



*Seventh Youth Parliament, 2013*

**NEW ZEALAND YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

***Parliamentary Debates***  
***(HANSARD)***

17 July 2013



**WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 2013**

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**WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 2013**

**Mr Speaker** took the Chair at 10.30 a.m.

**Karakia.**

**QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER****QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS****Carbon Emissions—Reduction**

**1. ISABELLA LENIHAN-IKIN (List)** to the **Minister for Climate Change Issues**: Will the Government make a commitment to reducing carbon emissions, as has been done by countries such as Denmark, Norway, and China?

**Hon SIMON BRIDGES (Associate Minister for Climate Change Issues)** on behalf of the **Minister for Climate Change Issues**: It is a great privilege to speak in this Parliament and answer the first question today. To answer the question, this Government believes in doing its fair share, and we have already made and gazetted a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50 percent by 2050. Different circumstances, of course, dictate a country's ability to make emissions reductions. For New Zealand, nearly half of our emissions come from agriculture, for which there are currently few economically viable technologies to mitigate these emissions. Of course, that is something we must factor into our equations.

**Rachel McLean-Dewes**: How are we actually reducing carbon emissions in New Zealand, when the Government has given a free pass to major polluters such as Fonterra, coal-fired power stations, and pulp and paper mills?

**Hon SIMON BRIDGES**: I thank the member for her question. The fact of the matter is that we have an emissions trading scheme that is second to none. And I note in that regard that the Prime Minister of Australia has recently signalled that he also will be moving to an emissions trading scheme if he is re-elected as Prime Minister. The fact of the matter is, though, as I said in my answer to the primary question, we do need to take into account the unique circumstances of our economy, including the fact that nearly half our emissions do come from agriculture, and through that we, more efficiently than anyone else, feed the world. So we do need to take those sorts of factors into account.

**Crown Minerals Act 1991, Amendment—Effect on Protest Activity**

**2. DAISY CADIGAN (Rongotai)** to the **Minister of Energy and Resources**: Does he agree that the recent amendment to the Crown Minerals Act 1991 strips New Zealanders of the democratic right to protest about Government action; if not, why not?

**Hon SIMON BRIDGES (Minister of Energy and Resources)**: I am really getting it today.

**Mr SPEAKER**: Order! The Minister will just address the question.

**Hon SIMON BRIDGES**: No, I do not agree with the question. The amendment does not stop protest action or the rights of New Zealanders to have their say. Lawful rights of protest do not extend to intentional damage or undue obstruction of others' lawful activities. I would also note that a *Herald-DigiPoll* from last week supported this position, the Government's position. It showed that a vast majority, 70 percent, believed that the amendment was good law that "allowed people to protest but at a safe distance".

**Michelle Too**: So by saying that it does not strip New Zealanders of the democratic right to protest, does it mean that you are inherently saying that your perspective on the meaning of democracy is one that excludes the basic right of freedom of speech?

**Hon SIMON BRIDGES:** No, not at all. I believe passionately in freedom of speech. Indeed, I believe that this law is consistent with our New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. The fact of the matter is that people are free to protest in all manner of ways throughout this country, including taking out large billboards of me in Cuba Street. What they cannot do is put other people's lives and limbs at risk, and that is the main reason why we have passed this law in this House.

### **Partnership Schools—Outcomes for Pasifika**

**3. FAAIU ANAE-TUNAI (Māngere)** to the **Minister of Education:** How can she be sure that charter schools will lift the achievement of Pacific Island students, when these schools have a chequered success rate in the United States for minority groups there?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** It is very important to understand that partnership schools, kura hourua, is a unique model designed for New Zealand. They are not charter schools. They are designed for our country, not the United States. Partnership schools will have achievement targets that must be met for all students, including Pasifika students. They are designed to raise achievement for Māori students, Pasifika students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students with special education needs.

**Ashley Stuart:** Has the National Certificate of Educational Achievement improved the achievement of Māori and Pacific students; if so, how will charter schools further improve a system that is already showing results and progress in this area?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** We have had significant improvements, particularly for Māori and Pacific students. As I mentioned in my primary answer, there will be specific achievement targets particularly for Pasifika students.

### **Budget 2013—Student Achievement and Participation**

**4. JAMES DEVEREAUX (Waitakere)** to the **Minister of Education:** How will Budget 2013 improve student achievement and participation?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** I am very pleased to announce and advise the House that the Government has increased spending on education for the fifth Budget in a row. Achievements in the Budget include \$80 million to help get 98 percent of children participating in early childhood education before attending school; \$63 million for the Positive Behaviour for Learning programme, to address conduct and behaviour in children and young people; and \$5.9 million for a new mentoring programme to help vulnerable children achieve National Certificate of Educational Achievement level 2.

We have placed particular emphasis on supporting priority learners, including Māori and Pasifika students and students with special needs. We know that lifting the quality of teaching is the biggest in-school effect on raising student achievement. Budget 2013 provides support to schools, teachers, and boards of trustees in working to help our children achieve, as well as whānau and wider communities.

**Clementine Howe:** What percentage of the Budget will be spent on boys and girls, as Paula Bennett mentioned in a visit to east Auckland that more money is spent on boys over girls?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** That is a very specific question, so I hope that I can provide that information later to the House. I think the member does raise a very important point. There is much research around particularly the lack of male teachers in our school system. I think that is something that we need to improve on. I can tell the member, as I just mentioned in my previous answer, that we are spending money on Positive Behaviour for Learning. We know that there are issues, particularly around boys and

behaviour. That is an important project that we are investing in. But I will come back to the House with the information that she specifically asked for.

### **Vote Education—Budgeting Priorities**

**5. COREY FUIMAONO (List)** to the **Minister of Education**: What amounts are budgeted over the next 3 years to fix issues with the Novopay system and upgrade NCEA infrastructure, compared with the amount to establish charter schools?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education**: What a great question. The member has actually asked three questions in that primary question, but I want to be very generous today and answer all of them. With regard to the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), we have committed to having 85 percent of 18-year-olds achieving NCEA level 2, or an equivalent qualification, in 2017. The Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority work together to ensure that NCEA is a credible, learner-centred qualification for over 165,000 school learners who seek to achieve NCEA every year. In Budget 2013, \$215 million has been allocated to specific initiatives that support student achievement. We have also set aside \$19 million as a small pool of funding to help set up partnership schools. That is a very small amount, in the scheme of things, of a \$9.7 billion education budget.

Regarding school payrolls, my colleague Minister Joyce has responsibility for that area. I am advised that progress continues to be made on catching up the backlog and ensuring that payroll instructions are processed in the period in which they are received. Finally, the Minister is reserving his position on the long-term future of Novopay, and an amount of \$8 million in contingency funding has been set aside, should it be required.

**Prabhjit Johal**: How can the upgrade of NCEA infrastructure benefit the students doing NCEA, and will this follow through in the future?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE**: Yes to the second part of the question.

### **Psychoactive Substances—Animal Testing**

**6. TOM RUTHERFORD (List)** to the **Minister of Health**: Will he take steps to stop animals being used in testing of synthetic drugs that give users a temporary high; if not, why not?

**Hon JO GOODHEW (Associate Minister of Health)** on behalf of the **Minister of Health**: Yes. Animal testing is an issue that many, if not most, people feel very strongly about. The Government understands these feelings. If there are suitable non-animal tests, they must and will be used.

**Henry Thompson**: How does the Government plan to address the issues of synthetic drugs amongst youth, considering the adverse effects that these drugs have on youth and the loopholes in legislation that manufacturers of such drugs have exploited to continue producing such synthetic drugs?

**Hon JO GOODHEW**: I am able to assure the member that this House has given due regard to the concerns the member has raised, and that the recent legislation that has passed will certainly address that, in limiting the psychoactive drugs that come to New Zealand and ensuring that only those that can be proven to be safe and very low risk to New Zealanders who use them will be available. In addition, the legislation requires that the outlets that sell them must be licensed, that there will not be anything other than point-of-sale advertising, and that only those over 18 will be able to purchase them. This is a huge step—in fact, a world-leading step—in addressing this issue.

### **Social Development—Welfare Reforms**

**7. AMBER COATES-REID (Mt Albert) to the Minister for Social Development:** What will the Government do to support the children of beneficiaries who suffer financial penalties for refusing to undertake a drug test as a precondition of employment?

**Hon JO GOODHEW (Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector)** on behalf of the **Minister for Social Development:** I thank the member for her question. As part of significant changes being made to the welfare system starting Monday this week, we now require beneficiaries with work-test obligations to be able to undertake and pass drug tests. This new policy is targeted at recreational drug-users rather than those who have dependency issues. Recreational drug-use should not be an excuse to turn down a job. Those people with drug dependency issues will be offered support, not sanctions. People who fail these tests or refuse to take one will be given warnings and a reasonable period of time to stop using drugs before having to take another test, but further failures or refusals will result in benefits being reduced, suspended, and ultimately cancelled. We are conscious of the impact on households where there are dependent children involved. Where there are children, sanctions will be no more than 50 percent of benefit payment.

**Olivia Ashby-Cartwright:** Given that New Zealand youth suicide rates have been on a steady increase for some years now, what have you put in place to support the initiatives that are surrounding resolving this problem?

**Hon JO GOODHEW:** Given that this question is a little wider of the primary question, could I seek the indulgence of the House and ask the member to repeat her question?

**Olivia Ashby-Cartwright:** Given that New Zealand youth suicide rates have been on a steady increase for some years now, what are you doing to support the initiatives that are being put in place by the Government to address this problem?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Hon Jo Goodhew—without bringing the Speaker into the debate.

**Hon JO GOODHEW:** The member asked a very important question about an issue that is certainly troubling the youth of New Zealand. I have to say that the responsibility for addressing youth mental health issues is one that the Associate Minister of Health the Hon Todd McClay has. However, I am going to give this a bit of a go inasmuch as I believe that the entire executive—that is, all the Ministers of this Government—are working in a variety of different ways. That includes the Minister of Health himself. But also in education we have put additional support into lower-decile schools, where we are looking at tools that will use new technologies to actually access those young people who are going through a tough time and who need that support. Many Ministers join together to address this, and we understand the concern you have raised today.

### **Social Security—Provision of Benefits in Australia and New Zealand**

**8. KATE GARDNER (Dunedin South) to the Minister for Social Development:** Has she had any discussions with her counterpart in Australia about Australian and New Zealand policies on providing social security benefits to each other's citizens; if so, what was the result of those discussions?

**Hon JO GOODHEW (Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector)** on behalf of the **Minister for Social Development:** Given our close relationship, officials work closely together on a range of issues, including social security arrangements. Currently, New Zealand has a reciprocal social security agreement with Australia, which enables New Zealanders and Australians to access old-age and permanent disability benefits from both countries. Entitlement to all other Australian and New

Zealand benefits is determined under each country's national legislation, which normally requires people to meet the relevant residence requirements.

**Teri Tuuau:** Did the Minister observe any welfare or child protection programmes during her recent visits to Ireland and Croatia, and how do these compare with similar programmes implemented by the Government?

**Hon JO GOODHEW:** Yes. On the Minister's recent trip to Ireland and Europe she met with her ministerial counterparts and officials. The Minister and her officials visited a number of community organisations and advanced bilateral social security agreements with Croatia and Malta. We have synergies with Ireland, given the similarity of our population, geographical size, and social issues, which gave rise to a genuine exchange of ideas about key policies. New Zealand is well advanced in terms of its welfare system—for example, we have long provided income support in tandem with job search support, which is in its infancy in Ireland. There was real interest, therefore, in advanced policies like our investment approach to welfare.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Youth Parliamentarians are so well behaved it is extraordinary, and we are now moving forward through the questions far quicker than I anticipated. It may be because you are hungry and want to go to lunch early, but on the basis that there may be more interest in further supplementary questions, I will allow additional supplementary questions on the next series of questions. I will look first to the member who has asked the first supplementary question whether that Youth Parliamentarian wants to ask a further supplementary question. If not, I will open it to the floor of the House. I may have some difficulty with your names at that stage, so bear with me.

#### **Civics Education—Role in Curriculum and Voter Participation**

**9. PETER MACCLURE (List) to the Minister of Education:** Will she include civics education in the New Zealand Curriculum, including the basic principles of democratic government; if not, why not?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** Can I first start by saying how generous the Speaker of the House is in allowing all of these supplementary questions—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will just address the question. Thank you.

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Civics education is very dear to my heart. In fact, my brilliant Associate Minister of Education Nikki Kaye also has a strong interest in this area. Civics education comes under the umbrella of citizenship and is already included in the New Zealand Curriculum. There are several projects in the New Zealand Curriculum. The social sciences learning area is about how societies work and how people can participate as critical, active, informed, and responsible citizens. The health and physical education learning area incorporates learning about healthy communities and environments and focuses on rights, responsibilities, and laws. The vision—confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners—is also a key pillar of civics education in New Zealand.

**Kristina Kim:** Will any form of electoral reform that is intended to increase voter participation, such as compulsory voting or lowering the voting age, be effective without the coexistence of comprehensive civics education?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think that is an outstanding question. I think it is important that we do what we can to strengthen civics education. I am aware that recently the Minister of Youth Affairs, Nikki Kaye, spoke to the United Nations youth council and was presented with a youth declaration, which included that important point of strengthening civics education in New Zealand.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Does Kristina Kim have a further supplementary question? [*Interruption*] Is there a further supplementary question? It must relate to the primary question.

**Samuel Hart:** We have had, in the past election in 2011, 27 percent of registered voters who did not vote during the election. Does the Minister believe that civics education and these reforms will help to increase voter turnout for the coming election?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I do think with regard to civics education there is research that shows a strong link in terms of voter turnout, but I think there are some other important points that I am sure my colleague the Associate Minister of Education Nikki Kaye would comment on and also the Minister of Justice, and that is that we need to ensure that issues are relevant for young people. I am very pleased that recently the Youth Parliament initiative was held. It is my desire and hope that all of those youth parliamentarians do what they can to raise the profile of the importance of this institution and the importance of young people voting in New Zealand.

### **National Certificate of Educational Achievement—Student Achievement**

**10. MELANIA NAPA'A (Manukau East)** on behalf of **CAMERON WEBSTER (New Lynn)** to the **Minister of Education:** What action is she taking to improve the pass rates for NCEA levels 1 and 2 in secondary schools?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** We are taking lots of action in this area. Our drive for greater National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) success is showing strong results, which is making a real difference to young people in New Zealand. We have committed to having 85 percent of 18-year-olds achieving NCEA level 2, or an equivalent qualification, in 2017. Data for the 2012 year shows that 77 percent of 18-year-olds achieved NCEA level 2 in 2012, compared with 74 percent in 2011. This means over 1,800 more 18-year-olds achieved NCEA level 2 in 2012. It is a great result, but we need to do better. We have invested heavily in professional development for teachers, with a particular focus on Māori and Pacific students. We have also worked with schools to identify students who are at risk of not achieving NCEA level 2 and put in place practical support to help them. We will continue to work together to get every student across the line.

**Adam Lawton:** Does she believe that the current actions she is taking will lead to the Government reaching its goal of 2017?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Yes.

**Youth Member:** What are the specific actions that the Ministry of Education is doing to help Māori and Pasifika students?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** More than 3,600 parents and caregivers have attended an NCEA & the Whānau workshop since September 2011. Those whānau workshops are particularly important for Māori students. These workshops explain to whānau how NCEA works, how their children can achieve it, and how they can most effectively help their children and work with their schools. It is really important that we realise that although our schools have a role in terms of student achievement, getting parents engaged—particularly in lower socio-economic communities or communities where there are cultural differences—will do a significant amount in terms of improving those results for those students.

**Jesse Medcalf:** Does the Minister believe that lowering the bar of achievement in NCEA in order to achieve pass rate targets is creating less employable high school graduates?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I disagree with the member's assertion in that question.

**James Devereaux:** What support are youth in New Zealand receiving when they leave school without NCEA level 1 or 2, and is there enough support?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Our Government has committed a huge amount, particularly for those students who may be leaving our school system without a qualification, whether you look at our recent Job Ops scheme or the Youth Guarantee. Since 2011 the Government has established a further 13 trades academies in New Zealand and 8,700 fees-free Youth Guarantee places. There is a huge amount that this Government is doing, and it obviously wants to do better.

**Daisy Cadigan:** What is the Ministry of Education doing to guide students with mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression, and insomnia through NCEA to help them pass?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think that is a really good question. I am happy to provide further information after question time on that issue, but I want to mention a couple of programmes. The first thing, as I mentioned previously, is the Positive Behaviour for Learning programme, which is, I think, about providing more supportive environments in schools. We have increased the number of social workers in schools as well. I am aware, again, that the Minister of Youth Affairs and Associate Minister of Education is very focused on the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project. That has a range of initiatives across Government and is about doing everything that we can to support young people in New Zealand who may have mental illness.

#### **Skycity, Convention Centre—Negotiation of Agreement and Implications**

**11. JACOBI KOHU-MORRIS (List) to the Minister for Economic Development:** What steps did the Government take to ensure fairness amongst all the participants in the process for awarding a contract for the building of the Skycity Convention Centre in Auckland?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Economic Development):** I think the member is referring to the New Zealand International Convention Centre, which will generate significant spin-off benefits for New Zealand and Auckland, including a projected \$90 million annual injection into the economy, an estimated 1,000 jobs during construction, and 800 jobs once it is up and running. The Government undertook a rigorous process before deciding to partner with Skycity around the construction of the New Zealand International Convention Centre. In summary, an expressions of interest process was used to test the market for the building of a convention centre. The Government specifically sought creative and innovative means by which it could be built, operated, and funded. Responses to the call for expressions of interest were independently rated against a specific set of criteria by a panel of four officials from the public sector.

The Government went on to negotiate on the proposal for the best option from a location, ability to operate the centre, and cost-effectiveness point of view. It is worth noting, and the member may be aware, that the Auditor-General independently investigated the decision to negotiate with Skycity and concluded: "We have seen no evidence to suggest that the final decision to negotiate with SkyCity was influenced by any inappropriate considerations."

**Abbas Nazari:** Does the Minister understand that by changing legislation to suit the interests of powerful corporations such as Warner Bros and Skycity, this Government is, in fact, jeopardising the integrity and democracy of this House?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, I beg to differ with the member, but I appreciate—

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am not surprised.

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Both he and I have not had a long time in this House, but perhaps for me it is slightly longer. But, no, I disagree. There are a number of instances,

and I can give the member a couple of examples right now, where specific laws are passed to give effect to particular agreements. Some examples, of course, would be Treaty settlement bills, which are specifically passed to enable settlements—their own legislation.

Also in regard to that, the legislation that allowed for the creation of Fonterra was another example where the House took these steps. Parliament is sovereign in these matters, and Parliament gets to make the decision. Parliament has a bill in front of it that is about whether or not this should proceed. It will get the opportunity to debate that. It is a full select committee process, and we believe that it is the most appropriate way to proceed. But Parliament will address that.

**Abbas Nazari:** Does the Minister understand that the economic gains of such deals are outweighed by the social harms of such deals?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, obviously, I do not agree with the member in that respect, and, in fact, Cabinet had the opportunity to weigh up all of those matters in considering whether to proceed. Of course, there are social harms that occur in different situations. For example, if we are employing an extra 1,000 people during construction and an extra 800 people during the operation of this facility, then that will reduce the potential for social harm for unemployment, for example, which is very important as well. So the reality is that Cabinet has to make those sorts of judgments on an ongoing basis.

The challenge is how do you ensure that the thing that you want—which is jobs and growth for New Zealanders—is best balanced with as much harm minimisation as you can have, to ensure that the social harm is mitigated? Frankly, there are many human activities that take place on a daily basis where there is risk of harm. I am thinking of a former portfolio I had, in transport, where there is a risk every time people participate in using transport. We lose a lot of lives every year because of transport, and the challenge always is to minimise the harm.

**Jacobi Kohu-Morris:** Does the honourable Minister liken this process to selling the law—i.e., a convention centre for more pokies—and does the Government plan on selling the law in this manner again in the future?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** I wonder which party this member represents—I just have a hunch. I obviously do not agree with the characterisation by the member. I think he is applying a particular political overtone to the thing. He may recall that his party supported a Government that made exactly the same arrangement for a very much smaller convention centre back in 2001-02. So it seems that sometimes things are good when you are in Government, but they are lousy when you are in Opposition.

**Henry Thompson:** How does the Minister plan to deal with the negative effects that will arise as the gambling capacity in Skycity casinos increases?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Firstly, the regulatory impact statement makes it clear that it is very difficult to quantify what, if any, additional social harm will occur, and that is for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is not clear whether additional harm will occur from a marginal increase in the number of gaming machines at a particular site, particularly—and this is my second point—when the overall number of machines is declining. Then you add to that the harm minimisation initiatives that are part of this agreement and will continue to be added over time as further technology becomes available, and I think it is open for argument as to whether additional social harm will occur in the round. Certainly, it is our very strong intention to minimise any additional social harm.

**Abbas Nazari:** Is the Minister admitting that the \$90 million of projected economic gain from the convention centre could be outweighed by the 70,000 extra victims of problem gambling that this will produce?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** I simply disagree with the member's assertion and note that that is not what the regulatory impact statement said at all. But, again, I note that I think I can almost guess which party he comes from, as well.

**Ethan Hill:** Does the Minister agree that the deal under this Government is very similar to the deal under the previous Labour Government for a convention centre and, in fact, that this Government got a much better deal than the previous Labour Government did?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** I think that was a much more balanced and neutral question, and I would like to thank the member for his obvious study of these matters. I think it is indeed fair to say, and he may have noted, that this convention centre arrangement is, for one, four times the size of the one that was granted under the previous Government in the early 2000s. I think it is very important that we realise that this is a very important facility for New Zealand. New Zealand has to have a city that is a strong competitor on the world stage with the Sydneys, Melbournes, Singapores, and so on of this world. These sorts of facilities are very definitely necessary, and we also have very limited financial capability—again, given our size and given the global financial crisis.

There is a later question in Parliament today that talks about the importance of encouraging immigration and youth employment and so on. Part of that is getting the facilities in Auckland that will allow that city to compete effectively on the world stage, and I am proud of the initiative that we have taken.

### **Migration—Relation to Economic Policy**

**12. HART REYNOLDS (List) to the Minister for Economic Development:** What does the Government plan to do to reduce the number of New Zealanders permanently emigrating for higher wages and a better standard of living?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Economic Development):** Well, the previous question was about one example of many of the things that we are doing in that regard. But let me start by putting permanent long-term migration of New Zealanders into a bit of context. The total number of people who migrate to and from New Zealand each year fluctuates quite dramatically, and the number of New Zealanders leaving for Australia is now, I am pleased to report, at its lowest level in nearly 3 years—in fact, since the Christchurch earthquakes, which caused quite an increase. Since 2002, in fact, net migration, the difference between the number of people who arrive less the number who depart, has been positive for that entire time. At the end of the day, how do you ensure that more New Zealanders have jobs and bring up their families in New Zealand? The way to do that is to actually encourage more investment in jobs and growth in this country. I think that is hugely important, and that is what our Business Growth Agenda is all about. It is about providing a better platform for businesses to be able to succeed from a New Zealand base.

We have some fantastic opportunities coming up in the world today, including, for example, the massive expansion of consumer power in Asia. The people in this House today will benefit from that more than any other generation, because that is a long-term trend that is going to occur over a period of time. Out of that, there are going to be massive numbers of jobs created. The only question for New Zealanders is whether those jobs are created in Auckland, Palmerston North, or Invercargill, or whether they are created in Perth, Brisbane, Singapore, or Kuala Lumpur. That is the only question, and that is why this Government is focused very strongly on taking the measures that attract investment into this country, so that people can have their jobs, have their incomes, and bring up their families here.

**Eru Kapa Kingi:** Hypothetically speaking, would an increase in the minimum wage ever be a viable decision, considering our economic debt; if so, where will these funds come from?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** That is a very good question. Actually, the Government increases the minimum wage most years. In fact, I think we have done that every year since we became the Government. The challenge is always how you do it in a way that does not result in a net loss of jobs, because, effectively, you are requiring that a minimum be paid for every occupation. It does not affect a huge number of people, but, actually, it has a flow-on effect to the rest of employment as well.

So the challenge is how you balance that every year. Every year Cabinet considers an increase in the minimum wage versus the potential job losses that might occur if it goes too far. There are those who say that there is no connection. And I say: "Well, just consider if you tripled the minimum wage. Do you think anybody would lose their job?". The answer is that, yes, a massive number of people would lose their job. So, constantly, that is the debate. We want to see minimum wages lift over time, but we have to, again, understand that every business that pays the minimum wage has to do that, and we do not want businesses laying people off. So it is always a balancing act, but we are seeking to lift it over time.

**Daisy Cadigan:** How does the Minister for Economic Development expect to keep youth in New Zealand by bringing in the youth wage, which motivates us only to live our lives overseas as soon as school finishes?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, there are actually plenty of countries where young New Zealanders travel to that have exactly the same thing—a youth minimum wage. If you ask yourself why they do that, the answer is that it is to give young people who have no job experience at all the opportunity to have a job and a role where otherwise they might not. It is only for a limited period of time, and that is very important, because once the employer has assured themselves of the young person's work ethic and approach, then it is appropriate that they move immediately to the adult wage. I think it is really important. It is about giving people a chance to have a bit of a start, where otherwise they would not. Many of you will know—even for the relatively short period of time that you have had in the workforce—that the CV is quite an important thing, and employers actually do look at your CV and they think: "OK, what's this person done before?". Somebody who is starting out and getting a job for the first time naturally has a disadvantage in that regard, unfortunately.

We are pretty proud of the approach we are taking. We note that it is completely consistent with many other countries in the OECD, and we expect it to mean more starting-out jobs for young people.

**Emily McCarthy:** Does the Minister agree that the disparity in pay rates between New Zealand and Australia serves as a major pull factor for emigration to Australia, and how is this being resolved?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Yes, it is obviously a factor. People are, by and large, pretty smart, and they can work out the difference in their income rates between here and Australia, although sometimes they do not factor in a number of extra things, including the cost of living in some cities in Australia and including the differences in tax rates, which at many levels are lower in New Zealand than in Australia. So it is important that when people are considering the difference they factor that in.

If you look at what has caused that over the last several years, again, I would argue very strongly that what we have seen is a very different profile of investment into Australia versus into New Zealand. There have been very large investments, particularly in the natural resource sector, in Australia. Some of the big areas that have attracted New Zealanders to move to in terms of jobs and growth have been Western Australia

and central Queensland and so on, where they have a very big resource sector. We do not necessarily have all those opportunities in New Zealand, although we do have opportunities in oil and gas exploration and so on, which I believe we need to explore sensibly to see whether they will create jobs for New Zealanders. So it is about attracting investment in New Zealand. The Government has had some success in that, and we are making some good progress, but it is a long job and we had a long period of, effectively, a very ambivalent approach to investment in this country.

What I can report to the member is that one of the interesting things is that the exchange rate difference between here and Australia is declining. It is tough for some exporters, but, actually, on a cost of living basis, and when you compare people's wages, it actually improves the margin over time. So what we are seeing is New Zealand becoming more attractive for investment, and we need to keep on and encourage that.

### **Youth Unemployment—Initiatives to Reduce**

**13. JACINTA GULASEKHARAM (Rangitikei) to the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment:** What steps is he taking to reduce youth unemployment?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment):** I thank the member for her excellent question. I am pleased to say that the Government is taking a number of steps to reduce the social harm of youth unemployment. One of the first things that is really important in this space is education. I am pleased to report to the House that we have now a very high proportion of 15 to 19-year-olds who are active in education of all types. What we have done is make a number of changes to allow that to occur. What we are trying to do is give young people different pathways to learning and to work. The Youth Guarantee system is a very important part of that. What is that? Youth Guarantee is a number of initiatives. Firstly, it is fees-free tertiary education for those who are not happy at school and who want to keep on with their education so that they can go to a polytechnic or a private provider and continue their education there, perhaps in a more practical trade.

We have set up Vocational Pathways, which allows people to make decisions while they are still at school to head in a particular general direction, like a construction pathway or a pathway into service industries, creative industries, and so on, which allows people to get more relevant education in their senior school years when they are not considering going to university. Then we have also set up what we believe is a stronger apprenticeship scheme called New Zealand Apprenticeships, which is actually for all ages, and an apprenticeship reboot that pays money to the employers and also to the apprentices when they set up and sign up to their apprenticeships. I think all of those things are helping.

I would underline for the House that we have two particular initiatives that we are very keen to see achieved. Firstly, we want to absolutely maximise the number of 18-year-olds who have National Certificate of Educational Achievement level 2 or equivalent by the time they turn 18. That has been growing quite strongly under the Better Public Services initiatives. It is crucial for New Zealand. We need to get that to 85 percent. Then, in the level 4 space, we want as many young people as we can to get at least a level 4 qualification by the time they turn 25. That is ongoing work around the tertiary sector as well.

**Malinna Liang:** Where is he investing funds in terms of secondary and tertiary education—as in, what areas—to widen the employment potential of youth and widen the New Zealand economy in future years?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** We have done a couple of things in that space. Firstly, in the tertiary area we have put performance requirements on all the tertiary institutions, so no matter what people are studying, there is a performance requirement for the institution to encourage people to complete their studies. I think that is really important because actually getting a degree is better than having no degree, no matter what the degree is in. Getting a degree is actually learning how to learn, in my view. So I do not have a very strong view as to what subjects people study, but I think they gain a lot out of achieving a degree. Then, within that, there are some particular skills that we have shortages of in this country. Particularly, they are currently as follows: engineering, information and communications technology qualifications, and also agricultural science, because most farmers now almost need a degree to operate some of the high technology that we are operating in our farming sector in this country. In those three skills in particular—and there are one or two others that escape me at the moment—it is very important that we grow the number of graduates, so we are directing investment to universities and to polytechnics to encourage them to increase the number of places in that space.

I was meeting with the information and communications technology sector yesterday. Its wages are approximately double the New Zealand average. I am not sure whether there are any information and communications technology - keen people in Parliament today, but perhaps before you become full-time politicians you might consider diverting into an information and communications technology qualification because, believe me, the money is good.

**Oliver Wilding:** In relation to youth unemployment, does the Minister not agree that it is more important for an adult supporting a family to be earning the minimum wage and holding a job, rather than a 17-year-old who is studying?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** It is very hard to judge, even with those two examples, the background to the question. I mean, we do not know the circumstances of the teenager; we do not know the detailed circumstances of the adult who is supporting a family. Obviously, it is important, as much as possible, to meet everybody's employment aspirations. We do not get to choose who participates in the labour market or not. What we do get to do is provide a platform to encourage more investment so that everybody who wants to gets the opportunity to participate in the labour market, and that is what we are focused on.

**Bokyoung Mun:** Does the Minister believe that the discrimination that youth will face through the youth wage scheme is in line with the vision of an equal New Zealand society, and that this discrimination and basic breach of human rights will outweigh the so-called benefits?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** No, I do not agree, for the reasons that I laid out in response to an earlier question, and that is that this is for a short period of time. It is about encouraging employers to give a chance and an opportunity to a young person to start out when they have no employment record. I think that is a beneficial thing to have. I would note that many OECD countries take the same approach.

**Annie Huang:** In terms of young people and the economy, how is the current price of housing in Auckland affecting them, and what is the Government doing about this?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Hon Steven Joyce, in as much as it relates to the primary question.

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Yes, which is not dramatically. But anyway, thanks to the member for the question. That is adding an important element to the mix—the affordability of housing in Auckland—but can I stress to the member that that is also indirectly an answer to the employment challenge in Auckland, as well. Fundamentally, we need more houses built in Auckland, and that is what this Government is focused on.

There is a shortage of supply, and the way to deal with a shortage of supply is to increase the supply and remove any supply constraints. My colleague the Minister of Housing is absolutely focused on that. The benefit that we get more broadly out of that too is a big lift in our construction sector and more opportunities for people to have jobs in building those houses. We are singularly focused on that. Yesterday we sat with the Auckland Council and had a very good discussion with its councillors, and I am sure that they are pretty focused on ensuring that we greatly increase the number of houses being constructed in Auckland.

**Hart Reynolds:** How does this Government respond to the concern that the youth wage system will lead to the exploitation of young workers?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** I simply disagree with that for the reasons that the member will have heard, and I think this has been referred to two times previously. What I would say is that it is really important that we do not exploit vulnerable workers in any way. There are always examples, sadly, of employers who are prepared to do that. My colleague the Minister of Labour is very focused on ensuring stronger measures to enforce the law in relation to those matters. Anybody who is being paid less than the minimum wage, whether it is the adult minimum wage or the starting out wage, needs to feel confident that if they make a complaint about that, that complaint will be sorted, and we are very focused on ensuring that.

**Callum Lo:** With regards to tertiary education, given that having more people with a tertiary degree makes that degree worth less in job selection and costs the taxpayer heaps to get them there through interest-free student loans that never get paid back, how is this an efficient way to manage New Zealand's labour market?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, it does stand to reason that if we supply too many graduates at any one time, the income they are able to earn is dropped, so I keep a close eye on that. There is a statistic that we measure for all graduates that is also linked into the Inland Revenue Department's tax data, so that we can see at a population level what happens with people who have achieved a degree. The rough premium at the moment of somebody who has achieved a degree over somebody who has not studied for a degree is around 50 percent a year over their entire adult life. So that is the really big premium in terms of the benefit you get from having a degree, and I think it is important that we keep that in mind.

The other thing I would say is that over time right throughout Asia we are seeing a massive investment in the number of universities and university-trained people over the next 20 years or 30 years. It is going to be a much more competitive scene in the workforce globally in the next 20 or 30 years than it is today. So if I was advising a young person today in terms of whether they should study or not once they have left school, I would encourage them to do the absolute maximum that they reasonably can that would give them a return on their investment in tertiary study, because the reality is that over the 40 years of their working life, competition for the sorts of roles that they are going to want to do is only going to increase.

#### **Schools, Canterbury—Establishment of School in Eastern Christchurch**

**14. MADELEINE WILLIAMS (List) to the Minister of Education:** What process was followed to establish a year 1 to 13 school in eastern Christchurch, and what are its expected benefits?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** The process by which decisions around school changes such as these are undertaken is set out in the Education Act. I am actually pretty surprised the member has not read the Education Act and I am happy to provide her with the statute after question time. The Minister is currently considering the schools' feedback from

consultation and will announce her final decision about the closures and new education provision in September. I think it is really important that the member understands we are dealing with some pretty devastating earthquakes. In fact, it is my understanding that in terms of a developed nation these earthquakes are some of the most significant in the world. So the damage that has resulted for a number of those schools is quite significant, and what is really important is that we do follow due process.

It is my understanding, as well, that in this particular situation the proposals that have been announced would also remove or reduce, depending on the configuration of the schools, transition points in the schooling system, which is when young people often disengage with education, particularly those living in lower-decile areas. The point is that it is our Government's vision that we not only fix these schools but we provide, in many cases, a better schooling provision all up.

**Patrick Savill:** Is the aim of this school to increase educational achievement; if so, how does it do this better than an ordinary school; if not, why not?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** There are three parts to that question. It is the aim of this proposal to improve educational achievement and outcomes for students. The proposal, in my view, will do that. It is really important, as I said previously, that we follow due process. The member may be aware that the boards of the Aranui schools were invited to consult, in the Minister's interim decision, and feedback was due by 3 July 2013. The ministry is currently considering the boards' submissions and will provide the Minister with advice on that on 26 July, so I do not want to pre-empt that due process. But I would say that I am confident that educational achievement will be improved and facilities will be better.

#### **Schools, Canterbury—Mergers**

**15. ALEX ZORN (Christchurch East) to the Minister of Education:** Did she consult with the Aranui community in Christchurch about the school mergers decision; if not, why not?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Associate Minister of Education)** on behalf of the **Minister of Education:** Yes, as is required under the Education Act. We ensured, actually, that a significantly longer than usual period of consultation was provided for, with more resources to undertake consultation than has been the practice in the past. In respect of the processes undertaken by the boards of the affected schools with their school community, we have recently received, as I said before, each board's submission relating to the interim decision. We look to establish, as is set out in the proposals, an Aranui campus. We are currently considering those submissions.

**Kaukiterangi Blair:** Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker. Would the money being used to establish charter schools be better utilised providing immersion or bilingual education in the east of Christchurch?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Tēnā koe. I think that is a really good question. The first point that I would make, as I already set out in answer to a previous question in question time, is that \$19 million is being provided for partnership schools. We see that as an important lever to get choice in our school system. We also have a range of funds available for Māori immersion and bilingual units. In fact, we recently announced additional funding, particularly around school property growth, for Māori immersion units. That has been a significant boost to those schools that want to set up those types of programmes. It is my understanding that it would be up to those schools in Christchurch to go through the process set out in the Education Act to set up a special programme. They can do that, anyway. So it is my view that we can have both. They can either go through the process in Christchurch to set up their own special programme

or, secondly, we can have some outstanding schools that will provide choice, particularly for Māori and Pasifika students who potentially want another option.

Can I also say to the member that our Government is investing a billion dollars in Canterbury. That is a huge amount when we have had a global financial recession. I am very proud that we can do a range of things—not just with the investment we are making in Canterbury—for Māori and Pacific students.

**Callum Lo:** Given that teacher quality has been shown to be more important for educational outcomes than class size, why did your Government back down on its proposal to increase class sizes to free up funding?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I do not think that that question is linked to the primary question, but I am very happy to answer it. I would say a couple of things. It is correct that teacher quality is important and an important lever in raising student achievement. Recently, we had an OECD expert in New Zealand, Andreas Schleicher, and he made that point. There are a number of different levers to improve teacher quality; it is not just about class sizes. We have been very clear on that in terms of our policy. There are other levers, like professional development. You may be aware that we have recently announced some proposals to reform professional development through the Teachers Council, and I look forward to the outcome of that.

The second thing that I would say is that I am aware that the Associate Minister of Education the Hon Nikki Kaye is doing a huge amount in digital literacy and technology. What that is about is understanding that there are some outstanding teachers in New Zealand and there is lots of innovation happening. One of the problems that has also been identified and is important to ensuring that we have quality teachers and access to students in New Zealand is greater collaboration between the profession, but also using technology to beam some of those outstanding teachers into other classrooms. We know that in certain areas of New Zealand it is difficult to get a specialist teacher. If we can use technology better, then we can utilise some of the other teachers that we have.

**Callum Lo:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. My question was regarding why the Government backed down on the trade-off between class size and teacher quality. I do not feel as though the Minister has answered my question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The difficulty was that your question was a long, long way—some kilometres away—from the original primary question. I thought the Minister made a gallant attempt to answer it. In fact, I thought she made a very long attempt. I was about to tell her to sit down.

**Alex Zorn:** Can she be sure that the majority of people in the Aranui community were given the opportunity to voice their opinion on the establishment of the new school?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** As I have already previously mentioned, there has been significant consultation. In fact, there have been two rounds of it. I think what I would say about any consultation is that you rely on the process that you put in place. That does not mean that every single individual will come forward. What is important is that we have had two rounds of consultation. As I said before, I do not want to comment on the detail of that, because it is important to respect that due process. The Minister intends to make further announcements on 26 July.

**Jack Stringer:** Does she believe that the proposed closure of several schools in Christchurch will raise both the quality of education and individual student achievement; if so, why?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Yes, to the first half of your question. With regard to the second half of your question, the reason that I think we will ultimately have a better situation for young people in Christchurch is that we are doing several things. The first

is that we are looking at situations like the Aranui campus, where we can have greater collaboration with the community. We are investing more in certain facilities, so there will be better facilities in parts of Christchurch than there were before. And we know that those facilities can be an enabler to improving educational achievement.

I think the third point that I would make is that as a result of this billion-dollar investment, we are taking the opportunity, I think, to improve both those facilities and investment in areas like digital literacy, where we know that, traditionally, certain students have not had access to certain resources, whether they are Māori or Pacific students or whether they have been more isolated in terms of the school system. As we know with Aranui, and as I mentioned in one of my previous answers, we can use that as an opportunity to reduce that disengagement via some of these proposals in Canterbury.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will take two further supplementary questions.

**Isabella Lenihan-Ikin:** Following the already devastating earthquakes in Christchurch, do you not think that it will be only detrimental to the students at these schools that will merge following the Government's policy to merge schools in Christchurch?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** No. What is really important—and I have been down there a number of times, in fact, as Associate Minister of Education. The Prime Minister has visited Canterbury as well very regularly. Other Ministers are down there constantly. Although sometimes it will be hard to have change, what we are focused on is making sure that not only are some of those facilities better but also we are now investing in new projects. There will be some of the most world-leading—actually, probably more New Zealand - leading—virtual networks in Canterbury as a result of these changes. So just because there is change, it does not mean that it is worse. It actually means that you can use it as an opportunity to provide better facilities and raise student achievement.

**Michael Fryer:** Kia ora, Mr Speaker. Does the Minister believe that through the positive changes that are happening to these students, in the future they could be our youth parliamentarians like we are here today?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Kia ora. That has to be the best question that we have had today. Yes, it is my hope that we will see some of the rising stars of Youth Parliament coming from Canterbury.

### State-owned Assets, Sales—Purpose

**16. DEAN BUCKLEY (List) to the Minister of Finance:** Why is the Government selling State assets instead of borrowing, and will those asset sales result in foreign ownership of shares previously owned by the Government?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE (Associate Minister of Finance)** on behalf of the **Minister of Finance:** Could I start by complimenting the members in the House today on the quality of the grilling they are giving Ministers. It is infinitely superior to what we have put up with most days this year, so you have my congratulations. The partial sale of the mixed-ownership companies is expected to raise between \$5 billion and \$7 billion.

There are three main reasons for the Government doing this process. Firstly, the money raised will be invested in new social assets and infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, without the Government having to borrow more money on behalf of New Zealanders at a time of global financial crisis. Secondly, we expect that the disciplines of operating in a public sharemarket will deliver a better-performing company over time through greater monitoring and oversight by the market and the discipline that comes from being a listed company. Thirdly, deepening capital markets give New Zealanders more options for where they put their savings, including those KiwiSavers right across New Zealand—113,000 Kiwis recently took up the opportunity to invest in Mighty

River Power. The member also asked about foreign investment. The Government's aim is for around 85 to 90 percent of the shares in mixed-ownership companies to be held by New Zealanders.

However, it is also worth noting more generally that foreign investment in New Zealand is very welcome. New Zealand has actually been built, in many ways, on foreign investment. It is a source of jobs and a source of skills and capital that increases the wages and living standards of New Zealanders. Investment, wherever it comes from, actually builds opportunities for New Zealanders.

**Victoria Holyoake:** Since the price per share of Mighty River Power has decreased, should potential investors be worried about the future sale of assets not raising the finances that the Government has promised; if so, where will these finances come from for the proposed investments such as public assets in Christchurch?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** It is never a good idea for Ministers to comment on the share price of companies listed, or prospectively listed, so I will not head down that path today. But, obviously, you know, when people make an investment, there is a risk attached to the investment. Prices go up and down over time, and that is the nature of these things. But the more general point is that the Government has not given itself a capital budget more generally because the Government is determined to keep our debt down and to get it down below 20 percent of GDP, which is crucially important for all New Zealanders' security in the years ahead. You have only to look at countries like Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and so on, which have too much public debt for various reasons, to know how vulnerable that can make a country if things go wrong. So that is really important to us. The short answer is that we expect to see the \$5 billion to \$7 billion raised, but obviously we would have to cut our cloth to fit the circumstances.

**Seamus Barnett:** Does he believe that the selling of State assets will create and continue to lead to disparity and inequality in the polling between National and Labour?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, if you are talking about the current disparity, I am all in favour of it.

**Victoria Holyoake:** Do you believe that any parties that do not support asset sales will actually come up with any other feasible options to support the funds in New Zealand?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, Mr Speaker, as I am sure you would advise me, I am not responsible for the policy of other parties, but I do think it is important that in all these things you face choices and the choices are never costless. In this case, the Government has made a decision that we will sell minority shares in these companies for the reasons I have outlined, and one of those reasons is to avoid having to borrow money from overseas for New Zealand. We think that is the right thing to do in the current financial times, and we think that the responsible financial management that is being taken by this Government will stand New Zealand in very good stead in the years ahead. There are other people who disagree, but they have yet to say how they would actually find the money to spend, if it was not to borrow it overseas or, in one or two cases, to print it out of a printer.

**Inji Johnstone:** Is it not true that by having a capital gains tax, in fact, the same outcome of getting money without borrowing overseas would come about, whilst also combating the inequality in New Zealand that we face today, which will only grow under the asset sales programme?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** No, I do not agree with the member's assertion, and the reason that I do not agree with it is that you can look across at a place where they have a capital gains tax, which is Australia, where it has not led to the solutions that the member raises or, in fact, to a solution to one that the member has not raised—that is, of course, housing. I have seen some articles in the last few days that show that in western

Sydney, they have got at least as much concern about housing as we have in parts of Auckland, and yet they have a capital gains tax today. The trouble with the capital gains tax is that it sends a very confused signal. So at the very time we are looking to encourage people to invest, grow their businesses, and bring more businesses into New Zealand, the Opposition parties are proposing to add a tax on any gain people make from operating those businesses here. That is for every business that operates in this country. I, for one, think it is the wrong signal to send if you are about trying to encourage investment and grow jobs and growth in this country.

**Mark Davis:** Does the Minister believe that an increase in financial education is required, so that people will learn to stop excessively borrowing or destroying investment with new taxes?

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** Well, there certainly are a few people around this Parliament who could do with a little bit of that education, but I think, actually, if you look at it overall, New Zealanders are saving more. Since the global financial crisis, there has been a change. New Zealanders are paying down debt and saving more, which is an absolutely appropriate response. We can debate whether they are doing enough of that yet, but, of course, the more they do save, the less money they spend, which means it is tougher for the retail sector. So all of those things have to come into balance. But on the whole, New Zealanders are saving more, and I think that is a really good thing, because we need both New Zealanders as private savers and the Government to save more so that we can ensure that we keep our overall debt down. It is coming down, but we need to get it down further.

**Bridget White:** Do you believe that selling State assets is a case of intergenerational theft; if not, why not? [*Interruption*]

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Hon STEVEN JOYCE:** No, not at all. If you think of it from an economic perspective, that cannot be possible, because if the alternative is to borrow money—say, more money today—then that is foisted on future generations. So it sounds like you are asking the question as if it is a yes or no choice, but the reality is that the Government does have to invest in some things—it has to invest in hospitals, schools, transport projects, and so on—and so the only question is how we pay for that. Our argument is that having a minority share in these assets—sold to New Zealanders, largely—is actually of little cost to the Government. In fact, it raises a lot of revenue that we can then put towards those assets, and we would argue that that would be a sound and more stable way than actually borrowing more money from offshore that future generations would have to pay off.

### **Youth—Involvement in Entrepreneurial Activity and Small Businesses**

**17. MUNGO MASON (Tauranga) to the Minister of Youth Affairs:** What is the Government doing to promote youth involvement in entrepreneurial activity and small businesses?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE (Minister of Youth Affairs):** Our Government encourages youth involvement in entrepreneurial activity and small businesses in a variety of ways. I am going to answer this question twofold. Firstly, it is not just about economic enterprise; it is also about social enterprise. The Ministry of Youth Development has supported the Youth Enterprise scheme since 2010 to give secondary school students opportunities to run companies, develop products and services, and then sell them.

In terms of social enterprise, the Ministry of Youth Development also supports the Festival for the Future, which showcases current young social entrepreneurship in New Zealand. Last year the ministry's funding enabled young people to participate in a festival at Te Papa, Wellington, and it is providing funding to continue this year's

festival. Finally, enterprise learning in general is included across New Zealand's school curriculum. The Ministry of Education provides materials for schools to develop a locally relevant enterprise-based curriculum. The Ministry of Education has also developed a senior secondary business studies curriculum, with achievement standards at National Certificate of Educational Achievement levels 1, 2, and 3.

**Lafoai Luaitalo:** What are the benefits of young people being involved in entrepreneurial activity?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think there are a range of benefits. Project management and planning skills are one aspect of that, and, secondly, access to experienced business people. As we heard last night when we were at the function, there are many New Zealanders who are aspiring to having access to those business people, particularly through the Youth Enterprise scheme. Thirdly, part of it is about that innovation and creativity—those skills. We cannot underestimate having that practical experience and what that does in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem, and creativity.

**Bokyoung Mun:** Does the Minister believe that the Government is doing enough to support charities such as the P3 Foundation, which is empowering young people through initiatives such as the Social Enterprise Competition?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think we are doing a huge amount, actually. My budget supports a range of youth providers, including charitable organisations that are doing things from social enterprise, to economic enterprise, to the Spirit of Adventure, and they are all about empowering young people. There is about \$7.5 million focused on that. I also have another fund that is \$890,000. That focuses on local authorities partnering with other organisations and young people to deliver local projects in communities, and I am going to make some announcements on that in the future.

**Lafoai Luaitalo:** What is the Government doing to ensure that more Māori and Pacific Island youth are taking up entrepreneurial opportunities and not just a particular socio-economic class?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think that is a good question. I would have to come back to the House with exactly how many Māori and Pacific young people are involved in the various schemes and the various projects that the Ministry of Youth Development funds. But what I can tell the member is that I know that a number of the organisations that are announced within one of the particular funds that I have do have a focus on, particularly, at-risk youth, of which there are higher proportions of Māori and Pacific young people. There are a number of mentoring programmes as part of that, and a lot of them do focus on the creation not necessarily of economic enterprise but of social enterprise.

**Jacobi Kohu-Morris:** As small businesses like profits and aim to be competitive, does the honourable Minister agree that with the implementation of the youth wage, youth will be employed, yes, but at the expense of adults already struggling for employment; if not, why not?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** That is quite wide of the primary question, but, again, I am very happy to answer that, and I refer you to the Hon Steven Joyce's previous answers around the rationale for having a youth wage. What I can say is two things in response to the two questions that you tacked on the end there. The first is that this is about providing young people with a foot in the door. There is a time limit on how long that youth wage is in place. We know that there will be jobs created as a result of that. Some of those jobs are not jobs that are necessarily specific to older New Zealanders, and I would be happy to provide further information to the House if he wants a specific breakdown of the age demographic of those jobs.

**Callum Lo:** Given that a capital gains tax during a recession would actually make it hardest for young, new entrepreneurs entering the market, is this not a very, very bad idea?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** Thank you for that excellent question. I do believe that a capital gains tax is a bad idea. As I said, the Hon Steven Joyce has set out the reasons for that. But what I think is important—and I know that my colleague the Hon Nick Smith is going to set this out—is that we have really good policies to focus on home affordability, particularly for young New Zealanders, and it is our view that the capital gains tax will not achieve that. There are a hell of a lot of other, better policies out there.

**Eru Kapa Kingi:** Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Youth Affairs. Do you think that political education such as this Youth Parliament could go hand in hand with entrepreneurial activity and small business?

**Hon NIKKI KAYE:** I think what is important—and what is really important about Youth Parliament—is that everyone in this Chamber is going to have the confidence, hopefully, to go back to their communities and talk more about these issues, because it is not just about understanding democratic institutions. It is about going back to communities and having projects but also going back to communities and talking about the issues that matter to them. Whether that is economic enterprise or social enterprise, whether that is housing affordability, or whether that is the youth wage, what is important is that more young people have an education about those issues.

#### **Housing Affordability—Overseas Property Investment**

**18. MATTHEW JACKSON (Northcote) to the Minister of Housing:** What action is the Government taking to prevent overseas property investors from increasing housing unaffordability for first-time home buyers?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH (Minister of Housing):** There is no solid evidence to show that overseas investors are having any substantive impact on house prices. The oldest trick in the book when confronted with a difficult issue like unemployment, crime, or housing is to blame it on some foreigner. Survey data on foreign ownership shows “8 percent overseas purchasing”, but on closer analysis this is based on the buyers having foreign-sounding names. That is OK if you have a name like mine—Smith—but it is not so good if you have a name like Key.

Proper analysis shows that the biggest group of overseas buyers are Australian, but, of course, New Zealanders are free to buy, and do buy, thousands of apartments in places like the Gold Coast. We should ignore these flaky arguments and instead address the real issues over housing affordability that have been identified by the Productivity Commission, like land supply, the cost of infrastructure, materials costs, productivity in the building sector, and compliance costs.

**Charm Skinner:** What reports have been commissioned about the effect of non-resident purchasers of investment houses in Auckland and the consequential effect of house prices limiting those who want to buy a home?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH:** There have been a number of reports, but when you look into the detail of them, they have based their assumptions on people’s names and whether they sound as though they might be English names or whether they might be from somewhere else. That is a very poor measure. New Zealand now has a very significant New Zealand - citizen Asian population, and many other nationalities. I think the argument that foreign purchasers are the cause of our challenges around housing affordability is simply a cheap political shot because people are not prepared to get into the nitty-gritty argument around the real causes and challenges.

**Jesse Medcalf:** Does the Minister believe that overseas property investment usually accompanies other investment in the business sector of New Zealand, providing employment opportunities to our recovering economy?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH:** The Government is keen to attract investment from overseas. We have business migrant programmes to encourage people to come to New Zealand and invest here. But in the rules we quite specifically do not include investment in residential property, except if they are going to build new houses. The reason for that is that although we want overseas investment, we do not want that which we encourage to artificially drive it. In fact, the rules right now for those business migrants require them to invest in ventures that create jobs, rather than just cheaply going into buying houses in an overheated market like Auckland.

**Faaiu Anae-Tunai:** How many new homes to be built in the next 3 years, as announced by the Government, will be affordable for low-income earners in Auckland?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH:** The agreement that we have reached with the Auckland Council is for 39,000 new homes to be built over the next 3 years. That works out at an average of about 13,000 per year. Over the last 5 years we have been doing only 4,000, so it is a big step up. In the accord, we have specifically made provision for the council to be able to require developers to ensure that there is a block of affordable houses, just as the Government has done with the Hobsonville development. The big question, of course, is what is affordable? The Government's view is that the affordability we should be aiming for is that ratio between income to average house price of not more than 4. In Auckland it is nearly 7. The reason we say a ratio is a better measure of affordability is that, quite frankly, what is affordable for a person earning \$50,000 a year is very different from what is affordable for somebody earning \$80,000 or \$100,000 a year.

**Charm Skinner:** Why has the Government neglected to protect the interests of first-time home buyers in Auckland who have been squeezed completely out of the market from owning their own home?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH:** The Government specifically helps first-time buyers, and let me explain why. If anybody joins up to KiwiSaver, for each year that they are in the KiwiSaver scheme not only will the Government let them withdraw their savings and withdraw the contributions that their employer has made, but also the Government adds up to \$1,000 per year up to 5 years as a subsidy to help those first home owners. That is available only to first home owners, because we recognise the real value there is in a property-owning democracy.

**Annie Huang:** Aside from supply side policies, what is the Government doing to curb the unsustainable trend in the price of housing?

**Hon Dr NICK SMITH:** The Reserve Bank, as we sit here, is right now contemplating additional measures that would be used for the very first time under our Reserve Bank of New Zealand Act to try to take some of the heat out of the housing market. It is very important in the way in which our Government operates that those decisions are made independently by the Reserve Bank. There is a long, sad history in New Zealand of elected representatives wanting to have cheap interest rates in an election year, because it will help them get votes, and then causing political and economic difficulties from that. So watch this space. It is important that those decisions around monetary policy are made independently by the Reserve Bank. It is looking to take specific measures to try to address this very real problem in Auckland of an overheated housing market.

## MOTIONS

### Youth Parliament—Expression of Thanks to MPs

**EBONY PEENI (List):** I move, *That the House thank the members of the 50<sup>th</sup> Parliament for electing the youth parliamentarians and providing us with a once in a lifetime experience that we will remember for ever.*

Motion agreed to.

*Sitting suspended from 12.01 p.m. to 12.45 p.m.*

## ELECTORAL LAW REFORM BILL

### Third Reading

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Members, here are some rules that we will follow during the course of the next 2 hours on the debate. The speeches are for 3 minutes. There are no warning bells, but just prior to the 3 minutes, with 20 seconds to go, I will signal with my hand, which means it is time to wind up. All right? When the 3 minutes finish, I will ring the bell, which is like that when it rings. The member must stop at that stage. If I stand, that means you have to sit down, all right? So just be mindful of that. We have a time constraint and we would ask that you all abide by that. There are some rules that have been circulated to you—the Standing Orders. If I make a ruling, however, rulings are done in silence. There is no debate and there is no comment about any ruling that I may make. So we are going to move into this now, so enjoy the afternoon. This is your opportunity to have a say on the legislative debate on the Electoral Law Reform Bill. I am calling the first speaker, Patrick Gerard, to move. Just say “Mr Speaker”, and then I will give you the call.

**PATRICK GERARD (List):** My name is Patrick Gerard, representing Steffan Browning from the Green Party of Aotearoa. It is such an honour to be here with so many motivated, enthusiastic, and politically conscious people my own age. Today we are here to debate a bill of great magnitude and of a relevant topic to us as New Zealand youth. I will start off my speech by immediately declaring my opposition to the bill, which seeks to make three major—

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** I am sorry to interrupt the member. The first thing that you must say when you are leading off a debate like this—so when I stand, you sit; we will get the protocols right—which, hopefully, you have got written down, is “Mr Speaker, I move that the Electoral Law Reform Bill be now read a third time.” All right? So we will start again, shall we? Only you have to say that, but you are leading the debate off, so that is the protocol.

**PATRICK GERARD:** I move, *That the Electoral Law Reform Bill be now read a third time.* My name is Patrick Gerard, representing Steffan Browning from the Green Party of Aotearoa. It is such an honour to be here with so many motivated, enthusiastic, and politically conscious people my own age. Today we are here to debate a bill of great magnitude and of a relevant topic to us as New Zealand youth. I will start off my speech by immediately declaring my opposition to the bill, which seeks to make three major amendments to the Electoral Act 1993, and another of major significance to the Constitution Act 1986.

I put it to the House that this is a radical movement that seeks to administer dramatic alterations, which will affect everyone as New Zealand citizens in a very short time frame. Changes of such proportions would be notable within decades, yet these four changes are to go ahead within the next year and a half, if permitted. I would be much more inclined to make such a movement over a lengthy duration, testing each carefully

as it were to be administered. I do not believe that introducing such changes en masse, in combination with lowering the voting age, would be of benefit to the country—if anything, perhaps making the prospects of voting more confusing and daunting, deterring young people from voting for fear of making the wrong decision.

Although I do believe there is a section of New Zealand youth who are educated enough to vote at 17, it is important to remember that very little political education is incorporated into the curriculum of mainstream classes in primary and secondary education, as we have already discussed here today in the debating chamber. Therefore, when it comes to political views, many young people are acquainted only with those of their parents and peers, and have not had a chance to develop their own. Upon consulting my community, I found the majority of people my own age to be completely uninterested in this bill, many of them without any political orientation or direction and not expressing any such points to conclude that passing this bill would be favourable. Meanwhile, some of the younger people I asked declared that they would certainly like to vote if they could—for the Communist Party. In general, people who were already eligible to vote said they would prefer the voting age be kept at 18.

Compulsory voting is a radical action that needs to be considered carefully. Although there is a clear lack of civic participation during general elections, I do not believe that introducing an obligation for people to vote is an essentially effective mechanism for improving this, even if they do not have to make any nomination. I believe it would be of much greater benefit to the country to improve education surrounding political understanding and the importance of voting, and, in doing so, demonstrating greater maturity as a freedom-conscious nation.

I do not support the increase in the parliamentary term from 3 years to 4 years. From what I could deduce from the bill, one of the main influential factors was its suitability as a cost-cutting measure, by decreasing the frequency of general elections. I argue that the only way to approve this fairly and democratically would be to hold a public referendum, as was done in 1967 and 1990. In both those cases, the change was ruled out.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** The next speaker is Jack Alison. Is Jack Alison available?

**Jack Alison:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Can I just say, you know when you are going to be speaking. As soon as the person before you has finished speaking, the idea is that you stand up and you call out “Mr Speaker.” I will then sort of know roughly where you are in the House. So rather than me calling your name, you stand up and call “Mr Speaker.”, and then I call your name. The call is to Jack Alison.

**JACK ALISON (List):** It is my privilege today to be a speaker in this legislative debate on the Electoral Law Reform Bill. I wish I could say that I am looking forward to some intelligent discussion, but, after racking my brain, trying to get my head around where this bill came from exactly, it is clear that intelligent discussion we will not get.

There are some shocking things here that we need to address. I could stand here and regale you with stories of how I, like many people my age, had about the same life and work experience the day before my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as the day after, if lacking a bit in mental dexterity. I could even stand here and shock you with the security risks that internet voting might pose to our so-called fair voting system, and then go on to say which things have cast a colossal shadow over us, such as the ACC leak of June last year or the Novopay mess-up, both of which arose from Government ministries.

But the most appalling, most shocking, and most morally corrupt provision would have to be the introduction of compulsory voting. Remind me again what century this is. In what oppressive, Orwellian society do we live in where people are forced from

their homes into the polling booths so that they must vote—must—for people whom they believe do not represent them fairly? It is Draconian to think that all people must involuntarily give their opinion, considering that inherent in a person's freedom of expression is the exact opposite: the inherent freedom to not express.

It is barbaric to punish these people and criminalise them. The people fined and punished for the utterly senseless and victimless crime of not voting are the exact people who cannot afford another financial burden. Take a look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs; now compare that with the people in my community. Most of them are struggling to find a decent job, have a decent wage, put food on the table, and find a warm, safe, dry home, let alone think about the next political party that will be in this House. Exactly what kind of person would be thinking politically if their basic human needs were not met by the Government that they are meant to be voting for? Forget about it. Take care of a person's basic needs, and that will free their mind for political thought. Otherwise, you are setting these people up for disaster and endangering their livelihoods.

I dare not say that I speak for anybody else's community but my own, but I represent my own area, and we need to understand that the problem does not lie with voters but with politicians. It is not apathy; it is rejection. It is not cynicism; it is a belief that there is nobody worth voting for. We need a bill that approaches the crisis of political engagement not with a clenched fist but with open ears.

**GUL AGHA ALIZADAH (Ilam):** Today we are debating a very momentous bill that has captivated not only my electorate of Ilam in Christchurch but the nation as a whole. I sincerely commend the Ministry of Youth Development for drafting the Electoral Law Reform Bill. Although all four elements of the bill are intensely debated and scrutinised worldwide, I rise today to proudly express my support and my electorate's support for the bill, as we believe it is for the betterment of New Zealand. Although we highly encourage all the proposed changes in this bill, the call for lowering the voting age to 17 is one that has strongly grasped our attention. Today we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our youth are more educated and more socially and politically aware than ever before. As a result, they are more passionate to have a voice and to have a larger part in decision making that will undoubtedly affect their lives and their country, which they are due to call home for generations to come. We acknowledge our constitution's stance on this law. However, this is the same constitution that requires New Zealand to have a democratic system of governance. Although we are internationally renowned for having a great democracy, we do, however, see gaps.

Forty thousand 17-year-olds today possess some form of employment in New Zealand. They are all legally obliged to pay taxation. Is it truly fair and consistent with our constitution that those 40,000 young people be forced to pay tax but not be granted the right to vote, and, in doing so, have a say as to where and how that hard-earned wage is to be spent? We believe in the policy of "no taxation without representation". Which one of us can factually assess one's maturity? At a young age, we leave school, we work and contribute to society, and we marry and raise a family. These things demand a significant level of responsibility. Is it not, then, very unjust that we are suddenly seen as not mature enough to vote? I have met and discussed this with 17-year-olds, and their logic, their intelligence, and their political knowledge and passion have inspired me today.

Although we fully understand the importance of whether other countries practise such laws or not, and whether these laws meet the target purpose, we also realise that each nation is different, with diverse perspectives and suitability. We have to appreciate that we represent the people of New Zealand, the youth of New Zealand, and so we must listen to their voices and make decisions that correspond to their views, while also

respecting our constitution. We may not be a military powerhouse or an economic giant in this world, but what we are capable of is change—change that positively impacts humanity, change that celebrates our past and dreams about a future. This change must come now.

**EMILY ANSELM (List):** The importance of having a country where all citizens actively participate in our election process cannot be exaggerated. Without an inclusive and straightforward voting process, the New Zealand Government is not able to meet the needs of its people. For a leader to contribute positively to the lives of the people he is responsible for, he must be able to understand those same people. He must hear their voices.

The reduction in the voting age and making voting compulsory are important changes that will help to integrate the administration of our country into the lives of every Kiwi. The reduction in the voting age is a crucial step towards making voting as inclusive as possible. The maturity New Zealand youth are capable of is clearly illustrated by our very presence in this room today. The most beneficial way to encourage students to take on not only personal responsibility but societal responsibility is to give their voice real weight at a national level. Without national regard for our thoughts, what encouragement is there to develop them? Why speak when no one is listening, no change will happen, and no actions will be taken? This apathetic attitude is the last thing we want to cultivate in our youth.

Given the demographics of most New Zealand Government representatives, it is even more important to take affirmative action to give our youth a voice. We need to create a system where more proportional weighting is given to New Zealand's youth, and where they are able to immediately influence the bills that affect their lives.

The concerns and opinions of all sectors of New Zealand society are unique and important. If we are to call ourselves a democracy, each of these opinions needs to be taken into consideration.

Not only this but a sense of social responsibility needs to be cultivated in all New Zealanders. The Government is responsible not just for those voters who get out there and vote; it is responsible for every man, woman, and child in New Zealand today. The two-way street that exists between a Government and its citizens does not only have to be maintained; it needs to be strengthened. As much as our Government has a responsibility to care for our welfare and our interests, we have a responsibility to create a Government that knows what we want. We have a responsibility to uphold the lives of those who died to give us democracy—those who have fought for their rights and who have given us the right to choose our future. This legislative bill is the tool New Zealand needs to create an inclusive and responsible society.

**SEAMUS BARNETT (Palmerston North):** I rise today to stand firmly against the Electoral Law Reform Bill. This bill does not have the support of the young people of Palmerston North, and, as such, I am opposed to it.

Democracy lies at the heart of what it means to be human. The ability to choose your leader and to have freedom of choice is something that can be taken for granted, yet it is what differentiates us as people. We must have this inviolable right to choose, whether it be to choose a Prime Minister, a local MP, or to choose not to vote. New Zealand, as a progressive nation, must be seen to be upholding this freedom to choose. I believe that enforcing compulsory voting violates this right and therefore must not be allowed to occur. Voting epitomises freedom of choice, and compulsory voting is the antithesis of our democratic ideal. People must be allowed to choose not to vote, for whatever personal reasons, and the Government cannot interfere in what can be a very personal decision. People know what is best for themselves, not the Government. Many young people in Palmerston North have told me that they feel that this aspect of the legislation

would alienate them from the democratic process. Young people already have so much of their lives tightly controlled, and they feel that they do not need another rule imposing on their lives.

The other key area of this bill that the young people of Palmerston North disagree with is the idea of lowering the voting age to 17. The feeling in my community is that it feels far more natural to vote at 18, when people are leaving school and entering the big wide world. Yes, 17-year-olds pay taxes and do other things, but so do 16-year-olds and 15-year-olds. I think it makes far more sense for the ability to vote to come at 18, when education will be becoming complete and people will be beginning to make fully informed decisions. Obviously, there will be exceptions to this age, because it is, after all, just a number, but in the main, voting at 18 works well and does not need to change. A line needs to be drawn, and it is natural to draw that line at 18.

There is mixed opinion among the young people of Palmerston North regarding the implementation of online voting and regarding the extension of the parliamentary term. But because my polls revealed such strong opposition to both compulsory voting and a lowering of the voting age to 17, I am proud to cast my vote today against this bill. Thank you.

**JAKE BENSON (North Shore):** On the North Shore, we feel that the Electoral Law Reform Bill has its merits. Electronic voting and extending the parliamentary term are its strengths, although decreasing the voting age to 17 and making voting compulsory are very definitely its weaknesses. Due to these strong weaknesses, I will be voting against the bill.

Electronic voting would make voting easier and more accessible for all New Zealanders. We feel strongly that every New Zealander should have the opportunity to have their say within our country. Electronic voting, and online voting in particular, would make voting for eligible citizens much more accessible. These include the disabled, the elderly, and citizens living overseas. Electronic voting would also increase New Zealanders' confidence in the Government, as it would be responding to public demand to modernise the voting system.

Increasing the parliamentary term from 3 to 4 years gives MPs time to achieve objectives and enact their policies. It is about getting the job done. In the first year, members spend time settling into the role. In the last year, they are in campaign mode. It is in the middle year that they push through the bulk of legislation. Surely, the main aim of a Government is to enact positive change, so adding in another year in the middle will lead to a great deal more in terms of legislation.

However, on the other side of the ledger, lowering the voting age to 17 is a definite weakness. In terms of mental maturity and the ability to make important decisions, there is a world of difference between a 17-year-old and an 18-year-old. I share the belief that young people have a significant stake in this country's future. However, at 17 youth have a mixture of independence and reliance on parental support, and the external effect of peer and parental pressures can overpower the youth's own views and intuition, and definitely affect their voting. According to the law, by 17 youth can get married, but with their parents' permission. So what is the law saying about the mental maturity of 17-year-olds and their ability to make their own decisions? On the North Shore we agreed to leave the age where it is.

Moreover, I share the belief of many North Shore youth that everyone should have the right to vote, but making the act of voting compulsory will ensure only that we get a poor representation of what the people of New Zealand actually need and want. Many New Zealanders do not do their homework prior to election day, and, when it comes around, they either make an uneducated or a spoiled vote. Furthermore, when I met with

the youth of my electorate, we came to a general consensus that compulsory voting would not be required if electronic voting was introduced.

All in all, on the North Shore we feel that the bill has its advantages. Electronic voting and extending the parliamentary term would have its positive consequences. However, the risks in decreasing the voting age to 17 and making voting compulsory are too large, and for this reason I will be voting against the Electoral Law Reform Bill.

**JILLIAN BLEASDALE (List):** Let us hook the young world into politics, let us give them a greater say, and let us do it in their language—not by paper ballot but by electronic voting. It is a young and technology-driven world out there. Let us use it to our advantage. Technology is the way of the future, as are the youth of New Zealand. Get them to vote now and they will become lifelong voters, but if young people are not included right from the start, then as older New Zealanders they will become disconnected from the New Zealand Government. These people are the leaders of the future.

We can do almost everything else online—banking, shopping, tax, and now even the census—so why are we still using an old voting system? Think of the huge numbers of people who vote every week for their favourite contestants on shows like *The X Factor*. Do you think as many people would vote if they had to vote through a ballot box at their nearest electorate? I do not think so. It is because technology is so easily accessible for most people today. As long as there are safety procedures in place to ensure that the principles of democracy such as one person, one vote are kept, then I do not see anything wrong with including electronic voting.

Being a young person in New Zealand, I honestly do not think that 17-year-olds have enough knowledge or education about politics to be able to vote sensibly. Twenty-two percent of non-voters for the 2011 general election were under the age of 21. The large percentage of young voters who do not vote, simply because they do not know how to vote or whom to vote for, need to be educated so that they can use their vote. A better option than reducing the age would be to fund civics education in schools so that kids understand how politics really works from a younger age.

Youth are always criticised for their irresponsibility and lack of maturity, so why lower the age and allow them to run our country? I think there needs to be some consistency between the voting age and the likes of the drinking age. The driving age was raised because teenagers are not fully developed mentally to take on that responsibility. Why is voting in elections any different?

Although we want as many people to vote as possible, I do not think that people should be forced into voting. We should have the right and the freedom to speak, and that includes the freedom not to speak. If made compulsory, voting will become somewhat of a chore rather than a free expression of political will. Elections are held for New Zealanders to choose who will be best in Government. If people are not interested, then they should not have to vote. So, maybe, instead of making a law that will ensure that everyone has to vote, why not focus on motivating people to vote? Every vote does count. People should vote because they want to, not to avoid a fine.

I would definitely recommend that the cons outweigh the pros, and therefore I believe that this Electoral Law Reform Bill should not be passed. Thank you.

**LIAM BOOTH (List):** Today I stand in opposition to this bill, the Electoral Law Reform Bill. If the amendment to the Constitution Act 1986, changing the term of Parliament from 3 years to 4 years, stood alone as the only amendment in this bill, then it would have my wholehearted support. But my strong opposition to the other three amendments of the Electoral Act 1993 unfortunately override that support.

This bill, as stated, seeks to modernise the Electoral Act and make it relevant for current times. I make no complaint about that, but precisely because of the current state

of technology, I disagree with adding electronic voting to the methods of voting. I am convinced that when the next general election arrives, the system for voting via the internet on home computers and smartphones will not be done safely, despite pilots. This aspect of the bill may become relevant in future when the trust of online services is more secure and they are run efficiently. As fairly recent global studies and events propound—in places like Washington—the internet and its systems are not as robust, trustworthy, or properly protected for such an event as a general election at this time.

On a personal note, there is something stirring about putting your voting papers through a ballot box in the town hall. There is a sense of history, tradition, and civic duty in doing so, and, besides, the tiny percentage of people who live nowhere near polling stations, have no telephone access, or are maybe physically disabled should get out of their bunkers and vote. That aside, this country should not have an additional electronic voting system adopted any time in the foreseeable future—for technical reasons, at any rate.

Making voting compulsory for all eligible voters may seem like a good initiative to accomplish absolute representation of the people in Parliament. But the individual's right to choose is, I believe, paramount; it is not for the State to decide whether you vote or not. People should sort out why their neighbour has not voted or does not vote, and encourage them to. People should sort out why some demographics are not voting and create community solutions. A constituent was telling me that politics was not a common topic for discussion in her household when she was younger, but, unlike for youth today, a general election was this big, important event that everyone had to participate in. This generation, at least in my community, is sometimes worryingly disengaged with government. There is a whole host of reasons why, but it comes back to the principle made that it should be up to people and families to encourage their children and raise them to acknowledge that each vote is essential to a nation's democracy and to acknowledge the importance that the effect of a vote has.

This brings me to my last point. Some other things I have said give a reason not to vote for the first amendment of this bill to reduce the voting age from 18 to 17.

**ROSIE BOWMAN (Rimutaka):** If young Kiwis can drive a car and become legally married at 16, why should they be refused a vote at 17? Today I will persuade you that the proposed mock bill is beneficial to all youth and to our Parliament as a whole.

Political involvement in youth is a major issue in our society. In the past general election we witnessed the lowest voter turnout from 18 to 24-year-olds seen in the past century. As the future generation of Kiwis, we need to have the right to vote earlier, to influence the decisions that will affect us later on in life. Research shows that if an individual votes in the first election they are eligible to vote in, they are likely to continue to vote, and if they do not, they are more likely to become uninterested and will never vote. Therefore, encouraging people to vote before leaving school is more practical. Reducing the voting age to 17 would allow an additional 62,000 voters to participate in the 2014 general election. Seventeen-year-olds have the equivalent maturity and political awareness to that of 18-year-olds, and lowering the voting age would ensure that more young people have their voices heard.

It is, similar to paying taxes, a civic duty to vote, thereby enabling vote totals to remain at a reasonable quantity. Countless votes have been wasted during recent elections. By introducing compulsory voting for those who are eligible, our country as a democratic society would continue to uphold its notable standard of human rights. The Attorney-General has concluded that the proposed enforcement is, overall, consistent with the rights and freedoms affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act. If our nation was to follow the lead of 24 other democracies that currently adopt this policy,

voting statistics would not be declining at an alarming rate. Essentially, political parties would receive the opportunity to flourish.

Generations of Kiwis fought and died for our country to become a democracy. The least we could do, besides honouring them on Anzac Day, is to exercise that democratic right.

The most probable cause of low voter turnouts in the younger generations is voting accessibility. It is time that we coordinated our methods of voting with how we live our lives. We can communicate, shop, and bank online. Therefore, we should be able to vote this way also. Under the Electoral Act 1993, electronic voting aims to make the process of voting more accessible. In particular, young voters of today would be more inclined to vote, using their phones and computers as authorised tools.

Time constraints on the parliamentary term are another unavoidable issue. Three years is barely enough time for a party to be officially deemed to govern, before it is time to vote again. This time frame is simply not sufficient, considering the proposed changes the Government wishes upon our society. Extending the parliamentary term from 3 years to 4 years would immediately solve this hindrance, additionally reducing election costs by a colossal 25 percent. Political parties, in general, would be allocated more time to formulate a plan for the campaign and make a positive difference.

I strongly believe in the inspirational policies that this mock bill suggests. Thank you.

**COURTNEY BUCKMAN (Rangitata):** I have spent a lot of time talking to the young people in my electorate about what they think of the changes that would be made if this Electoral Law Reform Bill were to pass into law. I have to be honest: I have had what I would call a relatively consistent response. That is, I have consistently been asked why. What is the point? Why would we do that? It is an interesting question, I think. If we were to look for an answer to this question, we could very easily simply quote from the words of the proposal in this bill: that we want to modernise the electoral system to increase civic participation. Maybe in a very general way this does, indeed, answer the question why. However, I would not say that it really justifies the amendments made in this bill, and I cannot see these amendments justifying themselves. So if the answer to the question is that we want to increase civic participation, and that we want more people at the polling booths on election day, then I do not believe that this Electoral Law Reform Bill can satisfy that.

The main issues that I and the young people of my electorate have found with this bill are in the changes to the voting age and the proposal to introduce compulsory voting. I suppose compulsory voting may very well be a nice idea, in the perfect, idealistic world where everyone is interested, well-educated, informed, and engaged when it comes to the politics of running the country—where everyone has an opinion and wants the chance to have their say. Unfortunately this is not the world that we live in. I am not trying to say that the qualities of a person—such as their level of education—dictate their right to vote. Everyone should have a right to vote. What I am trying to say is that some people simply do not want to vote. They are not interested. They do not mind. They do not feel that they know enough. They do not feel that there is a candidate who deserves their vote. Surely it is not that inconceivable that some people simply could not care less about elections and government and all that carry-on—we might as well let a bunch of school kids run the country. Whatever their own personal reasons are, some people just do not want to vote, and I do not have a problem with that. Is the right to vote not a right to a choice—a personal choice based on your own beliefs and reasons? I think no matter what our own personal beliefs and opinions are we need to respect everyone's right to make that choice—a choice that they have to take their own responsibility for, and accept the consequences of.

I think it needs to come back to that big question of why. What would we actually be achieving? Forcing people to vote is not actually helping anyone. People who do not want to vote still are not going to want to vote. They are still not going to be making well-reasoned, well-educated decisions. They may, in fact, be making random decisions simply because they have no other choice. That is not something that I think this House should be encouraging.

On the issue of the voting age, it is once again a question of why. It is known that some of the worst voter turnout is among young people. That is the issue, and lowering the voting age does not solve this issue. So I think that the question this House needs to consider is why.

**PENIATA ENDEMANN (List):** For most of my friends and peers, politics is a foreign idea. It is a thing that is done to us and not with us. In preparing for this speech, I found it challenging to discuss this topic with my peers, because they found it irrelevant, as they do not feel that they have a voice in decision making in our country. We as young people are busy trying to live our lives the best we can in an environment that is hard on so many young people and their families. It is hard out there for young people to find and keep good-quality jobs.

Young people's lack of understanding and voice in the political process was shown most recently when the Government lowered the minimum wage for 16 and 17-year-olds by 20 percent. The minimum wage was lowered from \$13.75 to \$11 per hour for so many of my peers heading into work. Unfortunately, while the Government was putting through that law, so many of my peers had no idea about it or the impacts that it would have on them and their families. If young people understood what was happening to them and had the opportunity to be heard, then we would have had more power in the debate.

The bill before us, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, provides an opportunity to strengthen the voice and involvement of young people in the political process. I support the lowering of the voting age from 18 to 17, with some form of civics education within our schools, so that young people have some idea about politics, voting, and the issues that affect them. We all have that friend who does not vote but who always moans about John Key and thinks it is OK. It is not OK. We must introduce compulsory voting to help these people. This way it will require them to go to the polling booth, have their say, and make it OK for them to moan about the Prime Minister.

I also support electronic voting. It will see a higher number of young people voting in elections, as it will make it easier for New Zealanders to participate in elections, especially if voting were to be made compulsory. Our young people want to be heard, especially on the issues that impact them and their families, such as the debate on youth rates. Our young people are the future of this country, so we need the opportunity to be involved in our communities and in politics. We need the opportunity to truly understand the direction that Governments are taking our country in, so we can determine in our minds what kind of future we want for this nation.

It is time that politics became something that is done with young people and not something that is done to young people. Thank you.

**MICHAEL FRYER (Ōtaki):** Kia ora, Mr Speaker. Let me first thank my humble Ōtaki electorate and the Hon Nathan Guy for giving me the opportunity to represent my community today. This Electoral Law Reform Bill represents change—change that allows the growth and independence of our youth. However, can you seriously look through your eyes and say that your youth are ready to take this step? Well, I believe, from my electorate, that we are not, so I oppose this bill.

Firstly, let us look at the parliamentary 3-year term. Let us face it, it is not much time. A common reason for our young adults neglecting their right to vote is that

Governments come in and go out so fast, and it is too complicated for them. However, luckily for us, the current National Government has had 9 years to create a positive change for our country. Let us hope it lasts another 9 years, eh!

We, as youth, are greatly influenced by the media. The media, however, provides only half the stories. Therefore, the concept of bias already comes within our minds, and, you know, in a youth it quells it immediately. If we are to endorse this bill, then we must ensure education is thoroughly and properly analysed and fully taught to our youth before they can make a decision on what type of Government they want.

I urge you all to look at your own electorates. Do you truly believe that they are really ready to take that step, to choose the Government? Do you really believe that? If you say yes, I take my hat off to you—I seriously do. However, from the Ōtaki electorate, we are not ready, and we are not mature enough yet—yet.

Change is inevitable. Youth are our future. We must ensure that our youth are fully educated about the aspects of the Government and parties, to ensure that they gain a full understanding of each party and its philosophy, so they know in their hearts that they have chosen the right form of government. I thank the House for its time. I thank my lovely electorate, as well as my whānau upstairs. Thank you very much. Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, kia ora koutou katoa.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** The next speaker is Brad.

**Brad Grootelaar:** All right, thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** No, you have got to go for the call, so say “Mr Speaker”.

**Brad Grootelaar:** Mr Speaker.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** I call Brad Grootelaar.

**BRAD GROOTELAAR (List):** I feel as though this piece of legislation, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, addresses the wrong issue. For that reason, I will not be supporting it. The real problem is that people do not want to vote, and we would not be having this discussion here today if everyone were already doing so. Although updating the existing electoral system may bring about higher voter turnout, it is not the only way that this problem can be resolved, and it is certainly not the most effective way. Instead of just telling people that they should vote with these kinds of laws, why do we not instead tell them why they should vote?

The problem with legislation such as this is that it assumes that everyone is already an expert on politics and that they are not voting because they have some kind of conscious objection towards the existing electoral system, when, in reality, many people know only a little about how this country is governed. If people do not understand the importance of their vote, then why would they take it seriously? When I was out and about collecting opinions from young people about the changes outlined in this bill, I was very much surprised at how often I had to explain how the existing electoral system operates. There is no doubt that lack of political knowledge is most prevalent amongst young people, and when we look at the statistics we see that young people also have a much lower voter turnout than the rest of the population. I do not see this as a coincidence.

Legislation such as this is not what we need to get people voting again. The answer is not making voting electronic or compulsory. The only sustainable solution to our voting crisis is to educate and empower the public to help them understand how important their vote really is. Then we will see them voting. Thank you.

**SAMUEL HART (List):** This Electoral Law Reform Bill strives towards exceptional lines. I commend the multiparty parliamentary steering committee for its selection of this topic, because these are very important issues that need to be tackled to

modernise our voting system, to increase the length of a term of Parliament, and, most important, and the issue that I will focus on today, to increase voter participation.

It amazes me, as someone who was ineligible to vote in the last election, how appalling voting turnout was. Voting turnout in 2011 was the lowest in 100 years—27 percent of registered voters did not vote on election day. I mean, what happened? Why did one million eligible voters feel that their vote was not important? Voter participation is extremely important. How can we have a House of Representatives if it represents only three-quarters of our country's voice? Although I agree with the aims of this bill, I believe the means by which this bill proposes to achieve those aims is utterly shameful.

Part of this bill proposes to “encourage increased voter participation”. I hope fellow members of the House will find the wording of this proposal ironic and even humorous, given that the bill wants to make voting compulsory. I do not associate the words “participation” and “compulsory” as having similar meanings. Participation is something done out of free will; to make something compulsory will not make participation meaningful. This will alienate people who do not really want to vote. As a result, those people will not make an informed vote.

The cliché: “If you don't vote then you can't complain” is valid, but we have a quarter of eligible voters who are just plain not engaged. Is the way to get these voters engaged and feeling that their say is important to make voting compulsory? Of course not. We need to tackle this issue from a much more local perspective. Local MPs should be engaging their communities with current and local issues. Of equal importance is that people feel their voice is important. Local MPs need to talk within their communities, to ensure all concerns are heard. Election campaigns need to include more marketing to promote voting. There should be education programmes in place for senior secondary school students, educating them about the importance of their vote. When this is done effectively, people will understand the value of voting.

I am proud to live in a very democratic society. When we vote later today, I urge members of the House to think about whether this bill is in keeping with the democratic nature of this country. Next year I will go to the polling booth for the first time and cast my vote, because I feel that my voice counts. However, I will by no means be forcing my neighbour to vote, because if one is not engaged in the election process, one will not make an informed vote. Thank you.

**CAMERON HAWORTH (List):** Extremely elegant and equally eloquent youth parliamentarians, and godlike gallery members, today is a day for prosperous progress, civic salvation, and righteous reformation. It is a chance to change what is outdated and aged in our strong but faded electoral system. In the extension of the parliamentary term, the elongation of our Government's contribution to our nation, we provide more time for the efficient rendition of Government plans. Bigger is not always better but longer is always more lovable. If you love what your Government can do for you with its current time, then you will fully support giving it the extra year to follow up on election promises and erect positive change for New Zealand.

The introduction of electronic voting is simply common sense at this stage in time. I have no doubt that the population of this room know this better than anyone else, and I will simply leave it at that.

Compulsory voting may seem controversial at first, although it can increase voting participation and it can also decrease the percentage of throwaway votes. Once you give proper credence to voting, once young voters understand its importance, then they will grow more mature and they will cease to throw away their vote because they think it is not important, because when they are forced to recognise that this is up to them now, that this is also their responsibility, then they will do what they can to be the best person

they can be. These are not ill-advised people. These are people who simply do not see the point.

So let us show them the point. We must absolutely ensure that education and information is provided to younger voters. With reference to voting, a word of warning: if you force 17-year-olds to vote without introducing further civics education, you are effectively forcing squirrels to cross-breed with hedgehogs. It is not going to work the way you might hope. The squirrels, representing cast votes, will end up significantly worse off than their prickly counterparts. However, if you first insert deeper civics understanding, you are essentially educating the hedgehogs on the proper ways to approach the squirrel and to deal with their unfamiliar tendencies. If you do this, you will find a cleaner solution and a far happier squirrel, and wider representation as a result of lowered voting age.

**ETHAN HILL (List):** Well, I am not sure that I can quite match that last speech from Cameron Haworth but I will give it a good go. It is without doubt that this Electoral Law Reform Bill was introduced to the House with the best of intentions. Encouraging voter participation and increasing youth engagement are enviable and laudable goals. However, this bill sets about doing so in completely the wrong way. The participation of young New Zealanders in elections should be, and rightfully is, of concern to the House. However, making voting compulsory is much like parking an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff—it does not actually address the real issue. Although compulsory voting may increase the number of youth voting in elections, it does nothing to deal with the underlying issue, which is the lack of youth engagement. Forcing people to vote will lead only to an increase in disillusion and apathy towards politics, which is the complete opposite to the aim of this bill. New Zealand prides itself on its history of giving everyone the right to vote, so surely if someone chooses not to exercise that right, it is not our job to impose restrictions to stop him or her doing that. It is, after all, their choice, their right.

Again, at first glance lowering the voting age to 17 looks like a good idea. Sure, another 62,000 youth may be able to vote, but, again, this does nothing to address the real issue of disengagement. Many 17-year-olds whom I spoke to do not even know what they want to do next year. Their political knowledge extends to the name of the Prime Minister, and sometimes the local MP. Combined with compulsory voting, allowing these youth to vote will not increase engagement at all, beyond them simply filling out the ballot paper.

Along with many of my colleagues today I think the solution to a lack of engagement is proper civic education. Teaching youth about their rights and responsibilities is much more likely to increase their engagement in politics. Without actually teaching them how Parliament works, participation in elections is not going to increase. Combine the lack of education with compulsory voting and my bet is on the Bill and Ben Party making a comeback next year.

Once again in this bill, we see in electronic voting a solution that completely ignores the actual problem. Electronic voting sounds like a good idea, and it may well be, but, again, it fails to address the issue of youth disengagement. With advanced voting being available in the 2 weeks before an election, there really is little excuse for youth not to vote other than them being disinterested. Sure, electronic voting means you do not have to leave the house if, say, it was raining on polling day, but if a bit of bad weather was enough to put you off exercising your right to vote, were you actually interested enough in politics anyway? Besides, if a bit of rain stopped you leaving the house, then you would never get anything done, particularly back home on the West Coast. Thank you.

**SHIVON KIEW (Pakuranga):** Fellow members, you have just turned 17. Under this new bill, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, you would be able to vote. You would be

able to determine the future of the country, but not buy alcohol, not go into a casino, and certainly not watch R18 movies. Why? Why blur the lines even more between childhood and legal adulthood. Extending voting rights may not even promote participation. Keeping in mind that Austria's voting age is 16, the voter turnout in 2008 was only 2 percent more.

Electronic voting itself is dubious at best. How can we be sure of the security surrounding electronic voting? Do the benefits of convenience really outweigh the costs of the machines and the threat of corruption? Yes, it is easier and more convenient, but the costs of the machines and technology involved rise into the millions of dollars—millions of dollars our country is not ready to throw away, millions of dollars we can instead use for civics education. Take Ireland, which wasted £54.6 million in the 7 years that electronic voting was put in place before it too realised the detrimental effects and abandoned the scheme. My community rightly fears that the threat of errors and compromising of votes runs too high. If Dutch Nedap voting machines can be untraceably manipulated in less than 5 minutes, what is stopping the same thing from happening here?

Voting should in no way be made compulsory. Not only is it an infringement on our liberty but it is hypocritical to force people to vote, when we pride ourselves on having the most freedom in the world. It is obvious that to get increased election participation we must instead change the school curriculum to include unbiased civics studies. How can people make an informed decision if they have no information to begin with?

With this in mind, it is undeniably clear that we should all vote against this bill, and instead amend the ways in which we are trying to overcome our problems. Low voter turnout? Why not educate rather than force. Thinking of piloting electronic voting? Local elections where the voter numbers are smaller are certainly a less risky and less difficult endeavour to begin with, rather than jumping into the deep end with nationwide electronic voting. Thank you.

**ANDRE KNOPS (List):** In coming to my choice on which way to vote today, I am reminded of a quote from Hilary Clinton: “Voting is the most precious right of every citizen, and we have a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of our voting process.” I believe that relates to one of the proposals in the bill that we are debating today, the Electoral Law Reform Bill. A concern that many people share about electronic voting is how the Electoral Commission can ensure the integrity of the process, prevent hacking, and prevent the rigging of elections. This is a paramount concern of mine and why I support the current use of paper ballots. However, in my time as a youth member of Parliament, I have met with a wide array of individuals from the Christchurch community, and among those people were the intellectually disabled work skills students at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology. For them, going to a voting booth and participating in democracy can be very difficult, but that still does not stop them. The students I met believe firmly that everyone in this country should be able to vote and, as such, should vote.

When you look at events occurring overseas, where people are fighting oppression, corruption, gerrymandering, and tyranny to have a say in how their nation is run, it is a sad reflection on Western society to see voter turnout rates decreasing and apathy on the rise. Electronic voting and compulsory voting are the solutions that the community that I represent believes are the answer. Another way to combat apathy is lowering the voting age, thereby allowing more of our nation's citizens to vote. A gentleman whom I have come to know closely, who is not that fond of festive events, noted that when you wake up on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, you feel no different physically or mentally than the day before; yet this magic day somehow suddenly allows you to decide in which direction our nation is heading through voting. In the high schools across our nation, there are

tens of thousands of students who have important opinions and want to make a difference but cannot, because until they reach that magic day they are classed as immature. Overseas, other nations have embraced the idea that the youth of the nation are the future and are immersing them in civics education at an early age and allowing them to vote, in some cases, at the age of 16.

The arguments against amending the voting age all centre around maturity. An argument I heard commonly, particularly from the older members of the community I surveyed, is that the students would waste their vote and that we would see the rise of joke parties. But the foreign nations that lowered their voting age did not see that. Also, what constitutes a joke party? Every person is entitled to a vote of equal value and it is their choice as to who they believe would best represent them.

So, to conclude, I am voting in favour of the Electoral Law Reform Bill, as I believe it would lift voter turnout and engagement in the democratic process by all members of the community. In the wise words of Vivienne Westwood: "I think it's important to vote." Thank you.

**DANIELLE LUSK (List):** Why change democracy? Research shows that of the 24 countries that already have compulsory voting, only around 10 actually enforce it. Will New Zealand just fall into this category if we make voting compulsory? It is undemocratic. Eighty percent of people already vote. That is quite a good turnout. Would it not cost more to police that 20 percent than what it is worth in votes? Should there be more laws and more money wasted to force people to do something they do not want to do because someone promises that it will be good for them? No thanks.

I personally would like it if everyone voted. Would that not show a proper democracy? Would it not show an accurate representation of what everyone wants? Possibly, it would, but I know that there is no point in forcing people to do something they do not want to do. Some people in New Zealand are just too ignorant and uninformed to make a proper decision, anyway. We would have unwilling people deliberately spoiling their votes because they have no understanding of our political system. Would this not lead to incorrect and untruthful votes? People would vote just to avoid a fine.

In Australia voting has become a chore of conformity done under the threat of fines rather than the free expression of the political will. It would not be logical for police to track down and charge over half a million people—like, seriously? We do not need bureaucracy telling us what we must do. Non-voters are generally younger. Nowadays so many people are turning 18 and choosing not to vote because they do not have the knowledge. Why not have political education for year 13s in schools? No, because our Government has no faith in the youth of this country.

My generation search what we are looking for on Google, follow our idols on Twitter, picture our food on Instagram, notify our dreams on Facebook, and re-blog our future on Tumblr. If the youth of my generation are too busy getting on and dealing with our own lives, then how are we expected to take out a textbook and read about our Government? It just seems boring, does it not? How are we expected to make a proper, correct, and informed decision about not only our future but the futures of those who are not yet able to have a say.

So instead of changing democracy, let people vote if they want to. But if they are not keen to party, do not force them, and definitely do not make them pay fines for it. Thank you.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** I understand the next call is Bridget White, who is going to speak on behalf of Raven Maeder. Is that correct?

**Raven Maeder:** I think I will try.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Oh, you have got your voice back.

**Raven Maeder:** A little bit.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** All right, you have a try.

**RAVEN MAEDER (List):** I think it is legitimate to expect some level of maturity when casting a vote, but maturity comes only with experience, and maturity varies a lot between individuals. I would argue that although 17-year-olds might not cast a totally mature vote, the earlier we engage young people in decision making, the earlier they will start developing mature voting habits.

Most young people at the age of 17 work part-time jobs and pay tax. They fulfil this civic duty and contribute toward society. They can also enlist in the army or the navy without parental consent, and they can drive a car. All these things require good judgment. Young people should be supported in becoming active citizens.

There is no cut-off age for voting within older generations, which means that decisions are usually made in favour of older generations. Although older people might have more life experience and maturity, they are sometimes out of touch with what it means to grow up in a world that is fundamentally different from the one they grew up in. Young people are generally under-represented, and politicians should be held more accountable for long-term decisions that affect young people more than they affect old people. An example of this is effective action on climate change, which has been stalled by the older generations for far too long.

Introducing internet voting also seems an obvious decision and a step that reflects the development of modern society. Although I acknowledge the concern that internet voting might lead to hastily cast votes, I would argue that because policy research can be done online, this will enable people to make more informed voting decisions in a shorter time.

I also support making voting compulsory, which is the subject of heated debate. An increased voter turnout will make sure that elections are a more accurate reflection of the will of the entire population. It is my humble opinion that in a democracy, rights come with responsibilities. Voting could be seen as a civic responsibility comparable to taxation, education, and jury duty. These are all responsibilities that we value in order to make our democracy work as well as possible. If voting is enforced, voters are not compelled to vote for any particular party. They are required just to take part in the democratic process itself.

I also speak today in favour of extending the parliamentary term from 3 years to 4 years. Three-year governance is hardly long enough to implement any policies, and we will never make inroads on big issues like climate change with 3-year terms. The economic benefits are also a strong case, so please vote yes.

**LEWIS MARCHANT (Taranaki - King Country):** Our electoral system needs to catch up with modern-day New Zealand and increase civic participation in our elections. The Electoral Law Reform Bill 2013 will achieve this. I will cover most of the components of this bill, and I encourage you to join me in voting for this bill in the upcoming mock legislative vote.

Firstly, the voting age should be decreased to 17. Many of the youth in my area, Taranaki - King Country, and your areas too, are responsible enough to make informed decisions on the direction of our fine country of New Zealand. For example, many of them already drive cars, own firearms, have left school, and, most important, are likely to be paying tax to our State. This same State will decide where the money is spent, whether on roads, health care, or education. This bill would not only increase voting numbers by approximately 62,000 but also create a fair representation of New Zealand society in this debating chamber of Parliament—one of the main objectives of the parliamentary system.

A secure and accessible means of electronic voting will help a massive new group of voters get to the polls via phone or online, especially those who are geographically isolated. Turnouts need improving—like the last election with a measly 74.21 percent turnout, which is the lowest since the 1887 election, when one Harry Atkinson of Egmont became Prime Minister. The electronic voting component of this bill will move us out of these 19<sup>th</sup> century systems. This bill will be a great stepping stone to a public holiday for polling on the special day in November.

The electoral reform will also introduce compulsory voting, which will achieve turnouts of 90 percent—something they have seen in Australia every election since the compulsory voting introduction in 1924. The opportunity to abstain will still be present, with an easy option to blank vote, but choosing not to make any decision will be discouraged by the succession of a warning letter and then suitable fines. So join me in voting for this Electoral Law Reform Bill today, and move into the current day. Thank you.

**JESSE MEDCALF (East Coast Bays):** Youth parliamentarians, it is absolutely outrageous that in a liberal democracy built on the foundation of choice and liberty, people could be forced to the polls against their will. The fact is that using an undemocratic means to engineer an undemocratic end is an abhorrent violation of my political choice.

Choice is the central tenet of democracy. It is the facet of our society that separates us from Orwellian dictatorship. Supporters of compulsory voting contend that it is a civic duty to vote and that not voting is not a democratic choice. But, ladies and gentlemen, abstaining from the political procedure entirely—not voting—is a far more valid political expression than casting a forced vote for a party that does not represent my views. By being unable to remove myself from the voting process, I am denied the fundamental right to express my dissatisfaction and disassociation with, and my patent disdain of, the available parties.

Let us be clear. I am all for measures to reduce this voter apathy and draw more people to the polls for a fairer and more representative election, but the notion that if people are forced to vote they will go out and actively learn more about the system is simply a fallacy, ladies and gentlemen. If my mum forces me to clean my room, that is not going to make me want to go out and clean the kitchen too. This apathy becomes a problem when it translates to misinformed, resentful, and dangerously irresponsible voting.

An utterly farcical ruling party is not the only problem with our neighbours over the Ditch. Gallup polls at the Australian 1998 federal election showed that one in five people voted randomly. In New Zealand, that is one in five votes going to the Pirate Party of New Zealand. In Australia, this sort of aggravated protest vote led to an ultra-nationalist right-wing party getting a seat in Government. Not that they were more incompetent than the usual MPs anyway, but do we really want the same misrepresentation happening here? I think not.

I went to my communities, ladies and gentlemen, and I spoke with some disaffected youth. When I asked them whom they would vote for if they were to be forcefully punished if they did not do so, the response I got was unsurprising. I was told: “I don’t care. Whoever.”, “I dunno. The first one.”, and “The one with the coolest name.” This is the reality of compulsory voting, ladies and gentlemen, and I know I have the full backing of the East Coast Bays electorate when I say that this bill cannot pass.

**KAYA MIRIAU (List):** Tēnā koe, Mr Assistant Speaker. Tēnā koutou katoa. I wish to begin by laying out for the House my support regarding the Constitution Act 1986 amendment of extending the term of Parliament from 3 years to 4 years, as well as two of the amendments to the Electoral Act 1993 of reducing the voting age from 18 years

to 17 years and introducing electronic voting to the voting methods. The proposition to enforce compulsory voting has not convinced me. Therefore, I disagree with that amendment.

A 4-year Parliament term would certainly have its benefits, such as the Government having more time to introduce and make slight adjustments to policies. It could also give the public time to understand Government policies and help them get to know the candidates running for Parliament. I wish to state my acknowledgment of the few restrictions made towards a 17-year-old as opposed to an 18-year-old. However, if a 17-year-old is required to pay the same amount of tax as someone who is an eligible voter, should that not be reasonable enough for them to have input into where that tax money is spent? I believe there is a higher maturity level in those aged 17 compared with those aged 16. I am aware of the possibilities leading to discrimination between 17 and 16-year-olds, but, with all respect, most 16-year-olds I know have very little knowledge on the topic of politics.

In reference to the introduction of electronic voting, I can see this being highly beneficial if the system is not abused. I do believe that keeping the paper-based voting system will still be useful and could possibly be more reliable than an electronic machine, although technology has had such an incredible influence on the younger generations that electronic voting may encourage them to partake in this fundamental process. An increase of voting participants who are more likely to be younger voters would be achieved, and that is the sort of outcome we want.

Without a doubt, I am convinced that the percentage of voters will increase if voting was made compulsory, but personally I would prefer the encouragement of voting as opposed to enforcing the process. I guess we could say that 17-year-olds are just as capable as 18-year-olds at making their own decisions when given the appropriate guidance. If reducing the voting age will help acknowledge their skills and allow them to make their own informed decisions, is enforcing compulsory voting not defeating that purpose?

In conclusion, reducing the qualifying voting age, extending the term of Parliament, and introducing electronic voting methods will be most beneficial for New Zealand and our people. I would still consider the encouragement of voting instead of enforcing the matter. It has been a great honour to speak today. Thank you.

**BOKYONG MUN (Dunedin North):** Mr Speaker and honourable youth MPs, we are here today to make a difference in our community, in our country, and in our world. We are here to come together and represent the people of New Zealand in the hope that someone would listen and that someone would show them that their voice can actually make a difference. And maybe at the end of all this kerfuffle that goes on, New Zealand will come out with the best Government it could possibly have. This is democracy and we are very lucky to be in a nation that upholds these values.

This electoral reform will allow more New Zealanders to be engaged in the civics of New Zealand. It increases the responsibility that the public will have in the democracy of our country, and it allows more of us, the future generation of New Zealand, to be considered important. Arguably the easiest and the most important way any member of the public can contribute to our Government is through voting. Voting gives them the power to directly influence how our Government looks, to directly have a say in the policies that will rule our country, and to directly express their opinions. It is our job as the representatives of New Zealand to provide the most opportunities for the people to vote.

Introducing electronic voting and lowering the age will empower a younger, bigger, and more innovative group of people. We can argue all we want about how 17-year-olds are not mature enough, but this debate is not about how mature or how good a political

opinion is that someone can form, but about empowering more people to vote. We need to be asking whether we are providing enough opportunities for the youth of our country and for the disadvantaged to be involved in the civics of New Zealand. If we want to increase civic participation, we need to ensure that the citizens of New Zealand are actually taking this responsibility. Making voting compulsory not only increases civic participation but also makes it more important. It makes it something that actually matters to the public and is a basic part of being a New Zealand citizen.

We need to make things like our Government, democracy, and voting more important in society. We need to make it so that it has a better and more effective influence, and currently 3 years is not long enough. Electing a Government is not an easy thing. We should be doing everything we can to make it a process that is actually respected, is understood, and empowers our citizens.

It is plain to see that as the representatives of New Zealand we want to make the decision that will most benefit our New Zealanders. I strongly, strongly hope that my fellow youth MPs here understand that the reason why this bill, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, has come under reform is obviously to increase civic participation and strengthen the Government's longer-term outlook. We can all agree that these two things are things we want to strive for, and these things will be achieved through this reform. Thank you.

**MADELEINE NASH (List):** Is voting a right or is it a responsibility? I have spoken to young people from my community. From discussion we believe that the most contentious of the changes to the Electoral Law Reform Bill was that New Zealanders should be compelled to vote through the proposed system of compulsory voting. And it boiled down to three questions for us. Firstly, would more votes be cast? Put simply, the answer is yes. We think that in passing a law we tell the general public that voting is of vital importance. Furthermore, we make it socially unacceptable for you not to vote. We think it should be socially unacceptable. Voting is a civic duty. Regardless of the financial penalty, people like to consider themselves good law-abiding citizens, especially when the action taken will have benefit to them and is not too difficult to undertake. Young people particularly will be drawn in by this, and they will set up a lifetime of voting. It seems clear that with an impetus to vote, matched with increased accessibility through electronic voting, more people would cast votes.

So to the second question: would these votes be informed? In the words of a 14-year-old I spoke to: "If you know you're going to have to do something, you might as well find out some extra stuff about it first." If voting is something we know we are going to have to do, for the most part we are going to do what we think will have the greatest benefit to ourselves and to the future of our country. We will make an effort to get ourselves informed.

Thirdly, what are the benefits such that we can impose this? We think a Government should be elected for the people, by the people. We stand strongly by this in New Zealand, as we seek to have the best democracy in the world—the democracy that best represents what the people want. A Government should have to work for everyone. Parties will have to put a greater emphasis on appealing to those who currently do not vote, of which a large percentage are from the young people demographic. They will have to ensure that their policies reach us, because they cannot just rely on the statistics that show we do not turn up to the booths anyway. They have to engage us or risk losing votes to their political opponents. If you do not like voting and you do not like any of the parties, you can still spoil your ballot, but at least you will not have just been someone who has not been listened to at all and can be brushed aside as being too lazy to turn up. We have a voice, we have a vote, but very few of us access them. It is our responsibility to each other and to our nation to vote and to use the power of the

political process that has been entrusted to us. It is not just a right; it is something that we owe to our fellow citizens.

The real question today is how important we think our Parliament is. If we do consider it to be of the utmost importance in the representation of New Zealanders, we need to ensure that all voices are heard, and we need this electoral reform.

**MARK ROBILLIARD (Rotorua):** The Electoral Law Reform Bill 2013 provides us with a unique opportunity to encourage New Zealanders to engage in the politics of this country. Lowering the voting age will empower youth and give us a sense of relevance and importance. Compulsory voting will send a clear message that the Government wants New Zealanders to participate. The addition of electronic voting brings the process into this age and signals to youth, in particular, a desire to be relevant and accessible.

In a University of Adelaide paper, *Compulsory Voting Laws and Turnout: Efficacy and Appropriateness*, compulsory voting is cited as “the only institutional mechanism that is able, on its own, to raise turnout into the 90% range.” Australia and Belgium, for example, enjoy a turnout of over 90 percent, with strong compulsory systems. But the question is whether this would translate to success in New Zealand.

Youth see little ideological differences between the major parties. This is not to say that young people have no interest in, or knowledge of, politics, but rather that we have absorbed the widely held belief that our vote will not change anything.

Youth do, however, have a clear understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. Youth in the Rotorua electorate can see that voting is a civic duty, and generally support this bill. They want the opportunity to vote at 17, and believe that starting the habit while many are still at school and reaching the voting age collectively will help to generate enthusiasm, discussion, and the beginning of a lifelong voting habit. Schools are likely to become an educational platform for voting.

Youth in my electorate are supportive of compulsory voting because it is the very act of casting a vote that engages the voter. By making voting compulsory, New Zealanders will be more likely to vote, and this will give them a vested interest in election outcomes.

Electronic voting will be a significantly persuasive tool, especially for young people and first-time voters. It will also mean that even our most disadvantaged youth are likely to have access to a simple voting process.

Our current voting strategy is to give voters the option to show up. This can easily be interpreted to mean that it does not really matter if you vote or not. This bill sends a message that your vote is needed as soon as you have the maturity to make a decision, and that the Government wishes to be elected on the strength of the attitudes and beliefs of the entire adult population. Strengthening our resolve to bring voters to the polls can only result in a more politically engaged population and, therefore, a Government that is representative of all New Zealanders. Thank you.

**CHRIS RYAN (Botany):** It is an atrocity that only 73.8 percent of enrolled voters voted in the 2011 general election. This bill, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, is finally something that attempts to do something about that. It is not acceptable to have 26 percent of the population simply not engaging with the political system. Why? Because the Government often uses an election as a mandate to push through policy that is controversial or unpopular. Yet that mandate is hardly clear when 26 percent of the population has not had any say on determining the actual mandate that that Government has. That is why we must support this bill—to make voting easier, more accessible, and more relevant to the people of New Zealand.

Allowing people to vote online is so important in making voting accessible and easy. It is important to incentivise people who are just not that interested in politics into

voting. When it is as easy as logging on to a website and choosing a party or a blank vote option, voting suddenly becomes so much easier and so much more convenient. We have already seen that people want to be able to participate in Government activities online, when 35 percent of New Zealanders completed the 2013 census online.

Lowering the voting age is perhaps the most significant revision proposed in this reform. It is really important because it increases voter participation and it increases the buy in of young people into politics. Youth are a group that is massively affected by the policies of the Government. They are affected not only now but also in the long-term implications of policy. It means that young people are one of the biggest stakeholders, and yet, oxymoronically, have very little say in the decisions that the Government makes. One of the key reasons why young people are not interested in politics in the first place is that they do not actually perceive a need to be, and they do not perceive any parties as actually aligning with their views. This proposal changes this. This proposal means that political parties will have to engage with young people and create policies that specifically appeal to young people in order to get their vote.

These policies are not only good for young people but also good for New Zealand as a whole. In the long term, this proposal will increase participation in voting, even if voting was not made compulsory, because from a young age people would be in the habit of voting. Having voting be compulsory is important in order to emphasise that the House of Representatives needs to be truly representative. The Government is too important to have 26 percent of people simply not engaged. This bill is important for our country's political system. It increases public involvement, specifically the involvement of young people, by making voting not only a right but a responsibility.

**SIMARJIT SINGH (Mana):** Sat sri akaal, Mr Assistant Speaker. We should keep the voting age at 18 because 63 percent of people at the age of 18 voted in the last election, while 70 percent of them were registered to be eligible voters. This means that 37 percent of people aged 18 did not vote. This is more than one-third of that certain age group. Being a college student, I can say that there are hardly any subjects in colleges that teach about the New Zealand Government or parties. If one-third of voters at the age of 18 did not vote, then we can expect this figure to be much higher if the age was reduced to 17. How can we expect a 17-year-old to know which party they should vote for if these subjects are not taught? On top of that, who knows whether that 17-year-old is even interested in voting?

By the age of 18, when people like us go out into the real world, we get to know what diplomatic changes we need in our societies. Therefore, we research different parties, get to know which party provides those benefits, and vote in the next elections. It has been proven by statistics that the voting percentage of voters voting at the age of 20 to 21 increases by 5 to 10 percent. So, clearly, those people who do vote at the age of 18 know what they are doing and know how it will benefit them and others. People at 17 could vote for a certain party just because their friends did so or their family told them to do so. But when you are 18 you are much more independent and are less influenced by others, and therefore you tend to make better decisions that will influence and affect your life for the next 3 years. Unless we spread awareness or get better statistics, we should keep the voting age at 18 and not reduce it to 17.

Today I speak for the best of New Zealand and its people and not just my community. Thank you. God bless everyone.

**SAMUEL STEAD (List):** When I look at this Electoral Law Reform Bill today, what is the first thing I see? I see a clause inside this bill that proposes we force New Zealanders to the polling booth to vote for candidates that they themselves do not support, under threat of a hefty fine. This is not only impractical, as we have to come up with some sort of voting police, or something along these lines, to chase up those who

have not voted, but also immoral and in disregard of the rights of citizens of New Zealand to protest an election and of their freedom of choice. If we begin to move away from the people's right to boycott an election, we move away from the democratic principles that New Zealand was set up on and move towards a more autocratic State that takes away its citizens' rights to peacefully protest against a Government or governmental candidates. If we look at countries that do have compulsory voting, we see States such as Egypt, Thailand, and Lebanon, which are not necessarily States that are known for respecting their citizens' rights to protest. Do we want to move New Zealand towards these kinds of States, or keep New Zealand as a properly democratic country where its citizens elect a Government that they have confidence in?

I must oppose the lowering of the voting age from 18 to 17. A 17-year-old is generally living at home and still attending secondary school. This means that they have immense pressures put upon them by their parents and family, which could potentially sway their vote as they wish to appease their parents. At 18, people are generally away from home, away from school, and can make decisions independently. They are not feeling the constant pressure. Also in New Zealand we have other major civil service requirements kick in at 18—for example, jury duty or the right to serve actively in the military. If we cannot trust a 17-year-old with jury duty, can we support them having a vote? We must draw the line somewhere.

I would like to come to the close of my address by stating my support for electronic voting and the increasing of the term of Government office. I feel that by allowing people to vote electronically, we will be able to reach out to those who might not have voted previously, due to the sheer hassle of getting to a polling booth. We want the largest turnouts as possible to an election, so that the Government has a true representation of the people, and electronic voting is a way of allowing this to happen.

I also support increasing the Government term to 4 years. I feel that the current 3 years is not enough time for Ministers and members to get a feel for the current issues and to get policy together to address them. This 4 years will provide enough time for the Government to sort out current issues and get things done without having to worry about the constant campaigning, not to mention the massive cost that it would put off for an extra year.

Although I support some aspects of this bill, due to the blatant abuse of the people's right to protest an election, I must oppose it. If, for example, an "I vote for no one" option was added to the voting ticket, I would potentially support this, but because people do not have the right currently in this bill to not vote, I must oppose it. And after talking to many members of my community, I feel that I have the backing of the Epsom electoral area to oppose this bill, and I urge all other members of Parliament to vote against the proposed bill as a way of upholding the New Zealand public's right to protest. Thank you.

**JACK STRINGER (Christchurch Central):** I rise this afternoon to convey my partial support for this legislation, the Electoral Law Reform Bill, that is before the House. As stated in the bill's explanatory note, the amendments to the Electoral Act 1993 and the Constitution Act 1986 will be treated as singular bills, following the third reading. Therefore, I will speak on the respective reform contained in each bill, as is appropriate.

I will begin by expressing my profound support for Part 1 of the amendment to the Constitution Act 1986, which will establish a 4-year term of Parliament. The basis for my argument today is really quite simple. A 3-year term of Parliament is not long enough for the Government to effectively conduct the affairs of New Zealanders.

We all saw a graphic illustration of this exact problem when National came into power in 2008. The Government came into office and was faced with 6 years of damage

to the economy at the hands of the Labour Government, and sought to immediately introduce a fiscal spending strategy in order to bring the Government books back under control. The first 2 years of the fifth National Government was spent passing extensive legislative reform in order to build a base for a strong and prosperous economy. Following the 2011 election, and with the eruption of New Zealand's worst natural disaster, and the Pike River incident, the Government's proposed strategy was interrupted as it sought to accommodate the immediate sentiment of New Zealanders.

It is a fairly accepted notion that Governments spend their first year settling in, their second year reforming, and their third year campaigning for the next election. By extending the parliamentary term, we will see a more cohesive and coherent Government that is able to effectively conduct the affairs of New Zealanders.

Conversely, however, I also rise to oppose the proposed Part 2 amendments to the Electoral Act 1993 that introduce provisions for electronic voting, enfranchise New Zealanders who are 17, and stipulate compulsory voting for all eligible electors. Although electronic voting as a concept is attractive—it being relatively cheap, convenient, and accurate—the security processes and systems that we currently have at our disposal, I believe, are insufficient to provide the people of New Zealand with indefinite assurance that systemic failures, such as privacy breaches and security intrusions, will not occur. If this bill goes ahead, I believe we will have an electoral system that will resemble that of the haphazard voting system used on *The X Factor*.

The bill also enfranchises 17-year-olds, in the pursuit of addressing the poor voting turnout on election day. Lowering the voting age by 1 year will not address this cultural problem. We need to introduce schemes that express the profound importance of voting and encourage New Zealanders to regularly exercise their democratic right.

Finally, I would like to finish by addressing the final and most absurd clause, clause 124B—that voting should become a duty rather than a reserved right. Here in New Zealand we live in a strong and healthy democracy. By introducing compulsory voting for all, we effectively erode this democracy.

**BROOKE WATERSON (Helensville):** Using the evidence collected from my online survey distributed throughout the Helensville electorate, I would like to summarise my findings on the topic of electoral reform, based on the opinions of the youth members who took part. The purpose of the mock Electoral Law Reform Bill is to encourage increased participation in voting, particularly for youth. Four aspects of the election process are being considered. For the participants of my survey, the majority ruled for electronic voting and extending the parliamentary term, and the majority ruled against changing the voting age and introducing compulsory voting. However, I will only be discussing extending the term and changing the voting age, as these garnered the most interest.

The main concern was definitely changing the voting age. Although reducing the voting age to 17 has the potential to encourage up to 62,000 new youth to participate in voting, these figures, although they sound impressive, do not fairly indicate increased involvement. In reality, this new rule would cater for only a small percentage of politically involved youth. Other than this small minority, most youth at the age of 17 live at home and are not affected by parliamentary decisions. Some people have mentioned that youth have jobs, so they must be responsible enough to vote, but, as one of my colleagues mentioned, they are only 14,000 out of 62,000.

All of my survey participants indicated that although 17-year-olds are mostly not interested in voting, not mentally prepared, or not informed enough, if this change is for the purpose of including youth participation, why not change the voting age to 16, like in Brazil? That is a wider bracket of youth. So where is the line drawn for mental maturity?

In my experience, people of a younger age lack the necessary capacity to independently decide how to cast a vote. This is not a stab at their intelligence, but consider how the focus might shift during elections to coerce extra votes from the 62,000 potentially naive new participants, who are probably more likely to vote for whomever their parents support anyway. If we did lower the age, compulsory civics education, which the Greens' Sue Bradford suggested in 2007, might have to be an option considered. There is, of course, nothing stopping politically involved 17-year-olds, such as some of us here today, from getting our voices heard through available means such as this.

I move to the second topic. Extending the parliamentary term was 50/50 for and against in my results. However, as one submission was crude and concerned only the removal of our current MP, I ruled that it was biased as it did not answer the question correctly and it was without a future perspective, thus moving the results in favour of extending the term. Three years is not considered substantial. As a quote I found states, Governments from other States traditionally spend the first year in office settling in, the second year tackling a stack of legislation, and the third year preparing for the coming election. Four years will increase productivity, it will give more time for long-term plans to reach their full potential, and it will provide a more stable and effective Government.

In conclusion, based on the opinions of the youth members of the electorate I am representing and myself, I propose that we vote against the Electoral Law Reform Bill. As it is in its third reading and the clauses cannot be changed, despite the potential positives of two of the proposals—electronic voting and extending the term—it is generally agreed that changing the voting age and introducing compulsory voting are far too drastic to currently introduce the bill. Thank you.

**OLIVER WILDING (Hamilton East):** The Electoral Law Reform Bill reminds me of an old saying, “If it ain't broke, don't fix it”. Through my research, I have concluded that neither youth nor adults want or need changes to be made to the electoral system in New Zealand.

I did a random questionnaire for students in years 12 and 13 in my electorate as to whether to lower the voting age to 17, and was surprised with the resounding answer of no. I asked these people why they believed that, and was surprised with what they said. Many of the people I asked would have been affected by the changes made and would have become eligible to vote in the 2014 general election. However, the vast majority believed that a 17-year-old is not yet ready to vote.

I queried this, and here is the answer I received. In their 18<sup>th</sup> year most teenagers are still sheltered within in the environs of their homes and by their parents. As they progress and think thoughts of going to university, moving out of home, and so on, they are faced with much tougher decisions to make and they come out of the shelter of their parents' wings and ideals. At the age of 18 a person has the maturity to make these decisions for themselves and to take their own initiative. Additionally, opening voting to 17-year-olds would start a whole new raft of changes and political competition. While you are at it, you may as well even lower the drinking age—I am sure that would go down well.

I now move on to my second point: electronic and compulsory voting. Although electronic voting has come a long way since the debacle of the 2000 US presidential election, it would introduce a whole raft of new problems. How would a system be adequately tested to handle over 2.5 million votes in 1 day, before the actual event? The fact of the matter is that the manual voting system we have in New Zealand still works, and we still manage to have that result on election night.

Compulsory voting is another point of contention within the Electoral Law Reform Bill. New Zealand is already far ahead of other countries using the Westminster system, without using compulsory eligible voting. I give the examples of the United Kingdom and Canada. Voter turnout in the New Zealand 2011 general election was 74.21 percent—miles ahead of the 65.77 percent in the UK and the 61.41 percent in Canada. Although, yes, we do lag behind other countries that have compulsory voting, those in New Zealand who do not vote are doing so because they choose not to. It would be impossible and an absolute waste of taxpayer money to enforce the idea of having every eligible voter turn out on election day.

And now to my final point: increasing the term of Parliament to 4 years. The 3-year electoral term currently in place makes sure that a Government stays on its feet. A Government cannot wallow around in its own power with a 3-year electoral term, as any sensible Government is trying to keep on hand with voters. A 3-year term keeps the system democratic and ensures fairness and equality, so keep it democratic and vote no.

**ELLA PALSENBARG (Papakura):** Bernard Baruch, political adviser to American Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt, famously extolled that “The greatest blessing of our democracy is freedom.” This concept is one that the youth of Papakura are overwhelmingly passionate about, understanding that the right to vote is a privilege, a responsibility—an understanding, they suggest, that not all 17-year-olds possess.

Throughout my tenure, youth have approached me exceedingly concerned about the potential ramifications of this proposed amendment to the Electoral Act 1993, which would lower the voting age to 17. Notably, these concerns did not arise from a lack of maturity in local youth but rather from a political apathy resultant from the lack of education in schools about the workings and purpose of the New Zealand political system. The truth of the matter is that the majority of New Zealand youth are uninterested in politics, as they know very little about how it works, who is involved, and what it entails.

Some of you may argue that if countries like Austria, Cuba, and the Isle of Man can have voting ages of 16 and 17, why can we not? The answer is civics education, which is compulsory in the majority of those said countries. In Austria, for example, civics is a compulsory high school course designed to enable informed, responsible participation in the democratic process, and has been proven to increase youth voter turnout. Therefore, I, as a representative of the youth of Papakura, am against this proposed amendment to the Electoral Act 1993. I believe that we must strive to better educate youth on the political workings of our nation, and encourage greater considered participation, before we even begin to consider allowing those below the legal age of adulthood to vote.

I am also equally against the proposed amendment to make voting compulsory in New Zealand. We view this proposition as a complete antithesis to democracy as a concept, which champions freedom of choice and expression above all else. A minority of those I spoke to cited fair representation of social opinion as the primary reason for making voting compulsory. They suggested that it would reduce disgruntlement and dissatisfaction with Government policy, as all would be able to have their choices heard. However, the reality remains that the fundamental burden of democracy is the inability to please everyone. In fact, in my opinion, this is the very beauty of democracy. The opportunity to argue, to express oneself, and not be persecuted should be viewed as a blessing and not a burden. Therefore, the youth of Papakura and I are, once again, against this proposed amendment to the Electoral Act 1993 and the Electoral Law Reform Bill as a whole, which violates, in our view, the very foundations of our democracy.

**HANNAH YANG (Mt Roskill):** Before I begin I just want to commend the good intentions of this Electoral Law Reform Bill to encourage young people to get into the community's political affairs and to give them a greater say in policies that affect them. However, these are only good intentions and it is for these reasons that the youth of Mount Roskill and I must oppose this bill, because this bill does nothing to bring about change in the right ways.

Lowering the voting age from 18 to 17 simply is not the answer to gaining more politically active youth in New Zealand. There is not a single subject offered under the New Zealand Qualifications Authority that educates 17-year-olds about the country's political affairs. It has been put forth today in the House as an argument that young people today are somehow better educated, and although that may be so, the question is better educated in what? Calculus maybe? Electronics? Chemistry? But the question I want to ask is how will knowing how to perform a titration help young people decide who should run the country? A member of the Youth Parliament today has also pointed out that this very sitting of Youth Parliament shows how politically informed young people can be. Although that is true, it is, however, a delusion to assume that all 17-year-olds in New Zealand hold the same enthusiasm for, and interest in, politics as we do. It is not a question of maturity; it is about education. That is the most important step.

As for compulsory voting, if youth members would just imagine for a moment what they would do if they did not wish to vote—whether because they did not prefer a political party or because they simply did not understand politics well enough—and yet they had to cast a vote, what would they do? Imagine how ridiculously easy it would be to simply vote for the candidate that they liked the look of. Maybe it would be the candidate of whom they thought: “Oh, I like this guy's hairdo. I'm going to vote for this person and just be done with it.”, just so that they could avoid paying a fine. What would that do to the integrity of our democratic system? To truly produce genuine voting turnouts, voters have to be given a good reason to vote, and not vote simply because the law says they have to.

Lastly, I come to electronic voting. Today one member likened the convenience of electronic voting to shows such as *The X Factor* or *American Idol*, or whatever the show was. This comparison, unfortunately, shows only what state it would reduce the voting process to in our democratic system. It is not a popularity contest; it is a serious matter, and it should get the integrity that it deserves.

It is for all of these reasons that the youth of Mount Roskill and I firmly oppose this bill. Thank you.

A personal vote was called for on the question, *That the Electoral Law Reform Bill be now read a third time.*

#### Ayes 35

Alizadah	Haworth	Maeder	Robilliard
Anselmi	Huang M	Marchant	Ryan
Bishop	Johal	McLean-Dewes	Scahill
Bowman	Johnstone	Moffett	Smith
Brown E	Kaur	Mun	Tuuau
Buckley	Kim	Musgrave	Waller
Carlier	Kohu-Morris	Nash	White
Cowie	Lenihan-Ikin	Nazari	<i>Teller:</i>
Gray	Lomax-Sawyers	Palairret	Knops

**Noes 80**

Abraham	Fuimaono	Luitalo	Skinner
Adam	Gardner C	Lusk	Smart
Alison	Gardner K	MacClure	Stead
Anae-Tunai	Gerard	Mason	Sterne
Ashby-Cartwright	Grootelaar	McCarthy	Stringer
Barnett	Gulasekharam	McKenzie	Stuart
Benson	Hart	McNabb	Taliau'li
Blackwood	Hartley	Medcalf	Thompson
Blair	Hill	Moon	Too
Bleasdale	Holyoake	Napa'a	Walker
Booth	Howe	Palsenbarg	Waterson
Brown J	Ivory	Peeni	Wilding
Buckman	Jackson	Rees	Williams A
Cadigan	Jones	Reynolds	Williams M
Coates-Reid	Kiew	Rolls	Yang
Curtis	Kingi	Rutherford	Zorn
Davis	Lamkum	Savill	
Deal	Lawton	Shiels	
Deshpande	Lee	Sinclair	
Devereaux	Liang	Singh A	<i>Teller:</i>
Evet	Lo	Singh S	Fryer

**Abstentions 3**

Endemann	Huang A	Miriau
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Motion not agreed to.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank you all for your participation in this debate this afternoon. Some very considered points were made. It was very interesting sitting up here and seeing your reaction to the debates. Also, thank you for having no points of order and no unparliamentary language. That is always good. And, of course, there was no heckling, which is often what happens across the floor of the House here, which we as Speakers have to contend with. So, a job well done—congratulations.

What is happening now is afternoon tea. We are not stopping, however. We are moving straight into the committee reports, but there is a continuous afternoon tea. We do not want everyone to rush out there; we want people in here for the committee reports, so come and go as you feel like it. You are free to do that, and we are going to move now to the committee reports.

**REPORTS****Consideration of the Report of the Commerce Committee**

**OLIVER WILDING (Hamilton East):** I was a member of the Commerce Committee, and our inquiry—

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Andre Knops):** Order! Sorry. There is a formal process—I probably should have explained it first. To all members who are presenting reports, you need to first of all start your address, just like we did previously, by saying “I present the report of—” whatever the committee was, and “on its inquiry into—” the topic involved.

**OLIVER WILDING:** I present the report from the Commerce Committee on the inquiry into purchasing online and supporting modern consumerism. Online shopping is undoubtedly one of the fastest-growing consumer markets in the world at the moment.

With freedom of choice, competitive prices, and convenience, it offers huge appeal to Kiwis. In New Zealand in 2012 consumers spent around \$3.2 billion on online shopping, accounting for approximately 6 percent of all retail sales. With forecasts of an extra \$2 billion in online sales in the next 3 years, it is time for online shopping to come into line with the same regulations governing the safety of those who shop in-store.

Through our research and public submissions, the Commerce Committee wishes to make several recommendations to this House on the Consumer Law Reform Bill. GST is currently not charged on online purchases of \$399 or less. Although the committee agrees that harvesting this revenue would result in an extra \$250 million to \$300 million a year in revenue, at this stage we have concluded that there is no fair and equitable way to gather this GST on all online purchases from offshore websites such as Amazon. However, we do conclude that the current method of taxation on imported goods over \$400 needs to change. By implementing a taxation threshold based on the value of the goods, as opposed to a minimum tax rate, any grey areas are cleared up and the line is drawn.

Currently, there is no clear definition of what a trader actually is. Under current laws, only those purchasing goods off a registered trader are actually covered under the Consumer Guarantees Act. Although it is illegal to mislead consumers, many of those selling goods in bulk on websites such as TradeMe have not actually registered as traders. This means that they have no obligation to conform to the fair trading standards currently in place for professional retailers. By setting the framework of what a trader actually is, there is no doubt as to who must be registered, helping to get rid of the rogues and pirates as well as taxing those who are out for a profit.

Online security for the customer is another concern for our committee. Although we acknowledge that it is not the role of the Government, as in a nanny State, to bail out those who have taken the risk and lost out, we do believe that educating consumers is vital for their protection. We are proposing an extended public television and internet advertising campaign to make consumers aware of these risks that are prevalent in the online shopping market place.

Our final recommendation is to channel research and development, as well as innovation funding, into encouraging and helping our small to medium sized Kiwi enterprises establish themselves successfully in the online market place. By having an effective and secure online presence, these Kiwi businesses will be able to offer the convenience and freedom that is offered by offshore firms with a large online presence. Although Kiwi businesses will never enjoy the economies of scale and lower prices offered by large offshore online firms, having this online presence will appeal to those both here in New Zealand and overseas to whom the Kiwi brand appeals. We see this as a vital step to grow our economy and help our businesses grow into a world-leading market place.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Education and Science Committee**

**PATRICK SAVILL (Nelson):** Our inquiry—

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Andre Knops):** Order! You are required to follow the correct protocol.

**PATRICK SAVILL:** I am representing—

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Andre Knops):** You present the report of the particular committee, and then what its subject was.

**PATRICK SAVILL:** I present the report of the Education and Science Committee on its inquiry into whether science should be compulsory in secondary schools. Firstly, we identified the main issues leading to this inquiry. Low achievement in fundamentally important areas and subjects that are compulsory, such as science, is leading to a lack of

skilled persons in the workforce. This is a huge deficit to our economy in New Zealand. Secondly, in a changing world, leading to changing careers and future jobs, we found that the basic skills are not being built upon to produce the skills needed in this workforce. Thirdly, the status quo is addressing only the majority and is not catering to everybody's needs and producing the best workforce and, indeed, skills for tertiary education that is possible.

Through public submissions, several examples were observed. Seventy-five percent of year 11 students take level 1 science, yet 50 percent are failing and 25 percent are passing. It is unclear whether all of this 75 percent are choosing to take science, but it can be safely said that those failing would have been forced into it, and we view this as a terrible act for schools to be committing. Compulsory subjects are thus detrimental to learning in most areas. Most students know which subjects they wish to take, and it is found that those who take subjects that they wish to take have a higher achievement and pass rate than those who do not.

So the committee decided and, through consideration and deliberation, recommends—though not, in so many words, unanimously—that subjects such as, but not exclusively limited to, science should be compulsory at years 9 and 10. An emphasis on encouraging students to take subjects like science should be cultivated both in early stages, such as intermediate, and in later stages, such as after years 9 and 10. The committee recommends the promotion of relevant and engaging teaching of subjects like science, along with increasing the quality of the teachers of these subjects in schools through activities such as professional development.

This would, we believe, rectify the lack of key competencies present in students leaving school, fill the gap of highly skilled workers in our workforce being needed by more employers than there are employees, and increase achievement rates across the board by students wanting to participate in school activities. Thus, students in years 11, 12, and 13 should not be forced to take subjects akin to science at secondary schools.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee**

**JACOBI KOHU-MORRIS (List):** I present the report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee on its inquiry into where New Zealand's international obligations should lie: the Pacific or wider afield. What an excellent committee I had the privilege of chairing. We had an excellent discussion about where New Zealand's international obligations should lie—whether they should be in the Pacific or whether they should be wider afield.

I am pleased to say that the committee came to a clear consensus that is a fair, proper, and mutually beneficial decision, economically and socially. New Zealand should obligate itself to the Pacific region and redirect our aid to that region, because there is a need for this aid to be redirected to that area. As a responsible, developed, and stable nation, New Zealand owes it to our brothers, our sisters, and our neighbours in the Pacific to work collaboratively, and to remove the huge challenges that the collective Pacific Island nations face. The committee believed that it is only morally right that their problems are our problems, because the decisions they make do affect us in the short and long term. These problems are evident. There is a lack of modern infrastructure. There is a lack of a secure and stable economy, and the almost destined failure to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, as set by the United Nations. All of these problems are deeply embedded throughout the region, and that calls for New Zealand to act. We have chosen to act. This committee has recognised the need. We have chosen to stand by our brothers, our sisters, and our friends in the Pacific who long—who long—for strong, committed, and dedicated leadership to take them through the challenges that they face. This leadership will come from New Zealand.

My committee recommended the following five recommendations: first, that New Zealand increase its portion of aid commitment to the Pacific by redirecting other aid from other regions or organisations; second, that New Zealand not neglect other relationships worldwide as a result of this increase; third, that New Zealand establish international trading agreements in the Pacific; fourth, that in delivering aid to Pacific countries, New Zealand focuses on developing infrastructure; and, fifth, that New Zealand hosts an international summit on the delivery of aid to Pacific countries, to help them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. All of these recommendations are aimed at targeting and combating the current dire situation in the Pacific. We have chosen to concentrate our aid and support in a place that will create more progress, rather than spreading everything that we can offer thinly over many different places. There will always be the need for a solution. But our committee came to the conclusion that by fragmenting our aid, we will not solve the problem. Thank you very much.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Health Committee**

**JACK ALISON (List):** I present the report of the Health Committee on its inquiry into substance abuse, on the topic of whether young people are taking enough responsibility for reducing and preventing substance abuse, or whether this should be the Government's role. Our many thanks go to our three evidential witnesses whom we heard from: the Acting Director-General of Health, speaking on behalf of the health inquiry, the New Zealand Drug Foundation - Te Tuāpapa Tarukino o Aotearoa, and the Hauora Waikato Group.

Our conclusion was that, yes, young people are taking enough responsibility, but it is also a responsibility of the Government to ensure that this is ensured for future years. Our recommendations were fourfold: that the Government provide substance abuse prevention programmes to all children, starting at year 5, with a gradual exposure as a basic standard; that the Government implement a youth-targeted, substance abuse prevention advertising campaign, focused on honesty and transparency; that the Government develop a compulsory national policy for schools to implement substance abuse prevention and education, and support schools with their own supplementary programmes; and that youth-led peer support and mentoring programmes be delivered through local community groups and schools to help young people make informed decisions on substance abuse.

Our committee recognised the need for early intervention in youth, as was backed up by the Acting Director-General of Health. He gave us information on the fact that targeting youth while they were still in the stages of development was essential in preventing substance abuse later on, which is also what we found in our own discoveries within our own communities. Exposure to harsher substances will gradually increase over the coming years, and with that we feel that the education around these substances should also increase. This will support lifelong understanding and good decision-making regarding substance abuse.

We believe that the Government is best placed to enforce a basic standard for schools to provide such a programme, and that the schools would then be supported and encouraged to develop their own supplementary programmes, if they deem that necessary.

We believe that attitudes to substance abuse in the wider society need to change in order to achieve a reduction in substance abuse in young people. We were particularly concerned about the social acceptance of alcohol abuse, and the peer pressure on young people to drink. We were also concerned by families experiencing the multigenerational abuse of illegal substances. A culture shift is necessary to recognise substance abusers

as victims rather than criminals. A complex approach will be required to deal with these diverse issues.

Young people need to support each other and support themselves in order to break the cycle of substance abuse. These programmes, such as peer support and peer mediation, as well as mentoring, should be supported financially by the Government and administered by both schools and community groups.

We also recognise the influence the media has on young people and their decision making, as well as on their opinions on substances.

**Youth Member:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Perhaps it would be wise if when one of our members of Youth Parliament is doing their address, you could give them about a 10 or 20-second warning, just to sum up, instead of cutting them off.

**The TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Andre Knops):** OK. I acknowledge that. We will do that for the following reports.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee**

**ADAM LAWTON (East Coast):** I present the report of the Justice and Electoral Committee on its inquiry into current sentencing for criminals. The question that we faced was in regard to white-collar and blue-collar criminals, and whether we thought the current sentences reflect the social and economic impacts of said crimes. First off, I just want to say that despite the wide range of opinions we had in that committee, the consensus was that, no, currently, we do not think that the Government is hard enough on criminals.

Some other stuff we came up with was that we considered that the primary purpose of the justice system is to prevent crime. So we came up with five recommendations for the Government to achieve this goal: to examine the feasibility of establishing sentencing councils; to look at increasing the severity and consistency of sentences handed down for all crimes; to amend the Parole Act 2002 to increase the maximum non-parole periods that violent offenders can receive; to legislate for judges to sentence first-time offenders to either short-term prison sentences or other harsh non-custodial sentences, to deter these offenders from becoming repeat offenders; and, finally, to examine how the Government could better assist prisoners in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

In regards to the first point, on sentencing councils, we thought we would take a page from Australia's book—not a good thing, I know—and establish something like the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council, which is basically a panel of experts that researches sentencing policy and presents reports to the Government so that it can decide whether sentences for criminals are fair.

In terms of severity and consistency, we looked at making sentences fair across the board. For example, for a financial crime such as tax evasion, a criminal who evaded over \$200,000 worth of tax got a jail sentence of 5 years, although it has been noted that some people who committed welfare fraud have been jailed for up to 7 years. We feel that, based on the nature of the crime itself, there should be consistency—they should get something similar.

In terms of amending the Parole Act, we figured that rather than increasing sentences themselves and rather than let people get off after only 1 or 2 years, we should consider there being no parole for at least three-quarters of a sentence. For first-time offenders, there should be maybe a short prison sentence, or some other form of harsh deterrence.

Lastly, the Government should take a more active role in rehabilitation and reintegration. Thank you.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Local Government and Environment Committee**

**CALLUM LO (List):** I stand here today to present the report that was produced by the Local Government and Environment Committee on the inquiry into whether or not the Government should restrict or permit private business from profiting from activities that take place on conservation land. Overall, the report of the Local Government and Environment Committee made the following recommendations to the Government and this House. They are threefold: firstly, that private businesses should be permitted to operate on conservation land; secondly, that although no additional restrictions should be applied to the concession process, that process should be reviewed and updated if required; and, thirdly, that ecotourism should be strongly promoted, which I will explore in more depth later.

Firstly, I will give some background. New Zealand's natural and historic heritage is currently maintained by the Department of Conservation, more commonly known as DOC, which was established under the Conservation Act 1987. The department's current approach towards conservation is to encourage outdoor participation in recreation on conservation land, and it is actively building infrastructure to support demand there. New Zealand's biodiversity is absolutely unique, with 90 percent of its birds, 80 percent of its plants, and all its reptiles, frogs, and bats endemic to New Zealand. The department is involved with many partner organisations in a number of projects, such as the Air New Zealand Great Walks Biodiversity Project and the Genesis Energy Whio Recovery Programme. We also established pest management as being perhaps the biggest threat to our eco-culture. New Zealand now has one of the highest proportions of threatened species in the world, as a result of its pest problem.

Under the status quo the current restrictions say that an environmental impact assessment should usually be carried out for all concession applications, and consultation with the public, tangata whenua, and trust boards is usually required. Conditions can be applied to minimise environmental impacts and to promote safety. For a concession to be granted, it must comply with the Conservation Act 1987 and the Reserves Act 1977, but we are concerned that these restrictions could now be outdated and in need of modernisation. In our review of the restrictions, we all agreed that businesses that damage the environment should pay taxes proportionate to the amount of damage that they incur, but we were unable to agree on the issue of whether or not businesses that benefit from but do not harm conservation should receive a penalty as such. With regards to mining, although we were persuaded that mining projects can bring considerable value to local communities, we were concerned about the major environmental damage that can be incurred through that. We want that to be rigorously examined. On the point of ecotourism, which is essentially tourism that either helps the ecosystem or is not harmful to it but is eco-friendly, we believe that it needs to be better promoted to private businesses in New Zealand and New Zealand consumers.

To conclude, we recommend that the Government should not place additional restrictions on businesses profiting from conservation activities, but neither should there be any relaxation of current legislation, which we believe to be robust. We recommend that the Government should further investigate the promotion of ecotourism, to help negate environmental impacts caused by businesses operating on New Zealand soil. Thank you.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Māori Affairs Committee**

**ERU KAPA KINGI (Te Tai Tokerau):** Tēnā koe, Mr Speaker. I present the report of the Māori Affairs Committee based on our inquiry into how rangatahi see the role of iwi in supporting the development of the next generation as more iwi move towards a

post-settlement environment. Just before I start, when I say “rangatahi”, I am talking specifically about Māori youth. Tēnā rā koutou katoa. Ko Eruranui Teakapa Kingi tōku nei ingoa. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou katoa.

*[Greetings to you all. My actual name is Eruranui Teakapa Kingi. Fond acknowledgements to you all indeed.]*

A topic of conversation within our select committee was specifically the iwi role in the development of rangatahi in a post-settlement environment. We strongly believe that iwi do have an important role in our lives as rangatahi in order to develop ourselves in better forums such as academics or skills and so forth.

Our broader recommendations to the Government are to implement an iwi role, a cultural connection, and sustainable relationships, as we do see a vital role for our iwi to develop our rangatahi. Some of our more specific recommendations to the Government and the iwi of Aotearoa will follow. They include the management of settlement assets in an effort to encourage iwi to use these assets to the best of their abilities and effectively provide realms of development for rangatahi. In saying this, I am talking about the money that iwi will receive from the Government in the form of settlements. This can come in the form of land or cash. Although we are in a post-settlement environment, we encourage that this money and land be used directly to help the development of rangatahi, whether it be through schooling, scholarships, or so forth.

Secondly, cultural connection is important within the development of rangatahi, because a main cause of youth suicide for my people is cultural disconnection. Therefore, iwi and the Government, we suggest, should expand cultural education through media such as kura kaupapa Māori and mentoring programmes. This will not only help build a cultural identity for rangatahi to adhere to but also help improve academic achievement. Academic failure lies within rangatahi, and that is where the support should go. There is no separatism involved in the building of kura kaupapa; it is merely an improvement within our own identity, to help us improve ourselves as a people and, effectively, ourselves as a nation.

Lastly, I will expand on the importance of iwi and the Government working to treasure natural resources and our environment, to again help rangatahi develop through the behavioural function of kaitiakitanga. This is basically the behavioural function of looking after what is ours in a correct manner. If we cannot look after the environment, how can we expect to look after ourselves?

These are just some of the recommendations. I would like to take this opportunity to personally congratulate my team.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Primary Production Committee**

**EMILY McCARTHY (Bay of Plenty):** I present the report of the Primary Production Committee on the inquiry into whether New Zealand can afford to be free-range.

Upon considering the topic of our select committee, there was the general consensus that raising animal welfare standards is the way of the future. However, views altered and changed as we debated and were exposed to the varied evidence. We heard from the Ministry for Primary Industries that there is no legal definition for free-range. This triggered a key recommendation that definitions should be arrived at by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee for all farming practices so that clarity and cohesion can be found in the industry. We also heard that new codes of welfare recommended the removal of sow stalls—confined pens for pigs during pregnancy—by 2015, and the phasing out of battery cages by 2022. They consider colony cages, barns, and free-range farms for chickens as able to provide lay hens with a similar level of welfare, provided that good stockmanship is exercised.

The next presentation of evidence heard by the committee was from the Egg Producers Federation of New Zealand, which held a more economic perspective on the issue, considering that 83 percent of egg sales are from battery farms, despite many consumers indicating that they would support free-range practices. We were also presented with the idea that free-range farming could cause some farmers to leave the industry due to higher costs, and those costs would also be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher-priced eggs and pork, with the retail price of the average egg increasing by 38 to 56 percent.

Our final evidence presentation was from Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE), which presented the committee with harrowing footage of the inside of a pig farm that used sow stalls and battery farms that used battery methods to keep their chickens. This brought to light the inhumane practices that can be inflicted on animals through such farming practices. We also heard that SAFE perceives that the retailer decisions on which brands to stock in the promotion of ethically produced food were just as important as consumer choices.

Based on the evidence presented, as well as personal surveys, discussions, background research, and debate, consensus for the committee was finally arrived at, despite some mixed opinions. The report of the Primary Production Committee recommends that the Government promote higher animal welfare minimum standards; that the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee define all farming practices legally; that sow stalls for pigs and battery cages for chickens be phased out as soon as economically viable; that farrowing crates be permitted for 4 weeks to assist with birthing in pig farms; that barn farming, colony cages with reduced densities, and free-range farms be acceptable for chickens under the new code; that free-farming and free-range be acceptable for pigs under the new code; and that the Government support advertising and education for producers and consumers of farming practices and codes.

The committee also recognised the importance of encouraging ongoing change.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee**

**HENRY THOMPSON (List):** I would like to present the report from the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on the inquiry into the barriers to young people entering employment across New Zealand workplaces, and how this can be addressed. I would first like to congratulate my committee on the work it put into the work over the last 2 days. We had a really diverse committee, and thus were able to obtain opinions that would not normally have been accessible. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the witnesses we had in our committee session. We had the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Careers New Zealand, and the Employers and Manufacturers Association. I would particularly like to mention the Employers and Manufacturers Association because it gave us a very unique insight into the mind-set of employers.

In our committee we found that the biggest challenge we faced was finding a balance, whether the balance be between the views of the employer and the employee or the economic benefits versus the social benefits. Taking those into consideration, we created the following recommendations. The first is that secondary schools inform students of the career and training options available to them beyond those offered by universities. The reasoning for this was that we believed that there is too much of a focus on pushing students into tertiary training—specifically, university and polytechnics—which creates a void in industries such as primary industries or trade industries. Especially for students who are not academically excellent, that leaves them rather out of place.

The second recommendation we made was that young people living in rural areas be exempt from current driver-licensing laws regarding age if necessary to access employment. The reason for this was, as one of our rural MPs brought up, that even accessing job interviews and ways to apply for jobs are difficult for rural youth, as they do not have their own methods of transport, hence the exemption from the normal age restrictions placed upon licences.

Our third recommendation was that gateway programmes in secondary schools be expanded to offer a more diverse range of study options. Our view was that one of the main things that students were lacking upon getting employment was that they do not have the correct work ethic and work experience in order to attain employment, hence the introduction of the diversification of gateway programmes to be able to give them more experience. Finally, we recommend that education regarding the employment sector be initiated at an earlier stage of secondary school, to make students more aware of their options. Thank you.

### **Consideration of the Report of the Social Services Committee**

**ELLIE BISHOP (Epsom):** I present the report of the Social Services Committee on its inquiry into how public expectations for social services can be balanced against likely rising costs for these services. Firstly, I would like to congratulate my committee on the excellent cooperation and quality of debate.

We believe that this report details and stresses the idea of self-responsibility and self-encouragement for youth to become more independent. We had public submissions from the Minister for Social Development and Ms Rice from the New Zealand Council of Social Services, which we took into consideration when making the following recommendations. First, that improvements be made to Government communications strategies regarding entitlements and changes to social services, so that the public may better manage their expectations. Second, that the Government consider an increased goods and services tax where the GST could be removed from some food products. Third, that the age of eligibility for New Zealand superannuation be reviewed. Fourth, that the Government consider expanding its recent purchase card reforms to all beneficiaries. Fifth, that free health care for people under the age of 18 be introduced. Sixth, that an inquiry into the availability of social services for migrants be initiated. Seventh, that more investment be put into helping young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years transition from school to work. Eighth, that further funding from apprenticeships be provided in order to reduce youth unemployment and increase youth skill levels and opportunities. Ninth, that additional funding be targeted towards career advice facilities and financial literacy training in secondary schools. Finally, tenth, that the Government conduct an inquiry into revoking the youth wage.

All of the above recommendations suggested by my select committee effectively answer the question of how public expectations for social services can be balanced against the likely rising costs for these services. Thank you.

Reports noted.

### **GENERAL DEBATE**

**Mr SPEAKER:** We come now to the general debate. The general debate is normally held in our Parliament for 1 hour every Wednesday immediately following question time. It is a very wide-ranging debate, and you have the ability to choose any topic that you wish to speak on. The time limit is 3 minutes. There will be no warning bells. At 3 minutes a bell will be sounded, and the member must then cease speaking and resume his or her seat. You have got a list of the order for speaking. You should stand and call

“Mr Speaker”, and I will then call your name. Would some honourable member care to move that the House take note of miscellaneous business?

**TAMA ABRAHAM (Te Atatū):** I move, *That the House take note of miscellaneous business.* Honourable and humble members of the House, I wish you to look at this concept, which is rangatahi thrive, or youth motivation. It is a relevant idea that impacts on a lot of our everyday lives. After much discussion with my community, I found that rangatahi today are lacking the necessary motivation to progress with their aspirations, or are just lacking any inspiration at all. I understand that this is not as big as poverty or homelessness, but it is none the less affecting the youth today.

I am really disheartened when I go into my community and I meet at forums these 16-year-old teenagers who have dropped out of the education system, who have no idea what they are doing with their lives. They are actually naive about how badly they are ruining their chances for the future. The reason I chose this topic is that I feel it is something that we can all, actually, effectively contribute to. No matter how big or small, a dream is a dream. We all deserve the right to have one, and we all deserve the right to pursue it. Look at everybody in this room. The people next to you right now are here fighting for their dreams and fighting for where they want to be in their futures.

It is not a secret that our time in this world is limited. It makes sense that in this minimal amount of time we have, we need to make the most effective changes that we can make for improving the quality of other people’s living, for improving the quality of our lives and the world around us. Advocacy, persistent nagging, or even just simply believing in people are very—can I say—within-the-budget ways of dealing with these issues. I believe that it is our duty as leaders in our communities to do these things for our young people, to make sure that every person possible makes it across that finish line.

I consider rangatahi thrive to be a way of thinking. Change what the youth today look at, make their world and everything around them change their beliefs, build a want to succeed, and watch as another person fights for their own dreams. If I can say so, motivation actually is the answer to a lot of our issues today—unemployment and education. Motivation within our youth is actually a contributing force to effectively changing these issues. Obviously, if a young person is portrayed as a thug—

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member’s time has expired.

**SAMANTHA SCAHILL (Northland):** Five permits were recently issued in Northland to three companies for mineral exploration. This has thrown petrol on a fire of already burning opposition. The opposition to mineral mining is not totally unjustified. Environmental concerns are mainly cited, and they do exist. However, it seems unfortunate that extreme opposition now appears to be so deeply rooted in some people’s arguments that they are shutting down any productive discourse on the matter with blanket protest statements of—let me summarise—“Mining is bad. It harms the environment.”

We in Northland are forced by such protest into two groups on the issue of mining: the group of environmentalists against mining and the vilified pro-mining group. The middle ground has been eliminated. Dare to question whether the economic benefits may offset the environmental shortfalls, and one is instantly categorised as pro-mining by the environmentalists. Not only is this inaccurate but it is also unproductive and alienates our public on a very important issue.

The facts are that Northland is one of the country’s lowest socio-economic areas with one of the highest unemployment rates, and our current industries are simply not capable of solving these huge deficits. Mining exploration alone contributed \$50 million to the New Zealand economy in 2011, and in Northland it is expected to generate over \$13 million over 5 years. To ignore or disregard such impressive figures is not only

participating in wilful ignorance but it is also socially and morally irresponsible. We have parents unable to afford to feed their children properly, to fill up the car—and let us not even talk about making next week's mortgage or rental payment! With the prospect of some serious job creation and alleviating some of that financial pressure on households, mining exploration and, indeed, mining in Northland have the ability to solve some real economic and social issues.

On the other hand, farmers do raise the very real concern that mineral runoff such as lead from mines has the potential to devastate their livelihoods, and such arguments as these deserve equal recognition and response. But this is the very core of the issue. Open up a newspaper in Northland and you will see we are concentrated on who is supporting which side. It is like the adult version of the *Twilight* saga. It is all: "Who's Team Edward and who's Team Jacob?". Where has the discussion on the pros and cons gone? Where have the rational analysis and logical examination disappeared to? I say it has been scared off by the emotive scaremongering by environmentalists and smothered by over-generalised justifications from the few pro-mining individuals left who are brave enough to speak out.

It is time that Northland faced up to the realities of its situation and started some serious discussion on the costs and benefits of mining, and it is high time we stopped accusing each other of being Team Jacob.

**OLIVIA ADAM (Clutha-Southland):** Imagine a country where a school-aged child can step out of their school and walk into a McDonald's, a country where fizzy drinks are cheaper than milk and fast food is cheaper than fruit and vegetables, a country where 20.9 percent of children are considered obese, a country where, today, obesity is killing more people than smoking. What if I told you that this is not your imagination but the country we live in today?

In our country, it is cheaper to buy a bag of chips and a bottle of fizzy than it is to buy a bottle of milk and a bag of fresh fruit or vegetables, but we still wonder why New Zealand has the second-highest obesity rate in the world. Is it really that shocking? Obesity is increasing throughout the developed world, and, sadly, New Zealand is in the leading groups of nations. The number of adults in New Zealand who are obese has more than doubled in the past 30 years. Twenty-five percent of our adults are now obese. That is one person in every four. Sadly, this is only going to get worse.

How come so many New Zealanders are obese? The Ministry of Health believes that the main factors are that we do less exercise than we used to and consume too many high-energy foods and drinks. It is cheaper, faster, and easier for a mother who is working full time to run into McDonald's to feed her family than it is for her to go home and prepare a nutritious, home-cooked meal. Sadly, this is reality for too many New Zealand families. Statistics New Zealand figures show that fast-food consumers spent \$1.56 billion on takeaway food services last year—a figure that has nearly doubled since 2004. So the big question is how do we prevent our obesity statistics from increasing even more?

Many families cannot afford to buy enough healthy food to feed their families. Sadly, some of these bad habits are carried into schools. Personally, I believe that all junk food in schools should be banned, especially foods high in sugar. How can children concentrate in class if they are on a sugar high? There is no need for it. Along with this, physical education is being cut from many schools because budgets do not allow it. It is assumed that children will go home and get all the physical activity they need. This is wrong. More and more children now have TVs, Xboxes, and iPads. These items are taking the place of the physical activity they need.

New Zealand children have the best opportunities to succeed in life, and now is the time to start them on the path to success. Decreasing the amount of junk food that

children consume, by lowering the price of healthy food and ensuring that physical education is compulsory in all schools, is the least we can do to help our children become the strong, capable leaders of the future. Thank you.

**ELLIE BISHOP (Epsom):** Honourable youth members of Parliament, I rise today to oppose the Psychoactive Substances Bill, in relation to animal testing. This is a bill that my party and my community feel very strongly about. The psychoactive substances, i.e. legal highs, are not necessary parts of our community or society. They are not life-saving medication or research; they are purely recreational.

Why are we harming innocent animals for people who want to take the risk of having a recreational high? One of the issues that also comes out of this debate is that of young people having to take these unnecessary mind-altering legal highs, and the effect that this has on their society. If there was not a market or an interest in legal highs, there would not be a reason to hurt innocent animals, puppies, and rabbits. Testing on animals is not effective, considering that it is not an indicator of how humans are actually going to respond to legal highs.

Before this bill was even written, there were several reports on how young New Zealand people were having serious and fatal side effects from taking legal highs. This proves that animal testing is not reliable, but there is a more effective way. We should not allow animals to be tortured in this way because we still have the outcome of humans getting hurt. According to Save Animals from Exploitation, there is now effective technology to test legal highs or any other form of drug—cosmetics, for that matter—that does not involve animal testing. These alternatives include embryonic stem cell tests and 3T3 neutral red uptake phototoxicity tests. The issue would be different if it was lifesaving or curing medication, but, to emphasise this again, it is unnecessary to have it in our society and results in drug-related problems, anyway.

In New Zealand there is a better standard of animal welfare compared with in China or India, for example, where they are testing these legal recreational highs on poor animals. We should be leading the way with world-class legislation like this. Young people in my community feel particularly strongly about animal rights and animal welfare, and are also aware of the harm that is caused to animals, due to the testing of recreational psychoactive drugs.

I condemn this bill, and wholeheartedly, as it is not necessary to society and it hurts innocent animals, which are killed in the process. There is a better, more effective way to test recreational psychoactive drugs. Thank you.

**JORDAN BROWN (Tāmaki Makaurau):** Kia hiwa rā, kia hiwa rā. Kiwa rā ki tēnei tuku, kia hiwa rā ki tērā tuku. Kia tū, kia oho, kia mataara. Ā, tihei wa mauri ora. Ka tika te mihi ki te mana whenua o tēnei rohe, ko Te Āti Awa, ā, tēnā koutou. Ka huri ōku nei mihi ki ngā rangatahi o te Whare Pāremata, ā, tēnā koutou katoa. Ko Jordan Brown tōku ingoa, he uri au nō Ngāti Hine, he uri au nō Te Ruki Kawiti, e mōhiotia nuitia ana tētahi anō o tātou ka whakanui i Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori. E ngākaunui ana au ki Te Reo Māori me ōna tikanga. Nō reira, ki a au nei me whakanui tō tātau Reo ia rā, ia rā ēhara i te kotahi wiki anake. E tū ana au i roto i te Whare nei he māngai mō tō iwi, ko te hunga rangatahi hoki. He moemoeā nui tōku pērā i te rangatira a Martin Luther King. Ko tōku nei wawata, ka taea te kōrero i te reo taketake o Aotearoa, ahakoa ko wai koe, ahakoa nō hea koe. Ā, tōna wā kei te pīrangi au, kia haere ki tōku kura auraki ki te kura tuarua o Te Kōtuku ki te kōrero ki tōku kaiako pūtaiao, ki tōku kaiako hītori, ki ōku kaiako katoa. Kei te pīrangi au, kia haere ki te hūpa māketē ki te kōrero ki te kaimahi i reira i roto i Te Reo Rangatira. Ahakoa ko Te Reo Māori te reo taketake o Aotearoa, he taonga o tēnei whenua, he tokoiti ngā tangata e mōhio ana ki te kōrero Māori. Kātahi te mea anu ko tērā. He pātai tāku ki a koutou katoa. Nā te aha ngā tamariki o Aotearoa i kore ai e herea ki te ako i Te Reo Māori? Mā wai e akiaki tō tātau

Reo Rangatira? Mā te Kāwanatanga, mā ngā hāpori. Ko te nuinga o ngā tangata e noho ana ki Aotearoa, ka taea te kōrero te reo kotahi anake. Kei te pōuri ōku ngākau ka whakarongo i tērā nā te mea, ko te nuinga o ngā tangata o te ao nei, ka taea te kōrero, te whakamārama ngā reo e rua, e toru, e whā. Kātahi te mea rawe ko tērā. Mehemea ka whiwhi koe i tētahi atu reo, ka tuwhera—

*[Be alert, be watchful. Be wary of this contribution and be mindful of that one. Stand up, wake up, sharpen up. Behold the breath of life. It is right that I acknowledge the local people of this region, the Te Āti Awa tribe. I salute you. My tributes turn now to the youth of the House of Parliament. I commend you all. My name is Jordan Brown, and I am a descendant of Ngāti Hine and particularly of Te Ruki Kawiti, known widely as one among us that promotes Māori Language Week. I am highly disposed towards the Māori language and its conventions. So for me, our language should be celebrated every day instead of one week. I stand in this House as a representative of your people and of the youth as well. Like that leader Martin Luther King, I have a huge dream. My real passion is that the indigenous language of New Zealand is able to be spoken regardless who you are or where you are from. In time I want to go from my mainstream school to the Te Kōtuku secondary school to talk to my science teacher, history teacher, all my teachers. I want to go to the supermarket and to speak to the staff there in the chiefly language. Despite the Māori language being the indigenous language of New Zealand and a treasure of this land, very few people know how to speak Māori. What a repulsive situation that is. I have a question to everyone. Why wasn't it made compulsory for New Zealand children to learn the Māori language? Who will encourage our chiefly language? Government and communities will. The majority of people living in New Zealand are only able to learn one language. To listen to that saddens my feelings, because the majority of the people of this world are able to speak and understand two, three, four languages. What a wonderful thing that is. If you acquire another language, it opens up—]*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Order! The member's time has expired.

**EDEN BROWN (Waitaki):** Today I wish to speak on a new drug that has entered my generation. Technology is an odd thing. It empowers the human race on the one hand, and threatens our existence on the other. As an instantaneous medium it satisfies the needs of the moment, but what long-term effects will technology have on Generation Z? The harsh reality is that our generation is getting hurt by social media—Facebook, Twitter, Ask.fm, Tumblr.

These social media sites draw upon our natural curiosity and have one unifying feature: to give the user instant gratification and a long-term scar. Ask.fm is particularly topical. It is a controversial site where anyone can ask questions anonymously of a user. Initially, we get our high from finding out whether you can take it, whether you are strong enough, and whether you can put yourself up for this. Many times these questions are hateful and abusive, for example, “You're not popular, so stop thinking you are.”, “Everybody hates you.”, and “Why don't you go kill yourself?”. And many times they have done so.

The craze is relatively young here in New Zealand, but in places such as the UK and Ireland it has been linked to many suicides. One in five of New Zealand's youth have experienced cyber-bullying. When it comes to a stage of life and death, something must be done. I must commend Judith Collins' legislation to make it an offence to post material online that is grossly offensive, punishable by up to 3 months' imprisonment or a \$2,000 fine.

This is a step in the right direction, but, as always, addiction must begin with the abuser. Our generation must make a conscious decision to limit our dangerous exposure to this 21<sup>st</sup> century drug of choice, must take responsibility for our own actions, and

must be there for one another. We must reform our values and we must learn to develop real communication, and this cannot come while we are trapped behind a screen. We must get out there, we must rediscover our world, and we must develop the skills with which we can lead this great nation forward.

Let us face it, no one knows what our future will look like, but we cannot and we must not let social media and technology hinder our generation's potential to succeed. Thank you.

**ALEXI CARLIER (Tāmaki):** When I was 9 years old and my brother was 4 years old, we were playing on top of a bunk bed. There are different accounts of what actually happened that afternoon, but because my brother is not here with me today, let me tell you all the true story. Somehow, without any help or a push from his older brother at all, Nico disappeared over the side of the bunk bed and landed with a crash on the floor. I peered nervously over the side of the bunk bed to see what had happened to my poor brother. I saw that he had landed painfully on his hands and knees, on all fours, on the ground, so I did the only thing that my frantic little 9-year-old brain could think to do to stop him from crying. I said: "Nico, Nico, wait, don't cry, don't cry. Did you see how you landed? Nico, no normal human lands on all fours like that. Nico, I think this means you're a ninja." Let me tell you that there was nothing in the world that my brother wanted more than to be Nico the special ninja. So instead of crying, a smile spread across his face and he scrambled right back on to the bunk bed with all the agility of a young ninja.

I tell you all this story because, for kids like Nico, the world is simple. I would love for my problems to disappear when someone calls me a ninja, but they do not. Although this simple and superficial approach is great in childhood, as we assume adulthood, as we mature, we have a responsibility to give greater consideration to our issues and especially the formation of our political views. No matter where various parties sit on the political spectrum, very few would argue that improving the well-being of the population is not the fundamental role of Government. The differences between us exist as we disagree on how to best achieve this.

The thing that surprises me is how so many of you young people are already set in your political views at such a young age. For those of you who support the left wing, a key belief is that poverty is a massive problem, and normally I would agree. But in Panama almost one-third of the population is below the international poverty line. That country is the happiest country in the world.

For those of you who support the right wing, a key belief is that economic affluence is very important, but Ireland faces a gloomy economic future—it is in much debt—yet its population is, again, among the happiest on the planet. Everywhere across the political spectrum we all agree that unemployment is something to avoid, but in our country of New Zealand, only one-third of us are happy at work.

My point is that achieving well-being is complicated in any society. But I believe that if we remember the complexity involved, if we remember the fundamental role of Government, then we can find the answers to our problems, because politics, it seems to me, has for too long been concerned with right or left, instead of right or wrong. Thank you.

**YANNI COWIE (List):** I have canvassed the views of young people in my community, asking them what they thought were issues that the Government should be addressing that were affecting them. I received a nearly universal answer: "I don't really care; the Government doesn't care about young people." After more discussion, I believe that a large part of this problem is the Government's policy of asset sales.

But wait—why do asset sales affect young people? Well, it is New Zealand's young people who are the ones who will have to foot the bill for the current National-led

Government's reckless agenda to sell off State-owned assets. I agree that the current Government clearly does not care about young people. It is young people who will be affected the most by asset sales. This is why the Government can take such a carefree attitude towards asset sales. They make the Government books look good in the short term, they may give the economy a small boost in the short term, and they do not overly affect anyone making the decision. But wait until those who are currently the younger generation join the workforce. Wait until they are running the country. Then we will be confronted by this stark reality: you can sell your assets only once. Asset sales is extreme policy—

**Oliver Wilding:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Would the member like to propose his idea to get the Government's books—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is not a point of order. This is a debating chamber and the member has every right to make his contribution.

**YANNI COWIE:** New Zealand is not facing any situation in the short term that is so extreme that asset sales are the only answer. A competent Government does not need to resort to asset sales to put our economy right.

I asked my constituents whether they might reconsider their views, given that they could be the ones investing in privatised assets. "No.", they answered, arguing that young people are not the ones who are going to be buying shares in privatised assets. Older New Zealanders may be making investments like this, but by the time today's young people are in a position to buy shares in privatised assets, who will own these shares? Will it be their mums and dads, selling them as they enter retirement? Or will it be foreign investors seeking to make a quick profit by meddling with the powerhouse of the New Zealand economy? Do we really want the profits of our assets going overseas? Furthermore, there is nothing in place to stop the privatised companies themselves falling into disrepair and having their own assets depleted by foreign investors interested only in making a quick buck.

I feel very privileged to be able to stand in this House today and say what clearly needs to be said in order to keep the future of New Zealand—indeed, the future of young New Zealanders and New Zealand itself—safe. If the National-led Government wants to show the young people of New Zealand that it thinks their future is important, it should be keeping our State-owned assets State-owned. Young people do not want their future to be put up for sale.

**ANGELA CURTIS (Auckland Central):** Child abuse is a touchy subject, and along with child poverty and numerous other issues we face in society, it is hard to convince people that it is of top priority. New Zealand has been ranked and labelled the third-worst country in the developed world for child abuse. How can such a small country be so poorly ranked?

An issue like this needs to be dealt with. We expect children to grow up and care about our country, to remember the good deeds our country did for them. With growing rates of child abuse cases, this seems like a far-fetched expectation. An abused child is a reflection of an unstable household, an unstable lifestyle, and an unstable nation.

Child abuse costs New Zealand approximately \$2 billion, or 1 percent of our gross domestic product. If we put this into perspective, \$14 billion goes into our health costs. Child abuse is equivalent to one-seventh of that amount. The majority of this money is used to manage the immediate results of abuse, and the remainder towards the placement of children in new homes and longer-term preventative services.

The main problem is not the amount of money we put towards the prevention of child abuse, because how can you put a price on the safety of our children? It is the cycle the victim succumbs to. So how can we stop this vicious cycle? Education. My community believes that investing more money in the prevention of child abuse now

will later benefit our people and then decrease the amount of money we spend on addressing child abuse in the future. This sort of education will give teachers an opportunity to understand child abuse and how to deal with specific cases. It will also include teaching parents about how to create a safe environment for their children and healthy ways to discipline their children. But, most important, it will teach young children and adults that violence is an unhealthy way to solve issues, and give them the freedom and power to break the cycle. Thank you.

**HANNA DEAL (Port Hills):** My name is Hanna and I will be talking about the main issue in the community for Deaf youth. New Zealand Sign Language is the third official language in New Zealand. Over 24,000 New Zealanders use New Zealand Sign Language, and over 9,000 deaf people use New Zealand Sign Language. What is New Zealand Sign Language? Sign language is the language of the Deaf community. It is a visual language with a grammatical structure different from English. Sign language can enhance a deaf child's language acquisition. I want to help you see that being deaf is a difference, not a disability.

Where does New Zealand Sign Language come from? Well, New Zealand Sign Language comes from many different places, like, for example, home signs, Deaf schools, Deaf clubs, and New Zealand Deaf sports. There are many factors that impact on the Deaf youth community. Deaf youth can be very isolated. Deaf people have a range of communication styles, but it is really important that they have a positive sense of identity. It can be very hard for Deaf youth to communicate with other people, and they need to build their confidence. They need to explore their Deaf identity or culture. At van Asch Deaf Education Centre, there is an immersion course for deaf and hearing-impaired people for years 6 to 13 plus. The immersion programme is a 5-day residential course designed to meet specific needs and other things. The programme involves Deaf culture and identity, personal development, communication and social skills, and transition into independent living. I think it is important to get all the deaf youth to be involved in a Deaf immersion course to help gain their sense of identity.

The Deaf community and hearing community need to work together. We need people from the Deaf and hearing communities to be mentors or role models. They will be looked at and remembered forever. They could look at cultural differences and they would be more aware of their own culture. Deaf culture is different from hearing culture. We stamp, tap, and wave to get attention. It would be good if the Deaf and hearing could work together to help broaden understandings of each culture, and help everyone understand different points of view in the community. I think it is also important for Deaf to build their confidence by seeing Deaf leaders. I am a youth leader. My leadership group is trying to have an event every month and get all the Deaf youth to be more involved and build their confidence by sharing their experiences with others.

It is very important for New Zealand youth to be aware of the Deaf community. I hope some of you would like to learn New Zealand Sign Language and get to know a variety of different cultural elements. Remember that technology can assist communication between me and you. I am Hannah. I am deaf and I am proud of it.

**JAY EVETT (Hutt South):** The year was 1867 and this House passed the Maori Representation Act, introducing four seats to Parliament specifically for those who identified as tangata whenua. This was a way of assuring those in the Colonial Office that Māori were being integrated into our legal system. It was passed with no high intention or moral principle, and the original members acted as pawns for the settler Governments. But 146 years on, things have evolved. What was originally a colony founded on biculturalism has progressed to the multicultural realm that it is today—ethnically diverse and rich in many cultures. However, these seats have still been retained and are based on the antiquated misconception that Māori would not be able to

advocate for themselves otherwise. It is due time that the Māori seats and subsequent electoral roll be brought to an end and assimilated into the general seats of this House. Not only is it on the imperative and will of constituents and concerned youth that I make this request, but also in response to the increase in suggested separatism in our nation by political parties and entities.

The Commonwealth Parliament has informed New Zealand time and time again that these seats are no longer justified and are an example of institutional racism. This member would not care if nine or 90 members of this House were Māori, so long as they were elected on their political merits, not by their race, and finds that the existence of these seats discredits those who hold them by making race their primary characteristic for election, not their political prowess. National, United Future, ACT, and New Zealand First have all made clear statements, ranging from 2008 forward, pledging to abolish these seats in 2014 as the Waitangi settlements process comes to a close.

**Youth Member:** Not Labour.

**JAY EVETT:** No, not Labour. However, this was withdrawn at the request of the Māori Party. A referendum was promised in 2011 on the matter, but, like many things in politics, it was never fulfilled. I implore on behalf of New Zealanders everywhere that the current Government follows through with the promised referendum, if not the integration of the seats.

This member fully believes in the importance of Māori traditions and culture. However, positive discrimination is not the way forward, and it is worse when it is endorsed by central government—

**Eru Kapa Kingi:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. I would just like to let everyone know that he is not of Māori descent, so what he is saying—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is not a point of order. If we are going to get points of order raised, I will listen to them, but if they are frivolous points of order designed to interrupt a member's speech, I will have no hesitation in asking that member to leave the Chamber for the rest of the debate. Jay Evett, you have an additional 30 seconds if you require it, in view of the fact that you were interrupted.

**JAY EVETT:** It is time that we took the bold first step to addressing constitutional racism in this country. Governor Hobson, upon signing the Treaty of Waitangi, made his intentions for our nation well-known: "He iwi tahi tātou."—we are one people. Let the Government finally honour this message and readdress the issue of separate Māori seats within the next parliamentary term. Thank you.

**CIAN GARDNER (List):** As the Minimum Wage (Starting-out Wage) Amendment Bill was proposed to Parliament, we, the teenagers of New Zealand, sat at home with our calculators and tried to work out exactly how the Government expected us to live off these wages. Sure, for those Government officials, the concept of dropping youth wages seemed applicable. "Why not?", they may ask. "Let's create more jobs. Jobs that will not pay as well—but hey, a job's a job, right?". Wrong.

My name is Cian. I am 17 years old. At present, I am working at Paper Plus, earning the minimum wage, which is around \$13.50 an hour before tax. With this money I am able to pay for petrol to get to and from work, any sudden costs at school, as well as the cost of owning my own car, food, and savings. I run a strict budget in order to use my money wisely. Next year I hope to attend university. I have worked out the living expenses for next year, and it is going to be extremely tight.

Do not get me wrong. I am sure those members of the Government have our best interests at heart—those members of Government with their six-figure pay cheques and only the memories of living a poor student life, with no recollection of how difficult it

already is to live, let alone with the added bonus of being paid less than what their morning flat white costs for an hour of hard work. Best interests at heart? Sure!

For those of us with the unfortunate luck of being aged 16 to 19-years-old, we are going to be forced to work alongside those who are older but get paid at different rates. How is this fair? I deserve exactly what they are earning. Let us imagine that this bill has been passed. The youth wage drops. Students obviously are struggling to make a living. They are then forced to go into debt in order to further their education, which will one day give them the opportunity to get a job that earns enough to start to pay this debt off. For students, all that we are looking at in this bill is debt.

What can we do about it? We can lower costs for students. And I am not talking about the odd deal of 10c off at Burger King. Lower the costs in places most needed: housing, groceries, and transportation. These inevitable living expenses are added to the required tertiary fees. We need to see a significant change in these prices. If you cut our pay cheques, cut the price of living. If you want to create jobs? Create them. But do not force us to suffer because of it—we who will one day be forced to clean up the mess that your generation and generations before you caused. That black cloud of debt that you are placing on our shoulders—get rid of it. We are not responsible for the mess you caused. Diminish the debt. You caused that; we did not. You want to lower—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr SPEAKER:** If a member wishes to raise a point of order, he needs to stand and call “point of order”.

**Samuel Hart:** Sorry. I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. Could the member please refrain from speaking about the Government in first—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Listen, the member is delivering a speech with passion. I think any member who wants to raise a point of order is welcome to do so, but it would be helpful for this debate if it is a legitimate point of order and is one that I think is not designed to interrupt the member’s speech. Would the member please continue.

**CIAN GARDNER:** I will start from that black cloud of debt that you are balancing on our shoulders. Get rid of it. We are not responsible for the mess you caused. Diminish the debt. You caused that; we did not. You want to lower our pay cheques? I cannot imagine anyone stopping you. But just remember that we need the cost of living to be lowered as well. Thank you.

**CALUM GRAY (Selwyn):** Internet piracy is probably one of the most commonly committed crimes in this country. I would even go so far as to say that the majority of the people I know illegally download software on a regular basis. That is not just young people. I know parents of friends and I know teachers at school who will freely acknowledge that they have committed this crime. Why? Why do so many people willingly commit this crime without shame or guilt? Well, the answer is complicated. It is complicated in a way that I do not think our Government understands. The legislation that it has tried to pass to combat this issue shows its misunderstanding.

Why do people pirate? Well, it is complicated. Firstly, it is free. Another cause, which I think is equally important, is that piracy is far, far more convenient than getting that content legally. People do not want physical media, especially young people. People do not want to wait 6 months for a TV show to come over here, then wait until it is on TV; people want to watch it when they want to watch it. That technology exists. The technology of how we consume media has advanced far, far ahead of how traditional business models sell that content to us. So now the only way to get that media in the way people want to get it, through this technologically new means, is through the illegal means of piracy. That, I assert, is the principle cause of piracy, not it being free, which, understandably, is a very big incentive too.

Thankfully, this is becoming less and less true every day. If we look at companies that truly are affecting piracy, it is companies like iTunes and it is companies like Spotify and Rdio, which are seriously making a dent on piracy. In 2012 music industry sales grew for the first time in over a decade. That is because business models are responding to this new technology. You can find similar trends in the sales of video games online and with many other forms of media.

In contrast, let us look at the legislation our Government has passed and see how effective that is. In 2011 the Government passed the Copyright (Infringing File Sharing) Amendment Bill, commonly known as the “Skynet Bill”. Legislation like this does not work, firstly because it is almost impossible to enforce. Enforcing anything on the internet is incredibly difficult, and experience with this law has borne that out. As of June 2012, over a year after that bill was passed, three—three—people in the whole country have faced prosecution for illegal piracy.

Furthermore, the technology necessary to avoid Government detection is constantly advancing at such a rapid rate that law enforcement simply cannot keep up. Already, there are technologies like seedboxes, proxies, and virtual private networks. If you use any of those technologies, the Government cannot catch you.

Ultimately, the best solution to piracy is not to legislate against it but to let the free market find solutions to it that make getting that content legally the more appealing option.

**MICHELLE HUANG (List):** In the year 2000 my family and I emigrated to New Zealand from the People’s Republic of China. The cost of this trip to start up a new life in a foreign country was not simply the cost of air tickets, visas, purchases of new appliances, clothes, furniture, and shelter; it cost us something that one can only class as being priceless. It cost us our Chinese cultural identity.

Sure, as I stand before you, through my physical features, my Chinese heritage is quite obvious. However, cultural identity is more than just skin-deep; cultural identity is created through environment, experience, and language. My first language is English, a language that my grandparents and great-grandparents and greater-grandparents would not, and do not, understand at all. It is obscure to think that I will be the first generation to live and breathe a different cultural identity to my ancestors.

I have grown up with the national holidays of New Zealand. I have grown up proudly singing the New Zealand national anthem. I have grown up with the pōhutukawa, the kōwhai, and the kauri. I have grown up as a Kiwi. However, at the same time I have grown up with rice for dinner, day after day. I have grown up with oolong tea as my go-to refreshment. I have grown up with yum cha and weekend tutorials. I have grown up as a Chinese. That is where it gets a bit confusing at times.

I, along with many, many other ethnic youth in my community, and in New Zealand as a whole, am stuck in the middle of two cultures. If I were to put this in a positive way, I could say that we have the best of both worlds. We are a mixture of two different spices, which makes our lives extra flavoursome. However, if I were to look at this in a more negative, yet realistic, way, I could say that we are stuck as outcasts of both worlds. We are neither one nor the other. We are alone and not fully accepted into either culture. There will always be a physical and cultural difference between me and a Western, New Zealand - born Kiwi child. This is the case for not only Chinese-Kiwi youth in New Zealand but also most, if not all, other ethnic youth in our community.

Although I feel privileged to be able to grow up in such an accepting, safe, and welcoming country, I feel that it is necessary to speak about the issue of cultural identity—or, should I say, the lack of cultural identity—of ethnic youth in New Zealand. I see it as a concerning matter, especially with the growing number of bicultural and multicultural youth in our society. Thank you.

**STELLA IVORY (Taupō):** We have all heard the catchphrases “It’s not what we’re drinking; it’s how we’re drinking.” and “Stop a mate driving drunk. Legend.” Well, these are just a few of the slogans that the Ministry of Transport has coined in recent ad campaigns to try to curb New Zealand’s drinking issue. Drinking is estimated by the National Drug Policy to cause 600 to 1,000 deaths in New Zealand per year. Regardless of the statistics, it is fairly well established that we have a problem with drinking, especially youth binge drinking.

To combat this, it was proposed that the legal purchase age should be brought up to 20, which, as we all know, was not passed. Despite many teenagers breathing a sigh of relief in response, we need to be realistic in how we can help curb our young people’s drinking issues. Raising the drinking age would not solve the issue. Law changes are not going to change the culture. As young people, we need a paradigm shift with how we look at drinking. This is not going to happen by encouraging abstinence from it. Young people have drunk, and always will drink, in excess at some stage, but we should be more focused on education surrounding drinking and on removing the trend that it is still cool to drink in excess all the time. We should be providing young people with alternatives to drinking.

The “Legend” drink-driving ad, which I am sure many of us are familiar with, has had an extremely positive response. Why do we not have a similar advertisement that focuses around binge drinking? At the moment it is still pretty normal to drink until you vomit. It was not until this year at a high school presentation that I realised how high your blood-alcohol levels have to be to cause vomiting. We need to get serious about encouraging drinking in moderation. It should be made less socially acceptable, which is something that only young people can encourage amongst ourselves. Imagine if binge drinking became like cigarette smoking has become—definitely not cool.

On the other hand, we need to ask ourselves why young people are drinking. Quite often it is because there is nothing better to do, especially in small towns—drinking is just a way to spark up a boring Saturday night. Cambridge, where I go to school, is a small town that does not have that much going on for young people. Plenty of my friends would rather go out and drink with a few people than just stay at home doing nothing. Zeal is an example of a group that is working to give young people better ways to spend their time, including in the arts. However, it is only in the cities. We need similar groups in towns like Cambridge to provide an alternative to drinking.

As a nation, we need to be realistic about our binge-drinking issue. We always will drink. It is part of our culture, but it is also part of being human. But we need to get serious about making young people realise how dangerous their drinking really is. The media can help with this, but we as young people need to change the trend. Like they say, with young people “It’s not what we’re drinking; it’s how we’re drinking.”

**JAKE LAMKUM (List):** ‘Sup, homies! What up, G? I come back from the home GI. This is the stereotype that should not define the youth of my community. When writing my introduction, I wanted to capture this portrayed stereotype of not only the Glen Innes youth but the community as a whole. Unfortunately, outside of my community, this would be the stereotype that represents Glen Innes. This stereotype is a myth, and, yes, I, Ngatokorima Mataio Jake Ulugia Lamkum, will be your personal myth buster for the remaining time I have to speak. Today I stand here as a proud resident of Glen Innes, which contributes to the growing diversity of our country.

Education—I could say a long list of issues that affect this aspect of life for the youth of Glen Innes. What I can say is that some of the schools in the Tāmaki subdivision of east Auckland, including Tāmaki College, where I come from, are a part of an innovative programme called Manaiakalani, which assists students in leasing out and purchasing netbooks for use in schools. This programme has enabled schools to

transition out of traditional ways of teaching and learning from books into digital technology. All the teaching and learning is now done online, so any time, anywhere, students can get access to their work. The project has given families internet access within our community, opening up the mentions of the World Wide Web.

Although there is more work still to be done, there has been a massive improvement in National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) results within Tāmaki College alone. Just to give some figures, comparing 2011's results with 2012's, the NCEA results moved from 17.3 percent to 24.4 percent of students achieving level 1. They moved from 25.2 percent to 51.6 percent of students achieving level 2. They moved from 18.5 percent to 39.4 percent of students achieving level 3. They moved from 14.8 percent to 25.3 percent of students achieving university entrance. These figures may not mean a lot to you all, but for a decile 1 school such as mine, this is a huge accomplishment for the community and the Pacific Island community. This definitely proves that we are on the right track to success.

I know that I said that all the stereotypes of Glen Innes are myths, but they would not be hanging over us if there were not a few rotten tomatoes. As a deeply involved community member, I would like to see MPs coming out to our communities to inspire the youth who I myself cannot reach and inspire on my own.

**SARAH LEE (Rodney):** Today I am here to talk to you about the 1961 Crimes Act, section 98D, which defines human trafficking as the arrangement, organisation, reception, concealment, or harbouring of a person in New Zealand, knowing that their entry was arranged by means of coercion.

Priya is a 13-year-old girl from New Zealand's Indian society, who is part of a recent case study. Her father sells her to his friends for sex to finance his new restaurant. I ask you is this human trafficking? By international standards, yes, this is trafficking. The abuse of power has led to the receipt of persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation. International law defines this as human trafficking, as Priya is being exploited for someone else's gain. However, under current New Zealand law, Priya's father would be found guilty of child abuse and of sexual assault but not of human trafficking, thus allowing us as New Zealanders to keep a self-deceived clean slate.

The 1961 Crimes Act does not recognise domestic trafficking. We therefore request that it be amended to define trafficking as the transportation and/or harbouring of a person, whether it includes the crossing of international borders or is regarded as domestic trafficking for the purpose of commercial exploitation. As Kiwis, we believe that human trafficking is not relevant to us here in New Zealand because we fail to recognise it due to a lack of education. Yet it is currently believed that there are 200 children being trafficked internally within New Zealand. We live in ignorance, thinking that slavery was abolished two centuries ago. Without realising it, we are growing the sex trafficking industry. The high demand for the legalised sex trade is a contributor to human trafficking, as the legalisation of prostitution and easy access to pornography normalise violent sexual acts.

Human trafficking is not just a Third World problem. Therefore, I urge you to take this requested amendment into consideration so that domestic traffickers and international traffickers alike will be prosecuted for what they are, so as to lessen the vulnerability of New Zealanders to human trafficking. We need to acknowledge the wrong in our country, rather than turning a blind eye, so that our citizens are educated and so that those who have been trafficked are offered the proper support that they are entitled to as victims of modern-day slavery.

We must step up to the international standard so as to remove the loopholes that are created in the law when we do not stand united against evil. Years from now, let

historians say of us that we fought well in the battle of our time—the battle against human trafficking.

**CALLUM LO (Tukituki):** New Zealand has a very long and very proud history of being a nation of equality and tolerance. We were the first country to give women the right to vote and have become world leaders in same-sex marriage equality. Despite this, discrimination against physically and mentally disabled people is shockingly rampant in this country. This is intentional, harmful, and malicious discrimination that some disabled people face every single day.

I recently watched a video on YouTube of a social experiment involving how ordinary people react when they witness active discrimination firsthand against those less fortunate than them. Hidden cameras were set up in a supermarket, where an actor with Down's syndrome pretended to work as an item bagger. Another actor using the checkout would begin loudly abusing the guy, saying things such as: "You're absolutely retarded. You have to go faster.", "They shouldn't hire these people.", and "You're so stupid, so slow. They have places for people like you." Most of the people standing in line behind the abuser did nothing, but stood uncomfortably and looked away.

This kind of culture where we stand by and do nothing is unacceptable. It is not acceptable to take the piss out of disabled people—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! *[Interruption]* Order!

**CALLUM LO:** I apologise. It is not acceptable to take the mickey out of disabled people, even if they cannot hear you. It is not—

**Michael Fryer:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. "Mickey" is the same term as foul language.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, I am finding that term acceptable. Certainly his earlier attempt was something that is not acceptable in this House. Would the member please continue; he is doing a good job.

**CALLUM LO:** It is not acceptable to make fun of disabled people, even if they cannot hear you. It is not acceptable to treat them differently as a result of their challenges. It is not OK to use the word "retarded" to refer to things that you think are stupid—a habit that I have recently started trying to get out of.

Disabled people face social barriers in schools, in workplaces, and in public. In 1988 Titewhai Harawira, Hone Harawira's mother, was found guilty of physically abusing a mental health patient in a health unit that she was in charge of.

**Michael Fryer:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. He is referencing a member of Parliament. That is insulting.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, no. The reference was to a person around a conviction. It is not a matter now before the court. The member is quite in order to make that reference that he has made.

**CALLUM LO:** I will resume. It was a mental health unit that she was in charge of. How she justifies this to herself and how she sleeps at night I have no idea.

Fortunately, attitudes are changing, and our culture is moving towards being one where we do not tolerate discrimination in any form. But although these prejudices continue—towards youth in particular—we must take action to show support for our disabled friends. Awareness is the most important catalyst for effecting change of this kind. I truly believe that most people are completely accepting of those less fortunate than us, but they are unaware of how serious this issue is. I encourage you all to go back to your electorates and communities with a message of understanding and kindness. Tell everyone that disabled people really are being treated cruelly in many situations. Thank you very much.

**GEORGINA LOMAX-SAWYERS (List):** I come from a town where it is more common to see "high-vis" gear than suits, a town where, it seems, every second car has

the words “Solid Energy” or “Stockton Alliance” along the side. Westport has the largest coalmine in New Zealand. The mine is what our whole town and community are based around, and especially mining jobs.

The mining company entices young people into the company. It pays miners \$65,000 a year. For many of our young people, especially our boys, getting \$65,000 seems like a much better option than staying at school. But at the end of the day, mining is a boom-and-bust industry, and currently it is busting. These kids are suddenly out of a job, with skills that are not easily transferable. Where does a young person left out of work, with these skills, go? They join the thousands of Kiwis fleeing our shores for Australia—leaving my town broken, with families and young people leaving. They are leaving Westport as a town that will not be growing, with an ageing population, as young people are forced to search for work elsewhere. You know, I cannot live in your ghost town.

This is not the fault of the young people who are just trying to provide for themselves. It is not even the fault of the big mining company turning a profit for its Australian owners. At the end of the day, it is the fault of the Government, a Government that has put all its eggs in one basket, backed boom-and-bust industries over resilient, sustainable ones, and failed to create good jobs for our young people. Young people in my town deserve another option. We deserve sustainable jobs that allow us to build a life for ourselves in the town we love. We deserve jobs that are not based around a boom-and-bust industry that leaves us helpless, with no option other than to cross the Ditch when the jobs run out. My town may be small, and we may think that “high-vis” is high fashion, but we deserve sustainable jobs that are helping to build a smart, green economy in Aotearoa. Thank you.

**EMMA MOFFETT (Wigram):** It is an honour to be speaking in the general debate. I feel proud to be sitting in the Chamber today representing Dr Megan Woods and the community of Wigram in Christchurch. As a Youth MP from Christchurch, I know I could be standing up here commenting on the Christchurch earthquake, how greatly affected the Christchurch community has been, and how the rebuild is taking place. But, to be honest, I slept through the first big quake. Instead, I am going to be talking about the current transition that my school, Hornby High School, is going through.

My school is becoming a year 7 to 13 school with the closure of our local intermediate, Branston Intermediate School. It has been a hot topic with students, teachers, and the surrounding community since being announced only last month. People have varying opinions on it, how it will work, and whether it will work. The current plan is that Hornby High School will become a year 7 to 13 school at the beginning of 2014 and Branston Intermediate School will close. At Hornby High School, the majority of our students come from Branston Intermediate School, which has an approximate roll of under 170 students in years 7 and 8. I have spoken to students who have attended the school, and they have had only good things to say about their experiences there. My father and my aunt both attended the school, whereas I did not. I attended a year 0 to 8 primary school, Templeton Primary School. I thoroughly enjoyed my experiences there. In years 7 and 8, we travelled to Branston Intermediate School to use its technology facilities for classes.

This closure will mean for Hornby High School that within only the next 6 months there will be the need for new classrooms, new teachers and support staff, a development of the structure for year 7 and 8 students, as well as other things to make the school function correctly. As a school, we are assured that there are the right people being used as assets to the school throughout this transition, but is that enough? The youth have not been involved in this process.

There are positives and negatives in all types of schools, whether they be a full primary school, an intermediate school, or a high school. Some of the positives in this situation are the new classrooms and the continuity. As a year 13 student, I see the way that the new classrooms are planned to look, and not only are they beautiful but the functionality has increased so much from the typical classroom I have been used to while growing up. I wish we had classrooms like that. There are so many other advantages in this remodelling of the school, such as the teachers being experienced in senior school and National Certificate of Educational Achievement teaching so that when the students are younger, they are ensured to be taught the things they need for when they are older.

I believe that the decision that has been made to close Branston Intermediate School is a good one, which will benefit Hornby High School but not so much Branston Intermediate School. This decision should have been made earlier by the Ministry of Education so that the transition was not so abrupt for the school. It has been a mess. The change in the community is going to have a strong impact on the youth in the Hornby and Wigram communities. I just hope that it turns out for the best. Thank you.

**GEORGE MOON (List):** “You can get so confused that you’ll start in to race down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace, and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space, headed, I fear, toward a most useless place. The Waiting Place ...”. Dr Seuss could be talking about Christchurch. It appears that we are in that weirdish wild waiting place with the Government at the helm. But who should be deciding the future of our place? According to my survey of approximately 150 people, satisfaction with the rebuild is at a low point because of the apparent lack of democracy. We feel we are not being listened to.

Like most Cantabrians, I started out with heaps of optimism for the future of our city. The fantastic Share an Idea campaign run by the council had a huge response. From the wacky to the awesome, over 100,000 ideas were shared across the 6-week campaign. People wanted a greener, more accessible city. They wanted fewer cars, more bikes, improved bus services, trams, and even new trains. These ideas were confirmed by my own research, from conversations and meetings, and from some thoughtful input from a work skills group organised by the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology and IHC.

Like many of our tall buildings, optimism was demolished with the introduction of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, or CERA. The authority was appointed, not elected, and it has taken away power from our council without consultation, and produced the final development plan of Christchurch, excluding many elements from the original draft. The Government is planning to build a 35,000-seat covered stadium. Sounds reasonable—right? But Cantabrians rated it as the least favoured project in the rebuild. There is an 18,000-seat stadium that does the job without needing additional council funding.

I took part in a protest rally last year against the lack of democracy in Christchurch. We cannot vote for who is in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority or who runs Environment Canterbury. The Government breaks its promises by ignoring its own commissioners and continuing to suspend Environment Canterbury elections. It said that the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority would be gone by the end of 2016. Who is to say the date will not change?

To summarise: give us back our say. Give us the opportunity to work together, share the power, and ensure that Christchurch is made a better place for now and the future. It is lonely in the waiting place. We need democracy for company. Thank you.

**JULIA MUSGRAVE (List):** I would be lying if I said that I think the world is perfect. It is impossible to go for very long without seeing or hearing something that

makes you cringe and temporarily lose all faith in humanity. It is inescapable, whether it be discrimination or poverty or climate change. Do you know what most people do about it? Complain. We complain or accept that things are always going to suck and try to move on with our lives. Go and do something about it? Like that would ever help.

As a teenager it is even worse. Society tells you that you are not actually as mature as you feel, that you are not developed enough to really matter, and it does not seem like anything you think or say is valuable or could make a difference or is even going to be listened to. An inherent characteristic of teenagers, and even children, is feeling more mature than we are, or, at least, than what we are told we are. Maybe it is just society telling us that we are wrong. I do not know whether it is something about growing up in general—the way that we need to feel like we are an improvement of who we used to be—but people always have the tendency to forget what it was like being a younger version of themselves, and recall only the regrettable things they did.

So, as a superior version of my 15-year-old self, and at the risk of my 17-year-old self's embarrassment, I can say with absolute certainty that being a teenager is not as bad as how you remember. As a teenager you are so much more intelligent, insightful, and enthusiastic than you will remember any time later, because you will always be biased towards the present you. OK, that might be what I am doing right now, but how does that make my 16-year-old brain any different from yours?

That leads me back to my original point. We all need a passion, and it is teenagers, who are much more likely to feel disempowered, who can benefit from that most. You need something that you believe in so strongly that you will risk embarrassing your future self to fight for it; something that no amount of societal pressure will stop you believing in it; something that is so important that even if you were the only person in the world trying to make a change, it is still worth it. If all the people who had ever worried about climate change and had decided that their small contribution was never going to make enough difference had been passionate enough to try everything they could anyway, just imagine where we could be now.

The only way to incite this passion in young people is to share it around. We need to show people—express our passion relentlessly—until they find something to fight for themselves. Passionate teachers are the most valuable things you can possibly have. Their enthusiasm is contagious and it inspires students to find a passion of their own.

This is how we change the world. I could have spoken about any number of issues today, but this, passion, is the key to shaping the world into the way we want it.

**JESSICA PALAIRET (Wellington Central):** The problem with politics is politics. The political game focuses on getting the best photo in *Women's Weekly*. Getting re-elected is focused on, not making policies that actually constitute the real and needed change. I think it is time to address this—to make politics about prioritising. I think that there are three key priorities that the Government is ignoring at the moment.

Firstly, young people are constantly scapegoated for what are wider societal issues. The prime example of this was the recent alcohol law reform bill, where rather than tackling the roots of this damaging and dangerous culture, young people were tackled.

**Mark Davis:** I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker. There has been a violation of House Standing Order 31, "Offensive references to House or judiciary". I believe that as it has been offensive towards the decisions of this House, this speech should therefore be ruled out of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Could the member repeat the Standing Order he is referring to?

**Mark Davis:** Youth Parliament 2013, Standing Order 31.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Standing Order 31 reads for me: "A member may not use offensive words against the House or any member of the judiciary." I do not think for 1 minute that Jessica has used such language. I invite the member to continue with her

contribution. Furthermore, because the member has been interrupted, if she needs another 30 seconds to complete her speech, it is available.

**JESSICA PALAIRET:** Thank you. What I was going to talk about was how young people are actually the victims of this culture. We are the victims of alcohol advertising, which normalises and sensationalises alcohol abuse. We are the victims of advertising and alcohol availability. So not only is this unfair but it is unproductive. We need to see a change in priorities with this.

Secondly, we pride ourselves on a history of leading the world. We have led the world in being nuclear-free. We have led the world in women getting the vote. But what are we known for now? Halving the amount of money that we invest in research and development of green technologies. We are known for wanting to frack our oceans. What does this mean? It means that we are falling behind, and the world is watching. Our priorities are not in the right place, because this should be an opportunity for us to be leading the world again.

Finally, New Zealand is rife with systemic inequality. We see this with women, and the fact that in the National Party, 14 out of the 59 MPs are women. We see this with income inequality, where we have one in five New Zealand children living in poverty. This is unfair, and it is horrible for these children. So why, then, are targets on child poverty being skated around and ignored? It is all very well to be focusing on rheumatic fever, but the causes of the problem need to be tackled. These things are not fair, they are not right, they are backwards, and it is time to change this.

I am not some revolutionary new thinker; I am just a young person who can see past the fickle game of politics and can see where our priorities need to be. The next question is simple: will our Government do the same?

**THOMAS REES (List):** Today I address the House to raise the issue of why New Zealand should re-implement the death penalty. First of all, the issue of crime in New Zealand is something that needs to be addressed. Currently, New Zealand does not have true justice when it comes to murder. The view of my community, the people of Mt Roskill, is that if you decide to commit some of the most heinous, disgusting crimes, then not only do you not deserve to walk on our streets again but you do not deserve to live. This is true justice and this is how we can show to the world that we have zero tolerance when it comes to murder.

One of the arguments that some members of my community have brought up is whether the death penalty is a deterrent of crime. From my research, it has become clear that the statistics are ambiguous, and they can be used to prove either point. But the way I think all of us should look at the issue of deterrence is shown in the words of John McAdams: "If we execute murderers and there is in fact no deterrent effect, then we have killed a bunch of murderers. If we fail to execute murderers, and doing so would in fact have deterred other murderers, we have allowed the killing of a bunch of innocent victims. I would much rather risk the former. This, to me, is not a tough call."

I think that deep down we all want the death penalty. Deep down, if you really find it in your heart, you do. But it is the flawed counterarguments that seem to dissuade many. One member of my community told me that he was against capital punishment, simply because of the risk of an innocent person being killed. The problem with that is that if you do have the death penalty in New Zealand, then people who are sitting on the jury are almost certainly going to take a trial much more seriously, as once you execute someone, there is no turning back. So this can prevent innocent people from being killed.

The other problem is that to oppose the death penalty means that you would have to be a complete pacifist, because in war there is always the possibility of an innocent person being killed. I am talking about necessary war, such as World War II. I do not

think anyone here would say that New Zealand's involvement in World War II was wrong, but because of our involvement, innocent people died. But just because innocent people died does not mean New Zealand's involvement in that war was necessarily wrong.

I think New Zealand should re-implement the death penalty so that we can have a safer society for the future of our children. Thank you.

**TIM SHIELS (List):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in this distinguished Chamber today to talk about something that is very important to me, and something that I hope will soon be very important to you. It is time New Zealand had an open discussion about the issue of organ donation. For too long there has been some sort of taboo around discussing this, and I hope this will change.

I have a particular passion for organ donation awareness, as last year my beloved 20-year-old sister died whilst on a waiting list for a donated liver. I tell this story not to elicit sympathy or to pull the grief card, but merely to explain the dramatic effect that organ donation, or a lack thereof, can have on people.

The rate of deceased organ donation in New Zealand is appalling, and it is much lower than in many other countries in the world. Something needs to be done about this. Although many people think that selecting "donor" on their driver's licence means that the organs will be automatically donated upon their death, this is not the case. It is the deceased person's family who make the decision. It is time we had a discussion, as a nation, about this.

There needs to be further support for live organ donors, as well. This is something that the Financial Assistance for Live Organ Donors Bill, the member's bill formerly in the name of my adult MP, the Hon Michael Woodhouse, would do. This is something that I urge all my fellow youth members of Parliament to talk to their adult MPs about, in order to get more support.

Wales has recently introduced an opt-out system of organ donation. This is where all Welsh citizens are automatically organ donors unless they opt out, which is something many people will want to do for spiritual or cultural reasons. Such a system in New Zealand would change attitudes towards organ donation and further increase the number of people who choose to donate their organs upon their death.

I strongly hope that some fellow honourable Youth Parliament members will join me in my call for a change in Government policy on this matter.

**JESSICA SINCLAIR (Wairarapa):** In my region, the Tararua, a pressing issue facing me and the youth of my community is the Horizons Regional Council - generated One Plan. It involves dairy and sheep and beef farmers as well as horticulturists within the region obtaining a personalised consent that details what practices on a farm need to be altered, what land needs to be retired, and also by how much farmers need to decrease their stocking numbers. The whole concept is to ensure that the Tararua waterways are not polluted any further by effluent runoff.

The problem I, my peers, and the farmers of the Tararua are having is the significant negative economic impact this plan is undoubtedly going to produce. I am not saying that the concept is not respectable, because it is, and there is not a single person in the region who does not want to protect our local waterways. But there has to be a balance, economically and environmentally. Currently, the One Plan, as it stands, is not providing this balance. The consents I mentioned earlier have an unrealistic expectation of how farming should be. Horizons and the Environmental Council are basically asking farmers to reinvent farming as something that is not economically viable.

A ballpark figure of \$60 million was quoted by a local businessman as how much he determined would be lost to the One Plan by our community. However, it is a cost not just to the farmers; it is a cost to the entire community. Reduced business from farmers

through various Tararua businesses, such as veterinary clinics and service people, will reduce the profits of our local enterprises, which will in turn result in businesses spending less through their suppliers, and so it goes on. No one is subsidising anyone; everyone is just losing.

Thanks to Landcare Research, the people of our district now have a good handle on the One Plan as it stands. It confirms that farm profitability will be at a loss of between 22 and 43 percent. Members of the public, take away this food for thought: take up to 43 percent off your post-tax income. Do you now understand the frustration of our region's farmers? And they are the issues of just the foreseeable future. What about youth in the same position as me, who are intending to study agriculture next year? Why would we want to continue to be a part of the Tararua community if our profits are going to be hindered? What about when this plan becomes a nationwide problem and New Zealand's primary industry is no longer the economic provider it is today?

The dairy industry is our country's primary exporter, and a main component in keeping our economy afloat. When the One Plan is nationwide, it will be everyone's problem—primarily, of those who are today's youth and who will be tomorrow's leaders. It is not something that is going to boost the economy and secure international relations, as asset sales do, but it is going to be a difficult problem to solve and not something that can be ignored.

I am asking that everyone currently involved in this issue and everyone who is in this Chamber take into account the difficulties that this issue is causing our farmers and my region, and consider how we, the members of the public, can create a balance that will benefit our economy and our environment. Thank you.

**ANCHAL SINGH (List):** I want to start by acknowledging my fellow Youth MPs from all over the country. Congratulations on your selection. I also want to greet our guests in the public gallery. Thank you for your interest and attendance. E Te Māngai Rangatira o te Whare nei, tēnā koe. E ngā raiona o te Whare, tēnā hoki koutou. Ki ngā manuhiri, nau mai, haere mai, tēnā tātou katoa.

*[Greetings to you Mr Speaker of this House and to you collectively as well, the lions of the House. Welcome to the visitors and to us all welcome.]*

In many communities throughout New Zealand, young students do not attend school and still expect great things, but, without qualifications and basic skills, a good job is unlikely. The question is why do young people not want to attend school? Students carry upon their shoulders a lot of pressure, not just from schoolwork but from all those who expect so much out of a student. The pressure, the lack of support, the lack of motivation, or when you are unable to succeed as well as your peers are just some issues that tend to drive a student away. Do students feel intimidated by academic education systems such as the National Certificate of Educational Achievement? I think another education system that allows students to decide whether they want to pursue an academic or a trades-based pathway should be available at high school level, to allow students entrance into polytechnics or into apprenticeships, with support from local organisations, foundations, companies, schools, and tertiary providers.

The Mayor of Ōtorohanga, Dale Williams, in the last 8 years has created a unique model of an apprentice support system and 10 other youth initiatives to help youth in his community. With help from the Waikato Institute of Technology, the community was able to open a trade training centre, driven by the district's employers. From this can be seen a significant decrease in crime in the community and frustrated unemployed youth. After hearing about this successful story, a few schools in the Wellington region, such as my own, Wainuiōmata High School, are in the middle of setting up a similar programme, with the help of principals and teachers, local councils, tertiary providers, churches, and the Careers and Transition Education Association, also known as CATE,

which also provides programmes such as Gateway and Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource.

If we can start to build support in the smaller communities and spread it out into wider ones, I am sure the future of youth, and the qualifications and skills that follow them, will allow for a secure future for New Zealanders entering jobs. Thank you.

**SAMUEL SMITH (Invercargill):** I believe that the ever-growing epidemic of obesity is going to be one of the most critical problems facing New Zealand in the next 10 years. Thirty-five percent of our population 15 years of age and over are overweight, and the health bill for that runs from \$700 million to over \$800 million a year. This includes the loss of productivity.

When taking a closer look at the population as a whole, the claims by researchers that obesity levels have reached an all-time high are correct. Why, in a country that has produced such incredible athletes and promoted fitness at all levels, have we allowed this to happen? Professor Swinburn claimed that New Zealand has “performed poorly on policies such as reducing junk food marketing to children, and simple front-of-pack traffic light labelling on processed foods and giving the food industry too much influence in developing public policies around food.” I mean, how are we supposed to make people eat healthily when junk food is so heavily advertised? Personally, I think a good idea would be to get rid of GST on fruit and vegetables, or subsidise bread and milk. At least, that would be a start.

I now move on to the subject of the health problems associated with obesity. This must be another great problem facing health professionals. The diseases associated with obesity are endless: diabetes, various types of cancer, heart failure, high cholesterol, strokes, heart disease, and the list goes on—not to mention the emotional impacts that most overweight people face. All of these problems have to be resolved somehow, whether it be by medical treatment or therapy, but all of these costs have to be paid by someone. This goes to show how obesity is holding our country back, because I am sure there are more important places the Government could be putting its money than to have some morbidly obese person’s varicose veins removed.

Obesity will have a critical impact on our health system in the next decade. It is unlikely that our working population will increase to the extent that the health system will be able to cope. So where will our priorities lie? Will insurance companies be unwilling to insure obese people? Will employers be reluctant to employ obese staff? As mentioned before, the loss of productivity is already of great concern to this country. Will our health system survive in its present state—remember, it is going to be under tremendous pressure—and will we have the specialists that we so urgently need? To ensure a healthy population and a health system that can provide a service to us all, I believe we need to start now and educate children and adults to be more aware of the consequences of being overweight, because if we do not, the endless cycle of obesity will pass down through future generations.

This will be difficult when junk food is so readily available. And, let us face it, who does not love some “K-fried” or “Mackers”? But, somehow, the Government is going to have to make some hard and unpopular decisions that include domestic and commercial life and that will put a stop to obesity. Thank you.

**SARA STERNE (Kaikōura):** Eighty-five lives—85 lives—were wasted on New Zealand roads as a result of drink-driving in 2011. Why are we allowing such an unnecessary waste of life to be inflicted upon our nation? Why are we allowing drink-driving?

I would like to propose a zero percent blood-alcohol limit for all New Zealand drivers. The current laws around drink-driving state that a 0 percent blood-alcohol limit is compulsory for any driver under the age of 20. However, according to the Ministry of

Transport, the age group that claims the highest percentage of fatalities due to drink-driving are the 20 to 24-year-olds, and there is still a consistently high trend of deaths right through to the 60-plus age group of New Zealand drivers.

I accept that the large majority of drivers do not abuse the right to drive with some alcohol in their system. However, there is still no need whatsoever for someone to have consumed any alcohol at all before driving. People's standard objection to banning all drink-driving is usually: "What's wrong with a few drinks before we go home?". But my answer to them is why? Why the need for a few drinks?

If people know that zero tolerance of alcohol is permitted, then they do not have to potentially wrongly calculate how many drinks they can have before they have reached their limit. Furthermore, drink-driving does not affect just the driver who is intoxicated, or even just the people in their car. As soon as an intoxicated individual makes that decision to get behind the wheel, anyone in the close vicinity of that vehicle is immediately put in danger—life-threatening danger. From 2009 to 2011, 151 innocent lives were wasted. These were helpless bystanders, passengers, and other road users who got caught up in one individual's bad decision. It was not them who chose to pick up the keys after drinking.

This is a real issue for communities in our country. Adequate action needs to be taken regarding drink-driving. We should not be allowing any alcohol to be in the systems of drivers. Why do we need to risk the lives of others for the sake of a few drinks?

New Zealand needs to take responsibility for its problems. We have to fight to have intoxicated drivers taken off our roads, we need to fight to have a safer country, and we need to fight for all the people who are dying pointlessly as a result of drink-driving. Zero tolerance of drink-driving would prove to the reckless few in our country that we no longer want to lose our friends, family, and acquaintances to such impudent behaviour. Zero tolerance of alcohol would demonstrate that drink-driving is not our future. Thank you.

**KURA WALLER (Waiariki):** Ngā mihi ki a koe, e Te Matua. Papaki tū ana ngā tai ki Mauao. I whakanukunukuhia, i whakanekenekehia, i whiua e Hotu a Wahinerua ki te wai, ki tai wiwī, ki tai wawā, arā, tihei mauri ora.

*[Greetings to you, Mr Speaker. The tides crashes ceaselessly upon Mauao where Hoturoa cast Wahinerua into the sea to appease the surging tides from here, there and everywhere and to manoeuvre and dislodge the vessel held fast. Behold the breath of life.]*

Māori are the natives of this country. We work just as hard as any other nationality here. If we are good enough to entertain your manuhiri, and if we are good enough to make New Zealand look good and make New Zealand unique, then we are good enough to sit in this Parliament. Perhaps my member of Parliament would believe that our Māori seats would much rather go to the Labour Party so it might become the Government, which is most unlikely.

But to get to my point today, ladies and gentlemen, on 17 April 2013 Parliament took a vote to approve gay marriage in New Zealand. With 77 votes to 44, the verdict was clear. The New Zealand Parliament had gone mad. Receiving its Royal assent on 19 April, gay marriage will on 19 August be legalised. New Zealand will be the first country in the Pacific to legalise same-sex marriages, and the 13<sup>th</sup> overall in the world. During the time of the passing of this Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill, New Zealand received a lot of attention worldwide—from Ellen DeGeneres, Macklemore, and a few others. My questions are these, though. Did Parliament pass the law for attention, or did it pass the law to take attention away from the sly papers it was doing underneath?

Bob McCroskie, the founder of lobby group Family First, said the bill undermined the traditional concept of marriage. Historically and culturally, marriage is about a man and a woman, and it should not be touched. After all this media attention has gone, will it still be worth it? Growing up Māori, never before have my kuia and my koroua ever told me that gay marriage was OK, or that being gay was OK. But I do not mean to offend anyone here; it is just my belief. Man was created for woman, and woman was created for man. Let us not get that confused. To quote *The Lion King*, gay people cannot reproduce, so they are not a part of the circle of life.

After the exploitation of marriage, the next thing you know, people might be going to ask for three-way marriages, four-way, and so forth. This fight is not one for equality and not one for rights, but we are human, we live in a free country, and we have the right to marry a woman or marry a man. If Australia has the sense not to pass such a bill, then why can we not? Which is more memorable, the country that gives in first or the one that is last?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The time for this debate has expired. Can I just say thank you to each and every one of you for the way that you have conducted this debate. Yesterday my comments at the opening were about you treasuring democracy and about you soaking up everything you could about this wonderful institution. This is a debating chamber. It is my job here as the Speaker to respect that you, as the Youth MPs, have the right to put your topics before this Parliament. You have done that with absolute passion. I have noted today that you all have respected each other's point of view. You have not always agreed, but what this debating chamber must be about is the ability for MPs to give their point of view, and to have that point of view not necessarily agreed with but it must be respected at all times. I thank you all for your contributions.

The debate having concluded, the motion lapsed.

## MOTIONS

### Presiding Officers, Minister of Youth Affairs, and MPs—Expression of Thanks

**MONTY BLACKWOOD (Whanganui):** I move, *That this House thank Mr Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, and the Assistant Speakers, all members of Parliament, and, in particular, the Minister of Youth Affairs for Youth Parliament 2013.*

Motion agreed to.

### Science and Innovation—Tertiary Scholarships and Increased Support

**MARK DAVIS (Hamilton West):** I move, *That this House call for greater support for those interested in scientific endeavour, including an increase in the number of scholarships offered for scientific study at tertiary level.*

Motion agreed to.

### Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill—Acknowledgment of House of Representatives

**AMY WILLIAMS (Coromandel):** I move, *That the House recognise the achievement of the House of Representatives, based upon the passing of the recent Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act, and that we continue to strive for political leadership worldwide.*

Motion agreed to.

**Rt Hon Helen Clark—Reappointment as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme**

**RUGVED DESHPANDE (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate Helen Clark for being reappointed as the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme for a second term as of April 2013, and acknowledge her commitment towards sustainable human development and eradicating extreme poverty.*

Motion agreed to.

**Hon Parekura Horomia—Acknowledgment of Passing**

**ANNIE HUANG (List):** I move, *That this House hold a minute's silence to commemorate the sad passing of the Hon Parekura Horomia, a man of great mana. Rest in peace.*

Motion agreed to.

Honourable members stood as a mark of respect.

**Queen Elizabeth II—Diamond Jubilee**

**GURSHARN KAUR (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate Queen Elizabeth II on her recent Diamond Jubilee and express its appreciation for the commitment, service, and dedication Queen Elizabeth has shown to New Zealand for the last 60 years.*

Motion agreed to.

**United Nations—International Year of Water Cooperation**

**EMILY McCARTHY (Bay of Plenty):** I move, *That this House recognise the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013, as designated by the United Nations, in order to promote education, collaborative technological advancements, and personal responsibility in terms of sustaining and equally distributing the vital, precious resource of water.*

Motion agreed to.

**Electoral Reform—Women's Suffrage and Lowering of Voting Age**

**ALLANAH HARTLEY (Waikato):** I move, *That this House recognise and reflect on the election on the 28 November 1893 where women were first given the right to vote, and the lowering of the voting age in 1974 to 18, and note that both changes to the vote encouraged a greater number of youth to have a say in the running of this country.*

Motion agreed to.

**Youth Problems—Promotion of Parental Responsibility**

**INJY JOHNSTONE (List):** I move that the House take action to promote parental responsibility as the main solution to problems such as teen pregnancy rates, a binge-drinking culture, and the abuse of drugs.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** That is not the motion I have in front of me. I will just ask the Clerk for clarification on that. I am afraid that the member must move the motion that is on the Order Paper, and no other motion. So do you have the motion that is on the Order Paper?

**INJY JOHNSTONE (List):** Yes, that is the one that I said.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Can you just bring it up here to the Clerk so that we can just confer, because it is certainly not the motion that I have. I call Injy Johnstone to move her motion.

**INJY JOHNSTONE (List):** Do you want me to repeat it?

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Yes, repeat it.

**INJY JOHNSTONE:** I move, *That the House take action to promote parental responsibility as the main solution to problems such as teen pregnancy rates, a binge-drinking culture, and the abuse of drugs.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Tertiary Education—Interest-free Student Loans**

**ZARNA JONES (List):** I move, *That this House continue to support university students while studying at university with interest-free student loans.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Health Services—Access for All New Zealanders**

**HOLLY MCNABB (Waimakariri):** I move, *That this House commit itself to ensuring that all New Zealanders under the age of 18 receive health, dental, and optical care as required, regardless of their socio-economic status, location, or culture.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Electoral System—Reform of MMP**

**DANIELLE ROLLS (Napier):** I move, *That this House listen to the public of New Zealand and reform MMP.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Marine Reserves, Akaroa Harbour—Acknowledgment of Minister of Conservation**

**BRIDGET WHITE (List):** I move, *That this House congratulate the Hon Dr Nick Smith for placing a marine reserve in Akaroa Harbour.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Schools, Canterbury—Status of Chisenallwood Intermediate School**

**JACINTA TALIAU'LI (Manurewa):** I move, *That this House congratulate the Government on finally listening to the people of Christchurch and seeing reason for Chisenallwood Intermediate School to remain open as a separate school.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill, Debate—Conduct of Members of Parliament**

**CAITLIN SMART (List):** I move, *That this House commend all members of Parliament for their tolerant and mature conduct throughout the debate on the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Bill.*

Motion agreed to.

#### **Crosspower Ministries—Congratulations**

**MELANIA NAPA'A (Manukau East):** I move, *That this House congratulate Crosspower Ministries on inspiring, encouraging, and creating a positive difference in more than 200 young people all across South Auckland by providing free mentoring, workshops, and lessons in musical and visual performing arts and trade skills, and supportive centres.*

Motion agreed to.

**Minister of Youth Affairs—Congratulations**

**ANIKKA WALKER (List):** I move, *That the seventh New Zealand Youth Parliament congratulate the Minister of Youth Affairs and the Multi-Party Parliamentary Steering Committee on a successful 2013 New Zealand Youth Parliament.*

Motion agreed to.

**Youth Parliament—Expression of Thanks to Staff**

**TEAONUI McKENZIE (Te Tai Hauāuru):** I move, *That this House thank the people who have worked to make Youth Parliament 2013 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.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Lindsay Tisch):** Members, this item of business is concluded, and it concludes the Youth Parliament. I trust that you have enjoyed the experience just as much as we have in providing it for you. Thank you very much for your participation.

The considered points that have been covered, and that you have brought forward over the last 2 days, have been encouraging. You have presented yourselves well. You are a credit to your MPs, a credit to your schools, and a credit to the communities that you come from. Congratulations.

**The House adjourned at 5.06 p.m.**

# MEMBERS OF THE SEVENTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF NEW ZEALAND

17 JULY 2013

*Speaker*—RT HON DAVID CARTER  
*Assistant Speaker*—LINDSAY TISCH

Abraham, Tama .....	Te Atatū	Lenihan-Ikin, Isabella .....	List
Adam, Olivia .....	Clutha-Southland	Liang, Malinna .....	List
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Bishop, Ellie .....	Epsom	Mason, Mungo .....	Tauranga
Blackwood, Monty .....	Whanganui	McCarthy, Emily .....	Bay of Plenty
Blair, Kaukiterangi .....	Te Tai Tonga	McKenzie, Teaonui .....	Te Tai Hauāuru
Bleasdale, Jillian .....	List	McLean-Dewes, Rachel .....	List
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Bowman, Rosie .....	Rimutaka	Medcalf, Jesse .....	East Coast Bays
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Cadigan, Daisy .....	Rongotai	Musgrave, Julia .....	List
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Coates-Reid, Amber .....	Mt Albert	Nash, Madeleine .....	List
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Curtis, Angela .....	Auckland Central	Palairet, Jessica .....	Wellington Central
Davis, Mark .....	Hamilton West	Palsenbarg, Ella .....	Papakura
Deal, Hanna .....	Port Hills	Peeni, Ebony .....	List
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Evett, Jay .....	Hutt South	Robilliard, Mark .....	Rotorua
Fryer, Michael .....	Ōtaki	Rolls, Danielle .....	Napier
Fuimaono, Corey .....	List	Rutherford, Tom .....	List
Gardner, Cian .....	List	Ryan, Chris .....	Botany
Gardner, Kate .....	Dunedin South	Savill, Patrick .....	Nelson
George, Rahul .....	List	Scahill, Samantha .....	Northland
Gerard, Patrick .....	List	Shiels, Tim .....	List
Gray, Calum .....	Selwyn	Sinclair, Jessica .....	Wairarapa
Grootelaar, Brad .....	List	Singh, Anchal .....	List
Gulasekharam, Jacinta .....	Rangitikei	Singh, Simarjit .....	Mana
Hart, Samuel .....	List	Skinner, Charm .....	Hauraki-Waikato
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Holyoake, Victoria .....	New Plymouth	Sterne, Sara .....	Kaikōura
Howe, Clementine .....	List	Stringer, Jack .....	Christchurch Central
Huang, Annie .....	List	Stuart, Ashley .....	West Coast - Tasman
Huang, Michelle .....	List	Taliau'li, Jacinta .....	Manurewa
Ivory, Stella .....	Taupō	Thompson, Henry .....	List
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Kaur, Gursharn .....	List	Waterson, Brooke .....	Helensville
Kiew, Shivon .....	Pakuranga	Webster, Cameron .....	New Lynn
Kim, Kristina .....	List	White, Bridget .....	List
Kingi, Eru Kapa .....	Te Tai Tokerau	Wilding, Oliver .....	Hamilton East
Knops, Andre ( <i>Temporary Speaker</i> ) .....	List	Williams, Amy .....	Coromandel
Kohu-Morris, Jacobi .....	List	Williams, Madeleine .....	List
Lamkum, Jake .....	List	Yang, Hannah .....	Mt Roskill
Lawton, Adam .....	East Coast	Zorn, Alex .....	Christchurch East
Lee, Sarah .....	Rodney		

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

*Clerk of the House of Representatives*—MARY HARRIS  
*Clerks at the Table*—PETER CARR, RENATO GUZMAN, TIM WORKMAN