

because of their light weight. A ban will do more than simply reduce litter; it will reduce harm to wildlife. I will be as brief as I can. The fact that we are even debating this today is ridiculous.

In 2016 when Labor introduced a bill to ban plastic bags, Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria had no ban in place and no plans to implement a ban. Queensland and Western Australia have now legislated bans and Victoria has announced plans to ban the bag, leaving New South Wales the sole jurisdiction without a ban in place or in planning. In June, Victoria announced that from 8,000 submissions received on the proposed bag ban in that State, 96 per cent of respondents supported the move. This bill is modelled on the successful Australian Capital Territory [ACT] bag ban, under which retailers cannot provide single-use lightweight polyurethane bags. As in the ACT, retailers can charge customers for alternative reusable bags. There is a range of reusable bags that will be unaffected by this bill, including "barrier" bags dispensed from a roll to hold loose items such as fruit and vegetables, heavier reusable plastic bags commonly used in department stores, paper bags, biodegradable bags and bin liners for purchase.

In July 2017, Coles and Woolworths announced that they would voluntarily stop supplying single-use plastic bags. Premier Gladys Berejiklian claimed that the Government did not need to take action to put a ban in place because "80 per cent of plastic bags are already banned by Coles and Woolworths". But in July 2018 when the self-imposed ban began, one supermarket chain reneged and went back to handing out free bags, owing to what it said was customer backlash. That is weak and a prime example of why a lack of leadership and buck-passing from the Premier and Government will not solve this issue.

It is a large issue. It might seem insignificant, but this is the scale of the problem. In New South Wales, up to 61 million bags are littered annually, while the national number of littered plastic bags can be 180 million. Every second, 159 single-use plastic bags are used across Australia. It is estimated that up to five billion plastic bags are used in Australia every year. Lightweight plastic bags are made from oil and do not degrade for decades, and their light weight means they can travel deep into natural ecosystems. According to Clean Up Australia, a 2002 study found that just 8.7 plastic checkout bags contain enough embodied petroleum energy to drive a car one kilometre.

The environmental impacts are enormous. Plastic bags enter the environment via runoff and wind. The CSIRO survey of marine debris found that three-quarters of all rubbish along the Australian coast is plastic. I do not need to go on with these statistics. The issue has been well canvassed and the damage has been well documented. By refusing to take action on this issue the Premier and the Minister have exposed themselves as environmental do-nothings at best and vandals at worst. They are neo-liberal ideologues who believe the free market can solve everything, which explains why the environmental policies they come up with are ineffective or bungled, or both. The container deposit scheme, which is a debacle, is a good example of that.

Debate adjourned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery students from the Al Noori Muslim School in the electorate of Lakemba. Welcome to the oldest Parliament in Australia. I trust the students will enjoy their morning.

Bills

WORKERS COMPENSATION (FIREFIGHTERS' PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS TO COMPENSATION) BILL 2018

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Guy Zangari, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr GUY ZANGARI (Fairfield) (10:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I invite bipartisan support for this bill by members of the Berejiklian Government to ensure that our State's firefighters receive the support they deserve. I acknowledge the presence of members of the Fire Brigade Employees Union [FBEU] in the gallery today. I assure them that New South Wales Labor will be backing them 100 per cent. I thank the FBEU and the Rural Fire Service Association for their consultation on this legislation over the past year. The Government has now announced its intention to move on this issue after the Opposition gave notice of the introduction of this bill. The Government claimed today that it has consulted with the

stakeholders. I put on the record that that is not the case. Unlike the Labor Opposition, it has not consulted widely about presumptive legislation. No-one has seen the Government's phantom bill. The Opposition has a bill on the table today and that is how it is backing in the firefighters.

I will commence by providing a brief history of the legislation and its importance not only in New South Wales but also throughout Australia. In June 2011, the Commonwealth Parliament introduced the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill for the Australian Capital Territory and aviation professional firefighters. That legislation ensured firefighters diagnosed with one or more of the listed cancers who had met the requisite years of service would then have their cancer presumed to be an occupational disease and as a result they would have requisite grounds to claim compensation. Following the introduction of the legislation, a Senate inquiry report was handed down recommending the passage of the bill and the expansion of the list of possible occupational cancers from seven to 12. In addition, the report recommended that similar legislation be implemented in every Australian State and Territory. The report stated:

The committee has conducted its analysis in the hope that similar legislation will be introduced across state jurisdictions in future as part of the harmonisation of workers' compensation laws. If this Bill is passed, the committee encourages state jurisdictions to engage in a dialogue which will eventually see a positive, and fair, outcome for firefighters across Australia.

New South Wales Labor has done that with the stakeholders—the FBEU, the Rural Fire Service Association and firefighters throughout New South Wales. The precedent for presumptive occupational diseases for firefighters was then accepted and the bill was passed on 24 November 2011 with the support of all major political parties. I emphasise that: All major political parties supported the legislation. Following the passage of that bill in the Australian Capital Territory in 2011, the Tasmanian Parliament unanimously passed a bill on 29 September 2013 recognising the same 12 cancers and the qualifying periods. Tasmania's legislation provides protection for career firefighters while extending the presumption to volunteer firefighters who could demonstrate 150 exposures over 10 years. The Western Australian Parliament followed suit and unanimously passed a bill on 29 October 2013 replicating the Commonwealth legislation covering career firefighters. In 2016, it extended the presumption to volunteer firefighters who had attended at least five hazardous fires during that year.

On 10 March 2014, the South Australian Parliament unanimously passed legislation based on the Tasmanian model. That legislation was subsequently amended in 2015 to remove the requirement for volunteers to have attended at least 150 exposure events. Then, in March 2015, the Northern Territory Parliament passed legislation, once again, based on Commonwealth legislation, for Northern Territory career firefighters. Like other States, it adopted the Tasmanian model for volunteer firefighters. The precedent has been set across the country. In September 2015, the Queensland Government passed legislation based, once again, on Commonwealth legislation for its career firefighters. Queensland introduced a new model for volunteer firefighters whereby claims are considered by a special administrative committee. The committee may consider evidence that may include fire service records and other similar information that would demonstrate volunteers' fire-scene exposures.

On 19 May 2017, the Victorian Government confirmed its intention to introduce presumptive legislation and subsequently held a parliamentary inquiry into the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill. The inquiry noted that "the Government has come to the strong conclusion that the case for reform is now overwhelming" and "the introduction of a presumptive rights compensation scheme acknowledges the risks that they take when carrying out their work." That is what the Opposition is doing: It is identifying these risks and saying that, as a result of the firefighting experience, should a firefighter be diagnosed with cancer, they should be protected by legislation. That is the bottom line of this legislation.

The need for legislation that appropriately protects and supports career and volunteer firefighters has been acknowledged in every other Australian jurisdiction. New South Wales remains the only jurisdiction left lagging behind with regard to presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters. That all changes today because the New South Wales Labor Opposition is backing in all firefighters who go in when other people go out. It is as simple as that. Whether it be a house fire, a bushfire or a road accident, these fine men and women go in when the rest of us go out. I have the privilege of introducing the Workers Compensation (Firefighters' Presumptive Rights to Compensation) Bill 2018, which aims to provide career and volunteer firefighters throughout New South Wales with the reassurance and peace of mind that they will in turn be looked after when they need our help. That is very important. Firefighters put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe and it is time that New South Wales afforded them the same protection in return.

Studies have conclusively proven that firefighters are at much greater risk of developing certain cancers as a result of being exposed to hazardous substances in their job. The bill seeks to make amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998, and the Workers Compensation (Bush Fire, Emergency and Rescue Services) Act 1987 to provide New South Wales firefighters with the appropriate protection should they contract a cancer known to be caused by exposure to

hazardous substances while performing their firefighting duties. This will ensure that any firefighter who is diagnosed with one of the listed occupational cancers is eligible for compensation without needing to go to excessive lengths to prove a direct cause of the disease. Many members have spoken in this place about cancer and the impact it has had on them or on family members. I ask them to imagine what it is like for firefighters having to go through an exhaustive process to prove that their duties caused their cancer. Under this bill these firefighters are protected.

The 12 occupational cancers and their qualifying periods which are referred to in this bill are: primary leukaemia, five years; primary site brain cancer, five years; primary site breast cancer, 10 years; primary site testicular cancer, 10 years; myeloma, 15 years; primary non-Hodgkin lymphoma, 15 years; primary site bladder cancer, 15 years; primary site colorectal cancer, 15 years; primary site kidney cancer, 15 years; primary site prostate cancer, 15 years; primary site ureter cancer, 15 years; and primary site oesophageal cancer, 25 years. For a firefighter to be eligible, they must meet the criteria set out in the table and their diagnoses must occur either during their term of employment or within 10 years of their retirement from active firefighting and the application. Minimum service periods must be equal to that of the qualifying period as I previously mentioned.

I note that this criterion remains consistent with legislation set out in other Australian jurisdictions and will provide a fair and just means to appropriately support volunteer and career firefighters should they contract an occupational disease. The legislation before the House today has come together, as I said at the start of this address, following extensive consultation with other jurisdictions and key stakeholders—some of whom are sitting in the gallery—including the affected firefighters, the Rural Fire Service Association and the Fire Brigade Employees Union, to form a holistic approach towards supporting firefighters who contract an occupational disease.

I have limited time to speak on this bill but I have a number of heartfelt, moving stories from firefighters, which I look forward to reading out on another occasion. I acknowledge the contributions made by Mr Darin Sullivan, who has spoken about his cancer story, Mr Stephen Nunn and Mr John Bromwich. I thank them for the stories that they have given to me and I looking forward to reading them onto the *Hansard* record. When it comes to occupational diseases, there is a clear need for firefighters to be supported and protected through legislation. People like John, Stephen, Darin and their families deserve support during those tumultuous times which can tear families apart. It is as simple as that—we know what cancer does.

The legislation before us today makes the necessary changes to ensure firefighters in New South Wales will have their occupational disease immediately presumed to have been caused by their years of service and exposure to hazardous substances while fighting fires in New South Wales. I once again invite members opposite to support this legislation and to support our dedicated firefighters throughout New South Wales. Firefighters are the people who protect us. What hope do they have if legislators in this place do not protect them? This legislation is about providing that protection.

Once again, I thank the firefighters for the jobs that they do and thank them for their year's worth of consultation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Visitors

VISITORS

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery students from the electorate of Hornsby, guests of the Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation and member for Hornsby.

Bills

PUBLIC FINANCE AND AUDIT AMENDMENT (STATE-FUNDED PRIVATE ENTITIES) BILL 2018

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 21 June 2018.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Treasurer, and Minister for Industrial Relations) (11:05): I speak on the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-Funded Private Entities) Bill 2018. We heard the shadow Treasurer the member for Keira outline the Public Finance and Audit Amendment (State-Funded Private Entities) Bill's follow-the-dollar powers for the Auditor General. The bill would allow the Audit Office to carry out performance audits to assess how non-government organisations [NGOs] or other private sector entities have spent public money to achieve a public purpose.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I am just making a point. As I said, I have had some doozies in my time, but that is an embarrassing question. I say this in all seriousness and as a point of difference: This Government works hard, day in and day out, for the people of this great State. I do not want to steal the Treasurer's thunder, but yesterday we got some very good news about the economy and our budget position. I will allow the Treasurer to talk about that. Ours are the parties that care about jobs, infrastructure, services and the cost of living, which matter to the people of New South Wales, and we will continue to do that. If members opposite go down into the gutter, we will go up and serve the people of this great State.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time.

FRONTLINE SERVICES SUPPORT

Mr STEPHEN BROMHEAD (Myall Lakes) (14:28): I address my question to the Premier. How is the New South Wales Government looking after our frontline services?

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN (Willoughby—Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Myall Lakes for his question. I know that he and everyone else in this place cares deeply about our frontline workers. Our emergency services personnel put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis. They walk into tragic situations to keep us safe. Whether it is fighting fires, catching criminals, delivering life-saving medical treatment or rescuing people from natural disasters, our emergency services workers and volunteers do an outstanding job on our behalf. I take this opportunity to say how deeply we appreciate the work they do and how much we respect the danger they face day in and day out. That danger is sometimes physical and apparent, and sometimes it is not.

That is why the Liberal-Nationals Government is proud to ensure that it supports our emergency services agencies with record funding, whether it is for the State Emergency Service, the NSW Police Force, firefighters or paramedics. This Government has provided record numbers of personnel and record funding to support our key workers in these areas. When a government has a strong budget and a strong economy, it can afford to announce an extra 700 paramedics and extra police officers. It can certainly also afford to ensure our firefighting men and women and all our other emergency services personnel have best equipment possible to get on with their jobs. I am very proud to be able to say that this Government is taking further steps today to support our emergency services personnel.

I was pleased this morning to have had the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Police, Troy Grant, and the Minister for Finance, Services and Property, Victor Dominello, confirm and announce that the New South Wales Government is introducing a bill to make it easier for firefighters diagnosed with 12 different types of cancer to claim compensation. Unfortunately—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: I am pleased to confirm that the Government has been working on this for more than 12 months.

Mr Guy Zangari: No, you haven't!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fairfield—

Mr Guy Zangari: Troy has not consulted with the Rural Fire Service Association or the Fire Brigade Employees Union, and you know that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Fairfield to order for the first time. I call the member for Prospect to order for the first time.

Ms GLADYS BEREJKLIAN: Importantly, unlike the proposals put by members opposite, the Government will not impose a 10-year limit on accessing the presumptive provision after firefighters retire from employment or volunteering. Because of the work the Government has done and because of our strong economic position, I can confirm that the Government will not impose the 10-year limit that members opposite have proposed. The Government believes that our firefighters deserve better protection than that proposed by members opposite. I stress that the Government's bill will contain no time limit on accessing the presumptive provision after a firefighter's career ends. The bill will ensure that our firefighters, who risk their own life and health to protect the people of this State, receive their workers compensation entitlements promptly. That is the difference between this Government and the Opposition: We do our work and we protect our citizens and our firefighters.

I also note that once the changes are introduced they will apply to eligible firefighters diagnosed from today with one of the 12 prescribed cancers. When we expect men and women to put their lives on the line, whether they face daily danger or acquire a serious illness because of the danger to which they have been exposed, it is our obligation to protect them and their families in the future. That is why this is such an important initiative.