourselves in an age where money itself has value beyond its monetary wealth. We must equip students with the skills needed to understand their financial situations and the consequences that can result from improper management or education. Prevention is key, and early education is the way to go.

Introducing seminars for Years 11 to 13 is a good way to address this issue. Some of the Youth MPs may be familiar with the Attitude presentations that some schools offer. These are presentations that deal with current issues facing youth in New Zealand, and the best part is that they engage students and make them want to listen. If we were able to give students some understanding about setting up payment programmes, financial plans, taxes, the dangers of credit cards, etc., in an interactive and interesting environment and then supplement that knowledge, we would ensure that most of the older students in New Zealand have some knowledge regarding finances before leaving school. One seminar a year would give students an introduction to financial capability that they may not have been

exposed to at home. It is not a given that parents will teach their tamariki about money—especially if they have never been formally taught themselves.

This is an issue that already has real implications, as one of the hottest topics of the year is student debt and the consequences of it. If we can deliver useful and relevant information regarding financial education to the youth of Aotearoa through the schooling system, we can equip students with the knowledge they need to be aware of these issues and to take pre-emptive measures, and that can make all the difference. Kia ora.

DYLAN PARSHOTAM (Youth MP for Dr Parmjeet Parmar): The “Kumbaya” circle from Labour and the Greens, oddly coupled with the outdated New Zealand First, has for years now opposed something fundamental to the growth of New Zealand—the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

It is an odd concept that the Opposition calls Fortress New Zealand. We on this side of the House admit that decades ago being a fortress delivered prosperity and growth to our country, but the world changed, and with it, so did National.

Labour, the Greens, and New Zealand First are the biggest opponents of free trade—opponents of wealth, opponents of the free movement of people, and opponents of the new ideas and innovations it brings. I suppose we are lucky that a debate about warships has not come up yet, because then Winston would be frothing at the mouth—unless, of course, they were made in China.

Kii Winston Small: I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. [*Interruption*]

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Order! There is a point of order.

Kii Winston Small: I ask that the member stop slashing political parties and politicians—

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): No, no, this is a debate, and—[*Interruption*] The member will sit. The member will sit when I am on my feet. This is a debate, and although some comments were made that you may not agree with, this is a debating chamber and members are free to express a view. I will determine the relevance of it and whether it is in order or out of order. I am calling Dylan Parshotam to continue.

DYLAN PARSHOTAM: Thank you, Mr Assistant Speaker. Let me highlight what the Opposition is willing to deny New Zealanders: it is willing to deny New Zealanders access to 12 countries on the Pacific Rim, accounting for 40 percent of the global GDP. What an opportunity for our businesses and exporters—508 million people freely at our doorstep. As much as the Opposition wants to return to Fortress New Zealand, this country did not become rich by selling to itself. We will not get anywhere by selling to just 4 million people, something this Government has recognised.

We are actually quite lucky, you see, because the TPP is such a worthwhile deal for New Zealand, and it is quite easy to debunk the misinformation being spread by the Opposition. For instance, they say that the TPP will not benefit our dairy industry. This is wrong. Over 40 percent of predicted tariff savings under the TPP come from a reduction in dairy tariffs. Dairy has the largest reduction in tariffs of any other industry. They say that the TPP will infringe on the Treaty of Waitangi, and yet article 29.6 explicitly states that the TPP cannot, and will not, affect rights under the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand. At this point, I start to question whether the Opposition members have even read the agreement yet.

Finally, they say that if we sign the TPP, we are stuck for ever. Look, it is a safe bet that nothing will go wrong, because it is a good deal, but for technical correctness, article 30.6

allows any nation to exit the TPP if it wishes. It is vital and fundamental to the growth of this nation that we sign the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Labour has done a U-turn from its pro-free trade past, and today the Opposition is spreading a doctrine of fear, misinformation, and playing politics over people. Thank you.

KEEGAN PHIPPS (Youth MP for Hon Dr Nick Smith): It is a great privilege to have won a local election and to represent the youth of Nelson, which is not something I would say if I was from Selwyn.

Earlier this year my school, Nelson College, was shocked by the death of a student who took his own life. This tragic event caused our whole school to go into mourning. We grieved for a fellow student, a brother, a friend, and a son. I pay my respects to this young man with my words today.

Young people of Nelson want me to say something here. Youth are experiencing too much stress, too many panic attacks, and far, far too much depression. Suicide occurs more than once a day in New Zealand. The reason for our shocking statistics is complex, but young people have identified one key cause. We have all been there—staying up too late to finish an assignment that we could not start because we had three others that week, terrified that we would not get that grade on the top corner of our paper that determines our worth to society.

Thirteen percent of secondary school students may be depressed at any time, according to Government figures. What kind of society are we if we allow our future leaders to be debilitated by mental illness? Why are we proud of an education system that allows a young person's life to be determined by their ability to remember information and regurgitate it in a 3-hour period?

The youth of Nelson believe that there is a desperate need for a reprioritisation of education outcomes. Let us actually teach all young people from ages of zero to 18 about hauora, about maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Let us prioritise developing our young people into adults who are equipped to create and innovate, not adults who are psychologically scarred. Let us give every school copies of this book, *When life gives you lemons*, which is a book for youth, by youth, that deals with anxiety and depression.

I am proud to say that my schooling is not my first priority. My highest priority is to develop into a well-rounded person who is going to contribute to society and fulfil my potential. I do not want to allow myself to become a slave to a system that categorises me by my age, my gender, and my academic ability, and is interested only in how I can produce answers on demand. I do not want to be a statistic, and I do not want to be part of a batch. School should not be about putting our young people under pressure and breaking them. Our system needs to put our young people first. Thank you.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): I call Kaleb Reid, representing Lindsay Tisch—and that is me.

KALEB REID (Youth MP for Lindsay Tisch): “This post will get me to 100 likes for sure.” That is the thought going through your head as you click “post”. You open and close Facebook and your satisfaction grows with every like you receive. You open it up to see someone has posted a comment that is grossly offensive. At first you laugh it off, then more and more people start to comment and it starts to get less and less funny. This is a reality for far too many teenagers.

Our generation has grown up with the looming presence of social media infiltrating our lives. Ninety-six percent of New Zealanders who have the internet are on social media.

Connecting and sharing with family could not be easier with Facebook. If you want to remain anonymous and share views with everyone within an 8-kilometre radius, no problem; use Yik Yak. There are clear differences between the two, but the one thing they have in common is that they both have the potential to have devastating consequences. Both are vastly different online societies, yet both have the potential to cause devastation.

I had a cousin who took her own life after the bullies became too much. She was 12. The effect on our extended family was unimaginable. Technology played a major part in this, and the worst part is that the bullies did not think they did anything wrong. Why is it that scenarios like this come to be? I believe it is because we are not educating young people on the consequences of their actions. How many of you knew about the current law that attempts to prevent cyber-bullying or discrimination towards someone—the \$50,000 fine a guilty individual faces under the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015? Anything that degrades an individual by reason of their race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability on a digital medium is viewed as cyber-bullying.

We have been so caught up in the importance of improving technology for the sake of making it quicker and more efficient that we have, I think, missed the boat completely on the social side. We have not considered the devastation that human nature can cause, and now we are frantically trying to fix it up. And with the constant change in technology, it is like trying to patch a hole that keeps getting bigger. I do not need to launch a full-scale inquiry to say the worst offenders in this case are teenagers. The evidence is all there for us to see. But why are the main offenders not educated on these laws? Would you tell a driver the speed limits? Yes. Would you tell a sportsman the rules of the game? Yes. So please tell me: why would you not tell social media users the rules of the game?

Debate interrupted.

VOTING

Correction—Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Members, before I call the next speaker, the vote on the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill was incorrectly recorded as Ayes 89, Noes 30. The correct vote is Ayes 89, Noes 29. The record will be amended accordingly.

GENERAL DEBATE

Debate resumed.

TIMOTHY ROWE (Youth MP for Hon Chester Borrows): I do not want to die. Most of us cannot fully understand the mentality of someone wanting to die. It is for those who can; for those who live in immeasurable pain, both physically and emotionally; for those who depend on others to complete the simplest human functions—it is because of these people that we must discuss euthanasia.

The word euthanasia sounds scary but I want to demystify it straight away. I believe in an individual's right to choose. If you or I were slowing dying, then would we not at least want the option for a peaceful and painless death? Euthanasia is mercy. Euthanasia is not a new concept. Multiple countries around the world have legalised at least some forms of euthanasia, and it is my belief that a properly regulated Act legalising euthanasia would provide great benefit to New Zealand society.

At the moment, the only alternatives to euthanasia for a terminally ill person are suicide or dying naturally through often excruciating pain. Is it not more moral to allow terminally ill

people who want to end their suffering to die in the company of friends and family and not have to commit suicide alone? New Zealand has had the opportunity to legalise euthanasia two times now, the last of which was the Death with Dignity Bill, which lost by a 3-vote margin.

In October, ACT MP David Seymour submitted the End of Life Choice Bill to the ballot. It would allow for a New Zealand citizen to be eligible for assisted dying if they suffer from a selection of factors. According to the Voluntary Euthanasia Society of New Zealand, surveys show that nearly seven out of 10 New Zealanders across every section of society favour end-of-life choice for those who qualify and request it. Many are angry after watching and caring for family members who have suffered long, drawn-out deaths, and want a good dignified death for themselves.

The great American novelist David Foster Wallace once said that a person in agony will consider killing themselves an option in the same way in which a trapped person will consider jumping from the window of a burning skyscraper. Make no mistake about people who jump from burning buildings: their fear of falling from a great height is just as great as it would be for you or me. The variable is the other terror: it is not desiring the fall; it is the terror of the flames. Yet, nobody down on the sidewalk, looking up and yelling “Hey! Don’t! Hang on!” can understand that jump—not really. You would have to have been personally trapped and felt the flames to really understand the terror way beyond that of falling. People around us face a fate worse than that of death, yet the Government refuses their right to die. Why? Is it not moral to give someone a choice to jump, rather than force them into the flames? Thank you.

NINA SANTOS (Youth MP for Hon Nikki Kaye): Kia ora. Malo e lelei. Namaste. Ni hao. G’day. Mr Speaker, members of the House, I am sure a lot of you are tired of speeches at this point. But I assure you that this is not just another speech; this is a call. This is an invitation.

You are all invited to be part of a global citizenship movement. The fact is that we are more connected now than ever, but the challenge is actually recognising the power of that interconnectedness and using it to our advantage. Globalisation is in full swing, and the world is changing. I believe that we should be very well equipped to keep up with the change—just like others keep up with the Kardashians—so we can be agents of social transformation.

This is possible with global citizenship education—the next big thing. It is education for real life. Although being a global citizen does not require you to be bilingual or have a diplomatic passport, it encompasses three main aspects: embracing diversity, protecting human rights, and preserving our environment. All of these are crucial with regard to global progress, peace, and prosperity. It is not enough that we limit the term “educated” to simply being able to read, write, and count. The world faces global challenges that require global understanding so we can formulate global solutions.

Education must fully assume a central role in helping people forge more tolerant, inclusive, and sustainable societies. Global citizenship education gives us the understanding, skills, and values we need to operate in terms of tackling the interconnected challenges of the 21st century and beyond. It encourages social participation in the form of responsible personal choices such as advocacy, civic engagement, and being “enviro-warriors”. Furthermore, it promotes cultural empathy and competence. As New Zealand, in Auckland Central for example, reaches a super-diverse status, it is important that we foster this culture now.

Global citizenship is more than just a concept; it is an identity. Before anything else—strip us of blazers and black suits; we are citizens of the globe. This is an identity and this is an

opportunity. This is our chance to revitalise our connection to our communities, and our responsibility to take care of one another. This is our chance to lead New Zealand in the right direction—the direction of unity and diversity, environmental sustainability, and overall human well-being.

We politicians have a habit of referring to young people as “the future”, but the truth is that we are also the present. We are the now, so let us educate our young people now, tell them about climate change, racism, deforestation, and overpopulation, but, most importantly, give them the confidence that they need to be able to overcome these challenges, and the knowledge they need to ensure that New Zealanders are not only world-class but also world-ready.

To all young people: we can truly be the difference, and we can bring about the change. This is your invitation. There is no RSVP to be a global citizen. Join the movement. Thank you very much.

KII WINSTON SMALL (Youth MP for Rt Hon Winston Peters): Kia ora, Mr Assistant Speaker. Before I start, contrary to popular belief, I am Winston’s MP, but my aim is to not get thrown out today. My electorate is Northland—32 percent Māori, 78 percent Pākehā; it is a low socio-economic area. I am going to focus on the youth today.

In Northland, 15 out of 17 of our secondary schools are below decile 3. Between the ages of 15 and 24, we have a population of around 7,000. Out of those 7,000, 2,826 are enrolled to vote. Only 52 percent of them voted in the last general election. Two questions arise when I bring up those two figures: why are only half of the enrolled youth voting; and why are so many people not enrolled?

Northland students are telling me that the only piece of voting education that they get is the Electoral Commission coming to their school and proceeding to guilt-trip the girls into voting because New Zealand was the first country to allow white women to vote. They proceed to tell you that countries do not allow people to vote, and you should feel honoured to vote—that is why you should vote.

I surveyed 110 Northland students: 49 of them could not tell me what their electorate was—in fact, one of the girls that I did survey told me that the electorate was “the difference between the amount of votes”. I surveyed a hand-picked 25 young leaders from Northland: 15 do not understand what MMP is; 21 do not understand how to vote; 15 do not know who runs Northland; 11 understand that it costs more than \$5 to vote in a general election; three believe that there is a fine if you do not enrol to vote; and another three understand that there is a yearly fee to vote. One adult aged above 21 told me that if you abstain from voting, your vote goes towards the National Party.

Hon Members: Ha, ha!

KII WINSTON SMALL: Now, some of us may chuckle, some of us may laugh, but do not forget that this is your generation. They represent you as much as you represent them. We need to educate them. There might be four rowers on each side of the waka, but if one person stops rowing, we are just going to go in circles, are we not?

Northland portrays the quintessence of this nation’s problem—we have a problem with voting. Let me tell you how we can fix it: we can implement civic education into our core curriculum. I would not encourage a child to jump into the ocean before I taught them how to swim; I would not put a soldier on the front line before I taught them how to fight; and I would definitely not encourage a child to vote until I taught them how to vote and what it meant.

If there was one thing that I took away from secondary school, it was that you do not learn anything until you have stressed about it and cried about it on the night before because it is due in 8 hours. I know the first 20 elements of the periodic table; I dropped physics in year 11, but I attended every class. I know more Māori than both of my parents put together and can comfortably do my pepeha in front of more than a hundred people—but I dropped te reo Māori in year 10. But I was taught my pepeha time after time after time after time while entering the classroom. I know these things because I was taught them. Whether I wanted to learn them or not is pointless—I learned them. So if voting and political knowledge are not taught in schools, and a significant number of youth in Northland do not know that voting is free, can we blame them?

FENELLA SMITH (Youth MP for Maureen Pugh): Today I am going to talk about the world's growing population, hunger, food wastage, and the opportunity for all New Zealanders to contribute to the solution. There are currently 7 billion people living on our planet, and according to the latest estimates, the population will grow to a huge 9 billion people by 2050. Underlying this is the global paradox: 1 billion people do not have enough to eat, while 1.6 billion people are obese. How we share the limited resources amongst 9 billion people will be a significant challenge that we will all have to grapple with.

Although we may seem relatively isolated from the pressure points that will develop in the more populated areas of the world, it will affect us all none the less. We are a food producing country. In fact, we are the leading exporter for dairy products. Having said that, we can only produce enough food to feed 40 million people—a little over 0.5 percent of the world's current population. Clearly, we are not going to be able to feed the world.

So what can we do? The obvious place to start is the incredible amount of food that we currently waste every single day. For example, it is estimated that 30 to 50 percent of all food produced never reaches a human stomach. In other words, the total amount of wasted food would feed the expected total increase of 2 billion people. This will not be a simple problem to solve, and I suspect it will be difficult, if not impossible, to cut our wastage to zero. However, there is a lot of room for improvement, which will require everyone to be involved.

We waste food right throughout the supply chain. At home, we throw food out that is unable to be used and is past its use-by date. Food retailers and supermarkets also throw food out that is unable to be sold. We are all responsible for eliminating needless food wastage. If we buy only what we need, and if supermarkets managed their stock more efficiently, we could collectively make a significant impact on wastage.

In summary, the world faces a significant challenge. Already, one billion people do not have enough to eat, and yet, in 34 years the world's population will increase by 2 billion people. New Zealand cannot feed the world, but we can all play our part by minimising our food wastage.

LEXI SUTHERLAND (Youth MP for Rt Hon David Carter): "Know thyself." This was the ukase of one of the founders of Western philosophy—Socrates. Knowledge of oneself is something that we can all work on. The lack of examination of ourselves is an issue that is hardly ever directly addressed, yet I believe it to be the underlying cause of a multitude of other societal issues.

From a very young age, the encouraging phrase "be yourself" is common and is often the first piece of advice someone will offer, but this proves difficult when we do not actually know who we are—what our values, strengths, and weaknesses are. We are not often encouraged to question and examine these things. This is the reason that I believe so many youth lack motivation and whose plans for the future are often ambiguous or non-existent. I do not

believe this to be from the stereotype of recreational drug use but from the lack of examination of oneself and knowledge of one's true passions.

I believe issues such as binge drinking, bullying, mental health, and violence in schools and the home can be attributed to individuals lacking knowledge about who they are, about what they want in life, and about being aware of the way they behave and the reason why they behave in the way they do. Perhaps a child had a difficult upbringing and was bullied and belittled by those at home. This being the only behaviour they knew, they may grow to bully others around them. This behaviour cannot be undone until the child becomes aware of why they behave a certain way. We can introduce as many anti-bullying programmes as we want, but until we address the root issue, we can never eliminate the problem.

It is the same with violence. It is a huge problem in New Zealand, with the terrifying statistic that one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime—that is one-third of all women in New Zealand. Again, we can provide as many support services for victims and campaigns to help raise awareness of the problem as we want, but until we address the issue of lack of self-awareness and the offenders not understanding why they may act out violently and what has caused them to behave this way, we cannot solve the issue.

With self-awareness also comes self-acceptance: a crucial part in establishing good mental health. I believe we need to place more of an importance in education about self-awareness from a young age. We need to get to know ourselves and our paths. We need to be aware of our actions, and we need to know what we want to get out of life for a healthier mind, society, and future. Thank you.

THOMAS SWINBURN (Youth MP for Hon Peseta Sam Lotu-liga): Before I begin, I would like to thank my MP, Sam Lotu-liga; Daryl Puagea; Ms Brown; the Maungakieie electorate; and everyone who has made this incredible journey possible.

My Auckland school, Dilworth School, has only four students studying a foreign language in year 13. Admittedly, we are a small school, but having talked to students across Auckland in public and private schools alike, I know our situation is not unique. Having personally gained a great deal from studying languages, I can attest to the individual benefits, and I know just how crucial they are for our country. Despite this, the number of students opting to study a foreign language is dwindling across the country. This is a problem our nation must address.

Our world is more connected than ever before. New Zealand is no longer that insular country in the middle of nowhere but, rather, a bustling hub sought after by immigrants and tourists of diverse backgrounds. For New Zealand, trade is no longer centred around Anglophone partners but, rather, various countries throughout Asia and the world.

For New Zealand to thrive in this exciting time, we need to learn languages. Languages build friendships and they build understanding. It shows a willingness to engage—an interest in and respect for other cultures. Languages are crucial in building tolerance between the many cultures that call this country home, while ensuring New Zealand is competitive and impactful on the world stage.

Yet, despite these undeniable benefits, in 2015 only one in 10 students opted to study a language at secondary school. Something needs to be done. I would like to see the Government take an active role in promoting language learning in high school, although it is us young people who must make the real change. We need to stop seeing languages as “that subject that’s just too hard” or not useful in the real world. Like anything, with a bit of work and determination, anyone can succeed.

I learnt French at school. Although it has been rewarding, I will be the first to admit that French does not look like it is going to be the lingua franca any time soon. Given the current world climate, I would have jumped at the chance to learn Mandarin or Spanish, but this simply was not possible in my case. We need to increase the accessibility of languages in our schools. The ultimate goal does not have to be to produce perfectly bilingual speakers—far from it. What we should strive for is a generation of young Kiwis who can converse in another language for business or pleasure, making the effort to show that we are not reliant on English alone.

To thrive as a country, we must realise that we are not only citizens of New Zealand but citizens of the world, and to achieve this we must develop and foster a culture of language learning among young people. Yes, language learning is a commitment. Yes, it is a challenge, but, ultimately, it is an incredible, rewarding experience that we must promote, both for our own benefits as individuals and for the benefits that it brings to our communities and our country. Thank you.

KERYN TUBBS (Youth MP for Jacqui Dean): “Small town syndrome”: a condition in which small towns suffer from a lack of offerings in a number of important lifestyle categories such as things to do, as well as having a general feeling of unhappiness and boredom. It is probably not something you are going to find in most medical journals. However, it is something that resonates with the youth from my area. I come from a town in Central Otago called Alexandra—a town for which, when you are telling people where you are from, you have to add “We’re about an hour away from Queenstown.” or they just look at you blankly. It is a town with a perfect and identifiable case of “small town syndrome”. There are only 500 people in my town aged between 13 and 18, and this is nothing compared to Maniototo, which has only 70.

After learning that I had the opportunity to speak, I set out to find out what my peers thought were the biggest issues facing them. Most of the answers I found typical: “Nothing ever happens.”, “There’s nothing to do.”, and “There’s not enough support for people with mental health issues.” This was a reoccurring point: the lack of accessible education, resources, and support for youth struggling with mental illness. After some investigating, I had to agree. Did you know that if you are under the age of 18 and want to access our community health services, your parents have to be informed? Did you know that the average waiting time for an appointment is 6 weeks? Did you know that 20 percent of high school students will suffer from symptoms or behaviours related to mental illness during their time at high school?

Students are under no illusion that if there is a genuine concern for their well-being, their parents and other parties would have to be informed—but for simply seeking out the services? This was one of the most common reasons for youth not pursuing the available services.

In regard to the 6-week waiting time: for a country that ranked first for youth suicide rates in the OECD, a 6-week waiting time is just not acceptable. The link between mental well-being and substance abuse is also extremely concerning. The use of drugs and alcohol among youth in our community was the second-biggest issue identified. It appears to me that there is the opportunity here to kill two birds with one stone.

I understand that it is a nationwide issue that has become a focus in recent years, but, speaking as a voice from rural schools, we are thankful for services such as Youthline and Healthline, which make their resources accessible no matter your location. But we want more. We need more. We need access to actual people, to education, to free and confidential services—and not just the ones we can reach from our phones and laptops.

Although eradicating “small town syndrome” may not be a priority, this is a symptom of it that is too severe to ignore and one that needs to be treated before it becomes more fatal. Thank you.

RUTH WRIGHT (Youth MP for Iain Lees-Galloway): A phenomenon that we in Youth Parliament are acutely aware of is the lack of participation of young people in politics, particularly with regard to voting. In the 2014 general election, roughly 62 percent of 25- to 29-year-olds voted, narrowly beating 18- to 25-year-olds into bottom place. As young people, we can all agree that this is a problem that will affect democracy in our country as well as our future generations.

The Electoral Commission is working hard on changing this, as we know from our training sessions when we receive things like pamphlets and Electoral Commission jellybeans. However, this does not seem to be translating into a significant jump in voting numbers. What I propose may seem more extreme, but I believe it is necessary to develop democracy in New Zealand.

Compulsory voting is often seen very negatively and believed to be undemocratic. However, I would argue that compulsory voting increases our freedom, as an act that participates in a democratic system is by its nature a free act. Paying tax is the price that we pay for living in a country with roads, health care, and education, so is voting not the price that we should pay for living in a country without a dictator?

We have tried and tried to increase voter turnout and the fact that we have been largely unsuccessful tells me that a drastic change is a necessity, not an option. It has been argued that more civics education in our schools would help with this problem and may be presented as an alternative to compulsory voting, but think how successful the two would be if paired together. Voting as a requirement would encourage more people to be engaged with civics education, leading to elections where more people understand the system and actually participate in it.

Australia’s system of a small monetary fine for those who do not vote is well judged, as it is a punishment but is not crippling to those who disproportionately do not vote—those who are young and those who are poor. Implementing a similar system in New Zealand would result in a more engaged country and election results that are a truer reflection of the whole population. Perhaps the right would disagree with this, as it does not suit them to have young people and poor people voting, but we must do something or else that 62 percent will decrease not increase.

I put it to Youth Parliament today that compulsory voting is the change that we need for political participation in New Zealand. Thank you.

BETH WALTERS (Youth MP for Poto Williams): Tēnā koutou katoa, he aha te mea nui o te ao? What is the most important thing in the world? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata! It is people, people, people! I think this is one of my favourite whakataukī because it acknowledges that at the heart of everything—politics, communities, schools, organisations; anything, really—the most important thing is people. It is not money, not personal benefit, not status.

The past 2 days we have come desiring change. We have debated and we have had discussion together, in the best interest of—what? The people, the young people, and the rangatahi of our communities. We have each represented them as we have sat in these seats but it is not just a seat; it is the place where you have authority for a short period of time to raise your voice for the young people in your community, and, may I add, what an excellent job everyone in this room has done.

I have felt very privileged to have had the opportunity to represent the east side of Christchurch—a community that is diverse and different. Since the earthquakes that severely affected our community 5 years ago, it has been a challenging and different environment for young people. Like many of the young people in my community, I began to find myself thinking that where I lived had nothing to offer me, because I saw broken structures and devastation. I saw empty spaces. Generally, people had a lack of hope. As young people, we have not had enough input in the recovery of our community.

However, I began to realise that this mind-set is damaging and nothing would change if we continued to have this mind-set. So, after a time, I began to see my community and the brilliance that has always been there and the potential it has. I think I realised that the young people of our community did not realise how powerful their voices were, but in the past year, they have begun to realise their voices are powerful and, when raised, people do listen.

Being a youth MP is about realising that this has been a chance to advocate, an opportunity to represent the rangatahi of our communities and to be their voice. So when we leave this building today, we will all return back to our cities, our towns, our own personal communities that we represent, and we will have a decision to make: whether we will let the past 6-month tenure be the end or whether we will let it be the start—the inspiration you need to ensure that the rangatahi of your community are well represented.

There is a quote that says “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” So do not doubt the power that you have and that the young people of your community have. Do not let Youth Parliament be the end; instead, let it be the start of a great adventure. Whether one day you find yourself sitting in one of these seats as a member of Parliament or whether you go on to continue to work for your community, no matter where your journey takes you, never forget: he tangata, he tangata, he tangata—it is people, people, people.

Stacey Rose: Mr Assistant Speaker, can I steal a minute of time, please?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): Is this a point of order?

Stacey Rose: No, it is a request just to speak, Mr Assistant Speaker.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch): No, no. Your request is denied. The reason is that we are in a debate and other members have not had an opportunity to speak yet, and we are going to hear them first. If you have got a point of order about process, then you can bring that forward and I will judge the merits or otherwise. So do you have a point of order? No—OK, I am calling Gennevieve White, MP for David Shearer.

GENNEVIEVE WHITE (Youth MP for David Shearer): “Dear Parents on the Sideline, Number 8, Eljae. My boy. The one you so freely stood on the sideline this morning laughing at. The one you were talking about being a ‘Big boy’ and not ‘an asset to the team’. The one you laughed at for not being able to run as fast as your kid.” This passage comes from the Facebook post of Rochelle, the mother of an obese child living in South Auckland, addressing one of the most serious and overlooked issues currently present in New Zealand—child obesity.

According to an annual New Zealand health survey taken between the years 2014 and 2015, one in nine children aged 2 to 14 years old were obese. This statistic is not including the extra 22 percent of children who are overweight. These statistics are appalling and clearly show that our children have an obesity problem here in New Zealand. Obesity is on track to take over tobacco as New Zealand’s leading preventable health risk. Our Government and our people need to act immediately and make change for the sake of our

children. There are many ways in which our Government can initiate actions that the New Zealand population can act upon—for example, the promotion and advocacy of a healthier lifestyle through the media, especially social media.

When I was younger, I would come home from school every day and turn on the television. Before my favourite cartoon shows would air, a very different after-school TV programme would be on, called CKC, which stood for Cool Kids Cooking. This show would air for half an hour, demonstrating how children and Kiwi families could cook easy, affordable, and healthy meals. This show no longer airs on New Zealand television. Although it was a short programme, the fact that it aired every weekday when children would most likely be watching was extremely important. It showed Kiwi kids that there is more to food than McDonald's and KFC even if they did not pay much attention. I would like to see shows like CKC brought back on to national television at peak hours, when children are most likely to view them.

Another point I would like to make is about the lack of nutritious and healthy lunch options that are available to children both at school tuck shops and at supermarkets and dairies near schools. Most of the items making up a school tuck shop menu are overloaded with sugar—items such as a bag of chips, an UP&GO drink, or muffins. This excludes the items that are available to children before and after school at supermarkets and dairies, such as pies, soft drinks, and sweets like chocolates and lollies. These items make up the diet of many children in New Zealand, mainly because of the quick, easy, and cheap attraction of buying lunch.

One way that our Government can help this issue is by regulating junk food in New Zealand and providing schools with the funding to invest in healthier alternatives for their tuck shops, or maybe by removing the tax on fruit and vegetables and increasing the tax on unhealthy foods. That may be what we need to do to see any improvement in this country's health. The children of New Zealand need the encouragement to make change, not only from their communities but also from their leaders. Act not only for our children but for the future of this country. Thank you.

TE PUAWAI WILSON-LEAHY (Youth MP for Nuk Korako): E Te Mana W'akawā, tēnā koe. I stand here today as a proud descendant of Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Tūw'aretoa, Ngāti Apa, and Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi. I also stand proud in my Scottish, Irish, and German heritage. My w'akapapa connects the two strands of tangata w'enua and tangata Tiriti—those who are the people of the land with those who live here in honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

From its signing, Te Tiriti o Waitangi has evolved into a meaningful context for the social, political, and cultural conversations necessary for the building of nationhood. Despite its significance, debates about Te Tiriti are among the most divisive in our society, with the essence of these conflicts regarding the way Te Tiriti can be given effect in 21st century Aotearoa.

Recently Andrew Judd has taken a stand on this issue, placing him at the forefront of public scrutiny. The New Plymouth mayor took a stand to call for change—a change regarding the under-representation of Māori on the New Plymouth District Council. Mr Judd called for a law change to establish Māori wards on every district council in New Zealand. His stance was not about offering Māori privileges; nor was it intended to create the divisive backlash that followed. Rather, it was about opening the conversation about inclusion—a conversation that is long overdue.

Under existing legislation, councils can choose to establish Māori wards. However, if 5 percent of voters sign a petition opposed to such a move, the decision then goes to a binding referendum—a law that does not apply to the establishment of any other ward. The

council's mandate is to serve the community and comply with the Local Government Act, which identifies Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations to include Māori. Notwithstanding these provisions, the 5 percent threshold, effectively, means Māori will almost always be defeated in this process. There is a w'akataukī that reads: Me mātau ki taua tū i mua i te kōkiri o te 'aere.

[One must be acquainted with that position before advocating the way forward.]

—before you set forth on a journey, be sure you know the stars. Our tūpuna were celestial navigators and astronomers, referring to the stars as a key navigational beacon for ocean voyages and for calculating time and the seasons. Yet in a modern setting, Māori have been stereotyped as those who receive the instructions, rather than those designing the blueprint for our maturing nation. In order to be the navigators we are destined to be, we need to have a voice at the table, an opportunity to lead debate, and a place in setting the agenda.

This, then, is my challenge to all those appointed under a political warrant—a licence to lead. The electorate has placed its faith in representatives who must carry the voice of the people with them. We expect those who have the authority of a ministerial portfolio, a select committee framework, or a question in the House of Representatives to consider how best to ensure all voices are included in discussions regarding the future of our local and national community—a future where my voice, my aspirations, and my priorities count. Kia ora mai tātou.

EMILY WOODHOUSE (Youth MP for Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi): Benjamin Franklin once said that in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes. Tax, and how much tax people pay, has been in the media a lot lately, whether it is foreign trusts being used to avoid tax or multinational companies using low-tax jurisdictions to pay less tax than they otherwise would. New Zealanders have a very strong sense of fairness, and we should all pay our fair share. But I believe many young people could be paying too much tax, not because they have to but because they do not understand when they should pay secondary tax and how much secondary tax they should pay.

It is a common misconception that secondary tax is 33 percent of a person's second income, but this is simply not true. The truth is that secondary tax does not even exist. However, secondary tax codes do, and I think this is where the problem is. Secondary tax codes are often used incorrectly because employers are unsure of a person's primary income, so they have to use the top secondary tax code as a default. This leads young people to mistakenly think that they have to pay an extreme amount of tax on their second job, and therefore that it is not worth taking up a second employment opportunity. This is simply wrong.

The reality is that the amount of tax to pay on a level of income is the same regardless of how many jobs you have taken to earn it. For example, a 19-year-old who earns \$16,000 in a year from one job will pay \$1,820 in tax. Another 19-year-old who earns \$16,000 but from three separate jobs will also owe \$1,820 in tax—no more. The way to make sure that only that amount of tax is deducted from all sources of income is by using the correct secondary tax code.

Some of you may already know this, but the fact is that more than 156,000 people from the age of 13 to 21 claimed refunds exceeding \$60 million last year, which strongly suggests to me that secondary tax codes are not well understood or used. That is an average of \$384 each. Many of these overpayments will be because of an incorrect use of secondary tax codes—and that is just those who filed for a refund. There could be hundreds of thousands more young people out there who are unaware they are owed a tax refund.

So what should young people do? Firstly, they should find out the correct secondary tax code for their income and tell their employer. Secondly, if they believe they have overpaid their tax, they should apply for a refund. I did it this year, and it took me all of 10 minutes to create a myIR account and claim my refund. Nobody wants to pay more tax than they should, and they should not have to. The best way to be sure of that is to make sure youth get their secondary tax codes right first time. Thank you.

CAMERON WRIGHT (Youth MP for Hon Peter Dunne): What if I were to tell you of a country—not just any country, but a country with a list of 3,540 threatened national species; a country where, up until recently, this shambles of a river was pristine natural forests and rivers. Many of the members are probably thinking smugly to themselves: “What a terrible place that must be. I mean, which country would be so stupid? Luckily, this would never happen in our very own, beloved New Zealand.” Not true.

New Zealand has systemic ecological disasters in the making. How about those 3,540 threatened national species? The Government pays to look after only 200. How about those rivers? Just 38 percent are safe to swim in. Deforestation for farming, mining in conservation lands, overfishing, tramping huts closed, roads through the middle of national parks, dirty dairying, shark finning, fracking—the list goes on, and it is all happening right here in New Zealand. It is time we stand up and take notice of the gross environmental mismanagement that is happening right under our proverbial noses. We do not see the decisions being made time and time again behind closed doors—the millions handed out to irrigate our rivers dry and the concessions granted to overfish vulnerable stock.

Looking after the environment makes economic sense. The Budget lays out 0.46 percent of national spending to look after a third of New Zealand. This distribution of spending reflects a larger problem in our society. We need to remember exactly what the environment gives us. Level 2 economics tells us that it gives us our comparative advantage. When we lose the clean, green image, our products lose their value. It is really that simple. Take tourism. Do not get me wrong—a country with 30 million sheep is quite unique, but there has to be a speciality, something found nowhere else in the world. For Europe, it is grand cathedrals; for New Zealand, it is our environment. It is pretty difficult to sell our products on a platform of mining in conservation lands and cows excreting in the same rivers that we swim in.

If Pokémon GO has taught us one thing, it is that we all love to get into the environment that makes this country unique. But imagine what it would be like if our rivers were so polluted that we could not even get near them to catch that rare “Water type”. That is the future we are heading to, ladies and gentlemen. For the sake of the next generations, I hope we can look past our short-term financial gain and make real progress in protecting the environment. It is time for the country to move away from damaging, production-based industry such as dairy. We should tax tourists for the environmental damage that they cause and move towards a truly clean, green, and united future.

The debate having concluded, the motion lapsed.

MOTIONS

Mr SPEAKER: We now come to notices of motion, and my Youth MP will assume the Chair for this session.

Presiding Officers and Youth MPs—Expression of Thanks

TEBARAE AMUERA (Youth MP for Tracey Martin): I move, *That this House thank Mr Speaker, the presiding officers of Parliament, and all members of Parliament for Youth Parliament 2016.*

Motion agreed to.

Youth MPs—Ongoing Commitment to Communities

CHEYENNE TE-HAARA BARR (Youth MP for Dr Megan Woods): I move, *That after Youth Parliament, we, as Youth Parliamentarians 2016, strive to continue to be a voice for our communities.*

Motion agreed to.

Robert Martin—Election to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

JAMES BUSCH (Youth MP for Hon Paula Bennett): I move, *That this House congratulate Robert Martin for being elected on to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and for being the first person with a learning disability to stand for and be elected to a UN committee.*

Motion agreed to.

Sex Education—Mandatory Applicability and Acceptability to Heterosexual and LGBTQIA Youth

KATE CHEW-LIT (Youth MP for Jan Logie): I move, *That this House take action to ensure all secondary schools provide mandatory sex education that is applicable and accepting to both heterosexuals and LGBTQIA youth.*

Motion agreed to.

Youth Suicide—Prevention Methods

AIMEE-CHANTELLE GOUGH (Youth MP for Rino Tirikatene): I move, *That the focus of suicide prevention for young people move away from the medical model of trying to fix it with medicine and to focus more on living for a purpose, working collaboratively with young people who are struggling with suicide and mental health, to make a plan to get their emotions out without hurting themselves, giving them reasons and opportunities to give their life more purpose rather than offering a quick fix of pills.*

Motion agreed to.

Education System—Financial Education for Students

ALOFA SO'OLEFAI (Youth MP for Alfred Ngaro): I move, *That this House look into adding a subject into high school that teaches young people skills on how to “survive in real life”, and that, by way of example, these would include topics like how to budget, what are taxes, and how much you will be taxed, what are loans, the importance of saving etc.*

Motion agreed to.

Young People—Recognition

KIRI CROSSLAND (Youth MP for Tim Macindoe): I move, *That young people’s rights be given increased recognition and importance within the House; for example, the review on*

issues such as the rights of children and teens in care, the “starting-out wage”, eligibility for beneficiary aid of the age group 16-19, and an increase in youth-friendly accessible services.

Motion agreed to.

Minister for Youth and Multi-Party Parliamentary Steering Committee— Congratulations

KELVYN HENARE (Youth MP for Pita Paraone): I move, *That the eighth New Zealand Youth Parliament congratulate the Minister for Youth and the Multi-Party Parliamentary Steering Committee on a successful 2016 New Zealand Youth Parliament.*

Motion agreed to.

2016 New Zealand Olympic Team—Best Wishes

TE PAKI McKENZIE (Youth MP for Marama Fox): Tēnā koe e Te Mana Whakawā, ka tū ahau hei māngai mā tātau ki ō tātau mahi rangatira o Aotearoa whānui me Te Pāremata Taiohi o te tau 2016, ki te tuku mihi atu ki ngā kaihākinakina nō Aotearoa katoa e haere ana ki ngā Kēmu Taumāhekeheke o Te Ao, me te tūmanako kia eke panuku, eke Tangaroa tātau. Kāore e kore ka tūtahi tātau tēnei Whare ki te tuku i ō tātau whakaaro ki a rātau e whakaoti ana i ngā mahi whakariterite, tae noa ki te tīmatanga o ngā kēmu taumaheke o Te Ao, hei te rima o Ākuhata, kia ora tātou! !

[Thank you Mr Speaker. I stand as spokesperson for us in our noble work New Zealand wide with Youth Parliament New Zealand 2016, to extend a greeting to all athletes from New Zealand going to the Olympic Games in the hope we are victorious and triumphant. Without a doubt we, this House, stand together to convey our thoughts to them as they complete preparations right up to when the World Olympics begin on the 5th of August, greetings to us!]

Motion agreed to.

Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk, Parliamentary Service, and Ministry of Youth Development—Congratulations

NISHA NOVELL (Youth MP for David Bennett): I move, *That this House thank the people who have worked to make Youth Parliament 2016 a success, including staff from the Office of the Speaker, the Office of the Clerk, the Parliamentary Service, and the Ministry of Youth Development.*

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: You see, Lexi, it is easy. Honourable members, it is my privilege to bring these proceedings to a close. You are all to be congratulated on the passion and the enthusiasm that you have shown over the last 2 days. As I listened to the arguments for and against the Accessible Web Pages and Apps Bill earlier today, what impressed me was the coherence of the arguments being advanced, whether they were for the legislation or opposed to the legislation. The general debate this afternoon was another chance for you, as youth members, to say to us, as members of Parliament, what the issues of real importance to you are, and we observed a huge variety of topics that you presented to us.

As I said to you at the opening ceremony yesterday morning, you have been given a huge opportunity to be a Youth Parliamentarian for 2016, and it was over to each and every one of you to take what you could from these 2 days. You have participated well. You have

impressed me in two particular ways that I want to note. One was the respect you have all shown for this House. You, I think, have realised that to be a Member of Parliament is a privilege and that with that privilege comes a responsibility—and that responsibility starts here in the way that each and every Member of Parliament respects this particular debating chamber and the institution of Parliament. So I congratulate you on accepting that responsibility and acknowledge the way you have all conducted yourselves within this Chamber.

Secondly, I have been impressed by the respect that you have shown for each other. Even though your views and your aspirations have clearly been greatly different at times, you have respected each other's point of view, and, in my mind, that is the mark of a good democracy. By all means go away from here and passionately argue for what you believe in, but, at the same time, I urge you to respect the point of view that might differ from yours. Freedom of speech is the essence of a good democracy.

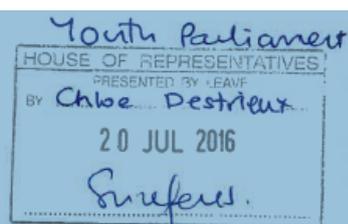
The next point I want to make is one I also made to you at the opening ceremony yesterday morning: please continue to use your experience as a Youth Parliamentarian for 2016 to remind your generation of the importance of democracy to this country. With democracy comes a responsibility to vote, and we heard earlier today one of the contributions pointing out the declining voter turnout that we observe at general elections. Under the MMP system, which is the only system you have known, every vote counts regardless of the electorate the voter is in. I travel quite a bit in my role as Speaker of this Parliament, and as I have been overseas to some countries, I have met people who have been prepared to die for the right to vote in their country. Sadly, too many of our New Zealanders take democracy for granted.

Honourable youth members, Michael McLeod said to us earlier that you guys are the elders of the future. To put it another way, you are definitely the next generation of leaders of New Zealand. I urge you to accept that role and to play that role now.

Honourable youth members, the House stands adjourned, and I declare the Youth Parliament for 2016 officially closed. [Applause]

The House adjourned at 4.52 p.m.

Manurewa Youth Declaration



This document is a reflection of the opinions discussed by 50 student leaders from the three high schools of Manurewa – Alfriston College, James Cook High School and Manurewa High School on 13 May 2016. Students were surveyed about the issues they felt most strongly about and accordingly placed into smaller groups to brainstorm and discuss possible solutions. The groups formed were – **Community, Discrimination, Employment, Education, and Poverty**. The following mission statements were presented by each group as a solution to their chosen issue:

1. Community

“We the youth of Manurewa want to see the needs of youth identified and met through the promotion of positive attitudes, community unity and beneficial community initiatives.”

2. Discrimination

“We the youth of Manurewa want to see more effective facilities and services that contribute to improving the livelihood of the vulnerable in our community.”

3. Employment

“We the youth of Manurewa want to see greater opportunities for work experience, especially in alternative fields, in order to ease the transition between secondary and tertiary education.”

4. Education

“We the youth of Manurewa want to see a raised awareness of school scholarships and effective mentoring programmes which create greater opportunities for struggling learners.”

5. Poverty

“We the youth of Manurewa want to see the government providing basic necessities to those who are vulnerable.”

“We the youth of Manurewa want to be informed about our human rights, especially as youth. This transparency is necessary to prevent these rights being breached.”