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SITTING DAYS—2020

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FORTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—FIRST PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. David John Hurley, AC, DSC, FTSE (Retd)

House of Representatives Office Holders

Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith MP
Deputy Speaker—Mr Llewellyn Stephen O'Brien MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP, Hon. Sharon Leah Bird MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP, Mr Steven Georganas MP, Hon. Dr David Arthur Gillespie MP, Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Hon. Dr John Joseph McVeigh MP, Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP, Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP, Mr Andrew Bruce Wallace MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP, Mr Richard James Wilson MP, Mr Trent Moir Zimmerman MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christian Porter MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Darren Chester MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Butler MP

Party Leaders and Whips

Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Scott John Morrison MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Joshua Anthony Frydenberg MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Albertus Johannes van Manen MP
Government Whips—Mr Rowan Eric Ramsey MP and Ms Nicolle Flint MP

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Michael Francis McCormack MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. David Littleproud MP
Chief Whip—Hon. Damian Kevin Drum MP
Deputy Whip—Mr Kenneth Desmond O'Dowd MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. Anthony Albanese MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Richard Marles MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP and Ms Anne Maree Stanley MP

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PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
AG—Australian Greens; ALP—Australian Labor Party; CA—Centre Alliance;
IND—Independent; KAP—Katter’s Australia Party; LNP—Liberal National Party;
LP—Liberal Party of Australia; NATS—The Nationals;

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Clerk of the Senate—R Pye
Clerk of the House of Representatives—C Surtees
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic
Parliamentary Budget Officer—J Wilkinson
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<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
<td>The Hon Ben Morton MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management</td>
<td>The Hon David Littleproud MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts</td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
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<td>Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure</td>
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<td>The Hon Kevin Hogan MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Nola Marino MP</td>
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<td>The Hon Jason Wood MP</td>
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<td><strong>The Hon Michelle Landry MP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>The Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>The Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations</td>
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<td>Ms Emma McBride MP</td>
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<tr>
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Tuesday, 16 June 2020

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 12:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

**BILLS**

**Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection Measures) Bill 2019**

**Consideration of Senate Message**

Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.

Ordered that the amendments be considered immediately.

*Senate's amendments—*

1. Clause 2, page 3 (table item 16), omit "Schedule 14", substitute "Schedules 14 and 15".
2. Schedule 6, page 25 (line 1) to page 32 (line 16), omit the Schedule.
3. Page 53 (after line 30), at the end of the bill, add:

   Schedule 15—Review of sentencing for Commonwealth child sex offences

   (1) The Attorney-General must cause a review to be undertaken of the first 3 years of the operation of the following provisions of Part IB (sentencing, imprisonment and release of federal offenders) of the Crimes Act 1914, as amended by this Act, in relation to Commonwealth child sex offences (within the meaning of that Act):

   (a) Divisions 2 to 4;
   (b) Subdivision D of Division 5;
   (c) Divisions 6 to 9;
   (d) Division 1, to the extent that it relates to a provision covered by paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of this subitem.

   (2) The review must be undertaken by one or more persons who, in the Attorney-General's opinion, possess appropriate qualifications to undertake the review.

   (3) The person or persons undertaking the review must give the Attorney-General a written report of the review within 12 months after the end of the 3-year period.

   (4) The Attorney-General must cause a copy of the report of the review to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days of that House after its receipt by the Attorney-General.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:02): I would like to indicate to the House that the government proposes that amendments (1) and (3) be agreed to and that amendment (2) be disagreed to. I suggest, therefore, that it may suit the convenience of the House first to consider amendments (1) and (3) and then, when those amendments have been disposed of, to consider amendment (2). I move:

That Senate amendments (1) and (3) be agreed to.

By way of explanation, the government will support amendments (1) and (3). These amendments would see a statutory review of sentencing for offenders convicted of Commonwealth child sex offences with the findings to be reported to the parliament within four years of the bill coming into effect. A review of four years, rather than two or three as was suggested in the amendments by the Labor and the Greens, will ensure that the review properly captures the impact of this bill on sentencing outcomes for Commonwealth child sex offenders charged after the passage of the bill.

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (12:03): There's a lot that this bill gets right. Labor will always work with MPs and senators from all sides to strengthen our laws to protect our children. Nothing should get in the way of this objective. There is nothing more sickening than child sexual abuse. Children are the most precious and vulnerable members of our community and Labor will always support strong and effective laws to protect children from abuse and to punish their abusers.

I thank the government for agreeing to Labor's suggestion that there be a statutory review of Commonwealth sentencing practice in relation to child sexual abuse matters. That's what this first amendment deals with. That review is to commence within three years and to be completed within four. It will provide an opportunity to review the practice, the working, of the current settings of sentencing in this child sexual abuse area.
I would add that from the very beginning Labor have said that whether our amendments succeeded or failed in the Senate we would support this bill. That is what Labor did in the Senate last night—Labor supported this bill. The government has signalled that it will delay the passage of this bill indefinitely if Labor insist on our amendment to remove minimum sentencing from this bill. That's disappointing. The government has already delayed the passage of this bill for some eight months. Unlike the government, Labor will not allow the passage of this bill to be further delayed. For that reason, while we maintain our opposition to mandatory sentencing—because it does not work and makes it harder to catch, prosecute and convict criminals—we will not insist on our amendments relating to mandatory sentencing when the bill returns to the Senate. Protecting the welfare of children will always be Labor's overriding priority and concern.

Question agreed to.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:06): I now move:

That Senate amendment (2) be disagreed to.

The government will not agree to this amendment and that is on a matter of clear principle. The amendment would remove schedule 6 of the bill, which is the schedule that provides for mandatory minimum sentences for child sex offences that attract the highest penalties and to recidivist child sex offenders who have previously been convicted of a child sex offence. The government has taken the view since the inception of this legislation in 2017 that current sentencing practices for Commonwealth child sex offences are resulting in manifestly inadequate sentences that do not sufficiently recognise the harm suffered by victims or provide for adequate rehabilitation time in custody. The mandatory minimum provisions provided for in schedule 6 are critical and necessary to achieve this bill's overall intent of ensuring sentencing for child sex offences are drawn into line with community expectations.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12:07): I just want to place the Greens' position clearly on the record. The Greens support this bill, especially now that amendments (1) and (3) have been agreed to. I think the belief is universal amongst everyone in this place that child sex abuse is a scourge. It is unthinkable and we must fight it. So what we are dealing with here now is not a debate about whether the bill will be agreed to. We are dealing with whether or not the majority view of the Senate should be respected. And the majority view of the Senate gave effect to a basic principle of the rule of law, and that is that when people are convicted of crimes, especially when they are convicted of heinous crimes, it should be left up to judges to make the decision about what the appropriate sentence is. There's a very clear reason for that and a very simply understood principle. That is that it is difficult for parliament to think in advance of every conceivable situation. In the context of this bill, in particular, it is important that we—and, as I say, the Greens support this bill—have strong responses to offences but that judges be given the capacity to consider individual situations.

I'd ask members of the public to consider their teenage daughter or son who is at high school. What if they sent a text message to the person they were seeing at the time, their partner, who happened to be in the year below them? What if that text message was of a sexually explicit nature? What if those two people happened to fall on either side of the dividing line of the relevant age? That young person might be committing an offence. Should they be required to go to jail? That is the question that we are debating now, and the Greens are saying that that question should be left up to a judge. And that is why, historically, most people who defend the rule of law, like the Greens, oppose the imposition of mandatory minimum sentencing. Now, it is clear that the majority of the Senate, certainly up until this morning, opposes mandatory minimum sentencing and supports the rule of law. This House should support the rule of law as well. There is unanimity in this place about supporting the bill. There is unanimity in this place about stamping out child sex abuse. But there should also be unanimity in this place about preserving the very important principles of separation of powers and the rule of law.

It has been said in the submissions to the inquiry into this bill, by legal experts, by everyone who would also agree that we need to take strong action to stamp out child sex abuse, that we also need to make sure that we preserve the independence of the judiciary. The Greens will act on principle and defend the independence of the judiciary at the same time that we support strong laws to tackle child sex abuse. Others had said that up until yesterday they agreed with those matters of principle, and it appears now it's a case of: 'These are my principles. We agree with them strongly, but, if you don't like them, we've got others.' It only takes a strongly worded headline or a push from a minister and they change their position, and that's disappointing because the decisions that we make about matters of principle, defending the judiciary, defending the separation of powers and the importance of the rule of law have very-long-lasting consequences. So I repeat: the Greens give support to the bill as it's been amended in the Senate. We're glad the House has agreed to amendments (1) and (3), and the House should also agree to amendment (2).
I also add two final matters. We as the Greens have raised some technical issues that there were with the bill. We don't think that should stand in the way of supporting it. Lastly, if I might ask, Mr Speaker: in the context where we are moving an amendment that's in the negative but we are also calling divisions to satisfy the separation rule, I would appreciate some clarity about which way ought to be called if you want amendment (2) to stand.

The SPEAKER: Sure. I think we're probably at the question, but I need to check. The question is amendment (2) be disagreed to. No further speakers? I'll put the question. If a division is required, it will proceed because it's on a motion moved by the Leader of the House. If it had been an amendment moved by a non-government member, it would have been deferred. The question has been framed in the negative, so it will be disagreed to. That will simply mean those voting aye are on the government side and those voting that it not be disagreed to are on the opposition side.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendment (2) be disagreed to.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side of the noes in this division, I declare the question resolved in the affirmative in accordance with standing order 127. The names of the two members who are in the minority will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question agreed to, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting no.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:18): I present the reasons for the House disagreeing and I move:

That the reasons be adopted.

Question agreed to.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SENATE
National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2)

The SPEAKER (12:19): I have received the following message from the Senate:

The Senate transmits to the House of Representatives the following resolution which was agreed to by the Senate this day:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) the Senate passed the Australian Greens' National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2) on 9 September 2019 to establish a federal corruption watchdog with broad remit to investigate allegations of corruption and misconduct, and to ensure strong, independent oversight of the actions of parliamentarians;

(ii) the National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2) was sent to the House of Representatives for debate on 10 September 2019, but has yet to be debated;

(iii) on 10 February 2020, the Senate resolved to call on the House to vote on the National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2);

(iv) the Government ignored this call and has prevented all attempts to debate and vote on the National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2) in the House;

(v) public consultation on the Commonwealth Integrity Commission model proposed by the Government ended nearly eighteen months ago, but the Government has yet to introduce legislation to establish an integrity commission;

(vi) in May 2020, the Attorney-General said that legislation to establish a Commonwealth Integrity Commission would be further delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite an exposure draft being "ready for release"; and

(vii) polls consistently show that the majority of Australians support the establishment of a strong national integrity body; and

(b) calls on the Federal Government to bring on the National Integrity Commission Bill 2018 (No. 2) in the House for a vote in the June 2020 sittings. The Senate requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives in this resolution.

The Senate requests the concurrence of the House of Representatives in this resolution.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:19): I move:

That the message be considered immediately.

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (12:19): I move:

That all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting the following words: 'the message be considered immediately'.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Greens will resume his seat.
Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (12:19):
I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Greens.

Mr Bandt: I was able to move the amendment—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Greens will resume his seat. We've been over this a number of times. The question before the House is the question moved by the Leader of the House. You had moved an amendment. Until such time as it is has been moved, seconded and stated, it is not the question before the House. It's well documented in Practice; I'm very happy to give the Leader of the Greens a copy of the pages. The question is that the motion be put.

The House divided. [12:24]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

| Ayes |..................| 56 |
| Noes |..................| 51 |
| Majority |..............| 5 |

**AYES**

Allen, K  
Archer, BK  
Broadbent, RE  
Christensen, GR  
Coulton, M  
Dutton, PC  
Falinski, JG  
Frydenberg, JA  
Gillespie, DA  
Hammond, CM  
Hawke, AG  
Joyce, BT  
Leeseer, J  
Littleproud, D  
Martin, FB  
McIntosh, MI  
Morrison, SJ  
O'Dowd, KD  
Pitt, KJ  
Price, ML  
Robert, SR  
Stevens, J  
Taylor, AJ  
Tudge, AE  
Vasta, RX  
Webster, AE  
Wilson, RJ  
Young, T

| Andrews, KL  
Bell, AM  
Chester, D  
Conaghan, PJ  
Drum, DK (teller)  
Entsch, WG  
Fletcher, PW  
Gee, AR  
Goodenough, IR  
Hastie, AW  
Hunt, GA  
Kelly, C  
Ley, SP  
Liu, G  
McCormack, MF  
McVeigh, JJ  
O'Brien, T  
Pearce, GB  
Porter, CC  
Ramsey, RE (teller)  
Simmonds, J  
Sukkar, MS  
Tehan, DT  
van Manen, AJ  
Wallace, AB  
Wicks, LE  
Wyatt, KG  
Zimmerman, T

**NOES**

Albanese, AN  
Bandt, AP  
Bowen, CE  
Burney, LJ  
Butler, MC  
Chalmers, JE  
Clare, JD  
Collins, JM  
Dreyfus, MA  
Fitzgibbon, JA  
Haines, H  
Husic, EN  
Kearney, G  
King, CF  
Marles, RD  
Mulino, D  
O'Connor, BPJ

| Aly, A  
Bird, SL  
Burke, AS  
Burns, J  
Butler, TM  
Chesters, LM  
Coker, EA  
Dick, MD  
Elliot, MJ  
Gorman, P  
Hayes, CP  
Jones, SP  
Koegh, MJ  
King, MMH  
Mitchell, BK  
Murphy, PJ  
Perrett, GD
The SPEAKER (12:29): The question now is that consideration of the message be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

The House divided. [12:29]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes ................... 56</th>
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<tr>
<td>Noes .................... 52</td>
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</tr>
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AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Joyce, BT
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pit, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE

Ayes

Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastic, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O'Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ
AYES
Vasta, RX  Wallace, AB
Webster, AE  Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ  Wyatt, KG
Young, T  Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN  Aly, A
Bandt, AP  Bird, SL
Bowen, CE  Burke, AS
Burney, LJ  Burns, J
Butler, MC  Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE  Chesters, LM
Clare, JD  Coker, EA
Collins, JM  Dick, MD
Dreyfus, MA  Elliot, MJ
Fitzgibbon, JA  Gorman, P
Haines, H  Hayes, CP
Husic, EN  Jones, SP
Kearney, G  Keogh, MJ
King, CF  King, MMH
Marles, RD  Mitchell, BK
Mitchell, RG  Mulino, D
Murphy, PJ  O’Connor, BPJ
Perrett, GD  Phillips, FE
Plibersek, TJ  Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)  Sharkie, RCC
Shorten, WR  Smith, DPB
Stanley, AM (teller)  Steggall, Z
Swanson, MJ  Templeman, SR
Thistlethwaite, MJ  Vamvakinou, M
Watts, TG  Wells, AS
Wilkie, AD  Zappia, A

PAIRS
Alexander, JG  Byrne, AM
Andrews, KJ  Champion, ND
Coleman, DB  Freelander, MR
Connelly, V  Claydon, SC
Evans, TM  Georganas, S
Flint, NJ  Giles, AJ
Hogan, KJ  Gosling, LJ
Howarth, LR  Hill, JC
Irons, SJ  O’Neil, CE
Laming, A  Khalil, P
Landry, ML  Leigh, AK
Marino, NB  McBride, EM
Morton, B  Neumann, SK
O’Brien, LS  Wilson, JH
Pasin, A  Owens, JA
Sharma, DN  Payne, AE
Thompson, P  Rowland, MA
Wilson, TR  Snowdon, WE
Wood, JP  Thwaites, KL

Question agreed to.

BILLS
National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020
Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.
to which the following amendment was moved:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that:

(1) the Government has damaged Australia's world-class vocational training system by:
   (a) cutting funding for vocational education and TAFE by over $3 billion;
   (b) presiding over simultaneous crises of skills shortages and youth unemployment; and
   (c) failing to tackle falling completion rates, with more people dropping out of vocational training courses than finishing them; and
(2) this bill fails to deliver the reform needed to fix problems in the vocational training sector".

The SPEAKER (12:30): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time. To this, the honourable member for Cooper has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted, with a view to substituting other words. If it suits the House, I will state the question in the form that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. I call the member for Bruce.

Mr HILL (Bruce) (12:31): I want to acknowledge the remarks of previous speakers but emphasise my view that, above all else, ASQA must focus on ensuring quality to protect the consumers of vocational education, students, and on ensuring also that the significant public investment in the training system actually achieves outcomes for the industry and the nation, and on maintaining our reputation globally for quality. I say that with a great degree of affection. In a former life I spent some years helping to promote Victoria's international education sector across the world. I've led trade missions to many parts of the world with TAFEs and quality private providers, and I think it's fair to say that in recent years it's been devastating for those who've valued Australia's training system to watch the decline in quality, when they really understand what's going on.

To ensure that reputation for actual quality, then, a strong and productive relationship with the sector, the providers, is so important. In many instances, a collaborative and educative regulation can be appropriate. But reports of heavy-handed approaches for minor administrivia or paperwork breaches are not appropriate and not helpful. But, of course, there's a balance there and care needs to be taken—because I know there's been pushback from parts of the private training industry to perceived overreach—that the pendulum doesn't swing too far the other way, where real quality issues are uncovered. Then firm action does need to be taken. Australians should expect that the governance changes proposed in this bill will assist with that.

I want to turn my remarks to the proposed second reading amendment. The Government have damaged the quality of Australia's world-class vocational training system by cutting TAFE and training by more than $3 billion. They're in their seventh year with $3 billion of cuts accumulating, coupled with the simultaneous crisis of youth unemployment and skill shortages that we're seeing break out. It's really quite an achievement, isn't it? We have skills shortages and at the same time they're cutting the vocational training system by $3 billion and, in some cases, relying on overreach of temporary migration to fill the gap because they've stuffed up the training system. And, of course, they're failing to tackle completion rates.

This is not a genuine reform package; this is a minor little tweak to governance arrangements, which might be fine in itself. But, in their seventh year in government, with the crisis in the skills training system, this is not a genuine reform package. These are serious and important issues. Indeed, it would be fair to say that the Liberals have conducted a war on TAFE, a war on public training, with their obsession with creating the market. I say right up-front: I think the former Labor government overreached in some areas in that regard. People have said so, and we've corrected that. But the government has had six years—and are now in their seventh year—to address these issues, and there is nothing. A few weeks ago the Prime Minister said, 'We're going to have a look at the vocational training system.' He couldn't bring himself to say, 'We're going to fix the TAFE system,' could he? He said, 'We're going to have a look at the vocational training system.'

The COVID crisis makes it even more urgent that the government acknowledge this crisis and actually get a plan to overhaul the sector. We already had skills shortages in critical areas of the economy before COVID. We've seen a 73 per cent drop in approved apprenticeships. We cannot lose the pipeline of apprenticeships right now, when migration into the country is stalled. It'll create a double whammy, so we have to see action from the government to restart the apprenticeship system and get it back on track. It's not rocket science, is it? You'd think that, in a recession, even this government would understand that now is the time to let people engage in the skills and training system and in the education system. Actually put some money back into TAFE to let people get back into the training system and incentivise them to do so now—not in six months or 12 months or at the next election when they come up with some nice-sounding policy, but now. Get young people back into the training system and back into apprenticeships. Uncap the university places. The universities are reporting that they can't accommodate the demand they're now seeing. Funnily enough, in a recession, people think, 'What am I going to do? Maybe I should upgrade my skills. Maybe I should go and get another qualification.'
Of course, we hear a lot about manufacturing. You can say ‘manufacturing’. Yes, we want to see the resurgence of manufacturing, but it’s not just going to happen. There are three critical ingredients, at least in my view: reliable, cheap power, and we know that renewable energy, which the government is so hostile to, is the cheapest reliable form of power; innovation and research, which the government is presiding over multibillion-dollar cuts to right now; and skills. They’re the three ingredients, and the training system is so important.

I also want to turn some of my remarks to another important part of ASQA’s function, which is the oversight of VET providers who deliver to international students. International education is this country’s fourth-biggest export overall and our biggest services export. It is now worth $40 billion to the economy, and that includes significant VET delivery. It’s in crisis at the moment. I’ve remarked elsewhere that the government needs to get its act together. It’s the only top-10 export sector that the government is not only not assisting but actively harming, with the Prime Minister out there telling students just to go home. They are astounding comments that are damaging future prospects to our biggest services export industry.

In relation to vocational education, I say clearly that our future success will rely on three things. The first is ruthless enforcement of quality, which is where ASQA comes in. We are a higher-cost, high-quality provider. That’s our market niche. We can’t compete with low-cost providers and destinations elsewhere in the world, so we have to maintain that reputation for quality and be ruthless about it. The second is that we need a great student experience. One of our competitive advantages with other places in the world where young people can choose to go to study is that, overall, we have a good student experience. People can have an English-speaking experience, living in and working part time in the community. The third ingredient, of course, is positive word of mouth. That is where the Prime Minister’s comments telling students to go home are so damaging. They set social media ablaze. People are rightly hurt, upset and, indeed, confused. Providers are despairing. I’ve spoken to them. The debate about student experience and marketing is for another time, but the government needs to act.

There’s one thing I want to put on the record. I think the government could use this short window of time—I hope it will be short—when we don’t have incoming students to actually fix a few problems in the vocational training system in relation to quality regulation by ASQA. This issue affects both domestic and international students, but I think it is a particular problem for international students. Australia’s consumer protection system for international students and its legislative framework, despite the problems we’ve seen emerge in quality, was a world first and remains among the world’s best. We should be proud of it. Indeed, our bureaucrats, trade officials and providers still spend time overseas—probably in Zoom at the moment—explaining to other systems how our system is run and the regulatory architecture around it. That commitment to the highest quality standards must be accompanied by strong and effective monitoring and compliance mechanisms. This is necessary to ensure quality teaching and services to international and also domestic students. Most providers seek to do the right thing, private providers included, but there remain some who do not. So, despite efforts over years, we’re told, under this government to crack down on dodgy providers, serious concerns continue to exist in the community and also in the sector.

If you talk to the long-term reputable high-quality private providers, they share these concerns, probably more than anyone because it’s them who get squeezed by the bottom feeders in the market that keep cutting costs. These bottom feeders are effectively a visa factory, selling work rights to students with very little regard to quality. They’re concerned about the effectiveness of the current quality regime to catch these providers. I stress again: most providers—TAFE and quality private providers—do the right thing. But some of these bottom feeders are catering for a small minority of students who are not in Australia to study and are really treating the student visa as a work visa. It’s a very small percentage of a very big number of students here, but that very small percentage is the part of the market that brings the whole into disrepute. Indeed, I would venture to say, based on evidence that we’ve seen and some of the work by fair work, it’s those students right at the bottom of the market who are not here to study who are undercutting wages and pushing domestic residents and young people out of a job because they’re not here to study and are therefore not adding to the economy.

Those students are recruited directly by dodgy agents, and, as a result of the COVID crisis and the government’s failure to provide assistance, there’s been a bonanza for onshore education agents who are hanging around outside the universities, hanging around outside the quality privates and saying to the students: ‘Come with me. I’ll find you a cheaper course. You’ll still get your visa, but I’ll find you a cheaper course. I might happen to get a great big kickback, but I’ll give you a thousand bucks as well. How’s that?’ You can see what that does, of course, to the quality. How can you actually deliver a quality product if the students are paying four grand? You can’t. It’s cut teaching with no attendance, and the spiral goes down.

Dodgy courses and providers catering to that minority of students also risk our reputation and undermine community confidence. The problem is, in my view, ASQA’s current regulatory regime—and this is the sort of thing that should be thought about if the government had a proper reform package instead of this piecemeal little
governance thing and a few marketing slogans, which seems to be most of their policy. The problem is ASQA's current regulatory approach doesn't identify these providers and shut them down, and the government changes in this bill won't do it. The government's focus, they say, is building training provider capability through education and a quality improvement approach to address sector concerns, but it doesn't touch the real issues. In my strong view—and this is one suggestion—it's time to consider and trial a more fundamental shift in our regulatory approach to weed out, finally, those dodgy few VET providers who harm the reputation of the rest who try and do the right thing.

An additional thought for consideration is that in Australia all VET providers are registered as both training and assessment providers. Once you get registered with ASQA, you're a training and assessment provider. In plain English, this means that, when you're registered, you do the training and you also do the exams and practical assessments and grade the students, which is fine in the good providers, but in the dodgy ones it opens up an enormous rort. It doesn't matter whether the student of the cooking class can actually cook, it doesn't matter whether the student in the aged-care course can actually look after senior citizens in a competent way, as long as they're paying the fees, you give them the mark and they keep the visa and keep working. But some countries separate the training and assessment functions to varying degrees, providing some measure of external assessment and independent validation of the student's competency. In the extreme, you'd think of year 12, where someone else marks the exam from the students at that school and there's a bit of moderation and so on. I'm not proposing we go to that extreme, but there's a strong case to at least trial external moderated assessment for the higher risk courses and the higher risk providers.

Just briefly I'll outline how this could work. Informal industry feedback that I've sought from quality public and private providers, coupled with data from regulatory enforcement action—ASQA probably has a reasonable idea, but, if you talk to the proper private providers and the decent agents in the sector, they will tell you who the dodgy providers are. They know to whom they lose the students for lower fees; they know who these providers are. This data combined with actual intelligence could suggest certain courses in the VET sector. I'd highlight cooking and aged care and security which pose a much greater risk of quality concerns and breaches. I propose that ASQA trial an independent training validation assessment—it's not a catchy acronym; the bureaucrats won't love it!—in identified high-risk courses. ASQA could accredit a limited number of high-quality providers—probably the TAFEs, as they do in other countries—and register them to undertake independent training validation assessments of students from other providers delivering the high-risk courses. In plain English, if there's ongoing evidence of concern regarding some of the dodgier cooking course providers, ASQA could force those providers to send their students, once a semester, for instance, for some independent assessment of skills. 'Go on, cook a cake for me. Go on, cook some peas. See if you can cook.' My mum failed cooking peas at nursing—that's where I got the peas from. She only passed her nursing degree because she stole some peas from one of the others. Cooking wasn't her forte. Anyway, that would identify the schools where most—

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr HILL: Pardon? Give peas a chance! That would identify the schools where most of the students actually can't cook, which would then give ASQA the evidentiary basis to shut those courses down. At the moment, the random enforcement model of ASQA turning up and checking if the paperwork is in order is not working; it doesn't work. Even the dodgy providers can get their filing cabinets sorted and make sure the students have signed the right forms, but it doesn't actually find the schools that aren't training people and providing any quality. I think it's worth a try. The payment could be from the student or the training provider. It's a relatively small amount of money in the scheme of the fees paid and the market. It would be a few hundred bucks, I guess, per student, and different models could be designed with industry. But political leadership is needed to force this change in policy and model.

This concept is not something I thought up. I think it was in a report from around 2007 or 2008 that the Rudd government was looking at. I think it was some work by Professor Peter Noonan at that point, and it included a range of other changes. They were pretty good changes, which the government could well look at going back to, if they're looking for inspiration. Some of that quite rightly was put on hold during the global financial crisis—not wanting to impose any extra regulatory burden—and was never revisited. I think there are more creative ideas that the government really needs to look at if they're going to be serious about improving the quality of regulation through ASQA, because these piecemeal little governance changes are not actually going to do anything significant to address the quality concerns. Aside from that, I'm sure the bill's great.

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (12:47): Can I indicate at the outset that I support the amendment moved by Labor and also that I don't oppose the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020 that is before us today, just as Labor doesn't oppose it.
As has been outlined by many speakers, the bill's intention is to amend the governance structures of ASQA, the Australian Skills and Quality Authority, and also to enhance its information sharing with the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research. These are both commendable intentions in and of themselves. The bill seeks to do this with two key amendments. The first one revises ASQA's governance structures, replacing the chief commissioner, chief executive officer and two commissioners with a single independent statutory office holder—a CEO. Secondly, the bill establishes the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council, which I'll just refer to as the advisory council, which is intended to provide ASQA with access to expert advice regarding the functions of the regulator.

On that particular aspect, the Labor Party more broadly is very conscious of the value of TAFE and also of union representation. We would argue that those views and voices should be heard when it comes to developments in the VET sector. For this reason, in the Senate we will seek to move amendments to ensure the public provider does have seats at the table. It is always a sensible and a useful option for government to set up forms of advisory councils bringing together key stakeholders in a sector to provide feedback and advice to government. Indeed, for a period of time under the Labor government, when I held both parliamentary secretary and ministerial responsibility for this sector, the thing that struck me was that, particularly in vocational education—maybe more so than in almost any other sector of policymaking that the government deals with at a federal level—there was a profound commitment by stakeholders to the sector and to improvements in the sector.

And there were many bodies, significant numbers of which I think were—in a very short-sighted and foolish manner—dismantled by the first Abbott government when it came to power. They were bodies that brought together industry, government and the trade unions in the sector to sit around the table and develop a range of advice to government. It might have been on areas such as the need for skills advice—what's happening in industry, what's happening in the economy and how our vocational education sector should be adjusting to address emerging demands, such as new levels of skills needed or indeed skills for which there is declining demand because of change in technology and so forth. There may have been advisory bodies around the actual implementation of skills training—the development of the training packages themselves.

I was very critical, when I had shadow responsibility for this area, of the fact that the government re-formed advisory bodies from the industry to talk and provide advice on skills packages and specifically excluded the trade union representatives. At the time I said to government—and I still, in the context of this bill, would say—that that is a short-sighted, stupid decision. There are people across the trade union movement—and I've dealt with many of them over the past 10 years—who have a deep and profound understanding of the vocational education and training sector. They sat, when Labor was in government, on many of these advisory councils and are very well regarded and respected by the industry representatives who sat on those bodies. And I have to say, many of the industry representatives were also profoundly knowledgeable and committed to vocational education and training. It was one of the few places where you would see all the other arguments and disagreements that might be expected between industry and union representatives left at the door and very constructive work done in a cooperative manner, and the government benefited from that. It made a significant difference to the quality and the outcomes that we saw in the vocational education sector.

So, I would say to government that when it looks at this advisory council it should be looking at tapping into to that deep expertise in the union sector about the vocational education sector across the board. In particular I'm thinking about representatives from the more traditional trades, particularly organisations such as the Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and the Australian Workers' Union—a range of those unions that have a long history of working with apprenticeships and with skills training. People in those organisations take significant pride and have significant knowledge about how the system has developed over decades. They're not coming to the table with just a couple of years of experience; they're coming with decades of experience and a commitment to and priority of the outcomes for the students. Their priority is: how do we get a quality worker out of a training system, somebody who is deeply and broadly qualified in the skills that they are being trained in?

I would argue that that has been a national asset for Australia for many decades. People talk about the international standing of this sector. There was a period when we rivalled Germany. Internationally, other countries that are looking at developing their vocational education sectors would look at Australia and Germany. We were seen as the two leading lights internationally. I well remember, on the change of government—when the Abbott government came in—we had people in India at the time, as India looked deeply at replicating our training sector, doing that work for Australia.

Unfortunately, what we've seen in the seven years since is an absolute decline in that situation. While this bill talks about quality in the vocational sector, it is remiss of government not to get its head around the fact that for seven years they have not really, deeply and meaningfully dealt with the vocational education and training sector.
What is the evidence for that? Why do I say that? Because we have significantly fewer people engaging in the vocational education and training sector. We have significant—in fact, alarming—drops in the number of people engaging in the apprenticeship system. We've seen lost opportunities to address this issue during the COVID period, when the country has required government to step up with what would not be natural for them—interventionist-type policies.

During the global financial crisis, the government was very conscious that one of the first groups of workers that would be hit were apprentices. When the sectors that employ apprentices are particularly hard hit, one of the first decisions they often take is to lay off their apprentices—and that was one of the first responses. In an unprecedented manner, the way in which the Labor government tied its investment and stimulus to the employment of apprentices meant that we actually did not see a drop in apprenticeship numbers during the global financial crisis. That was an extraordinary thing. What is really important about it is that it tells this government that they can do it. They can ensure that those connections remain in place through their policy settings.

Instead what we have now seen is a report from peak bodies that we're looking at losing 100,000 apprentices in this year alone as a result of COVID-19. We've already lost over 140,000 over the last seven years of Liberal governments. But this year alone; that's a crisis. That means that we will completely destroy the pipeline of skilled tradespeople, whether in plumbing; carpentry; electricians and electrical goods; hairdressers; chefs; mechanics; bricklayers; or trainees in the IT sector. The breadth of coverage of the pipeline of workers that we're going to need in the future in these industry sectors which will be impacted by that sort of loss is a serious issue that government needs to have a policy response to.

I eagerly watch every press conference and read every media release—and I have done since the Abbott government was first elected—when governments pre-empt the fact they're about to do a big announcement on vocational education and training or apprenticeships. On each and every occasion, I have, unfailingly, been massively disappointed in what they've announced. It's a marketing opportunity only: there'll be tweaks, 'We'll have someone to do a review; we will tweak this particular bit of regulation; we'll wag our finger at the states.'

An opposition member interjecting—

Ms BIRD: Start a culture war, exactly! A whole lot of things are put out there as a massive response; that only they understand the problems in the vocational education sector and they're going to do something about it. There's no detail, definitely no funding and no outcomes that they've ever held to account for in any of those announcements. It was no different when the Prime Minister stood at the National Press Club the other day and said that one of the key things he was going talk about was skills and the vocational education sector. Again: a massive disappointment, 'Let's just move on—we'll move on to the next announcement and no-one will notice that we actually didn't make any difference at all to the number of people being able to access vocational education, or the numbers of people engaged in apprenticeships and traineeships.'

It's simply not good enough. It's not good enough for the young people who need those pathways into good careers across so many industry sectors—in growth areas such as aged care, child care and disability care—and the opportunity to have meaningful traineeships in those sectors and create careers for people. It is not good enough for young people. It's not good enough for mature-age workers, who could take up apprenticeships and traineeships as an opportunity to restructure their own careers if they're in industries that are in decline. Labor at the last election and the one before had policies about getting mature workers those opportunities. But we hear nothing but crickets from this government.

It's not good enough for our economy. It's simply lazy to think that you can continue to use temporary migration programs to fill skills gaps that you're doing nothing about addressing in the first place. Those programs are good programs designed to give this nation the time and space it needs to train Australians up for the industry sectors that might be emerging or where we've got shortages. That's a sensible thing to do. It is not sensible—in fact, it's a dereliction of duty by a national government—to use that program simply to keep papering over the problem and never do anything about it. Over $3 billion has been either taken out of or underspent in vocational education and training by the federal government. Let's not exempt state governments. I certainly think many of them could pick up their acts as well. But the federal government has a national responsibility for economic diversification, for economic development, for participation and for productivity.

All of these big issues are underpinned by a vocational education and training sector that delivers for people and for the economy and it was never treated that way until the Abbott government. The Turnbull government was no better. The Morrison government, I would argue, is even worse, because it cynically seeks, at so many opportunities, to do the photo op, to do the marketing spin, to do what looks like a big announcement and then to walk away and actually deliver nothing. It is time they were held to account. This bill is a very minor tweak to the quality system. It is good that it's being done. But, I tell you what, there's a whole lot more they need to be doing.
Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:02): I'm pleased to follow the member for Cunningham today, because she has an unrivalled history in this space in this place. There are few people in this building with a deeper knowledge or understanding of this sector—which it needs and the history of it, the mistakes that have been made and the way we should move towards fixing them. So I welcome her contribution today on the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020 and the amendment moved by the member for Cooper, who is seated in front of me today.

I welcome the amendment from the member from Cooper because I welcome the opportunity to talk about vocational education and training—and the sector itself—because we are in a desperate, desperate state. That fact is only highlighted further by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis and what's coming at us now, which is the recession, and what that's going to mean in terms of both industry pipelines and, as the member for Cunningham so eloquently demonstrated for us, the pipeline of workers that we are going to need.

I had a conversation last week with a young person in my electorate who said that they were looking to do a civil construction certificate IV. As part of that course, they would get heavy machinery certification and their truck driving licence. Do you know what they said to me? They said that they were going to be working with pilots in Victoria who were retraining to get jobs as truck drivers. That's where we are. Highly qualified people are seeking to retrain wherever there is a shortage. My heart breaks at that point for the pilot who is not working and for their family, but also for the young person who walked away thinking that they weren't good enough to compete in that space and that it didn't matter what qualifications they pursued, because they wouldn't get employment in this tough market. That's what this government should be addressing.

As the member for Cunningham said, this is a tweak. Yes, we need quality. Yes, we need changes to ASQA, and this process may be part of improving quality in TAFE. But, let's face it, since this last decade, not a lot of people in the community have a lot of faith in this sector anymore. That's because of bad headlines but it's also because of bad administration in this sector by this government, which continues to go for the sugar headline and fail on the substance, and which continues to grab the good-news story at the front end with no accountability and no outcomes at the back end. This space is no different: all spin and no substance. This legislation is a small tweak. We're in here talking about vocational education and training, and this government hasn't sat and talked to the peak bodies and hasn't been out on job sites time and time again to talk to people in the training sector.

In my electorate, it is absolutely clear where the issue rests. As an educator for many, many years, who worked in techs a long time ago, let me tell you that the private sector will go hard in this space where delivery is cheap, where equipment is cheap and where you can make a profit. That leaves our public sector to do the heavy lifting where the equipment is expensive. Do you know how long a lathe lasts on the ground in our tech schools—the John Howard tech schools or ours? It's about five years before a lathe is out of date. Do you know what they cost? That's why public TAFE has to be public TAFE. This is expensive, and the private sector doesn't want to pay for it. The private sector doesn't want to be involved in our licensed trades where accountability is high and there are exams at the end of it that are externally assessed.

I listened to the member for Bruce's contribution earlier and I thought he had some terrific ideas. Lo and behold: they are not new ideas. How do you get integrity into this sector? You separate the provider from the assessment; that's how you get integrity into this sector. You do not rely on a tick-box exercise to deliver quality; you make sure it is connected at the hip to the industry that it is serving and to the community that it is serving. These are the things that this government needs to address—not tweaks, not doffs of the hat to the shortages that are being created. As the member for Cunningham said, there were 140,000 fewer apprentices before COVID. As the member for Sydney said just last week at that dispatch box, the projections at the moment are that we're losing 2,000 apprentices a week. Everyone in my electorate knows how this works. They all know. They can't figure out how we can have shortages. We've got no bricklayers. That's a skills shortage. We've got no bricklayers, yet we have unemployed young people. How is it that we can't put these two things together and fix it? It's not that hard: focused delivery.

I can't talk about this sector without adding to talk about government services and the jobactives and their interaction with the sector. It is often the case that young people are getting certification in spaces and are then applying for positions only to find that they actually haven't done the OH&S training that they needed to do. Without that card in their pocket, they're not going to get past first base. When I first became a member and I sat with my local jobactives, I saw that the people who were giving guidance to the young people who found themselves unemployed didn't know about the white card and didn't know you needed one. They were pushing kids out and sending them to interviews. The kids couldn't get past the first hurdle because, although they had done a VET subject, they didn't have a white card.

This is not difficult, but currently we've got a government that doesn't want to do the heavy lifting, doesn't want to do the hard yards and doesn't want to sit and talk to the peak bodies, the unions or the people providing the
training. Worse than that, in the development of this legislation, they have not asked for the views of the trainers and the educators. They have not sat with them. They haven't spoken to the people who actually deliver this training to find out what they think would work.

I'm pretty sure most of the trainers out there would be pretty keen to get around a table and tell a government how to fix this system. I know that trainers, teachers and educators in the public TAFE sector are desperate to get that system back up and running. There is nothing more satisfying than working with someone in an education program and watching them walk out the door to their first day of work. There's nothing more satisfying. There's nothing more satisfying as a teacher than connecting a young person with an employer. People talk to me a lot about these things. Obviously I spent a lot of time in secondary schools. Obviously I was a senior level coordinator before I became a principal. Obviously I used to organised for young people to go and do their work experience.

We've got some terrific people and some terrific businesses in my electorate. We've got a plumbing company that has two kids a week from our local schools doing work experience with them—two kids a week. It's no surprise they're getting a lot of business. Every one of those families tells all of their friends, if they need a plumber, to ring that company. They say, 'They're good guys; they're training our kids.' It also means that that company gets the pick of the kids. They've seen them all on the job site, they've had a chat to them, they've had them in the van and they know who's keen so they get the pick of the kids. This is not difficult, but what it requires is goodwill. What it requires is a community based response. What it requires is that the jobs and the shortages out there are connected in.

I've listened for years and years and years to people saying, 'I'd really like to put an apprentice on but there's nobody out there who wants to be an apprentice.' It's really simple: ring your local high school and talk to the careers teacher. They'll have them lined up at your door tomorrow for an interview. This is not hard, but we've corporatised it. We've created a pool up here for the private sector to say they're going to give certification, but they're not connected to give anybody a job. This government needs to address these things. The member for Wannon, as the minister, should know this. He's from regional Victoria. He grew up in Victoria. He watched these things. It's really not that difficult.

What we do know about this government is that they're not interested in talking to educators—not in any sector. We saw that last week when they said, 'We'll just make a cross-the-board decision and get the sugar-hit line that we're giving free child care and a couple of weeks later we'll rip that away, we'll rip jobseeker away, we won't talk to educators, we won't talk to the service delivery people, we won't talk to the small centres in communities and we won't ask them, "At what level do you become unviable in terms of capacity?"' Do we talk to them? Do we talk to the educators? Does this government bother? No. They just make broad sweeping statements. They come in with a policy and walk away, and it's the same with this piece of legislation.

I welcome anything that muscles ASQA up. I welcome it because in my community I've seen a lot of young people pay for training and then have it questioned, or, worse, pay for training and not have a certificate delivered even though they were told they completed the training. They're paying off loans for things that have no value for them. This piece of legislation muscles up ASQA, and I'm all for that. But how on earth is it going to be self-funded? How on earth are you going to get quality but not give the funding for ASQA to do the work that they are doing? How is that going to make sense? How is it going to work?

Again, to the member for Wannon, the minister in this space: it's a broad portfolio and it goes to your government's value of education that one person is to oversee all levels in education, making them an expert in nothing. It means they can't get their head into the detail in any of these sectors. I feel for the member for Wannon. It's a big job. It's an extraordinarily big job, and he works inside a government that has cut and cut and cut and cut this part of his responsibility out of his whole portfolio. The poor minister gets to walk in here and front us and the cameras every day to explain how we're supposed to, in a crisis and in a recession, fill these skills shortages and match up the unemployed with the skills shortages when there is no funding to do it. How are we supposed do that if we're not all working together? How can we on this side work with a government that devalues education and training at every level? Do you know how I know it's devalued? It's easy: if you value something, you fund it. If you value education, you see it as an investment and not as a cost. This government's failed on every measure since I came to this place in 2013, and this piece of legislation is no different.

The government says: 'We want to muscle up ASQA. We'll write some pretty lines here about how it's all about quality. We're going to improve the quality of the sector by muscling up ASQA to help them to do that. What's the fine print? ASQA have to do it with no funding. In fact, we're going to change the funding model and they're going to have to become self-funded.' Who's going to pay? Young people in my electorate seeking certification so they can get a job—that's who is going to pay. When we are confronting a recession and when we are going to be trying to rebuild our economy, we are going to have skills shortages with a lack of apprenticeships. We have
temporary migration, on the one hand, suddenly not available for this skills shortage. What is the government doing? The government's saying, 'Well, ASQA will have to do that, but they'll have to find the money to do that from the clientele.' Are they going to go out to business and ask them for money? Why would business give ASQA money? No, they are going to pass on the cost of this to the young people in my electorate needing a job. They are going to pass on the cost of this to the recently unemployed pilot who is trying to retrain. That's who's going to pay for this self-funded improvement in quality in our vocational education and training sector.

I complete my remarks by reminding this government and by appealing to this minister. You want to muscle up ASQA? Well, all I want you to do, Member for Wannon, is muscle up in cabinet. Can you muscle up in cabinet? Can you be a force in cabinet? Can you walk through those doors, look the Prime Minister in the eye and say, 'You cannot fix the things you are trying to fix until you value education and fund education properly in this country'?

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:16): It is a pleasure to follow the member for Lalor in this debate on the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020. I, too, whilst not opposing the legislation, speak in support of the amendments moved by Labor. The Morrison government has a shameful track record on supporting skills and vocational training in this country. Its abandonment of skills training since coming to office in 2013 will be looked back on by future generations as one of the catastrophic failures of the Abbott, Turnbull and now Morrison governments. It has left Australia vulnerable. It has left Australia unprepared.

First, it was the rorting of the VET sector by shonky operators, where we saw millions of dollars paid out to crooked training operators for training that was never delivered or delivered to non-existent trainees or for courses that did not meet relevant training standards and ultimately undermined the reputable TAFE system. These were scam operators who were able to exploit the VET system under this government's watch even after what was going on had become very clear. Simultaneously, the government white-anted the public TAFE system by cutting $3 billion of funding or simply not spending the funds allocated. Over the last five years, the underspend has been around $919 million. The result has been a training sector in crisis, a national skills shortage, a closure of TAFEs around Australia and a reliance on overseas skilled migration.

The facts speak for themselves. Between 2013 and 2019, apprenticeship numbers across Australia fell by almost 140,000—from 412,000 to 276,000. Those figures are now over a year old. The numbers would very likely be much worse today, but the government doesn't seem to want to release those latest figures. I ask: why not? I suspect it's because they will tell an even more damning story. The number of apprentices didn't fall because of a skills glut in Australia. There was not an oversupply of apprentices or tradies. It was because the funding and the training places were simply not there.

At the same time, industry sectors were facing skills shortages. What was the Liberal government's response to that? It was to bring in skilled migrants from overseas. In 2018-19, Australia recruited 110,000 skilled permanent migrants and 41,000 skilled temporary migrants to fill skills shortages. The government has been doing that year on year for several years now. Those are all skills shortages that could have been filled by Australians had they been trained. Skilled migration has dominated Australia's migration intake. Of course we should be grateful for those skilled migrants who came to Australia and filled job vacancies, enabling productivity or services to continue. However, the flip side of that is that I often speak to young people or to their parents about the difficulty that they have in getting an apprenticeship in a vocation in which Australia has a national skills shortage.

In my own state of South Australia, the apprenticeship situation is even worse. Apprenticeship numbers in South Australia have more than halved since 2013, from around 33,000 to around 16,000. Again, those figures are a year old, and I suspect the numbers are much lower today. When the South Australian Liberal government took office, it added to the demise by closing TAFEs, including three in my own region at Tea Tree Gully, Port Adelaide and Parafield, again, not only closing the ability of people in South Australia to skill up but closing opportunities to young people in that part of Adelaide—young people who don't always have the money to drive from one side of Adelaide to the other in order to get the training that they need. The Marshall government also cut TAFE funding from an average of about $441 million over the last decade to $347 million in 2018, and it seems that there will be a further $15 million cut in this financial year. Those cuts will inevitably result in job losses and fewer courses available.

Not all people want or are suited to university study, but they may be attracted to a trade career if they are given the opportunity. Yet federal and state Liberal governments cut back those opportunities by cutting the funding. They seem to have this view that it's up to industry to train the people that they need. And, whilst I don't have a problem with industry doing that, the government equally has a responsibility to ensure that we have sufficient training places and opportunities for people in this country—so much so that industry sectors like the Civil Contractors Federation South Australia are establishing their own apprenticeship and group training organisation.
in order to overcome skills shortages. In other words, they can't rely on the government, so they have to do it themselves. Now, I applaud them for doing that, because I know that industry led training organisations do a good job. It's in their interests to do so. They want the people that come out of the training to be trained up to the standards that they want them to work at once they become employees.

At the beginning of this year there were over 4,000 registered training organisations in Australia. I'm not convinced that they were all needed or that they all provide value-for-money training, so I'm hoping that this legislation will raise confidence in the VET sector. The legislation makes two structural changes to the oversight of VET training in Australia. It replaces the current Australian Skills Quality Authority hierarchy of three commissioners with one single CEO, and then there will be a 10-person-maximum advisory council appointed to provide advice to the CEO. Other members on our side have already raised the concern about the selection process. We don't know how it's going to take place or who will be appointed. I assume that, if there are nine people on that panel, there will be at least one from each state, but even then it doesn't give me confidence that it will be a properly representative panel. That is going to be critical to how effective this whole legislation is. Having said that, I have to say the legislation in itself and that change are not going to make the drastic changes to skills training in this country that the country urgently needs. I see it more as something that the government is doing in order to pretend that it is an issue that it has on its agenda and to pretend that it is making advancements in respects of skills training across Australia. Nevertheless, it is something we don't oppose. But it will be interesting to see in two or three years time what effect that advisory panel and having a single CEO has had in the system across Australia.

Ultimately, its effectiveness will be dependent on the competence of the CEO and the members of the advisory council, so it is important that we have the right people in those positions. I do note, however, that the advisory council will not provide advice to the regulator in relation to particular registered training organisations or particular VET accredited courses. Whilst the advisory council is there to oversee the regulator, I would have thought that, if we pull together a panel of nine people who have expertise in VET training, the regulator might want to take advice from them about all sorts of matters relating to VET training in Australia. Why waste the experience that these people will supposedly have? Regardless of whether it's simply to do with the regulator's position, or whether it is to do with actual courses or, indeed, other training organisations, I would have thought that that panel should be there to provide all kinds of advice. It doesn't mean the regulator, or the government for that matter, has to take the advice, but they should at least consult the council wherever an issue arises where its advice could very well be useful.

As I said earlier, this legislation tinkers around the edges of the skills crisis in Australia. Like so much of what this government does, there is a lot of spin over substance with respect to it. There's been much fanfare and big announcements by this government, but often very little delivered. I refer to the announcement by the government in March of this year that up to $21,000 would be allocated between 1 January and 30 September for each apprentice or trainee employed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, that was a measure that I welcomed, and I think it was the right thing to do. At the time, the government claimed that the measure would support up to 70,000 small businesses employing around 117,000 apprenticeships. What we don't know, and what we haven't heard since—and I've certainly never heard any statistics with respect to this—is: what was the take-up rate of that support? It seems to me that, because the government hasn't been using the statistics, perhaps the take-up rate wasn't very high. If it was, I'm happy to be corrected. It's a matter that I've got an interest in and I would certainly like to know. As I say, it's a matter where I suspect it was a case of the government putting spin over substance once again. There have been debates in this House time and time again with respect to skills training across Australia. There is no doubt in my mind that it is an important issue. And there is no doubt in my mind that over recent years this country has done badly with respect to skills training.

Recently in South Australia we also had commentary that the naval shipbuilding work that is proposed for South Australia might hit a stumbling block because we simply don't have enough skilled people in that state. I suspect that a lot of the skilled people we did have may have left the state because of the work winding down the way it did—again, under this government. If that is the case it's a sad indictment on this government that it allowed the situation to get to that point. I would certainly hope, given that much of that shipbuilding work hasn't started yet, that in the years ahead and in the immediate years ahead we will recommit to training people so that, once the work does start and the employment is there, it is South Australians, and Australians for that matter, who take up that work, rather than what we're seeing elsewhere which is people coming in from overseas in order to fill the skills shortages.

I'll finish on this note: over recent months I have had discussions with several people who have come to me because they have a son or a daughter who hasn't been able to get work and, in particular, hasn't been able to get work in a trade that they were pursuing. They can't get the work because the employers find it impossible to take
them on when there is not enough support for them. Again, it is the industry itself, the people that would otherwise say, 'I would take on an apprentice if I was given more support from the government.' But they won't. Again, I think it's high time that this government understood that there are opportunities there, that there are young people who would like to enter a trade or a career of one kind or another but they are simply blocked out because for too long this government has cut the funding—as has the state government in my state of South Australia—that would enable those people to pursue the career or the vocation they would like to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Petition: Parramatta Female Factory Heritage Listing**

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (13:30): I table this petition on behalf of the federal member for Parramatta, Julie Owens. The Parramatta Female Factory Friends have collected 11,155 signatures that ask the House to do all in its power to enable the female factory site to be nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site so it can become a living museum and national resource centre managed jointly by a federal and state government trust with the expertise to conserve and interpret the site in accordance with the guidelines of the Burra Charter.

Of the 13 female convict factories built in Australia, the Parramatta Female Factory is the earliest surviving and most intact, predating all but three of the convict sites currently on the World Heritage convict list. The site includes the 1818 convict female factory commissioned by Governor Macquarie, the 1820s Governor Brisbane third-class additions and the Governor Gipps Courtyard. It's been a barracks, a factory, a marriage bureau, a prison, a work assignment bureau, a hospital and a women's health centre, and the site of the earliest women workers' action in 1827.

An estimated one in seven Australians are related to factory women, including Maggie Beer; Dawn Fraser; Kurt Fearnley; Meg Keneally, daughter of Tom Keneally; John Pilger; and Lisa Wilkinson. It's time for the Australian government to take the final step and nominate this extraordinary place for World Heritage listing, cementing its status as a site of outstanding universal value.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The document will be forwarded to the petitions committee for its consideration and will be accepted subject to confirmation by the committee that it conforms with standing orders.

Ms TEMPLEMAN: I seek leave to incorporate the petition.

Leave granted.

*The document read as follows—*

> We the undersigned request the site known as the Parramatta Female Factory be declared a site of world heritage significance and returned to the Australian people. This historical site should be managed by a government body with the expertise to conserve and interpret this site for the people of Australian in accordance with the guidelines of the Burra Charter.

**Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance**

Mr ZIMMERMAN (North Sydney) (13:32): Australia plays a vital and proud role in improving the health care available to millions of people across the Indo-Pacific region. This contribution was affirmed recently by our government's important pledge of $300 million to Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance. Gavi provides access to vaccines for developing countries and, over the past two decades, has assisted in the lives of over 318 million children through immunisation. Gavi specifically targets the most vulnerable diseases preventable by vaccination in the poorest countries and the poorest groups within those countries.

Australia has long been a strong supporter for Gavi in Asia, and the latest pledge at the Global Vaccine Summit affirms our role as a leader in the region. But even now, as the world turns its focus to the coronavirus, it is the world's poorest countries where millions of children are being affected by diseases such as polio, diphtheria and measles where we can't let up on the cause of providing vaccinations to those people.

Over the next five years, Gavi will spend over $800 million to immunise over 140 million children. As part of this, Gavi will provide $200 million to continue immunisation programs through the COVID pandemic and will later organise catch-up immunisation campaigns once it is safe to do. Immediately to our north, over 400,000 children in neighbouring Papua New Guinea will receive life-saving vaccines, and four million Indonesian children will access pneumococcal vaccinations at a quarter of the cost. This is a wonderful contribution Australia is making.

**Brand Electorate: Memorial**

Ms MADELEINE KING (Brand) (13:33): In Esplanade Park in Fremantle, there is a monument to early explorers, which reads:
… this Terra Incognita, attacked at night by treacherous natives were murdered at Boola Boola near Le Grange Bay on the
13th November 1864

Also as an appreciative token of remembrance of MAITLAND BROWN one of the pioneer pastoralists and premier
politicians of this State, intrepid leader of the government search and punitive party, his remains together with the sad relics of
the ill fated three recovered at great risk and danger from the lone wilds repose under a public monument in the East Perth
Cemetery

"LEST WE FORGET"

In 1994, in an act of reconciliation, another plaque was placed on the monument, which reads:

This plaque was erected by people who found the monument before you offensive. The monument describes the events at La
Grange from one perspective only: the viewpoint of the white 'settlers'. No mention is made of the right of Aboriginal people
to defend their land or of the history of provocation which led to the explorers' deaths. The 'punitive party' mentioned here
ended in the deaths of around twenty Aboriginal people. The whites were well armed and equipped and none of their party
was killed or wounded. The plaque is in memory of the Aboriginal people killed at La Grange. It also commemorates all other
Aboriginal people who died during the invasion of their country.

LEST WE FORGET

These words are repeated on the plaque in the language of the people who were victims of the punitive party.

We don't need to pull statues down in this country. We just have to tell the truth; we have to tell the whole truth.

Bennelong Electorate: Queen's Birthday Honours

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (13:35): The past few months have been chaotic and terrifying for most of us. Normal life has gone
out the window, replaced by uncertainty. For the lucky, it has simply meant a change of scenery, more time working from
home and more time with our children. But for many, this time has been stressful and deeply concerning as jobs have been
lost and careers imperilled, and life has become more challenging. Times like these remind us that we are so fortunate to have people in our community who look out for those around them, care for our neighbours and generally make Australia a better place, and it is great that we have opportunities like the Queen's Birthday honours to recognise these achievements.

I would like to congratulate Mrs Marilyn Havini, who received the Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to the international communities of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville; Ms Patricia Cooper, who is a recipient of the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to the community; and Mr Phuoc Thang Tran, who received the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the Indo-Chinese community of New South Wales. The Public Service Medal has been awarded to Mrs Noelani Reardon for outstanding public service to road safety in New South Wales. Finally, the Australian Police Medal has been awarded to Sergeant Ian Cameron Miller. I would like to congratulate all these recipients on these richly deserved awards and recognition.

Bean Electorate: 'Bloomsday'

Mr DAVID SMITH (Bean) (13:36): 'Bloomsday' is the celebration of the life of Irish writer James Joyce, observed on 16 June, the day his 1922 novel Ulysses takes place in 1904 and named after its protagonist, Leopold Bloom. Celebrations often re-enact the journey Bloom makes across Dublin, a mock epic that reflects the structure of Homer's Odyssey. It's almost a century since the novel's publication and, to the day, 116 years since the day this amazing book is set—a journey of exile, of history. It is a book, as T S Eliot said, 'to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape'.

Ulysses revolts against history as hatred and violence. And while it's often said to be about everything, it is fundamentally about love. It is almost as funny as Derry Girls. It elevates everyday and ordinary lives to Homeric levels, injecting them with dignity. It finishes famously with Molly Bloom's thoughts and memories and the most practical demonstration of the nature of love, and ends on a note of reconciliation. In Ulysses, James Joyce faithfully re-created the sounds, smells and rhythms of Dublin from semi-exile with a painstaking eye to detail—a love letter to home. Bloomsday is a day that brings much of the Irish diaspora around the world together. Normally the Irish community would be celebrating Bloomsday at the Canberra Irish Club in Weston, in the heart of the Bean electorate. Happy Bloomsday to all! (Time expired)

Higgins Electorate: Student Services and Amenities Fee

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (13:38): Higher education students have been doing it tough during this pandemic. Many study in cities far from their families. Many work in hospitality, which is among the hardest hit industries. All of them have been unable to physically attend university campuses this year because of COVID—universities that they spend thousands of dollars to attend. The student services and amenities fee is only making their lives harder. In this era of COVID, when students can't attend campuses, it's a tax for services they can't even use. It's a tax that's come at a time when they need the money more than ever to support themselves.
There are 14,700 higher education students in Higgins. Many have complained to me that, even before COVID, funds were being put towards services that were in the politicised interests of a few. This government is committed to supporting students, and the first step for that is helping them to support themselves. Refunding the SSAF paid by students this year is not only good policy for helping students; it's also the right thing to do. This year's SSAF must be refunded and consideration given to axing the SSAF altogether.

Aged Care

Mr PERRETT (Moreton) (13:39): It's been more than three years since the Australian Law Reform Commission first recommended establishing a serious incident response scheme. It's been almost two years since the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established, and it's almost a year since the interim report from that commission was tabled, the foreword of which is entitled 'A shocking tale of neglect'. So, although Labor welcomes the government's announcement to give initial funding to establish a serious incident response scheme, for many vulnerable older Australians, it's too little and too late. Older Australians are some of our most vulnerable citizens. They deserve that this government protect them from abuse. The royal commission was scathing in its interim report:

The neglect that we have found in this Royal Commission to date is far from the best that can be done. Rather, it is a sad and shocking system that diminishes Australia as a nation.

We know that Australia's population is ageing. This problem is far from going away. It's going to get worse. It will be devastating for us as a nation if we don't tackle this problem now. Our veterans and pioneers of industry and business now in their later years deserve better. Our mothers and fathers deserve better. We can all do better.

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:41): Volunteers are the lifeblood of this country, and their work is instrumental in supporting and strengthening all of our local communities. Volunteering Australia estimates that over six million people selflessly give their time and effort to make our communities better places to live. So I was pleased to announce in recent weeks that 16 local community groups in Menzies will benefit from a share in the $9 million of federal funding to support local volunteers across Australia. The grants awarded are between $1,000 and $5,000 and will enable organisations in Menzies to better support their volunteers, purchase small equipment and pay fuel, transport and training costs.

Volunteers are an integral part of our society, especially during the difficult times we've experienced recently. Their contribution is vital to ensuring that we continue to support families, provide employment pathways for young people and strengthen community resilience. The successful organisations in Menzies are Diamond Valley Railway; Doncare; Kevin Heinze Grow; South Warrandyte Fire Brigade; the Vantage Point Church; the Russian Literature Society; the Australian Greek Ex-Servicemen's Association; Manningham Inclusive Community Housing; Research Fire Brigade; the Chinese Senior Citizen's Club of Manningham; the Combined Pensioners Association of Bulleen and Templestowe; Eltham Fire Brigade; Manningham Toy Library; Rights, Employment, Accommodation, Leisure (REAL Inc); Wonga Park Fire Brigade; and the Manningham United Blues Football Club.

Menzies Electorate: Volunteers

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (13:42): I'm desperately worried about the young people in my electorate of Paterson. The latest youth unemployment figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics do not bode well for young people in the Hunter region generally. Youth unemployment in the Hunter Valley is now at 15.7 per cent. That's two percentage points more than the national average, and it's likely to get worse as the full impact of COVID-19 bears down upon us.

The electorate of Paterson has lots of fantastic young people, and I'm going to be conducting a virtual town hall with them in the next couple of weeks. They work in hospitality, the arts, retail and tourism either casually or part time. Many casuals employed in the last 12 months have missed out on JobKeeper, and the industries they work in have been hit hard and will be slow to recover. Young people make up a high proportion of apprentices and trainees in my electorate. Since the coalition government came to power, Newcastle and the Hunter have seen a massive drop in apprenticeships and traineeships—down 27.2 per cent. Let that sink in: that's nearly 30 per cent fewer young people, particularly, getting a chance at getting skills and getting a trade and a job for life. Young people are told to dip into their superannuation. It's not good enough. This government should do better.
Cha Cha for Charity

Mrs Archer (Bass) (13:44): Winter is always a particularly difficult time of the year for the most vulnerable in our community, and perhaps more so this year as we negotiate COVID-19. Mental health support has never been more important. The Examiner’s Winter Relief Appeal is an important annual fundraising drive in my community raising money to assist our community, and I have spoken previously in this place of the great work done by SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY in the area of mental health and suicide prevention. Both causes received a tremendous boost in recent weeks, with an event that also created some great community spirit and fun. An accomplished local dancer and dance teacher of 30 years, Andrew Palmer teamed up with Launceston Deputy Mayor and event director extraordinaire Danny Gibson to bring us Cha Cha for Charity. Andrew was joined by family and friends and a cast of cameo dancers including politicians, sportsperson and local identities such as stepdaughter and Dancing with the Stars champion Lily Cornish, as well as by dance colleagues across the world who joined online. The dance marathon saw Andrew perform the cha-cha non-stop for 24 hours. The event was live streamed on social media and the community really got behind the challenge. Even after fainting in the early hours of the morning and a visit from paramedics, Andrew persevered, and the event has raised over $42,000 for these great causes. Congratulations and well done to Andrew, Danny and all involved with this great achievement.

Perth

Mr Gorman (Perth) (13:45): Perth is a big and beautiful city: it is our nation's western capital, and we need big ideas for the future. It's estimated that as soon as 2021, and likely by 2040, Perth will overtake Brisbane as the third-largest city in Australia. Today in the West Australian, the Committee for Perth released new research. The title of their report is Boorloo Kworp, meaning Perh is good’ in Noongar language. The research highlights the need for built attractions; the popularity of Perth, with visitors comparing it favourably to Sydney, Melbourne and Singapore; the need to increase the vibrancy of our city; and the opportunity to establish Perth as a renewable energy leader. But the 'one big idea' was to build a world centre for Indigenous culture. I support 100 per cent the work of the Committee for Perth in advocating this. I will fight as best I can to get them federal funding. And, when we think about the bicentenary of Perth in 2029, I note that when it came to the bicentenary of Sydney in 1988 this parliament and the federal government provided—in today's dollars—some $470 million for that national celebration. I believe we should do the same for our western capital. It is, of course, a city that we in this place all love and care about. This is a fabulous piece of research by the Committee for Perth. I commend them for releasing it. They do conduct incredibly thorough work. I encourage every member to read it.

Asylum Seekers

Mr Broadbent (Monash) (13:47): Ten years ago next week is the anniversary of the toppling of the democratically elected Kevin Rudd by Julia Gillard. Australia woke up to a new government. So long ago, so long ago—10 years. So many prime ministers, administrators, floods, drought, fire, pestilence, recession. And now, national trauma: physical, social and economic. Then I thought, there could not be asylum seekers still in detention since Rudd-Gillard government? Surely not in this country, that some would call the great 'South Land of the Holy Spirit'? I will ask Sister Jane Keogh, she will know if there are.

Today, many shout 'Black Lives Matter', injustice called out through the nations. I am Russell Broadbent, member for Monash, Australia, I may stand here alone, but I say all lives matter. Asylum seekers' lives matter, and their children's lives matter. I say injustice matters, whether it's in the open, hidden or in your face. Even more so when it's in your own backyard. Some anniversary.

Racism

Ms Wells (Lilley) (13:48): We've seen new lows from the government this week as the Queensland LNP continue their live audits for the upcoming top-of-the-ticket Senate stoush in Queensland by competing to see who can use a national platform to be the most reprehensible character. LNP Senator Stoker has accused the Queensland Premier of being 'the knee on the throat of businesses, stopping them from breathing'. Who uses the words of a dying man to make a political point! A barrister with a first-class law degree sitting among those opposite did. In just the same way, who gave 23 votes to Pauline Hanson's 'it's OK to be white' white supremacist motion in the Senate? Those opposite did. And who said, 'it's a free country', when their base thronged the streets to protest 5G but said, 'let's throw the book at them', when ordinary Australians marched in the streets because black lives matter—because people's lives actually matter? Those opposite did. How draining that First Nations peoples have to expend their energy to call their leaders to account on racism, even this week. How appalling that we have to wring a conditional apology out of those opposite just so we can restore a bit of decency around here and get on with our actual job, which is amplifying the voices of the disenfranchised in our own country. The PM must answer the question of whether he too supports the sentiments of this senator. If not, what is he going to do to stop the rot in his own party room?
Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (13:50): I'd like to congratulate Stabilcorp. It's a local business in Wauchope in the Hastings valley. They've received $90,000 from the Manufacturing Modernisation Fund. Stabilcorp designed and manufactured the ShoulderMaster, which is a very clever bit of manufacturing in civil construction. It's designed to improve road safety by restoring the shoulders of regional roads. It does it in a mechanical fashion. Across Australia, from the west coast to the east coast and from north to south, and now in North America, this locally manufactured civil engineering equipment is exponentially increasing the productivity of road repairs. It would normally take a day to do about 500 metres of road repairs; now four kilometres can be done in day. Congratulations to Stabilcorp on their ShoulderMaster machine. Up to 65 per cent of the ShoulderMaster is made with CNC machines. This will decrease waste and increase proficiency, and it will reduce the cost to all the local councils around Australia that have to fix up their roads. Well done! It's all out of the Morrison government's Manufacturing Modernisation Fund.

Stabilcorp

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (13:51): Last week, LNP senator from Queensland Amanda Stoker said that the Queensland Premier was 'the knee on the throat of businesses of Queensland, stopping them from breathing'. She subsequently gave what I would call a Clayton's apology—the very disingenuous apology you have when you're not having an apology. She said, 'It was just a phrase that was around at the time.' Well, we know why the phrase was around at the time, and so does she. We know that she is well aware of the Black Lives Matter protests because she went on Sky and complained about those same protests. Also, we happen to know that she hasn't been living under a rock. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Black Lives Matter protests, which have been happening internationally, were in part spurred on by the death of someone in those circumstances. The reason the phrase has been repeated is that there has been an outpouring of grief, heartbreak and fury across the world in relation to the death of black people. Here at home we've seen the Black Lives Matter protests that are protesting Australia's shame about black deaths in custody in Australia and about the over-incarceration of Indigenous people in Australia. To use this phrase for cheap political points is a matter of great shame.

Child Abuse

Mr CONNELLY (Stirling) (13:53): I rise to make an apology and to make a promise to a friend. Last week my good friend and former colleague Mark Maxham let me know, 'Vince, I'm starting a campaign to raise awareness of child sexual abuse because, when I was 14, I was abused sexually by two men.' I said, 'Mark, that's great. Let's raise awareness about the importance of tougher sentencing'—because 39 per cent of those convicted of a Commonwealth sex offence last year did not spend one single day in jail. This outcome offends community values and expectations of how crimes of this nature must be dealt with. It compounds the pain and the trauma of victims, and it endangers our Aussie kids. That's why this government had a bill before the Senate yesterday specifically designed to introduce minimum mandatory sentencing for child sex offenders. Well, yesterday in the Senate, Labor, the Greens and the crossbench teamed up to block mandatory sentencing. These people stood up for paedophiles over our Aussie kids and should be deeply ashamed.

The SPEAKER: No! The member will withdraw that remark immediately or he'll need to leave the chamber. He cannot reflect on members in that way.

Mr CONNELLY: I withdraw, Mr Speaker. Mark, I promise to continue standing beside you, along with every other parent, aunt, uncle and grandparent in this country, to ensure that those who sexually abuse our children go to jail.

COVID-19: Live Music

Mr BANDT (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (13:54): Before COVID-19 hit, 112,000 Melburnians attended a live music gig every weekend at many of the local venues around the city. Melbourne is the live music capital of Australia. In fact, Melbourne currently has more live music venues per capita than any other city in the world, and the live music industry generates $15.4 billion for the Australian economy and provides 65,000 jobs.

Since COVID-19, music venues are barely surviving, because the government doesn't understand the nature of the industry or what it needs to survive. Music venues have told me of the stress of paying commercial rent and insurance when the business is bringing in no income. The government's inadequate solution—a rent relief code of conduct—leaves venues vulnerable, requiring them to negotiate individually with landlords. JobKeeper's exclusion of casual and short-term workers means that it's unavailable for many in the industry. Venues worry that as restrictions ease and other businesses open they won't be able to reopen as a result of social distancing requirements. Music venues are the backbone of the live music industry. If they collapse, there's a devastating
flow-on for staff, musicians, promoters, publicists, hospitality staff, technicians, security staff, suppliers and the list goes on.

During the bushfires, the live music industry stepped up and helped their fellow Australians with gigs around the country to raise money for those who had lost everything. I call on the government to do more for those who work in live music, who now feel that they've been forgotten by this government in their time of need.

**Melbourne Airport Rail Link**

*Mr DRUM* (Nicholls—Chief Nationals Whip) (13:56): I've been very vocal recently, urging the Victorian government to build a designated tunnel from Southern Cross Station to West Footscray Station as an integral part of the Melbourne Airport Rail Link project. The concept of a designated tunnel to take six to eight trips to Tullamarine every hour has featured strongly on the Labor government's press releases and websites. Last year, if you entered the Big Build website, you could read about the Melbourne Airport Rail Link project. It said: ‘… additional tracks between Sunshine and the CBD, to cater for faster, more frequent metro and regional trains. This would most likely be a new tunnel that would be part of the Melbourne Airport Rail Link.' If you go onto that same website now, the Labor government in Victoria has deleted all references to the tunnel. On 16 October 2018, they had a press release and a big launch, saying: ‘… additional tracks between Sunshine and CBD, most likely through a new tunnel, which would also be used by airport-bound trains and integrated with the Airport Rail Link.' If you go onto that website now, you'll see that that press release has been doctored.

In 2017, Daniel Andrews said, effectively: 'When we build this airport rail link, it needs to benefit every single Victoria. In our view the airport rail link has the potential to unlock western Victoria and northern Victoria.' It seems as though Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan have walked away from all these promises. They've walked away from all of these comments that they made previously, and now they're going to burn western Victorians and burn northern Victorians. They're going to burn everybody, just to put in a cheap and nasty airport rail project.

**Human Rights: Black Lives Matter Movement**

*Stoker, Senator Amanda*

*Ms BURNEY* (Barton) (13:57): Three weeks ago in America, a black American man, an African-American man, was killed at the hands—or the knee—of a Minneapolis police officer. His name was George Floyd. He was knelt on for over 8½ minutes. His last words were, 'I can't breathe.' He was choked and the world let out a primal scream: enough is enough. No more to inequality, no more to racism, no more to black lives being lost, no more to violence, and no more to brutality. Many Americans are asking, 'Did the era of the Jim Crow laws ever finish?' It reverberated around the world: South Korea, New Zealand, the British Isles, France, Europe and Australia.

In this place last week, the senator from Queensland Amanda Stoker used the despicable, abhorrent term. Referring to Annastacia Palaszczuk, she said:

… she is absolutely choking our economy by having these borders shut. She is the knee on the throat of the businesses of Queensland stopping them breathing.

The question from Senator McCarthy to Senator Cormann is: 'What are you going to do about it?' My question to this House and to this Prime Minister is: 'What are you going to do about those comments and those attitudes from the senator from Queensland, Amanda Stoker?'

*The SPEAKER:* The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order?

*The SPEAKER:* No, I'm just going to say to the minister: I'm hearing him on a point of order just as I would hear the minister himself on a point of order.

*Mr Albanese:* The member for Barton has just given a serious speech—

*The SPEAKER:* You do need to go to the point of order.

*Mr Albanese:* and she is a serious person about race. The Treasurer made an interjection aimed at the member for Barton that it was a distraction, that speech, and he should withdraw. She is a person of integrity.

*The SPEAKER:* The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I call the Treasurer.

*Mr Frydenberg:* I withdraw.

*The SPEAKER:* Alright. It's now two o'clock, so we can proceed to questions without notice.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**JobKeeper Payment**

*Mr ALBANESE* (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday in this House the Prime Minister admitted more Australians would lose their jobs because he's planning
to withdraw their JobKeeper wage subsidy in September. How many jobs is he planning to sacrifice to his snapback?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:01): The Leader of the Opposition misrepresents—in fact, he is completely wrong about what I said yesterday. I said we're in a recession and in a recession people lose work. It's an awful tragedy for those Australians, and that's why the government has put in place record supports through JobKeeper, jobseeker, the cash flow allowance and the support that has been put in for business lending—over $200 billion worth of support. That's what the government has been doing in our record response. As a result of the interventions that our government has made, Australia is weathering this economic storm better than almost every other developed country in the world today. We are providing the support that Australians need and we will continue to provide the support that they need.

The most important thing that this country needs for those jobs is for our economy to grow again, for businesses to move forward again, for our economy to reopen and for those Australians to find themselves back in those jobs. That's what our JobMaker plan is about. Our JobMaker plan is not just about the support that is occurring right here and right now with the assistance Australians need but also about the important changes that we need to make in so many areas so we grow the economy next year, the year after and over the next five years to take back what has been lost as a result of this COVID-19 crisis.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to tell to Australian people that in recession there is no hardship then he is a fool.

JobMaker

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (14:02): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how the Morrison government's JobMaker plan is guaranteeing the essential services Australians rely on?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:03): I thank the member for Reid for her question and her continuing leadership in her own community as she supports Australians, particularly young Australians so impacted by this crisis. Her experience in dealing particularly with young children as well in her professional work before coming to this place is very important in informing the government's policies, particularly around issues like child protection and supporting the mental health challenges that young Australians face.

It's not just the jobs of Australians that are dependent on us recovering ground in our economy.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Can the Prime Minister pause for a second. The member for Rankin and the Treasurer have this continual conversation that's very loud that's preventing the rest of us hearing the answer. If they could just cease interjecting. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr MORRISON: It is not just the jobs of Australians that depend on the resurgence of our economy on the other side of the COVID-19 crisis; it is indeed the services that Australians rely on that are so dependent on the restoration of the Australian economy, which is why the JobMaker plan is so important. We restore the revenues that those essential services rely on not by higher taxes. We secure that higher revenue by ensuring we get people back into work, that we get investment back into our economy and that we see our economy grow again. That is why our JobMaker plan is about keeping the tax cuts that we have legislated in this place, and we remain absolutely committed to keeping those tax cuts to give Australians that continued incentive in the economy.

This includes the changes that we need to make to skills, working with the states and territories; the changes we need to make in workplace and industrial relations; the changes we need to make to ensure that we deregulate our economy so businesses can invest and employ people and find their way back; the changes we need to make in infrastructure and increasing our investment. As we said yesterday, almost $10 million has been brought forward in new investment just in the last eight months alone.

Of course, there is much more to come in this area as we continue to roll out the JobMaker plan, which ensures we can get the growth that will provide the revenues to support the essential services we're committed to, such as the $31 billion in extra spending on hospitals in the five-year agreement signed by all states and territories, which was secured by the Minister for Health. There is the delivery of pharmacy services secured by the pharmacy agreement, delivered by the Minister for Health. There is the continued support of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, with some 2,300 new and amended listings already introduced by this government. The record needs-based funding for our schools, which the Minister for Education is delivering, is up from $13.8 billion when we came to government, and is now at $21.8 billion and heading to $32.5 billion under the changes we've made—and what we've achieved by putting that funding in place. There is also the $243 million—
Ms Swanson interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Paterson is warned.

Mr MORRISON: that we've committed to supporting the safety of Indigenous children in this country. *(Time expired)*

**JobKeeper Program**

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) *(14:06)*: My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday, the Prime Minister said: 'The challenge of JobKeeper is that businesses will form views about those employees who they will be able to keep on longer term and those who they will not.' Why won't the Prime Minister just be honest and tell the Australian people how many jobs he will end in September?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) *(14:07)*: JobKeeper is supporting more than three million workers. Across gymnasiuums, across the not-for-profit sector—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will just pause for a second. The level of interjections is too high. I'm giving fair warning to everybody. The Treasurer can just mute for a second. I'll have no hesitation in lowering the volume through the use of standing order 94(a). I'm just letting everyone know that. the Treasurer has the call.

Mr FRYDENBERG: The JobKeeper program, the largest such support program in Australia's history, at around $70 billion, supporting more than three million workers, is helping to maintain that formal connection between employers and employees. It's part of a suite of measures that the government has deployed—some $260 billion, or 13.3 per cent of GDP. The states have put in around $36 billion. We have contributed, in terms of economic support, some $260 billion. We have said that, when it comes to the future of the JobKeeper program, we will undertake a review; the Treasury is currently conducting that.

I am asked about jobs. I point the member for Rankin to the ABS weekly and payroll and jobs data which was out today, which showed that the total of payroll jobs increased by one per cent in May. Payroll jobs worked by females increased by 1.4 per cent in May, compared to 0.4 per cent for males. When it talked about younger workers—who, like female workers, have been really badly hit by this COVID crisis—it made the point that payroll jobs in the final week of May increased by two per cent for those aged under 20, compared to 0.4 per cent for all jobs. That's a reflection of the fact that some of those sectors where young people and women are more prominent—and I'm talking about the hospitality sector and the retail sector—are starting to open up. As a result of the success that we have had as a nation in flattening the curve, people are starting to get back to work and it's the coalition who can be trusted to keep people in jobs and to ensure that this transition, helping the economy get back on its feet, will occur.

**JobMaker**

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) *(14:09)*: My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development. Will the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House how the Morrison-McCormack government's JobMaker plan is creating jobs, building infrastructure and boosting the economy as part of our recovery from COVID-19, including in my electorate of Lyne?

Mr MCCORMACK (Riverina—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Leader of the Nationals) *(14:10)*: I want to thank the hardworking member for Lyne for his question. He would know Rod Williams, the deputy chair of Advance Gloucester. I've been speaking with the member for Lyne about Advance Gloucester and about the Bucketts Way project. I know the member for Lyne has long advocated for an upgrade to Bucketts Way. Rod Williams had this to say about the project:

*We're over the moon ... There are no losers in this. It'll springboard Gloucester's opportunities, supporting tourism and industry in the region.*

Tourism and industry, I know, are two sectors that the member for Lyne has long championed. He is somebody who understands small business, he understands regional development and he certainly understands the importance of Bucketts Way. It's about 150 kilometres, a rural road, connecting Gloucester to Taree and Raymond Terrace. Gloucester, established in the 1850s, has a population of around 2,400. It's an important dairy and beef community. The $25 million federal upgrade to this particular stretch of road under Roads of Strategic Importance, under the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program is going to change the lives of those people in Gloucester, and the member for Lyne knows that. He understands that this is going to provide 240 jobs through construction—240 jobs! He understands that the construction, which is due to come in coming months, is going to make such a difference for his local area. He adheres and he agrees with Mr Williams and his summary of that project.
He also understands that through the COVID-19 pandemic we have the relief and recovery measures in place—the plan, the blueprint, the vision for the future—which are going to help regional communities such as the electorate of Lyne through these difficult times. They are trying times, and they're certainly trying times for those regional communities such as Gloucester. He also understands that councils such as Dungog, Maitland City, MidCoast, Port Stephens and Port Macquarie-Hastings are also going to benefit from the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program that we have established, that we have put in place. We have doubled the Roads to Recovery funding for those councils I mentioned—$7.44 million in addition to $23.09 million under the Financial Assistance Grants brought forward. This is going to make such a difference for those regional communities. It's going to enable them to build the roads. It's going to enable them to protect the jobs and the livelihoods of so many in the electorate of Lyne, the electorate which the member so fiercely and proudly represents—has done for some time and will do for some years to come.

**Bushfire Recovery Fund**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. I recently met Craig and Tamara, who are beef farmers in Cobargo, whose herd was devastated when bushfire tore through their property. They say they haven't been able to access the bushfire recovery grant. Why is the Prime Minister leaving people like Craig and Tamara behind?

**Mr MORRISON** (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:13): In relation to primary producer grants in New South Wales, they have been available in 49 local government areas, 2,236 applications have been received and 1,341 grants have been approved, worth some $84.6 million. In fact, what has been occurring with the primary producer grants is they've been running ahead of what our estimate has been for the provision of those grants to primary producers. There is certainly eligibility criteria, which I would think the Leader of the Opposition would think is necessary. When you provide any grant programs, there are eligibility criteria that apply to those grants. But I know that those primary producer grants have been incredibly important to those who have been able to receive them and have been eligible for those grants because it is assisting them as they're able to restock their properties and deal with the significant damage. It's some $75,000 that those grants apply to. I've seen firsthand their benefit across Australia, including in those communities that the member refers to. But I've also seen how they were applied in earlier times in relation to other disasters, such as the floods in North Queensland. But the minister for agriculture has further information that he can provide to assist the member with his inquiry.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:15): Thank you, Prime Minister. I can advise the House that Tamara and Craig have in fact received a grant. They received it on 26 May. The Leader of the Opposition in fact tweeted on 27 May that they didn't receive a grant. This is a very serious issue. With all due respect, this is about us as a nation working together. We are making sure that we are working with state agencies that are rolling out these programs, ensuring that we support them. We will not blame the states; we will help them. In fact, we have done that so much so that we have put on nearly 30 additional National Bushfire Recovery Agency staff to get out there and be boots on the ground and supporting the states in rolling out the programs that we are asking them to deliver. We are happy to work with every level of government to identify anybody that might have fallen through the cracks. No-one will be left behind. This government has made that commitment to every bushfire victim. We will make sure the states and the federal government work together to look after our fellow Australians who went through one of the worst bushfire disasters in our nation's history.

**Higher Education**

**Dr HAINES** (Indi) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Education. On Friday, the minister will address the Press Club on the crucial role of universities in producing job-ready graduates in the COVID-19 recovery. Tertiary admissions centres have reported a surge in applications, but some universities do not have places available to meet this demand. Will the minister consider funding more places for domestic students in areas with skills shortages, such as nursing and allied health, for instance, at the regional campuses of the La Trobe and Charles Sturt universities?

**Mr TEHAN** (Wannon—Minister for Education) (14:17): I'd like to thank the member for her question. The government is already providing additional places for regional and rural universities through our performance based funding. It's providing 1.3 per cent additional places across the board. We are also providing additional places through our short courses which have been taken up by regional and rural universities. As a matter of fact, I want to commend all regional and rural universities that have taken up the government's challenge to adopt the short courses. At the moment, we have 49 providers that are offering 321 courses in those priority areas that the member was talking about. Those priority areas are where we have skills shortages. So, when it comes to IT,
when it comes to nursing, when it comes to counselling—something which has been incredibly important when it comes to the bushfires and we saw that we had a shortage of counsellors—when it comes to teachers, in all these areas we have been offering these short courses. The universities have offered them and students have taken them up.

Our hope, when they were announced on Easter Sunday, was that we would see 20,000 additional students take up these short courses, and we think we're on track to reach that number. So it shows that the demand is there. We want to keep working with the sector to make sure, especially in those areas where we know there are skills shortages, we will be able to provide those additional—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat for a second. The member for Indi on a point of order?

Dr Haines: It's on relevance, Mr Speaker. I have asked: will the minister consider funding more places?

The SPEAKER: Whilst the question did have a preamble, there was a specific element to it and I invite the minister to address himself to the question.

Mr TEHAN: Just so I'm very clear, they were additional places for those short courses. That's what I was talking about. When it comes to performance based funding, they are additional courses and so that is what I was talking about.

We're also offering additional courses through the regional university centres. As you know, we made a further announcement about those regional university centres last week—the nine new regional university centres. That takes to 25 the number of regional university centres now rolled out across the nation. Each one of those brings additional places with it. As the member knows, we're working with her community in Wangaratta to put in place a regional university centre there. Now we do know, due to the counter-cyclical nature of unemployment, that we're going to see additional demand come into the system over the coming months. I am in discussions with the university sector on this right now, seeing how we can work together with the additional demand that's going to come into the sector as a result of COVID-19 and the impact that it's had on the employment market, so that there people who want to go to higher education can go to higher education and those people who want to go to vocational education can do that. Hopefully, if we can keep the confidence in our economy, we can enable those people who want to go into the job market to go into the job market. (Time expired)

Senior Australians

Mr FALINSKI (Mackellar) (14:20): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline for the House what the Morrison government is doing to assist older Australians and those planning for their retirement during this pandemic? Is the Treasurer aware of any alternative policies?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (14:21): I thank the member for Mackellar for his question and I acknowledge his extensive background in small business, the health sector and also the financial services sector before coming into this place. Australians are doing it tough in this once-in-a-century pandemic, particularly older Australians: those who are either in retirement or planning for retirement. That's why the Morrison government has acted, with $750 cash payments—one that started on 31 March and another to come in July—that have been supporting more than two million pensioners. We've also reduced the drawdown rates by 50 per cent to give retirees more control over their savings. We've also reduced the deeming rates by 0.75 per cent so at the lower level they are at a quarter of one per cent. The Council on the Ageing has welcomed these measures and said that the government is helping to get senior Australians through this crisis.

I'm asked about any alternative policies. Well, I know that the member for Rankin was the architect of $387 billion of higher taxes. Do you remember those higher taxes? The member for McMahon said of those taxes: 'if you don't like them, don't vote for them'. The $387 billion of higher taxes that the member for Rankin—who keeps his head down—said he was pleased and proud of. He was so pleased. Do you remember that photo on the eve of the election under the heading, 'We're ready'? You can ask yourself, how would senior Australians fare with those taxes—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin and the member for Deakin.

Mr FRYDENBERG: Well, there was $34 billion of extra taxes on super. There was $31 billion of extra taxes on housing. And there was a $57 billion retirees tax that would hit some one million Australians—including around 7,000 in Eden-Monaro—and would leave those Australians on average $2,200 a year worse off. It would have heavily hit women and lower income earners. The Alliance for a Fairer Retirement System said Labor's policy was a 'cruel blow', the end result of which would be to 'drive many retirees on to welfare'.

CHAMBER
Now, I read today that the member for Rankin is blaming the media for his irrelevance. How delusional and desperate can you get? He didn't ask me a question all last week and he hasn't asked me a question this week. The member for Rankin has his eyes on only one job, but he can't even do his.

**Australian Bushfires**

Mr ALBANES (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): My question is to the Prime Minister. I have in my hand an AusTender contract notice which reveals that during the bushfire crisis the government entered into a contract for: 'global sentiment monitor—Australian bushfires', costing taxpayers $293,000. Why is the government spending money monitoring what the world thinks about our bushfires?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:24): I'd be happy to take the information that the Leader of the Opposition has and come back to him on this matter. I'm happy for him to provide that to me. I do recall that at the time one of the concerns particularly of our tourism industry was about how Australia—

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lalor is warned.

Mr MORRISON: was being perceived. They had very real fears at that time, and that was pre-COVID, that people might cancel their holidays to Australia. I must say, when I was talking to various global leaders at that time there was quite an inaccurate picture of the extent of where the fires were across Australia. That was causing very real concern about international bookings into Australia, particularly in places like Western Australia, parts of western Victoria, along the Great Ocean Road and the Northern Territory. I'm happy to look at the specific issue that the opposition leader has raised. But I can say on the broader issue of understanding what global perceptions were at that time that there was a concern in the government and there was a concern in the tourism industry about how we could be tasking our missions overseas to be addressing any misperceptions about those arrangements to ensure that the terrible damage that was being caused by the bushfires was not made worse by misinformation in the global domain.

**COVID-19: Women's Economic and Physical Security**

Mrs McINTOSH (Lindsay) (14:26): My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Women. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government's investment in essential services is supporting women's economic and physical security in response to the coronavirus pandemic?

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for the Environment) (14:26): I thank the member for Lindsay for her question. As someone who led an international initiative on women's economic empowerment before coming to this place, she is in a terrific position to support her community at this time. I know that she would understand really well that the choices women make for women's economic and physical security in response to the coronavirus pandemic?

Prior to COVID-19, women's full-time employment and female participation reached record highs. We will absolutely continue our focus on our $158 million women's economic security plan, which we were the first to introduce and which the Prime Minister said earlier this week will get a refresh. Women have been the hardest hit through COVID-19. Our participation figures show that 325,000 women have lost their jobs and the women's workforce participation rate has fallen 0.9 percentage points to 58.4 percentage points, and this is partly due to the fact, of course, that women are heavily represented in sectors with sharp decreases in paid work: hospitality, tourism and retail. We know that increasing women's participation in paid employment will assist in accelerating Australia's overall recovery.

Our record investments are supporting women and men, households and businesses through COVID-19. Half of all JobKeeper payments are going to female workers. It has been a lifeline for female-run businesses, like that of Kerry Haskew in my electorate of Farrer, who runs a small lingerie business in city walk in Albury. She wrote to me to say that she really appreciated the relatively quick and easy way she was able to get support through JobKeeper. Kerry doesn't want a continual handout. She wants her business open. It opened on 1 June. She wants people walking in the door. She loves her elderly customers. She wants shoppers in the streets. She knows that this government has been there when she needed it.

We saw some welcome news today. ABS payroll data shows that the number of females in jobs increased by 1.4 per cent through May. We've got more work to do, but it's a really encouraging start.

Outside the workplace, unfortunately, the pandemic has meant domestic violence rates have increased. We are still working hard. The support that we added during the crisis included our domestic violence initiatives and our
information campaign. Whether it be women's safety, participation in the workforce or financial security, we want to see every woman empowered to make, for themselves and their families, the choices that a strong, resilient economy will allow. (Time expired)

**Australian Bushfires**

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (14:30): My question is to the Prime Minister. The National Bushfire Recovery Agency admits that months and months after bushfires ripped through Snowy Monaro not one out of 119 bushfire affected properties has been cleared of debris. Why is this Prime Minister spending money on marketing instead of bushfire survivors?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:30): Obviously, on the properties that were damaged across Eden-Monaro, we're working with the New South Wales government to make sure the clean-up is taken as quickly as it possibly can. You have to appreciate there are some complexities. You have to understand there's complexity around the clean-up in that some of those buildings contain asbestos. It took time to get personnel into those areas to make assessments about whether there was asbestos and whether any unsafe trees had to be felled so that they could get people in safely. You cannot put other Australians in harm's way. These are professional men and women who make these assessments. They are held by the state governments, who pay them to make sure that they keep all of us safe.

The New South Wales government has done that. In fact, they have made a commitment to have all homes in New South Wales cleaned up by the end of July. In Eden-Monaro, let me tell you what the numbers are as of 16 July. In the Snowy Valley LGA, 188 homes have been cleared out of 208. In Snowy Monaro, 11 out of 31. In Queanbeyan, 48 out of 64. In Bega Valley, 375 out of 431. In Eurobodalla, 570 out of 610. The New South Wales government, to which we made a commitment to pay half the bill, engaged contractors to undertake this in a professional way to keep everyone safe and get people whose lives have been uprooted by this fire back into recovery.

This is a complex program. I have to congratulate the New South Wales government in being able to do this in a professional way and as quickly as they possibly could. South Australia is in fact completed. Victoria will not be completed until the end of August. We make sure all this data is available on the National Bushfire Recovery Agency website. There is full transparency to make sure everyone understands the progress of every program in which the federal government runs itself or in which we ask the state governments to run on our behalf. We are working collaboratively together. We're not going to blame the states. We're going to work with the states, because this is above politics—this is about people.

The **SPEAKER**: Is the Manager of Opposition Business is seeking the call?

**Mr Burke**: Yes, on the tabling of a document. The minister just quoted from a document that provided different numbers to those that the government has otherwise provided. I'd ask him to table it.

The **SPEAKER**: Was the minister quoting from a confidential document?

**Mr Littleproud**: Yes.

The **SPEAKER**: The minister was quoting from a confidential document.

_Opposition members interjecting—_

The **SPEAKER**: All can I do is ask the minister if he's reading from a confidential document. He said that he was. I take the minister at his word. A document can contain more than just the material that the House is after.

**COVID-19: Mental Health**

**Ms BELL** (Moncrieff) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is investing in mental health support, particularly for our youth, during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond?

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service and Cabinet) (14:33): I want to thank the member for Moncrieff for her commitment to youth mental health. In particular, she has been a great advocate and supporter for headspace Southport, along with all of the young people on the Gold Coast.

We know the challenge of youth mental health is real, profound and significant. One in four young Australians in any one year face some form of mental health challenge. Over 400 beautiful young Australians took their lives in 2018, for which we have the confirmed figures. Last year, one of the central features of the budget put forward by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer was a youth mental health package of over $500 million. Going into the pandemic, however, we knew that more needed to be done and that the challenges that were already there required...
additional investment, so the first phase of what we did was a $1.1 billion investment in primary health. In particular, there was a $74 million investment in mental health with a significant focus on support for youth and children: $2 million for Kids Helpline and $6.75 million for the work of the Head to Health youth focused website. All of these things have been helping to make a difference.

More broadly, telehealth, now with over 14 million services, has been a prime deliverer of additional mental health support for young Australians and, in fact, for all Australians. The second phase of the mental health program through COVID-19 had a particular youth mental health focus—a program of over $40 million, coupled with the pandemic mental health plan. That led into the third phase, which was the practical research focus. That was a $20 million investment, with half of that to be spent on suicide prevention, with youth as a fundamental part of that.

Going forward, we have more work to do. It's something that every member of this House believes in and is passionate about. It's part of our fundamental responsibility. In that context, I'm delighted that we have been able to announce in the last week an additional $24 million for headspace to expand services in headspace centres around the country. We currently provide approximately $120 million a year for headspace, but this investment will provide additional services for young people in their teens and early 20s in over 40 different headspace centres. I had the privilege of visiting headspace Queanbeyan, where Tiana talked about the way in which headspace has been able to transform her life and her experience. The investment we're making there is similar to the investment we're making in over 40 other headspace centres. It's about hope, opportunity and recovery.

Australian Bushfires

Mr MARLES (Corio—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): My question is to the Prime Minister. Why are all the media and communications positions at the National Bushfire Recovery Agency filled, while the three local economic recovery positions are still vacant? Why is the Prime Minister focused on marketing instead of delivering for bushfire survivors?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (14:37): The local economic recovery plans start on 1 July. This has been about making sure that the commitment of an additional $450,000—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I'll answer the question: they start on 1 July because it was very important that we engaged with the community and made sure we did it region by region. So it took time to bring the community and civic leaders together. We didn't want a Canberra led recovery. Those on the other side would like to see that it's all centralised from here. We wanted engagement with the local community. Therefore, the commitment to the rebuilding of those communities will be important, community by community. In terms of having media people within the National Bushfire Recovery Agency stood up immediately, that was important. There was important information that needed to be put out. In fact, $240 million in immediate relief was put out. It was important that the message got to people. It was important that we helped the states to disseminate information about the small business grants, the farmer grants and concessional loans to ensure that people understood what was available. They were going through trauma. It was important that we were able to communicate to them the programs that were available both centrally and on the ground. That's why we continue to put additional personnel from the National Bushfire Recovery Agency on the ground. This has been a multifaceted approach.

The next phase is recovery. It's about the local economic recovery plans—a local led recovery, not a Canberra led recovery—ensuring that locals are empowered to make decisions about what that recovery looks like in terms of Building Back Better. They should determine that, not someone from Canberra. That's exactly the strategy that we've undertaken and will continue to undertake because we want to build this nation back better for those who have been impacted. This is what it's all about: calmly and methodically working through, ensuring that the $2 billion in additional support will get out there. In fact, we said we would only be able to have $500 million out by 30 June, but we will have $1 billion of the $2 billion fund out by 30 June. That's because we've been able to communicate with those who need it the most—getting it out of our pocket and into their pockets. That's exactly what you should do in this recovery: look after them. And we've done that, calmly and methodically, and we say to those opposite that we are open and transparent, happy to work through any issue you may have. This is about more than politics; this is about people.

Cybersafety

Ms HAMMOND (Curtin) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts. Will the minister update the House on how the Morrison government is protecting children online during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as they return to school?
Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) (14:40): I thank the member for Curtin for her question. As a former vice-chancellor of one of our leading universities, she has a longstanding commitment to the welfare of young Australians, so it's a very appropriate question for her to be asking.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen a very high usage of the internet by children and by adults. The internet is an extraordinarily valuable resource. But, sadly, a percentage of human interactions online, just as offline, are not positive ones. That's why it's very important that we have the eSafety Commissioner there to protect Australians, particularly children, against some of the risks they may encounter online. Indeed, our government took the lead in establishing what was first called the Children's eSafety Commissioner in 2015, before its responsibilities were expanded, and was one of the leading governments around the world in making sure that there was an agency there to protect Australians. The eSafety Commissioner is funded with $90 million over the next four years.

Over this period, traffic to the website of the eSafety Commissioner—esafety.gov.au—has doubled as Australians, particularly children, parents, carers and teachers, come forward seeking practical advice and assistance. More than 28,000 people have registered for one of eSafety's free webinars since mid-March. Very importantly, the eSafety Commissioner has the power to intervene if a child is the subject of cyberbullying, and the eSafety Commissioner has the power to take action where people are the victim of image based abuse. And I'm sorry to say that we have seen a 200 per cent increase in reports of image based abuse coming to the eSafety Commissioner during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, with more people at home and online. I'm very sorry to report to the House that we've seen an 80 per cent increase in reports of child sexual abuse content. And, as children are returning to school, we have also seen an increase in complaints about cyberbullying—up 128 per cent on last year.

If you are experiencing cyberbullying or one of these other adverse online consequences, please go to esafety.gov.au. It has the capacity to get this stuff taken down, in some instances in as short a period as 30 minutes. The eSafety Commissioner has a range of useful tools and resources, with more being added all the time, including the eSafety Toolkit for Universities, and the member will be interested to know that there have been 3,600 visits to look at various aspects of that toolkit in the first few days since it's been released.

**Child Care: JobKeeper Payment**

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (14:43): My question is to the Prime Minister. When it comes to slashing mail deliveries, the Prime Minister says that pandemic measures will last until the middle of next year. So why is he kicking childcare workers off JobKeeper in July?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (14:43): I'll ask the Minister for Education to further respond to this question. What we are doing is providing additional support to childcare operators—more than $700 million of support in addition to the rebates that are received by childcare operators—so they can support more workers, not less. That has occurred as a result of the consultations undertaken by the Minister for Education. Not only did this government step in to provide childcare support by offering free childcare when the childcare sector was dropping like a stone in the face of the COVID crisis. We stepped in, we acted, we have worked with the sector and we have provided that additional subsidy support as they transition back to their operations in the future. We've stepped in, we're providing support and we've worked with the sector. Those opposite seek to make hay over a crisis, and they should be ashamed of themselves. I will now ask the Minister for Education to add to the answer.

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston will cease interjecting. The Minister for Education.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (14:45): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Prime Minister, and I would just remind the House that we put in place temporary measures to help the childcare sector when demand was dropping. Ninety-nine per cent of childcare services remained open through the pandemic. If you have a look at what happened right across the world, you can see that we are unique in this regard. Can I say, on behalf of the government—and I think this would be on behalf of all members of the House—to all those early childhood educators who worked through the pandemic: thank you.

They provided much-needed services to those essential services workers and, in particular, to the vulnerable children who needed care. We put in place temporary measures for when demand was dropping. We have now put in place transition arrangements to support the sector as demand comes back into it. It has reached 74 per cent. With regard to the employment guarantee that we put in place and the transition payment of $708 million that the Prime Minister mentioned, that now means that 200,000 employees are supported rather than the 120,000 employees who were supported under the temporary measures that we put in place. One was there for when
demand was dropping. We've now put in place new arrangements as demand increases. We will continue to work with the sector. We will continue to consult with the sector. I once again commend the sector for the outstanding job they did in making sure they were there to provide the care we needed—99 per cent of services open. (Time expired)

Child Abuse

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (14:47): My question is for the Minister for Home Affairs. Will the minister update the House on steps the Morrison government is taking to protect Australian children from exploitation and abuse? Is the minister aware of alternative approaches?

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Home Affairs) (14:47): As I have reported to the House before, the government has made it an absolute priority to make sure we can protect Australian children. One of the ways we're doing that is to invest significantly into the Australian Federal Police, and the other agencies within Home Affairs, to work closely with their police colleagues around the states. We have been involved now in a number of operations where a record number of paedophiles have been arrested.

You can imagine the devastation of the police and the investigators, but most importantly the victims, their mums, their dads and their family members, when those offenders go to court and in many cases receive no jail time at all. The government has spoken to a lot of victims' groups and to a lot of individual police officers, about how this work has scarred their lives, in many cases forever, and all of them say to us, 'Please do whatever you can to increase the jail time for those sex offenders'. So the government was shocked last night in the Senate when the Labor Party opposed the bill that we had put in place. When the Labor party went completely back—

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will cease interjecting. The member for Mitchell will cease interjecting. I'm going to call the Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order, and then I'm going to, for the convenience and interest of the House, say a couple of things myself. The Manager of Opposition Business on a point of order.

Mr Burke: A point of order, Mr Speaker, on reflections on members: claiming that members voted in a different way to how they did is both dishonest in the House and disorderly, and the minister should withdraw and should not be allowed to continue with an answer that he knows is not true.

The SPEAKER: On the point of order, this is obviously difficult ground. I've ruled on matters before and made clear what the rules are. I don't expect every member to necessarily remember that, but members need to tread very carefully. The minister on a point of order.

Mr Dutton: On a point of order, Mr Speaker—it goes to the contribution made by the honourable member opposite. The statement that he made was incorrect. The comments he made in relation to me were false, and I would ask you to ask him to withdraw those comments.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Those members behind the Leader of the Opposition are not helping anyone, including their leadership, when they interject like this. I need to deal with what's a very serious matter and all they do is hinder the performance of the House. That's not what they were elected to do. I'm going to say two things to the Manager of Opposition Business and to the Minister for Home Affairs. It is well established that, when it comes to questions and answers, the chair is not in a capacity to judge accuracy. I'd be suspending the House and going and checking on facts and figures all day. That is why personal explanations are allowed at the end of question time. I'm going to say very clearly that there is no tolerance for reflections on members and imputing motives within the Practice. I'm just saying that as a piece of information that is very, very important. So both the Manager of Opposition Business and the minister can have their personal explanations at the end of question time, if they so wish, and we will deal with them then. In the meantime, I'll listen to the minister.

Mr Dutton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the Senate last night, the government sought to introduce legislation which was not supported by the Leader of the Opposition or the Labor Party. That is the truth. We wanted to introduce minimum mandatory sentencing for paedophiles, and those opposite opposed it. They were captured by The Daily Tele today. That's the reality.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister knows the rules on props.

Mr Dutton: The government are as offended as parents are around the country, because the Leader of the Opposition stood in here last week and said that he would assist us in relation to these matters in any way he
could, and yet this week he demonstrates that he will not support us on these very important matters. Labor say that it's a principle issue for them—that they won't support any mandatory sentencing. The fact is that the Labor Party have supported mandatory sentencing in relation to terrorism related offences. They have supported in Victoria mandatory sentencing for people that commit assaults against emergency services workers and they have supported mandatory sentencing in relation to people-smuggling offences as well. So I would just say that the Leader of the Opposition needs to reconsider his position. We are all absolutely committed to seeing the original bill, with its original intent, go back into the Senate and be supported, which the Labor Party did not do last night.

This came yesterday on a day of great shame for the Australian Labor Party, where Mr Orkopoulos was again charged with offences. All I would say is: think of those victims when you make these dreadful decisions. (Time expired)

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The minister will cease interjecting.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong) (14:54): My question is for the Minister for Government Services. In March 2017, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal found there was no legal basis for the method used by the government to raise robodebts. When did the minister know robodebt was illegal?

Mr ROBERT (Fadden—Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Minister for Government Services) (14:54): I thank the member for his question. As I've said previously in the House and as the Ombudsman's report accurately reflects, the use of income averaging to raise debts has been a longstanding practice of government. Indeed, it is so longstanding that, in 2009, 16 per cent of debts raised from a sample of 500 were raised solely or partially using income averaging, and in 2011 that jumped up; 24 per cent of debts that year were raised wholly or partially from income averaging. That was done from a sample of 500, which demonstrates the longstanding nature of this practice, and those ministers in 2009 and 2011—

The SPEAKER: Before I recognise the member for Maribyrnong, I was just about to intervene and say, as I've said to the minister before, that he's entitled to a preamble, but that's now approaching a minute. The question was very tight. It had a statement of fact that was necessary for the specific question and there was no commentary or debate in the matter. So, as I said, the minister is entitled to a preamble, but he now needs to bring himself to the specifics of the question or wind up his answer.

Mr ROBERT: Since it was such a longstanding practice to use averaged income data from the ATO, as soon as I was informed, I moved expeditiously to halt the program. I announced that on 19 November last year.

The SPEAKER: The minister will resume his seat. The member for Maribyrnong is entitled to seek the call.

The member for Maribyrnong on a point of order.

Mr Shorten: It is relevance, Mr Speaker.

Mr Robert interjecting—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Hang on! The minister and the member for McMahon can cease their animated discussion and I'll hear the point of order. The member for Maribyrnong.

Mr Shorten: On the point of relevance, it was: when did the minister find out it was unlawful, not when did he decide to do something about it or tell us publicly? When did the minister know robodebt was unlawful? It's a date, Stewie.

The SPEAKER: The member for Maribyrnong needs to refer to members by their correct titles. Those last words were unnecessary to his point of order.

An honourable member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: No, I make the point seriously, because, when the football turns over and the boot's on the other foot, people tend not to like it. Not everyone likes their nickname. The minister does need to address himself to the specifics of the question or wind up his answer.

Mr ROBERT: As I said last week in the House and this week in the House, as soon as I was informed, I moved expeditiously to inform the Australian people. That date was 19 November.
Child Abuse

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (14:57): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney update the House on how the Morrison government is working to ensure children are protected from the abhorrent crimes of child sexual abuse, and is the Attorney aware of any alternative policies?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (14:57): I thank the member for his question and for his great commitment to this area. The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences Against Children and Community Protection Measures) Bill 2019 will shortly be put to a final vote in the Senate. In fact, in its original form, it was introduced on 13 September 2017. Absolutely central to that bill, as the Minister for Home Affairs elegantly explained, is minimum mandatory penalties. It is the absolutely central part of that bill. Why has the government never given up on minimum mandatory penalties for child sex offences? It is because the type of offending they sentence are the worst of the worst, because the instances of this type of offending are increasing, because the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation tells us there has been a 123 per cent increase in the average number of reports of child exploitation it receives each month, and because there's clearly undeniable evidence that sentencing does not align with community expectations and therefore doesn't provide sufficient or general specific deterrence.

Last year, in 39 per cent of Commonwealth offences in this area, the offenders did not receive a single day in jail. There have been sentences where the maximum penalty is 15 years, such as that of a 22-year-old who committed sexual activities online with someone whom they thought was a 12-year-old child and the offender received nine months—15 years; nine months.

Members opposite have been opposed to minimum mandatory sentencing as a matter of principle. But, in assessing that, let me read statements of Senator Penny Wong on the introduction of mandatory minimums in the Anti-People Smuggling and Other Measures Bill 2010. She said:

The measures in the bill will address the often serious consequences of people-smuggling … The bill will act as a greater deterrent for people smugglers …

... ... ...

The bill is a measured response to a growing problem and demonstrates the government’s commitment to addressing the serious nature of people-smuggling.

To assess whether or not that was a matter of principle or hypocrisy, listen to those sentences again with a slight change to the words and answer whether it now makes more or less sense: 'The measures in the bill will address the often serious consequences of child sex offending. The bill will act as a greater deterrent for child sex offenders. The bill is a measured response to a growing problem and demonstrates the government's commitment to addressing the serious nature of child sex offences.' There is one principle here, and that is that these people must spend longer inside prison.

Employment

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (15:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. On 29 May the Prime Minister said the government has a jobs target. What is it?

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:00): We went to the last election committing to generating another 1.5 million jobs. That's what we did. We went to the election with that very commitment, and in our first six years that's exactly what we achieved. We generated that through policies that we put in place and working with the Australian economy and the businesses that make it up—the many small business and medium-size businesses. That's what we achieved.

Now, the COVID-19 crisis has wiped 30 months of job growth from the Australian economy, and that is a devastating outcome. But what the Australian people know is that this government has demonstrated its ability to work with businesses, employers and employees across this country to generate jobs, and they know we can do it again. They know that's what they need. They know they need a government who knows how to create jobs, and that's what the JobMaker program is all about. That is the program I have outlined to the country and that, indeed, the Treasurer will add further to when the economic statement is released later in July and, of course, in the budget in October. This government knows how to generate jobs, and it's jobs that Australians need. That's why we will remain committed to generating those jobs and regaining those jobs that have been taken from Australians during the COVID-19 crisis. Our government has the policies to achieve it.

I had the opportunity to see a copy of the speech the Leader of the Opposition was supposed to deliver on economic policy this week. I am not surprised he did not decide to deliver it, because there was nothing in it. The Leader of the Opposition's great national solution to the problems of jobs in this country is a national driver's licence. What's next—harmonisation of shopper dockets?
The SPEAKER: Can I just say that the Prime Minister has moved off the policy topic.

Mr MORRISON: I have because the Leader of the Opposition is off the policy topic, and that's the economy and jobs. We will be working to restore those jobs that have been lost and generate even more, and we will update on those targets when we present the budget later this year. But our government has delivered jobs and will deliver jobs again. Our government balanced the budget again. We'll be putting in place the decisions to do it again.

The Australian public know that we know how to run an economy, particularly at a time like this. This Leader of the Opposition is shallow-thin when it comes to economic policy. He has no experience on the issue of economic policy, and his shadow Treasurer has even less.

Education

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Education. Will the minister please update the House on how the Morrison government is ensuring that Australian children get a quality education, including during the current pandemic?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Education) (15:04): I thank the member for Robertson for her question. I know that she cares deeply about the education of Australian children. It's one of her absolute passions, and it's why she's supported the government's record investment in schools: $314.2 billion to 2029. That's a 62.3 per cent increase in funding. On Friday, the Education Council met and we were able to endorse some projects and some policies which will further benefit Australian children.

Ms Ryan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Lalor has already been warned.

Mr TEHAN: To start with, what we were able to do is all agree that every student who does year 12 this year, or year 11 where they do a VCE subject, will get an ATAR in 2020. There will be no mass repeating and no year 13. We've dealt with the pandemic and we will ensure that every year 12 student will get an ATAR in 2020. We were also able to agree that we will set up a $50 million national evidence institute, a key recommendation of David Gonski's Review to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools. This is another key milestone in ensuring that when it comes to schools they will get the best practice and they will get effective teaching policy given to them by an independent national evidence institute, which will go a long way to lifting educational outcomes in this nation. Can I thank all the states and territory education ministers for working with the Commonwealth to agree on this key achievement: the establishment of this $50 million national evidence institute. Dr Jenny Donovan will be the inaugural director from 1 July 2020. So not only have we set the institute up; we have a director who will hit the ground running to make sure that this institute can put those practices and policies in place that will inform schools—and in particular teachers and principals—about what they can do to lift education standards in this nation and education outcomes.

We also progressed the Review of the Australian Curriculum. It was an election commitment of the federal government that we wanted to declutter the Australian curriculum, so that a focus on literacy and numeracy could be at the heart of what our children are learning at school. This is what we have agreed, and, importantly, it will be maths and science that we start with in decluttering the curriculum and making sure that that focus is there on numeracy and on science. The Education Council is endorsing our policies and our commitment to make—(Time expired)

COVID-19: Economy

Mr BRENDAN O'CONNOR (Gorton) (15:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. How many businesses are trading insolvent and are expected to close when government support is suddenly withdrawn in September?

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Treasurer) (15:07): Mr Speaker, as you know and as the honourable member knows, we have put in place some changes to the insolvency and bankruptcy laws to get businesses through this difficult period, but, at the same time, we are doing everything possible to ensure that businesses can stay in business and Australians can stay in jobs. The member for Gorton should know that in his own electorate there are more than 4,000 people who are benefitting from the JobKeeper program. The reality is that through our measures we are supporting more than 800,000 businesses with the JobKeeper program. Under us, you'll see more people in a job and see taxes lower.

Indigenous Australians

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (15:08): My question is to the Minister for Indigenous Australians. Will the minister outline to the House how the Morrison government is supporting the wellbeing of Indigenous children and their families across the nation?
Mr WYATT (Hasluck—Minister for Indigenous Australians) (15:08): I thank the member for Berowra for his ongoing interest in the work we're doing in our portfolio, and, more importantly, for his interest in Indigenous children and families. One of the key foundations of life is the beginning journey for a child in a family environment, which consolidates the way in which nurturing love is the basis for a great opportunity. I want to acknowledge the member for Barton, because she and I, many years ago, worked on a document called *Solid foundations*, which went to a number of aspects not just of education but of social and emotional wellbeing—the elements of the way in which children were given an opportunity that gave them a better future. The Morrison government has invested a further $243 million under the IAS Safety and Wellbeing program, which includes funding for social and emotional wellbeing support for families and youth; violence reduction and victim support for families; crime prevention, diversion, rehabilitation and reinvigoration activities; and youth alcohol and substance misuse prevention and treatment activities. One of the things we need to think about in the protection of families and children is that, when they experience a disruptive life in which domestic violence or sexual abuse is part of their life, it leaves an indelible scar that carries on into their future years and often is a barrier to the success of their journey in life. It impacts on their education. And so the interventions that we're putting into place are being done by working with community, working with our women, who are our leaders in so many fronts in health and education and family violence, and also working with our men so they can take their place in the protective role that they have to share and be involved in. If we are to change the dynamics, then it's important that all of us in this chamber build on those strategies.

We're focused every single day on getting more children to school, reducing suicide rates, which are a scourge on our communities, and creating jobs and economic opportunities for all Indigenous Australians—because all of those have flow-on effects that will make a difference. And we are succeeding. Successive governments have built success. We should celebrate success, not always focus on the gap. Whilst the new *Close the Gap* report has significant targets, we must celebrate every achievement. By celebrating achievement, we give people the opportunity and aspiration for a better future.

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (15:11): on indulgence—I want to associate the Labor Party with the comments of the minister. The truth is that we as a parliament, on all sides, have failed on these issues in the past. We need to do much better and we need to work together wherever possible to achieve better outcomes and, indeed, celebrate the wins that are here. There are two wins sitting here in the chamber—the fact that the minister and the shadow minister are the first Indigenous Australians to hold their respective positions.

Mr Morrison: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Australian Bushfires

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Prime Minister and Minister for the Public Service) (15:12): I'd like to add to an answer.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister may proceed.

Mr MORRISON: I'm adding to an answer in relation to the matter that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and I thank him for his comments on indulgence on that other matter. Austrade initiated the contract that he referred to to assist the reputational impact on Australia as a result of the bushfires. It was part of a broader allocation to DFAT at their request to counter negative sentiment that could damage Australia's economy. It was a package that was presented and recommended to the government by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The imputation in the Leader of the Opposition's question was to suggest that this was some sort of consumer marketing exercise. That is a false assertion. This was responding to the very careful advice provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We were responding to what was very important advice at a very critical time for Australian businesses.

DOCUMENTS

Treaties Committee

Presentation

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:13): A document is tabled in accordance with the list circulated to honourable members earlier today. Full details of the document will be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*. 

CHAMBER
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Live Animal Exports

Mr WILKIE (Clark) (15:13): I seek leave to move the following motion:

That the House:

(1) Notes that:
   (a) the Federal Court has today ruled in favour of allowing the livestock carrier Al Kuwait to depart Fremantle for Kuwait with 56,000 live sheep;
   (b) the live animal export industry is systemically cruel, costs Australian jobs and lacks wide-spread public support;
   (c) live sheep exports to the Middle East at this particular time of the year, into the scorching heat and humidity of the Middle East summer, has been shown repeatedly to be even more cruel; and
   (d) the Government's claim to have made the trade less cruel is a sham as evidenced by the exemption for the Al Kuwait and previous exemptions for the Al Shuwaikh in December 2019 and the Maysora in March 2020.

(2) Calls on the Government to:
   (a) immediately prevent the Al Kuwait from departing Australia with its cargo of live sheep;
   (b) commit to no more exemptions under the current regulatory framework;
   (c) develop a plan to completely shut down the live animal export industry; and
   (d) remove responsibility for animal welfare from Ministers and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and instead establish an Independent Office of Animal Welfare with the power to investigate allegations of animal cruelty and to punish people and organisations that mistreat animals.

Leave not granted.

Mr WILKIE: I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Clark from moving the following motion immediately:

That the House:

(1) Notes that:
   (a) the Federal Court has today ruled in favour of allowing the livestock carrier Al Kuwait to depart Fremantle for Kuwait with 56,000 live sheep;
   (b) the live animal export industry is systemically cruel, costs Australian jobs and lacks wide-spread public support;
   (c) live sheep exports to the Middle East at this particular time of the year, into the scorching heat and humidity of the Middle East summer, has been shown repeatedly to be even more cruel; and
   (d) the Government's claim to have made the trade less cruel is a sham as evidenced by the exemption for the Al Kuwait and previous exemptions for the Al Shuwaikh in December 2019 and the Maysora in March 2020.

(2) Calls on the Government to:
   (a) immediately prevent the Al Kuwait from departing Australia with its cargo of live sheep;
   (b) commit to no more exemptions under the current regulatory framework;
   (c) develop a plan to completely shut down the live animal export industry; and
   (d) remove responsibility for animal welfare from Ministers and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and instead establish an Independent Office of Animal Welfare with the power to investigate allegations of animal cruelty and to punish people and organisations that mistreat animals.

There is an urgent need for the House to consider this motion—

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:17): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is the member for Clark be no longer heard.

The House divided. [15:21]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ................... 57
Noes ................... 46
Majority ................ 11

AYES

Allen, K
Andrews, KL
## AYES

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Question agreed to.

The **SPEAKER** (15:23): Is the motion seconded?

**Mr BANDT** (Melbourne—Leader of the Australian Greens) (15:23): Seconded. We must stop these ships of shame—

The **SPEAKER**: The Leader of the Greens will resume his seat. The Leader of the House.

**Mr PORTER** (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (15:23):

I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The **SPEAKER**: The question is that the member be no longer heard.

The House divided. [15:25]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ......................57
Noes ......................47
Majority...............10

**AYES**

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**NOES**

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The question now is that the motion moved by the member for Clark be disagreed to. Putting the question in that form will mean the government can stay on that side. By the look of things, though, they are going to be joined by some members of the opposition. All those of that opinion say aye, to the contrary no. Division required. We'll ring the bells for four minutes, and we will require two things: firstly, we will just require a quorum in the House, which is 31, so that doesn't mean everyone has to be here, and, secondly, I will allow the whips to count any members who are standing, if that's necessary to maintain the spacing requirements.

A division having been called and the bells having been rung—

The SPEAKER: As there are fewer than five members on the side for the noes, I declare the question resolved in the affirmative in accordance with standing order 127. The names of those members who are in the minority will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

Question agreed to, Mr Bandt and Mr Wilkie voting no.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (15:32): Mr Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Does the Manager of Opposition Business claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr BURKE: Yes, I do.
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The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business may proceed.

Mr Burke: Today, in question time, the Minister for Home Affairs said that I had made a statement which was incorrect. The statement that he was referring to was when I made clear that Labor had not voted against the piece of legislation he was referring to. The statement from the minister is untrue and demonstrably so. That legislation passed the House on 15 October of this year on the voices without objection and without division. It then went through the Senate with an amendment. It was supported at the second reading, it was supported at the third reading and then it went through the House again today, with the support of Labor. In the last couple of moments, it has just now gone through the Senate.

There were four occasions where the Labor Party supported a piece of legislation that the Minister for Home Affairs today claimed we had not. If the Minister for Home Affairs is claiming that somehow by moving an amendment at some point that makes you opposed to the piece of legislation, I would remind the House that Senator Hume moved a government amendment to the same piece of legislation. Unless everybody is opposed to the piece of legislation, the argument put forward by the minister is absurd. When he claims that we opposed the legislation it's not only untrue but untrue twice in this House and twice in the Senate. That is why I made the comments that I did today.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

COVID-19: Economy

The SPEAKER (15:35): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Rankin proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government's mismanagement of the economic crisis and its lack of a comprehensive plan for the recovery.

I call upon those members who approve of the proposed discussion to rise in their places.

More than the number of members required by the standing orders having risen in their places—

Dr Chalmers (Rankin) (15:34): This month Australians learned that we as a nation are in recession for the first time in almost three decades, and this week the Morrison government showed its true colours. This was the moment when the Prime Minister and the Treasurer snapped back from 'we're all in this together' to 'you're on your own' when those opposite reverted to type—to the stale, failed policy of tough luck and cold charity, to the unfair and un-Australian notion that if you fall behind you get left behind.

Every member of this side of the House understands that recessions aren't about spreadsheets on a computer screen or some abstract technical jargon; they're about people, their jobs and their living standards. They're about whether people can afford to pay their rent or their mortgage or put food on the table or school shoes on their kids. They're about whether or not as a nation we can avoid the long-term unemployment which can turn into long-term, entrenched disadvantage and which risks cascading down through the generations in communities like the one I represent and those represented by this side of the House.

These are serious times, and people are understandably anxious. Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs. Just today, in the new data, we learnt that 750,000 jobs have already disappeared and that the impact of those job losses has been felt disproportionately by women, by younger workers and by people employed in industries dominated by casual and insecure work. Faced with this avalanche of reality about what this recession means for real people in real communities, those opposite are leaving those workers behind. They're leaving those workers in the lurch. They're leaving them hanging when it comes to important updates and reviews of the JobKeeper program and the budget update, which was promised for June but now, all of a sudden, has been pushed back beyond the Eden-Monaro by-election in July.

Three decades of continuous economic growth, which began under Labor and was defended by Labor when it was last most at risk, has now come to an end under those opposite because of this pandemic. On this side of the House we have always acknowledged the devastating economic consequences of this diabolical health crisis. We know that the pandemic arrived without warning, but the truth is that weakness in the economy did not. And, with us having acknowledged the role of this pandemic in ending that remarkable period of continuous economic growth, it's now time for those opposite to acknowledge three things. One is that we entered this crisis from a position of weakness because of seven years of incompetence, inaction and ineptitude which saw slowing growth and stagnant wages, business investment going backwards, productivity flatlining, record household debt and record public debt. We came into this crisis from a position of weakness. We weren't as strong as we needed to be in confronting something as serious as this. That's the first thing.

The second thing that they need to acknowledge is that stupendous errors have been made in the implementation of programs that should be doing more good in our economy than they are—and I'll come back to that. The third thing for them to acknowledge is that as it stands today, despite all the speeches and all the slogans,
there is still no comprehensive plan for jobs and the recovery and the future of this country. Australians can't afford for those opposite—having bumbled the economy before, having botched the response—to bumble the recovery as well. Every Australian needs the government to do a much better job of managing this crisis and this recovery than they were doing managing the economy in the lead-up to this pandemic.

Perhaps the defining debacle of all of this has been the JobKeeper program. I'm referring in part, but not wholly, to the biggest-ever error made in any budget by any Treasurer in the history of the Commonwealth—the Treasurer's $60 billion JobKeeper blunder. That matters, because they turned people away on the basis the program was full only to cough up late on a Friday that it was actually three million workers short.

But that's not the only error those opposite have made with the JobKeeper program. They've left too many people out of it, and that means they've left too many Australians behind. They introduced it too late and it was too narrow, and now they risk withdrawing it too soon and too bluntly. The tragedy of this is that the JobKeeper wage subsidies could have been such an important part of dealing with this crisis.

The government actually started with the right instinct, which was to try and keep as many people connected to their employer as possible, and we supported that. We support it now. But what they showed is that you can't trust a bad government with a good idea. It's a good idea but badly implemented and badly communicated, and Australians are paying the price for it. And that's why even the Reserve Bank, including today in their minutes, have said multiple times that the economy is going to be weak for some time, so don't withdraw the support too soon. All that will do will mean that we've spent all of this money turning an April-May problem into a September-October problem so that people are in strife later in the year instead of earlier in the year.

In question time this week, we asked the government why, if the JobKeeper enrolments were down, they wouldn't admit that the jobseeker enrolments were up. We learned the answer from the committee chaired by Senator Gallagher, the shadow finance minister. Those opposite are all of a sudden pretending that JobKeeper and jobseeker are one and the same. The truth is, on the side of the House, we'd prefer people in work if they wanted to be in work. We'd rather people maintain that connection. The original instinct of this program was right; it's just been bungled in its implementation. We want people in work, and we prefer people in work.

When asked today about how many people would be sacrificed in September to this snapback that the Prime Minister is clinging to, all those opposite wanted to do was to talk about the Labor Party. It wasn't that long ago that this Prime Minister was saying, 'In this country, if you have a go, you get a go.' And now he's saying: 'You had a go. Off you go to Centrelink.'

What do those opposite say to all of those Australians who've been left behind by the incompetence and ineptitude of those opposite and sacrificed to their cold and cruel ideology? They say to the Australian people: 'Don't worry. I know you've lost your job, but our recession is not as bad as America's.' Their main defence—and we know what's going on in the United States—is: 'Don't worry. It's not as bad as what's happening in the US or Italy.' They say: 'Don't worry. We know you've lost your job, but it's not quite as bad as we originally feared.' It is for that family. It is for that breadwinner. It is for that community. Their defence that it's not as bad as the US or not as bad as they feared is cold comfort if you're one of the hundreds of thousands of Australians who headed off to lengthen the unemployment queues.

Just as having no plan before the crisis was a recipe for economic weakness, it is so too a recipe afterwards. The Prime Minister gave a speech yesterday which tried to do two things at once. It tried to argue this crisis will be with us for longer but that the support should be drawn out sooner. You can't have it both ways. He's got to pick which of his comments is true. It makes no economic sense for him to be talking up austerity at the same time he's pretending he's game for growth.

In serious times like this, we need a Treasurer who's up for the task as well. Instead, we get the butterfingers of Australian politics—the Treasurer who will always have his name on the first recession in three decades, the Treasurer who will always have his name on the biggest blunder ever made in a Commonwealth budget since Federation and the Treasurer who printed the mugs saying we are 'back in black' only to deliver the biggest ever deficits in the history of this nation. We need those opposite to do better.

The Leader of the Opposition has said rightly that Australians have a choice. The choice before all of us is whether we want to snap back to the worst elements of the economy before this crisis—all the insecure work, stagnant wages, flattening living standards and record household debt—or whether we can go forward to something better, and that is the question before this parliament. We won't get anything better if those opposite continue to bungle JobKeeper, or if they fail to understand that this recession, on their watch, is about real people in real communities. We won't get there without a plan or without leadership, and those opposite are providing neither. (Time expired)
Mr HOWARTH (Petrie—Assistant Minister for Community Housing, Homelessness and Community Services) (15:44): I've been overwhelmed by the number of calls that I've received to my electorate office in response to the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. I'm sure that the member for Grey has had the same number, and the members for North Sydney, Chisholm and O'Connor have all experienced it. And I suspect some of those on the other side of the House have also had calls from people about how pleased they are with the government's performance and about how the Prime Minister has handled this in a very statesmanlike manner by calling the national cabinet together—Australia's first national cabinet. Australians desperately want leadership. They won't get it from this shadow Treasurer and they won't get it from this Leader of the Opposition, but they will get it from this Prime Minister.

When the Prime Minister spoke about our JobMaker plan in question time today, it was really inspiring to hear what he had to say—to hear that he understands Australians need and rely on the services that we deliver. We want to ensure that revenues are restored, that people get back to work, that the Queensland borders are opened, that tourism is flourishing, and that the services that people rely on are delivered. We know that getting people back to work pays for all the services that people rely on, whether it's the $31 billion in additional funding that we pumped into hospitals, including the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, or the almost $20 billion that's been forecast for schools funding. When I was elected, we were spending something like $14 billion a year on schools. It's currently $21 billion a year. Fantastic! And those services can be delivered to our children because of the economy that we're in. We want to make sure that the economy is up and running again as quickly as possible.

But what we hear from those opposite and what we just heard from the shadow Treasurer is a whole lot of negativity. He actually used the words: 'sacrificed in September'. Those are the words of the shadow Treasurer. We heard nothing from him about jobseeker and the doubling of jobseeker, for those important people who are living in public housing or are looking for work or are doing it a bit tough—nothing from the opposition acknowledging the help that is being provided to those people. We heard nothing about the emergency relief funding that's being rolled out around the country or about the JobKeeper payment that is helping so many Australians and the many small businesses who have called us and said, 'Thank you for what you're doing and the plan that you have in place.' Deputy Speaker, do you know that the stimulus that the federal government has delivered is almost ten times larger than the states' combined? It's unbelievable what the Australian government has been able to roll out to help so many people.

Those opposite don't have a plan. The member opposite, the shadow Treasurer, just criticised the Prime Minister's speech to CEDA yesterday. The opposition leader didn't even do a speech, and he has criticised JobKeeper because the forecast was wrong. If those opposite had been in government it wouldn't have been an underspend, I can tell you that, Deputy Speaker. It would have been a big overspend. So I do find it appalling that this opposition come in here at this time and try to talk down the economy—'sacrifice in September' is the sort of language that the shadow Treasurer brings to this place to inspire people.

I heard the Prime Minister speak today about the JobMaker plan. People are inspired by that, and I know they are because people have been calling my electorate office. There's also a plan for manufacturing—making it, for the agriculture sector—growing it, and for the resource sector—mining it, and there are infrastructure projects being rolled out around the country—servicing it.

In relation to manufacturing, the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology has spoken about the Manufacturing Modernisation Fund, which is a really good opportunity to help all Australians support manufacturing. This government has supported over 200 job-creating projects, investing over $215 million; that's over $1 million on average per project. We're also investing in homegrown companies like Kestrel Manufacturing and Clets Linen—both in Labor-held electorates, I might say. They're manufacturing personal protective equipment and looking for opportunities to export. Under this minister, we've also set up service hubs and new cybersecurity hubs. In my own electorate, the Dolphins leagues club were recently hacked by someone and they've had to strengthen their own cybersecurity, but we've set up hubs in Brisbane, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast. We've also set up SME export hubs in Boothby in South Australia and in Melbourne to work with businesses and help businesses gain access to international markets.

In the agriculture sector, we are doing a lot to help grow the economy. We're making sure the agriculture sector has the workers it needs, and we're making sure that the freight assistance to support that is also in place. There's a lot happening in agriculture. The resources minister, Minister Pitt, spoke about mining yesterday. He said that the Australian resources sector has contributed around nine per cent to Australia's GDP and 25 per cent growth of all our exports have been coming into the economy in this sector in the last couple of years—some $100 billion in the iron ore industry and $50 billion in liquid natural gas. We've got a lot of plans in place in the resources sector and in agriculture, and what do we get from the Queensland Labor Party? We get roadblocks at every opportunity. That's why we need a new government come October in Queensland. There are good women up there who
understand that we need to get rid of the red tape and the roadblocks that others are putting up—LNP candidates like Amanda Cooper in Aspley; Kerri-Anne Dooley in Redcliffe; Yvonne Barlow in Murrumba; and Kara Thomas in Pine Rivers. We would love to see them elected.

It is nice, by the way, that the federal government is investing in Victoria as well. We are investing in both of those hubs in Jagajaga and Scullin. Unlike the Victorian Labor Party—and unlike what is happening with Adem Somyurek at the moment—at least we are actually looking after Victoria.

In relation to infrastructure projects, we've just seen $1.8 billion invested in councils right around the country to make sure that councils can get jobs happening right now. That involves projects in my own electorate to upgrade places like the Clontarf Beach Scout Group and a road upgrade at Bonnet Parade and Mango Hill Boulevard, where we've invested $555 million. These projects, relying on councils, are happening right around Australia.

The JobKeeper wage subsidy program has been really helpful to people. The cash flow incentives for small and medium businesses have been essential. Some small-business owners told me the other day that they received a $50,000 rebate in PAYG. We've put in place a 50 per cent wage subsidy for apprenticeships and a safety net for companies facing financial stress. The instant asset write-off is really helping the economy: you can invest up to $150,000 and ensure that that item is written off straightaway.

I would say to the member opposite who raised this matter of public importance that what he's saying is false, because the calls that we are receiving are overwhelmingly supportive, right around the electorate. When I get out and talk to people, they're really happy with what the government is doing. There's more work to be done, but I believe that the Prime Minister is providing the leadership that this country needs and the plans—particularly our JobMaker plan—to ensure that, over the next five years, we continue to go from strength to strength.

Australia is the best place to live. I am proud to live here and to be a member of this House. I say to those opposite: don't talk negatively and try to scare people. Look at what you're doing and how you can contribute to a better Australia.

**Mr Stephen Jones** (Whitlam) (15:54): The fact is Australia is in its first recession in 30 years, and ordinary people are worried about their jobs. In my electorate, those with a job are concerned if they are going to keep it. Those without a job don't know when they are going to get another one. These serious times mean we need a serious government. Sadly, we do not have one.

It's a fact that, before coronavirus, business investment was falling off a cliff. It is a fact that, before coronavirus, wages growth had flatlined. In fact, workers' share of national income was at its lowest level in decades. It is a fact that debt had exceeded $500 billion. It is also a fact that all of these problems haven't gone away; they have got worse. But we do not have a government with a plan to deal with them. In fact, we have a government which is seriously contemplating making each and every one of those problems even worse.

It's a lamentable fact that, come October, a million Australians are going to get an income cut as a direct result of the decisions of this government. We are told that somehow $40 a day was insufficient for those one million and more Australian workers who lost their jobs at the commencement of the coronavirus. It was insufficient in March, but somehow it is going to be just enough in September when all of those workers on JobKeeper, many of whom are in industries which are still being affected by the restrictions, are going to have their support slashed, and business support is slashed as well.

The government says in response to these criticisms that Australian workers do not want a handout. Well, isn't it remarkable that that is exactly what this government's decisions are going to leave millions of workers doing? I'm referring to the fact that it has encouraged two million workers to raid their retirement savings. These workers are going to be more reliant, not less reliant, on pensions come their retirement because, for every $20,000 that is withdrawn, it's probably going to cost them in excess of $100,000 in retirement. The well-off people on the other side might yawn and say, 'That's nothing,' but if you are a low-wage worker in an electorate such as mine that is probably the majority of your retirement savings. The government think it's nothing that these workers cleaned out their retirement savings accounts.

Because this government was so slow and so sluggish at putting in place support for businesses and support for workers, many of those workers had no choice but to raid their superannuation. Because of the misadministration of this scheme, we've had workers' savings exposed to frauds and rip-offs. It has been a honeypot for fraudsters.

**Mr Howarth interjecting—**

**Mr Stephen Jones:** The assistant minister says, 'Turn it up.' He asks, 'How many have there been?' I might ask the assistant minister: how many have there been? We know of 150 cases they will admit to. Where there are 150 cases they will admit to, hundreds more red flags and concerns will have been raised.

**Mr Howarth interjecting—**
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): The assistant minister will cease interjecting across the table.

Mr STEPHEN JONES: The assistant minister thinks this is nothing, but these are the retirement savings of ordinary Australians through the scheme that the government have put together. So, at a time when Australians need a government with serious plans and proposal, they are getting nothing but big promises and no delivery and big slogans and no substance. They are leaving people behind, and their one big plan is to wait for the economic tide from the rest of the world to somehow wash upon our shores and ensure that the growth that is driven from elsewhere lifts the Australian economy. Well, we need more than that. Australians deserve and need more than that. They need more than the slogans and hopeless plans of this assistant minister and this government. These are serious times, and they need a serious government with a serious plan, not this hopeless mob.

Ms LIU (Chisholm) (15:59): We live in a strange time, but I am proud of our government's strong economic response in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. This has not been an easy task. The current crisis we find ourselves in is unprecedented. But, thankfully, the coalition government's strong economic policies have put us in a good position to bounce back. Without the coalition government's decisive economic response, we would not be in the position we are in now.

The impact of COVID-19 has been severe, not only for our health system but for the economy as well. While those on the other side might try to attack us for our mismanagement of the economic crisis, it would be important for them to note that we are in a global crisis. The average fall in GDP across OECD countries in the March quarter was six times that of Australia. Our economy has only contracted by 0.3 per cent, which is negligible in comparison to countries which experienced the full extent of the outbreak at the same time as us—including COVID-19 successes, such as Germany, which had its economy shrink by 2.2 per cent in the same period.

Government initiatives like JobKeeper have helped 7,000 organisations in my electorate of Chisholm. These organisations have been able to keep people on the books and off an already strained welfare system. Without this program, unemployment was projected to rise to 15 per cent instead of the worst-case scenario of 10 per cent that is currently predicted. In what universe is this not a success in economic management? Additionally, the coronavirus supplement paid along with the jobseeker payment has effectively doubled the payment for those who have lost their jobs and are doing it tough. This has stopped Australians from having to default on their loans, which could have led to a wider collapse of the banking and financial systems. That could have had wide-reaching consequences for the economy. I am glad we have managed to avoid that possibility through the coalition's measured and well-considered policies. Of course, these measures can only be temporary. We, the government, are committed to ensuring that our economy can fully recover from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. This is of incredible importance for Australia as a whole and cannot be rushed, and I wish those on the other side could understand that.

Unlike those opposite, we do have a comprehensive plan for Australia's economic recovery, based on growing the economy and creating jobs. We have already begun to unveil parts of this, such as the JobMaker program, which aims to fast-track infrastructure projects around Australia, creating jobs and promoting growth. We are committing a further $1.5 billion to immediately start work on small priority projects identified by the states and territories. This is on top of the $7.8 billion of projects we have already brought forward since November last year.

Our economy is slowly reopening, with restaurants, cafes, bars and other non-essential services gradually beginning to serve customers again across Australia. This is a great help to those businesses that have been struggling through these difficult times. We should continue to work together to make sure that our hard work does not go to waste. We live in strange times, but I am glad we have a strong coalition government with a proven record of sound and strong economic management to lead us out of this challenging time.

Mrs PHILLIPS (Gilmore) (16:04): This government wants to talk about economic recovery. They want to pat themselves on the back for a job well done. Well, from where I'm standing nothing could be further from the truth. This government has no idea what regional areas like my electorate of Gilmore on the New South Wales South Coast need. They have no plan to help us recover from this year from hell. We suffered from drought, bushfires and floods, all well before coronavirus.

At every opportunity I have stood here and asked those opposite to do more, to actually look at what areas like the New South Wales South Coast need for our economy. Even before the unprecedented threats of this year, I begged those opposite to invest in local jobs on the South Coast. We have the highest youth unemployment rate in New South Wales. Our youth unemployment rate before COVID, before bushfires, was 18.7 per cent. In the December quarter last year alone Nowra's unemployment rate was 17½ per cent. They have had no plan to address this. They have done nothing.
I have asked the government to invest in projects like the Princes Highway, affordable housing projects in Bomaderry and east Nowra—now there's a great idea: affordable housing—the East Arterial Road, Curarong Road, the Mogo adventure trail, the Eurobodalla hospital. The list goes on. That is without even considering the bushfire recovery. But what has the government done instead? They have given $25,000 so that people in city areas can renovate their homes. Apparently this will save our economy. We have people still living in caravans waiting for their homes that were destroyed by bushfire in December to be cleaned up. But this lot are more worried about home renos. How out of touch can this government be?

Only last week we discovered the truth about the bushfire clean-up. Less than one in three destroyed and damaged properties in my electorate have been cleared. In the Shoalhaven 280 out of 772 destroyed properties have been cleared. In the Eurobodalla the story is even worse with 331 out of 1,195—absolutely appalling. All the government knows how to do is make flashy announcements and false promises. They don't know how to follow through. They leave people out time and time again. There was one tiny project under the Building Better Regions Fund and one tiny project under the Manufacturing Modernising Fund. People are still ineligible for the Drought Communities Program Extension. Job opportunities have been squandered and there's no plan to help communities on the South Coast.

How about bushfire-proofing our emergency evacuation centres? When the bushfires came so many communities were cut off with only one road in and one road out. Then the power and the telecommunications failed. People were left with nothing. Ulladulla Civic Centre was lucky. The circus was in town and they kept the lights on. But what about elsewhere? People were left scared and frightened. Those opposite could listen to Lana, who said this on my Facebook page only yesterday:

About evacuation centres: they should be made accessible. So many elderly people and those with mobility issues could not access the centres we had during this summer. I know people who were in motorised wheelchairs rolling around with a garden hose because there was no point evacuating to somewhere they couldn't access.

This is outrageous. It should never happen anywhere. But where is the government's plan to fix it?

We need to also make sure every region has a fit for purpose emergency operations centre. When the Currawong fire was split in two, the Eurobodalla emergency operations centre was run out of a community hall, complete with fold-up tables from Bunnings. The staff there did an amazing job, but why should they have had to do it in those conditions?

The next tragedy might not be on the New South Wales South Coast, but you can bet it will be somewhere. So why is the government focusing on renovations that most people can't afford anyway? This is just too little too late for people impacted by bushfire. As Mirren said:

 Plenty of us would have qualified to help us rebuild, but we've already signed with builders, thus making us ineligible...It's a slap in the face.

Indeed it is. Those opposite aren't listening.

Mr CONAGHAN (Cowper) (16:09): Having listened to the member for Rankin for 10 minutes, I'm somewhat bemused at the framing of the MPI. The member for Rankin spoke almost entirely on the government's intention to remove JobKeeper at some stage later this year. If more intellectual honesty had been put into the MPI, perhaps he might garner some support from this side of the floor, particularly from regional and rural representatives. But that's not what he did. What he did put was a fairytale as the first section of an MPI that was in two parts—firstly, 'the government's mismanagement of the economic crisis' and, secondly, a 'lack of a comprehensive plan for the recovery'.

But for this government, but for the plans of this government through JobKeeper and jobseeker, Australia would be in a world of hurt. Labor's constituents and many of the people who voted for Labor—hundreds and thousands of them—engaged in those programs. Why? It was because they were needed. Why? It was because it was good policy. As the member for Rankin said, it put food on the table. As my colleague said, it paid the rent. How can that side of the floor criticise this government for making good policy and keeping people in contact with their employers so that, when we get through this, there will be jobs for them? And that is exactly what has happened. There are many companies and businesses out there who are now saying: 'We don't need JobKeeper. Thank you for it, but we don't need it.' I have been out there. I have spoken to businesses. I have spoken to people on the street. I have received emails from the people of those opposite, saying: 'I don't normally vote for your side of politics, but thank you. Thank you for putting out JobKeeper. Thank you for putting out jobseeker.' For the Labor Party to sit on their side and criticise, it is just fanciful. In the first sentence of the storybook, Chicken Little walks outside and starting telling everybody that the sky is falling.

Now, in addition, what we have is a policy to go forward. How can the Labor Party say that there is no planning for the future? We have $9 billion of infrastructure, $1.5 billion of which came out this week alone.
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There is JobMaker. We are putting jobs back out there. We are creating the environment for that. Politicians don't make jobs. They create the environment for jobs to be made, and that is what this government is doing. It is investing $9 billion to bring forward infrastructure projects through my electorate—

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr CONAGHAN: And through your electorate! You cannot deny that the money will go into all your electorates. That is why we have a plan for the future. This government has provided sensible advice and sensible policy to go forward. That is why the Australian people voted for us on 18 May last year, and they will continue to vote for us because Labor have no plan. The only plan they had last time was $370 billion in taxes, and there was not one word of a plan for our country to go forward.

I go back to my original point. But for this government, there would be no jobseeker payment. There would be hundreds of thousands of people out of work and without support payments, because the Labor Party would only tax us. Because of our strong budget, we were in a financial position to be able to put these policies and these schemes in place. The people who are on the age pension received $750 each in two payments. There are emails from them thanking the coalition government for their considered judgement and for their financial management of this country. That is something that the member for Rankin should take into account. (Time expired)

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (16:15): Maybe if the member stopped praising himself and actually came up with an economic plan this country wouldn't be in such trouble from the mismanagement of the economy under this mob. I am very pleased to stand up to support the member for Rankin on this MPI because, if the member for Rankin were the Treasurer, he would have acted months before the coronavirus. There could be certainty and stimulus in this economy. Instead we've had mugs, we've had recession and we've had the largest deficit in our country's history. We didn't get back in the black; we got the largest deficit in our country's history.

I am very proud to represent the electorate of Macnamara. It is one of the great electorates, if not the greatest electorate, in this country.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BURNS: I am hearing a lot of support on this side of the House! But, in all seriousness, in Macnamara there are some of the hardest hit areas in the economy in the country. Elwood is the hardest hit suburb in Victoria. St Kilda, St Kilda East, Elsternwick, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, Southbank and Windsor are some of the hardest hit suburbs in the country because they are filled with casual workers. They are filled with people who work in hospitality, in retail and especially in our arts and entertainment industry, which is absolutely doing it extremely tough in this very difficult time. Sadly, many people in my electorate have been left behind by the Morrison government—left behind by this government that is all spin and no action, that doesn't have a plan to get our economy moving.

This Prime Minister is very good on announcements but not so good on the follow-through. The government are happy to just sit there and watch industries fade away. They're happy sitting and watching the arts and entertainment industry fade away, just like they were happy to sit there and watch the car industry fade away to go offshore. I remember the Treasurer at the time stood in this place, goading the car industry to leave, and that is exactly what happened. And jobs in my electorate, in Port Melbourne, disappeared when that government didn't stand by the workers in this country, and we are seeing that once again.

At the moment, one of the key things we need in this economy is certainty. The Prime Minister himself promised that the JobKeeper supplement would be here at least until September. Well, it didn't take long for that promise to be broken. After only four days the Prime Minister took the JobKeeper payment away from some of the most underpaid and hardest working people in the economy in our childcare workers. They have done a stoic job, our childcare workers, and what did the Prime Minister do? He ripped the certainty away after only four days. But it's not surprising, because there has been a growing number of members on that side of the House who have been desperate to take away the support measures that we have been calling for for months. And I can quote. David Crowe of a Nine newspaper reported on 11 May:

"The longer we wait the harder it's going to get, and the more damage it's going to do to the economy," said one Liberal MP.

The member for Mackellar, not usually one for bright ideas, came out and said that JobKeeper should be cut off as soon as possible.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Llew O'Brien): The member will withdraw that.

Mr BURNS: I withdraw. The member for Mackellar came out and said:

Liberal MPs are calling for a pathway out of the mammoth job assistance programs that are supporting more than 5 million workers …

Those numbers have been revised subsequently.

"The longer we wait the harder it's going to get, and the more damage it's going to do to the economy," said one Liberal MP.

The member for Mackellar, not usually one for bright ideas, came out and said that JobKeeper should be cut off as soon as possible.
I think we should turn off JobKeeper as soon as possible. As soon as the schools are back then it should go.

The member for Hughes also backed changes and was reported to have told the coalition party room that withdrawing JobKeeper from businesses that recover sooner would help expand its eligibility for sectors that suffer longer. They've obviously ignored the member for Hughes, but they haven't ignored the call to rip JobKeeper away, and we know that that's coming only moments after the Eden-Monaro by-election. Only moments after the Eden-Monaro by-election is over, this government is going to rip JobKeeper away from vulnerable businesses and businesses on the brink.

Finally, the Minister for Housing and the assistant minister for housing, who led this debate for the government—well, it says a lot about that minister that, through his 10 minutes of whatever he ended up saying, he didn't mention his portfolio once. His portfolio is one of the most neglected portfolios. The government is letting down Australians by failing to invest in housing, failing to invest in the economy and failing to support Australian jobs.

Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connell) (16:20): It's my lucky day today, not only to be able to contribute to this debate on the member for Rankin's matter of public importance but also to follow the member for Macnamara, who's made a couple of extraordinary statements through his contribution, one of them being that the member for Rankin, had he been the Treasurer, would have acted months before the coronavirus. Well, we'll never know whether the member for Rankin had some sort of crystal ball, but we do know that he would have been busy implementing his $370 billion worth of new taxes. That's what he would have been doing. We know that. We know he would have been dismantling negative gearing. Imagine how that would be impacting the construction industry at the moment. So we do know a couple of things that the member for Rankin might have been doing, had the disaster occurred of a Labor government being elected last 18 May. But fortunately that didn't happen.

I think it's worth taking a moment to reflect on those very dark days at the end of March, when the national cabinet were meeting at least couple of days and the Prime Minister was holding a press conference at the end of those meetings to inform the nation of the decisions that were being made. We heard of businesses being forced to close and the job losses that were coming. Obviously the health crisis was paramount at that point in time, but the Prime Minister also made it very clear that, at the same time, we had an economic crisis coming towards us.

One of the things that gave me and, I'm sure, many Australians who were watching those early press conferences great heart and confidence was that, when the Prime Minister was asked about what he considered was an essential job, he said, 'Every job's an essential job.' Every job is an essential job. I've spoken in this place previously to acknowledge and thank some of the people who kept working through those dark days—the people who work in supermarkets, serving customers and stacking the shelves, and the truckies delivering those goods. Through those dark days, they were still turning up to work. They were fronting the public and taking the risk, and they deserve enormous credit for that.

As that economic crisis started to unfold, the government announced the JobKeeper program, and immediately afterwards I had a phone call from a very good friend of mine who owns a car dealership and employs 61 people, including six apprentices. She said to me: 'This is a lifesaver. This is going to save my business and it's going to save those 61 jobs.' And that was repeated 4,100 times across the electorate of O'Connor—4,100 businesses and individuals accessed that support. I happen to know that that dealership is now back on its feet and, if not running at full capacity, then certainly, in the lead-up to the end of the financial year, getting a lot of interest in new vehicles. That's partly because of the $150,000 instant asset write-off—another initiative of the government to boost the economy and part of our plan to get businesses back on their feet and people back in jobs.

So that's the impact of the JobKeeper program. As part of the government's plan to reinvigorate the economy, we stand firm for the electorate of O'Connor. And the mining sector across my electorate never faltered. Every year it produces over $10 billion of income for our nation—it was $11.4 billion in the past financial year. And there are plenty of projects that are ready to go that just need their approvals. I note that the assistant minister who is assisting the Prime Minister with deregulation is here in the chamber this afternoon, and I know that part of the government's agenda and its plan going forward is to make those approvals quicker and simpler so that we can get those projects up and running and producing income for this nation.

The other sector across my electorate which hasn't faltered, is standing firm and will produce income and revenue for this nation going forward is the agriculture sector. Our grain exports, our meat exports and our wool exports will carry this nation forward. I've got to say, I was very, very pleased to hear today that the live export ship the Al Kuwait is loading at the moment and will be on its way to Kuwait shortly. (Time expired)

Ms MURPHY (Dunkley) (16:25): The Prime Minister and the Liberals now preside over the biggest blunder in Australia's history, the $60 billion JobKeeper blunder, the first recession in decades, record debts and hundreds
of thousands of Australians unemployed or left behind, and they don't have a comprehensive plan to get us out of it. In fact, with the only plan they have had, really—the JobKeeper plan—the member for Farrer appeared to call it a 'handout' in question time today. That's the attitude that this government has towards supporting people to get through this recession.

The Grattan Institute recently analysed job losses. My electorate of Dunkley was estimated to have lost 7.9 per cent of jobs since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the third worst hit electorate in Victoria, after Wannon and Mallee. We need a plan. Yet the JobKeeper wage subsidy isn't reaching all of the people in my electorate who need it. There are the casuals. There are the local government employees at PARC, for whom we've been fighting week after week. And the Treasurer says, 'Just go and lobby someone else; I'm not interested in helping them.' There are the employees at Monash University's Peninsula Campus. They are not covered by JobKeeper, and it's not good enough. The governor of the Reserve Bank has warned the federal government that the JobKeeper Program may need to be kept going beyond September to avoid the Australian economy falling off a cliff.

There is not a comprehensive plan for the recovery. Too many Australians are going to be left out when the Prime Minister tries to enact his snapback. Do you know who most of those Australians are going to be? It's women—who, apparently, are the essential workers at the frontline: childcare workers, hospitality workers, retail workers and those supermarket workers that the speaker before me mentioned. Women have been hardest hit during this pandemic. We don't care about them, apparently—that's from the government. The Minister representing the Minister for Women, in answering a question in question time today about how great this government has apparently been for women, called JobKeeper a 'handout'. That's their comprehensive plan to get us out of this recession, but 325,000 women have lost their jobs during the pandemic. Half of all JobKeeper payments are going to female workers. Where's the plan for women? Payroll jobs for women declined by eight per cent, while male payroll jobs rose by 6.3 per cent.

Where's the plan for young people? Payroll jobs worked in by people under 20 decreased by 16½ per cent. Job losses have been concentrated with high concentrations of workers excluded from JobKeeper. One in three hospitality jobs have been lost. One in four arts and recreation sector jobs are gone. That is not a comprehensive plan for the future or to get us out of this and recover.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister was reported as saying that one of the ways to recovery is a modernisation of how Australia approaches the economy. They would be nice words if they weren't followed by, 'The plan for modernisation is simply deregulation.' How about an actual plan for modernisation of Australia's economy? Take the once in a lifetime chance. Have a triple bottom line accounting method. Let's have a look, actually, at every single policy for the future having an economic benefit, an environmental benefit and some social capital benefit. 'No. Let's just have deregulation.' Let's have an economy for the future that supports people, that protects the environment, that builds new jobs in new manufacturing areas and that supports women, rather than just cutting everyone off at the knees with JobKeeper in September.

My electorate has been so hard hit by job losses. Where's our investment? Where's our investment in our roads? Where's bringing forward some Black Spot funding when we need it? Where's the business case for the electrification of the train line to Baxter? Where's the commitment to support the arts and the sports and the cultural hubs we have in Dunkley? We actually need a comprehensive plan to support people, to support institutions, and to grow our economy and leave no-one behind.

**Ms HAMMOND** (Curtin) *(16:30)*: Since this pandemic first came upon us, the government have made it quite clear that we had to tackle it on two fronts: on the health front and on the economic front. On the health front and because of the unified actions of all Australians, we have slowed the spread of the virus through quarantining, through social distancing and through social isolation through our border closures. It's been hard. I think the words 'challenging' and 'unprecedented' have never been used as much as in recent times. It has been hard, but Australians have suck it up because it's been in the best interests of the country. It has also hit us on the economic front, and the government have always been very clear both that it was going to hit and now that it is hitting us. As a result of the measures we had to take, our economy has been severely impacted. Economic activity has slowed and businesses and households are facing uncertainty.

Like businesses everywhere across the country, many of the small and medium-sized businesses in my local community have been financially devastated by the measures put in place to protect our health and protect our safety in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through my contact with local businesses over the last couple of months, I have heard about the extent of their financial losses; their fear and concern for their livelihoods, their families and their future; and their fear and concern for those they employ and for those they trade with. Amidst the fear and the worry, I've also heard stories of the positive impact the various government support initiatives
have had on many of these businesses. To many, JobKeeper, the measures boosting cash flow for employers and the expansion of the instant asset write-off have not just helped keep businesses in business and people in jobs; they have eased, to a certain degree, their anxiety and their fear.

Of the 26,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Curtin, approximately 6,000 have accessed JobKeeper. Jane from Barchetta cafe in Cottesloe had to close her cafe on the beachfront in Cottesloe in an absolutely beautiful location. When the pandemic set in, she had to close the cafe. She employs 14 people, who she describes as family members. Jane was able to access JobKeeper. She was able to keep all of those 14 employees in employment, and, when restrictions were eased in Western Australia recently, she was able to reopen Barchetta with all of those 14 staff members. She also used the instant asset write-off scheme to do a bit of a renovation during the closure. She had hoped that we would come back, and so she bought some new equipment and did up the kitchen. She said it was great to be back at the cafe on the first day of their opening, and the local community loved it.

Another example is Filament Coffee in Osborne Park. This is a new start-up that was hit by the pandemic within the first nine months of their operations. Filament Coffee is actually a cold brew coffee, and it's supplied on tap and in cans around Western Australia. I'd never tasted it before I went out to visit Filament Coffee. All I can say is that it's got a bit of a caffeine kick to it! Aaron at Filament Coffee was able to access JobKeeper. Once again, this meant that his business could retain the very small number of employees that they had and continue to go forward as a start-up. For people who were starting up businesses in the last 12 to 18 months, it is that start-up phase that is the greatest pressure point of any business. Aaron accessed JobKeeper. He also accessed the instant asset write-off to purchase two new tanks of some description to store and help process the cold brew. Many of the sole traders in Curtin—sole traders who feared at the outset that they'd be left behind but were included within JobKeeper, because of feedback and because the Treasurer and our government recognised the importance of sole traders—were able to access JobKeeper. Ginger B is a gift store in Wembley run by Bianca, and she said that JobKeeper helped her keep her doors open. The Painted Teapot in Subiaco is run by a lovely woman called Tory, and she told me directly: 'Without JobKeeper we would have lost the business entirely. The support gave us some hope, and that glimmer of hope is now turning into confidence for the future.' That is where this government is now focused: looking at the future, building that confidence, building on that hope and making Australia bounce back even harder and stronger.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Goodenough): The discussion has concluded.

BILLS

Health Insurance Amendment (General Practitioners and Quality Assurance) Bill 2020
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority Amendment (Enhancing Australia's Anti-Doping Capability) Bill 2019
Official Development Assistance Multilateral Replenishment Obligations (Special Appropriation) Bill 2019
Paid Parental Leave Amendment (Flexibility Measures) Bill 2020

Assent

Messages from the Governor-General reported informing the House of assent to the bills.

Treasury Laws Amendment (2019 Measures No. 3) Bill 2019

Consideration of Senate Message

Message received from the Senate returning the bill and acquainting the House that the Senate insists upon the amendments disagreed to by the House.

Ordered that the message be considered immediately.

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (16:36): I move:

That the House insists on disagreeing to the amendments insisted on by the Senate.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Whitlam) (16:37): We disagree with the proposition put by the government. Quite simply, for the second time this week, the Senate has voted in favour of corporate transparency and, for the second time this week, the House of Representatives has been asked to concur. All Labor members of the House concur with the Senate. I understand that members of the crossbench also concur with the Senate, and so they should. It is important at any time that incorporated bodies have transparent reportage of financial arrangements. It is important at any time, but, in the midst of a financial crisis, with such economic uncertainty, it is more important than ever.
These provisions, when inserted in the act 25 years ago, were a part of a temporary and transitional arrangement. They were supposed to be reviewed. They were not. They were supposed to be transitioned to be removed out. They were not. They apply to in excess of 1,000 very large corporate organisations, some of the biggest private companies in the country. We say that we should be removing this anomaly which applies one set of rules to some private companies and a different set of rules to other private companies. It's an unlevel playing field that those members opposite should be supporting Labor in having removed.

When this matter was last before the House, there were three government members in the chamber. There was the member for Forde, a former financial planner. I fully expected him to jump and concur with Labor in defence of the financial planners, whose interests are being compromised by the fact that this bill is in deadlock, but there has not been a word from the member for Forde. There was the member for Goldstein, who finds it incredibly difficult to remain silent on any matter as soon as he's awake, but there has not been a word from the member from Goldstein. It fell to the assistant minister, the member for Petrie, to run the defence for the government. We were waiting with bated breath to hear what possible public interest reason the government could be advancing to have one set of rules apply to some corporate entities and another set of rules—a much more stringent set of reporting rules—to others.

Unable to articulate the public interest reasoning for having two sets of rules, he tabled a document. I've managed to obtain a copy of the document, and it reads as follows: 'The issue raised by this amendment is the subject of a recommendation in the Senate economic committee's report Corporate Tax Avoidance Part 1: You cannot tax what you cannot see. The reason we reject it is that the House will not pre-empt the government's response to this recommendation as a part of its response to the Senate economic committee's corporate tax avoidance report.' Members of the House might be interested to know when this report was tabled. Maybe it was last year. Maybe it was the year before. Maybe it was the year before that. No, it was August 2015. Students of this place know that's three prime ministers and three treasurers ago. We've been waiting a long time for this response. There can be no justification for further delay.

This amendment has been recommended by the corporate regulator, who has found as follows:

The lack of availability of public financial reports reduces transparency about possible indicators of tax avoidance or tax minimisation.

So, when we ask again, 'What possible reason could members opposite have for rejecting this amendment that's been put and rejected?' the only conclusion we can find is they are protecting their corporate mates and their corporate tax avoidance. There can be no other reason. Perhaps, as has been put elsewhere, there are large donors to the Liberal Party who find themselves on this list. I hope that is not the reason. I expect that the assistant minister at the table will leap to their defence and articulate a plausible public reason for why the rules should not be altered, and, if he's unable to do that, he should join with the crossbenchers and Labor and accept the message from the Senate. (Time expired)

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (16:42): I will keep my comments very brief. I find it extraordinary that the government wants to send the message to the community that there should be one set of rules that apply to the super rich in Australia and another set of rules that apply to the rest of us. That is quite simply what this amendment seeks to do—to change what is currently existing so there's not one set of rules for the super rich and one for the rest of us. There is no public interest reason for the government not to support this amendment.

I think it's rather childish if the whole purpose of the government not supporting this amendment is simply because it isn't an idea of government. This place is supposed to be the contest of ideas. All good ideas should come up from this, and, if it's a good idea that the majority of the place supports, like what happened in the Senate, then the government should take that idea and champion it. But what's happened twice now is that, because the government have the majority numbers in this chamber, they have not supported a very sensible amendment simply because it's not their amendment. The Treasury Laws Amendment (2019 Measures No. 3) Bill 2019 is a good idea. We can't allow in Australia one set of rules for the rich and one for the rest of us.

I implore the government: don't allow this to be the hill that you want to die on—on this issue in Australia now. Our community wants transparency. They don't want to see the richest people in Australia getting to hide their information, particularly when ASIC has been very clear that it believes that this rule should be overturned. I would urge the government, in the strongest possible terms, to accept this amendment. This is a good amendment for Australia.

Dr MULINO (Fraser) (16:44): I rise to support the comments made by the shadow Assistant Treasurer and the member for Mayo in arguing against the motion that's just been put on the Treasury Laws Amendment (2019 Measures No. 3) Bill 2019. I'm going to begin my observations by misquoting Oscar Wilde and say that to reject a sound amendment once is unfortunate, but to reject it twice is careless.
We're finding ourselves here again, debating the most simple of propositions and we are going to see speaker after speaker raise very sensible public policy reasons why one of the foundational elements of the regulation of the financial sector—transparency—should be applied on a level playing field, and there will be not a word from those opposite—not a word. We've had what can only be described as a very lame document provided, as I think the shadow Treasurer may have said, in Marcel Marceau fashion. In the dead of night a document was passed across the chamber which said, 'We will get back to you on our reasons for rejecting this very sound amendment multiple times when we respond to a report that was lodged years ago.' This is government at glacier pace. This is not something that warrants multiple years of consideration.

Let's start with the basic proposition here—transparency. This is something I would hope people across the aisle could agree with: transparency is absolutely foundational to our regulation of the financial services sector. The royal commission highlighted this. The royal commission was something which we on this side had to drag those on the other side, kicking and screaming, into agreeing to. But, once it was established, it demonstrated with absolute crystal clarity why it is so important that we expose our financial services sector to transparency and why that transparency should be comprehensive and applied throughout on a level playing field. I'm on the House economics committee. Time and time again, we see the results of that royal commission played out and the damage that has been done to individuals throughout our society because organisations weren't held to account through transparent regimes.

As earlier speakers have noted, this is a measure brought in as a temporary measure a quarter of a century ago. So that's only a small amount of time longer than this government is taking to respond to a straightforward report that was tabled many years ago. It is nonsensical that this measure, this exemption, is not being removed when it has been subject to such a sensible amendment. This exemption creates a two-tiered system without any public policy rationale, and the two-tiered system means that some of our country's wealthiest individuals, through proprietary companies, are not having to report to ASIC in a way that other companies are. It's creating a two-tiered system with a completely arbitrary cut-off. Those companies that were on the list in 1995 don't have to report to ASIC; those after 1995 do. There is absolutely no public policy rationale for this distinction. In fact, it is such an absurd situation that even when companies want to remove themselves from the list, even when they don't want the exemption to apply to them, it's impossible for that to occur. Malcolm Turnbull tried to get his company removed from the exemption and that couldn't happen. That's one of the few actions he's taken in recent years that I support, but it was blocked by his own government.

In government, we proposed getting rid of this exemption for companies with turnovers of more than $100 million. The coalition overturned that change. That was on the basis, in part, of the fact that some proprietary companies could face kidnapping or commercial disadvantage. So again, as I mentioned yesterday, this is the absurdity of where we are at the moment. Those opposite, to the extent that they have laid out any policy rationale for this distinction, seem to imagine that kidnappers have some exhaustive record of ASIC records and when companies were formed or when they got different exemptions or not. This is a bizarre situation that has absolutely no justification on public policy grounds.

What we face here today is that the Senate is sending back a very sensible amendment which the Senate has passed twice now. It is an amendment that stands on its own merits, but it's also an amendment that aligns with broader objectives of transparency that should be more important than ever. As the shadow Assistant Treasurer said, at times like this, transparency is more important than ever, particularly after all that we've seen coming out of the royal commission. We should support this amendment.

Mr KEOGH (Burt) (16:49): I invite members of the chamber to cast their minds back to history and to think about the chap Henry VIII of England, a former monarch, effectively, of this great land eventually. The things about those times were the issues that Henry was confronting. He had lords, earls and other noble people that he had to keep on his side because there were threats to the ongoing viability of his position as monarch. So Henry came up with the idea of the exchequer. It was a bit of a problem for some of these nobles. They didn't really want to be having to pay a lot of money to the king, and particularly to the exchequer, especially because Henry kept having wars. They were worried about the scrutiny that was being applied by Henry's central government, but they cut a bit of a deal. They decided that, if they could just make sure they didn't have to report on things so much to King Henry, it would make their lives a bit easier.

In the times that you would expect something like this to happen—in the Middle Ages of England—Henry drew up a list of some of his favourite barons. He said: 'If you're on my favourites list, you don't need to report on your financials to the exchequer. You don't need to tell my government what's going on. It'll be fine.' We might think: 'That's the Middle Ages. That sort of makes sense.' You might also think that that wouldn't be an arrangement that would last for terribly long, and it certainly wouldn't survive over multiple terms of parliaments and governments. But then we cast our way forward to 21st century Australia where we find that it has for reasons
of transition, reasons of referral of power and reasons of old Corporations Law schemes—and, quite frankly, I will not bore this chamber with the history of the Corporations Law in this country in migrating from being a state based scheme to a national scheme, and you will all thank me for that! But somehow, in that process, we ended up with a list of private companies that were exempt from the application of law as it applied to everyone else.

A fundamental tenant of this nation and of liberal democracies generally is that the law applies equally to everyone. You don't create a law and then create a special little list of your mates who don't have to comply with the law, and you especially don't create that list and never update it. This is so perverse and odd that even a former Prime Minister who was on the list couldn't get off the list when he wanted to get off the list. There is really no defence available to this government to justify now why a list from 1995—25 years ago—still exists, can't be removed and can't be fixed. For some reason, in this little area of Corporations Law that most Australians have paid no attention to, the government wants to continue to run a protection racket for this list that was set in 1995.

Twenty-five years sounds like a long time ago. But to put that in a little bit of context—for the minister at the table, in particular—if only I had been able to incorporate a private company when I was in year 9, I might have had a chance of getting on that list. That's how long this has been around. Yet now—after reviews, after recommendations and after the corporate regulator said, 'Why don't we change this and get rid of this list?—this government is continuing to try and maintain this arcane little exemption to the Corporations Law that has existed for 25 years. There is probably not one line in the Corporations Act now that is the same as what it was 25 years ago. This is a historical anachronism if there has ever been one when it comes to Corporations Law.

I spent time prosecuting the Corporations Law. I had to do it under two different criminal law regimes. The whole regime changed in that time, but somehow these companies kept their exemption from the application of the Corporations Law. It's ridiculous. There's no justification. There's no basis that you can have to explain why we should keep an exemption. You've got this little list of people who get to play the game differently. There's no justification in principle. There's no justification in law. There's no justification in a liberal democracy as to why you would keep this some 25 years later, even if there was at the time. For the government to now want to bounce this back up to the other place as if somehow their principled position is principled just goes down with every other principled position this government has ever had.

Dr LEIGH (Fenner) (16:54): I was just pausing for a moment to see if perhaps there was one member of the coalition who might defend their current position. I'm perfectly happy to yield to anyone on the other side who wants to defend the position that they are about to vote for. I think they're hoping that people will see the word 'tax' and just tune out. But let's be very clear about what we're debating in the House right now: the government want to throw an invisibility cloak over their mates so they can evade scrutiny. It is as simple as that. This is a measure that should have been a temporary exemption for a couple of years. That's what it was to have been when the Keating government put it in place in 1995. But it was the Howard government that said: 'You know, this is a pretty good cloak for some of our mates. Let's make it permanent.'

As previous speakers on this side—I don't need to say that; there have been no speakers on the other side—have noted, 1995 was a long time ago. The year 1995 was the era of Forrest Gump. It was when Oasis's 'Wonderwall' topped Triple J's Hottest 100 list. It was the era of Silverchair. It was a period in which most parliamentarians weren't on the internet and didn't have email. It was a very different era from today. Yet the coalition want to keep on rolling this little exemption forward, using excuses that become more and more spurious.

As I'm sure all of our parents mentioned at some point, if you don't have anything nice to say, just don't say anything. What those on the other side are doing is taking it to the next level: if you don't have a single decent defence, don't say anything at all; just stay really, really quiet and hope the Australian people don't see that you're voting for a cloak of invisibility for your mates. Those on the other side are welcome to jump up and defend it at any point, but they can't and they won't. They know it is as indefensible as their taking money from cigarette companies, as they did up until recently. They know it's as indefensible as their pledge to introduce a national integrity commission bill by the end of last year, which they squibbed on.

As the member for Whitlam has noted, their reason for voting against it is just laughable: 'The issue raised by this amendment is the subject of a recommendation in the Senate economics committee's report Corporate tax avoidance: Part 1—You cannot tax what you cannot see.' As the member for Whitlam noted, it would've been helpful if they'd mentioned the year of that report. That is a 2015 report. The basis upon which they want to defend a 25-year-old exemption is a five-year-old Senate report that they haven't got around to responding to. So maybe, if we give them another 25 years, they'll respond to the Senate report, and maybe, another 25 years after that, they'll think about getting around to removing the exemption for their mates.
Let's remember who's hurt by this. The Australian taxpayer is hurt by this. Other competing businesses are hurt by this, because new businesses don't get the lurk. This is not just a grandfather provision; it's a great-grandfather provision, and it's disadvantaging the young start-up firms that have to report their dealings to ASIC, as they should.

The fact is that the government has not a single excuse for its current position. Saying it's in a 2015 Senate report that they'll get around to responding to is laughable. ASIC supports removing this exemption. Labor support removing this exemption. We voted for it in 2015 when Ricky Muir put it up, and the Liberals and the Greens voted it down. We voted for it in 2018 after the Greens backflipped and decided to put it up. We're voting again today to remove this exemption which should have existed for more than a couple of years. It is absolutely indefensible that the government would continue to defend those 1,500 select few companies. It is the party not of the many but of the few. They're not the party for Middle Australia; they're the party for looking after their mates. They're not a party for transparency, because they don't have the guts to stand up here right now and defend their own position. Not one of them will step up and defend it, because they know it's indefensible.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the House insist on disagreeing to the amendments insisted on by the Senate.

The House divided [17:03]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 56
Noes ...................... 53
Majority ................ 3

AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Joyce, BT
Leeson, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MJ
Morrison, SJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Young, T

ANDREW

Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hastie, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O'Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Simmonds, J
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Haines, H

ANDREW

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Chesters, LM
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Gorman, P
Hayes, CP
Question agreed to.

**National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020**

**Second Reading**

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

to which the following amendment was moved:

That all words after "that" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House notes that:

(1) the Government has damaged Australia's world-class vocational training system by:

(a) cutting funding for vocational education and TAFE by over $3 billion;

(b) presiding over simultaneous crises of skills shortages and youth unemployment; and

(c) failing to tackle falling completion rates, with more people dropping out of vocational training courses than finishing them; and

(2) this bill fails to deliver the reform needed to fix problems in the vocational training sector".

The SPEAKER (17:07): The original question was that this bill be now read a second time, to which the honourable member for Cooper has moved as an amendment that all words after 'That' be omitted with a view to substituting other words. If it suits the House, I will state the question in the form that the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Ms PAYNE (Canberra) (17:07): I rise to speak on the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020. Labor will support this bill because we believe that
students studying in Australian TAFEs deserve to study high-quality courses. The pandemic and associated economic downturn have made it clearer than ever just how important education is not only for the individual but also for the nation. The VET system is fundamental to the Australian economy, but it has been neglected under this government. The changes proposed by this bill, while possibly helpful, are relatively minor and certainly don't deliver the significant level of reform that the TAFE system needs.

The bill amends the governance structures of the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET regulator, and enhances information-sharing arrangements between ASQA and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. Key amendments will revive ASQA's governance structure, replacing the existing chief commissioner, chief executive officer and two commissioners with a single independent statutory office holder, a CEO, and establish a National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council. The advisory council is intended to provide ASQA with expert advice regarding the functions of the regulator.

The lack of TAFE and union representation on the advisory council is a serious oversight by this government and, as usual, is a sign of ideology, rather than prioritising the provision of the best advice to ASQA. Union membership is strong within the industries typically trained by TAFEs. They clearly understand the work that construction workers, care workers and other heavily unionised industries do, and, as such, the training they need. With TAFE staff also strongly unionised and TAFE teachers clearly expert in the provision of VET courses, why on earth wouldn't they be at the top of the list for a place on the TAFE advisory council? When it comes to the VET sector, their views should be heard and considered. That's why we'll seek to move amendments in the Senate to ensure the public provider has seats at the table.

Labor supports a fair and considered approach to ASQA reforms. We will support changes that improve ASQA's capacity to ensure responsiveness to students, communities and employers, but we will reject changes that attempt to weaken ASQA's regulatory framework. We need to ensure that reforms to ASQA audit processes do not allow any reduction in quality. In the past, we've seen this government be slow to act on quality issues and this has done serious damage to the sector. Quality is vital in the VET sector. Lives and safety depend on it. A poorly trained builder or carer can do serious damage.

TAFE creates skilled workers who build our country and keep it operational, but it hasn't been delivering what we need it to for a long time. Australia has a crisis in skills and vocational training after seven years of a conservative government. Australia has experienced a 73 per cent drop in the number of apprenticeships advertised. The system has been cut to the bone; $3 billion has been removed from TAFE and training sectors. We need this funding restored and we need serious investment in vocational education and training, a sector that will be vital to the economic recovery our nation is about to embark on.

We had skills shortages before COVID-19. As we recover, we will need a strong and well-funded vocational education and training system to train and upskill our workforce so they can participate in the new economy. If people are unemployed because of this crisis—and we know one million Australians who weren't unemployed at the start of 2020 will be by the end of the year—then we need to enable them to easily access new training opportunities and skill them for work.

But not only have the government cut VET to the bone, they have has also failed to spend money they have budgeted for skills. The federal education department's own data shows the Liberals have failed to spend $919 million of their own TAFE and training budget over the past five years. With acknowledged skills shortages in this country, how is an underspend possible? With high youth unemployment across various parts of Australia prior to COVID-19, how is there an underspend? Where is the strategy from this government to skill Australians and get them into work? And why are TAFE facilities crumbling across Australia with almost $1 billion unspent? Why aren't we offering quality courses, taught to anyone who needs training, in high-quality facilities across Australia? It's a serious lack of vision on the part of this government.

Now the Prime Minister has announced his intention to maybe improve the way the Morrison government funds TAFEs, but only if the states agree to do the heavy lifting, and then, maybe, if they come to the table, the Prime Minister will restore some of the billions he has ripped out of the TAFE system. There is no commitment to improve skills training during the first recession in almost 30 years. There is no commitment to stem the haemorrhaging of apprenticeships that has occurred under this government. It is all talk, no action.

This lack of action is alarming considering that unemployment has doubled since COVID-19 began. Under the Liberals there are 150,000 fewer apprentices and trainees, and a shortage of workers in critical services, including plumbing, carpentry, hairdressing and motor mechanics. The number of Australians doing an apprenticeship or traineeship is lower today than it was a decade ago. The independent National Centre for Vocational Education Research recently found that, over the past year, 20 per cent fewer people were signing up to trade apprenticeships and traineeships. This was even more extreme in a number of essential trades. The number of Australians studying
an apprenticeship or traineeship in construction, including carpentry, bricklaying and plumbing, dropped by an alarming 40 per cent. There are more people dropping out of vocational education training courses than finishing them. These numbers must get better—not only for the economy but also for the young people who a decade ago would have been undertaking this training but are not today.

As Anthony Albanese outlined in his vision statement on emerging from the shadow of COVID-19, we need to support people to train too. For many young people, this will mean a liveable youth allowance payment. I have been contacted over the last few months by many students who have been unable to access anything from this government's COVID-19 package and who are desperate for assistance. What makes a government exclude young people during this crisis? I've heard from students who obviously had not been working in their casual jobs for a year, many because they had moved to Canberra in January to start studying, who were, of course, unable to access the JobKeeper payment. Then, because they're students, which means they're not unemployed, they have been unable to access the jobseeker payment. And, because this government has refused to relax the parental income test on youth allowance, they have not been able to access youth allowance, even in this time of crisis. A further issue on that point is that the parental income test is based on the parents' income from the previous financial year. So, if their parents have lost their jobs due to COVID-19, have had their income massively reduced or have lost their business, that is not accounted for in that income test, and the government has refused to heed Labor's calls to do something about this and ensure that some support can be provided to these young people.

It is this mindset that has led to this government failing to adequately support the training of our young people. They have failed to acknowledge that not everyone has family who can support them while they train or study and that, with the increased cost of living, it is increasingly unrealistic for middle-income families to support their adult children. There is a further assumption that it's easy for parents to support adult children and that students who are trying to study can do it because their parents can help them. That is exactly the sort of thing we as a nation want to address. We want everyone to have the chance to study at TAFE or university. Clearly, they can't with costs of living as they are and no support from this government.

It's time that we saw youth allowance as an investment in young Australians and in the future of our nation. For over a month now, Labor has been calling on the government to increase access to youth allowance, and the minister has refused to act. The Labor Party called on the government to waive the parental income test on a case-by-case basis, but they have refused to act. We must invest in our young people and set them up for success. The Morrison government has failed to do this during the pandemic, and this bill demonstrates the lack of ambition they have for our TAFEs, our young people and, in turn, the future of this nation.

Ms SHARKIE (Mayo) (17:17): In the past decade, TAFE and similar training organisations have been the poor cousins when it comes to investing in post-secondary education in Australia. As the education spokesperson for Centre Alliance, this leaves me and, I'm sure, many of those who are involved in the sector deeply concerned, particularly as our young people navigate a post-COVID-19 world.

Just yesterday, I listened to the education minister talking about the huge surge in interest in university applications and about how many applicants the minister believes won't receive a place, which will leave many young people languishing next year with few job prospects. With no opportunity for a gap year and with poor job prospects, it seems those with a marginal interest in attending university have decided that study might be better than unemployment. There has been a considerable amount of marketing of university as a job training pathway, and higher education continues to rise in importance. However, direct employment outcomes do not always follow a degree. During my time working in the youth sector and in other sectors, I have met many young people with degrees who couldn't find a job in their chosen field. What we need to do, though, is to ensure that young people realise that there are many pathways to success and that the support is there to access those pathways. One pathway is certainly TAFE.

Latest figures show that Australia had 1.5 million university students enrolled in 2019. There were 4.1 million students in vocational education and training, including around 260,000 apprentices and trainees, 230,000 school based students and more than a million students in government funded courses provided through institutes such as TAFE. In South Australia alone, there were 70,000 TAFE enrolments last year, with students taking part in over 630 courses across 290 sites.

I would like to talk briefly about the TAFE sites in my electorate of Mayo in Mount Barker, in Victor Harbor and on Kangaroo Island. Around 2½ thousand people across my electorate are involved in TAFE training in some form. All three campuses work exceptionally hard, with very limited resources, facilities and equipment—and I can't underline enough how limited their resources really are. Even barista equipment is in dire need of upgrade. Given these limited resources, I am amazed at how much TAFE is able to do with so little, but significant additional investment is clearly very much needed. Training on Kangaroo Island is not delivered through a
dedicated campus. Rather, courses are delivered directly to industry, agriculture and community sites, including at one of the local pubs, and students are supported with online training materials.

Just last week I received some very welcome news from the TAFE manager in my region about a certificate III in individual support—that's in ageing and disability—that has just commenced on Kangaroo Island. It took a considerable amount of time and effort for that certificate to be available. I understand that 14 students are signed up to gain that qualification, and I'm advised that all of them, provided that they pass, will be able to walk straight into a job on the island, given the significant need for the invaluable skills they are learning. I would like to commend all of those students for taking that step and seeking to gain that certificate. There is an urgent need for carers on the island, and this course will help meet that demand.

Indeed, there is an urgent need for carers throughout Mayo, the electorate with the oldest median age in South Australia. So it would seem quite logical that we would have that great need. We need to have some really significant investment in vocational training in my electorate so that locals are able to get that certificate III in caring, in ageing, and then provide support to those who are in need in our community. It's been estimated that the aged-care workforce will need to grow from 366,000 to nearly one million by 2050 to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of older Australians accessing aged care. But I don't think we are planning for this. Mount Barker and the surrounding regions contain more than 30 residential aged-care and disability facilities. Victor Harbor and its surrounding region contain another 15 residential aged-care and disability facilities. Yet getting into a course locally is so difficult.

The move towards individualised and specialised service provision through the individual care plans in the National Disability Insurance Scheme has created an unparalleled shortage of new workers, and we need to ensure that our vocational education providers, such as TAFE, have the resources to meet the demand. Another pressing need in my local area is investment in building and construction and in hospitality. An extensive refurbishment of the existing skills labs at the Victor Harbor and Mount Barker campuses would significantly expand TAFE’s capacity to deliver training in these key areas.

There are just under 11,000 businesses operating in Mayo; 99.6 per cent of them are categorised as small businesses, and nearly one in five of them are in the construction sector. TAFE SA Mount Barker has just begun a multi-trades program for high school students who are interested in trade pathways, focusing on building and construction. Twelve students are currently participating in the program, and already one student has been signed up for an apprenticeship. Noah started work as a first-year apprentice bricklayer last week and he will continue trade training through TAFE. Good luck, Noah. We need you. We need really good bricklayers, tilers and builders. I was pleased to learn that TAFE SA is rolling out much-needed training in forklift and telehandler tickets and licensing on Kangaroo Island across June and July. I'm advised that these short two-week courses are fully subscribed and are being run with the support of local businesses and organisations, including Kangaroo Island Council, Kangaroo Island Business and Brand Alliance, Ag KI, Mitre 10, Capula, Junction Australia and the Ozone Hotel.

Besides construction, more than 10 per cent of small businesses in Mayo are involved in retail, food and accommodation. The Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island are well-known destinations for food, wine, hospitality and tourism. All of them are in my electorate. And my electorate is home to over a hundred recognised wineries and cellar doors, complemented by increasing numbers of restaurants, cafes, microbreweries, hotels and accommodation facilities. Demand for skills and labour across the tourism and hospitality sector continues to grow in our region. The changing nature of the industry, moving away from seasonal peaks to year-round activity, provides increasing genuine career pathways and ongoing employment opportunities.

Our construction and tourism sectors have been hit hard by COVID restrictions, world market conditions and, of course, the bushfires, but we will bounce back. Figures from Global Apprenticeship Network Australia show the number of advertised apprenticeship positions fell by 73 per cent between January and April this year, largely due to the downturn in the economy thanks to COVID. There were 468 jobs advertised in April 2020 compared to 1,212 in April last year, but there were strong signs of business confidence returning, with the number of apprenticeship vacancies increasing by 150 per cent in May, to 678 positions. The biggest proportional increase was in hospitality, travel and tourism.

Having toured the TAFE campuses in my electorate, I know much of the work that needs to be done at the Mount Barker site involves bringing the construction, automotive, community services, hospitality, business and IT facilities up to modern standards. The Victor Harbor campus is also desperately in need of upgrades to facilities for forklift licencing and training in tourism, hospitality and community services. Both campuses are located in rapidly growing areas. Mount Barker will be the second largest city in SA in the next 30 years with a population of more than 56,000 by 2036. The size of both campuses and the age of their facilities will significantly restrict the quantity and quality of courses that they can offer our young people if we don't act now.
This is why, before the federal election last year, I made a commitment to the people of Mayo that I would advocate strongly for investment in our TAFE campuses. Young kids in regional areas, such as my electorate, want to study regionally, and one of the places they can do that is TAFE. But our TAFEs have not had the investment that they need.

University isn't the only pathway to success, as I mentioned before. We need young people to study in areas that they love right across the spectrum, from aged care, through to mechanics and carpenters and in the construction industry. We want young people to stay in our regions, and they want to stay in our regions. We want young people to stay in South Australia, and we need to make sure that the avenues for training are there for them. So I call on the major parties to make it a priority to invest in quality training and education and, particularly, to invest in TAFE and vocational education in the regions, as well as to provide greater opportunity for young people from the regions to access university.

Mr Gosling (Solomon) (17:27): I'm very happy to be here to talk about the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020. As I'm sure many of the previous Labor speakers would have mentioned, we support a fair and considered approach to the ASQA reforms, and we'll support changes that improve the capacity to ensure responsiveness to students, communities and employers, but we'll reject changes that attempt to weaken ASQA's regulatory framework.

If I can be frank, and I hope I can, more broadly, this legislation is just another tweak from a tired third-term conservative government who simply refuse to deliver a genuine reform package that overhauls this vital sector to our nation—if I'm honest. The Liberals have slashed funding to TAFE and training, let apprentice numbers fall and presided over a national shortage of tradies, apprentices and trainees. I see that in my electorate of Solomon in the northern capital of Australia, but I know it's happening around the country. For more than seven years this tired and clueless Liberal government has left Australia facing a crisis in skills and vocational training. If they don't do something seriously to fix this skills crisis that they have themselves created, we could be looking at the extinction of the Australian tradies.

Under those opposite there are 150,000 fewer apprentices and trainees and a shortage of workers in critical services, including plumbing, carpentry, hairdressing and motor mechanics. Experts are now warning that we are on track to lose another 100,000 this year if the government fails to act. That's 2,000 trainees and apprentices a week. I also need to remind the House that those opposite have cut TAFE and training by over $3 billion. The number of Australians doing an apprenticeship or traineeship is lower today than it was a decade ago. Just two weeks ago in my electorate I was talking to young refrigeration mechanic Cameron—good lad. He was in his last year and he was saying that not many of his mates were able to get into the training that they wanted and in fact that industry needed, and he couldn't really understand what had happened. He'd seen his older brothers and older mates go through and get a trade, but what he was seeing was far different to that.

There are also more people dropping out of apprenticeships and traineeships than finishing them, and that's a problem for us and a problem for our nation. There's a nearly 10 per cent increase in the number of occupations facing skills shortages. While the Australian Industry Group says 75 per cent of businesses surveyed are struggling to find the qualified workers they need, there are about 1.9 million Australians who are unemployed or underemployed. So you can see that there's this disconnect. We are simultaneously experiencing a crisis of youth unemployment and also a crisis of skills shortages. One of these is bad enough, but to be faced by both at the same time is pretty hard to imagine. But here we are, confronted with both. While businesses are struggling to fill the skilled positions they have on offer, we have young Australians desperate for work who can't fill those positions because they haven't been given the chance to gain the skills that those roles, those jobs, require.

I want to know why the Prime Minister isn't training these young Australians for jobs in industries where there's a shortage of workers. The answer, of course, is what I mentioned just a little while ago. There's been $3 billion cut out of the sector. They've cut funding to TAFE and training. Even though this is the case—and it's plainly obvious that it is—the government, those opposite, refuse to properly fund the sector. They refuse to give it the proper reform that it so desperately needs.

Now, young people have been clear about what they need. They need a skills training sector that is properly funded and properly resourced and has educators who are properly trained and able to skill these kids up as a pathway to meaningful employment so they can grow our nation. This government hasn't delivered on a single element of those requests from our young Australians, from our future. Fiddling at the edges of the current system will not address the profound problems that undermine vocational education and training and, consequentially, the productive performance and international competitiveness of our economy.

The government doesn't seem to understand the critical role of TAFE as the public provider, the value in skills and apprenticeships or the value of the hardworking and passionate public TAFE teachers. If we continue down
this path, we will severely jeopardise our future economic growth, undermine the opportunity of individual Australians to meet their full potential and, very importantly, compromise our ability as a nation to compete with the rest of the world using the skills, knowledge, discovery and inventiveness of our people. We know that nine out of 10 jobs created in the future will need post-secondary school education, either TAFE or uni, so we need to increase participation in both our universities and our vocational educational sector to make sure our young people are prepared for the world of work, which is changing so very quickly. If we do not value the role of an appropriately funded VET sector for the training, skills and apprenticeships they provide to so many Australians, nor its vital role in driving the economy and enhancing industry, we fail our nation.

This third-term government has had seven years to fix this sector. Rather, they started the cuts and, in the intervening years, they have failed to properly fund and resource the sector. They need to deliver a genuine reform package that overhauls this higher ed sector and properly funds both the VET providers and the universities to deliver the services that the students need.

When it comes to the Northern Territory, it is undeniable that the government's inattention and callous disregard for apprentices and trainees has been a kick in the guts for Territorians. The tradie crisis created by the federal Liberal government—that is, those opposite—is hurting the Territory's economy and denying Territorians jobs. As a result, we now have shortages of bricklayers, plumbers, hairdressers, bakers, electricians, mechanics, panel beaters and other critical trades.

We have so many terrific businesses in Darwin, Palmerston, the rural area and other parts of the Northern Territory, and they want to grow. They want to hire more staff. They want to employ more locals. They want to employ those who have put down roots in the Territory. That's what they would rather do. Unfortunately, they're forced to either go without those additional workers or look for overseas workers, because they're let down by the Prime Minister's failure to back apprentices and trainees.

We have lost over 600 apprentices in the Territory since those opposite came to power. This is the government that promised to grow the North and to develop the North. What a load of rubbish that turned out to be. It has been seven years and all we've seen are cuts to this sector, a lack of resourcing and 600 fewer apprentices. We're trying to grow the North and at the same time we're being hamstrung by those opposite who fail to recognise the essential nature of the skills VET training sector.

This is a government that has bungled so much in that seven years. The fact that they've stuffed up TAFE and training isn't a shock really, but once again it is something that will devastate thousands around the country. What gets me the most is that it's affecting our future. It's affecting the young Territorians, the young Australians. It's affecting those who want to start a career, be able to support themselves and be able to support their families in due course, but their opportunities are far fewer after seven years of those opposite.

The Prime Minister's latest marketing ploy around tradies hasn't really helped anyone either. HomeBuilder has done nothing for tradies. It's a rubbish policy designed for grabbing on the nightly news and to shield an incompetent government that has no plan to help tradies at all. The quote from the member for Blaxland, 'It's more Scotty's scam than Scotty Cam,' is a cracker. I think it very nicely sums up this absolute facade.

In the time I have left, I'd like to acknowledge the work done by the Northern Territory government to help support our tradies during the pandemic. The Northern Territory government—I'm proud to say it is a Labor government—has chosen substance over spin and has rightly focused on developing a plan to keep people employed. They've backed our tradies.

We need this federal government, those opposite, to start focusing on meaningful reform in this sector over marketing and spin. It's all about the announcement but there's never any follow-through. I remind honourable members that it has been seven years and all we have seen from the government is mismanagement, creating crisis after crisis in the VET sector. Young Territorians and young Australians deserve a lot better and I call on those opposite to pull their fingers out and provide the system that we need to grow our nation.

Ms TEMPLEMAN (Macquarie) (17:40): This is one of the issues that's going to be key in our ability to help people recover from the economic crisis and from the financial crisis they have personally faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. When I think about 31,000 apprenticeships and traineeships disappearing from New South Wales, it's a horrific thought, particularly for a community like mine in the Hawkesbury where so many people have built their business and their life on their apprenticeship. They started out wanting to be a plumber or wanting to work in construction and, through that, working in a family business or for a friend of a family member or finding their way into an apprenticeship in some of our fantastic small business areas, they then went: 'You know what? I don't just want to work for someone else. I want to work for myself.' I think we forget about the pathway that is laid by having a strong VET system. These bills which start to improve the system, although not to
the extent that we would like, will really make a difference to kids' lives. We, of course, would like to see a much bigger difference being made, but we obviously won't oppose this bill.

One of the issues that has been raised with me over the years has been the quality of ASQA's governance. People have found it very difficult to find their way through the bureaucracy and the procedure involved. So I think the key amendments here—revising ASQA's governance structure and replacing the existing chief executive officer and two commissioners with a single independent statutory office holder, or a CEO—are really important. I hope that makes a difference. I hope the establishment of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council, which is intended to provide ASQA with access to expert advice regarding the functions of the regulator, also makes a difference.

In relation to the value of TAFE, I'm very lucky to have within my electorate of Macquarie a wonderful woman who heads up the TAFE Teachers' Association, Annette Bennett. She works tirelessly to make sure that not only are the interests of students fulfilled but also the TAFE teachers are treated the way they deserve to be. They are people who are absolutely expert in what they do. Not only have they achieved a professional standing that is recognised by their peers, but they have also chosen to give up their professional ability to earn money in that capacity to say: 'Look, I want to share what I know. I want to share my expertise and my skills with people.' It is people who are really driven to share their expertise who help us transfer the skills to the next generation. So I think we should all be commending TAFE teachers for the work that they do.

We recognise that we need a fair and considered approach to these ASQA reforms and we will support the changes that improve the organisation's capacity to ensure it is responsive to students, communities and employers, but we do not support the changes that attempt to weaken the regulatory framework.

I just want to talk more about the broader need for reform in TAFE. This really is just another little adjustment to a system that has been undermined for the nearly seven years of this government. There haven't been things that have built up TAFE; there have only been things that tear it down. Every member in this place can see it with their own eyes in their own electorates, where the range of courses that used to be offered in a TAFE are no longer offered. You can't get the specialty manufacturing skills needed for the manufacturing sector in the electorate of Macquarie any more, nor can you get it in large areas of Western Sydney. You need to travel a really long distance to be able to do certain courses.

I'm all for bringing together specialities, but you also have to make TAFE accessible. You can't make it hard for young people who have simply stayed in their suburb and gone to their local primary school and then their local high school, being all of a sudden asked, even before some have their licences, to travel large distances. Keep in mind that Hawkesbury, in particular, doesn't have good public transport connections with so many other TAFEs. For instance, to get to the Kingswood TAFE you need to catch a train to Blacktown—that's a hike in itself—change trains and head back in the other direction to get to Penrith. In a car it's an easy half-hour drive but by train can take over an hour and a half. These are the sorts of things that really go to the heart of TAFE—making training accessible.

I think the coronavirus outbreak has really brought home to people the need for accessible education. There are many people who are now on jobseeker or JobKeeper and are likely to lose their JobKeeper payment and their job come September. They'll be asking themselves: How do I retrain? What system do I want to go to? How do I know I'm going to get quality training for the money that I spend? It's not just a token amount any more. We're now talking about serious expenditure. It's a heavy debt that people carry for the privilege of learning.

More than ever, we need to think about how we make TAFE accessible and how to build up its capacity for the many new people who, until now, might not have considered the need to reskill. With coronavirus and the crisis it has brought to the economy, they will recognise the need to shift their skill base. The most recent figures show a 73 per cent drop in the number of apprenticeships advertised. Not only am I concerned, come the end of this year, about the people whose jobs will disappear in September but I'm concerned about the people in years 11 and 12 now. I've been speaking to a lot of year 12 students. Many of them do want to get an apprenticeship. They don't see university as the most appropriate path for them, but they want an apprenticeship. I had contact from a constituent recently whose son lost his apprenticeship during this coronavirus pandemic. He's desperate to get back into it, to find a new employer and to pick up that apprenticeship to further his career.

Right now we should be talking about capacity building in TAFE. While in this amendment there is a slight adjustment in hopefully the ability of the TAFE to deliver a quality product, it's not what we need. We need way more than what is being offered in this and other pieces of legislation that have come to this chamber in the last week or so.

I don't think you can talk about TAFE without talking about the skills shortages. It strikes me that there'll be additional skills shortages going forward. In 2013, I lost my house in a bushfire and for the next few years there
was a shocking shortage of brickies and roofers. I know the Blue Mountains had to have roofers brought down from northern New South Wales to meet the demand, and that was a fire that took out 200 homes. Now we've had fires across the state taking out thousands of homes, so we are really going to struggle to find the tradespeople to be able to do those rebuilds in a timely fashion. It isn't good enough to just say, 'What we've got will do,' and nor is it good enough to rely on bringing in temporary workers from overseas. The only reason you would do that is if you were using them to train up your people and create more traineeships. But, as we've seen under this government, we're not seeing more trainees and apprenticeships created; we're seeing fewer.

There are fewer apprenticeships and trainees now than there were when Labor was last in government, and that is a shocking statistic for people to consider. But it's not surprising when you know that this is a government that spent seven years cutting funding while also underspending on what had been promised to the sector. Rebuilding our skills and our training sector is crucial, and I look forward in coming months to seeing some legislation before the place which actually talks about rebuilding the sector.

We need to properly fund our TAFE and apprenticeship program. We need to see something that makes up for the $3 billion of cuts to TAFE and training in recent years, and the government needs to restore all the funding that it's cut by investing in training so that the next generation of tradespeople actually find their way into TAFE and have a supportive mentor—someone who is willing to take them through the hard yards. It isn't easy to say, 'I'm going to take on an apprentice.'

I've spoken to a lot of builders in the last few months for a whole range of reasons, from bushfire to HomeBuilder. They say that it's harder than ever. The support for them as employers is less than they've seen for themselves in previous years, and many have chosen not to keep on taking apprentices. We need to reverse that. Those employers have such depth of knowledge to share, but we all know what it's like having work experience people in our offices. It takes time to make it a really worthwhile process for them. Now do that tenfold with apprentices, and it does take a real commitment from an employer. So I salute the employers who do have apprentices and who are willing to take them on and invest in them, whether it is in the construction industry or whether it's in the hair and beauty sector, where there is also big demand.

I've talked to some fantastic operators of hair and beauty salons. Linda Fenech, who is considered to be a real leader in her industry, is based in Richmond. Linda has a team of girls. She admits she's tough, but they absolutely recognise that. She is not only tough but fair. She sets for them a really high standard of work. That's the sort of person we need and the sorts of ideals we need, but those employers need to be supported to be able to take themselves away from their business so that they can mentor, teach and guide their younger apprentices.

I suspect that, in the wake of COVID and the job losses that we've already seen and the ones that we all expect to see, it won't just be young people who will want to be apprentices. We will need to have people willing to mentor and train up older workers who can see that there's an opportunity and that we should be creating that opportunity. We should be making it easy for those people to see an alternative pathway in a whole lot of ways, such as by making it accessible to find out what the pathways are online.

The other thing I absolutely think we need to be looking at is how we tie together university and TAFE. The two of them work so effectively together for so many of the jobs of now and the jobs of the future. I'm very lucky to have a TAFE and Western Sydney University campus side by side at Richmond, and they are looking at all sorts of agricultural initiatives that will involve students from the TAFE as well as the university researchers.

One of them is to do with periurban cropping. How can we use the giant greenhouse at Western Sydney in the Hawkesbury campus to expand what is available for local use but also for export? They have a vision of having a logistics hub placed right next to that. They have a proposal to the government for that. I urge the government to consider supporting the Western Sydney proposal for a logistics hub that not only would help periurban producers in my electorate—especially in the Hawkesbury and parts of the Blue Mountains—but would help producers all through Western Sydney. It would also create opportunities for export, because if we can do work on how to grow things so that they travel easily and if we look at, logistically, how we package them, we give ourselves an edge for exports to Asia. They are the sorts of things that generate more jobs and generate apprenticeships in a whole range of areas.

Of course, the other thing TAFE campuses need is some investment. Absolutely, go for the great big new things, but we could also do with improvements. The greenhouses at Richmond TAFE desperately need updating. They're 30 or 40 years old. They're still working, because the TAFE teachers and the people who work at TAFE just keep on getting the best they can out of them, but one of my election commitments was to upgrade them. That's the sort of thing this government needs to be doing.
Ms WELLS (Lilley) (17:55): It's a pleasure to rise on this bill this evening and speak on behalf of the apprentices in my electorate on the north side of Brisbane. Many of them have been in touch over the previous months since I was elected to talk about the crisis in TAFE and the need for more investment in the sector.

Labor will support the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Governance and Other Matters) Bill 2020 this evening, because we believe that students studying in Australian TAFEs deserve to study high-quality courses. That's what they deserve. The pandemic and the associated economic downturn have made it clearer than ever just how important education is. You never know when you're going to need to pivot, whether as an individual or as a nation.

The VET system is fundamental to the Australian economy, but it has been neglected under this government. The changes proposed by this bill, while possibly helpful, are relatively minor and they certainly don't deliver on the significant level of reform that our TAFE system needs. I feel that this is possibly the third time I've risen in this House to make this point, and it represents another missed opportunity this evening for us to do more for our VET sector and our TAFE students.

The bill amends the governance structures of the Australian Skills Quality Authority and enhances information sharing arrangements between ASQA and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. The key amendments will revise ASQA's governance structure and replace the existing chief commissioner and CEO and two commissioners with a single independent statutory office holder. It will also establish the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council. That's intended to provide ASQA with access to expert advice regarding the functions of the regulator.

The lack of TAFE and union representation on the advisory council is a serious oversight by this government, and, to be honest, it smacks of ideology rather than the provision of best advice to ASQA. Union membership is very strong within these industries. They are typically trained by TAFE themselves. They understand the work that the construction workers, the care workers and the workers in other heavily unionised industries do—the people on the frontline. As such, they understand the training that they need. With TAFE staff who are also strongly unionised and TAFE teachers who are clearly expert in the provision of VET courses, why on earth wouldn't they be on the top of the list for these seats on the council? Their views should be heard and considered when it comes to the VET sector. That's what we believe on this side of the House, and that's why we'll seek to move some amendments to that effect, to ensure that the public provider has seats at the table. We will do that in the other place.

We support a fair, considered approach to the ASQA reforms. We will support changes that improve ASQA's capacity to ensure responsiveness to students, communities and employers, but we'll reject changes that attempt to weaken the regulatory framework. We need to ensure that reforms to ASQA audit processes don't allow any reduction in quality. In the past, we have seen this government be slow to act on quality issues. That has done serious damage to the sector. That's a real problem, because quality is vital in this sector. Lives and safety depend on it. A poorly trained builder or a poorly trained carer can do serious damage.

TAFE creates our skilled workers who build our country and keep it operational, but it hasn't been delivering what we need it to, what our students need it to and what our future students need it to for a very long time. Australia now has a crisis in skills and vocational training. After seven years of a Liberal government, Australia has experienced a 73 per cent drop in the number of apprenticeships advertised. The government has cut the system to the bone. It has removed $3 billion from the TAFE and training sector. We need this funding restored and we need a serious investment in VET, a sector that will be vital to the economic recovery our nation is about to embark upon.

We had skills shortages before COVID-19 and, as we recover, we will need a strong and well-funded VET system to train and upskill our workforce so that they can participate in the new economy. If people are unemployed because of this crisis, and we know that they will be, and we know that one million Australians who weren't employed at the start of 2020 will be by the end of the year, then we need to enable them to access new training opportunities and to skill them for new work. But not only has the government cut VET to the bone; it has also failed to spend the money that it budgeted for skills.

The federal education department's own data shows that the Liberals have failed to spend $919 million of their own TAFE and training budget over the last five years. With acknowledged skills shortages in this country, how is an underspend even possible? With high youth unemployment across various parts of Australia prior to COVID-19, how is there an underspend? I know in my home state of Queensland, the unemployment rate is something like 6.3 per cent for the Brisbane east area, higher than the national average. But the youth unemployment rate is at 11.2 per cent, double the national average. In parts of Queensland, particularly North Queensland—and I note...
the member for Leichhardt has just come in—youth unemployment has risen as high as 25.7 per cent for kids who are growing up in regional areas like Cairns or Mount Isa.

We have a crisis in youth unemployment and we have a crisis when it comes to skill shortages, but for some reason the government fails to put two and two together and continues to underspend. It boggles the mind. One of these is bad enough to be faced with if you are a kid growing up in regional Australia, but both of them at the same time, and now with this pandemic, is very, very tough. We should be doing more here in this place. That's what people elected us to do. Our apprentices and tradies, people who were told that if they had a go they would get a go, have been the worst affected by this. The school students and the young jobseekers in my electorate of Lilley have been clear with me about what they need. They need a skills training sector that is adequately funded, that is properly resourced and that has educators who are properly trained so that they can aspire to and secure the highly skilled, highly paid jobs in technical industries. The coalition government needs to come up with a better plan than this.

According to the Australian Industry Group, which is hardly a bastion of socialism, 75 per cent of businesses surveyed are struggling to find the qualified workers they need. At the same time, almost two million Australians were unemployed before COVID or were looking for more hours of work. So why isn't the Prime Minister training jobseekers for jobs in these industries where there is a shortage of workers? This seems like first-year economics 101 stuff: supply should meet demand. Where we have employers crying out for more qualified workers and jobseekers desperately looking for more work, only this government could fail to connect the two.

Late last year, I had the pleasure of visiting a TAFE north of Brisbane, Bracken Ridge TAFE, which is, I will admit, just outside my electorate in the member for Petrie's electorate. But many of the students there are from Lilley, so I go there as often as I can possibly get myself invited. I took the member for Sydney and the Queensland state minister for TAFE with me for a tour of the facilities. The campus has a shared delivery arrangement with TAFE Queensland SkillsTech and the Queensland Pathways State College. We heard about the fantastic work that the Queensland Labor state government is doing despite the federal funding cuts, including providing free apprenticeships for people under the age of 21. There are over 20 free apprenticeships for those under 21 available on the Brisbane North campus, including apprenticeships in electrotechnology, construction, plumbing and marine mechanical technology. Since July 2019, over 115 new apprentices commenced training on that Brisbane North campus. Put simply, when TAFEs are properly invested in, we get results, and I'm sure the member for Petrie would agree with me on what a great job the Queensland Labor state government is doing despite the federal funding cuts.

When I was speaking to these apprentices on that visit at the end of last year, what really stood out for me was the relationship they had with their teachers and the outstanding work their teachers are doing in leading them through. I met Andrew Begbie, who was teaching carpentry and cabinet making; John O'Shea, outdoor powering equipment; and Dave Compton, automotive industry. And I met all of their students, who were diligent and hardworking in the hopes that they would be able to secure a job as a result of their efforts.

We need to make sure that these fantastic teachers have the support that they need. They are passing on their knowledge and their skills to young people who want to learn and to work, and they deserve better than $1 billion in underspending. I also want to take this opportunity to commend Zupps Aspley, who are providing certificate III apprenticeships in light vehicle mechanical technology to young locals on the north side. They are stepping up and doing what this government should be doing.

The Prime Minister isn't training young people for jobs in industries that are facing skill shortages. Instead, he's starving TAFEs and training funding and wondering why the rates of apprenticeships and traineeships are dropping. Australia's economic growth has been the slowest since the global financial crisis, and that was before we faced the pandemic this year. Wages were stagnant. Household debt had skyrocketed, and business investment was at its lowest level since the 1990s recession. A decline in vocational education and training only worsens those outcomes for everybody, and it worsens them for generations to come. Fiddling at the edges of the TAFE system, as we are seeing here again now, will not address the problems that this government has created in vocational education and training. If we continue down this path of underfunding, we will sabotage future economic growth, undermine the opportunities for young Australians looking to upskill to meet their full potential and compromise our national productivity.

We know that nine out of 10 jobs created in the future will need post-secondary-school education, including TAFE. We need to act now to increase the participation in our vocational education sector to make sure that our young people have the skills necessary to meet this demand. Look at what adequate funding has done on the Brisbane North TAFE campus. I know how important vocational education and training is to our local economy and for our local jobs. The Liberal government either doesn't care or doesn't have the capacity to do that hard work that needs to be done to build a path to skilled jobs. Tonight is another failed opportunity to do more in this
space. The Prime Minister claims that he wants to lift the status of vocational Australia, yet his actions, like the failure to move more significant reform than that provided to the House this evening, prove that he doesn't. Australians are sick of the marketing, the hollow men, the publicity stunts and the empty gestures. The vocational education and training system managed by this government is failing students, it is failing workers, it is failing local business, it is failing local economies like the north side of Brisbane and it is ultimately failing the national economy. Australians want this government to take serious action now and to grow the job opportunities for the young people of today and of tomorrow.

Under this government there are 15,000 fewer apprentices and trainees and a shortage of workers in critical services, including plumbing, carpentry, hairdressing and motor mechanics. The number of Australians doing an apprenticeship or traineeship is lower today than it was a decade ago. The independent National Centre for Vocational Education Research recently found that over the past year 20 per cent fewer people were signing up to do trade apprenticeships and traineeships. This was even more extreme in a number of essential trades. The number of Australians starting an apprenticeship or traineeship in construction, including carpentry, bricklaying and plumbing, dropped by an alarming 40 per cent. There are more people dropping out of vocational training courses than there are finishing them. These numbers have to get better, not only for the economy but for the young people who a decade ago would have been undertaking this training but are not today.

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (18:10): I move:

That the debate be adjourned and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour this day.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion to adjourn the debate be agreed to.

The House divided. [18:15]

Ayes ......................59
Noes ......................48
Majority ................11

AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC

Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Joyce, BT
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
O’Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML

CHAMBER
Question agreed to.
Debate adjourned.
Crimes Legislation Amendment (Sexual Crimes Against Children and Community Protection Measures) Bill 2019

Message received from the Senate returning the bill and acquainting the House that the Senate does not insist on its amendment disagreed to by the House of Representatives.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (18:20): I move:
That business intervening before order of the day No. 3, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:20): We might be able to deal with this quickly. I just want to confirm from the minister at the table: at whose request has the postponement been moved? It might be the Leader of the House; I'm just asking him. It has to be moved at someone's request, and I'm asking at whose request the postponement has been moved.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr BURKE: No, no; if I can assist him: either someone has asked the minister to move this or they haven't, and I'm just asking who.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. The assistant minister has the call.

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (18:20): The motion has been moved at the request of the Assistant Treasurer.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left! I warn the member for Griffith in advance; it's probably quicker!

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:21): If that's the case then standing order 113 hasn't been complied with, and I ask that we just continue with the business on the Notice Paper.

The SPEAKER: I just point out to the House and the Manager of Opposition Business that a minister can move such a motion on behalf of another minister.

Mr BURKE: Both the section that you refer to and the standing orders have it that the postponement has to be moved at the request of the member. What we hear here from the member of the executive at the table is he has the request of the minister whose legislation he wants to bring on but he doesn't have the request of the motion on the Notice Paper for what he wants to postpone. What you just read is about the postponement.

The SPEAKER: So your point is—

Mr BURKE: He's got the request to the wrong minister.

The SPEAKER: Right. That's your point?
Mr BURKE: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Okay. Just before I call the Leader of the House, I'll say that standing order 112 makes it very clear when it states 'the order in which motions are called on is the order in which they appear on the Notice Paper', so that's why we're dealing with that now. A member who gave notice of a motion may move its postponement without notice. Let me just try and save time—although I suspect I may not necessarily be successful—essentially, the point the Manager of Opposition Business is making is that the assistant minister named the wrong minister. Is that essentially the point?

Mr BURKE: No. My point is—I work on the basis that the assistant minister told the truth to the House as to which minister had made the request. And, if that's the case, then the motion can't be put before the House, because the request has to come from the minister whose motion is being postponed. So I believe the assistant minister absolutely gave accurate information to the House. It just means, if that's the case, he can't move it.

The SPEAKER: I'll hear from the Leader of the House for a second.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (18:26): I don't know whether the—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right! The level of interjections—seriously, if members don't want to listen, the quorum is 31; they don't have to be here. Leader of the House.

Mr PORTER: I don't know whether the Manager of Opposition Business asked the question in the specific terms as to who asked for the postponement. He spoke to the motion. As I understand it, the Assistant Treasurer is asking for his bill to come on. The communications minister has asked for his bill to be postponed.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:27): We've just heard from the Leader of the House that, in his opinion, the communications minister has made that request. The assistant minister has already advised the House that the person who made the request was—

Government members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my right, I will eject you under 94(a). Those that aren't party to this are not going to try and involve themselves in the debate by interjecting. They're really not. Yes, just so that I'm absolutely being clear, that includes the Deputy Prime Minister. If members wish to raise a point of order, they're welcome to. The Leader of the House is now doing that on behalf of the government. The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE: The assistant minister was asked: 'At whose request is this?'

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr BURKE: We were told it was at the request of the Assistant Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer is not the person who has a motion on the Notice Paper that is being asked to be postponed. The Leader of the House has now raised the minister for communications, but that's not who we were told the request came from. The request has to come—and the standing orders and Practice are specific that it has to be at the request—which is why, had the answer from the assistant minister been that the request was from the minister for communications, I would have had no point of order to object on.

The SPEAKER: Well, why don't I just ask him? There's the free will of the House. Why don't I just ask the minister for communications?

Mr BURKE: I've got no objection to it being done the proper way, but at the moment what's happening is we have something that has been put before the House which has not been requested of that individual by the minister for communications.

The SPEAKER: But this is almost like the recommittal of a vote. Why don't I just ask him? I mean, it's—

Mr BURKE: He can move it, which is what the standing orders presume—if someone's postponing something that they've bothered to put on the Notice Paper, that they would bother to have the courage to actually put the arguments before the House as to why something that last night they thought should go on the Notice Paper today they think should be taken off.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (18:29): I think the Manager of Opposition Business is right. He asked: 'Who requested this?' Well, if he had specified 'this postponement' or 'this bringing on of the bill'—
Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I just caution members on my left, particularly the member for Ballarat.

Mr PORTER: He could have easily done that and saved the confusion. But the postponement is being requested by the minister for communications, and the intervening bill is being requested by the Assistant Treasurer.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the minister for communications, I'm going to make two points. I allowed the Manager of Opposition Business to essentially ask a question of the assistant minister which has led us down this alleyway that we're going to need to reverse out of. It is the established convention that ministers act on behalf of other ministers. That is the established convention and that goes back a long way. Given where we are now, we can look at the technicalities, but all that really matters is that what's being moved is really being moved on behalf of, and with the consent of, the minister concerned. Given he's here, I'm prepared to hear from him. The minister for communications.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts) (18:30): Mr Speaker, I'm somewhat surprised that the point needs to be made express, given it is entirely in accordance with the normal practice of the House. But, if it assists the House, I can absolutely confirm that I have requested that this motion be postponed.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I think it's probably easier if we say that it is therefore so moved. So the question is that the motion moved by the minister for communications be agreed to. That's the question that's before the House.

An honourable member: Is someone speaking to it?

The SPEAKER: I don't prompt people to speak.

An honourable member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Very generous of you, I think! I think he's moved his motion. The Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (18:31): Mr Speaker, I move, as an amendment to the motion before the House:

That the words 'to a later hour this day' be deleted and the words 'until 7 pm this day' be inserted in their place.

This amendment would allow the government to still deal with the bill that they want to deal with, but would make sure that this House voted on the Australia Post cuts. Only last night, the minister for communications decided this was important enough that he was going to put it on the Notice Paper. I invite the Deputy Manager of Opposition Business to second the motion.

The SPEAKER: I'm not going to call the seconder. We're getting into a very technical area. The same page of Practice that I read from earlier states:

A private Member—

who is not a minister—

cannot move to vary the order of government business in the House—

that's what I mean—

nor can he or she move an amendment to a postponement motion—

It would have that effect, so I need to rule that motion out of order.

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I'm ruling that motion out of order, unless the Minister for Home Affairs wants me to rule it in order. I'm ruling the motion out of order; it can't be moved. The member for Hindmarsh.

Mr Butler: I'm seeking to speak on the motion.

The SPEAKER: No; I've ruled it out of order.

Mr Butler: No, on the minister's motion.

The SPEAKER: On the actual motion? Yes, sure. The amendment is out of order. The question is that the motion moved by the minister for communications be agreed to. The member for Hindmarsh. The member for Hindmarsh will resume his seat. The assistant minister.

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (18:33): I move:

That the question be now put.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be put.
The House divided. [18:38]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 59
Noes ...................... 49
Majority ................. 10

AYES
Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES
Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Koehl, MJ
King, MMH
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM (teller)
Templeman, SR
Vamvakianou, M
Wells, AS
Zappia, A
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER (18:41): The question now is that the motion moved by the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet be agreed to.

The House divided. [18:41]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

<table>
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<th>Ayes</th>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>Majority</td>
<td>10</td>
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**AYES**

| Allen, K | Andrews, KL |
| Archer, BK | Bell, AM |
| Broadbent, RE | Chester, D |
| Christensen, GR | Conaghan, PJ |
| Coulton, M | Drumm, DK (teller) |
| Dutton, PC | Entsch, WG |
| Falinski, JG | Fletcher, PW |
| Frydenberg, JA | Gee, AR |
| Gillespie, DA | Goodenough, IR |
| Haines, H | Hammond, CM |
| Hastie, AW | Hawke, AG |
| Hunt, GA | Joyce, BT |
| Kelly, C | Leser, J |
| Ley, SP | Littleproud, D |
| Liu, G | Martin, FB |
| McCormack, MF | McIntosh, MI |
| McVeigh, JJ | Morrison, SJ |
| O'Brien, T | O'Dowd, KD |
| Pearce, GB | Pitt, KJ |
| Porter, CC | Price, ML |
| Ramsey, RE (teller) | Robert, SR |
| Sharkie, RCC | Simmonds, J |
| Steggall, Z | Stevens, J |
| Sukkar, MS | Taylor, AJ |
| Tehan, DT | Tudge, AE |
| van Manen, AJ | Vasta, RX |
| Wallace, AB | Webster, AE |
| Wicks, LE | Wilson, RJ |
| Wyatt, KG | Young, T |
| Zimmerman, T | |

**NOES**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Albanese, AN</th>
<th>Aly, A</th>
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CHAMBER
Question agreed to.

Rearrangement

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler—Leader of the Opposition) (18:42): I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent the private Members' business notice relating to the disallowance of the Australian Postal Corporation (Performance Standards) Amendment (2020 Measures No. 1) Regulations 2020 standing in the name of the Member for Grayndler being called on immediately and given priority over all other business for final determination of the House.

The fact is that this change, which will scale back services and will mean that people will only be able to get basic letter services on two days a week, is a disgrace. With the cover of the pandemic, what they are doing is saying to older and vulnerable Australians, 'We will rip up the community service obligations'.

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (18:43): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.
The SPEAKER: The question is the Leader of the Opposition be no further heard.

The House divided. [18:47]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ..................... 59
Noes ..................... 50
Majority ................ 9

AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Fallniski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ
Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Kearney, G
King, CF
Marles, RD
Mitchell, RG
Murphy, PJ
Perrett, GD
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Smith, DPB
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD

Aly, A
Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Chesters, LM
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Gorman, P
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Keogh, MJ
King, MMH
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM (teller)
Templeman, SR
Vamvakina, M
Wells, AS
Zappia, A
Question agreed to.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (18:48): I second the motion. This government is sacking postal workers and it is an outrage—

The SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. Leader of the House?

Mr PORTER (Pearce—Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Leader of the House) (18:48): I move:

That the Member be no longer heard.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the member be no longer heard.
The House divided. [18:50]
(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ...................... 59
Noes ...................... 50
Majority ................ 9

AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
Hastie, AW
Hunt, GA
Kelly, C
Ley, SP
Liu, G
McCormack, MF
McVeigh, JJ
O’Brien, T
Pearce, GB
Porter, CC
Ramsey, RE (teller)
Sharkie, RCC
Steggall, Z
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
van Manen, AJ

Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
Fletcher, PW
Gee, AR
Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Joyce, BT
Leeser, J
Littleproud, D
Martin, FB
 McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
 O’Dowd, KD
Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Question agreed to.

The **SPEAKER**: The question now is that the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition be disagreed to. The House divided. [18:52]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayes</th>
<th>Noes</th>
<th>Majority</th>
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<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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CHAMBER
AYES

Allen, K
Archer, BK
Broadbent, RE
Christensen, GR
Coulton, M
Dutton, PC
Falinski, JG
Frydenberg, JA
Gillespie, DA
Haines, H
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Wallace, AB
Wicks, LE
Wyatt, KG
Zimmerman, T
Andrews, KL
Bell, AM
Chester, D
Conaghan, PJ
Drum, DK (teller)
Entsch, WG
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Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM
Hawke, AG
Joyce, BT
Leeser, J
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Martin, FB
McIntosh, MI
Morrison, SJ
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Pitt, KJ
Price, ML
Robert, SR
Simmonds, J
Stevens, J
Taylor, AJ
Tudge, AE
Vasta, RX
Webster, AE
Wilson, RJ
Young, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bandt, AP
Bowen, CE
Burney, LJ
Butler, MC
Chalmers, JE
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Dreyfus, MA
Fitzgibbon, JA
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Kearney, G
King, CF
Marles, RD
Mitchell, RG
Murphy, PJ
Perrett, GD
Plibersek, TJ
Ryan, JC (teller)
Smith, DPB
Swanson, MJ
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Watts, TG
Wilkie, AD
Aly, A
Bird, SL
Burke, AS
Burns, J
Butler, TM
Chesters, LM
Coker, EA
Dick, MD
Elliot, MJ
Gorman, P
Husic, EN
Katter, RC
Keogh, MJ
King, MMH
Mitchell, BK
Mulino, D
O’Connor, BPJ
Phillips, FE
Rishworth, AL
Shorten, WR
Stanley, AM (teller)
Templeman, SR
Vamvakinou, M
Wells, AS
Zappia, A

PAIRS

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KJ
Buchholz, S
Coleman, DB
Connelly, V
Evans, TM
Flint, NJ
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Conroy, PM
Freelander, MR
Claydon, SC
Georganas, S
Giles, AJ
PAIRS

Hogan, KJ  Gosling, LJ
Howarth, LR  Hill, JC
Irons, SJ  O'Neil, CE
Laming, A  Khalil, P
Landry, ML  Leigh, AK
Marino, NB  McBride, EM
Morton, B  Neumann, SK
O'Brien, LS  Wilson, JH
Pasin, A  Owens, JA
Sharma, DN  Payne, AE
Thompson, P  Rowland, MA
Wilson, TR  Snowdon, WE
Wood, JP  Thwaites, KL

Question agreed to.

BILLS

Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 2) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the bill be read a second time.

The SPEAKER (18:53): The question is that this bill be read a second time. The assistant minister.

Mr MORTON (Tangney—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister and Cabinet) (18:53): I move:

That the question be put.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be put.

The House divided. [18:58]

(The Speaker—Hon. Tony Smith)

Ayes ....................... 56
Noes ....................... 50
Majority ................... 6

AYES

Allen, K  Andrews, KL
Archer, BK  Bell, AM
Broadbent, RE  Chester, D
Christensen, GR  Conaghan, PJ
Coulton, M  Drum, DK (teller)
Dutton, PC  Entsch, WG
Falinski, JG  Fletcher, PW
Frydenberg, JA  Gee, AR
Gillespie, DA  Goodenough, IR
Hammond, CM  Hastie, AW
Hawke, AG  Hunt, GA
Joyce, BT  Kelly, C
Leeser, J  Ley, SP
Littleproud, D  Liu, G
Martin, FB  McCormack, MF
McIntosh, MI  McVeigh, JJ
Morrison, SJ  O'Brien, T
O'Dowd, KD  Pearce, GB
Pitt, KJ  Porter, CC
Price, ML  Ramsey, RE (teller)
Robert, SR  Simmonds, J
Stevens, J  Sukkar, MS
Taylor, AJ  Tehan, DT
Tudge, AE  van Manen, AJ
Vasta, RX  Wallace, AB
Webster, AE  Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ  Wyatt, KG
Young, T  Zimmerman, T
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

**Third Reading**

**The SPEAKER** (19:00): Is leave granted for the third reading to be moved immediately?

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (19:00): Yes, leave is granted. It's a bill we support. We simply wanted to be able to use the parliament to give a speech in the second reading debate.

**Mr EVANS** (Brisbane—Assistant Minister for Waste Reduction and Environmental Management) (19:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Bushfire Recovery Fund

The SPEAKER (19:01): The Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management indicated to me quite a way back that he wished to add to an answer from question time today.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa—Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and Deputy Leader of the National Party) (19:01): I seek to add to an answer made earlier today in response to a question from the member for Grayndler relating to the number of bushfire affected properties in New South Wales cleared of debris. I stated that, as of 16 July, in the Snowy Valleys LGA 188 homes out of 208 will have been cleared, in Snowy Monaro it will be 11 out of 31, in Queanbeyan 48 out of 64, in Bega Valley 375 out of 431, and in Eurobodalla 570 out of 610. I've since been informed that the 'out of' figures referenced in my answer are in fact the number of properties expected to be cleared by 20 June and not the total number of properties impacted in each LGA. This information has been provided by the New South Wales state government to the National Bushfire Recovery Agency. It's important to note that, as of 16 June 2020, the number of homes that have been cleared of debris in the five LGAs mentioned in my statement is 1,192, and the New South Wales government estimates 1,344 homes in these LGAs will be cleared by 20 June 2020. The National Bushfire Recovery Agency continues to request real-time updates from the New South Wales government, as the New South Wales government is the jurisdiction that holds this data.

BILLS

Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020

Second Reading

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (19:02): Given the very unconventional circumstances that bring me to my feet today, I hope you'll excuse me and give me a moment to gather myself, following the shock of that bill being rammed through without a single speaker in opposition just now. I'm sure that there was a great urgency and contingency that drove that from the government side.

But we now come to the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020. This bill is the government's latest attempt to deal with the very significant structural changes occurring in regional media in Australia. The can has been kicked down the road by this government for many years now. Indeed, the Australian content obligations being discussed and dealt with in this bill have been kicked down the road by this government for four years, and now before the House we have a bill that we are told needs to get through the parliament this week. That's not the way, by any stretch of the imagination, that I'd go about managing, coordinating or doing a proper policy process, but here we are.

The bill before the House is one that the Labor Party supports. We support it not because we believe that it will solve all problems, and not because we believe that it will be a decisive intervention in addressing the issues confronting regional broadcasters—regional commercial radio broadcasters and regional television broadcasters—but because we believe that it will provide some degree of regulatory relief, and there is no reason for us to stand in the way of that. We do have a second reading amendment, which I will move shortly, when the text is before me. But we are happy to support the passage of this bill in order to accommodate its passage for the government.

As I said, this bill has been brought on here today in fairly extraordinary circumstances—with, I understand, the discussions that have been going on to support it. The postal bill, which many people were very enthusiastic to speak about, has been put off.

As I said, really the structural changes in media go back to the convergence review under the Rudd-Gillard government. The fact that we are now seven years into this new conservative government and have not seen the substantive structural issues dealt with is extraordinary. Indeed, in 2017 we saw a reform bill come through the parliament that was going to turn this upside down, was going to address the big-picture issues. Yet three years on we see another set of amendments coming into this chamber. Of course, these commercial broadcasters aren't the only part of this regional media picture. A very significant part of this also is the role of the ABC, and we know what the government has been doing with respect to the ABC in recent times—constant cuts to the ABC's budget, after we were promised, before the 2013 election, that there would be no cuts to the budget of the ABC. The people who bear the cost of this—the regions of Australia that bear the cost of this—most acutely are those in rural and regional Australia.

And this is all part of the same ecology. I don't like to talk about it now, as a Melbournian, but I grew up in country Queensland, as the Speaker may be familiar with, and I know how important the ABC is to rural and
regional areas. It's treasured in those areas. It's literally a lifesaver in times of crisis. People turn to the ABC as that trusted source of information when their lives are on the line, when their livelihoods are on the line, when their property is on the line. They turn to it for the local coverage that is necessary. And we've seen this government treat the ABC with contempt, after promising there'd be no cuts to the budget of the ABC, and we've seen a series of cuts, and now we're starting to see the consequences of those cuts. We're seeing cuts to staffing in regional areas. The chickens are coming home to roost.

So, we see the structural problems in the industry. We're familiar with them. In the commercial sector they're becoming very acute. I should say that the problems being experienced by both commercial radio and commercial television broadcasters are part of big structural changes in traditional media, but they're being made more acute by the growing uncertainty caused by this government kicking the can down the road. It's really difficult to invest, it's difficult to plan, it's difficult to tackle these challenges head-on when you don't have confidence in the regulatory arrangement, when you know there are multiple review processes underway that haven't been dealt with.

The Broadcasting Services Amendment (Regional Commercial Radio and Other Measures) Bill 2020 amends the Broadcasting Services Act and the ACMA Act 2005 with a range of deregulatory measures to ease the regulatory and compliance burden on regional commercial radio and regional commercial television broadcasters. The bill makes relatively minor amendments relating to local content obligations and the Australian content transmission quota. Once again, the government serves up regulatory housekeeping when major reform is needed. Once again, this government is rushing a bill through the parliament when they've been sitting on these issues for literally years. Once again, this government dithers and delays on genuine reform when the industry is crying out for uncertainty to end.

The media sector is in crisis, and it was in crisis well before the impact of the latest COVID-19 pandemic. So, as I said earlier, Labor will not oppose this bill. We'll be constructive. We'll play our role. We won't stand in the way of relatively minor regulatory amendments to alleviate the regulatory burden on regional broadcasters, particularly in the face of concerns about the market failure of regional commercial television. But we are concerned that regional Australians are missing out as a result of this government's ongoing failure to support regional media. Indeed, the measures in the bill don't so much make things better for regional Australians as simply stop them getting worse. They press 'pause'.

We are also concerned that the government continues to delay genuine reform, which exacerbates the uncertainty faced by the media sector as a result of digital disruption. Media reform isn't a straightforward exercise and the issues are complex, but this government has had almost seven years to address the systemic challenges facing the media sector. During this time, review after review into the media sector have piled up and gathered dust on the shelves. They used to be Malcolm Turnbull's shelves, as the communication minister. Then they were Mitch Fifield's shelves. Now they are the member for Bradfield's shelves, as the Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts. The shelves might have changed, but the issues remain the same. The names on the front pages of the reports have changed, but the lack of action remains the same. In many ways, the bill is a small admission of failure by the Liberal-National government when it comes to regional broadcasting. There in the fine print is an admission that the government has failed to ensure that the regulatory framework keeps pace with market realities, but the government sat on early warning signs that regional commercial television broadcasters are facing market failure—something that has occurred on this government's watch—and that regional Australians will have less Australian content available to them than they should have, as a result of this government's failings.

The measures contained in schedule 1 of this bill permit greater flexibility for regional commercial radio broadcasting licensees in satisfying their local content obligations with amendments to the local content requirements and associated reporting requirements. Currently, regional commercial radio licensees are required to provide a minimum amount of material of local significance per business day in order to support the ongoing availability of local content in regional Australia. The regional commercial radio industry considers a number of the requirements associated with the local content and minimum service standards obligations to be inflexible, impractical and overly burdensome. The bill will provide the regional commercial radio industry with more flexibility in acquiring its local content and minimum service standards obligations. These changes facilitate flexibility in staff rostering over Christmas, in January and on public holidays, simplified reporting, and a move towards a complaints based approach, rather than ACMA monitoring. They also remove a requirement for a three-yearly statutory review of certain local content provisions. Importantly, the bill will not lower the amount of local content that is currently available to regional audiences on commercial radio.

Schedule 2 of the bill permits regional commercial television broadcasting licensees to be deemed to have complied with the multichannel transmission quota obligations even if they have not broadcast the required 1,460
hours of Australian content if the amount of content on the multichannels that they do carry under affiliation agreements is not less than the amount of Australian content on the equivalent metropolitan multichannels. Currently all commercial television broadcasting licensees, whether metropolitan or regional, are required to broadcast an annual minimum transmission quota of 55 per cent Australian programming between 6 am and midnight on their primary channel and broadcast minimum levels of Australian content—at least 1,460 hours of Australian programming—across their multichannels or non-primary channels between 6 am and midnight.

Metropolitan television networks provide regional and remote commercial television broadcasting licensees with content under affiliation agreements. However, there is currently no obligation on regional broadcasters to take every multichannel, like 7mate, 9Go! or 10 Bold, produced by their metropolitan affiliate. This means that some regional television networks may fall short of the multichannel transmission quota requirement to broadcast 1,460 hours annually of Australian content, depending on how metro networks schedule Australian content across their multichannels. The measures in the bill will assist certain regional and remote licensees that are failing to satisfy the obligation as a result of programming decisions beyond their control by the metro affiliates. It will not directly reduce the amount of Australian content available to regional viewers, but it does permit a reduction in the overall hours of Australian content broadcast by regional broadcasters.

This brings me to my next point. The bill says it all about this government's failures on regional media in Australia. It's late, it's inadequate and it sells regional Australia short. The bill is late, because it addresses an issue the government has known about since at least 2017. An issue arose in 2017 which the department considered to be an early warning sign of market failure in regional television broadcasting, yet the government is only just getting around to addressing it now. To quote the explanatory memorandum:

The Department is of the view that broadcasters' difficulties in meeting content requirements can be taken to be an early warning sign of market failure. In order to fulfill the intention of its policy, the Government will need to take action before market failure occurs, as this would limit regional audience's access to Australian content rather than promoting it.

After sitting on this issue for years, the government is now rushed the bill through the parliament having introduced it only a few days ago—indeed, having brought it forward significantly on the Notice Paper today.

The timing of this bill is off for another reason, though. The bill amends the Australian content transmission quota for commercial television broadcasters, which is a provision the government currently has under formal public review. Only two month ago, the government released an options paper for consultation as part of its review of the Australian content framework. As the explanatory memorandum states:

This process will include consideration of the Australian content transmission quotas, including the multi-channel quota.

Go to the department's website today and you'll find that the consultation on the options paper is still open and doesn't close for a couple of weeks yet. The government is still inviting submissions but now seeks to amend the quota for regional and remote commercial television broadcasting licensees with little to no public notice.

The bill is inadequate because it merely tinkers with a few provisions in the Broadcasting Services Act when a coherent, holistic and strategic package, including wholesale reform of the policy and regulatory framework, is necessary—a fact this government has known since it took office in 2013. Even the explanatory memorandum refers to:

... concerns that the legislative framework had failed to keep pace with the market realities of providing commercial television broadcast content in regional and remote geographic areas of Australia.

Instead of doing the hard yards to reform the legislative framework, all this government knows how to do is dismantle it, piece by piece. The bill contains relatively minor amendments when major structural reform is required to address digital disruption, COVID-19 and the risk of market failure in regional television. While the bill will ease the compliance burden for regional broadcasters, the measures are relatively minor and, alone, are insufficient to address the risk of market failure.

After seven years of inaction on wholesale reform, and after letting the issues the bill addresses fester for years, the government is now rushing this bill through the parliament. Whereas the former Minister for Communications, Senator Mitch Fifield, was renowned in the industry for doing very little—with all manner of work disappearing into what became widely known in the industry as the 'Fifield triangle'—the current minister for communications is so desperate to appear to be doing things, he's doubling up. So desperate is the minister to appear to be doing things that not only did he falsely claim to have suspended the Australian content quotas in April this year, he now has a bill before the parliament to amend a provision that he currently has under review. Witness the 'Fletcher paradox', where the minister says one thing but does another and where he says he's consulting on the transmission quota even as he puts legislation before the parliament to amend it.

The bill sells regional Australia short, because it assumes that, where broadcasters face challenges in meeting Australian content requirements, the answer is to relax the content requirements rather than assist broadcasters in
bridging the gap somehow or undertaking genuine reform to address structural challenges. When faced with the problem that some regional broadcasters are finding it difficult to satisfy their transmission quota, what does the government do? It looks to relax the consumer safeguard, not support reaching the consumer safeguard. While the bill will not lower the amount of local content that is currently available to regional audiences on commercial radio, it does permit a reduction in the number of hours of Australian content on regional commercial television that is currently available to regional audiences. At best, this will be only an indirect and modest reduction in the number of hours of repeat Australian content or simulcast content already available to regional audiences—content that is currently used as filler to make up hours to satisfy the quota. At worst, it may have unintended consequences and result in a significant reduction in the number of hours of Australian content available on regional commercial television. The explanatory memorandum notes:

The Department worked closely with ACMA throughout the development of this measure to ensure that the preferred deeming provision option has enacted the Government's policy without any unintended consequences.

The explanatory memorandum further notes that the government assessed these risks as low to very low. What is clear is that regional media is facing challenges, partly as a result of this government's failure to keep the regulatory framework up to date and regional Australians are missing out as a result. It isn't regional media that has failed here, it is the government that has failed regional media. For years, Labor has been calling on this government to overhaul the policy and regulatory framework and implement a real plan to support Australian content, public interest journalism and regional media in a landscape transformed by digitisation and convergence. For years, Labor has been warning this government that their legislative changes, funds and backroom deals are inadequate to support regional media in the face of digital disruption.

When this third-term coalition government took office back in 2013, they knew Australia's media laws were broken. The regulator said so, and the industry had told them so. Years ago, this government itself decried the regulatory framework as 'analogue era', yet it has failed to provide a digital-era replacement in the many years since. Over six years, this government has left the hulking analogue framework in place and has not addressed the main game around new services, the shift in advertising revenue and the uneven playing field.

In September 2017, the former Liberal Prime Minister described the government's changes to media law as 'a new era for Australia's media' and boasted:

The government is strengthening Australia's media industry, enhancing media diversity and securing local journalism jobs, particularly in regional areas.

Less than three years later, the government stated that it is of the view that:

...broadcasters' difficulties in meeting content requirements is an early warning sign of market failure.

The _AFR_ is reporting 'regional TV on the verge of market failure'. It's an indictment. The government's failure to address these systemic challenges has left the sector exposed to external shocks, and Australians are missing out on public interest journalism and content as a result. It's coming up to seven years of this third-term government, and they still don't know what to do. They've had years to fix the outdated regulatory framework and address the systemic challenges facing regional media but still don't know what to do.

The government have a pile of reviews and recommendations at their disposal, yet they continue to ignore them or cherry-pick them in a lopsided manner. The final report of the ACCC digital platforms inquiry, which was released in June 2019, devotes an entire appendix to recent reviews of media industry laws and regulation. It's a library. The government have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on consultants to advise them on regional media, but they don't know what to do. As recently as this month, the department put out to tender for research to:

...provide an assessment of the existing, emerging and novel business models for the production and distribution of news and media content.

It will also:

...evaluate the regulatory and non-regulatory measures employed (or being considered) in comparable jurisdictions.

The research is to be delivered by 31 August 2020. The government have taken almost seven years to commission this research, but the consultant gets less than seven weeks to actually do it.

The government released its response to the ACCC's _Digital platforms inquiry_ report to much fanfare in December 2019. Unfortunately, the government did not support all the ACCC's recommendations for the media, and their so-called reform road map makes no clear reference to modernising measures around regional broadcasting, among other glaring emissions.

The ACCC's _Digital platforms inquiry: final report_ makes a range of recommendations that this government has not supported, is pretending to support or has been slow to implement. For example, in recommendation 6, the
ACCC recommends a process to implement a harmonised media framework. The government says that it supports it and will be:

- commencing a staged process to reform media regulation towards an end state of a platform-neutral regulatory framework covering both online and offline delivery of media content to Australian consumers

Yet this bill is a step away from harmonisation, as it treats metropolitan and regional commercial broadcasters differently when it comes to Australian content multichannel transmission quotas.

In recommendation 7, the ACCC recommended a code of conduct to govern relationships between digital platforms and media businesses. The government supports it in principle. The ACCC is currently working to consult on a proposed mandatory code of conduct, but questions remain as to how much this will help regional media or independent media outlets. In recommendation 9, the ACCC recommends stable and adequate funding for the public broadcasters—the SBS and ABC. The government says that it supports the recommendation, even as it cuts a further $83.7 million from the ABC.

In recommendation 10, the ACCC recommends grants for local journalism. The government says that it supports this in principle and has brought forward a new fund, the Public Interest News Gathering fund, to replace its embattled Regional and Small Publishers Innovation Fund, but there are a few hairs on this too. The government is too slow when it comes to getting direct support to media outlets who need it. The fund they announced in 2017 failed to get the money out the door, and the fund they announced in 2020 came almost a year after the ACCC had recommended it. Where the ACCC has recommended the fund be administered at arm's length, the minister has installed himself as the decision-maker. Where the ACCC recommends $50 million over three years, the government has announced $50 million for one year, and $30 million to $40 million of that is an underspend from the fund that they announced back in 2017. It's unclear how much funding is available for regional print, regional commercial radio and regional commercial television or for smaller publishers, and our questions to the minister on this remain unanswered. In recommendation 11 of the digital platforms inquiry, the ACCC recommended tax settings to encourage philanthropic support for journalism, and the government has said it does not support the recommendation.

In the context of COVID-19, we urge the government to recalibrate their response to the ACCC digital platforms inquiry and reconsider many of the good recommendations that have been advanced by parliament, the ACCC, industry, academics, non-profits and others, such as the Public Interest Journalism Initiative. Regional media has been hit by the triple whammy of digital disruption, COVID-19 and an inept Liberal-National government. Australia’s media was already in crisis before COVID-19. The government's many failures on regional media have left the sector exposed to external shocks. Regional areas are where the underlying trends impacting the media are being felt most acutely. Regional media in Australia has been pushed to the brink of market failure by this government's inaction.

Data collected by the ACCC shows that between 2008 and 2018, 106 local and regional newspaper titles closed across Australia, representing a net 15 per cent decrease in the number of these publications. These closures have left 21 local government areas previously covered by these titles without coverage from a single local newspaper in either print or online formats, including 16 local government areas in regional Australia. According to the Public Interest Journalism Initiative, 200 titles have closed since January 2019, and the number of contractions in Australia's public interest news landscape has grown to over 200 since January 2019, according to data from the Public Interest Journalism Initiative Australian Newsroom Mapping Project. The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance has noted:

In recent months we have seen more than 150 regional and community newspapers cease printing. This is on top of the 106 local and regional papers that closed over the previous decade.

Many of those papers are more than a century old. Many may never reopen.

It shouldn't be this way. The stories of regional and rural Australia are important: our stories matter.

In regional Australia the local paper is the heartbeat of the community and provides the local news that the big cities can't or won't provide. It's often also a focal point for community connection, cohesion and education.

Media diversity in regional and remote areas is at or below the minimum number of voices in 68 per cent of licence areas, and multiple local television stations have closed their doors. On this government's watch we have news deserts emerging, widespread closures of newspapers, closure and consolidation of multiple television newsrooms, and mass sackings of journalists—a devastating loss for many local communities and for our stories, our culture and our democracy.

Labor welcomes the relief announced by the government so far, but it is inadequate, and more is needed. That's why Labor's shadow minister for communications, Michelle Rowland, wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister in April advocating for the regional community media sector to be considered as part of the government's $1 billion
regional community fund. There has not been a response to date, and that is why Labor is moving an amendment to this bill. I move:

That all words after "That" be omitted with a view to substituting the following words:

"whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House:

(1) notes the alarming decline in regional media;

(2) acknowledges that regional commercial television broadcasters’ difficulties in meeting content requirements can be taken as an early warning sign of market failure;

(3) notes the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has found that:

(a) between 2008 and 2018, the closure of 106 local and regional newspaper titles across Australia has left 21 local government areas previously covered by these titles without coverage from a single local newspaper (in either print or online formats); and

(b) the public broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, are not currently resourced to fully compensate for the decline in local reporting previously produced by traditional commercial publishers;

(4) further notes the Public Interest Journalism Initiative's Australian Newsroom Mapping Project found that the number of contractions in Australia's public interest news landscape has grown to over 200 since January 2019; and

(5) is of the view that this third-term Government has failed regional media by failing to reform the legislative framework and failing to deliver effective direct and indirect support to industry in a timely manner".

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr McVeigh): Is there a seconder for the motion?

Mr Perrett: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (19:30): It being 7.30 pm propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

COVID-19: Pacific Island Nations

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (19:30): Australia and New Zealand have done remarkably well in weathering the coronavirus storm. Australia has had something in the order of 7,300 cases—including active and predominantly resolved cases—and slightly over 100 deaths. Our trans-Tasman neighbour New Zealand has had in the order of 1,100 cases and somewhere around 22 deaths. Every death of course is regrettable, but, compared to how the rest of the world has fared, we have done remarkably well in protecting our population from the ravages of this crisis.

One of the untold success stories is how well our immediate neighbourhood has fared. The countries of the south-west Pacific, despite being potentially quite vulnerable to the ravages of this disease, have actually done a tremendous job in managing the impact of this disease on their populations. According to the WHO, there are now 322 cases in total in the Pacific and some seven deaths in total. But the countries that we consider closest to us have quite a small number of cases. Papua New Guinea has had eight cases. Fiji has had 18 cases. For both countries, it has now been more than three incubation periods since they’ve had a new case. The Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa have all been COVID-19 free. In fact, most of the cases have really been concentrated in what we would consider the eastern part of the Pacific, the territories of Guam, French Polynesia, Northern Mariana Islands and New Caledonia.

Why do I mention this? There has been a lot of talk in the Australian media and between our governments about a trans-Tasman bubble. That's a bubble that would allow air links, travel, commerce, trade and tourism to resume between Australia and New Zealand. It makes a lot of sense because both of our countries have done relatively well in managing this virus, and in a risk-based approach we can look at resuming these air links.

But in the next step we need to look at expanding this concept to include some of the countries of the south-west Pacific. The countries of the south-west Pacific are very vulnerable to the coronavirus, because they’ve got limited public health infrastructure and, if the virus was to take off there, their systems of public health could quickly be overwhelmed. But, as I said earlier, the governments have done a very good job in preventing new infection by preventing overseas arrivals, limiting internal travel, raising public awareness, good hygiene practices and the like.

Australia is already helping these countries get on their feet. We've helped these Pacific states defend themselves and we've helped them respond to the threat of COVID-19. I commend the work of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Payne, and the member for Mitchell and Minister for International Development and the
Pacific, Alex Hawke, in helping to reprogram our aid program to the Pacific and make sure we support things like testing capability, public information campaigns, access to medical supplies and expertise and the like.

But for these countries now the risk is as much economic as it is health related. The World Bank has warned that the economic outline for Pacific island countries this year is subject to substantial risk due to their economies' reliance on grants and tourism. This is why a trans-Tasman bubble would be such an important initiative. It would allow Pacific islands to once more access some of their biggest tourism markets, which are Australia and New Zealand. It would also incidentally provide an opportunity for many Aussies and Kiwis to take a holiday in our own region rather than further afield and get to know our own neighbourhood a little better.

One example is that tourism accounts for around 30 to 25 per cent of Fiji's GDP. That's almost gone to zero overnight because of the cutting of air links. Somewhere in the order of 85 to 95 per cent of those tourists and travellers to Fiji are Australians and New Zealanders.

There is an interesting pilot that has been underway this week: 189 German tourists got on a plane in Dusseldorf on Monday and flew to the Spanish territory of Majorca in the Balearic Islands. It's part of a pilot scheme taking place before Spain opens up to international tourism to see whether, and how, these sorts of air links can be resumed. Interestingly enough, these tourists are staying in only two hotels. They need to have a temperature check before they go, fill out an address and have a questionnaire completed, and there's a facility to quarantine these people should they test positive at any time during their stay. These are the sorts of innovative things that we will need to pursue as we look further ahead beyond the health aspects of this crisis and look towards getting our neighbours back on their feet.

Australia is well known as part of the Pacific family. Indeed, we view the countries as our family and we look out for each other in tough times. The next step for this family is to ensure we come through this crisis together.

**Uluru Statement from the Heart**

*Ms THWAITES (Jagajaga) (19:35):* I want to speak about the Uluru Statement from the Heart, because it is such an important document and an opportunity that we should not just let pass us by. Much of the conversation around the Uluru statement has been focused on a voice to parliament. I fully support a voice enshrined in our Constitution, but there is another part of the statement that gets less attention but which seems particularly relevant to our national conversation at the moment. That's the call for a Constitution, but that was only the beginning.

It is the case that most of us in this country grew up with a view of history that was not complete. It was told from only one point of view. I well remember being in primary school and making my projects about the settlers and the explorers, but there was a chunk of what happened that I hadn't heard about to include in my history project. As my colleague and First Nations woman Linda Burney has said, some of the massacres that occurred in this country happened just one generation ago. They have, necessarily, left scars. It will hurt us to look more closely at them, but we cause far greater ongoing hurt for First Nations people if we are not prepared to do this work. Doing this work would not make us less as a nation; it would make us more. It doesn't have to be a culture war; it can be part of reconciliation and part of healing.

In the last few weeks, so many people in our community have been showing us that they are ready for this conversation. I want to thank all the people in my electorate who've contacted me, urging the parliament to progress the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It is time for leadership from this place to make that happen. It's time for voice, treaty, truth.

Doing this work makes us so much more likely to get progress on the areas where the experiences of First Nations people are still unacceptable. The 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody found that Aboriginal people are more likely to die in custody, because they're arrested and jailed at disproportionate rates. As of March this year, 28.6 per cent of the male prison population is Aboriginal, yet Aboriginal people only make up three per cent of the total population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to be held in custody for traffic offences, unpaid fines or minor offences than white Australians. Since the royal commission, 434 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have died in custody. My colleague Senator Pat Dodson in the other place, who obviously knows far more about this subject than me and has a long history of fighting for improvements in this area, made a speech that was far more eloquent than I could make on this very topic just last week. I urge everyone to look at and listen to that speech, because it is so important.

Being honest about our history also means we can be honest about the work that we need to do next. This is important at the moment with the Closing the Gap Refresh process that's occurring. The Coalition of Peaks, a new group of Aboriginal peak organisations, have been leading the way in this process for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver the services that First Nations people need. They've been demonstrating that, without a voice at the table and without genuine investment, we don't get progress.
We've heard a lot in this chamber about the Closing the Gap targets and progress and too much about a lack of progress. What we need to hear about is a new way, and that's one of the things that's on the table for us now if we're prepared to do the work, if we're prepared to listen to Aboriginal people and put their voice at the table. The Coalition of Peaks made the point that those targets that we hold up can be meaningless if governments aren't willing to change the way they work, if we're not willing to cede some of that control that we hold so closely and to put these voices front and centre.

They're also meaningless without proper funding. You can't close the gap if you don't fund it. You can't change someone's life if they don't have a roof over their head. You can't help families keep their kids with them, rather than in custody, if they don't have a clean kitchen to feed them from. These are really big issues that our nation—let's be honest—has not done a good job of confronting. We have the opportunity now; let's not let it pass us by.

It's time for us to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

**Child Abuse**

Mr SIMMONDS (Ryan) (19:40): Tonight the parents of Australia and, in particular, the parents of the Ryan electorate are sleeping more soundly. Because of the three years worth of work of the Morrison coalition government, we now have mandatory sentences for child sex offenders. It's been three years of Labor opposition and their backflips and tactical games, but this is because of the hard work of the Morrison government. In particular, I want to congratulate the Attorney-General and my fellow Queenslander Minister Dutton for shepherding these important reforms through both the House and now the Senate. Because of their efforts, the Morrison government has been able to put front and centre the protection of children and our most vulnerable children at that.

We have invested more than any government before us in tackling child sexual exploitation. Under the guidance of the Minister for Home Affairs, we've established Australia's eSafety Commissioner, which is providing parents with a broad range of online safety programs and resources. Minister Dutton has established the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, which is successfully driving the national response to counter the exploitation of children, leading to a significant increase in arrests. This focus and spending has been so vital for Australian families. As a dad, it is hard to comprehend just how disgustingly prevalent the risk of this abhorrent exploitation is. Each year the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation receives almost 18,000 reports of child sexual exploitation. Each report can contain hundreds or thousands of explicit videos and images.

One child suffering sexual abuse is one too many in this country, and yet current data shows 7.7 per cent of Australians will have experienced childhood sexual abuse before the age of 15. Child abuse causes lifelong mental and physical harm to the victim, and the financial cost of child abuse and neglect in Australia is over $9 billion per year. Unfortunately, during the COVID pandemic, as we have spent more time at home and online, the eSafety Commissioner has seen a 300 per cent increase in reports from some forms of online child exploitation reporting. The ACCCE reports a 123 per cent increase in child exploitation cases compared to just last year. In the last few weeks, we've seen that the AFP has made major arrests in our community, including nine men across three states, laying 40 charges relating to a sophisticated child abuse network operating in Australian suburbs that was putting child exploitation material online.

The new mandatory sentencing legislation will now act as a strong deterrent of this most abhorrent behaviour. Last year, current sentencing outcomes meant 39 per cent of convicted Commonwealth child sex offenders did not spend a single day in jail. This is just so wildly out of step with community expectations, it is hard to imagine how it has gone on this long. It's taken us as a government three years of hard work to get past Labor's political games and backflips, but it's now so important that we're here, because, instead of that situation where 39 per cent didn't spend a single day in jail, now a jail term is the starting point for all of these federally convicted child sex offenders. Maximum penalties will also be increased to better reflect the gravity of these types of crimes, including a new life term for the worst offenders. The bill creates a new maximum penalty of life for the most serious Commonwealth offences and a presumption against bail to keep offenders in custody while they face trial.

This is a tremendous outcome for Australian parents. As parents, we now need to look to our own families, because we can do more. While parents talk to their kids often about stranger danger, only three per cent of parents list online grooming as a concern. Children are allowed access to the internet at a young age but are not given the tools to understand the dangers. Four out of five children aged four are using the internet, and almost one-third of these four-year-olds have access to their own device. By age 12, 50 per cent of kids have access to their own internet enabled device, yet 70 per cent of parents allow children aged 12 to use the internet anywhere in the house, including where they are alone. Parents, it's time to talk to your kids about how prevalent this is and to make sure they are armed with the tools to prevent it.
Congratulations to the A-G and particularly Minister Dutton for three years of hard work to get this together. Because of your efforts, the parents of Australia will sleep better tonight.

Renewable Energy

**Dr HAINES** (Indi) (19:46): In the 19th century, it was regional Australia that led the world in the transition from gas to electricity. When electric lighting first lit up our streets, it happened first in towns like Tamworth, in 1888, Penrith, in 1890, and Broken Hill, in 1891. Sydney didn't get electricity until 1904, after Federation. This history is fitting because, in the 21st century, regional Australia is again leading the country in the transition to renewable energy. The hard-headed engineers at the Australian Energy Market Operator tell us that some 15 gigawatts of coal power will be retired from Australia's electricity system over the next 20 years and will be replaced almost entirely with the cheapest form of new electricity going around, and that is renewables. The CSIRO projects that $1 trillion could be spent on Australia's electricity system by 2050. A boom is coming in renewable energy, and it's coming to the regions. Those same engineers have identified 33 renewable energy zones across Australia that are prime locations to concentrate on new renewables. I'm proud to say that my electorate of Indi is one of them. The question is: how do we capture the benefits of this boom for regional communities? I believe that community energy provides a pathway forwards.

Community energy is where everyday people own, develop or benefit from a renewable energy project. That project could be putting solar on every roof of every house in your street. It could be putting solar panels on the roofs of all the local schools, the local hospital or the footy club. It could mean raising money to buy and install a community battery to store electricity when it's cheap and cut the whole town's power bills. It could be working with a commercial wind farm to develop it and ensuring that the local community can buy shares in that project, so that every electron sold brings money back into regional communities. The possibilities are many, but the message is clear: putting everyday regional communities at the centre of the renewables boom is the best way to ensure that they benefit. I know this because Indi is a leader in community energy. We have 12 community energy groups across the electorate, more than in any other electorate in Australia. There are 100 in total, with more than the 12 in Indi. They're looking to build microgrids in towns like Euroa, Yea and Corryong; to put batteries in Beechworth and Yackandandah; and to install solar on low-income housing in Wodonga.

When I was elected, I committed to developing a policy to unlock the potential of community energy, not just for my electorate but for every regional community in Australia. It was pretty ambitious. That's why, five weeks ago, I launched a community co-design process to invite everyday Australians to work with me to develop a national policy for community energy. I published a discussion paper on my website, outlining the massive potential that community energy holds for regional Australia, the barriers that exist for further deployment and policy options the Commonwealth government could take to accelerate the sector. I'm inviting every Australian to have their say. Until 3 July I'm inviting submissions from interested Australians to comment on this paper and to answer an important question: what could the government do to unlock the potential of renewables in your regional community?

So far in this co-design process we've held workshops with Totally Renewable Beechworth, Totally Renewable Yackandandah, 2030 Yea, Euroa Environment Group, Renewable Albury Wodonga Energy, and Wangaratta Landcare and Sustainability. We've held two national workshops with people from all over the country. Over the next few weeks we've scheduled workshops with Renewable Energy Benalla, Renewable Energy Mansfield, Wangaratta Youth Council and GV Community Energy in the Goulburn Valley. As soon as I finish this speech I'm going back up to my office to rejoin a Zoom workshop with the Kinglake Rotary club.

We had submissions from Manilla, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange and, of course, right across Indi. Submissions will close on the co-design process on 3 July. I encourage every community group, local council and sporting club and every person in Australia to make a submission to my community co-design policy. At the end of it, together with a panel of community energy experts, we will be developing a concept paper to bring to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction outlining practical, sensible steps. This is an experiment in participatory democracy. When I was elected, I promised to do politics differently. I meant it. This is community co-design, bringing a democratic approach to new policy.

**JobMaker**

**Mr PEARCE** (Braddon) (19:51): It was great news for the Braddon electorate yesterday. The Prime Minister announced the step up of the government's JobMaker program. Project Marinus is one of the 15 projects that will be fast-tracked for approval. Renewable energy is one of the greatest economic opportunities in the north-west, West Coast and King Island. We're the envy of Australia. We have what the rest of the world needs: the capacity to produce clean, reliable, affordable energy.
We are on track to be 100 per cent renewable by the year 2022. It has been forecast that we could generate up to 200 per cent of our current electricity needs by the year 2040. This means that we will be not only a producer of renewable energy for our own domestic needs but also an exporter of renewable energy across the national electricity grid. Tasmania is perfectly placed to supply Australia with the energy reliability and security it needs, which in turn will inject billions of dollars into the economy and create literally thousands of jobs in our local region.

The proposed route for the Marinus Link interconnector is between Burnie and the La Trobe Valley in Victoria. This means that yesterday's announcement is yet another vote of confidence in our region by Prime Minister Morrison and another job-creating commitment for the north-west, West Coast and King Island by the federal government.

Progressing the Marinus Link and Battery of the Nation projects, as well as backing our broader renewable sector, will underpin these projects. This is a particularly keen focus of mine. Renewable energy is vital to our region because the sector has the potential to secure our prosperity for generations to come. Renewable energy will create thousands of jobs today and tomorrow. Whether it's through pumped hydro, hydrogen, wind energy or the incredibly exciting federally funded wave energy pilot that is about to be commissioned on King Island, these industries have the potential to create a jobs boom. It is estimated 1,400 jobs will also be created over the peak construction phase of Marinus, with up to 2,350 jobs also created from further renewable energy and storage development over the peak construction period for the Battery of the Nation and Marinus developments. The combined investment of Marinus Link and the new renewable energy developments will inject over $7 billion into the Tasmanian economy over the coming years, and a large proportion will be in the electorate of Braddon.

It's important to note that the government's announcement to fast-track the approval for Project Marinus doesn't mean that environmental safeguards will be relaxed. This isn't about reducing environmental standards. We're accelerating projects through existing process by cutting red tape, not by cutting corners. Having stronger and faster environmental approvals through the removal of inefficient administration is key to our economic recovery as we emerge from COVID-19.

Yesterday's announcement continues to build on the work that the government has already been doing to improve the assessment time frames in delivering quick and robust decisions on major projects well ahead of time. Marinus will still undergo an extensive environmental assessment and checks. The announcement to fast-track Project Marinus means that the required due diligence will happen sooner, enabling the project to provide the stimulus that our region needs sooner. Last month the Australian Energy Market Commission confirmed the need for increased renewable energy supply, increased energy storage and increased interstate transmission infrastructure. All of this can be supplied within the north-west, the west coast and King Island, supported by our nationally-significant Battery of the Nation and Marinus Link projects. I am committed to playing my part to secure Tasmania's renewable energy future, working with my state Liberal colleagues to progress these vitally important projects for the electorate of Braddon and for Tasmania.

Western Sydney University

Ms STANLEY (Werriwa—Opposition Whip) (19:55): When Gough Whitlam was first elected as the member for Werriwa in 1952 there was not a single high school, let alone a university, in the electorate. University participation rates in the western suburbs had, for a long time, been the lowest in Australia. The concept of a university in Sydney's western suburbs was, for decades, repeatedly considered and shelved. Gough was not only instrumental in ensuring a tertiary education was the right of all Australians but was also an active champion for the establishment of a university in Western Sydney.

Gough, of course, remained a close friend and supporter of WSU until his death. The university honoured that support with the establishment of the Whitlam Institute in 2000. He would no doubt be proud to know, as I am, that Werriwa is now home to more Western Sydney university students than any other electorate—3,909 at the last count. In 30 short years, the university's impact on the region has been immense, becoming one of the driving forces in the transformation of Western Sydney.

There aren't too many people who live, work or play in Western Sydney that don't have a connection to WSU. All three of my sons are alumni of the university. Two of my current staff are both alumni and ex-staff of WSU, and I have a staff member who is currently a student. Because of these strong links, WSU recognises it must play a leading role in the post COVID-19 recovery of the Western Sydney economy. It aims to do this through employment, education, training and construction. Despite a disappointing lack of support and assistance from the federal government and unlike a lot of other universities, WSU is proposing no staff cuts or redundancies this year. So I commend WSU on its ongoing negotiations with the NTEU and the PSA.
WSU is also supporting an essential retraining and reskilling effort by offering online short courses in the areas of education, aged care, interpreting and translation. Through a swift migration to online learning, existing students were able to negate the toll COVID-19 has had on their studies. The WSU's Student Hardship Fund has provided an olive branch to both domestic and on-shore international students experiencing financial hardship. A critical 10 per cent reduction for international students was implemented, along with money and food vouchers to ensure they're well taken care of.

WSU is determined to support their students, their staff and the wider community. However, the burden of any recovery effort cannot be carried by the tertiary sector alone. The federal government must support our TAFEs and universities. As we saw with Labor's successful management during the GFC, one of the key factors to keeping an economy strong and Australians working is providing strong stimulus, particularly in the construction sector. If we're to overcome our nation's first recession in three decades, it won't come via HomeBuilder. WSU is ready and committed to do some of that work. The university believes residents across the width and breadth of Western Sydney should have ready access to the world's best education and research facilities, and it wants to do that building. A multiversity, bringing in four of Australia's leading higher education institutions, would be one such facility. Located at the Aerotropolis, also in my electorate, the multiversity will focus on STEM specialising disciplines, including aerospace engineering, advanced manufacturing and defence.

A health research and education hub, adjacent to Liverpool Hospital and the Macarthur Medical Research Centre in Campbelltown, will provide thousands of positions in the health sector, focused on education, research and employment. There's the peri-urban greenhouse and the logistics hub at Hawkesbury and a future technology centre at Werrington, providing projects based on CBD campuses. The first of which is the Peter Shergold Building in Parramatta, which sets a world standard for technology driven modern learning spaces. The Ngara Ngura building in Liverpool, which opened last year, is a similar success.

Gough once said:
We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer—a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.

Western Sydney University is trying their best to make sure that the students of Sydney's west have the best outlook on life.

House adjourned at 20:00

NOTICES

The following notice was given:

Mr Littleproud to present a Bill for an Act to amend the Biosecurity Act 2015, and for related purposes. (Biosecurity Amendment (Traveller Declarations and Other Measures) Bill 2020)

Ms Claydon to move:

That this House:

(1) notes that:
   (a) more than 140,000 Australians were on social housing waitlists in June 2018;
   (b) the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has identified a shortfall of 433,000 social housing dwellings over the next 20 years;
   (c) much of Australia's existing social housing stock is in dire need of maintenance and repairs; and
   (d) the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has urged the Government to consider investment in social housing as a means of protecting Australia's economy from the impacts of COVID-19;

(2) recognises the success of Labor's $5,638 billion investment to build 20,000 new social housing dwellings and renovate a further 80,000, as a key economic stimulus measure during the global financial crisis; and

(3) calls on the Government to:
   (a) ensure that stimulus measures are focused on delivering maximum ongoing public benefit; and
   (b) work with the private and community sectors and superannuation funds to invest in more social housing and repair existing social housing.
Tuesday, 16 June 2020

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie) took the chair at 16:01.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Kerr, Mr Laurie

Dr ALY (Cowan) (16:01): Members in this chamber may not know the name of Laurence ‘Laurie’ Kerr. Those who do know him or know of him might associate his name with the Kingsley Amateur Football Club, where, as chairman of the selectors of 2002, he turned the club's fortunes around and the senior and reserves made their respective grand finals. Later that year in October, the club's players, 19 of them, headed to Bali to celebrate their win. Laurie was there too. They had been in Bali for less than 12 hours when tragedy struck. Laurie Kerr was born on 12 May 1958. He was a survivor of the Bali bombings on 12 October 2002. The club lost seven of its players that night in Bali at the Sari Club. Laurie survived with burns to 20 per cent of his body, but the bombings really changed his life.

Sadly, I stand here today to commemorate the life of Laurie Kerr. He passed away on Saturday 13 June 2020. When I met Laurie, I was struck by two things: his incredible sense of humour and his incredible sense of sadness and loss. As we shared a meal one day in a little cafe in suburban Greenwood, just a few minutes from his home in Kingsley, he wavered between tears of sadness and sometimes tears rolling down his face while he bellowed in laughter. Laurie didn't want his life to be defined by the bombings, but the trauma was just too much. In fact, in the moments after the bombings, despite his injuries and still inside the Sari Club, he worked to rescue others. But in the years since then, he had been battling constant pain from his injuries, he'd undergone numerous operations and he had chronic pain syndrome.

My office, along with Kingsley MLA Jess Stojkovski and the Australian Red Cross, helped Laurie to get permanent housing and to work with Centrelink. He didn't live in Cowan; he actually lived in Moore, and I know the member for Moore to be a decent human being, and I understand that he will also be speaking on the life of Laurie. He deserves to be remembered in this chamber.

Laurie is survived by his children Tristan, Aaron, Brittany and Allira, and by six grandchildren. I understand that he passed away peacefully and was found in his lounge room on the sofa. If there was one thing I could have wished for Laurie, it's that he would find peace. Laurie, may you rest in peace now.

Nambour

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (16:04): I rise today to talk about one of the greatest regional towns in Australia.

An honourable member interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: No, but I'll give you a second guess.

Honourable members interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: No, I'll give you a third guess. I'm talking about the town of Nambour. There's so much about Nambour that people would naturally love. I'm talking about a town that has historically been the centre of the Sunshine Coast region. I'm talking about a town that has its own railway station, a town that has both private and public hospitals, a town that has some of the greatest schools in the region and an enormous, fantastic RSL. It's a vibrant town centre. We've got the Big Pineapple in Nambour, we've got a golf course, we've got a zoo—you name it.

But it's not the assets, no matter how good they are, that make Nambour so good. The community of Nambour has made it very clear that, as much as they are part of the broader Sunshine Coast region, they have their very distinct identity. They are part of Nambour, first and foremost. Nambour has had better times economically, but it's that pride, it's that determination, it's the cultural DNA of the people of Nambour that has allowed them to work cooperatively—three tiers of government, the business sector and the community sector—to map out a path to Nambour's future, something referred to as Reimagine Nambour.

Nambour's future has indeed been reimagined, and I have been delighted to play my role in that reimagining and come through with some serious funding: half a million dollars to get the tram back on the tracks, and half a million dollars to help with streetscaping. I was delighted, only a couple of weeks ago, to make an announcement, standing shoulder to shoulder with the state member and the local councillor, Marty Hunt and David Law, about a $60,000 rebranding exercise for the town. The time has come, now that the economy of Nambour is starting to move, despite all of the struggles with COVID-19, for the town to rebrand itself, to tell not just the rest of the coast and not just Queensland and Australia but indeed the world what Nambour stands for. It will be a stamp on what Nambour is. It will show a clear line from the past, all the way through to the future. And like the Reimagine
Nambour project itself, it will be done with a cooperative spirit of the community, led by Peter Boyce and the new Reimagine Nambour Inc. Let's see where this takes us. I for one am excited and enormously optimistic.

The Overland

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (16:07): The Overland train service that runs between Melbourne and Adelaide commenced in 1887 and until 1926 was known as the Adelaide Express. The history and significance of the Overland was recently documented by railway historian John Wilson, who last month released his third railway book The Overland: A Social History. The Overland is currently a twice-weekly service operated by Journey Beyond, formerly Great Southern Rail. For the past five years, since this federal government cut subsidies to pensioners, veterans and seniors, the service has relied on Victorian and South Australian government subsidies. Those subsidies have now stopped, with the South Australian Marshall government ending its financial assistance in 2018 and refusing to extend it, while the Victorian government continued funding the service until this year. The future of the Overland is up in the air, with COVID-19 adding to that uncertainty. If the service was discontinued, it would be a short-sighted, penny-pinning decision by the two state governments and the federal government, particularly given the modest subsidy required and when nationally there is a revival in building rail networks. Aerospace engineer Edwin Michell has outlined a proposal for modernising the Overland that would turn it into an attractive, viable service at a cost of around $50 million. I don't know if his proposal has been independently costed, but at a time when hundreds of millions of dollars are being put into other national infrastructure projects, at the very least the proposal should be properly assessed by governments.

This Friday between 1 and 2 pm a Zoom community summit will be held for people, many from country regions in Victoria and South Australia, that would be affected by the loss of the Overland. Amongst those people will be author John Wilson, Mayor Mark Radford from the Rural City of Horsham, Mayor Bruce Meyer from the West Wimmera Shire, Councillor Mat O'Brien from the Rural City of Murray Bridge, representatives of the Tatiara District Council and Margaret Millington of the rural community of Nhill.

The purpose of the summit, which has been referred to as the Serviceton Summit, is to launch a public campaign to save the Overland. For South Australia the loss of the Overland would be devastating. It would be another serious blow to South Australia's image, public confidence and status. I call on the South Australian government to work with the Victorian government, the federal government and Journey Beyond to secure the future of the Overland. And I say to Premier Steven Marshall: just for once, show some leadership.

Queen's Birthday Honours

Mr JOYCE (New England) (16:10): Deputy Speaker Gillespie, I want to acknowledge how well you look in the chair and what a marvellous Deputy Speaker you're going to be. Today I would also like to acknowledge Bede Burke and his wife, Narelle. Bede received an AM. This is a gentleman who's done so much for his community, whether it's in the Farmer's Federation, egg production, or his involvement in the National Party, this person has always got a reason to find time to help other people. He's known for that precise thing. It's not only Bede Burke that we should acknowledge. There are so many in my electorate who received these awards. Whether it's Clare Doherty OAM for her work in services to paediatric physiotherapy; Caroline Downer OAM for services to the visual and performing arts including her exceptional work for NERAM, which is our gallery in Armidale and something we're very proud of; Doug Hewitt, who is 90 years of age. I remember sending him a card for his 65th wedding anniversary. He's done so much work for the Armidale and Nambucca Heads districts. Diane Trestrail OAM for services to people living with Parkinson' disease. That is so apt because, as we know, former senator John 'Wacka' Williams has Parkinson's disease. Bob Bensley OAM from Inverell for services to the community. One of the famous things he did, which was very apt, is he lobbied for Copeton Dam, something that showed incredible foresight and produced so much wealth for northern New South Wales. Aileen MacDonald—I gave her a call the other day—for her work especially in the Guyra district. She has been a continual workhorse, whether it's local government, environmentalism or just community services around Guyra. Bob Kneipp of Inverell for his services, especially as an alderman of Ashford Shire. He has been Lions president, Ashford bushfire brigade, just to name a few. Melinda Commens, Public Service Medal for outstanding public service to education in New South Wales, particularly for families and children with disabilities. These people have made a statement that they are the sort of people who go the extra step and make our nation a better place.

I also note that the former member Mr Windsor received an award. I was always disappointed, to be quite frank, by some of the sordid innuendos in some of the tweets he used to put out, but nonetheless he received a reward, and that should be noted as well.

Paterson Electorate: Infrastructure

Ms SWANSON (Paterson) (16:13): Today I am calling on the Prime Minister to kickstart the Paterson economy. Regional communities like my electorate are the key to our recovery, Prime Minister. We have
boundless plains to share. We've got the land, and many new families are moving into my electorate to chase that great Australian dream of home ownership. New estates are springing up at Chisholm, Aberglasslyn, Gillieston Heights and Thornton, bringing with them people who need jobs and services. While we welcome those new families—I relish the thought of one day being able to doorknock all those thousands of new homes—I know that the people that are moving to our area and the people that live there want the infrastructure to support these new families moving to our area. It's one thing to have lots and lots of people moving into the area, but they have to be able to move around; they need hospitals and schools; they need the infrastructure and services to support a worthwhile life and to enhance that dream. Unfortunately, after drought and fire and now COVID-19, many people in my community have felt that the government just hasn't done enough to kickstart the economy and really back their family in. I'm imploring the government to do more to help the Paterson economy bounce back.

The Prime Minister has said he's going to fast-track $1.5 billion worth of infrastructure projects. Well, I've got some suggestions for things that he could do in my electorate that desperately need doing. The Prime Minister could build the M1 extension from Raymond Terrace to Black Hill. This would be the last piece of the M1 puzzle, Prime Minister, to go from Sydney to Brisbane. People are now queuing up to an hour or two hours just to get over the Hexham Bridge and the river. This is just not good enough. We know that lots and lots of freight comes from western New South Wales across the New England Highway and the Golden Highway down to the Port of Newcastle. It intersects with that same stretch of road, and, in the meantime, I have people who are just trying to make a living. They just want to get to work and not be camped with holiday traffic for three hours—and it's not just the holidays; it's every morning and afternoon now.

Come on, Prime Minister, give us a clear run on the M1, and the Newcastle Airport, while I'm at it. If we could make the runway a code E runway, then we would be able to have planes landing that would be able to reach further into Asia and we would be able to take our beautiful seafood and our produce into those areas, creating export dollars and industries for my community. This is so important. I'm going to be talking to my community in a virtual town hall about this. I'm inviting you to come along. It's Wednesday 24 June at 10.30. Just go on to my website, merylswanson.com.au, to register.

**Men's Health Week**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (16:17): Deputy Speaker Gillespie, I know you know that this week is Men's Health Week. Unfortunately, the health status of men in most countries, including Australia, is generally poorer than that of women. More men die at early stages of life, more men have accidents, more men take their own lives and more men suffer from lifestyle related conditions than women of the same ages. At the same time, men are less frequent visitors to their general practitioners and less inclined to seek help on account of their health. Men's Health Week is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and to encourage early detection and treatment of disease amongst men and boys.

I'm a huge supporter of raising awareness of men's health issues, particularly conditions that are preventable or have high survival rates when detected early. Prostate cancer is one such condition. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australian men, and early detection and treatment can significantly improve prostate cancer survival rates.

The Limestone Coast region in Barker has a strong community led prostate cancer support group, and I'm really pleased that every year they take the opportunity to have their big annual Aussie barbie out the front of my electorate office. It's now in its sixth year, and the Limestone Coast Prostate Cancer Support Group join with me at my office. We have a great day. We cook a few snags and we raise money, but, most importantly, we raise awareness about prostate cancer and the importance of knowing the risk factors, knowing the symptoms and how to undergo the health checks, particularly that you can now rely on a blood test.

The Limestone Coast has also been fortunate to have the support of the Male Bag Foundation, an organisation I've spoken about previously in this place. This year the foundation's efforts were aimed at funding transperineal biopsy machines in Riverland and the Limestone Coast. The foundation has entered into a memorandum of understanding to facilitate machines at both locations by mid-2021. These machines will significantly boost the number of biopsies and seeding procedures, which currently require patients to travel to Adelaide or interstate.

This week, being Men's Health Week, is a fantastic time to announce a prostate cancer nurse for the Limestone Coast. This is something that I have been working for with my local community for a very long time. To think our community was included in our government's $23 million announcement is outstanding. The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia will support not only a nurse in my community but in 24 other locations around Australia.

Finally, the message for all men this Men's Health Week is: be active, get medical help if you don't feel well, have a problem that won't go away or you notice unusual symptoms. Don't try to do everything on your own or bury your problems. Talk to your partner, talk to your friends, talk to your workmates and get the help you need.
Lilley Electorate

Ms WELLS (Lilley) (16:19): The last few months have been really tough for Australians, and sometimes good news has been few and far between, so it's my pleasure to share with you all today some good news stories from my community on the north side of Brisbane. The Lilley team were able to achieve a great result for the Queensland Stoma Association in Chermside, who contacted us asking for help with a loophole they were caught in that prevented them receiving JobKeeper. After working with the Queensland Stoma Association, Treasury decided to exclude government revenue from the turnover calculations so Kylie and her team were eligible for JobKeeper.

Mark from Taigum had his NDIS appeal approved after working with my team. Mark now has the green light to install an access ramp in his home. Patricia from Chermside was finally able to get her Centrelink carers allowance claim approved after we worked with Centrelink a good seven months after she initially applied.

We were also able to secure JobKeeper for Tim and his team at Harvest Rain, an amazing youth arts organisation in Stafford. Tim applied for JobKeeper for 22 of his workers in April. One month after the reimbursements were supposed to start rolling out, Harvest Rain had not received a cent. By that time, Tim had spent over $130,000 in wages in April and May and the Harvest Rain bank account was empty. So we called the tax office to let them know that he would have to stand down 22 workers without pay if he didn't receive JobKeeper that week, and, after six weeks of waiting, the claim was processed and the money was put in Tim's bank account. I want to congratulate Tim for his advocacy, both for his workers and being a good boss, and for his work for the northside and broader Queensland arts industry.

We were also able to help out Shorncliffe Outside School Hours Care, who had applied for JobKeeper but had been incorrectly classified by the ATO, resulting in very long delays paying the subsidy. We were able to work with the ATO to change their classification and get them their subsidy. We worked with the Department of Home Affairs to help get Yaping Shier's travel application approved so she was able to fly to Taiwan for her sister's funeral.

Thank you to all of these northsiders who trusted me and my office to help them when they were going through a rough patch. It was my pleasure to help you as your federal member and it is something I will do every single day that you entrust me with the role of being your federal representative. These have been very tough times for us. We have worked together on the northside. We have highlighted where there are gaps in the system, and these are some examples of how, when we work together constructively and effectively, we can get really good results.

I will endeavour to continue to do this for you in the months and, hopefully, years to come. Again, I thank you very much for working with my team. Please sing out if we can do anything for you. My office number is (07)32668244. I'm 'Anika Wells MP' on all social media platforms, including TikTok, and at anikawells.com.au.

Braddon Electorate: COVID-19

Mr PEARCE (Braddon) (16:22): There was good news from the great state of Tasmania this week, with Premier Peter Gutwein announcing that we have no active coronavirus cases. This is the milestone that we've all been working towards, and it could not have been reached without the sacrifice and the discipline of all Tasmanians. Thank you to everybody across the north-west, the west coast and King Island for playing your part.

Since the pandemic outbreak I've had contact with hundreds of businesses who have told me their stories. Every business has been affected, every individual circumstance has been different, but the unifying theme has always been gratitude. Businesses have told me that, without the swift and targeted support of the federal government through the cashflow boost, the extension and then the expansion of the instant asset write-off, the doubling of the safety net and jobseeker coronavirus supplement, and, of course, the JobKeeper program, their businesses would be in a much worse financial position as they emerge from the crisis. Some have told me that without the government's support they would have closed their doors for good.

What JobKeeper has meant to businesses across the region can be summed up by Michael Gates, who owns Print Domain in Burnie. Michael's staff is highly specialised and cannot be easily replaced. In his words, JobKeeper meant that he could retain his highly trained staff throughout the shutdown phase. He said that, thanks to JobKeeper, he had not been burdened with having to recruit or train new staff. He's hit the ground running and he's getting back to full production sooner. It's good for Michael and his staff and it's exactly what our local community needs.

A few weeks ago I also met with Justin Delanty from Lending4U in Devonport. I was after their feedback about government programs, like the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme and the instant asset write-off, and how they were being received in the electorate. Justin, Steven, Madison and I spoke about the many positives of the scheme, and they also raised a few challenges and issues they had with delays in processing claims under the

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instant asset write-off. I immediately had a meeting with the Treasurer and outlined to him what Justin had told me. The government is listening. Within a week the six-month extension of the $150,000 instant asset write-off had been announced.

I have confidence in the people of the north-west, the west coast and King Island, and I know that because the government is listening and is responsive we will emerge from this pandemic a stronger, more resilient community that understands our enormous potential to achieve great things together.

Cybersecurity

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (16:25): Since 2016, the US government has invited the public to hack the Pentagon. It's true! Knowing that adversaries are constantly trying to breach their systems, the US Department of Defense periodically invites white-hat hackers to try to breach its systems and win a cash bounty if they're successful. It's known as a bug bounty—a financial reward used to harness external security researchers in the task of identifying security vulnerabilities in systems—and it's working. Since 2016, more than 10,000 vulnerabilities have been discovered as security researchers have hacked the Pentagon, the army, the air force, the Marine Corps and the Defense Travel System.

Compare that with this government, which not only fails to engage with security researchers to strengthen the Commonwealth's cybersecurity posture but has often been actively hostile to their work. Compare the philosophy of Hack the Pentagon with this government, which threatened a prominent cryptographer for revealing that an anonymised dataset released by the health department was easily re-identifiable. It is a government that has sought to gag security researchers at Commonwealth funded cybersecurity conferences and has kicked journalists out of public forums on the development of its cybersecurity strategy. Most recently, it has allowed unnecessary bugs to undermine the effectiveness of its COVIDSafe app by failing to engage with the community of public-interest technologists who have volunteered their time to review the app's code for security and operations flaws. Just this week, Richard Nelson, a software developer studying COVIDSafe in his own time, identified a bug in the app that prevents locked iPhones from being logged by other phones—two months after the app passed internal reviews and went live.

This government's approach to security is entirely founded on secrecy, but vulnerabilities don’t vanish when you refuse to talk about them. Transparency doesn’t create security threats; it reveals them. Yet the government have treated the good-faith endeavours of independent security researchers as acts of malice. They’ve treated potential allies as enemies. While the US government pays independent security researchers, the Australian government gags and ignores them. The government's addiction to secrecy in cybersecurity is making us less safe.

A government that wanted to harness the endeavours of independent researchers to improve our posture could take a number of steps. It could initiate a process to reconcile conflicting and confusing state and territory laws that are potentially applicable to aspects of security researchers’ work. It could insist that Commonwealth entities publish a vulnerability disclosure process outlining how security researchers can alert management to potential vulnerabilities in systems—and it's working. Since 2016, the US Department of Defense periodically invites white-hat hackers to try to break its systems and win a cash bounty if they're successful. It's known as a bug bounty—a financial reward used to harness external security researchers in the task of identifying security vulnerabilities in systems—and it's working. Since 2016, more than 10,000 vulnerabilities have been discovered as security researchers have hacked the Pentagon, the army, the air force, the Marine Corps and the Defense Travel System.

The government's neglect of cybersecurity policy has been obvious to all since the Prime Minister, when he came to power, abolished the dedicated portfolio for it in the executive and made it the last point in Minister Dutton's 'to do' list. The new Cyber Security Strategy has been in the works for 10 months and is now two months late. But the most inexplicable neglect in the government’s approach to cybersecurity is its refusal to engage with the security research community, public-interest technologists volunteering their time to help the government be better.

Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park

Mr SHARMA (Wentworth) (16:28): I want to congratulate the New South Wales government for listing, on 12 June, Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park, in my electorate of Wentworth, on the New South Wales State Heritage Register. For over 150 years, this area, once swampy land covered in tall rushes—hence the name—has been a place for people to get fresh air, exercise, enjoy views and enjoy entertainment.

Making it Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park, in fact, was one of the largest harbour reclamation schemes for public recreation in New South Wales's history. Six acres for this park were set aside in 1878, and it was proclaimed in 1885, making it one of the earliest recreational spaces protected from development. This area has seen much history. It was the site of the famous Sydney Stadium, which saw many boxing matches of the era, including the famous heavyweight bout between Tommy Burns and Bill Squires in 1908.

It also hosted many of the famous pop and rock stars of the era, including The Beatles on their famous 1964 tour. The area includes the Reg Bartley Oval, named after a former lord mayor of Sydney, and the Cruising Yacht
Club of Australia, which every year on Boxing Day is a hive of activity as yachts prepare to set sail in the Sydney Hobart Yacht Race. Today, both these parks, Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park, are vital places of recreation, well enjoyed and frequented by residents living in the built-up areas adjacent, in Elizabeth Bay, Potts Point, Rushcutters Bay, Edgecliff and Paddington. You see people walking dogs, people exercising, children using the playground equipment, and people eating at the kiosk. In fact, I'm a frequent user of the park myself.

This listing on the State Heritage Register is the culmination of a long campaign to ensure that these two parks, Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park, have a high level of protection and are preserved for the benefit of many future generations to come. Today, I want to commend some of the local residents who have been involved in this long campaign to have the site heritage listed. I would like to acknowledge Andrew Woodhouse, the President of the Potts Point and Kings Cross Heritage and Residents Society, and all members of the society; Ms Charlotte Feldman, president of the Darling Point Society, and all the other members of the Darling Point Society; Ms Dixie Coulton, a local resident; Mr John Walton AM, another local resident and passionate supporter of the area; Mr John Bevel, a local resident; Ms Chicky Bray, a local resident and also a family friend of mine; and, finally, my state parliamentary colleague Ms Gabrielle Upton MP, the New South Wales member for the seat of Vaucluse. All these residents and individuals have done a tremendous service to the residents of the area, to the people of Wentworth and to future generations in protecting and preserving these open spaces.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Gillespie): I thank the member for Wentworth for that contribution. In accordance with standing order 193, the time for constituency statements has concluded.

COMMITTEES

Health, Aged Care and Sport Committee

Report

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the House take note of the report.

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (16:31): It's not often that you come to this place and one of the first inquiries that you sit on regards the expertise in your former life. So it is with a great sense of pride that I support the report that was recently handed down on the inquiry into allergies and anaphylaxis, Walking the allergy tightrope. I've spent a lot of my professional career dealing with families and children with food allergies. The reason that I did this is that, as a paediatric gastroenterologist, I became exposed to people who were complaining about things that were affecting their life and they didn't know why. I dedicated my professional career to trying to understand this new concern: food allergy. As a medical student and as a medical professional, we were not trained in allergy, so there is a whole cohort of doctors who have had to be reverse trained in order to understand the issues of allergy. I would like to make the comment that the report that was handed down just this week is of immense importance because the committee members who sat on the committee came across information that many doctors, who are formally trained, have not come across. I would say that the committee are now experts in allergy, which is wonderful for this place.

Food allergy is one of the conditions that is terribly frightening for families and the person or child affected. When someone is exposed to something that could be completely safe for 99 per cent of the population but could effectively kill them if they were to eat it is terribly frightening. But, more than that, there are many families with food allergies who seek help from doctors and are not offered the right advice, the right management or the right treatment. I would like to congratulate the allergy community for the work they have done over the last 10 to 20 years to increase awareness about this particular group of conditions and to bring light to this area that has so needed exposure to information.

As a paediatric allergist, the most common question that I was asked is: is food allergy on the rise? Also: if it is on the rise, why is it on the rise? People just cannot understand how something as innocuous as a peanut can literally kill somebody. I spent a lot of my medical research time trying to understand why food allergy was on the rise. I'm pleased to say that the food allergy community, both here in Australia and overseas, has delivered information for a number of reasons why we think food allergy is on the rise. We are at the point where we're able to make some public health recommendations to help turn back the tide of food allergy. This is a very exciting time in medical research and, indeed, for healthcare practitioners because they have an ability to make a real difference. I often used to say to people, 'Cancer, infectious diseases, Alzheimer's—you name it: these medical conditions have been around for as long as mankind, but food allergy in particular and allergy diseases in general have only occurred more recently.' This is a concern of the modern era. This is a particularly interesting era for medical researchers to try and understand why something like this is occurring. The possibility that, as this has occurred only in the last number of decades, we could potentially completely eliminate it is incredibly tantalising.
I really recommend this report because it focuses on recommendations on how to move this area forward for the benefit of families with food allergy and other allergy and for children and adults who are suffering with allergic disease. It is amazing that one-third of people in Australia will develop allergies over their lifetime. So many people have problems with hay fever, asthma, food allergy, eczema and anaphylaxis, and unfortunately Australia has the highest rate of food allergy ever reported. Unfortunately, Australia is the food allergy capital of the world. Australia is a country; it's not a capital, but you get my point; we do have incredibly high rates. In fact, 10 per cent of children aged 12 months appear to have food allergy in Melbourne, which has the highest food allergy prevalence in Australia. Over four million people are living with allergies, and this number continues to rise. Of course, the most common food allergy consequence that is most frightening for everyone is anaphylaxis. As someone who themselves has a peanut allergy, I know how frightening it can be to have the most life-threatening condition, anaphylaxis. All that we can do to help save lives and protect lives through prevention of anaphylaxis is a very important outcome indeed.

Last August, in 2019, the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, referred the inquiry into allergies and anaphylaxis to the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport. The inquiry looked into the prevalence, management and treatment of allergies. It was a very thorough inquiry. It received 257 submissions from members of the public, doctors, parents and organisations. I would like to congratulate all of those submitters for their dedicated work. These people took time out of their professional days to either provide a submission to the inquiry or present in person. I'd particularly like to thank Maria Said from Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia; Jill Smith and Preeti Joshi from the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy; Kirsten Perrett and Jennifer Copland from the Centre for Food and Allergy Research; and Richard Loh and Maria Said from the National Allergy Strategy. Now, Richard has recently retired from the National Allergy Strategy, but it is very important that we acknowledge the important work he has done advocating for a national approach to allergies.

When I travelled internationally as a medical researcher, there was absolutely no doubt that we had some of the highest rates of allergic disease in the world; but, we equally had the best health care with regard to clinical guidelines and the allergy profession working together to protect allergy patients. More importantly, we have a very dedicated multicentre group of people who were interested in trying to work out how to deal with allergies better, and Richard Loh and Maria Said should be congratulated for the work they did in coming up with this National Allergy Strategy. Some ideas that have come forward as recommendations by this committee have been informed by that information.

There were a number of recommendations made after seven hearings. The first was a recommendation that there be a national centre for allergies and anaphylaxis in Australia to continue the work that has already been done and to explain why Australia has the highest rate of allergy in the world.

Recommendation 2 was additional funding into food allergies and anaphylaxis research, in particular funding for clinical research into oral immunotherapy trials. We know that a number of families—in fact, hundreds of families—are travelling to the United States and receiving care for food allergy because they cannot get that care here in Australia, and that care is oral immunotherapy. So people who have peanut allergy or egg allergy or other food allergies are living with these allergies and living with the risk of having anaphylactic events in uncontrolled situations. Some of these families have spent upwards of $35,000 to travel to the US for a cure for their food allergy. These clinical trials at this point in time are still in the research domain here and overseas, so our recommendation is that Australia leads the way by starting oral immunotherapy trials for food allergy here so that we can provide cutting-edge research and clinical trials to families who have food allergy.

The inquiry report, Walking the allergy tightrope, has also recommended we ensure that the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy receive ongoing long-term funding to continue its partnership work with the Department of Health and the National Allergy Strategy to develop minimal standards of allergy training for health professionals, and to continue the good work that these collaborative organisations and institutions have already commenced.

Recommendation 6 recommends that telehealth funding support for doctors and allied health workers is provided so that we can have professional services that give support to allergy patients in rural, regional, and remote Australia. I know, as a paediatric allergist, I had people travelling from all over Victoria and, indeed, from all over Australia—and even from the Asia-Pacific!—to have specialist care for food allergy provided at the centre that I used to work at, the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

Recommendation 12 recommended that the Therapeutic Goods Administration provide some competitive alternatives for autoinjectors. It was made very clear that there have been issues with the supply chain for autoinjectors. Fortunately, that does not appear to have happened during the recent COVID pandemic, but it has
happened previously when there have been supply line issues. It was thought it was important that patients always have access to adrenalin autoinjectors to ensure that they remain safe.

Recommendations 14, 15, 16 and 17 provide that we ensure there's vocational education about food allergies in food service. Now, we do know that schools around Australia have made great headway in legislating to ensure that children in schools are kept safe. In fact, state legislation in Victoria has ensured that Victoria does not take a back seat to safety compared to anywhere in the world, being one of the first states to legislate for food allergy. But we would like to see a more standardised approach for all states to have education in schools, and we'd also like to see consistency in vocational education about food allergies in food service. We'd also like to see consistent food processing, including the use of the vital tick. Now, it is very important that the allergen—I've been told I have 10 minutes, not five minutes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You've spoken for 10 minutes.

Dr ALLEN: I've spoken for 10 minutes? Oh! I would like to conclude by thanking the member for North Sydney, the chair of the committee, and the member for Macarthur, the deputy chair. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker Gillespie, for your indulgence. I clearly have a passion for this subject, and I thank the committee for their work.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (16:43): I say to the member for Higgins that going over time was not a problem for this side of the House, because it is indeed a very important issue and 10 minutes doesn't do the issue justice. Member for Higgins, well done for the contribution you made within that limited time.

I will begin by thanking both the secretariat and my committee colleagues, including the member for North Sydney, who's in the chamber and who chaired the committee's work, for their work in this inquiry. I agree with others who have made it absolutely clear: this was a very significant inquiry, not just because of the work of the committee but also because of the issue at hand. I particularly thank the many people who made submissions, both written and in person, to the committee, especially those people with allergies who fronted up before the committee and told their personal stories and their lived experiences. For me, it was a real eye-opener. It's not that I haven't had some experience with allergies, but it was a real eye-opener to hear about some of the struggles, the social limitations, the financial cost, the stresses and the severe discomfort that many people live with each and every day.

As others have said, some four million Australians around the country live with an allergy. Ten per cent of children and two per cent of adults live with allergies. Those figures themselves are quite startling, and when you put them into perspective you start to understand that you can't go very far without running into someone who has an allergy problem of one kind or another.

For those whose allergies can result in life-threatening anaphylaxis, life, as we were told in the report, must be very much like walking a tightrope or walking through a minefield, particularly as so many of the risks are often beyond the person's control and impossible to detect. I'll use the case of the pesto and peanut issue of earlier this year that was brought to the committee's attention. Again, there were undeclared peanuts in a product—pesto that contained cashews—that was imported from overseas. No-one was to know. Families looked at the label, and, before you knew it, some people had suffered severe reactions to it. That highlights the risks I'm referring to.

Between 1997 and 2013, there were 324 recorded deaths from anaphylaxis in Australia, and, as the report says—and I agree with it—I suspect those rates were underestimated. Quite often, while a death might not have been directly linked to the allergy, it was the allergy that triggered the chain reaction that ultimately caused the death. So, I suspect it was much worse than that.

Australia has one of the highest allergy rates in the world, and that in itself is an interesting phenomenon that I would like to think we would put a lot more research into. Having said that, I accept that Australia is also a world leader in allergy research—but we could do a lot more, and we should. As a country, we're in a position to do more, if the will is there.

I note with concern and interest that, in the past 10 years, hospital admissions for food allergies increased fourfold. Again, that begs the question: why? I don't know why. We can all speculate, and I think the committee tried to come to some conclusions about it, but it's of real concern that it is happening. It's also of real concern—and I can talk about this from experience because it happened in my family—that 10 per cent of infants up to 12 months have an allergic reaction to a food. For a mum to see a little baby suddenly turn red and stop breathing because of an allergic reaction would be a nightmare. I have to say it would be one of the most frightening experiences I can imagine.

I believe we should be focusing on four areas: research; medical education, which the previous speaker spoke about a moment ago—I think it is critical for our GPs and others to be better trained with respect to treatment and diagnosis; public education, so that the broader community, right across the board, understands the risks
Communications and the Arts Committee

Report

Consideration resumed of the motion:

That the House take note of the report.

Ms BELL (Moncrieff) (16:51): It gives me great pleasure today to stand here in the Federation Chamber and talk about The next gen future: Inquiry into the deployment, adoption and application of 5G in Australia report. As a government member of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, it gives me great pleasure to be here. Australia was among the first to get our hands on the next generation of mobile technology, with Telstra allowing public use of its 5G enabled wi-fi hotspots in my electorate of Moncrieff on the central Gold Coast. As a member in the pilot region for the rollout of 5G, I was pleased when, during the public hearings, the committee visited the Telstra 5G centre at Southport to witness and experience firsthand the benefits of 5G.

The major attribute of 5G is its latency capability. This means that there is no lag time between receiving the signal and the response from the technology it's being applied to. For example, I was able in that forum to show off my electorate to my colleagues by putting them in a mask that showed the iconic Kurrawa Surf Club at its best, complete with the breathtakingly beautiful Gold Coast coastline, the surf and the coffee shop—which is now open for business, can I just add. It was in 360 degrees and in full 3D. Kurrawa is one of the nine surf clubs in my electorate, and I would like to give a shout-out to them and thank them for the work that they do in the community. Also, Surfers Paradise surf club has undergone a renovation, and Trevor Hendy tells me that there are examples of this presented to us—they should be given that type of support. It would make a world of difference if there were carers payments made available to people who are caring for people who could not survive without a carer. I don't believe this country cannot afford to provide support for these things. I think that, when you sum up the total cost of all the things that we would like to see, it would pale into insignificance in terms of the money we spend in other areas. Yet, I doubt the difference made to the lives of people in those other areas would be as important or make as much difference as the expenditure on this issue would.

The people who appeared before the committee or made submissions to the inquiry are, through the voice of the committee, pinning their hopes on this parliament giving them the support that they are literally begging for in some cases. For those reasons, I hope that the minister will embrace the recommendations in this report, because all the recommendations were carefully thought through.

Debate adjourned.
I was a little bit frightened to actually walk out on the beam, because we felt that we were going to fall off the 21st floor and fall down to the bottom. There were a number of members who decided not to walk out on that beam; however, I was not one of those members of the committee—I did step out. I stepped off to the left of the beam, and I was instantly transported to the ground floor. I opened my eyes and there I was back on the ground floor. It was very exciting, and it certainly opened my eyes—and my bravery—on that day to what 5G can deliver. It was a great day.

At the hearings on the Gold Coast we heard from many of my constituents on the Gold Coast, but we also heard from constituents in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. We also heard from Vodafone UK, who conducted the UK's very first live holographic call using 5G technology. The low latency and high speeds of 5G actually made it possible to produce a 3D hologram of someone who was more than 330 kilometres away. This technology could transform many very many areas. It could transform the way that families stay in touch or the remote working experience. These things that I am talking about might seem like a novelty, but this technology could be applied to areas like education, health, sport, industry and many other areas. As a member of the Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, I was very excited to think about how this technology could be applied to rural and remote education and benefit, particularly, Indigenous communities around our great country. That's what really excites me.

The other thing that really excites me is jobs and how 5G could transform our economy into jobs. It not only has the capability to revolutionise those remote education outcomes but also has the ability to transform health, small business, industry, manufacturing, road safety, sport and the environment. But, most importantly, as I said, it has a role to play when it comes to creating Australian jobs, and those jobs of the future that we hear people talking about. And what are those jobs of the future? Well, 5G will create those jobs of the future through the technology, which is very, very exciting. It's going to revolutionise the way we do things in Australia. Indeed, we have an opportunity to be a world leader, to be a centre of 5G equipment component manufacturing. We've heard a lot about Australian manufacturers having a bit of a rebirth, and 5G is a great opportunity for our great country to go into the manufacturing of componentry for 5G technology. So there are definitely opportunities for start-ups to develop their ideas and to connect our nation through 5G.

Several organisations told the committee that 5G is essential if we're to be a global competitor in food and wine production, entertainment, automated vehicles and IT. You might ask how in food and wine production. It is all to do with the sensors and how 5G can pick up how much moisture is in the room and those sorts of things. It can automatically change the humidity in an environment, through its innovation and technology. That's very, very exciting.

5G builds on current 4G technology, which of course was built on 3G and 2G. As the title of the report says, it's the next gen future. But it does several things differently, from the radio waves to the equipment, handsets, infrastructure, and application. It will use multiple spectrum bands of radio waves, including bands in a higher frequency to those used for older generations of mobile phone technology. The different way of using spectrum bands means that new equipment and infrastructure are needed to transmit information using these radio waves.

Unfortunately, a vast amount of misinformation about the safety and impacts of 5G is out there in the community. The committee received a large amount of information from inquiry participants who were concerned over the deployment of 5G and asserted that 5G would have a detrimental impact on human health. I do, as did the chair and the committee, acknowledge their concerns and thank them for their contributions to the hearings and for their submissions. But I would like to make one thing very clear, and that is that the committee heard from several Australian government agencies and officials that 5G is in fact safe for humans. Due to the technological qualities of 5G, beam forming and network slicing and the multiple output technology involved in 5G, the amount of energy that is received is lower than 4G, which is lower than 3G, and it is safe. You get more exposure from a baby monitor or a microwave than you would from 5G technology. These concerns in the community have been influenced by misinformation about the technology. The technology is safe. I urge the public to be cautious of claims from anti-5G campaigns. These campaigns are generating unfounded fear and concern within the community.

The committee made 14 recommendations. I won't go through all of them, but they include, importantly, the speedy allocation of spectrum needed for 5G, which will improve market competition.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

Sitting suspended from 17:00 to 17:09

Ms BELL: Before the suspension, I was speaking about the committee's recommendations, which include the installation of multi-user infrastructure and conducting of 5G trials in rural and regional areas; the Australian government to encourage manufacturing of 5G infrastructure in Australia with potential partnerships with the
United Kingdom, United States of America, New Zealand and Canada; the establishment of a 5G R&D innovation fund; better consultation between Australian government agencies and members of the community concerned about the deployment of 5G; and a focus on ensuring the ICT workforce is expanded and appropriately skilled by lifting apprenticeships and working with curriculum setters. So there are the jobs, jobs, jobs that I was speaking about earlier. 5G technology enables enhanced mobile broadband features like digital video streaming and browsing the internet and pages super quickly. But, in summary, there are huge productivity gains across the whole of the Australian economy that can be realised. 5G could have a very significant role in the reinvention of Australia's next generation post-COVID economy, in terms of innovation applied to business models in order to improve our domestic and international competitiveness and the future of our great, great country.

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (17:10): I'd like to start by thanking the secretariat of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts for their work on this report, *The next gen future: Inquiry into the deployment, adoption and application of 5G in Australia*, and thanking the chair and the deputy chair of the committee for their work. It was a good, collaborative exercise where we ventured to some interesting places. I didn't make it to the Gold Coast—a lovely place, and I was very sad to miss it—but I did make it to the Ericsson offices in Melbourne where, again, very quickly, the goggles were out and we all put on our favourite hi-tech fashion accessory. I would also like to thank the 537 people who submitted to this inquiry. It's fair to say that this topic of 5G technology raises very strong passions and the possibilities of this technology also really excites people. We held six public hearings and addressed time and time again the concerns that some people have about the health impacts of this technology. When it comes to health related issues, the science is incredibly clear. As we have just been through and continue to deal with the coronavirus pandemic and we have accepted the advice of science and health experts, we must maintain that discipline and accept the advice of science and health experts when it comes to the rollout of technology. So I'm very comfortable in saying that 5G technology is safe for our communities and for our country.

But that is not to say that we can't do more in terms of improving the way we communicate this, because, when people have anxieties about technologies being rolled out, those anxieties are real. I think this committee process was a good way to allow people to raise their concerns, but I'd also say to anyone who has lingering questions—because of some crazy Facebook meme they have seen—to read the first couple of chapters of this report. It condenses the science and the advice of the Australian government experts and scientific experts very well in saying how this technology is safe and how it can be rolled out safely across our country.

It is important that we have good mobile telecommunications services across this country. There are some 34 million mobile devices connected to mobile networks in Australia today, and that number is only going to increase. That is 1.4 devices per person. And, as I look around this room, I notice that most people have multiple devices connected currently to probably 4G networks or wi-fi. But hopefully soon, as we address the challenges in this building of ageing infrastructure—which this report touches on—we will also have 5G rolled out in this building. Some 80 per cent of that mobile traffic occurs indoors, which, for this technology using smaller shorter waves, is a particular challenge. It requires more hardware but smaller hardware to be rolled out across our communities, and I have a great concern that that rollout may be patchy and may lead to a new digital divide. Some of the recommendations in this report address how you can ensure that you don't have such a digital divide in the future. We have seen the challenges of rolling out large-scale infrastructure projects in Australia. Indeed, I note that one day soon the NBN is due for practical completion. The reality is that the rollout of 5G technology will need to be much quicker than we have seen with the rollout of other such technologies.

I will address some of the specifics in the report. The first recommendation is about how we actually improve the process through which we auction spectrum. Those auctions are primarily done in the interests of the government, in terms of creating revenue, but one of the recommendations the committee has made is that it should also be about improving market competition for the benefit of consumers, because ultimately they are the users of that spectrum—both business consumers and individual consumers across our country. This goes to the member for Moncrieff's point about making sure this technology best delivers on expanding the range of job opportunities for people—the types of jobs that are available anywhere in Australia.

The second recommendation is something that I think is very worth the government taking fast action on, which is how to manage redundant infrastructure in Australia. Whenever you roll out new infrastructure, it obviously also means that there are pieces of infrastructure that become redundant. If you think about the infrastructure that people have campaigned against at times in their communities—people have the right to do that; I've never signed such a petition, but people have the right to campaign against such things—we will get to a point where people won't necessarily know whether the old mobile communications infrastructure in their communities is, in fact, still operating. Sometimes it's cheaper for telecommunications companies not to remove the infrastructure and just leave it there. Therefore, we've recommended there should be action taken to make sure
that there are proper processes for managing redundant and/or ageing telecommunications equipment. Similarly, for new equipment, we should do more with co-location. We talk about co-location in a lot of other areas. There's no reason we can't do more when it comes to co-location of 5G infrastructure and infrastructure sharing.

One of the things that excites me most—and I'm sure it excites you, Deputy Speaker Rick Wilson—is the idea that the committee heard from WA farmers: a large-scale trial within a farming region. I note that one of the most innovative farming regions in Australia is in your electorate, Deputy Speaker. Indeed, the WA farmers suggested that Esperance would be a good location for such a trial. I'm pleased that the committee has noted that recommendation. The other place that was suggested by WA farmers was Margaret River. The member speaking earlier said there are applications of this technology in the production of high-quality, high-value exportable products, such as wine. Indeed, if you were to roll out this technology in the Margaret River as an early-stage trial, coordinating with government and carriers, that could be a very good thing.

The other challenge we have, and we've seen this most recently with challenges in our supply chain for personal protective equipment, is that we are not immune from supply chain shocks when it comes to high-tech infrastructure in this country. Indeed, practically nothing we use to build these networks is made here in Australia. Recommendation 8 is for the government to investigate ways to look at encouraging manufacturers of some parts of this infrastructure here in Australia. That would be very welcomed. To roll out the technology wherever it is produced, we also need to make sure we invest in training. One of the committee's recommendations is that we should ensure that graduates are industry-ready and make sure that we talk to TAFE, universities and, indeed, to our high schools to make sure that there is enough training and enough apprenticeships to be able to roll this out. We've seen in the past that rolling out large-scale government infrastructure programs can be a challenge if there are not appropriately trained people. We know that this technology will have huge economic benefits for our country and, therefore, we should make sure that we line up with TAFE, vocational education and training institutions and the private sector to make sure we have the skills necessary.

We spoke to a range of local governments. There were some very interesting comments from them in terms of how they might deploy this. Since we did this inquiry, I've seen a smart bin. There is one in my electorate. There is a smart bin in Elizabeth Quay, in the electorate of Perth. I would never have noticed the smart bin if I had not done this inquiry. Local councils talked to us about smart bins and other things. However, we noted that there's a gap in knowledge in many levels of our community services and, in particular, in local government, so further education and increasing awareness of the benefits of 5G technology within local government would be of benefit.

The final point I'll make is that we need to make sure that the information that is provided by government departments on this technology is received by those who need to receive it and that they communicate through appropriate channels. That might be more through social media than through traditional media. I applaud the government's further investment in such communication efforts, but we've got to make sure we're constantly monitoring and evaluating that communication effort, because it is clear there is misinformation out there and, if not addressed through an effective government communication campaign, we will have failed to fully realise the benefits of this technology.

Dr ALLEN (Higgins) (17:20): We all know we live in a fast-paced and informational age, and that's never been more obvious than in the COVID pandemic that we're currently living through. Ensuring that Australia has world-leading telecommunications infrastructure is one of the Morrison government's top economic priorities, because the forthcoming rollout of the 5G network is going to be very important to underpin our prosperity and economic opportunities going forward. I am very pleased to be a member of the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, which recently handed down the report on the inquiry into 5G, The Next Gen Future. It is very timely for us to look at this particular issue. The importance of telecommunications infrastructure cannot be stressed enough. In fact, the implementation of the NBN, which is on track to be completed this month, in 2020, has already seen a huge contribution to our GDP. It has created up to 5,400 new businesses and supported 2,900 new jobs. These figures are only climbing.

I'm also delighted to be a government member of the Joint Standing Committee on the NBN. It has been a very interesting time for me, sitting on both of these interrelated committees. Australians need fast and reliable internet now more than ever as they continue to work at home and learn online. I think this is particularly important. I was recently hosting a Zoom conference with members of my constituency, and the guest speaker was none other than Professor Ian Harper, who is a world-renowned economist. He was asked what he thought the future held with regards to what we would learn post COVID. One of the things he said is we would learn to work more from home. I did make the comment that perhaps men would learn to work more from home, since I think there are many women who have been working in a flexible environment using the internet over the last 20 years. Women have been early uptake users of communications and using these sorts of technologies from home so that they can have a flexible work-life balance and manage the many commitments that they do have.

FEDERATION CHAMBER
My constituents have told me how they have taught their parents and grandparents to use FaceTime. I myself made a little video for my Facebook so that we could get more constituents using FaceTime and getting online so they can communicate with their families while in isolation. We have seen businesses using online learning and online communication. In my office we have been using Skype and Zoom to communicate more broadly with my electorate. So it's been a very interesting time during COVID, but it does really bring to the fore the fact that the internet is the future.

The government has achieved so much in the past six years with regards to telecommunications, and the introduction of 5G continues to build on this important trend. In order to maintain Australia's current leading position in the global system for mobile communications connectivity index score and to facilitate future economic prosperity, Australia is welcoming the 5G network rollout. There are many benefits of this. As I mentioned, the report that has been just been handed down is called The next gen future: Inquiry into the deployment, adoption and application of 5G in Australia, and it really has affirmed to me personally, and also to the committee, the benefits of 5G. I welcome the comments made by my good friend the member for Moncrieff earlier in this debate, where she explained how she saw the wonders of the internet going forward, the internet of things. I have to say I'm quite jealous of that visit; I was home in Higgins and unable to participate in the visit. But it was very clear that the new technologies that are coming at us at speed are not just the domain of sci-fi; they're now here with us and they're going to change the way that we do business, the way we connect with families, the way we connect with the globe at lightning speed. I'd like to acknowledge the member for Lyne, the chair of the committee, and the work he did in helping to hand down the report, and all the other committee members who were very diligent in their assessment of the inquiry and the submissions that were made to this inquiry.

Australia, along with the rest of the world, is really on the brink of experiencing what we dub now the fourth industrial revolution, or the digital revolution. I often like to say that the paint is not yet dry on the digital revolution. In fact, I believe that we have gone through a massive social revolution as a result of us now being able to work and play in a very different way. There's been a sixfold increase of data downloaded onto mobile handsets in the four years leading up to 2018, which is evidence of the immense changes that we are going through as we experience the internet of things going forward. It's very important that Australia is alive to the opportunities that this provides. These circumstances really do necessitate an upgrade from our current 4G infrastructure to the proposed 5G.

5G technology promises great capacity and faster data speeds and significantly lower signal latency and delay, and it will support a larger number of devices in a given area. This will be absolutely critical for digitally reliant industries to be productive and competitive in a global market. The committee has heard that the 5G rollout will allow solutions to some of our most compelling challenges at the global and national level. It has predicted that 5G technology will also be hugely beneficial to those in regional and remote Australia. I know myself, as a medical practitioner, with the use of telehealth to prevent patients from having to travel for many hours to get to my clinic, I could actually do a lot of my care across the internet line through telehealth. We know that those strong connections will be incredibly important.

So the committee made a number of recommendations. In fact, it made 14 wide-ranging and productive recommendations, a handful of which I'll consider today. Importantly, it noted that we need to be aware of the issues of manufacturing, and that has been an issue that has been very much front of mind for the Morrison government in our post-COVID plan for the future. We understand that we need to be alive to the opportunities for manufacturing, and manufacturing of 5G infrastructure in Australia in particular. This includes advanced manufacturing for components and equipment used for the rollout of the 5G networks. This could be supported through the establishment of a 5G R&D fund to fast-track development. It could also involve manufacturing partnerships with countries like Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. I note here the chair for the Committee on Treaties, and I'm sure he will have an important role to play in ensuring we have a strong relationship with regards to advanced manufacturing in our treaties relationship with other countries. This will also enable our 5G rollout not just to have domestic benefits but to also have international benefits. So in this way, the 5G network could help support a more diversified economy, which we know will be incredibly important in our post-COVID environment.

The Next gen report also found that we should be reviewing ICT curricula for roles in 5G related industries. TAFE, accredited training providers and tertiary institutions should be modified also to ensure graduates are industry ready. Something we have noticed in particular moving forward is that we need our students and our youth to be ready for the future, and we need them to be skilled and trained for the new jobs that are coming online at speed. In particular, the committee recommends that the government lift apprenticeships in the ICT sector. These are jobs for the future which the rollout of the 5G network will support both directly and indirectly.
The committee also noted that there were concerns about network and data security of 5G equipment and that there are cyberthreats that are sophisticated and constantly evolving. Australia has a strong track record of data protection, but we must continue to strive for this to be robust.

We also noted that there were concerns from the community about the perceived health threats from 5G, and I'd like to reassure the community, after having reviewed all of the submissions, that the committee felt very strongly that the threats that people perceived were a problem are not indeed a problem. That is because the intended frequency of the 5G network will stay well below any harmful radiation—in fact, it is lower than visible light. It appears that most of the confusion that has resulted is from misinformation and a lack of awareness about the 5G infrastructure. The committee does recommend that a public health information campaign would be a very important component of ensuring that 5G is well recognised by the community and can be safely rolled out. There needs to be education and awareness to ensure that, indeed, the community members that are confused or misinformed have their fears dispelled by a careful campaign to understand the information that it is actually a safe thing to do.

In conclusion, I'd like to say that the technological progress for Australia is really on an irreversible trajectory and Australia cannot be left behind. We need to be ready for the digital revolution that is upon us and we need to ensure that we can seize new ideas and innovations. Importantly, it will help form the bedrock of Australia's economic prosperity.

Debate adjourned.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Consideration resumed of the motion:
That grievances be noted.

Morrison Government: COVID-19

Mr ROB MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (17:31): Today we can say, 'Mark your calendars,' because in less than three months the government are packing up shop on the Australian people. As far as the government are concerned now, it's every man, woman and child for themselves, as they pull back from helping Australians through this pandemic. Despite skyrocketing unemployment and underemployment rates, despite no clear path to recovery, the government want to pull the rug out from under struggling families—the end of the JobKeeper program; the end of the coronavirus supplement, with the jobseeker payment cut in half; the end to wage subsidies for apprentices; the end to the small and medium enterprises loan guarantee, where the government back 50 per cent of new loans issued by lenders; the end to the ban on rental evictions; the end of free child care, which has been plagued by issues and falsehoods from the government but which many families have relied on to stay afloat; and the end to the banks' mortgage freeze. Many people will see their lives turned upside down and tossed about when they're already on the brink.

As we know, this government are all about marketing. Too many Australians will be left behind by the Morrison government. There's a new announcement every day, but they never, ever deliver. They never deliver, and it's always the Australian people who suffer the consequences. People want to see the economy and businesses carefully reopen as soon as it's responsible to do so, based on medical advice. Some parts of the economy will recover faster than others, but not all jobs in all industries will just snap back to normal like Prime Minister Morrison assumes.

We understand that the Prime Minister has acted too narrowly and too slowly. Australians can't afford the government to withdraw support too quickly. Firstly, they promised immediate support for bushfire victims. Months later, we know that only around four per cent of them have received any help. They gave us robodebt, the JobKeeper program, the Ruby Princess and budget stuff-ups, and turned a blind eye to criminals stealing people's superannuation.

Australians have worked together to combat the virus, but more work must be done by the government to ensure that our hardest-hit Australians are not left out and left behind in the recovery. Take the government's announcement on child care, which was to provide six months of free child care. That was the headline. It made for a great headline when it was announced back in April, but for families struggling to make ends meet, for those working in essential jobs or working from home, it could've been welcome respite. But, instead, as we've unfortunately come to expect from this government, when we got beyond the slogans, families and childcare providers were sold a pup.

Prime Minister Morrison reneged on a promise that the JobKeeper program would continue until the end of September by announcing that it would be ripped away from childcare educators in July. With more than 10,000 children under four in McEwen alone, tens of thousands of parents are relying on childcare providers so that they
can get back to work. Regardless of what you do for a living, whether you are a nurse, a supermarket worker, an office worker or a teacher, if you have young kids, most of us will need help at some time or another with child care. It's these families whose tax dollars are fronting the Prime Minister's stimulus package. Instead of using those taxpayer dollars to invest in families' well-being, supporting those who are trying to return to work and to continue to work, or supporting women trying to raise their own families or run childcare services, the Prime Minister's message is clear: as far as he's concerned, it's not his problem. Despite his initial claims that he consulted with the industry, we later learned that this was simply untrue. There was no consultation with family day care providers. Charity organisations were actually misled on what this meant.

This is a mostly female workforce, with around 95 per cent of childcare workers being women. The government's mismanagement of this so-called free child care has been a monument to the Morrison government's attitude towards supporting women in the workforce. While we know that most childcare workers are women, we also know that it's mothers who continue to take on the lion's share when it comes to child care. We know that if families can't afford child care, mums are more likely to skip a shift or reduce their hours to make sure that the kids are looked after and that the family budget stays in the black. The damage of this policy will be felt for decades after the pandemic is over.

As I said, the government assured us they would leave the program alone until September. While this left many childcare workers on severely reduced incomes, it at least gave them a timeline to work with, to plan and to survive. But, in a massive U-turn, 120,000 childcare workers have now been told that they will lose access to the JobKeeper payment in July—two full months before the government promised it would end. Three days after the Prime Minister guaranteed all Australian workers on the JobKeeper payment that payments would continue until September he kicked early educators out of the program.

Let's be clear about the JobKeeper scheme: wage subsidies along with the principle of keeping workers connected to their employers in order for businesses to restart after times of crisis is a good idea. We know it's a good idea, because Labor put forward the idea. Labor, the trade unions, the business community and leading economists were all calling on the government to introduce a wage subsidy scheme for months before Treasurer Frydenberg was dragged kicking and screaming to take any action whatsoever.

We all know that good ideas are simply not enough when you're in government. Good ideas and good government require good governance and strong leadership. From day one, after the Morrison government belatedly and begrudgingly introduced the JobKeeper scheme, we have sadly seen mistake after mistake. Some of the mistakes, like the $60 billion budgeting blunder, occurred simply due to the government's careless implementation. It meant that rating agencies were misled, investors were misled, businesses were misled and Australian workers who found themselves out of work were misled. It's a budgeting bungle that is bigger than any in the history of this nation. I can guarantee one thing: we won't see them flogging that on black mugs anywhere!

Sadly, for other people in Australia, these cuts have been much worse and much more sinister. What really worries me is that there are many examples where we now see the Morrison government making calculated and cruel decisions to deliberately dud workers who were promised, and took it in good faith, they would be looked after by the scheme during difficult times—people like the workers at dnata, who were sold an absolute pup. They actually applied. They were given the go-ahead to go and do it, and then the government reversed their decision late one Friday afternoon in what's becoming known as 'take out the trash Friday' with this government.

They have also deliberately left behind casuals, freelancers, temporary migrants, NDIS workers, local government employees, charity workers, teachers and university staff. They all contribute to building a nation and they were all deliberately failed by this government. It's hard to have any faith that this lot have the capacity to deliver a plan that will effectively transition the economy out of the pandemic, let alone that they will have the intention of looking after the most vulnerable and deserving along the way.

The economy was not going well before coronavirus, drought and bushfires, and the Morrison government has no plan to turn it around. How this support is removed from the economy is as important as how it was introduced. You can't just turn it off like a tap. Recently the OECD has warned about the risk of removing assistance too early, and many sectors from across the economy are currently calling for Jobseeker to be extended for six months. With a little over 12 weeks before all assistance packages are set to expire, the government has provided no certainty and no clarity to Australian workers. The support must be phased out in a responsible way that doesn't undermine Australia's recovery or risk thousands of jobs. Millions of Australians who have lost their job because of the pandemic are anxious and going to be wondering how they're going to make ends meet, while the Prime Minister sits back and says: 'No. We can just snap back. It all ends in September.'

One thing that we've talked about too is the need for infrastructure, and the government belatedly has come to the party talking about shovel-ready projects. We've had two shovel-ready projects sitting on our books for a long
time: the Wallan interchange on the Hume Highway, which is a federal government responsibility, and the Macedon Ranges sports precinct. Both of these projects are ready to go. The federal government is the only roadblock stopping these much-needed projects being delivered. The Macedon Ranges Shire Council is on board. The Victorian government is on board. In fact, even the Victorian Liberals came on board with this project for the Macedon Ranges sports precinct as an election promise.

Twice the shire has applied to the federal government for funding, and twice they've been misled and twice they've been knocked back. Enough is enough is enough. Hundreds and hundreds of families each and every week can't get access to the sporting facilities they need because this government is too cruel and heartless to support people in regional areas. We've seen the way that this government has made promises that they've never delivered. We only have to look at the Calder Freeway. Fifty million dollars was promised by this government to deliver extra loans to the Calder Freeway, and not one cent has been spent. The Hume Highway, Australia's traffic spine, needs extra lanes put in it because of the growth in the outer suburbs and the growth in regional areas. Again, it was a promise made by the government before the election, and there's been not a single peep afterwards.

People rightly are finding that they're more and more cynical with politics these days. And, sadly, when you've got a government that's all spin and no substance, runs out of headline and doesn't deliver on its promises, this is only going to get worse and worse. It's time the government stood up for Australians instead of standing on them.

Lindsay Electorate: Manufacturing

Mrs McIntosh (Lindsay) (17:39): I was really pleased to receive some information from my local university in Lindsay, Western Sydney University, around our local manufacturing industry today, which says that Western Sydney is the site of Australia's largest industry concentration of manufacturing, generating in excess of $41.5 billion per annum. The manufacturing sector employs approximately 114,000—up to almost 115,000—people in Western Sydney alone, and across transport, warehousing and logistics supports an additional 71,000 jobs. These are pretty impressive numbers, but, in Western Sydney, as across Australia, we have a lot more to do when it comes to backing Australian manufacturing.

I do speak a lot about manufacturing and advanced manufacturing in this place, and for very good reason. Recently I convened the Lindsay Jobs of the Future Forum, which is made up of representatives from primary schools and secondary schools in Lindsay; our local tertiary institutions, the university, TAFE; industry experts; local manufacturers; and business and science institutions. We come together and discuss how we can advocate for small business and influence policymaking.

As part of this group, we established the Advancing Manufacturing Taskforce, which I'm leading. I'm really pleased to say that as part of this taskforce I have representatives from Western Sydney Institute, Kingswood TAFE, Sydney Science Park, Nepean Community College, a Schools Industry Partnership, Swinburne university, and of course Western Sydney University, in addition to local manufacturers, which is really important. The task force will investigate and promote local and national opportunities for advanced manufacturing in Western Sydney, advocate for manufacturing and backing our manufacturing industry and, as I said, attempt to influence better policymaking when it comes to supporting our manufacturers. Where there is an opportunity to collaborate or draw from existing task forces, we will seek to achieve this as a tangible outcome. I'm looking forward to working closely with our task force and presenting our findings to the Morrison government.

The challenge we've faced for many years is that we don't always see the benefits of supporting Australian industry and business by buying Australian-made where we can. Every time you purchase an Australian product, you're making sure that the revenue is kept in Australia, and that flows onto the millions of Australians who need jobs. It keeps Australia competitive and, most importantly, it backs our products, which are famous for being some of the best quality in the world.

The Advancing Manufacturing Taskforce will work with our local businesses and industry leaders to make sure that we are encouraging more opportunity and growth in Western Sydney. The Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport, the aerotropolis and Sydney Science Park will see Western Sydney at the forefront of emerging industries and science, technology, engineering and so much more. We will be a centre of excellence for research and education, and that's why it is so important to start the discussion now, to get the work going now, on how we support Australian industry.

Manufacturing in Australia has long faced difficult challenges. Our geographic location, a smaller population, scattered centres of population and transport difficulties have combined to limit the scope for manufacturing in Australia. In addition to higher labour costs and lower productivity, these have been critical factors affecting the competitiveness of manufacturing. But manufacturing has also survived many challenges over the past decade, including the global financial crisis, an extended period of unfavourably high exchange rates—with the Australian dollar trading at parity against the US dollar for about three years from 2010—the rapid rise of China as the
world's factory and Australia's largest trading partner, the end of local automotive assembly operations in 2017, and the onset of digitalisation. Something else that local manufacturers often speak to me about as being a barrier to local success is the high cost of energy, which the Morrison government is currently working very hard on.

While manufacturing has faced these challenges, it's important to recognise how many Australians are showing their support for Australian manufacturing. Last week I met with the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to talk about how we can support Australian-made products and Australian industry. In Western Sydney we have local businesses like Pandrol and business owners like Jeff Sinclair, who are so passionate about supporting manufacturing opportunities in Western Sydney. I met Jeff and his wife, Tracy, at their family business and we talked about the challenges facing Australian manufacturing and small and medium businesses. Jeff is the quintessential Australian who has worked hard all his life and put everything into his business. If we all knew that buying Australian products and supporting Australian-made meant keeping businesses like Jeff's afloat, I know we would always make this choice when we could.

Jeff and I met with Pierre, Pat and the team at Pandrol in Western Sydney, where again we saw wonderful Australian-made products. Pandrol define the industry standard across rail fastening systems. They've created rail infrastructure in more than 100 countries, with products and services that extend to designing, developing and manufacturing equipment, and constructing and maintaining railways. Every day, millions of Australians use our rail networks, and a lot of that is because of the types of products that Australian companies like Pandrol have on the market.

Pandrol, like many Australian manufacturers, work very closely with local contractors, and this means more local jobs. They support small engineering businesses—the one-man or one-woman shows like Jeff and Tracy have—as well as supporting many other local businesses across the community. That is part of the wonderful work that our local manufacturers do in our communities. I want to thank Jeff and the team at Pandrol for showing me around both their workplaces the other week.

In February, across Australia, nearly a million people were employed in the manufacturing sector. It makes up 7.1 per cent of total employment in Australia. In New South Wales we have nearly 200,000 people who work in manufacturing. It has been steadily declining over the last 20 years, with employment in the sector falling, and it's now experiencing some important rebalancing in its products, technology and supply chains in response to long-term local and global structural shifts. As I indicated earlier, some of the problems the industry has experienced include high energy costs and a high Australian dollar. Now the sector is experiencing some challenges, as we are across the whole of our economy, when it comes to the coronavirus pandemic. That is why it is so important now to be getting behind our Australian manufacturing industry.

In the last decade, consumers have sought more Australian food and beverages, which account for 27 per cent of manufacturing employment. Building materials, furniture and household items have also contributed. I want to encourage everyone in my community of Lindsay to keep backing manufacturing. You've said to me that this is what you want to do, that you're focusing more on quality over price. When it comes to advanced manufacturing, that is particularly where Australia has its competitive edge. If we invest in that focus on quality, and with Western Sydney airport coming on board very soon, we will have many opportunities for local people in our community to work closer to home. By investing in skills in advanced manufacturing we will be ensuring our kids are being trained in the jobs of the future, which is one of our greatest challenges at the moment in the advanced manufacturing industry. With all the energy and focus and collaboration that I know is going on in my community, I'm very confident that advanced manufacturing will be strong going into the future.

Lalor Electorate

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (17:51): The electorate that I represent, the seat of Lalor, seems to be at the epicentre of any decision those opposite make. All too often the actions taken in Canberra by this government are detrimental to the residents who live in the electorate of Lalor. When it was the GP tax, we were in the top 10 of bulk-billing electorates that would have been hurt. When the Liberals announced their attempted income tax hike—remember the increase to the Medicare levy?—we were in the top 10 of those who would be most affected. When the government announced tax cuts that favoured people in higher income brackets, we were of course in the bottom 10 of electorates that would benefit from that change. It is clear that the electorate of Lalor is low on the Liberals' priority list, and we've seen that most grievously in their questionable allocation of grants, most infamously the sports rorts grants—the Prime Minister's fund, administered by Senator McKenzie, where we saw an uneven and unfair allocation of grants to marginal seats and safe Liberal and National seats across the country.

The population of the city I call home and represent has grown extraordinarily, by 42 per cent between 2013 and 2019. We are now a city of over 275,000 people in Melbourne's outer west. In that time, cricket has grown by 137 per cent in participation rates; soccer has grown by 124 per cent; netball, my love and passion, by 69 per cent;
while basketball grew by a whopping 356 per cent. You think these impressive numbers would mean something to a program that claims to be, and I quote:

Supporting small to medium scale projects … to improve local community sport infrastructure which will support greater community participation in sport and physical activity and/or offer safer and more inclusive community sporting hubs.

Wouldn't you have thought that the seat of Lalor would've been a high priority? But guess how much the sporting clubs in Lalor got? Zero. In those same years, women's football—footy, of course, being Australian Rules for my friends north of the Barassi Line—has grown by a whopping 600 per cent. In those same years, there was a massive growth in women's sporting teams and women's participation. But how many clubs or grounds got funding from the Prime Minister's grants to build female changerooms? Zero—zero for the electorate of Lalor.

But it's not just in the scandal-plagued sports rorts that Lalor has missed out; it's across the board, with all this government's decisions. Our local council told me about their experience with congestion funds—that buzz word which I'm sure tested well in the marketing groups but doesn't actually deliver much. The local council were contacted by the minister, spruiking this fund, but, when they sought clarification on the grants, they were knocked back and told it's not up to them. Seriously? They wrote to the council announcing funding and then the minister told them not to bother because it was out of his hands. But the hollow-man-esque scenario of writing to council to grandstand when they knew nothing was available isn't the worst of it. How can the government wipe their hands of our city—25 kilometres from the CBD of Melbourne, home to the most Victorians who spend more than two hours a day commuting to and from work? How can it be ignored?

Clearly, the congestion our community faces needs to be addressed. The state government are doing great things to reduce this congestion. They are removing three level crossings in the city and offering more transport options. But, while the state government gives and gives, the federal Liberals have forgotten about Melbourne's west and Wyndham. The Prime Minister is happy to stand with maps of the Monash or the Eastern, but his knowledge of the West Gate is how to get to Geelong. Despite all the stats and the common sense about building congestion-busting infrastructure—and the marketing screams while donning a shiny new hard hat—in the eyes of our marketing PM, Lalor was not worthy. What did we get from this government in congestion funds? Zero. In fact, in Victoria, coalition seats and some marginal seats received 89 per cent of the $1.26 billion allocated across Victoria, leaving 11 per cent for the rest of us—and, again, nothing for Lalor, absolutely zero.

I have been on my feet in this chamber so many times talking about parking at train stations and about Labor's commitment at the last election to build the Wyndham west link, which would create two bridges on the edge of our city to move us in and out, to connect the two sides across the river, but the government claims that we didn't ask. In fact, we did. Labor proposed infrastructure projects at the last election and even our previous mayors have written to the minister about the infrastructure we need. We did ask, but those opposite chose to give us nothing. They just don't care about our community's needs.

The long list of rorts has grown in recent weeks, with The New Daily's shocking revelations of the rorts in the community development grants. It gets better and better! The CDG program is 11 times the size of the sports rorts and the pork-barrelling more blatant: 75 per cent of the funding went to Liberal seats; $10 million has been spent in Liberal seats and just over $4 million in Labor seats; and, of the 27 electorates that missed out on funding altogether, 22 were Labor seats—and it will be no surprise to anyone listening that Lalor was one of those seats. It is clear by the actions they take and the decisions they make that the Liberals don't care about Lalor. They have never made one election commitment to our community since I have been in this place. They treat the entire spectrum of government grants with contempt and don't deliver to the areas in need.

The disdain has been exposed again by the JobKeeper program and the Prime Minister's snapback deadline that he refuses to move away from. The postcodes of 3029 and 3030 encompass almost every residential suburb. They also have the highest number of JobKeeper applications of any postcode in Victoria, behind the Melbourne CBD. While there are holes in the JobKeeper payments, it's clear our local businesses are reliant on these payments. I fear that, if the JobKeeper ends, with the PM's snapback deadline, our Centrelink lines will grow and our local businesses will close.

As of last week, the list of people warning against the cutting of JobKeeper payments were the OECD, the Reserve Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and many private forecasters. If JobKeeper ends in September, it will be devastating to our local economy. So I stand here and I say: Prime Minister, there's a place just between the leafy east and the towns beyond Greater Geelong; it's called Melbourne's west. It's time to find us, it's time to fund us, and it's time to give Melbourne's west and Lalor a fair go.

Tuesday, 16 June 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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FEDERATION CHAMBER
Manufacturing

Dr MARTIN (Reid) (17:59): I would like to make some remarks regarding the Morrison government's plan to regain consumer confidence, create jobs and put our economy on a path to recovery. We're building momentum in our economy with a five-year plan that will shape Australia's growth over the next three decades.

This week, the Prime Minister outlined the details of the JobMaker program. Infrastructure development is a key part of that plan. The Australian government is cutting red tape under a bilateral government model to fast-track 15 major projects across the nation. They include the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail, the Maribus Link and the Olympic Dam expansion in South Australia, supporting around 66,000 jobs. We have committed $1.5 billion to get these projects underway, and they will offer relief, particularly to our regional areas.

In my wonderful electorate of Reid, I welcome the news that $1.5 million of scoping works have begun for the $100 million infrastructure upgrade to Homebush Bay Drive. This jointly funded federal and New South Wales government project will not only see the start of an important infrastructure upgrade but also create an estimated 210 local jobs. In addition to this, the Morrison government has delivered more than $450,000 to six different road black spots in Reid to improve dangerous roads in suburbs like Lidcombe, Burwood and Concord. The federal government's Roads to Recovery Program delivers $500 million annually to our local councils, and this will be a huge help to our local area. I will keep working closely with our six local councils as they receive further federal funding for community infrastructure and road projects that will help create jobs in our area.

Many constituents have recently contacted me to express their renewed support for Australia's growing manufacturing sector. As global supply chains were crippled by the coronavirus, Australians innovated and retooled in order to produce the essential items we needed, including personal protective equipment and hand sanitiser. The Australian chemistry industry, which is the third-largest industry in the country, has also expanded domestic manufacturing to keep up with the demand during shortages in our global supply chains. This is not a new issue. Many Australians care deeply about our domestic manufacturing sector, including those who live in my electorate of Reid. The coronavirus pandemic has shown us some gaps in our manufacturing capability and in our supply chains, particularly around medical supplies and equipment. As we move forward in our plan for recovery, our government are more conscious than ever of the need to support the growth of this sector.

The Morrison government had been working with the manufacturing sector before the pandemic. Earlier this year we launched a new advertising campaign to promote Australian-made products, reminding Australian consumers of the value of buying home-grown and domestically made products. This ad campaign follows the government's $5 million investment earlier this year to expand the reach of the Australian-made logo. The merits of buying local, Australian-made products has been advocated in federal parliament since Federation. When we buy Aussie made, we are supporting our farmers and our manufacturers as well as the supply chains that use the market and deliver their products.

In my electorate of Reid, manufacturers have often said competing with overseas companies is the biggest barrier to domestic production, not being able to match their lower manufacturing cost. However, Australians have a renewed appetite for Aussie products. People want to support our local economy and will pay for quality products in order to do so. And we know that our quality products will also be well regarded on international markets too. Our government's investment in Australian-made products is more timely than ever as we look to ways to create jobs and strengthen our economy following the financial impacts of the pandemic. The Morrison government's Manufacturing Modernisation Fund is supporting around 200 projects around Australia with a federal investment of $48.3 million. We expect a further 2,600 jobs in the sector will come out of this initiative alone.

Manufacturing today is so much more than production in the traditional factory setting. It includes research and design, it encompasses after-sale service, it has a broad reach through supply chains and it offers so many opportunities for innovation and job growth. Many well-known manufacturers are located right on the doorstep in Reid. In fact, our suburb of Silverwater is considered the heart of Sydney's manufacturing district. I'd like to acknowledge several outstanding manufacturers in Reid who have received $20,000 through the Morrison government's business growth grants earlier this year—funding which will help expand their capabilities. The grant recipients included manufacturers like Decor Systems in Silverwater, and I had the pleasure of visiting Decor Systems last year; Memphasys, experts in biological separations, located in Homebush West; and Acme Case Co, which is Sydney's oldest packaging designer, and they have been operating since 1913. I would also like to congratulate Disc Brakes Australia, based in Silverwater, who received over $111,000 from the Morrison government's Automotive Innovation Lab Access Grants for the development of the world-first cool drive rotor. It's exciting to support innovation in Australia's automotive product development, and even more exciting that it's happening in my electorate of Reid.

FEDERATION CHAMBER
Manufacturing is the seventh-largest employing industry in Australia. More than that, it is the sector that invests in home-grown innovation. It is the sector that opens the door to opportunities for our country. Right now, our Aussie manufacturers hold the key to our economic recovery and growth. They will put momentum behind the government's plan to restore confidence in our economy. Strengthening our domestic manufacturing sector is by no means an attempt to nationalise our industries or pander to protectionism. When we support local production, we produce quality products that will be of value in international markets. It puts Australians squarely on the world stage.

In order to support our economic growth, our government has turned its attention to supporting our small and medium-sized businesses through the unique pressures of the pandemic. The JobKeeper program has been a huge help in keeping businesses open and employers connected to employees throughout this very difficult period. An estimated 8,800 organisations in Reid have benefited from the JobKeeper payment. They are businesses like Watergrill Restaurant in Abbotsford and Sass Hair and Body in Concord. Both businesses were able to keep staff on through the COVID period, through JobKeeper. As restrictions have eased, their businesses have seen people coming back in through the doors.

We have also announced the extension of the $150,000 instant asset write-off for six months until 31 December this year. By investing in assets, businesses can continue to expand and modernise. It is expected that these measures will support over 3.5 million businesses across Australia. Another business in Reid that has benefited from the support of the Morrison government is Proline Building Commercial in Mortlake. They're just one of many other businesses in our area receiving a cash flow boost through the Australian Taxation Office in order to retain employees.

What is remarkable is the ingenuity and flexibility of many businesses in our area who adapted while under social distancing restrictions. Many restaurants pivoted to takeaway during this period and have elected to continue to offer these services because of their success. For example, Cucina Espresso in Concord were preparing home cooked meals for busy families which could be bought, taken home and heated up. Even though now they have reopened under the new social distancing guidelines, the meals have been so popular that they have remained on the menu.

In recent weeks, I have had the opportunity to visit many businesses in Burwood, Strathfield and Concord, and I look forward to visiting many more businesses in Reid on my return. Many of the business owners I have spoken to are very, very grateful for the government's economic packages. We must also be realistic about the challenges that they will have in the months ahead. We continue to restore consumer confidence for our economy to recover. Our businesses are prepared to operate in COVID-safe ways to ensure that they plan and can meet the unique health and safety risks.

**Perth Electorate: COVID-19**

Mr GORMAN (Perth) (18:09): These are tough times, and for millions of Australians they continue to be tough times. We continue to see that while every single Australian has done their bit, be that staying home, avoiding trips, looking after people, there are some in our community who have gone truly above and beyond. With *Perth Voice*, my local paper, I launched the Perth Community Champions to recognise some of the people who really have gone out of their way in the toughest of times. The first I'd like to recognise is Neil Dwyer. Neil is the President of the Bedford Bowling Club in my electorate. He has continued, if not amplified, the social life of the club during the last few months. He's in the vulnerable category himself, but he still manages to get himself to the club on the bus—and thank you to our Transperth bus drivers for continuing their work in very difficult circumstances a few months ago. Neil has continued to coordinate members, keeping them feeling included, reaching out to vulnerable members of the Bedford Bowling Club, building the plan to restore the club to full activity as soon as possible—I understand they have just started to open up again—and also helping people who haven't had internet access to stay in touch at times of isolation.

A division having been called in the House of Representatives—

**Sitting suspended from 18:11 to 19:03**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time for the grievance debate has expired. The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 192B. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

**Federation Chamber adjourned at 19:04**
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Banking and Financial Services
(Question No. 357)

Mr Brendan O'Connor asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 13 May 2020:

(1) On what dates did meetings occur between the department (including with the Minister and ministerial staff) and the following supply chain finance firms: (a) Greensill; (b) Taulia; (c) Citibank; and (d) Earlytrade.

(2) Can the Minister confirm the discussions related to the provision of supply chain finance on government projects and procurements.

Mr Frydenberg: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

Departmental officials met with representatives from Citibank on 30 April 2020 to discuss Citibank's views on cash flow support for small and medium sized businesses. The meeting was not attended by the Minister or ministerial staff.

Parliamentary Budget Office
(Question No. 359)

Mr Hill asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance, in writing, on 13 May 2020:

In respect of Report No. 1 of 2020 published by the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) on 19 March 2020 entitled Alternative financing of government policies: Understanding the fiscal costs and risks of loans, equity injections and guarantees:

(1) Is the Minister aware of the report.
(2) What consideration has the department given the report.
(3) What is the Minister's position regarding the report.
(4) Is the Government giving consideration to the suggestions regarding possible enhancements to budget reporting outlined by the PBO, as summarised in table 4 on page 23 of the report.
(5) Can advice be provided regarding the Government's responses and intentions as to each of the 10 possible enhancements to budget reporting outlined by the PBO, as summarised in table 4 on page 23 of the report.

Mr Frydenberg: The Minister for Finance has supplied the following answer to the honourable member's question:

1. Yes, the Minister for Finance is aware of the report.
2. The Department considers a range of factors as part of its normal assessment of potential changes to Budget processes and documentation. As noted in the report, there is a range of information presented in Budget papers on the fiscal impacts of policies. Policy costs are subject to quality assurance assessments as part of the Budget process and are reported in Budget papers consistent with applicable accounting and external reporting standards.
3. The Minister notes the report.
4. The Government is committed to transparency in budget reporting. Since the 2014-15 Budget, the Government has increased the level of disclosures in budget papers, including by introducing the reconciliation between underlying and headline cash balance estimates of the general government sector and the addition of disclosures on loan programs in the Statement of Risks. The Government continues to consider further scope for enhanced transparency.
5. The Government considers a range of suggestions as part of normal considerations that underpin Budget processes and documentation.