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**SITTING DAYS—2015**

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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SEVENTH PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency General the Hon. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd)

House of Representatives Office holders
Speaker—Hon. Anthony David Hawthorn Smith
Deputy Speaker—Hon. Bruce Craig Scott MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Robert George Mitchell MP
Members of the Speaker’s Panel—Mr Russell Evan Broadbent MP,
Ms Anna Elizabeth Burke MP, Ms Sharon Catherine Claydon MP,
Mr Patrick Martin Conroy MP, Mr Alexander George Hawke MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Ms Sarah Moya Henderson MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP, Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP,
Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Michelle Leanne Landry, Ms Clare Ellen O'Neil, MP,
Mrs Jane Prentice MP, Mr Ross Xavier, Dr Andrew Southcott MP, John Vasta MP,
Mr Brett David Whiteley MP, Mrs Lucy Elizabeth Wicks MP

Leader of the House—Hon. Christopher Pyne MP
Deputy Leader of the House—Hon. Luke Hartsuyker MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Anthony Stephen Burke MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—Hon. Malcolm Bligh Turnbull MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Scott Buchholz MP
Government Whips—Mr Andrew Alexander Nikolic, AM, CSC and
Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP Southcott

The Nationals
Leader—Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Barnaby Thomas Gerard Joyce MP
Chief Whip—Mr Mark Maclean Coulton MP
Deputy Whip—Mr George Robert Christensen MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—Hon. William Richard Shorten MP
Deputy Leader—Hon. Tanya Joan Plibersek MP
Chief Opposition Whip—Mr Christopher Patrick Hayes MP
Opposition Whips—Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP and Ms Joanne Catherine Ryan MP

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<tr>
<td>Willie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
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<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
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<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
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## PARTY ABBREVIATIONS
- **ALP**—Australian Labor Party; **LP**—Liberal Party of Australia; **NATS**—The Nationals;
- **IND**—Independent; **NATSWA**—The Nationals WA; **CLP**—Country Liberal Party;
- **AUS**—Katter's Australia Party; **AG**—Australian Greens; **PUP**—Palmer United Party

## Heads of Parliamentary Departments
- **Clerk of the Senate**—R Laing
- **Clerk of the House of Representatives**—D Elder
- **Acting Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services**—D Heriot
- **Parliamentary Budget Officer**—P Bowen
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<td>Senator Hon. Nigel Scullion</td>
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<td>Senator Hon. Eric Abetz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Hon. Joe Hockey MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
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<tr>
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Each box represents a portfolio. **Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.** As a general rule, there is one department in each portfolio. However, there is a Department of Human Services in the Social Services portfolio and a Department of Veterans' Affairs in the Defence portfolio. The title of a department does not necessarily reflect the title of a minister in all cases.
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<tr>
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<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
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<td>Senator Hon. Penny Wong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia</td>
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<tr>
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Thursday, 17 September 2015

The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:00, made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

BILLS

Aviation Transport Security Amendment (Cargo) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Truss.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (09:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Aviation Transport Security Amendment (Cargo) Bill 2015 will amend the Aviation Transport Security Act 2004 to ensure Australia's air cargo security arrangements keep pace with international standards. In particular, the amendments will ensure that Australia's $4.8 billion worth of airfreight exports to the United States continue without disruption.

The United States obliges all airlines transporting air cargo to the US on passenger flights to examine 100 per cent of air cargo at piece level. This means that each individual box, carton or other item in a shipment must be examined by technology or physically inspected before it is loaded onto a US-bound aircraft. This is a US government legislative requirement. The US has recently re-evaluated Australia’s air cargo security arrangements and determined that they do not meet US standards.

The Australian government has negotiated a two-year time frame to implement the changes required by the US. This will give Australian based exporters, freight forwarders and airlines time to adopt new security measures for the preparation of US-bound air cargo. The amendments proposed in the bill are an important element of the government's two-part strategy to respond to the US requirements, a strategy which will be implemented in partnership with industry.

The first element in the response is already being implemented. Approved businesses are now able to examine air cargo off-airport and have this process recognised under the Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005. Cargo screened under these arrangements is not required to undergo further examination at the airport cargo terminal.

The second element in the response is the establishment of a known consignor scheme under the Aviation Transport Security Act 2004.

'Known consignor' is an internationally recognised method of meeting air cargo security requirements that focuses on ensuring the security of goods from early in the supply chain through to their ultimate loading onto an aircraft. It can be an effective, alternative means of securing air cargo from unlawful interference compared to the traditional methods of screening or alternative examination techniques.
The purpose of the known consignor concept is to place the emphasis for the practical implementation of security controls on the actual shipper or the originator of the goods and to ensure the security of air cargo and mail as they move through the supply chain. This requires goods to be produced, packaged, stored, transported and handled in a manner that ensures their integrity and protects them from unauthorised interference from the point of origin and throughout the secure supply chain.

The Aviation Transport Security Act 2004 establishes a regulatory framework to safeguard against unlawful interference with aviation. This includes measures to ensure the security of air cargo.

The act gives effect to Australia's international obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation, also known as the Chicago convention, in particular annex 17 to that convention, which deals with security.

The amendments proposed by the bill are required to establish the legal authority for the establishment of the known consignor category of industry participant.

The amendments clarify what is meant by cargo receiving clearance and being cleared for carriage through a secure supply chain. They will also establish a framework to enable the making of additional regulations and other legislative instruments to provide the details of the new enhanced measures.

The government has an ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety and security of Australians and Australian interests. The government is also committed to maintaining and growing Australia's international trade.

This bill ensures that Australia is positioned to deal with emerging security risks and continues to have a sound, effective and internationally recognised air cargo security framework.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (09:07):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015.

This bill will streamline and focus the Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS Act), which is the legislative framework assuring student protection for the international education sector. Through this bill duplicative regulations will be removed while retaining the high level of quality assurance in Australia's international education sector. The
cooperation government is committed to ensuring Australia builds on its success as a world leader in international education.

International education is our largest non-resource export—and it continues to grow. The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released preliminary figures showing our international education exports reached a record $18.1 billion in 2014-15. This 14.2 per cent increase on the 2013-14 financial year shows the government's policies are succeeding in driving further success in this major industry and are generating new jobs for Australians.

International education is not just an export industry. Through our high-quality education institutions across all sectors—schools, higher education, vocational education and training (VET) and English language teaching—Australia engages with the world, particularly our nearest neighbours. International education opens doors for Australia. By building education networks we help sustain Australia's place in global relations as well as create trade and investment opportunities.

As one of the most sought-after study destinations in the world, Australia has a major role to play in global education services. We are now a key centre for learning, research and innovation.

The bill I am bringing forward today reflects the government's collaboration with the international education sector to reform the ESOS Act. In the development of this bill the government consulted extensively. Comments were sought on a discussion paper which was released in October 2014, and an exposure draft of this current bill was made public and feedback was invited. Stakeholders who provided comment included international education institutions, students, peak education industry bodies, the national quality assurance agencies and the states and territories. They have told us they strongly support the ESOS framework, but it needs to be better adapted to the contemporary international education landscape. This bill addresses the key areas of improvement sought by our stakeholders. It also clearly demonstrates our commitment to quality and to the protection of international students.

The principle that underlies these reforms is that the quality of our education system does not depend on the amount of regulation we put in place but on the effectiveness and appropriateness of that regulation. These important changes to the legislative framework for international education will retain the high level of quality assurance for international education while reducing complexity and supporting the growth and competitiveness of the industry.

In working collaboratively with international education stakeholders we will achieve a better system of quality and oversight in international education—and significant deregulatory savings for education institutions of an estimated $75.9 million a year.

I turn now to some of the specific measures in the bill that will make a significant difference to the operation of our quality frameworks for international education.

Regulation should be necessary and effective

The Tuition Protection Scheme (TPS) is the world's most comprehensive scheme designed to protect international students. During the government's consultations on reforming the ESOS framework, stakeholders recognised the importance of that protection to international students and the way in which the TPS enhances Australia's reputation. While the Tuition Protection Scheme is a critical element of our world-class student protections, part of its
administration imposes a significant regulatory burden on education institutions. This bill adjusts some TPS requirements to better target risk and cut some of the unnecessary red tape that was introduced with the TPS in 2012 amendments to the ESOS Act.

Currently the ESOS Act prevents any education institution from receiving—or any student from paying—more than 50 per cent of a student’s tuition fees before the course starts, except if a course is less than 24 weeks. This is an inadvertent restriction on student choice, and it will be amended so a student can choose to pay more where they wish to do so. This will benefit students who are on scholarships or who are in a position to pay up front if they choose to.

An additional TPS related requirement is that some education institutions must keep the tuition fees paid before a course commences in a ‘designated account’. This only applies to private institutions. This is a costly imposition and an unfair burden on one group in our international education sector. It limits their competitiveness and their ability to invest in innovation to improve their operations and the quality of the student learning experience. Today we propose to change that so that all education institutions operate on a more level playing field.

Some reporting requirements relating to international students have been identified as being unnecessarily burdensome, such as the requirement for institutions to report a default by an international student in an unreasonably short time frame. Stakeholders told the government that requirements like these were disproportionate to risk and did not allow enough time for students and institutions to try to resolve issues and confirm that a default has indeed taken place.

These reporting requirements are duplicated in other provisions of the ESOS Act relating to changes to information about students, creating an unnecessary compliance burden for institutions that has not provided any additional protection for students or necessary information for government agencies.

The bill focuses the reporting requirements on changes to a student’s course or movements and ensures the time frame for reporting these changes is much more appropriate. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of students under the age of 18, the bill will maintain the shorter reporting requirements for such students where they fail to begin a course or their study is terminated.

These changes will not water down the TPS’s role or its ability to operate effectively or to manage risk. They simply reduce the areas of overlap and overreach that were created in the establishment of the TPS in 2012. The government has listened to the views of the international education sector in making these changes and we are confident they strike the right balance.

**Measures to streamline the education quality architecture**

Currently the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) are the administrators of the ESOS framework for the international higher education and the international vocational education and training sectors—respectively—through a delegation arrangement with the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training, or in some cases the minister. The Department of Education and Training is the administrator of the ESOS framework for schools. The changes
in the bill have the effect of formalising the current arrangements—that is, that ASQA, TEQSA and the Department of Education and Training are the agencies responsible for administering the ESOS framework, or the 'ESOS agencies', for the respective areas of the international education sector.

This will streamline and simplify regulatory arrangements by providing TEQSA and ASQA with direct responsibility for many of the activities previously delegated to them.

The ESOS agencies will have direct and clearer responsibilities under the act. The bill ensures the states and territories retain their important role of assessing and recommending schools for registration by the Commonwealth under the ESOS Act.

The bill enables the minister to direct an ESOS agency in the performance of its functions under the ESOS Act, equivalent to the minister's power in domestic education under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act (TEQSA Act) and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act (NVETR Act).

The bill also reduces duplication that exists under the current arrangements. Different registration periods in the ESOS Act, the TEQSA Act and the NVETR Act create duplication in processes and unnecessary administration for many education institutions.

The amendments to the ESOS Act will allow for the registration of a provider for a maximum of seven years, with no minimum period of registration. The amendments also provide that an ESOS agency may extend a provider's period of registration for the purposes of aligning it with domestic registration timeframes.

An additional amendment will reduce the regulatory burden caused by having different registration processes at varying times by allowing an ESOS agency to use information supplied to it by an education institution to support their applications for registration under both domestic student and international student frameworks. Again this will have no impact on quality assurance, but will reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden on international education institutions.

To give further flexibility to education institutions, the bill allows institutions to seek an internal review of decisions made by ESOS agencies where institutions do not agree with a decision on registration or re-registration. Previously, education institutions had to take their case to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a decision. Adding this additional avenue of review for institutions and the ESOS agency to resolve these issues will save significant time and money for all parties.

In 2013 the Review of Higher Education Regulation by Professor Kwong Lee Dow and Professor Valerie Braithwaite highlighted the need to reduce duplication across the ESOS Act, the TEQSA Act and the NVETR Act. The review found the differences between these legislative frameworks was a significant regulatory burden for education institutions. Today this government addresses some of those key differences by aligning these acts.

**Appropriate and effective provisions to maintain quality and compliance**

Some of the amendments introduced in the bill will create more streamlined processes of quality assurance and oversight between the ESOS Act, the TEQSA Act and the NVETR Act. Agencies will have more flexibility and discretion in coordinating their responsibilities for international education under the ESOS Act with their responsibilities for education delivery to domestic students under domestic frameworks.
During the government's stakeholder consultations on the bill, we identified that the arrangements need to be more flexible where TEQSA or ASQA take action against an education institution under domestic frameworks. Where the institution's registration under domestic frameworks ceases, or where it ceases to be accredited to deliver a particular course to domestic students, the ESOS agency will now be able also to cancel, suspend or otherwise impose a condition on that institution's registration under the ESOS Act without going through another review process. This ability to more easily align regulatory decisions in respect of an education institution under both the ESOS and domestic frameworks will improve efficiency for ESOS agencies and also provide greater transparency and equity for institutions subject to those actions.

In response to feedback from stakeholders during the government's consultation on the exposure draft of the bill, the bill clearly specifies the circumstances in which an education institution is able to continue to teach—or 'teach out'—existing students once that institution's registration expires. While a provider is able to 'teach out', the bill also makes it clear that an institution cannot recruit or enrol new students in a course after their registration expires.

These are important measures that will help to maintain Australia's reputation for quality in international education.

By way of further improvement, the Director of the TPS will be able to directly issue production notices requesting information from education institutions on their activities, and to make a recommendation directly to an ESOS agency about appropriate enforcement action against an institution.

Conclusion

The measures to streamline regulation in this bill will help to drive the continued growth of international education. We need a strong, clear and flexible ESOS framework that works effectively and consistently with domestic quality assurance frameworks.

This bill shows that we can cut red tape without compromising our commitment to quality or the reputation of Australia as a world-class destination for international students.

The international education community have told us very clearly that they want these reforms. They have worked with us proactively in developing these changes to the ESOS Act. We will continue to work with them on improving the ESOS framework, cutting unnecessary red tape and enhancing the quality of Australia's international education services.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (09:22): I move:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015. This bill is required to give effect to the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015 which I introduced earlier today.

The amendments I introduced in the streamlining regulation bill remove the minimum registration period for education institutions which provide education to international students. To facilitate this change this charges bill makes minor consequential changes to the Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997. The amendments in this bill also clarify that the existing entry to market charges are paid by an education institution only once for each actual year of registration.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Education Legislation Amendment (Overseas Debt Recovery) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (09:23):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Education Legislation Amendment (Overseas Debt Recovery) Bill 2015. I will also be introducing the Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Bill 2015.

Together, these bills create an overseas repayment obligation for Australians who have taken advantage of the government's generous income-contingent loans. This includes Higher Education Loan Program (or HELP) loans and trade support loans.

The new bills are, at heart, about ensuring equity and fairness for all Australians with HELP or TSL debts, and about maintaining the stability and security of our education and training systems.

I first announced this new measure on 2 May 2015 in advance of its inclusion in the 2015–16 budget.

Under the current system, Australians overseas are able to make voluntary repayments to the Australian Taxation Office but are not under any legal obligation to repay their debt to the Australian taxpayer.

Now, for the first time, Australians who live and work overseas will be required to pay back the same amount of their HELP or TSL debt as they would if they were living and working in Australia. This is a matter of equity. It is also a matter of sustainability, ensuring the quality of future education in Australia, and being one of the reasonable measures needed to maximise the repayment of debts to the taxpayers while preserving the income-contingent nature of our student and trade loans.
The measure will save more than $25 million from 2015–16 to 2018–19 and more than $150 million over 10 years in fiscal balance terms.

The repayment system will uphold the income-contingent nature of our student loans system—a system that is the envy of the world—by only requiring those who earn above the minimum repayment threshold to make the repayments they would have to make if they were in Australia.

This year, HELP and trade support loan debtors in Australia only begin to repay their debt when they earn over $54,126 per annum, after which borrowers pay four per cent of their income towards their debt.

Under our proposed higher education reforms, there would be a new minimum repayment income threshold of $50,638 in 2016–17, and the new minimum repayment would be two per cent per year.

Australians living overseas would only begin to repay their debts when their income reaches the equivalent amount.

It is important to remember that this measure involves the repayment of a debt that a person has willingly undertaken in order to pay for their education and training. It will reduce a person's HELP or trade support loan debt over time, and will in most cases eventually reduce that debt to nil.

This change is fair for the individual and the taxpayer and is expected to improve Australia's balance sheet by more than $150 million over the next 10 years. The repayment obligation for Australians living overseas will commence on 1 July 2017 based on income from the 2016–17 financial year.

For many young Australians, heading overseas in the years following graduation is an ambition, whether as a gap year, a working holiday, or as an upward step on the career ladder in their chosen field.

Some will remain overseas forever. Many others—the majority, in fact—come back to a stale debt that has been indexed at CPI every year they were away, when they could have been reducing it.

So let me be clear. If you are volunteering and earning only a small amount, if you are looking for work and struggling to make ends meet, if you are pulling beers or cutting hair in London for three months and earning only modestly while saving for the next European adventure, you will not be within the scope of these obligations.

But if you are working in a well-paid job overseas—if you are a banker on Wall Street, for example, or an engineer in Dubai or a lawyer in London—you ought to pay back the cost of the education that you received here in Australia.

This is the way it works in many other countries already. We are joining these countries in making this sensible change to improve the equity and sustainability of our loan schemes.

I am also pleased to say that this measure has strong support in the community, the higher education sector and, I believe, across both sides of politics.

The Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee issued a report late last year on the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014, including a formal
recommendation that 'the government explore avenues to recover HELP debts of Australians residing overseas.'

Professor Bruce Chapman, the architect of HECS when it was first introduced over 25 years ago, has argued for this measure to be implemented.

There are also many others who have called for this change, including a range of people in the higher education sector.

Belinda Robinson, Chief Executive of Universities Australia, has said that '[t]his is a welcome move by the Government in improving the fairness and sustainability of the student loans scheme … there is no obvious reason why obliging Australian graduates living overseas to repay their HELP debt shouldn't be adopted in Australia.'

And in response to my announcement of this measure in May this year, the opposition signalled that it is willing to 'support measures that work to protect fairness and integrity in universities, including the HECS system.'

But while there is strong support for this change, no government has ever tackled this before—it has been put in the too-hard basket.

This new legislation remedies this deficiency in our student loan and training loan schemes.

The Education Legislation Amendment (Overseas Debt Recovery) Bill 2015 comprises five schedules.

Schedule 1 amends the Higher Education Support Act 2003, and schedule 2 amends the Trade Support Loans Act 2014, to create an obligation for HELP and trade support loan debtors to repay their debt based on their total Australian and foreign sourced income, known as their worldwide income. This is only if the debtor is earning more than the equivalent of the Australian minimum repayment threshold.

Schedule 3 of the bill amends the Higher Education Support Act 2003 to allow the Department of Education and Training to access the tax file numbers of students in order to improve the efficiency of data exchange with the Australian Taxation Office and to improve data quality. This merely extends administrative processes already in place with the trade support loans, providing consistency across the loan schemes. It will enable more effective administration of overseas debt recovery as well as HELP more broadly.

Schedule 4 amends the Taxation Administration Act 1953 to allow the sharing of protected tax data with overseas jurisdictions for the purposes of student loan debt administration. This is necessary to support potential reciprocal cooperation on debt recovery in line with good international practice. The government intend to explore such reciprocal arrangements with other countries, starting with New Zealand and the United Kingdom—countries with which we have already established a constructive dialogue on these issues.

Schedule 5 amends the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 and the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 to ensure that, consistent with the treatment of repayments made in Australia, repayments made from overseas cannot be claimed as a tax deduction in relation to expenses for self-education.
In conclusion, let me say I am very proud that this government has taken the initiative to once again level the playing field and treat people the same whether their pay comes in dollars, pounds, euros, yen, yuan or some other currency.

Together, the two bills will contribute to ensuring the equitable repayment of HELP and trade support loan debts by all Australians who have them and to securing the future of higher education and training in Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Bill 2015**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Pyne.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (09:33):

I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the Student Loans (Overseas Debtors Repayment Levy) Bill 2015.

This bill will require Australians living overseas who have a Higher Education Loan Program or trade support loan debt to repay their loans in line with the obligations that apply to Australian based debtors. Repayment obligations will only commence once the individual reaches the minimum repayment threshold. This bill will strengthen both the legislative basis for the program and the capacity of the Australian Taxation Office to collect this debt through the current tax administration arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

**BUSINESS**

**Withdrawal**

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (09:34): by leave—I move:

That the following order of the day, government business, be discharged:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment Bill 2015: Second reading—Resumption of debate.

Question agreed to.

**BILLS**

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment (Forum on Food Regulation and Other Measures) Bill 2015**

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Ley.

Bill read a first time.

**Second Reading**

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (09:35): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.
The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed at its meeting on 13 December 2013 to streamline its council system from 22 councils to eight.

The five legislative and governance fora—including the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation—will continue as per legislative requirements, albeit outside the auspices of COAG.

At the meeting of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation on 27 June 2014, ministers agreed to change the name of the Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation to the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the forum).

The Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 (the FSANZ Act) requires amendment to reflect the name change.

Amending the FSANZ Act to reflect the name change presents an opportunity to make other amendments in the same bill to improve the clarity and operation of the legislation.

The amendments proposed in the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment Bill 2015, scheduled for introduction and debate during parliament's autumn sittings, were postponed and have been consolidated with other amendments proposed for this spring. These amendments have been set out in a single Food Standards Australia New Zealand Amendment (Forum on Food Regulation and Other Measures) Bill 2015 (the consolidated amendments bill).

In summary, the consolidated spring bill:

- makes amendments to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 (the act) to reflect the change of name of the former Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council to the forum;
- makes amendments to improve the clarity and operation of the legislation—these amendments are intended to improve regulatory efficiency and provide greater clarification for businesses and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), by removing ambiguity and improving consistency in the way in which the act outlines procedures for consideration of food regulatory measures; and
- in relation to consumer rights, science, public health and food industry board members positions, amends the FSANZ Board's compositional requirements and appointment process, in accordance with recommendations endorsed by the forum, to:
  —address the need for flexibility to accommodate FSANZ's future work requirements, and
  —include a competitive selection process (such as external advertising), which the bill allows to occur simultaneously with the existing nomination process when recruiting for each vacant FSANZ Board member position.

Proposed amendments to the FSANZ Act will require consequential amendments to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994.

I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.
Health Legislation Amendment (eHealth) Bill 2015

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Ms Ley.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Ms LEY (Farrer—Minister for Health and Minister for Sport) (09:38): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Health Legislation Amendment (eHealth) Bill 2015, which implements the government’s recent $485 million budget announcement on eHealth. These changes are just one small aspect of the government’s broader digital health agenda.

This bill takes the first important steps to reboot our national electronic health records system to deliver an effective system that will help improve the health of all Australians, as well as realising the benefits that instant access to and sharing of electronic health records can provide.

A review of the personally controlled electronic health record in 2013 found that there was overwhelming support to continue implementing a national and consistent shared electronic health record system for all Australians, but that a change in approach was needed to correct a number of early implementation issues, and a lack of confidence in the system from clinicians and consumers due to these issues.

The Healthcare Identifiers Service, a key foundation of the electronic health record system, was also the subject of a review in 2013. This review found that some adjustments are required to improve its operation to better support access to and sharing of information in the electronic health record system.

This bill implements the recommendations from both of these reviews which are aimed at facilitating increased participation in the system and improvements in the usability and clinical content available in the system for individuals and their healthcare providers.

Firstly, the personally controlled electronic health record will be renamed My Health Record—which is a simpler, more meaningful and clearer name for individuals to relate to.

The system is currently an opt-in system, where you have to actively apply to have your electronic health record created, and as it stands only around one in 10 Australians have an electronic health record set up. The review concluded that this is not a large enough population to make it an effective national system, nor is it worth the time for doctors to use it.

Healthcare providers have overwhelmingly indicated through the review process that, if the majority of their patients have a My Health Record, they would be much more willing to use it. This means more doctors would add their patients' health information to it, and this will improve the overall value of the system for both patients and the healthcare providers who care for them.

To increase uptake by individuals, the government will be conducting trials of different participation arrangements in 2016 to identify the optimal approaches for maximising participation in the system. This will include trials of opt-out participation arrangements.
Individuals in opt-out trials will automatically have a My Health Record created for them unless they opt out, which they will be able to do in a number of ways. Extensive communication will be undertaken in the trials before trials begin to allow individuals to make an informed decision about whether or not to opt out. The process and the criteria for selecting locations to conduct the trials will be made publicly available before the trial sites are selected, and this bill provides that I, as the responsible minister, in consultation with the states and territories, will be able to make rules under the act to apply opt-out participation arrangements to a particular geographic area, allowing these trials to occur.

Importantly, individuals will continue to be able to control access to their My Health Record through a range of existing access control settings in the system. This includes the ability to instruct healthcare providers not to upload certain information into their health record.

Outside the opt-out trials, the My Health Record system will continue to operate on an opt-in basis.

If the trials provide evidence that an opt-out system is a better approach for improving participation in the My Health Record system, the bill provides the ability for the government to extend opt-out arrangements nationally, in consultation with the states and territories.

Given the nature of information that may be contained in a My Health Record, the bill will increase the range of enforcement and penalty options available if someone intentionally or deliberately misuses the information or commits an act that may compromise the security or integrity of the system. This is an important protection for consumers who have their health information contained within their health record. Criminal penalties will now be available, in addition to the existing civil penalties and other sanctions, such as enforceable undertakings and injunctions. However, neither civil nor criminal penalties are triggered if someone simply makes a mistake.

Additionally, the enforcement and penalty options available for the Healthcare Identifiers Service will be aligned with those for the My Health Record system.

The bill also provides for a number of consequential amendments and additional clarifications. The scope of what is considered to be a health service and health information has long been subject to some ambiguity, and in 2008 the Australian Law Reform Commission recommended changes to the Commonwealth Privacy Act to remove uncertainty.

This bill implements those recommendations, amending the Privacy Act to make it clear that a health related disability, palliative care or aged-care service is considered to be a health service, and information about an illness or injury, and medical information about a genetic relative, is considered to be health information.

These clarifications reflect current practice in the health sector and will facilitate integration of health information and health related services to support improved continuity of care for patients.

The bill will make way for forthcoming changes to the governance of digital health in Australia.

The Australian Commission for eHealth will be established in coming months to oversee the operation and evolution of national e-health systems. Among other things this commission
will become the system operator of the My Health Record. This commission is intended to remove the complexities associated with the current governance arrangements, strengthen accountability and improve transparency and stakeholder involvement, and it was another key recommendation of the PCEHR review.

An implementation task force is currently being established to design, establish and transition to the new governance arrangements. The task force will oversee the transition of functions from the Department of Health and the National E-Health Transition Authority to the new organisation. The National E-Health Transition Authority will be disbanded.

The Department of Health will continue to be responsible for the policy underlying national digital health programs, and for the supporting legislation.

In line with government's cutting red tape strategy, the bill will reduce burden by making amendments that will mean healthcare organisations will no longer need to enter into a participation agreement with the system operator. Entering into these agreements can be complex, and time consuming for organisations, and it is simply another barrier, and more paperwork that needs to be completed before organisations can participate in the My Health Record system.

We just do not know what kinds of new and innovative digital health services are just around the corner. The way in which services are provided and who provides them may become important to the efficient delivery of health care. If we do not anticipate innovation, our current processes and protections may prohibit new services and the providers of these services from becoming part of the My Health Record system.

Having said that, it is equally important that we continue to protect the integrity of the My Health Record system and the Healthcare Identifiers Service and exercise effective controls over who is able to become a service provider in the digital health system.

For these reasons, the bill will establish a mechanism that will allow the government to make regulations to authorise new entities to handle healthcare identifiers and other protected information. This power will be limited to circumstances that relate directly to providing or facilitating health care or assisting individuals who require support for health reasons.

As part of measures to simplify and streamline the My Health Record system, the bill will establish new copyright arrangements. At present, healthcare organisations participating in the My Health Record system, and the system operator, rely on copyright licences to use information in the system without infringing anyone's copyright.

In place of licences, the bill will establish new copyright exceptions in the Copyright Act. These will ensure that upload, download and use of works in the My Health Record system do not infringe copyright.

The bill will make a range of other amendments intended to clarify and improve the My Health Record system and Healthcare Identifiers Service.

The My Health Record system has the potential to change the nature of health care in Australia and become a widely accepted everyday part of good healthcare management. These improvements we are making get us closer to reaching that goal. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.
COMMITTEES
Publications Committee
Report
Mr COULTON (Parkes—The Nationals Chief Whip) (09:48): I present a report from the Publications Committee sitting in conference with the Publications Committee of the Senate. Copies of the report have been placed on the table.
Report—by leave—agreed to.

BILLS
Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Legislation Amendment Bill 2015
Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Fees Imposition Bill 2015
Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Bill 2015
Second Reading

Cognate debate.
Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (09:49): The government is to be congratulated for its efforts to develop an accurate and effective foreign ownership register for agricultural land, as promised in the 2013 coalition election campaign. This is an issue which is important to the Forrest electorate and to the agricultural sector across Australia. Residents in Forrest—and I have heard it elsewhere around this nation—have raised this issue repeatedly over many years, and the coalition government has responded with this legislation. Sound processes, accurate information and good communication will provide confidence for both the Australian people and investors.

Of course, both domestic and foreign investment are vital to Australian agriculture. Much of the agricultural development in Western Australia has happened as a direct result of foreign investment. If we are to really take advantage of the potential growth that is available in Asia in the 21st century, foreign investment is essential. The government supports investment in our agricultural sector. There are many examples of foreign investment in agriculture that have resulted in positive outcomes for the foreign investors and also for local Australian businesses and communities, and the economy. An example in my own state of Western Australia would be the American investment in the Esperance region in the 1960s that contributed to the region developing into the prime cropping and grazing region it is today.

In being supportive of investment in agriculture, including foreign investment, we do, however, need an open and transparent foreign investment process. As a sovereign nation, it is essential to know how much foreign investment there actually is. We certainly do not oppose foreign investment; in fact, we encourage it. We just want to know where and when it is happening. Open, proper scrutiny is needed so that Australians have accurate information and a clear understanding and so that they can have trust not only in the process but in the accuracy of the information itself. It is clearly a simple way of managing misinformation as well, to help address the concerns and fears we often hear from our communities—and we do hear these concerns.
According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics and ABARES in their 2013 report, nearly 50 million hectares of Australian agricultural land had some level of foreign ownership. The area of agricultural land in Australia owned by businesses with a level of foreign ownership increased from 44.9 million hectares at 31 December 2010 to 49.6 million hectares at 30 June 2013, an increase of 4.7 million hectares. Of this 50-million hectare total, 28 million hectares were more than 50 per cent foreign owned—you can understand why people express concerns to us.

In my state of Western Australia, there are over six million hectares with some degree of foreign ownership. Over 3.5 million hectares of Western Australian agricultural land is over half foreign owned—that is, foreign controlled. If you wonder why people express concern to us, it equates to half of the area of mainland Tasmania, or equal to a country the size of Belgium. It is over twice the size of the Forrest electorate. It is more than all the land west of a line from Bunbury to Albany. We do not want to discourage foreign investment; we just simply want to identify it in an open and honest manner. Over seven million hectares of Western Australian agricultural land has some level of foreign ownership, which equates to all of mainland Tasmania. The purpose of the foreign ownership register for agricultural land is to increase transparency and provide accurate information to the community and policymakers.

This package of bills will make important changes to strengthen the integrity of Australia's foreign investment framework, ensuring Australia maintains a welcoming environment for investment that is not contrary to our national interest. I saw in an inquiry in 2012 that FIRB officials acknowledged that the current law requires overseas buyers to seek FIRB approval to buy a small city apartment but most other acquisitions, other than metro or urban properties, such as farmlands and farm businesses can be bought by anyone as long as it is less than the $244 million threshold. These changes implement the reforms announced by the government on 2 May 2015 to ensure that from 1 December 2015, Australia's foreign investment framework is more modern, simple and better targeted to changing demands and community expectations—those that I spoke about.

These changes will deliver a robust regulatory framework, increase community confidence and provide a predictable and welcoming environment for investors. They are about welcoming essential foreign investment that is not contrary to our national interest. What our communities do not want is foreign investment that simply hands over our assets without benefiting or local communities and broader economy, a reasonable request. Good foreign investment strengthens Australia's economy. It creates new jobs and it unlocks innovation. Being able to distinguish between the two is critical.

The Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 represents the most significant overhaul of the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975 since its introduction 40 years ago. No wonder the FIRB officials had some challenges in dealing with the world as it is now. It provides essential changes to simplify the system, strengthen the framework and ensure the rules are enforced. It introduces additional and stricter civil and criminal penalties to ensure foreign investors and intermediaries do not profit from breaking the rules. At that parliamentary inquiry of 2012, FIRB officials acknowledged that there are anomalies in the existing laws, which is a part of the reason why these bills are important. They admitted that no fines could be imposed on companies that did not deliver assurances
made to FIRB when securing investment approvals. These bills enable the transfer to the Australian Taxation Office of responsibility for regulating foreign investment in residential real estate, which will further enable stronger enforcement, audit and compliance of the existing rules. The bill also enables the lowering of screening thresholds for investments in Australian agriculture to ensure significant investments in this sector are actually scrutinised.

The Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Bill 2015 complements these changes by establishing a register of foreign ownership operated by the Australian Taxation Office. Foreign investors are required to register essential information about their existing holdings and subsequent acquisitions of Australian agricultural land, providing greater transparency around foreign investment in agriculture.

The Australian government welcomes good foreign investment because, as I said earlier, it certainly plays an important and beneficial role in the Australian economy. Good foreign investment provides additional capital for economic growth, creates employment opportunities, improves consumer choice and promotes healthy competition while increasing Australia’s competitiveness in global markets. We just simply need to be able to tell the difference. That is what these bills before the House do. I support the bills as presented.

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (09:58): It gives me great satisfaction to rise today to speak on the government’s legislative package that will strengthen Australia’s foreign investment framework, enabling our current foreign investment rules to be properly enforced and providing greater transparency on the actual levels of foreign investment in land and residential real estate than ever before. Australia welcomes foreign capital and has always had a liberal regime that encourages investment unless contrary to the national interest. Foreign investment has played a vital role in the development of our modern and successful society and recognises that this will continue to be the case in the future. It is because we understand the benefits to our nation and to our region of open markets that this government is delivering the three North Asian free trade agreements, which independent analysis demonstrates will boost our economy by $2.4 billion every year for the next 20 years.

In 2013-14, there were 25,005 applications to the Foreign Investment Review Board, worth a total of $167 billion of investment into our country. When one excludes the residential real estate sector, only three applications were rejected in 2013-14. Against this context of welcomed investment, it has long been recognised that certain sectors were more sensitive and therefore subject to greater government scrutiny. Residential real estate is one such sector, and there is good reason for that. Homeownership—and the related issues of housing supply, investment and ultimately affordability—remains integral to the Australian dream. There is a sensible and reasonable rationale behind this personal aspiration. In truth, the availability of housing is fundamental to our wellbeing. It begins with the need to find stable, affordable shelter and follows a spectrum through to those that are in the market to purchase expensive accommodation. Whilst housing fulfils our basic need for shelter, it is ideally, and in reality for most Australians, so much more than that. It underscores our personal security and health; informs our sense of self through connection to family, friends, neighbourhood and community; and underscores our personal security. Housing underpins our financial security through access to services and work. For the majority of Australians who own their own home, it is their largest single asset and the physical and financial foundation from which
they provide for their own families and those of the next generation. In Australia today the total estimated value of residential dwellings is around $5.4 trillion.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer I take special interest in housing affordability and believe that it underpins the wellbeing and capacity of every individual and family. These bills before the House will harness the benefits of foreign investment into residential real estate, ensuring that they continue to benefit Australians. In essence these bills seek to achieve the following four aims: to reinforce our longstanding focus on channelling foreign investment into increasing the overall supply of residential real estate through the construction of new dwellings for Australians to build, buy and rent; to improve the monitoring, compliance and ultimately enforcement of the rules surrounding foreign investment in real estate and to ensure that those who do flout these longstanding rules are dealt with commensurately and appropriately; to provide far greater scrutiny and clarity on the level of foreign ownership of land in Australia, both agriculture and residential, so that, as we move into this century, future Australian governments will be able to base their policies on holistic and accurate data rather than on piecemeal statistics or anecdote; and, finally, to provide a predictable and modern environment for investors.

My involvement in this policy area first began when, in March 2014, the Treasurer asked the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, of which I was chair, to examine Australia's foreign investment policy as it applies to residential property, with its intended aim of increasing Australia's housing stock, and examine the economic benefits of the policy and its administration. The committee conducted six public hearings and received 92 submissions from organisations and individuals from across the country.

The committee's unanimous report made four key findings and 12 common-sense recommendations to government. The first finding was of the absence of timely and accurate data as to the true level of foreign investment in residential real estate. The Foreign Investment Review Board tracks applications to purchase but not actual transactions or compliance with the requirement to seek approval prior to purchase. The simple truth is that no-one actually knows the level of foreign ownership of residential or agricultural property in Australia.

The second finding was that, while all foreign persons are required to seek approval prior to purchasing property, monitoring, compliance and enforcement had been entirely insufficient to provide any level of confidence in overall adherence to the rules. The committee discovered that over the life of the previous government not one divestment order for illegally acquired property was issued nor one court action undertaken. It defies credibility that all foreign investors were compliant or indeed had cooperated with the foreign investment regime for this entire period. By comparison, 17 divestment orders were made between 2003 and 2007, at a time when foreign investment in Australia's residential real estate was at much lower levels.

I must say that compliance activity was further undermined by the previous government, who in 2008—under the then Assistant Treasurer, now shadow Treasurer, the member for McMahon—removed the requirement for temporary residents to notify FIRB of all residential purchases. This change caused damage—most likely to compliance with the legal conditions under which temporary residents are able to purchase a single home while in Australia, and certainly to the Foreign Investment Review Board's capacity to effectively monitor and
enforce these conditions. It also sent a powerful message that the then government was not interested in ensuring that the rules were enforced. The member for McMahon's successor, Senator the Hon. Nick Sherry, recognised the ALP's error and reversed this policy change. In a media release he detailed a number of measures to improve monitoring and enforcement in the lead-up to the 2010 election. Regrettably, most of those announced measures remained just words and were not pursued by Senator Sherry's successor, the Hon. Bill Shorten, or by any of the subsequent assistant treasurers in the last Labor government.

If you are not prepared to enforce the rules then it is less likely that people will comply with the rules. This is especially true if the consequences of a breach are neither sufficiently adverse nor commensurate to the act. And, as a result, the committee's third key finding was that new, more flexible and ultimately stricter penalties were necessary for adequate enforcement. Finally, the committee found that the reliance on the Australian taxpayer to foot the bill had handicapped Australia's foreign investment regime by contributing to underinvestment in audit, compliance and enforcement activities.

I am delighted that the government accepted all of the committee's recommendations, and the legislation today acts upon their intent. From 1 December 2015, Australia's foreign investment framework will be simpler, more modern and far more effective. Our foreign investment rules have not been substantially revised since they were first introduced in 1975. The legislation today will ensure that the regime keeps pace with the development of international investment and capital and will place our nation in a strong position to monitor and enforce existing rules.

The government has already made strong progress on this issue. To encourage those in breach to self-report, the government has provided a moratorium on criminal sanctions for those who volunteer their illegal behaviour and they are given a longer period of time to divest their property—12 months rather than the usual three months. Concurrently, the Australian Taxation Office has begun using their sophisticated and extensive data-matching technology to crossmatch ATO data against data held by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, AUSTRAC, amongst others. No-one who is breaking the rules should be under any illusion. If you do not come forward to the Australian government, the Australian government will come to you.

In addition to the five concessional divestments announced yesterday, the Treasurer has also required the divestment of six illegally held properties and has issued a formal divestment order to the owners of a Point Piper property earlier this year. This was the first divestment order issued in about 10 years. So since March of this year, under this government 12 divestment orders have been issued.

With the introduction of the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, changes will be made to simplify the system and strengthen the framework and ensure the rules are enforced. The bill introduces a range of new and stricter penalties that will enable breaches to be dealt with according to the severity of the breach. The existing criminal penalties will be increased from $90,000 to $135,000 for individuals and from $450,000 to $675,000 for companies. These will be supplemented by civil pecuniary penalties and infringement notices for less serious breaches of the residential real estate rules. For the very first time, third parties such as real estate agents, migration agents, conveyancers and
lawyers who knowingly assist a foreign investor to breach the rules will also now be subject to both civil and criminal penalties.

Lastly, this legislation will close outrageous loopholes that have seen those people who have illegally purchased property, and required to divest, able to keep the capital gain. The foreign acquisitions bill delivers on the government's commitment to lower the screening thresholds for investments in Australian agriculture. Since 1 March 2015, the screening threshold for foreign purchases of agricultural land has been lowered from $252 million to $15 million based on the cumulative value of agricultural land owned by that investor. The government is also introducing a $55 million threshold for direct interests in agribusinesses from 1 December 2015. With this measure, Australians can be assured that investments into agriculture will be scrutinised to ensure that they are not contrary to our national interest.

As part of the first major review, this bill includes a package of long overdue amendments that will modernise the regime by reducing unnecessary red tape. In particular, this bill includes raising the substantial interest threshold from 15 to 20 per cent to align the foreign investment framework with the takeover rules in the Corporations Act 2001.

The Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Fees Imposition Bill 2015 enables the adequate resourcing of monitoring and enforcement of the foreign investment regime. No longer will the Australian taxpayer fund the cost of administering the regime. The imposition bill introduces fees on all foreign investment applications from 1 December 2015. For example, fees for residential properties valued at $1 million or less will be $5,000 and $10,000 for property over $1 million, increasing in $10,000 increments for every million dollars thereafter.

Applications fees will also apply to commercial real estate, business and agriculture applications. These fees will ensure that the Australian taxpayer will no longer fund the administration of the system, whilst providing additional resourcing to Treasury and the ATO to undertake their activities.

The final bill is the Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Bill 2015. This register will provide information such as the location and size of the property and size of the interest acquired, and will enable better transparency around foreign investment into Australia's agricultural sector. All existing holdings of agricultural land held in foreign ownership must be registered with the ATO by 31 December 2015, with new interests subsequently registered within 30 days.

The government is also actively working with the states and territories to use their land titles data to expand the register so that it includes all types of land, including residential real estate, in the future. For the first time, this will enable a clear picture of the levels of foreign investment in residential real estate by capturing real transaction data. This empirical data will separate fact from fiction and enable policy formation on empirical data rather than 'best guestimate.'

There is no doubt that overseas investment has contributed to our nation's standard of living and represents an enormous opportunity for investment in Australia's future. We welcome foreign investment. With these bills, Australia will continue to welcome this essential foreign capital and ensure we remain best placed to harness this opportunity,
deriving the maximum benefit possible for all Australians for generations to come. I commend these bills to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Message from the Governor-General recommending appropriation announced.

Third Reading

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (10:13): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Fees Imposition Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (10:15): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Register of Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land Bill 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (10:16): by leave—I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a third time.
BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:17): by leave—I move:

That orders of the day Nos 4, 5 and 6, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.
Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:20): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: OneSKY equipment rooms project in Melbourne and Brisbane.

As I advised the House when referring this project to the Public Works Committee, Airservices Australia and the Department of Defence are planning to replace their existing air traffic control systems with the new civil military air traffic management system being delivered under the OneSKY program to provide a common air traffic control platform in both civilian and military controlled airspace. To achieve this outcome, Airservices is proposing to construct new equipment rooms in Melbourne and Brisbane to house the critical OneSKY computer and communications infrastructure in a Defence protected status building.

The proposed works will include facilities to ensure that two systems can be run in parallel during the transition phase while providing a clear separation between the existing operational air traffic management system and the new air traffic control system. The new civil military air traffic management system will require continual work to develop and test the system without disruption to existing operations and operational equipment. The proposed facilities will meet stringent reliability and security requirements in order to adequately support air traffic control in more than 11 per cent of the world's airspace, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

The committee has conducted an inquiry and is of the view that the project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project that is fit for purpose and expedient to carry out. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for undertaking a timely inquiry. Subject to parliamentary approval, the proposed works are scheduled to commence in late 2015, with a staged practical completion and commissioning between September 2016 and November 2016. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:20): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Fit-out of existing leased premises for the Australian Taxation Office at 121-125 Henry Street, Penrith, New South Wales.

As I advised the House when referring this project to the Public Works Committee, the Australian Taxation Office proposes to undertake a fit-out of existing leased premises at 121-125 Henry Street, Penrith, New South Wales. The ATO has substantially reduced the amount of space it will retain in Penrith, in line with the agency's off-ramping strategy. The reduction in space equates to a saving of $38.9 million, excluding GST, over 10 years, representing an excellent outcome for the Commonwealth. The new fit-out will provide the ATO with considerable advantages in terms of building design, operating efficiencies and long-term viability through improvements in building infrastructure.

The committee has conducted an inquiry and is of the view that the project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project that is fit for purpose and expedient to carry out. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for once again undertaking a timely inquiry. Subject to approval of the project by the parliament, the fit-out is expected to commence in late 2015, with staged practical completion scheduled from mid-2016. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:22): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: REDFIN Phase 1B Infrastructure—Facilities required for the new fleet of Special Operations Vehicles.

As I advised the House when referring this project to the Public Works Committee, the Department of Defence is proposing to provide new and refurbished infrastructure at four locations across Australia for the acquisition of special operations vehicles and communication systems for the Australian Defence Force special forces. The project includes new and upgraded facilities and infrastructure essential for the operation of the special forces, which includes new working accommodation, maintenance hangars, storage and workshop facilities. ADF special forces are highly trained and specially equipped to conduct operations at short notice in a range of domestic and international environments. Special forces give the government a range of strategic options beyond those available through conventional forces.

The committee has conducted an inquiry and is of the view that the project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth, and constitutes a project which is fit for purpose and expedient to carry out. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for once again undertaking a timely inquiry. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to begin in early 2016 and be completed by late 2018. I commend this motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:24): I move:
That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Campbell Barracks Redevelopment Project, Swanbourne, Western Australia.

As I advised the House when referring this project to the Public Works Committee, the Department of Defence is proposing to construct new, modern, adaptive, purpose-built facilities and improve the infrastructure to support the requirements of the Special Air Service Regiment in Campbell Barracks, Swanbourne, Western Australia. Campbell Barracks functions as both an operational and training base, and comprises a number of specialised working, training and storage facilities. The barracks house a diverse and complex inventory of SASR equipment, including vehicles, weapons, communications equipment, watercraft and personnel equipment. Campbell Barracks is an operational mounting base and a command-and-control centre for global operations. It supports a highly trained and specially equipped force that must be able to prevent, deter or respond to a threat at short notice in a range of domestic and international environments. Campbell Barracks enables current operations, planning for impending operations and enables the development and application of classified and sensitive capabilities.

The redevelopment project will replace ageing and obsolete facilities by delivering functional, flexible purpose-built facilities and improved infrastructure at Campbell Barracks. These will include a new operations precinct, new and refurbished operational support squadron facilities and quartermaster store, a new entry precinct and a fibre transmission facility. The project will deliver upgraded facilities, services and infrastructure, and demolition of 34 obsolete facilities. The committee has conducted an inquiry and is of the view that the project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project that is fit for purpose and expedient to carry out. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for yet again conducting a timely inquiry. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to begin in early 2016 and be completed by late 2018. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:27): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, it is expedient to carry out the following proposed work which was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and on which the committee has duly reported to Parliament: Fit-out of existing leased premises for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal at 83 Clarence Street, Sydney, New South Wales.

As I advised the House when referring this project to the Public Works Committee, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal proposes to undertake a fit-out of its leased premises at 83 Clarence Street, Sydney, New South Wales, to accommodate the expanded Administrative Appeals Tribunal, which commenced on 1 July 2015 with the merger of the former Migration Review Tribunal, Refugee Review Tribunal and Social Security Appeals Tribunal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The move to a single location for the AAT in Sydney will allow for the rationalisation of resources, particularly in the sharing of public facilities such as hearing and conference rooms.
across jurisdictions. The move to a single location will also allow the AAT to reduce its current overall property footprint in the Sydney central business district and deliver savings to government through a reduction in property operating expenses. The design of a new fit-out will allow the 'new' AAT to improve the service to clients by using new technologies to deliver services more efficiently and effectively, and by providing a single point of access for most Commonwealth merit reviews.

The committee has conducted an inquiry and is of the view that the project signifies value for money for the Commonwealth and constitutes a project that is fit for purpose and expedient to carry out. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for once again undertaking a timely inquiry. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to begin within the next few weeks with staged practical completion scheduled from early 2016. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Reference

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (10:29): I move:

That, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report: Delamere Air Weapons Range Redevelopment Project, Northern Territory.

The Department of Defence is proposing to construct new fit-for-purpose facilities to support the Royal Australian Air Force's primary training area for air-to-surface weapon deliveries at the Delamere Air Weapons Range, which is in the Northern Territory. The Delamere Air Weapons Range includes an airfield complex, an urban environment and a fuel storage complex. The range also includes a high-explosive impact area, a practice bombing impact zone, a practice rocketry impact zone and air-to-surface gunnery lanes.

The project will deliver new working and living accommodation and vehicle maintenance areas, a new alternative high-explosive impact area, upgraded roads, improved boundary fencing and general airfield remediation. The project will also conduct demolitions, civil works and landscaping. The project will support increased exercise activity and meet the desire from coalition partners for increased exercise access and greater operational fidelity. The project will also support the safe employment of the Air Force's weapons capabilities and the new Growler mobile threat training emitter systems.

The project cost is estimated at $74.4 million, excluding GST. This includes costs of construction, escalation allowances, professional service fees, design, information technology equipment and contingencies. This investment will bring economic benefits for the Northern Territory. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to begin in the first half of 2016 with completion expected by early- to mid-2018. I commend this motion to the House.

Question agreed to.
Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (10:32): I rise today to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015. It is great to have the Minister for Small Business in the House. He is, I know, a great supporter of creating the best business environment we can have, and that includes removing red tape. The Minister for Small Business has had some great successes this year, including the 2015 budget and that $5.5 billion package to help small business, incentivise small business, get the economy going and reduce taxes and taxed incentives.

Notwithstanding that success, the Minister for Small Business did have a defeat on the weekend with his beloved Richmond. I commiserate the Minister for Small Business and Richmond for losing three finals in three successive seasons to one of my teams—my favourite team actually: Port Adelaide. It is about perseverance, and that is what much in life is about. Just on football, without diverging too much, I want to pay tribute to the Adelaide Crows and wish them all the best for their final against Hawthorn tomorrow night in Melbourne. In particular, I hope that the Adelaide Football Club—including: Rob Chapman, the president; directors Rod Jameson and Nigel Smart; their captain, Taylor Walker; and Bob Ford—go well. I wish them all the best for the match against Hawthorn tomorrow night.

While I am on football, the member for Wakefield is in the House and I just want to wish his team, Central Districts, all the best in the SANFL finals on the weekend, because they are playing against one of my local clubs too, West Adelaide Football Club, in one of the finals. That should be a great encounter. West Adelaide lost to another one of the good local football clubs in my area, the Woodville West Torrens Football Club, on the weekend too and they are in the grand final in a couple of weeks time. All the best to the football teams in their matches over the weekend.

Getting back to the purpose of this bill, cutting red tape is at the heart of the coalition government's mission to build a strong and prosperous economy for a safe and secure Australia. For too long, more regulation has been the default option for policymakers. During
the previous government, some 21,000 new regulations found their way into national life. Poorly designed and inefficient regulation has been imposing unnecessary costs on every Australian. The coalition government is cutting red tape and changing the way regulators act and behave. The government has taken steps to remove around $2.5 billion in red tape, more than double the annual net $1 billion target it committed to delivering—an outstanding achievement.

I am pleased to play a role in the deregulation committee. Initially it was chaired by Josh Frydenberg, who is now the Assistant Treasurer. It is now chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Christian Porter, who is doing a fantastic job in this space. As I have mentioned, deregulation units have been established, from existing resources, in every portfolio to drive red tape reduction across the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is working collaboratively with the states and territories to reduce red tape across all levels of government.

We committed to repealing $1 billion worth of red tape per year. As part of this commitment, the government dedicate two parliamentary sitting days as repeal days every year. Following the government's third repeal day, the government will have repealed more than 10,300 legislative instruments and introduced legislation to repeal over 2,700 acts of parliament. The first repeal day in March last year announced measures that, when fully implemented, will result in gross savings in excess of $700 million in reduced compliance costs. The second repeal day in October 2014 announced measures that, when fully implemented, will result in savings measures in excess of $2.1 billion in reduced compliance costs. On the third day, 18 March 2015, the government announced measures that, when fully implemented, will result in net savings in excess of $2.45 billion in reduced compliance costs. This is significant progress and significant savings, all due to good government policy and execution of that policy.

I want to touch on a couple of specific areas of red tape reduction and reduction in compliance. The first one is making it easier to navigate around the ATO website. Since late 2014, the ATO has been improving client experience by changing the structure and design of its website so that individuals and businesses can find relevant information more quickly. In a meeting with the ATO commissioner yesterday, I was very pleased to hear about some of their initiatives—the development of portals and making their operations more efficient and more consumer friendly for the Australian public.

Each year around six million people use the ATO website. To make the website more user friendly, the ATO is changing the structure of the website to make it more intuitive and task based. The search function is being improved and information is tailored to specific audiences, including individuals, businesses and intermediaries. The Treasury portfolio has estimated that this will lead to an annual saving of close to $50 million in compliance costs.

We have also introduced more flexible screening arrangements at Melbourne and Adelaide airports. As Adelaide Airport is in the middle of Hindmarsh, operational improvements there are always significant for my electorate. On 19 November 2014, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development served amendments to aviation screening notices to introduce more flexibility at multilane passenger screening points at the Melbourne and Adelaide airports. Following a trial in 2013, operators will now have the option to conduct explosive trace detection, or ETD, screening operations at the front of a screening point and to
test persons in batches of up to three persons per ETD test. Industry will benefit from reduced staffing requirements and reduced capital and maintenance costs, and passengers will save time during the screening process, something I am sure everyone will appreciate when they go through the airports. The improved screening will be achieved while maintaining high security standards, something we are committed to. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development has estimated that this will lead to annual savings of $8.8 million and $2.4 million in compliance costs for the Melbourne and Adelaide airports respectively.

Another important initiative is reducing duplicate assessments for Australian manufactured medical devices. The medical devices and health services sector is a sector of great strength in Australia as well as being, given ageing populations in many of the countries we trade with, one of great future opportunity. On 15 October 2014, the Assistant Minister for Health announced changes to the regulation of therapeutic goods that will allow Australian manufacturers of medical devices to obtain market approval for most of their products using conformity assessment certification from European notified bodies. The change will allow Australian manufacturers to choose to have a conformity assessment conducted either by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the TGA, or by an alternative conformity assessment body, such as a European notified body. This will put Australian manufacturers of all but the highest risk products on an equal footing with those from overseas, avoiding the need for duplicate conformity assessments for those manufacturers wishing to export their products to Europe. In many cases this could allow locally made medical devices to get to market more quickly. This is so important in helping our competitiveness in the global economy. The new rules will not apply to the very highest risk devices, which will still need TGA conformity assessment. The compliance cost savings are estimated to be $6.1 million.

The final matter I want to cover is foreign purchases of agricultural land. Foreign investment is something we have just discussed in this House. On 11 February 2015, the government announced that the screening threshold for foreign purchases of agricultural land will be reduced from $252 million to $15 million from 1 March 2015 and that the government will introduce a foreign ownership register of agricultural land from 1 July 2015. These changes increase scrutiny and transparency around foreign investment in agriculture. The new $15 million threshold will apply to the cumulative value of agricultural land owned by the foreign investor, including the proposed purchase. Consistent with free trade agreement commitments, this will apply to all non-government investors except those from the United States, New Zealand, Chile, Singapore and Thailand. All proposed direct investments by foreign government investors, including in agriculture, will continue to be reviewed regardless of value. The government is currently consulting on a range of options to strengthen Australia's foreign investment framework. Final figures are still to be determined for a range of implementation options and will be accounted for on the spring repeal day.

In closing, the coalition government understands that in order to build a prosperous economy we must relieve the burden of government red tape on businesses, community organisations, families and individuals. We must allow people and businesses to do what they do best rather than spending wasted hours dealing with paperwork, waiting in queues or searching for information. Importantly, we want to hear from businesses, community organisations, families and individuals on how we can cut even more red tape to help build a productive and prosperous economy for the benefit of all Australians.
Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (10:42): The member for Kooyong, Josh Frydenberg, has moved on to greener pastures, but this time last year he was the humble—well, he was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Australia's red-tape tsar. Describing the origins of his zeal for cutting red tape, Mr Frydenberg told *The Australian Financial Review* about the time his wife went to Centrelink to apply for paid parental leave. I thought to myself: 'She went to Centrelink to apply for paid parental leave? Does that make them double dippers or rorters, to use the words of the member for Cook? I guess it does.' But he was not making the point that he would fall into the category of double dipper or rorter. Rather, he was making the point that he was beside himself over the paperwork his family had to deal with in signing up for government paid parental leave alongside employer based paid parental leave—and he committed himself on the spot to doing something about it.

You have to give him credit: the member for Kooyong does not do things by half. He certainly found a solution to that red-tape problem at Centrelink. The government's solution is apparently to change the scheme so that, in future, families who want to claim the payment that his family claimed would not be entitled to do so—80,000 new mums booted off the Paid Parental Leave scheme. That will save them having to fill out the sorts of forms the member for Kooyong's family had to—by completely cutting off their access to parental leave. It is an ingenious solution from the former red-tape tsar and you can see why, with ideas like that, the government has promoted him.

At the heart of this story is the problem with the Abbott government's—now Turnbull government—approach to so-called red tape repeal. Most of the time the changes they make in bills like this are completely pointless. The member for Watson has referred to it as the 'war on punctuation'; around my office this part of the government's agenda is referred to as the 'Comma Commandos'.

With the government putting forward so many examples of ridiculous changes and pointless updates, it is hard to pick a favourite. After all, this is a bill that goes to the trouble of changing 'if' to 'of' in the Surveillance Devices Act 2004; and replaces the gendered 'Chairman of Committees' with the more politically correct 'Chair of Committees' in the Parliamentary Presiding Officers Act 1965 and the Public Works Committee Act 1969. It is somewhat ironic give that I have heard members of this government proudly say that the term 'chairman' should continue to be used rather than 'chair' within their internal processes. I digress.

I could not go past the government's brave and important decision to replace the term 'reference base' with 'index reference period' in 31 acts discussing indexation provisions. That is going to be a huge gain for Australia. You can already imagine the other OECD countries and the G20 countries, sitting around saying, 'Well, if we want to follow Australia's economic lead, what we need to do is change reference base to index reference period in our acts too.'

Yet the government is trumpeting these so-called red tape reductions. Mostly, this is what it is doing: removing commas, replacing prepositions, and updating words like 'fax' to 'email'. It is mostly harmless stuff, but certainly nothing deserving the kind of fanfare the government gives it. When we were in office, Labor removed 16,000 redundant acts, regulations and legislative instruments but we did not declare war on bad punctuation. Fixing typos is simply part of the background work of government. Red tape repeal day is like having a day where you come to the office, have a cup of tea and get to work.
Occasionally, when the government gets its red tape scissors out, it actually does real harm. There is no better example than the Abbott-Turnbull governments' attempts over the past year to scrap the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission under the guise of cutting red tape.

Our charities and not-for-profits are the backbone of Australia's community life. Every day, across Australia, hundreds of thousands of organisations deliver services to the sick and elderly, help make our environment cleaner, contribute funds for critical research, run programs to keep at-risk kids out of the justice system and make sure that our social fabric is that little bit stronger. Charities are vital for our community and, if their contribution was measured in GDP, our GDP would be considerably higher than it is today. As it is, the measured economic activity of charities is around five per cent of total GDP and turns over about $1 billion a year.

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission exists so that those charities can spend less time filling in paperwork and more time helping Australians. Independent research suggests the commission saves charities around $120 million a year in compliance costs. That is $120 million more that can be spent in communities that really need the help. As well as accrediting charities so that they can qualify for tax-deductible gift recipient status, the commission also helps not-for-profits understand and meet their governance obligations through information, advice and guidance.

When it cuts red tape for charities, the charities commission protects Australians from scammers. Before we established the commission, Australians had no way of finding out whether a charity was dodgy or legit; whether somebody who came to your door asking money was a real charity or a scammer. Now you can jump onto www.acnc.gov.au and check them out in an instant. The charities commission is proactive when it comes to dealing with scammers. In 2014, it deregistered several charities across Australia after investigations showed their benevolent work was a sham.

Earlier this year we celebrated with a birthday cake at the opposition end of the House of Reps—the fourth birthday since the establishment of the charities commission. This was an event to which all members of parliament were invited, but I was sad not to see a single one of my coalition colleagues. It was disappointing that even the member for Dunkley, the great bipartisan member that he is, was not able to be there to support the work of the charities commission.

Mr Billson: Did I get an invitation?

Dr LEIGH: You did, member for Dunkley; you were invited and, sadly, you declined the invitation to celebrate what is a great Australian institution. I know people on both sides of this House support charities, but you have got to go further than simply supporting charities in words; you have got to do it in your deeds.

The charities commission is recognised by charities across the spectrum as having built Australia's first national charities register, which now has nearly 60,000 charities on it. It not only protects Australians from scammers but also allows us to understand the full size, depth and economic contribution of the charity sector for the first time. We used to have lists of charities kept by the tax office, but the lists were out of date, overlapping and nowhere near as consistent as the charities register we have now under the charities commission.
The charities commission has now de-registered or revoked the charitable status of over 1,000 not-for-profits, which no longer met the requirements. In some cases the groups were inactive; in others, it was because they were not involved in legitimate charitable work. But the charities commission's work in monitoring and de-registering charities means that Australians can have confidence in those charities which remain listed on the charities register.

When Labor set up the charities commission, we hoped to one day make it a streamlined national scheme—much like a previous Labor government did in streamlining the Corporations Regulations in 1990, moving from state and territory based corporations registers to a single national corporate regulator, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. That same streamlined national scheme for charities is also in operation in Ireland and the United Kingdom. Australia can do the same and can reduce paperwork for charities as we have done for corporations. South Australia and the ACT, to their credit, have tied their charities regulation to the national charities commission. Rather than having separate regulatory schemes, any not-for-profit that registers with the national charities commission is now automatically registered in that state or territory as well. So they qualify for state concessions and exemptions simply by becoming a deductible gift recipient at the federal level.

We know that other states are also looking closely at this approach because it makes like significantly easier both for charities and state regulators. We hope the charities commission will act for not-for-profits like ASIC does for business: that it can be a one-stop shop for registration and reporting. But here is the catch: the charities commission can only do that if the Turnbull government allows it to stay open and continue its good work. The coalition went to the last election promising to scrap the commission. Former social services minister Kevin Andrews spent much of last year trying to break it up. Indeed, there is still a bill languishing on the Notice Paper in this very House that would abolish the commission, although the government has not been game to bring it on since a single brief day of debate late last year.

Before the winter break, the Senate passed a motion calling on the government to withdraw that bill and commit to giving the charities commission the resources it needs to continue operating on a permanent basis. Given that the coalition did not even call that to a vote in the Senate, that gives you a pretty strong sense as to how the Senate crossbenches feel about maintaining the charities commission. I would reinforce to the House of Representatives today that the Senate supports the charities commission.

We know that charities support the charities commission. The 2014 Pro Bono Australia State of the Sector survey found that four in five charities said the commission was very important for the sector, a result virtually unchanged from the previous year's survey, which does tell you something about the advocacy power of the member for Menzies.

Last year, over 40 charities signed an open letter to the Prime Minister calling for him to keep the charities commission. The signatories read like a who's who of the charity sector, including Lifeline, ACOSS, Save the Children, the RSPCA, World Vision, the Ted Noffs Foundation and many more. Nine in 10 submissions to a Senate inquiry about the charities commission called for it to be kept. In consultations between the social services department
and over 300 charities, the vast majority wanted to build on the commission's work rather than scrapping it altogether.

Basically, the charities sector believes that the commission is doing great work and should be retained. That is because not-for-profits understand that the commission cuts red tape rather than creating it. Labor understands that too. Charities want to save time and money by reporting once through a single agency.

We have seen hints of a new approach since Scott Morrison, the member for Cook, took over from Kevin Andrews, the member for Menzies. He has indicated that scrapping the commission is 'not a priority'. He went to a Philanthropy Australia meeting on 9 September 2015 and again hinted that the government did not want to go ahead with scrapping the charities commission. But here is the thing. Until the charities commission gets the certainty that it needs from this government, it will continue to have difficulty attracting and retaining staff. It has recently seen around 25 per cent staff turnover each year as a result of the legislative uncertainty caused by this government. The government just needs to withdraw the charities commission abolition bill from the Notice Paper and clearly state that it recognises, as the charitable sector and Labor do, that the charities commission is a way of cutting red tape, not a form of red tape.

Of course, the other big red tape cut that the Comma Commando from Kooyong was going to deliver was the gutting of Labor's future of financial advice reforms. Those reforms set new professional and ethical standards for financial advisers and reduced the lifetime cost of receiving financial advice. We introduced them to prevent a collapse like another Storm Financial, when thousands of people lost their life savings because of bad financial advice.

On the government's first Red Tape Repeal Day, the member for Kooyong stood in this chamber and proudly listed the FoFA changes as one of his main red tape targets. One year on, Labor and the Senate have stood up to stop the watering down of consumer protection and said no to letting practices like conflicted remuneration continue unchecked in the financial advice sector. He could not get it done, because it was a bad policy that would put thousands of Australians at financial risk.

It is becoming a bit of a habit with the member for Kooyong, I am sad to say. He is big on a headline and loves the announcement, whether it is FoFA, legislating the bank deposits levy or cracking down on multinational tax avoidance. But, when it comes to delivery, FoFA changes went down in flames, Josh Frydenberg and Joe Hockey got rolled on the bank levy at a cost of $1½ billion to the budget bottom line and the great crackdown on corporate tax, according to the budget numbers, does not raise any revenue. Perhaps the former tennis ace from Kooyong needs to focus more on actually concluding sets rather than just serving into the net.

The thing about the coalition's approach to red tape is that they claim their red tape measures are necessary and significant. They are right, but it is a pity that over the past year they have made very clear that the necessary ones are trivial and the significant ones are unfair.

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (10:57): I rise to speak on Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015. This bill is a coalition initiative which seeks to amend and repeal redundant and ineffective legislation across seven portfolios of government. This particular bill is one of four
such bills which this government has proposed since it came to office that have been directed at cutting red tape and repealing redundant legislation. This bill delivers on our commitment to the Australian people to clean up the mess Labor legislators left in the wake of their disastrous term of government.

This bill is comprehensively consistent with the coalition's commitment to cut red tape and reduce the suffocating regulatory burden big government has on Aussie businesses, on individuals and on our community sector. Not only is the bill delivering on our commitment to smaller, more efficient government; it is also true to our values. We of the coalition know that big and intrusive government is ineffective, cruel and discouraging to human achievement. Ours is a philosophy of strategic but limited government. We believe in creating the space for success, not suffocating it. The coalition's commitment to freeing Australia from unnecessary and burdensome red tape has been an essential change in direction from the overburdening, overregulating, job-destroying mindset of the Australian Labor Party when they were last in government.

We are delivering on that commitment today. The coalition knows that, when you trust the people of Australia to make their own decisions with small, efficient regulatory frameworks, we actually succeed as a nation. Labor does not trust the individual. To them individual enterprise must be suffocated under a mountain of regulatory compliance measures.

There is a risk that this bill might not receive the attention it deserves because it deals with abstract policy or because it does not deal with some hot topic of the day. On the contrary, this bill delivers better legislative outcomes across a broad range of government portfolios that affect many, many Australians. I particularly commend the steps this bill is taking to reduce the regulatory burden we have on our agricultural sector. Agriculture is an essential pillar in the Australian economy. The coalition is fully committed to attaining better outcomes for the agricultural sector. Labor do not and never will understand agriculture; that is why they are prioritising their own CFMEU mates over our farmers on the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Because this government is fiscally responsible and economically competent, it takes a different perspective on ChAFTA and a different approach to cutting red tape for our farmers.

In developing this bill we have consulted broadly with the National Farmers' Federation, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund, Greening Australia, Conservation Volunteers Australia and Landcare networks as well as having comprehensive consultation with the Department of Agriculture. This bill will deliver for agriculture and balance the needs of our farmers with the responsibilities we have to the environment. At the heart of the coalition government's mission to build a strong and prosperous economy for a safe and secure Australia is less regulation for our agricultural sector. For too long, more regulation has been the default option for policymakers. During the previous government more than 21,000 new regulations found their way into national life, with poorly designed and inefficient regulation imposing unnecessary costs on each and every Australian. This is true of their approach to agriculture, a sector they lack the capacity to understand.

We have ensured through previous omnibus repeal day bills that Australia's biosecurity arrangements have been reformed to provide greater flexibility to manage biosecurity risks. We have reduced compliance associated with illegal logging due diligence requirements. We have removed the requirement for tail tags for cattle destined for the European Union and we
have improved access to export terminals for grain exporters. Importantly, through making space for agriculture, we have ensured that our farmers are better prepared than ever to make the most of the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement, the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement and, of course, the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. These are agreements that will deliver benefits for Australian farmers and the agricultural sector next year, the year after and for very many years into the future. Through cutting red tape and reducing the regulatory burden on our farmers we have continued to prepare them to take advantage of these historic free trade agreements. The Labor Party, as I have said earlier, adopts the same view on ChAFTA as it does on reducing regulatory burden on Australians. The free trade agreement with China will deliver unprecedented opportunities to our agricultural sector.

In the same way as this government are committed to cutting red tape, we are resolved to dropping the barriers of trade between Australia and the world's most populous nation, China. As I said earlier, agriculture is a key pillar of our national economy. The future of Australia's prosperity is contingent on a strong and productive agricultural sector. Through this bill the government are taking steps to ensure continued productivity in that sector, alongside our efforts to open markets with free trade. If Labor is for free trade, they should be for deregulation. It is evident through their capitulation to their CFMEU masters that they lack the conviction and the commitment to the future of Australia's economic prosperity to reduce red tape here in Australia and through our trade agreements.

We in the coalition government are committed to our economy and to our farmers. That is why this bill cuts regulation in the agriculture portfolio. Importantly, part 2 of the bill will amend the Natural Resources Management (Financial Assistance) Act 1992 to abolish the Australian Landcare Council. In May 2014 the government announced that, to reduce unnecessary duplication and red tape, the ALC and the Natural Heritage Trust Advisory Committee—the NHTA Committee—would be consolidated into one committee, which is sensible policy reform. This section of the bill is utterly consistent with our promise to the Australian agricultural sector to reduce red tape and remove unnecessary duplication.

This bill also delivers on our promise for smaller, more efficient government, and that is true not only for the agricultural sector but also across all sectors of the economy. Crucially, since our election we have focused on facilitating growth in our business community, particularly our small business communities, through red tape reduction. We have implemented an easier monthly pay-as-you-go system for certain businesses. This has given businesses the ability to choose their own method to calculate their actual instalment income on a quarterly basis, which has delivered an annual compliance saving of a whopping $2.7 million. We have reformed the 457 visa program by streamlining the processing of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications. Through reforming sponsorship requirements we have reduced the time and, importantly, the cost to business. Through increasing the sponsorship approval period from 12 to 18 months for start-up businesses and through providing greater flexibility in relation to the English language testing and skill requirements we have delivered annual compliance savings of close to $30 million. We have also improved the ATO website so that six million Australians—over one-quarter of the population—can find relevant information more quickly, which has delivered an annual compliance saving of $48.5 million.
These are only some of the legislative reductions we have made in the business sector which, along with our commitments to fostering growth and jobs, have successfully created 300,000 new jobs since our election in September 2013. This bill is part of a sound and effective legislative agenda which at its heart believes in removing unnecessary legislation and reducing red tape. This bill is an essential part of the government's commitment to smaller, more efficient government. We are cutting the regulatory burden on businesses, reducing red tape for our community sector and delivering more room for individual enterprise.

Labor are unwilling to cut red tape because, fundamentally, they do not understand the culture of business or of individual enterprise, particularly small, family based businesses. Labor is addicted to big government, big unions and therefore, by definition, big taxes. The coalition government understands that what is required to foster growth and jobs in our communities is less regulation, not more. This bill seeks to remove the weeds left behind by Labor. It cuts back the overgrown and out-of-control regulatory burden facing Australians, and it creates space for enterprise to flourish.

This government is true to its word when it comes to cutting red tape and reducing the burden of regulation. On behalf of my constituents in Barker, I welcome the benefits that this omnibus repeal day bill will deliver across a broad range of portfolios of government, and I welcome further reductions in the size of government in Australia. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (11:08): I rise today to speak to the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, a bill that Labor supports in the interests of reducing red tape and streamlining legislation. The majority of items in this bill relate to the repeal of spent and redundant acts and redundant provisions within acts; therefore, these are, of course, welcome reforms. That does not mean that they require the fanfare that those opposite demand on these red-tape repeal days. All governments have them, and so they should, but they should not demand applause, a standing ovation, for reducing red tape.

While I pledge my support for the removal of superfluous legislation, we must thoroughly make sure that that is exactly what it is: superfluous. I think back to when the last lot of repeal legislation was introduced to the House, and I remember a sneaky measure, a really underhand measure, where something was removed that was actually not redundant. It actually mattered a lot. It mattered a lot to many, many people. It mattered a lot to many people who work in this building: people who clean our offices, day in, day out; people who work alongside us—our colleagues.

What was done in the name of red-tape reduction was actually the repeal of the wages and conditions of cleaners who work for the Commonwealth, the cleaners of this building. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our workforce. For many of them, English is their second language, and many of them have few to no qualifications. Many of them are single mothers. This is aside from the fact that they are also some of the most modestly paid. Yet the repeal of the Commonwealth cleaners guidelines means that cleaners in Commonwealth buildings are, on average, $6,837.35 worse off a year. That is a huge amount of money for anyone, in anyone's language, let alone some of our lowest paid workers. It is an absolute disgrace.
I met with a group of Commonwealth cleaners here at parliament a couple of months ago. They were absolutely distraught, and they were absolutely desperate. They were so distraught that they took strike action out in front on the lawns here at Parliament House because they felt they had no other option, no other way of telling this government that what it has done is just not okay. Some of them are working for $2 an hour less for doing exactly the same job for the same amount of time, at exactly the same hours. And that comes on top of the fact that cleaners' wages have been frozen since July 2012. They deserve respect, they deserve fair wages and they deserve decent conditions.

The fact that the Commonwealth cleaners guidelines were cut as part of a repeal day highlights the need for scrutiny. In the end, it comes back to trust. This government has shown time and time again that it cannot be trusted. It cannot be trusted with hospital funding. It cannot be trusted with education funding. It cannot be trusted with pensions. It cannot be trusted with ADF pay. It cannot be trusted with dental care. The list goes on and on and on. It cannot be trusted with giving cleaners, some of the lowest paid workers in this country, decent pay and decent conditions. This government showed its true colours in last year's budget, and Australians have every right to feel sceptical about this government. That is why, on these repeal days, I also feel sceptical.

This repeal bill in particular includes amendments and repeals covering the Agriculture, Environment, Health, Indigenous affairs, Social Services, Treasury and veterans' affairs portfolios. This was part of a set of bills introduced as part of the government's so-called autumn repeal day. As I said earlier, the majority of the items in this bill relate to the repeal of spent and redundant acts and redundant provisions within acts—for example, the repeal of seven acts in the Agriculture portfolio which are all spent and redundant. Also, the Dairy Adjustment Act 1974, which enabled the Commonwealth to enter into arrangements with the states for dairy adjustment programs, is being repealed. Given that the period for approval of a new agreement lapsed in 1977, no agreements are currently in place and all payments have been made, so this act is redundant.

In the Treasury portfolio, five acts are being repealed, all of which are spent and redundant. For example, the International Monetary Agreements Act 1959, which related to an increase in Australia's quota in the International Monetary Fund and an increase in the capital stock of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, is being repealed. Given that these transactions have already happened, this act is also redundant.

In the Social Services portfolio there is the removal of a number of indexation provisions that are spent, as they have passed their date of effect and, as a result, are no longer needed in legislation. These are a couple of items where elements are redundant or spent, and they are no longer up to date.

But there are two items in this bill that do have deregulatory savings. The first relates to the removal of the requirement to sign a statutory declaration when submitting a compensation claim under the Health and Other Services (Compensation) Act 1995. Instead, the claimant is able to declare that the information provided is true and correct, using existing forms required for the process. This is estimated to generate $41.4 million in deregulatory savings.

The second relates to the granting of greater access to aggregated information under certain social services legislation to the public, where that information does not disclose information about a particular person. This will enable greater access to information for use by researchers.
and the general public. This is estimated to generate $3,000 in savings. So the total amount of deregulatory savings in this bill, $41.4 million, is less than 10 per cent of the $475.7 million in savings that have been reported since the last so-called repeal day, in October 2014.

The last so-called repeal day was when those absolutely outrageous, brutal attacks were made on the cleaners that clean our offices—our colleagues, who work alongside us in this House and who are some of the lowest paid workers in this country. Quite often English is not their first language. Quite often their education levels are not particularly high and, from meeting many of them, I know that a lot of them are doing it tough, on their own, as single mums trying to bring up their kids and to give them a decent start in life and a decent education. What does this government do? It cuts their wages, and it does so under the guise of a red-tape repeal day.

Measures that were described in the Parliamentary Secretary's statement last week—such as the use of electronic devices in flights, removing duplicative record-keeping requirements for psychologists or the removal of the requirement for trucks to have spare spray suppression devices—are not being discussed as part of this bill. The removal of spent and redundant acts, spent and redundant provisions within acts and the correction of spelling and punctuation in legislation is an ordinary process of government. The elevation of this activity to the status which this government gives it is simply not warranted and it is unnecessary.

The fanfare, the standing ovation and the round of applause that is expected when these repeal days occur is just breathtaking. I say: get on with the job of deregulation—necessary deregulation that will not leave people worse off, like last year's sneaky measure that was introduced into the repeal day. It should be deregulation that does not leave cleaners, some of the lowest paid workers in the country, worse off and that does not leave single mothers who are trying to do the right thing by their children worse off. They are working hard, trying to keep food on the table, trying to keep their kids educated, and they are doing it on their own. Do not attack them on repeal days. Do not attack their wages. Do not attack their conditions. For God's sake, be fair to these people who are doing it tough. If you are going to have a repeal day, then please do not bore us with the so-called fanfare about it. But, most importantly, do not attack the lowest paid workers in this country in the process.

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (11:17): I rise to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 and related bills. This brace of bills and amendments delivers on election-day commitments made by the coalition to cut red and green tape, wherever we can, out of the Australian economy. It is worthwhile noting that this legislation adds to the delivery of a long list of achievements for this coalition government, including cutting taxes—the mining and carbon taxes, in particular—and stopping the boats. I notice that the minister who had responsibility for that achievement, Minister Morrison, is now at the table. That has enabled Australia to take a very strong and positive position in dealing with refugees from Syria. The coalition's achievements also include free trade agreements with Japan, Korea and China—unbelievably at this stage still not clearly supported by Bill Shorten and the Labor Party. I hope they will get to the right place in a very short time. These were wonderful achievements by Minister Andrew Robb. There has also been a record infrastructure spend around Australia. All the while, the government has been taking the tough decisions to begin the job of budget repair and pulling the economy back from the precipice.
This is a substantial but far from exhaustive list of achievements that were delivered under Tony Abbott’s leadership. It was a prime ministership attacked from day one by so many influential people in our community, many of whom consider themselves to be learned, and many very poisonous pens in the press. It led to a situation where many Australians developed a personal dislike for or vitriol towards the former Prime Minister. It is most unfortunate. It is a very sad thing for him personally to lose the prime ministership, and for his family and his staff and his friends and colleagues in this place. It is a very sad that he was not given the opportunity to defend his record at an election. But the party room took the collective decision that the risk of conceding the next election to the Labor Party was too great—not for the Liberal Party but for Australia. The risk of handing power back to the economic vandals that placed Australia in the precarious position we faced on coming into government was too great. It is certainly a position we have not fully recovered from at this stage. Progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the member for Warringah, Tony Abbott, for leading us back to government, for giving Australia chance before it was too late, for delivering a tough but necessary agenda and for giving his every waking moment to the country he loves, Australia. Tony, you will be judged kindly by history.

As part of our election commitments, when all these things are delivered on, this legislation will take the total deregulatory bonus to $2.45 billion for Australia. That is enormous—$2.45 billion per annum from getting the government out of the road of ordinary Australians at work and play and getting rid of waste. It is a great thing. There is still plenty of work for us to do in this area. There is still plenty of low-hanging fruit. We will continue to deliver these savings to the Australian economy, lifting the burden of red and green tape from ordinary Australians. As a result, I think for the very first time a full audit of government services has revealed a drop in the cost of federal regulation. It is an amazing thing. Everything else goes up and up, but we have been able to wind back the total cost of regulation. Following this repeal day and the full implementation of its content, more than 10,300 legislative instruments will have been axed and we will have removed 2,700 acts of parliament. Unbelievable. Other governments have promised but never really delivered in this area. We have delivered and we will continue to do so.

So what do some of these reforms in the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 mean to individuals and to businesses? Mr Deputy Speaker Mitchell, I am sure you have bought a mobile phone at some stage; certainly I have. Fair dinkum, you need to take a day off to go and buy a mobile phone. There is a saying we have in the CFS—I am a CFS volunteer—‘hurry-up and wait’, and so it applies to buying a mobile phone. You would think it would be so easy to just go and pick the thing out but then you sit down and they say, ‘I am sorry, Sir, we are just going through this and we are going through that.’ It takes forever. You cannot believe it. It should be so simple. You would think in half an hour you would be able to buy a mobile phone. We will make easier to perform identity checks. It will speed up so, Mr Deputy Speaker Mitchell, that will give you an opportunity to go fishing for the rest of the day after you buy your next mobile phone.

Of course we will have already noticed that we are allowed to use our personal electronic devices on flights. I had always wondered why it was that we could not use electronic devices on aeroplanes. I have never flown a jet liner it must be said but I can fly a light aeroplane and
I have never come across a pilot that said it made it a scrap of difference whether or not we are on the phone. I actually thought it was about public etiquette. For those of us that have been to Japan, let me tell you, you rarely, I have to say, see a passenger on a Japanese train that has not got their mobile phone in their hand, furiously texting away. But I tell you what, you never hear one ring and you will never hear them pick up the phone and make a call because it is considered to be such poor etiquette. I had wondered over the years if perhaps the airlines just did not want people shouting on their phones in aeroplanes and upsetting the rest of the people on the flight. Anyway, we can now use our personal electronic devices in flight.

Improvements to the myGov site will save people's precious time. Time is the one thing that we all are given a certain amount of in our lives and wasted time is the worst time of all. Anything that cuts the time we have to waste trying to deal with government departments is a good move so there will be improvements to the myGov website.

Businesses will benefit from improved flexibility for pay-as-you-go payments by allowing monthly payers to actually calculate their contributions on a quarterly basis. This will not make any difference to the total income of the government from these payments; it will just make it simpler and easier for all those thousands of people running small businesses out there to deal with the requirements of government.

We will be removing idiosyncratic regulations applying singularly to the federal interstate registration of B-doubles—hooray say all of my truckies, the truckies that carry the nation. They have been driven absolutely spare by the inconsistent rules across the nation in relation to the transport industry and it costs them millions. This is just one small reform but in this case the changes will deliver more than $8 million worth of savings to the industry. Anything we can do to make their job easier is, in the end, a benefit for all Australians.

The ag sector is a sector I have been closely associated with all my life. We bring a number of livestock products into Australia that are low biosecurity risk. Because they are low-risk, they will be excluded from the onerous scrutiny of APVMA, a very fine organisation. It provides a double benefit in that it frees up the APVMA to do the important things, the things they should be doing. The APVMA will deliver in a more timely manner the services and registration of new chemicals, for instance, that farmers need to run modern and efficient properties. An added benefit will be that it will make it easier for those people importing those products that essentially are low-risk and do not deserve the level of scrutiny they are receiving at the moment. If you keep looking at a product as it is brought into Australia and over a long period of time there are no complications with it then it obviously makes sense to take it off the high level of scrutiny agenda.

Students trying to attend a tertiary education in the city are a very important part of my electorate. I have spoken many times in this place about the difficulties that country students face in trying to deal with a $20,000-difference in the cost of doing a degree by dint of the fact that they have to leave home to attend the institution. For them to juggle the financial commitments of attending those institutions, they often have to juggle jobs, sometimes numerous jobs and inconsistent part-time jobs. So students will be given new access online to be able to change their details for the government benefits they receive. It is a very important reform. As their circumstances change on a day-by-day basis, they can log on and keep the
system up to date to make sure they are not infringing the law. It is estimated that this will save $7.8 million.

There will be changes to NAPLAN. NAPLAN will be delivered online, which will save $9.7 million. These last two changes I have just detailed are harvesting the technology dividend. It is so important that we should. We feel sadness throughout our community as we see jobs disappear that have employed people in our communities for all our lives. The perfect example is the local banks. Once you would go in and there would be 10 or 15 people in the branch, scurrying round, all with different jobs to do. Now of course we do pretty much all of our banking outside that building. If the bank's branch still exists, there are two or three people in there. We do not go in to get a roll in cash; we get that out of the hole in the wall outside. When we want to pay bills, we sit down on our computer at home and press the buttons and the bills are paid. I mourn the loss of those jobs but they simply make no sense any more. Just as with the students online and the changes to NAPLAN, that is about government adjusting its services to modern technology and taking advantage of the dividend that modern technologies provide. It is fitting and the right thing to do, and we should always be on that edge, making sure that we get the best performance possible from the federal government and consequently for the community at large.

So many of these individual items embraced in the three repeal day bills up to this time have taken advantage of that dividend. We have looked at old and antiquated legislation—things that simply do not have to be there anymore, sometimes. Governments have said—in fact, I think the previous Labor government said—'We will repeal a bill for every new regulation that comes in.' Unfortunately, they got sidetracked and that never happened. I do not think it was a lack of intent. Government is a very difficult business. It can be overwhelming, and the demands of the day mean you do not get to tidy up the ends, which is why it has been so important that this government has dedicated somebody to that role. It started off, of course, with the member for Kooyong.

So I commend the bills. It is government at work and getting on with the business, and I look forward to the opposition supporting the individual changes required to achieve the overall reduction of red and green tape in the Australian economy.

Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (11:31): It is wonderful to be able to get up today and speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015 and the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015. They build on a commitment that this government made prior to the election that we would have a laser-like focus on removing red tape that had grown disproportionately out of control for many years and increased somewhat under the former Labor government.

The member for Grey made a good point: that, prior to the 2007 election, that Labor government made what I think was probably an earnest commitment that, for every regulation brought in, one regulation would be repealed. After six years of Labor government, we ended up with 22,000 additional regulations. So whilst the commitment may have been earnest at the beginning—some people would doubt that, but I will give the Labor Party the benefit of the doubt—it was just an example of the size of government and the red tape that we impose on all sectors of our economy, whether it be the private sector, not-for-profits or government institutions in their interactions with Australian individuals. In each one of those cases, the
inexorable growth of regulation just strangles the capacity of our country to grow and the entrepreneurialism of our citizens.

That is why we made a commitment to ensure that red tape was something that we would have an absolute focus on removing at every opportunity, and this, our third set of red tape repeal days, has reaped a huge dividend for this country: $2.45 billion worth of regulatory costs have now been taken out of the economy—subject, of course, to all of the bills that form part of omnibus repeal day being passed.

But why are we doing it? Why are we spending time in this parliament repealing red tape and, more importantly, why have ministers and individual members of parliament like me spent hours and hours and hours identifying what those regulations are and what those impediments to growth in our economy are? It is because we want to unshackle our citizens and small businesses and encourage them to do what they do best, because we have a very basic philosophy on this side of the House, and that is that governments do not create jobs and wealth; individual citizens do. If we can do more to unshackle them and help them realise their ambitions, that is something that is extraordinarily worthy.

That is why I am disappointed and despondent when I watch those opposite mocking and belittling individual changes here, because the whole reason why red tape builds up over years and years and years is that incrementally one rule after another after another after another after another builds up, although it might only be small in an individual case. That is why you must have the discipline in government to have a laser-like focus, identify each of those individually and remove them, and that is what this government is doing.

I was having a conversation with my father, who was a small business operator. He ran many, many small businesses, and he said to me, 'Michael, when I came to Australia in 1966, it was a great country, full of opportunity,' and he has realised those opportunities himself. He said that, if he thinks about all of the additional laws and rules—the reams and reams of legislation and regulation at a federal, state and local government level—and adds all of those up, it still has not resulted, in his view, in Australia being much of a better place than it was when he arrived here in 1966. Is our country that much greater because of it? Are our citizens freer because of it? Of course not.

Governments at all levels feel as though for every problem there must be a regulatory or legal solution. Often what we end up doing is putting in place rules and regulations that do not have any practical impact and do not really address the problem that they seek to address. All they are is just another aspect of the law that private citizens, small businesses, not-for-profits and charities need to adhere to.

I was speaking recently to a local NGO who employs somebody full time effectively just to deal with the rules and regulations that they must adhere to in all of their program delivery. I am sure that all of those rules and regulations were extraordinarily well intentioned when they were put in place, but it is quite extraordinary to me that that organisation must employ somebody full time on something that in no way furthers the goals of that organisation.

I speak to countless small businesses—often husbands and wives, business partners, who absolutely work their guts out. If you are in a small business, you understand a few things. If you are the owner, you pay the rent first, you pay your employees second, you pay your taxes third and then, if there is a little money left over, you pay yourself. Those small-business
owners will often be up at five in the morning, they will work all day and then when they go home, instead of spending time with their children, instead of spending time doing things they want to do, the countless things, they will sit at their desk and deal with paperwork. It might be BAS or some other form or compliance activity that the government requires. We are literally draining the energy out of our entrepreneurial small businesses.

I am not going to go chapter and verse through all of the items in this omnibus repeal day suite of bills. The member for Grey did it very well and did it in a more entertaining fashion than I can. So I want to focus on and continue to focus on why we have such a dedication to repealing red tape. It is not sexy. It is not something that is going to capture headlines in the newspapers. The Labor Party talk about it being the ordinary course of business. They say: 'Why is the government making such a big deal out of this? Why is the government trying to pat themselves on the back? Well, today is not an exercise in patting ourselves on the back. Today and the previous two repeal days are an exercise in showing our dedication and commitment to the Australian people in getting off their backs. Government should really only do for people what they cannot do for themselves. Government should not unduly burden citizens and individuals with rules and regulations that add little value to their lives or little value to their businesses.

There is a startling statistic from 2014. In the burden of government regulation index that is put together by the World Economic Forum, Australia ranked 124th out of 148 countries. Now, we are a great country. As the foreign minister often says, 'We are a top 10 nation.' We are in the top 10 in a range of indices, whether it be economic growth, whether it be GDP, whether it be GDP per capita in particular, whether it be entrepreneurialism, science, technology or development. But to be 124th out of 148 is absolutely outrageous. This was also highlighted by a report which said that Commonwealth government regulation alone—and I am not including state governments or local councils which are bad as well—was costing the economy $65 billion or 4.2 per cent of GDP. So it is no surprise that we were 124th out of 148, but we must therefore be dedicated over time to improving it.

In three repeal days, we have repealed $2.45 billion of red-tape costs. I can tell you having been on the backbench committee involved in the red-tape repeal days, we have absolutely sweated blood to find that $2.45 billion, literally going through regulations line by line and speaking to small businesses whether it be a business in pharmaceuticals or a manufacturer—the myriad of regulation. It is quite difficult for politicians to understand some of the regulations, particularly the very technical regulations that our manufacturers or others need to deal with. So, to get to $2.45 billion was incredibly hard.

Each repeal day that we have as a government will incrementally get more difficult. We will have to be more ambitious. We will have to search harder. It is the old adage—the low-hanging fruit has gone now and we will have to be even more dedicated. But after all that work, $2.45 billion is extraordinarily exciting and it is a lot more than we promised. We promised $1 billion and we are now up to $2.45 billion. But that is $2.45 billion out of a cost to the economy of $65 billion. So we have barely touched the sides, but we have made an earnest attempt.

Governments from both sides of this chamber for the last 40 years have piled on rules and regulations, and we are strangling the entrepreneurial nature of this country. Every single road block that you put in somebody's way when they want to chase their own idea and start their
own small business is an absolute tragedy for this country. This country has been built on the foundations of an entrepreneurial spirit, and risk-taking has been in our DNA.

I fear that the more government shackles our country, the more people will say: 'You know what? Why am I going to risk my house? Why am I going to mortgage my own home to start a new business, when I can get a cushy job somewhere and take no risks. It will be a hell of a lot safer and it will be better for my family?' That is logical thinking, but that is not what creates wealth for this country. What creates wealth for this country is people saying: 'I have an idea. I see a gap in the market. I see boundless opportunities and I am going to risk everything to take it.' It is those sorts of people who built this country and it is those sorts of people who exist today, but we have to encourage them even more. I am very proud to be part of a government that has shown the dedication to do something that, as I said, is not sexy. I do not get constituents walking up to me in the street saying, 'Michael, thank you for repealing X, Y and Z regulation.' It does not happen. That is why it has been ignored for so many years. This is what good government is about: it is about doing what is right for this country, even when you know you are not going to get kudos for it.

I can visit my father now and say to him, 'Dad, we have repealed 890 Commonwealth acts of parliament,' in response to his words to me that, from the time he came to this country in 1966, the endless rules, regulations and laws, in his view, have not been what has made this country better. This country has been made better despite those rules and regulations, not because of them. I can say to him that we are starting the process to change this inexorable decline that Australia has gone through in shackling our people with red tape. I am very proud to be part of this government and I am very proud of this repeal day today. (Time expired)

Ms O’Dwyer (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (11:46): I join with the member for Deakin in saying that I, too, am delighted today to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 and other key red tape reduction measures announced by the government in its third repeal day package. I am proud that we continue the good work begun last year of removing inefficient regulation that cripples our economic growth. However, I am even prouder of the contribution this legislative bundle and its related measures will make to improving the lives of our hardworking small business people.

In 2013, there were 7,165 businesses employing fewer than 200 staff and 13,690 non-employing businesses in Higgins. When I see this legislation, I think of the many men and women in my electorate who rise early and work late to keep their businesses afloat and who employ people, pay taxes and provide essential community services. I think of the printers, the pharmacists, the restaurant owners, the hairdressers, the retailers and the myriad of other small business people whom it has been my privilege to meet as the local member for Higgins.

Red tape repeal days mean that these people get to work on their businesses rather than on wasteful compliance activities. They get to go home to their children rather than search opaque websites for hard-to-find help with government requirements. They get to engage with their customers and communities rather than wait in queues. All of this helps people personally and makes for a more productive Australia.

The coalition has already introduced a raft of measures to help businesses: 402,000 small businesses no longer have to interact with the pay-as-you-go instalment system; there is now a one-stop shop for environmental approvals; and the mining and carbon taxes have been
repealed. In addition to this, the government has sought to reduce the duplication of regulatory arrangements where existing international standards from trusted bodies have already been met. For example, Cochlear, the manufacturers of the bionic ear, is able to have all of its products verified under the European Union certification process and does not have to also seek TGA certification in addition to the European certification. This is saving both the manufacturer and the TGA valuable time and money and, most importantly, in the case of Cochlear, gets necessary products out to the people who need them in a shorter period of time.

Imagine a small business owner who runs a high-tech printing shop in my electorate. It is a local institution, but the owner has a heavy load. On top of managing staff, property, printing operations, service and the organisation's finances, this printer must submit her tax paperwork, including her PAYG instalments. On top of this, she has a raft of other compliance related work, such as that relating to two 457 visa workers she wants to hire, who will fulfil roles which are both critical to the business and cannot be filled locally. This is only the tip of the iceberg of her administration and compliance activities, most of which is done on weekends or in the dead of night. She struggles to juggle her time running the business with her time with her family, so every second liberated is of incomparable value. So far our measures have helped her by establishing a small business helpline to give advice on employee wages and workplace laws. Changes to SuperStream regulations mean that it is now easier for her to pay her employees' super contributions. Legislation has also been introduced to reduce the administrative burden on employers, like our small business owner, who can now administer paid parental leave payments directly through the Department of Human Services.

Our third repeal day package takes our promise to reduce burdensome regulation even further by making it easier for our small business owner to be 457 visa compliant, with the streamlining of the processing of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications. She will also find business easier in several ways over time. She can find information from the tax office more readily and can more easily keep her personal details up to date for online government dealings. It is even easier for her to buy prepaid mobiles for her business. The government has also announced that it will expand access to the Small Business Superannuation Clearing House, meaning that 27,500 businesses will benefit from a cost-free solution to meet their super obligations. This all leads to a happier and healthier small business owner. I have no doubt that her children will also benefit. Furthermore, it makes great economic sense to free up time from low-value compliance to high-value business activities and time with family. One step at a time, we can strike a more sensible balance for our hardworking small business owners, who account for nearly one-half of private sector industry employment.

The coalition's economic agenda centres on building a stronger, more diverse economy, reducing taxes and creating jobs. Removing red tape is at the heart of this agenda. However, it is also at the heart of a value set which encourages us to see small business people as invaluable contributors to our communities, and that we should not be putting unnecessary obstacles in their way. Business and individuals suffer unnecessary costs each day due to poorly designed regulation. By reducing this burden, business can grow and create more jobs. Our attitude to this stands in stark contrast to the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government. Under Labor, much was promised on the management of regulations, including a promise to remove
a piece of compliance for every one that was added. Yet, at the end of the day, we saw 21,000 new regulations put in place. This was not sustainable.

Step by step, in a practical way, the coalition has sought to make it easier for business to do business, to employ people and to lift local communities because we know that every change counts. The red-tape reduction measures that I have discussed today are just one element of the coalition's third repeal day agenda. These measures go hand in hand with the repeal of outdated legislation. The Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill we are debating today will, along with its related legislation, repeal 890 Commonwealth acts. In repealing redundant acts, we help businesses, community organisations and families who waste valuable time sifting through outdated regulations to try to determine whether they still apply.

The bill repeals acts in a number of areas including agriculture, environment, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury and veterans’ affairs. Today I will not undertake to summarise the legislation's many components, but I will point out that the estimated cumulative savings so far from red-tape reduction now amount to around $2.45 billion. What you are seeing with this legislation is practical government at work: doing the job that it should be doing. That is why we were elected to be a government in this place: to make sure that we do not block the aspirations of Australians, but in fact encourage those aspirations. We do that with this bill, and I commend it to the House.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Social Services) (11:54): I am pleased to join this debate on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015. More than $2 billion of regulation has been stripped away since the last election as a result of the efforts of this government and it is true to say that at the same time the business of government has continued. It has continued to ensure the necessary protections and other sanctions and things that are necessary to be in place are there to protect our community and ensure proper compliance with Australian law, that these important parts of our regulatory environment not been undermined. We are interested in having good regulation, and the Australian public also believe in sensible, good regulation. They want to ensure their interests are protected, but, at the same time, their interests are not impeded by unnecessary regulation. It is true that while new measures have been brought in by the government, we have had to also introduce other measures at that time that may have increased regulation in some respects. But I can tell the House that for every dollar of new regulation that has been introduced by this government, we have got rid of $10 of old regulation. That is quite a significant achievement for a government.

When I was the shadow minister for productivity before the last election, there were occasions—indeed, I was often with the parliamentary secretary at the table, the member for Higgins—when we would go to forums and briefings and other things like that and say, 'What is the one thing we could do to help business in this country and improve productivity?' Many issues were raised, but the one issue that was always raised on every single occasion was the level of suffocating regulation that was constraining economic growth and business growth. And so, while many governments have made claims in the past about wanting to see a smaller government and have made claims about wanting to reduce regulation—have talked big in opposition but in government have failed to execute that—this government's record says something very different. We said we would do it, we said how we would do it, we said when we would do it, and we have done it. More than $2 billion in savings for businesses in...
compliance costs and regulatory reductions as a result of this government's consistent and applied effort.

I want to pay tribute to the parliamentary secretaries to the Prime Minister, who have been fuelling that process, the member of Pearce and, of course, the Assistant Treasurer, the member for Kooyong. I want to commend them for being the driving force that they have been in ensuring these regulatory changes have been driven through this process. It is a tedious, time-consuming process that requires total application from those parliamentary secretaries. Of course, it also needed the strong stamp of authority from the Prime Minister: that was the case with the former Prime Minister, and under the new Prime Minister it will certainly be the case as well. This is a government that is committed to ensuring reduced compliance costs because of unnecessary regulation. We will ensure there is necessary regulation; we will ensure that that appetite for regulation, that appetite for busyness that you can sometimes see in government, will not be something that this government has ever pursued or will ever pursue.

I note that those opposite, when they talk about how good a government is, talk about how much legislation they pass, as if that is somehow the measure of a good government. The measure of a good government is actually increasing the number of people in jobs by 300,000. The measure of a good government is ensuring that we are getting our spending under control. The measure of good government is acting on issues of national security and stopping the boats and doing all of that. That is what a good government looks like: you measure it on outcomes, things that actually improve the lives of people in this country. You do not measure it on how much legislation you pass and how many speeches you give in the parliament, but that seems to be the measure that those opposite are seeking to establish.

I am very pleased to support this bill. Its contents go into so many different areas, including into my own portfolio. I am very pleased to have supported this process as a minister and to have worked with the parliamentary secretaries, the member for Kooyong and the member for Pearce on it, and I commend them on the excellent work they have done.

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (11:59): I am pleased to rise in support of the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill and associated bills, which as we have been hearing on this side of the House have a direct and positive impact on Australian industries and our communities. Today, the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill—which is before the House along with the Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015 and the Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015—will further clean up the Commonwealth's statute books by repealing acts and amending unnecessary and outdated provisions. The Spent and Redundant Instruments Repeal Regulation 2015 is also part of the repeal day package.

Cutting red tape is at the heart of the coalition's commitment to build a stronger, more prosperous economy and a safe, secure Australia. To quote the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Christian Porter, who has done some outstanding work in this area:

Regulation should only remain in force for as long as necessary.

This package of legislation before us today is not about removing protections. This is, rather, the application of common sense. Subject to the parliament, these bills will collectively repeal over 890 Commonwealth acts. The Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill alone will amend or repeal 14 acts across portfolios, some of which are spent and redundant or have remained on the Commonwealth's statute books long beyond the date of fulfilling their
purpose. Other acts being amended or appealed have provisions that were superseded by other legislation many, many years ago.

These measures, part of the coalition's third repeal day, build on the $2.1 billion in red tape reduction decisions we made in October last year. We set a target of reducing the regulatory burden by $1 billion a year. Not only did we exceed that net target by more than double in our first year, but we are well on our way to meeting a new target of $1 billion worth of deregulatory decisions this year. Compare this to the previous Labor government's record, when Commonwealth regulation was costing Australians approximately $65 billion per year—a remarkable 4.2 per cent of GDP. Labor introduced more than 975 new or amending pieces of legislation and over 21,000 additional regulations. This is despite Kevin Rudd's 2007 promise of a 'one regulation in, one regulation out' policy. As a result of six years of Labor's red tape, last year we ranked 124th out of 148 countries in the world competitiveness index, which describes the burden of government regulation.

Let's not forget the carbon tax and the mining tax—two business-destroying, ineffective taxes now scrapped by the coalition. As we know, Labor introduced the world's biggest carbon tax, which drove up prices, reduced growth and added red tape for over 76,000 businesses or organisations each year. If left in place, this would have cost the Australian economy a cumulative $1.3 trillion by the middle of this century. Of course, after voting time and time again to stop us abolishing the carbon tax, now Labor wants to bring back the carbon tax if they are elected. I have to say, this is something that is of great concern to businesses and residents in my electorate on the Central Coast. Small businesses talk about the choice between paying the carbon tax and the increased electricity bills or employing another young person in their business. People in the streets of the Central Coast came up and spoke to me about their concerns about the increasing prices of electricity. Make no mistake: this is a very real issue on the streets of the Central Coast.

In relation to the mining tax, we were told it would raise $12 billion over its first two years. Instead it raised less than three per cent of what was promised but added record levels of red tape and discouraged investment in Australia. This sort of unnecessary red tape is a contributing factor to Australia's productivity challenge. It reflects Labor's fundamental inability to understand business and the value of individual enterprise.

The Productivity Commission has previously estimated that reducing red tape will boost national GDP by $12 billion a year. Across industry it is believed red tape accounts on average for four per cent of business costs, so I am pleased to be part of a coalition government that is tackling this head on. It means we are now able to, with a very high degree of accuracy, publicly report to parliament a downturn in the total amount and cost of federal regulation. In fact, the government will have repealed more than 10,300 legislative instruments and introduced legislation to repeal over 2,700 acts of parliament. Ultimately, cutting red tape is about Australians spending less time filling out paperwork, less time waiting in queues and less time searching for information.

The New South Wales government have also made moves to cut red tape because they know the benefits to the local economy. When the state government announced recently they would cut more than $815 million in red tape, the New South Wales Business Chamber was full of praise. The chief executive, Stephen Cartwright, described it as 'a significant achievement that will make it easier for small businesses to grow and employ more people'.
He described red tape as an 'incredible burden on small business operators' and said that regulations of all levels of government were 'combining to create billions of dollars in compliance costs for businesses each and every year'.

This desire expressed to see small businesses grow, thrive, succeed and create even more jobs and more opportunities for people right around Australia reflects my own passion, particularly in my electorate on the Central Coast, where we see 30,000 commuters leave early in the morning to Sydney or Newcastle and return home late at night to their families because currently that is where their job opportunities are. We see this measure, this suite of bills, and our policy to reduce red tape as vital in helping us boost confidence in our local economy. It is also something that is central to our commitment to deliver our Growth Plan for the Central Coast, which is about delivering more opportunity for people to live and to work in our local region.

Red tape is one of those things that hold small businesses back and that hold back opportunities in our local community. In fact, one of our community leaders, Sean Gordon, the CEO of the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, spoke recently about this in *The Australian*. He spoke about the red tape that he faced at almost every turn while working on a major project on the Central Coast. Indeed, I am advised that Indigenous service delivery has, under Labor, had to navigate 200 Indigenous related programs administered by 17 Commonwealth agencies. I understand that each program had its own application form and processes. In the resources sector the member for Bradfield, earlier in the chamber, recounted a story of one particular project that apparently required 4,000 meetings before approval was granted, and ultimately 12,000 state and 300 Commonwealth conditions were placed on that project.

I will now briefly outline some of the ways that we are making life easier for businesses, particularly businesses on the Central Coast, by cutting the red tape burden. We have established the Fair Work Ombudsman's Small Business Helpline to assist business owners with advice on employee wages and workplace laws. There is improved communication from the Australian Taxation Office with small business through a new digital news and information service. The ATO's website is also being improved to make it easier to browse. We have introduced a bill to amend the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 to reduce compliance burdens. This includes the surely common sense removal of unnecessary requirements relating to reporting food related product safety incidents. We have improved the pay as you go instalment system by changing the entry and exit thresholds, meaning that certain small businesses will no longer have to interact with the pay as you go instalment system. We have scrapped complex certification requirements of aged-care facilities, including those that duplicate state building requirements.
under the Building Code of Australia. We have streamlined the forms for the Aged Care Approvals Round process, reducing the overall size of the application forms by half.

We have also taken measures that will result in millions of dollars in compliance savings for the disability services sector. In fact, I was pleased to be speaking in the Federation Chamber just this morning to confirm details about the full rollout of the NDIS on the Central Coast, which is significant and welcome news for our region. With the rollout of such a big project it is vital that we implement solutions to improve outcomes for people with disabilities and service providers. Among the changes as part of this legislation participants will be able to accept their Employment Pathway Plan on the Australian JobSearch website rather than using email or post. We have also streamlined the process for mergers and amalgamations of Australian Disability Enterprises, of which there are three in my electorate, for those looking to merge for viability and sustainability reasons. The Hearing Services Program's online portal will also be improved to enable real-time confirmation of client eligibility and automated application processing. This reduces record-keeping requirements, eliminating numerous paper forms and simplifying a variety of administrative tasks.

This government's commitment to repeal red tape is ongoing. Indeed, today earlier in this place, the Minister for Education introduced new legislation to streamline regulation, remove duplicate requirements and cut red tape for Australia's international education providers. The Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Streamlining Regulation) Bill 2015 removes unnecessary reporting from the act while protecting the high quality of Australia's international education sector. International education is Australia's largest non-resource export and generates an estimated 130,000 jobs throughout the country. Through this bill we are cutting unnecessary red tape to allow our institutions to focus on their core business and to be even more competitive in offering world-class education. The minister estimates it will generate $76 million a year in deregulatory savings for our education institutions. So it cuts red tape while improving Australia's reputation as a high-quality, world-class destination for students.

This is an issue particularly close to my heart, because we have a dream on the Central Coast to see our region known as a world-class region of excellence, not just for our beauty, not just for more local jobs and more businesses growing, thriving, succeeding and prospering, but also to see world-class excellence and world-class educational opportunities on the Central Coast. I am pleased to say that the University of Newcastle is currently promoting a wonderful proposal that would see a stand-alone Central Coast medical school and medical research institute, which is their dream, in the heart of Gosford in my electorate. It is outstanding opportunity for more students, not just on the Central Coast, but around Australia and beyond to be able to access and participate in world-class education right in the heart of the Central Coast.

In conclusion, I want to put on record one more thing. As the granddaughter of a farmer I want to indicate that this bill also helps slash red tape for cattle producers with the removal of the need for tail tags on cattle needed for processing for the EU meat market. From this month Australian producers are no longer required to use special lime-green tags on the tails of cattle produced for processing into beef exported to the EU. I have been advised that cattle producers will save up to $1 million a year just by the removal of the need for these unnecessary tags.
Like I said at the beginning of my contribution, this is common sense legislation. It is all part of the government's plan to make life easier for businesses and industry and, of course, for the Central Coast community. I commend the bills to the House.

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (12:14): I rise in support of the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015, which, while it does not have a very exciting name, does so many positive things for many businesses and individuals in this country by improving the efficiency of government and cutting unnecessary red tape and costs to the Australian taxpayer. The bill is a whole-of-government initiative to amend or repeal legislation across seven portfolios. The bill brings forward measures to reduce the regulatory burden for businesses, individuals and the community sector that are the subject of an individual, stand-alone bill. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr Porter, said in his second reading speech, this bill:

... will amend or repeal 14 acts across portfolios, some of which are spent and redundant or have remained on the Commonwealth statute books long beyond the date of fulfilling their purpose. Other acts being amended or repealed have provisions that have been superseded by other legislation years ago.

The bill also makes a number of amendments to legislation to reduce complexity and compliance costs.

It is often all too legitimate criticism that governments are too bureaucratic and inefficient. As to what it means for the business community, I hear much comment from the 30,000 businesses that I represent. Coming from a small-business background myself, I hear their lament. Often they say to me, 'If only government could operate more like business,' or make the more pointed criticism, 'If we ran our business the way government operates, we wouldn't have a business; we'd all go broke.' Regrettably, often what happens is that, when those opposite get into government, they do send the country broke, and it is up to us to clean up their mess. That is exactly what this bill is all about. It is about cleaning up the mess.

The coalition's goal is to make life easier for Australians and to make it easier for businesses to invest, to create jobs, to employ people and to grow the economy. Cutting red tape is about Australians spending less time in queues, less time filling out forms, less time searching for information and less time dealing with the duplication and the myriad of forms across different departments. Many businesses continually tell me that they are filling out the same information in a different format when they are asked for it by different government departments. Under the former Labor government, Commonwealth regulation was costing Australians approximately $65 billion. That is a staggering amount of money—4.2 per cent of GDP. The coalition set itself a target to reduce the regulatory burden by $1 billion a year. Not only did we do that; we doubled that target in our first year, and we are now on our way to meeting a fresh $1 billion target for 2015. On the government's third repeal day, which was on 18 March this year, we made a decision to decrease the $65 billion regulatory burden by $2.45 billion. To date, we have implemented $1.57 billion of that $2.45 billion, with $880 million to be implemented. I thank the Assistant Treasurer, the member for Kooyong, for all of the fantastic work that he did in that process. That is $2.45 billion in savings from cutting red tape, which is equal to every man, woman and child in this country putting $100 back into the national piggy bank.
What is concerning is that this whole process is the first time in Australian history that a Commonwealth government has undertaken a thorough and accurate stocktake of all of those federal regulatory costs and consistently measured and reduced the cost of Commonwealth government red tape on Australian businesses, organisations, families and individuals. As a result, Australia now has its most precise, comprehensive and transparent program to reverse the growing costs of red tape on the Australian economy. It is now more than a year since we started this concerted plan to reduce the regulatory burden on our society, because we recognise that, for far too long, Australians have suffered from poorly designed and excessive regulation.

There are six areas that we are streamlining and cutting red tape in that I want to focus on today: business, education, health, building and construction, individuals, and students. In the business sector, one of the key measures was implementing a much easier monthly pay-as-you-go system for certain businesses. Businesses choosing to use this method will now only need to calculate their actual instalment income on a quarterly basis. There are annual compliance savings there of $2.7 million. We have also improved the Australian Taxation Office website so that six million Australians can find relevant information more quickly. That has resulted in an annual compliance saving of $48.5 million. Other measures announced in the first year of cutting red tape included repealing the carbon and mining taxes, making other changes to the entry thresholds for pay-as-you-go instalments and expanding private sector access to the government's Document Verification Service. That resulted in a combined net red tape saving of $194.4 million. We also introduced a one-stop shop for environmental approvals, resulting in a net red tape saving of a staggering $426.3 million.

In the educational sector, we have developed an online national assessment platform which will deliver the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN, online. That is scheduled to be available from 2017 and will deliver an annual compliance saving of $9.7 million.

There are so many other good stories happening, particularly in the health area. A streamlined grant administration processes for the National Health and Medical Research Council and a range of other changes will result in a net red tape saving of more than $150 million. This will be very welcome news to the many medical research institutes that are based in my electorate and those particularly in Brisbane: QUT, the University of Queensland, the Queensland Institute of Medical Research and many, many other research bodies.

In the building and construction area, we have removed the costly and time consuming requirement for builders to be certified to Australian standard AS4801 or equivalent prior to applying for scheme accreditation. Unaccredited builders will now have the opportunity to undertake government funded building work where they are in a joint venture with an accredited company. They can operate under the partner's scheme accredited systems. That will be a very welcome relief to many in the construction industry.

For individuals, we have implemented additional functionality for myGov users to allow customers to update their details in one place using the myGov tell us once service to obtain secure and convenient access to online services with a single account and one set of credentials. Again, that has saved an enormous amount of money: $5.4 million. We have made identity checks easier for those many hundreds of thousands of people who are working
in the retail sectors and for consumers when they purchase a new prepaid mobile phone. That has delivered annual compliance savings of $6.2 million. The myTax initiative reduces the amount of information 1.4 million users need to supply to the Australian Taxation Office when filing their e-tax forms each year. That has resulted in red tape savings of $156 million.

The government is making it easier for Australians to access government services. The changes will see Centrelink claimants able to check the status of their claims online. That will reduced the need to waste many minutes in direct follow-up interventions by phone or having to go in in person at a Centrelink service centre. Students will also be able to upload their course selections. Again, they can make some very flexible changes. They can do that in their own time and at whatever time they want to do that. Students who receive government payments are now able to change those details online. It will be very, very useful for those who are studying and receiving things like youth allowance. They will no longer be required to contact a call centre or attend a service centre. They can just go online. This will result in annual compliance savings of $2.7 million.

In undertaking this thorough and consistent stock take of all Commonwealth regulatory costs, the government has developed a map of the Commonwealth regulatory environment. What is surprising is that this is the first time in Australian history that a Commonwealth government has undertaken a thorough and accurate stock take—and it is a stock take—of all federal regulatory costs. It is consistently measuring and reducing the cost of Commonwealth red tape on Australian businesses, organisations, families and individuals.

What is equally surprising is that this is one of the few times that any country in the world has engaged in a rigorous and consistent process that allows for an absolutely accurate assessment of the total cost a national government imposes on the economy. The benefits of having an accurate measure of Commonwealth regulations is obvious in the now and, as I say, very important for ministers, departments, secretaries, regulators and policy officers. They will be able to get a detailed picture of what regulations the Commonwealth government has instituted through primary legislation, subordinate instruments and quasi-regulations.

Thanks to this process being undertaken by the coalition, Australia now has its most precise, comprehensive and transparent program to reverse the growing cost of red tape on the economy. It also provides an opportunity for the government to learn how to work more positively with business, community organisations and many other individuals. This has been very important and highly beneficial. Reducing red tape is not just about what we do within our own borders; it is also about other countries, it is about potential investors and it is also about importers and also about how we are perceived in terms of the ease of doing business in this country and how easy it is for overseas investors.

An unacceptable fact is that, according to the World Economic Forum's global competitiveness index, Australia's competitiveness has declined during the course of the last decade. In 2013-14, the Australian economy was ranked 21st out of 148 economies, with the perception of those surveyed being that Australia was well behind in terms of global best practice when it came to the burden of government regulation. This is not a dynamic that this country can afford to have continue. This is exactly what Prime Minister Turnbull was talking about when he said:

The Australia of the future has to be a nation that is agile, that is innovative, that is creative. We cannot achieve that outcome if our spirit of innovation is strangled by red tape.
This will be an ongoing process that the Turnbull government is committed to: reducing the regulatory burden for all Australians. We understand that in order to build a prosperous economy we must relieve the burden of red tape on businesses, community organisations, families and individuals. We must allow people and businesses to do what they do best without spending endless hours dealing with paperwork, waiting in queues or searching for information. They should be concentrating on market development, product development and staff development.

It is important that businesses, community organisations and others in my electorate of Brisbane contact me to see how reduce red tape so that we can continue to build a productive and prosperous economy for the benefit of all Australians. As to this, I want to highlight the fact that the *Australian government annual deregulation report 2014* and the *Australian government's Autumn repeal day 2015 overview* can be downloaded at cuttingredtape.gov.au.

This is a much welcomed bill. It will make a huge difference to the many thousands of businesses, families and individuals in the electorate of Brisbane. I welcome this bill.

Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (12:29): I rise also to add my great appreciation for the government on this third repeal day and the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 that we have before us in the House of Representatives today. It is one of the greatest achievements, I think, of the coalition government that we, twice a year, examine, review and repeal unnecessary red tape and regulation and reduce the amount of regulatory burden on individuals, businesses and ordinary Australians.

From the outset I want to say that one of the most time-consuming things that I find as a member of parliament, as the member for Mitchell, in dealing with Australian businesses who approach me as their local member is their great challenge with over-regulation, with difficult government process and with bureaucratic process when wanting to do something innovative, something different and something to advance their business or the quality of their product or service. It engages a large part of my time as I represent an area which has so many dynamic small and medium enterprises, like those at the Norwest Business Park, and also larger businesses. Those businesses also have difficulty with out-of-date and difficult regulation.

That is why I think it is very important that every year at regular intervals we turn to see what can be done to reduce the burden of red tape, to regulate and deregulate as appropriate to move with what is a very fast-paced society and economy. Prime Minister Turnbull speaks about the disruptive nature of technology and of changing patterns within a modern global world. That is why parliaments and legislatures need to become much more agile and forward thinking about how they react to regulation and how they are able to not only regulate but deregulate where necessary.

There is a very good example within this bill of something that would make practical common sense to everybody listening and anybody who cares to take interest in this matter that we are talking about today, and I will go straight to it. There are so many things that we are doing, but the one thing that stands out to me is that, for individuals, we are removing restrictions on the use of personal electronic devices so that travellers can use their personal electronic devices during all phases of flights. This produces a compliance saving $17.7 million. All of us fly nowadays. We have all asked, 'Why can't I use that electronic device that isn't a communication device while I am flying, during all phases of flight?’ It is something that everybody wants to do today. It is something that is simple and common sense,
something that every passenger can relate to. Everybody thinks, 'Why do I have to switch this off? The plane is not being affected by my personal electronic device.' That was an out-of-date Commonwealth regulation. That is why. We are getting rid of these sorts of things and being flexible enough to move with the times, to deregulate. Why do we need that regulation anymore? The answer is: we do not. The compliance cost savings of $17.7 million goes back into the economy and does not stay in the dead weight of regulation. Ordinary passengers can go about their business using their personal electronic devices during all phases of flights—a great outcome.

On something of a more serious nature, of course, there are billions of dollars to be saved in compliance costs from real regulation and the regulatory red tape that holds up the advance and development of business. It is a real challenge that they face. Too many businesses in too many fields and sectors today tell me that Australia is still one of the worst jurisdictions to do business in. In a globalised economy, we have to take this very seriously. Whether it is the health sector—which I am particularly familiar with due to the companies in my electorate—wanting to manufacture things here in Australia, it is harder for a small Australian business to get regulatory approval here than it is in the United States or Europe. There is no reason for that. It is also harder for a small start-up medical business to get regulatory approval here in Australia than in New Zealand or Canada, by a factor of five.

Why is Australia the most difficult regulatory environment to get a business up and running in of anywhere in the world in many cases? That is the question being posed by these bills. That is the question being posed by the Turnbull coalition government. Twice a year, every year, we ensure that we ask: how can we deregulate? How can we delegislate? How can we provide micro-economic reforms that really address these issues? They are crushing innovation and the ability of people to start up businesses and get them into successful zones.

When you are looking through the provisions of this bill, you will see many other key measures that I think are pretty good. The pay-as-you-go provisions, making monthly payments for certain businesses easier, have a compliance savings cost of $2.7 million. We are continuing to make pay-as-you-go costs for certain businesses easier. For the 457 visa program, streamlining the process of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications will have annual compliance savings of $29.9 million. The trucking sector will have savings of $8.3 million. Improving the ATO website so that six million Australians can find relevant information more quickly—something that I understand all taxpayers will be relieved about—has a compliance savings cost of $48.5 million.

There are so many things that we are doing inside this legislation. Government has such scope today that most people will never hear about. But, if you are affected by these things, it is a cost on you, a cost on your business and a cost on the administration of our economy that can easily be removed by deregulating. That will have no change in the quality of government and no change in the quality of our society, other than people having more time and more money in their pockets. We will have less government, doing less. It goes to the heart of our guiding values and principles about government. It is a guiding value of the coalition government to ensure that we have as little government as possible—the government that we need, the regulation that we need to administer our society efficiently, but as little government as possible to allow us to get on with things and do things that we all want to keep doing.
It is good to see additional things in this bill such as those relating to the use of online and disruptive technologies by government agencies. It is good to see things in this bill that will ensure that students, farmers and other people are able to access government agencies in modern and relevant ways. A farmer out there in the middle of the country, who has limited time to do all of the work that he has to do all day, will not have to spend half a day on the phone. If you speak to some farmers, they can spend a long time on the phone to government agencies a long way away, disrupting what they are doing, slowing down their day, slowing down our productivity and making it more difficult for a smaller scale farmer to compete. We want to remove those burdens completely for all of these people who are doing so much in our economy.

I think this has to be a regular and thorough process. It is often the case that the opposition says: 'This is just rats and mice, pennies and dimes—small-scale stuff. We would have done it anyway. It's obvious.' I do not think it is obvious. I do not think it is rats and mice. I do not think it is pennies and dimes. These small things affect individuals out there in the community, whether they are farmers, small businesses, micro-businesses, stay-at-home mums, stay-at-home dads, people who are trying to start up their own online businesses. It is those regulatory burdens that slow them down, that stop them from going forward, that take much more time in a day than they ought to and that really do put a burden on our innovative capacity as a society. It is about our ability to regularly remove these things, to ask, 'Why do we need that regulation?' or 'Why are we putting hours of red tape on the ATO website when we can make it minutes?' These things are micro—they are microeconomic reforms—but they matter. They are of great benefit to the whole of our society. When you make things easier for individuals—for individual family units and for individual businesses—you make our whole society better in a way that I think is much more elegant and productive than trying to implement macroeconomic reform.

I am a big fan. Whether you look at businesses, individuals, the farming and agriculture sector, the health sector, the building and construction industry sector or the education sector—all the different sectors that are benefiting from microeconomic reforms within this bill—it is a necessary. It is vibrant, I think, to be taking this approach to small things. All of the little things that need to get done do need to be done so that we can have easier interaction with government and easier interaction with our society so that when people want to do something that is a bit different, that is a bit outside of the current regulatory environment, that is innovative, that requires a bit of a risk—of capital, of intelligence, of their family's welfare—to put something up and see whether it is going to work in the marketplace, it is made as easy as possible from a government perspective for people to do that.

That is why I am really happy to stand up for the third time in this place to speak on these bills, and I will always speak on these bills. I will make that commitment to my electorate and to this parliament. I will always be happy to come in here and speak about all of these measures, these microeconomic reforms, these individual things that we are doing to make the lives of individuals, families and businesses so much easier in terms of interaction with government. The common-sense things that people ask us every day as legislators and as individual members of parliament are: why is that there? Why can't you get rid of that regulation so that we can just have more time in our day, so that we can get on with the things we want to be doing? Often the answer, as you will see from this legislation, is that we really
do not need that regulation, we really do not need that to be the way it is. We can fix that, and
twice a year now we are going to be doing this.

There is much more to be done in this space, and it is not acceptable that in so many fields
we are so behind our competitors in terms of competitiveness of regulation and the regulatory
environment. It is not acceptable that we are the hardest place to do business in, in so many
fields, among most Western and Asia-Pacific countries in the world. We have to make
ourselves competitive, and these microeconomic reform processes that we are engaging in
today are the best way we can do that regularly as a parliament. So, I would ask the
opposition to cease some of its derision of some of these measures and to adopt this when
they are in government—

**Wyatt Roy:** In a very long time.

**Mr HAWKE:** Yes, in a very long time—that is a good point—when Wyatt Roy is ready
to be Prime Minister, in 40 years time!

**Wyatt Roy:** And they will be in government?

**Mr HAWKE:** Yes, when they are ready to govern again, in 2048. When you are ready,
please adopt these measures, because I will support you if you continue this process, and I
think all members here will support you in that endeavour. We must as a parliament be
committed to microeconomic reform, and we must be committed to deregulation and getting
the government out of people's lives so that they can get on with what they want to do.

**WYATT ROY (Longman) (12:40):** I commend the previous speaker, the member for
Mitchell, on his contribution to this debate on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill
2015 and related legislation. In this place few people have the same passion he does for small
government. Small government is sometimes a contentious idea, but on this side of the House,
on the Liberal side of the House, we recognise that the great prosperity is not found here in
Canberra; it is found when our citizens have enterprise and are prepared to go out and take a
risk and government is actually taken out of their lives so that they can have a go and make
something of their lives. I think it is a very refreshing moment, standing here in the parliament
today speaking not on new laws, not on new regulation, not on a new invasion into the lives
of everyday Australians but on the removal of government from our lives so that our citizens
can achieve their full potential and our nation can achieve significant prosperity because
everyday Australians are freed from government and have the opportunity to start those new
enterprising businesses, to create the new prosperity for our nation and ultimately create the
jobs that all Australians need.

This is, in no small measure, a very bold initiative. The coalition government has a
commitment to reduce red tape by over $1 billion every single year. That has a very practical
impact on those enterprising businesses that our nation needs in order to thrive. We have seen
some bizarre opposition from members opposite around these red-tape repeal days. This is the
third red-tape repeal day on which members have had the opportunity to speak. While we on
this side of the House believe that the Australian people are intelligent and capable and should
be free to live their lives how they choose, the Labor members of this House, those members
opposite, believe that there is no problem that the government does not have a solution for—if
there are any challenges in our society then government must be at the heart of the response to
those challenges. This is a very fundamental divide between the two sides of politics.
I agree with the previous speaker, the member for Mitchell, that should one day the Labor members, unfortunately, move from that side of the House to this side then they might consider continuing with this initiative and, instead of talking about how great it is that the parliament has passed new laws, talk about how great it is that the parliament has removed laws, regulation and red tape so that Australians are free to live their lives how they choose.

In a very practical sense, these red-tape repeal days have achieved a very positive impact for the nation and particularly for my community. For Packer Leather, a business in Narangba, there were crazy regulations such that when they needed chemicals registered in Australia—chemicals that went through a very significant registration process in the European Union and the United States—they had to pay tens of thousands of dollars to have those chemicals re-registered in Australia, essentially to fill out an enormous amount of bureaucratic paperwork to achieve the same end. With these red-tape repeal days we have managed to remove that regulation, and now Packer can spend those tens of thousands of dollars employing more locals.

This is a business that is now radically expanding. It is a manufacturing business that is over 100 years old. It is manufacturing leather for iconic Australian brands—Sherrin footballs made of Kangaroo, and cricket balls, as well as the leather that goes into R. M. Williams boots. They were forced to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for the registration of and even the scientific measurements around their leather manufacturing machines imported from Italy. Of course, that regulation already occurred in the European Union. When they imported, they then had to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for the same regulation here in Australia to achieve the same outcome. Common sense would say, 'If it's good enough for the European Union, it's probably good enough for Australia. Why don't we simply adopt those standards?' In these red-tape repeal days, we have moved towards initiatives like that, which, again, are saving this business thousands of dollars that it is reinvesting into employing locals.

One of the things that I have been very proud of about this initiative and this round of reform is that it has really embraced the grassroots of this reform package by going out into the Australian community and talking to as many businesses as possible about how we can find these red-tape reductions. One of the first instances that we saw in this process was when the Assistant Treasurer came up to Caboolture, which is in my electorate. We had a community forum, and Ian Rodgers from R&R Hire in Caboolture got up and spoke about a very complicated piece of regulation around the PPSA, which, in short, is a very complicated bureaucratic system where hire companies have to register their equipment. In effect, it had the unintended consequence that, if you hired out a piece of equipment—a pallet jack or something like that—to a company for a few months and the company you hired it out to went broke, the liquidators would come in and seize that asset that actually belonged to the hire company as if it belonged to the business that hired it. This placed a huge burden on hire companies across the entire country, particularly in my community. The paperwork involved with registering on the PPSA was unbelievable.

This is a reform that few countries around the world have managed. It has been put in the too-hard basket for many years. When Josh Frydenberg came up to Caboolture, Ian Rodgers stood up and started to explain this. As put of this package, we managed to introduce a reform bill into this parliament to change and remove those laws. That bill has now passed the
Senate, and we have been able to remove a significant burden of red tape from not only local hire companies but also hire companies across Australia. That Caboolture company itself has just recently doubled its staff. That is a huge success. It really shows that, when we get government out of our lives, when we get a practical removal of red tape and regulation for those small businesses, which do not have many staff to deal with it, they can then invest in new staff, making their businesses more productive, and put those resources into marketing and advertising so that they can get more sales. In a very practical sense, this reform package is making a very big difference when it comes to jobs growth, both locally and nationally.

There are other examples of some practical reforms in this reform bill before the House. We are implementing easier monthly PAYG for certain businesses. Businesses choosing to use the new method will only need to calculate their actual instalment income on a quarterly basis, and that will mean annual savings of about $2.7 million. That is a very practical change. We are improving the ATO website so that Australians can find relevant information faster, and that will see annual savings of about $48.5 million. We are removing the requirement for heavy vehicle operators of B-double truck combinations registered under the Federal Interstate Registration Scheme to fit additional spray suppression devices, which is giving us an annual saving of about $8.3 million. That is a very practical, simple change.

We are making identity checks simpler and easier for retailers and consumers when purchasing prepaid mobile phones. Everyone who has bought a prepaid mobile phone knows how annoying the paperwork is. This will make a very practical, real difference to that process, and that will give us annual savings of about $6.2 million.

Another initiative in this package is that students who receive government payments are now able to change their details online at a time that best suits them, without being required to contact a call centre or attend a service centre. I think everyone could understand how that is a very practical, simple change that will make a big difference in people's lives. It will deliver us a saving of about $2.7 million.

This reform initiative is a return to common sense. Here in Canberra, common sense often seems to be lacking, and it is very exciting to rise in the nation's parliament and talk about a very common-sense, practical reform that will get government out of the lives of everyday Australians and free them so that they can go out, have a go and invest in those businesses so that they can increase the productivity of our country and, ultimately, create more jobs for all Australians. For that reason, I strongly commend these bills to the House, and I look forward to speaking on the next package of reform of this government.

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (12:50): I rise also to join the member for Longman and others to speak on the Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015. On this side of politics, we are all about small government. It is the DNA of the Country Liberal Party, which is the party I belong to that is in coalition with the government. The DNA of my colleagues throughout the coalition is all about small government. There is a place for regulation, legislation and government oversight, but where does it exist? It needs to be part of a deliberate, careful, considered mechanism to improve the business environment and the quality of life for individuals.

We often look at this the wrong way. We should not have a system where businesses and individuals strive to satisfy the needs of the bureaucracy. The system should be designed so that the bureaucracy and the legislation satisfy the needs of all Australians. That is what we
on this side of the House are endeavouring to do. Every line on our law books should serve as a policy outcome. Every line, every paragraph and every subclause should be weighed up against one simple question. That question is: is this the most efficient way to achieve what we are trying to achieve? If anyone can identify a regulation, a part of a regulation or a system where the answer to that question is no, someone—either someone in this place, through a legislative mechanism, or someone in the bureaucracy—needs to go back to the drawing board and start with the end in mind. What is the outcome we are looking for here? What is the best way to achieve that outcome with the smallest burden of compliance?

The hundreds of thousands of pages of legislation we currently have on the books have not been shaped through this framework. Since the parliament first convened some 114 years ago, governments of all flavours have passed tens of thousands of bills. On top of that, their state and territory counterparts have been going through the same process. At the same time, local governments have also been going through these processes in their areas of responsibility. Each of those tens of thousands of pages of legislation, regulatory processes and protocols adds to the burden that individuals and businesses have to bear—not to mention being a burden for government to bear, since all these acts and laws need oversight and administration. Until this government was elected, no-one had ever gone through this tangle of red tape, these tens of thousands of pages, and weighed costs against benefits. No-one had done it.

I am happy to stand here as a member of the coalition government—the first government in Australia's history to do exactly that. When we were elected in 2013, we received a clear mandate from the Australian people and from the Australian business community to reduce the burden of excess regulation. I use the word 'excess' very deliberately. There is a role for regulation. Some laws protect us from crime, some laws protect the environment from pollution, we have regulations to make sure taxes are collected, and we have bureaucracies to ensure that people who are in need get assistance—the people who use Centrelink, for example. But, if a law is redundant, if a law is inefficient or if there is a better way for the intended outcome to be achieved, then the regulation needs to go.

Looking over the explanatory memorandum for the legislation we are considering here today, it is not hard to find fantastic examples of redundancy. You do not have to go far to find superseded legislation, cumbersome legislation, legislation which doubles up and legislation which is inefficient. A quick glance at the full page of abbreviations one needs to know in order to understand the legislation gives a pretty strong indication that something has gone wrong along the way.

Consider, if you will, the industry of beef production. In the Northern Territory, cattle production is the cornerstone of our economy—a cornerstone, I point out, that was without warning cast aside by the Labor government in 2011, but that is a story for another time. Modern farmers are professionals. They need to understand meteorology, chemistry, geography and animal husbandry. They are scientists striving to get the highest quality product possible from the resources they have available. They should not need to be lawyers as well. Yet there are six pieces of legislation on this list alone which deal directly with beef production: the Domestic Meat Premises Charge Act, the Export Inspection and Meat Charges Collection Act, the Meat Export Charge Act, the Meat Export Charge Collection Act, the Meat Inspection Act and the Meat Inspection Arrangements Act—and remember that
these are just the federal regulations! The situation is especially absurd when you realise that large sections of the acts I just listed have been redundant since 2011—yet they still remain on our books.

Every unnecessary piece of legislation, every inefficient piece of legislation, is a compliance burden on all Australians. Every form a businessman or a businesswoman fills out in order to satisfy a bureaucracy represents time he or she is not spending developing their business. Can you imagine how many forms and how many layers of bureaucracy someone involved in beef production must come up against? Apart from those six acts, there was subsequent legislation—which left two layers of federal regulation in effect—in addition to all the state, territory and local government regulations.

I am immensely proud that legislation repealed by this coalition government is already saving $2.45 billion annually. Just in case you did not hear me correctly, I will repeat that: it is saving $2.45 billion. That is a lot of money. If this bill receives assent, a further 890 redundant or inefficient Commonwealth acts will be struck from the statute books. Health, agriculture, telecommunications, human services, transport—all of these industries will see compliance costs reduced. How many hundreds of thousands, or millions, of dollars has the beef industry spent navigating that maze of red tape I discussed a moment ago?

I am excited about this legislation, because it will free business up to do what it does best: employing people and generating wealth and jobs. Every single dollar that businesses do not spend on navigating bureaucracies and cross-checking redundant legislation is a dollar they will invest in their business—money they can use to buy new equipment or employ new staff.

Every hour a business operator does not have to spend deciphering lists of legislative acronyms or filling in the forms needed to satisfy the bureaucracies, which have been set up to oversee these laws, is an hour saved. It is an hour they will spend with their clients or staff developing their business and increasing productivity.

A good government appears when it is needed, does what needs to be done, and then gets out of the way and lets people get on with their business. That is what this government is all about.

We heard the member for Longman talking about one of the examples in this package of bills is simplifying the process for buying a mobile phone—identification for prepaid mobile phones. That is also helping our young people, because they are very big users of prepaid mobile phones.

I wish to reiterate that removing redundant legislation is an example of how we, as a good coalition government, are getting out of the way of business and letting people do what they need to do—that is, running their businesses, generating wealth and creating jobs. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr McCormack (Riverina—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance) (13:02): That was yet another good speech from the member for Solomon who talked about the benefit of government getting out of the way and letting business get on with the job that it does best: raising wealth and prosperity.

I heard a 'Hear, hear' from the Labor member for Rankin—he understands from his former role the need for government to get smaller and business to get bigger. He gets it—I wish a few of his colleagues on the other side understood that concept as well.
The Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 is important, because it goes to the heart of what we are about as a coalition government—a good coalition government, a good Liberal-National government. This is a continuation of the good work started by the member for Kooyong when he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and continued by Christian Porter, the member for Pearce. As I say, this is very, very important legislation, because it takes in a whole-of-government initiative to amend or repeal legislation across nine portfolios.

There are more than 20,000 statutes, laws, regulations and bills on federal parliamentary books. I heard from some of the Labor members who were speaking in this debate that all this is about is removing apostrophes and semicolons, putting commas in place and seeing if full stops are totally needed. In one part of his speech on Monday, the member for Scullin talked about a saving of $3,000 in deregulatory costs and mocked it. That is emblematic of what was wrong with Labor—and I appreciate that the member for Scullin was not here at that time—between 2007 and 2013.

That $3,000 did not mean all that much to the member for Scullin; a million dollars did not matter all that much; a billion dollars or a thousand million dollars did not matter all that much. That is why we saw the debt and deficit rack up to record proportions. That is why, when we came into government after the 7 September 2013 election, we inherited a debt and deficit legacy, which saddled our children and grandchildren with a great burden of responsibility to lower it—which of course came back to the Liberal-Nationals to fix, as we always do. That is what Liberal-National governments do very, very well: we fix up the mess that we always, inevitably, inherit from Labor.

That $3,000—I might remind the member for Scullin that it does matter, because $3,000 here and $3,000 there adds up. He called them pennies—'If we look after the pennies,' he said in his Monday speech. That is true. They all add up and they add up to big amounts. This omnibus repeal day debate is so important, because it is a matter of adding up the pennies.

Pennies—or cents in today's terminology—turn into dollars. Dollars turn into billions of dollars. A penny saved goes a long way towards paying back the debt that we inherited. But it is not what we, as a Liberal-National government, inherited—if we inherited it, it might be okay—it is the taxpayers of this nation who inherited it. We have just got the job as the sensible people in the parliament to fix the mess.

It is not just about commas, semicolons and apostrophes; this is about dollars and cents. This particular bill brings forward a range of minor, some might say non-controversial measures to reduce regulatory burden for business, individuals and the community sector, and that is so important. We understand—as, in good faith, I know the member for Rankin does—the need to be able to get out of the way of business. You understand it, Member for Hughes, sitting in the chair. I have heard you many times in this place advocate passionately—

**Dr Chalmers:** He's going for an extension of time!

**Mr McCormack:** I might get an extension of time; I'm certainly hoping for that!

And I know the work you have done in conjunction with Professor Frank Zumbo to look at regulation, to see how we can reduce it, to see what we can do with such things as the Competition and Consumer Act. I know that is digressing a little bit from the legislation before us, but they are all the sorts of things that are going to help business get ticking along.
They are all the sorts of things that are going to help us as a coalition government, as a parliament, as a nation to pay back the debt and deficit that we have been struck with.

There is a risk that this bill will not be considered ambitious enough. We have heard that from Labor members. But it is ambitious. It follows on from the successful repeal days put forward by the member for Kooyong. As we move along as a government, hopefully, these omnibus repeal days will not be ambitious as the previous one, because the art of good government is to get the regulations such that they streamline efficiency, to get the regulations such that business knows that it can perform the job it does on behalf of the nation and the taxpayers to ensure that things are going well. The economic parameters, policies and growth that we are attempting to put into place with every piece of legislation that we bring into this place and that we attempt to get through in the Senate goes to the very heart of that, goes to the very core of having good government and good business conditions.

We have been helped in part by good weather in regional areas. I know my electorate is at the moment looking better than it has looked for a long time. Hopefully, we will have a very good harvest. I know that my predecessor, Kay Hull, suffered a long drought—the Millennium Drought—which caused poor conditions even though we had the Howard government in place producing good economic reform and a regulation regime that was good for business. The weather was not kind. But now we have a perfect storm of opportunity energising enterprise, as the Minister for Small Business would say. We have reasonable weather conditions in our food bowls save, I have to say, the electorates of the member for Parkes, the member for Maranoa and a few others where it is a bit dry and they need a bit of rain. But overall, in the Riverina, the Mallee, the seat of the member for Murray and other areas where there is a great food bowl, we have conditions that, hopefully, with no more frosts and a bit more rain in late September and early October, will have a bumper harvest.

That, coupled with the omnibus repeal day measures we are bringing in and, hopefully, passing through the lower house this week, will see regional Australia thriving and Australia prospering as well.

The member for Rankin understands that, when regional Australia is strong, so too is Australia.

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

Mr McCormack: He is nodding; of course he knows that. I know that he listens very carefully when regional members of parliament stand up and speak. I know that he would be pleased that, when we did have a leadership change this week, the new coalition agreement struck is going to benefit regional Australia. I know the former Prime Minister, the member for Warringah, understood regional Australia and worked very well with the member for Wide Bay, the Leader of the Nationals, but I am sure that the member for Wentworth will do the same. I am sure that he will respect the role that the National Party has always played, plays now and will continue to play in this parliament and in this nation to ensure that repeal days are successful, that policy is good for regional Australia and that we get on with the job of doing what is best as far as regulatory and economic reform are concerned.

The three bills are separate whole-of-government initiatives which deliver different outcomes. The Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015 will bring forward deregulation initiatives which reduce regulatory burden and repeal acts and provisions in acts which are no longer required. Sure, that does involve some grammatical fix-ups in the many
statutes, legislation and bills on the books, but we need to get rid of some of those archaic, decades-old pieces of legislation and wordings that are no longer relevant.

The Amending Acts 1980 to 1989 Repeal Bill 2015 will repeal spent and redundant amending and repeal acts which were made in the decade of the 1980s. The measures within these acts have taken effect and do not contain any other substantive provisions, and that is fair enough.

The Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2015 will repair minor errors and oversights in Commonwealth consolidated acts and repeal spent or redundant provisions of acts. When I say 'minor errors' I mean that sometimes, when Labor was in power in the six sorry years that we had Kevin Rudd, then Julia Gillard, then Kevin Rudd administrations, we did see policy being introduced into this place in great haste, with little thought and with no consultation. Because the Labor government had been able to strike a deal with the member for Lyne and the member for New England at the time—the Independents—and the Green, they were able to ramrod legislation in this place, which caused a lot of consternation, particularly in regional Australia, about the haste and the waste. Australia was poorer as a result.

The three bills assist to deliver the coalition government's commitment to reducing red tape. I am joined here by the parliamentary secretary, the member for McPherson. She understands the need to reduce red tape. She understands just how important it is fo the government to get out of the way of business, to make sure that everything business does works to the benefit of the nation. We are cleaning the statute book and ensuring that outdated, redundant and duplicative regulation is repealed. That is what this is all about.

The government announced that the total deregulatory saving since September 2013—and the member for Rankin is going to be interested in this figure—is $2.45 billion. That is going to be a saving against that total bill that, had it been left unchecked, was going to reach $667 billion. Thankfully, we are doing something about that. Thankfully, we are striding towards a credible surplus in the future. Labor have not produced a surplus since 1989. At the time the member for Rankin was no doubt at school, or perhaps he was not even born. I am not quite sure. When were you born?

**Dr Chalmers:** I will ask the questions around here, mate!

**Mr McCormack:** It was a long time ago. The member for Longman certainly was not born at the time, and he is very much looking forward to a point in time when we get back into surplus. I will not say he is looking forward to the time that Labor achieves a surplus, because we do not want to see Labor back in government and doing what they did between 2007 and 2013.

The $2.45 billion of total deregulatory savings is a significant achievement because it will produce a real and positive impact on business. Business confidence is at a very good level at the moment, particularly after this year's May budget when the instant asset write-off for $20,000 worth of goods was introduced. Certainly it is amongst the farmers, who can write off their fences as a 100 per cent total deduction straightaway. That produced a lot of confidence within my electorate of Riverina.

For the first time in Australian history, the federal government have undertaken a thorough and accurate stock take of all federal regulatory costs. We are consistently measuring and decreasing the cost of government red tape for Australian businesses, organisations, families
and individuals. As I say, we are energising enterprise. We hear the small business minister saying that in his evangelical way all the time, and it is so true. We are energising enterprise, and that is a good thing. I commend this legislation to the House.

Mrs ANDREWS (McPherson—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry and Science) (13:17): It is my great pleasure to indicate my support for this omnibus bill which represents the third repeal day in the life of this government and which clearly reflects our unwavering commitment to cutting red tape. I know that everyone on this side of the House remains excited and energised about the fact that while we are in office there will be two sitting days every year dedicated to repealing legislation and regulations. This is about removing unnecessary red tape that does not serve a positive purpose and only adds to the regulatory burden that individuals, businesses and community groups have to deal with. We were unequivocal during the 2013 election campaign—we made a commitment to cut red tape by $1 billion every year. So far, we are delivering that commitment in full, with the total deregulatory saving since September 2013 currently at $2.5 billion. This is a significant achievement and one that has a very real, positive impact on businesses, community organisations and families.

But, of course, there is much more to be done. Importantly, for the first time in our history, we have undertaken a thorough and accurate stock take of all federal regulatory costs, and we have embarked on an ongoing program to consistently measure and reduce the cost of government red tape. Under the former Labor government, Commonwealth regulation was costing Australians approximately $65 billion—a remarkable 4.2 per cent of GDP. Following these bills, the government will have repealed more than 10,300 legislative instruments and introduced legislation to repeal over 2,700 acts of parliament.

It is not about cutting red tape for the sake of it; the reason we are so determined to pursue the task of ongoing deregulatory savings is that our goal is to make life easier for Australians and to make it easier for businesses to decide to invest and create more jobs. Cutting red tape is about Australians spending less time in queues, filling out forms and searching for information.

In my electorate of McPherson on the southern Gold Coast I regularly hold listening posts. The most regular and common message I get when I am speaking to my constituents is that people want the government to make things simpler rather than more complicated. They want to be able to get on with their working lives and run their businesses or volunteer at the local charity or sporting club without having to wade through paperwork and having the burden of regulation make tasks that were originally simple much more difficult.

Members opposite used to brag when they were in government about the amount of legislation that was passed through the House. Indeed, in just over five years, Labor managed to introduce around 21,000 new regulations—but so much of it was unnecessary. As I said in the spring repeal debate last year, I am a firm believer in smaller government. I believe that the 'have a go' budget our government delivered is all about harnessing the drive and energy of our people, because they are the ones who will grow our economy and create a more cohesive society.

Governments are rarely the solution to any problem. We can help to create the right environment for individuals and businesses to thrive, but governments do not hold the
answers. And the notion of big government solving problems—which seems to be the Labor mantra—is in my view a recipe for disaster.

The idea of smaller government is at the heart of the coalition's policy approach, and it is certainly reflected in these bills and in our commitment to ongoing repeal days. This will help ensure that, over time, the burden continues to be lifted and we streamline the work of government into the future. What is more, the coalition have a new approach with every piece of legislation or proposed regulation that we put forward. We must first ask, 'What is the purpose, cost and impact on productivity of the proposed initiatives?' before we regulate. Only after these questions are answered and only when it is absolutely necessary will we proceed to regulate.

I want to point out that, as part of the government's red-tape objective, portfolios and regulators are assessing opportunities for greater acceptance of international standards and risk assessments. If a system, service or product has been approved under a trusted international standard or risk assessment then the view is that our regulators should not impose any additional requirements for approval in Australia unless it can be demonstrated that there is a good reason to do so.

To ensure a thorough review of all regulations, ministers in all portfolios are seeking the views of key business and other stakeholders on each of their standards and risk assessment processes. Members of the public are being invited to submit examples of unnecessary divergences from international standards, on the Cutting Red Tape website. We recognise that this is very much an ongoing process, and we are inviting continued input from the community and from businesses.

I want to speak very briefly about the nature of the changes that we are discussing today. On top of delivering the biggest small-business package in our nation's history with the budget, we are also delivering some significant measures with this bill, including implementing easier monthly PAYG for certain businesses. Businesses choosing to use this method will only need to calculate their actual instalment income on a quarterly basis. This is expected to result in annual compliance savings of $2.7 million.

For transport and freight companies, we have removed the requirement for heavy vehicle operators of B-double truck combinations registered under the Federal Interstate Registration Scheme to fit additional spray suppression devices. This will save around $8.3 million each year.

We are also reforming the 457 visa program by streamlining the processing of sponsorship, nomination and visa applications; reforming sponsorship requirements to reduce the time and cost to businesses; increasing the sponsorship approval period from 12 to 18 months for start-up businesses; and providing greater flexibility in relation to English-language-testing and skill requirements. This is expected to result in savings of $29.9 million a year.

We are also making improvements to the ATO website so that six million Australians can find relevant information more quickly, resulting in compliance savings of $48.5 million. These are all measures that collectively ease the regulatory burden on businesses, and there will be many more to come.
This bill also improves the myGov online service to allow customers to update their details in one place and to obtain secure and convenient access to online services with a single account and one set of credentials. This is expected to generate savings of $5.4 million a year.

We are also making identity checks even easier for retailers and consumers when purchasing a new prepaid mobile phone, saving $6.2 million a year. And restrictions on using personal electronic devices have been lifted so travellers can use their PEDs during all phases of flight. This will deliver compliance savings of $17.7 million. These are just a few of the common-sense measures in this omnibus bill.

I note that within the portfolio of industry and science, of which I am parliamentary secretary, there are net savings of $56.05 million as part of this repeal day. These come from a variety of measures, including closing down programs that were no longer required or perhaps were duplicating services offered elsewhere. Our portfolio, like every other portfolio, is being asked to contribute to the task of deregulation, and we will certainly continue to do so.

The bottom line is that our government will continue to work its way through the tangle of red tape and regulation in order to deliver cost savings, which ultimately result in more-efficient government and more-productive business and not-for-profit sectors. This is good news for Australian industry, and it is also good news for the scientific sector, which I know sometimes feels the weight of regulatory burden. This will improve competitiveness, help create more jobs and also lower household costs, which is great news for my constituents on the southern Gold Coast, as it is for all Australians.

I am very proud to be part of a government which is very much focused on cutting red tape. As I indicated earlier in my speech, when I am in my electorate and I am speaking to my constituents, the single issue that they repeatedly raise with me is their concern about red tape slowing down their businesses and slowing down the work that they are doing in their communities and at charities. They have asked me as their representative to do everything that I possibly can to make sure that this government continues on the path of cutting red tape.

I certainly am very proud to be doing all that I can to cut red tape, and I call on all of the members of this House to do everything that they can to identify opportunities for red tape to be reduced for our businesses and our members of the community. It is one of the most important things that we as members of this House can do, and I certainly commend this bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Turnbull Government

Dr CHALMERS (Rankin) (13:29): It has been a momentous week in this building. We are approaching the end of a parliamentary week in which we saw, on its first day, on Monday, a change of the Prime Minister of this nation. On Monday night, some Australians would have gone to sleep with one Prime Minister in office and woken up with another one. In all of the self-congratulations over the last week or so, one opportunity has been missed. The new Prime Minister could have stood up and said, 'A new leader of this country necessitates a new direction.' Instead of saying that a new Prime Minister necessitates a change in policy direction, we have had the Prime Minister stand up time and time again and
confirm for the Australian people that he remains a captive of the fruit loops and the loonies that occupy the far right of his party. Instead of a reset, we are getting re-rerun of all of the policies.

The signature failures of this government over the last two years were the 2014 budget and the 2015 budget. The new Prime Minister's fingerprints are all over those budgets. He stands up time and time again and says he supports every single part of the budget. All of the catastrophe that we saw in those two budgets handed down by the member for North Sydney is completely owned by the new Prime Minister. The leader has changed, the Prime Minister has changed in this nation, but the policies have not. The policies of this country will not change unless there is a change of government. We need a totally new direction, when you consider the unemployment rate going up, when you consider all of the economic failures of those opposite. If the Australian people want a new direction, they need a new government entirely.

**Calare Electorate: Polling Booths**

**Mr JOHN COBB** (Calare) (13:31): I would to take the opportunity to raise my concern over the proposed closure of polling booths, particularly those in the Calare electorate. I was recently contacted by the Australian Electoral Commission and advised that 13 booths around my electorate are looking like being closed for next year's election. Booths set to come under the knife in my electorate include Peel, Sofala, Vale of Clwydd, Trunkey, Littleton, Mitchell Campus, Neville, Oakey Park, Parkes Hospital, Alectown, Burrara, Capertee and Hampton. I am dismayed at the changes being proposed. I consider myself a supporter of change and I am able to look at sensible rationalisation, but in this circumstance it is going too far.

The Australian Electoral Commission say the abolition of some polling places is due to an anticipated increase of pre-polling at the next election. That may well be true, but to suggest pre-polling as an excuse to close booths can be insulting. Sofala in my electorate does not suddenly find itself next door to one of the very few polling booths in Calare. I do not believe this rationalisation is good enough. I do not see that the constituents of Calare should be made to travel long distances to exercise their democratic right and their obligation to vote. I am sceptical about the data being used to back the move, as Trunkey Creek has not shown a drop in numbers over the 2010 and the 2013 elections.

**Health Services**

**Ms McGOWAN** (Indi) (13:33): I would like to welcome to this chamber today CEO Marg Bennett and board chair Brendan Schutt from Northeast Health, based in Wangaratta and servicing most of north-east Victoria. Their purpose here today is to advocate for $22.5 million to support the long-term strategic approach to deliver services in north-east Victoria. I am delighted to have you here and I thank you for your time and effort.

Northeast Health won the Victorian Premier's award in 2014 for Regional Health Service Provider of the Year. It provides 220 hospital beds, services over 85,000 people, operates a 24/7 emergency service and a whole swag of other services to my community. I am proud to host essential services providers like Northeast Health in parliament. This is the Indi way: to come to the people's house to meet with ministers and staff, making the case for significant investment in our health services. I also welcome today two members of the 304 'friends of
‘health’, Helen and Adrian Twitt. It is great to have you here as part of the Indi volunteer team. Also, to Jude and Emma: thank you.

In closing, I call on the government, I call on my colleagues opposite: do not cut health funding for capital works in the next budget; make it a priority. Communities in north-east Victoria, like Wangaratta, need more money. We need to develop our service providers. Please, please, please.

**Bass Electorate: Netball**

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass—Government Whip) (13:34): We have got quite a few world champions in Launceston and I would like to tell the House about the most recent world record holders from my home town. They are the members of the Generation Netball Club who compete in the Northern Tasmanian Netball Association, of which I am the proud patron. The Generation Netball Club celebrated its 20th Anniversary this year, and two of its members, Jordyn Becker and Sarah Stuart, decided that a good way of promoting the club would be to do something really big. They decided to try and set a world record for the longest continuous netball game and spent months organising players, umpires, volunteers and spectators for the event. They discovered that the Guinness World Record for this category was 61 hours, set in Canada in 2011.

On Thursday 9 July 2015, the members, families and supporters of the Generation Netball Club gathered at the Scotch Oakburn College gym for the world record attempt. As patron, I was proud to attend the start of the attempt and then, 72 hours later, delighted at their success in breaking the record by 11 hours. It was a wonderful way for the Generation Netball Club to celebrate their 20th anniversary and to focus the attention of our community on their talented netballers, committed administrators and supporters. I congratulate everyone connected with this amazing achievement. And the final score was 3,772 goals to 3,603.

**Turnbull Government**

Ms KING (Ballarat) (13:36): For almost the entire time this government has been in office, it has been an absolute disaster. It has been a disaster for the economy, a disaster for education, a disaster for manufacturing and especially a disaster for health. But, sadly, the member for Wentworth is making clear that all the Liberal Party has done is put a different colour tie on the leader at the dispatch box. Only this week, he declared, of the government’s disastrous first budget, ‘We support all of our policies and all of our measures.’ In other words, nothing has changed since the member for Wentworth told Alan Jones that he supports unreservedly and wholeheartedly every element of the 2014 and 2015 budgets—every single one.

So the test for this Prime Minister is not persuading just over half his colleagues that he is a better salesman; it is persuading the Australian people that he has a better product to sell, and that means abandoning the four-year freeze on the Medicare benefits schedule on general practice that is already wreaking havoc on patients across the country, forcing doctors to raise their fees and to cut bulk-billing. The test is to get rid of the $1.3-billion hike on prescriptions and the test is getting rid of the $270-million cut to the Medicare Safety Net, which will see cancer patients having to pay up to $10,000 extra for their radiation oncology and people seeking fertility treatment, trying to have a baby, paying up to $15,000 extra. Shame this government. *(Time expired)*
Solomon Electorate: Midnight Basketball

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (13:37): I rise today to speak about Midnight Basketball in my electorate of Solomon. Midnight Basketball is a national, community-run program—and I see the member for Rankin knows all about it—held in a safe environment for 12- to 18-year-old at-risk youths. Supporters of the Midnight Basketball program are a diverse range of organisations and individuals and I would like to publicly acknowledge these supporters: Australian Red Cross; Charlie King and the NO MORE campaigners; Darwin Basketball Association; Northern Territory Police; City of Darwin; Darwin Rotary Club; Amity Community Services; Commonwealth Bank; Chandler Macleod; and the Adelaide 36ers.

Mr Williams: Hear hear!

Mrs GRIGGS: I was waiting for that, member for Hindmarsh. These wonderful supporters all bring different experiences and opportunities to the participants. Each night requires 15 volunteers, who assist with tasks like helping to serve dinner, setting up the workshop rooms, managing teams, scoring, reffing, and driving the buses.

I encourage both players and volunteers to please get behind this program. For more information or details you can register at: www.midnightbasketball.org.au/Darwin. Please get involved and let's help these people at risk.

Turnbull Government

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:39): I will ask the House a question today: when is a progressive not a progressive? The answer: when they become an ultra-conservative Prime Minister. This Prime Minister, this new shiny Prime Minister has told us this week that he supports all of the policies and all of the measures that preceded him, which tells us that he is determined to pursue the destruction of Medicare—our world renowned universal health care system. He is determined to Americanise our universities and introduce a $100,000- degrees. He supports cuts to apprenticeships and support programs. He supports cuts to schools and hospitals—the $80-billion cuts our schools and hospitals are living with. He is standing by every broken promise. He is standing by every unfair measure.

This Prime Minister needs to hear very clearly that if you stand by the decisions that have doubled the deficit, you are not a friend to the Australian public. He has led the Australian public to believe that he was a modern man but he is just another backward-looking Tory Prime Minister.

Flynn Electorate: Rugby League

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (13:40): Today I want to add my support to all the Northern Districts Rugby League teams in my electorate. They had a pretty tough season. They have a lot of South Sea Islanders in those teams now. The Miriamvale Magnies came out the grand final winners and the runners-up were the South Kolan Sharks. They were followed by the Avondale Tigers, The Agnes Water Marlins, the Burnett Heads Cutters and the Gin Gin Hawks.

But Saturday was a night for the Marlins. They had their presentation night and a masquerade ball at Agnes Water. I presented Seb Carmichael with the award for most improved player and Kenny Wogandt with the award for most consistent player. Two outstanding players made a big contribution to their team. The whole team deserves
recognition for playing their hardest and fairest this season—it was a tough competition. They have played well all season. Fitness let them down and they had a few injuries at the last moment but, overall, they did very well. I expect next year, with the final being held in Agnes Water, there will be a very fierce competition for the grand final again. All players vowed on Saturday night that they would be fitter and better next year. I wish them very well.

I want to thank the Marlins for inviting me and my partner to the awards night on Saturday night and look forward to next season's games.

**Turnbull Government**

**Mr ZAPPIA** (Makin) (13:42): On Tuesday it was revealed that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull had transferred oversight of the Murray-Darling Basin from the environment minister to the agriculture minister, Barnaby Joyce, sending a clear message that the National Party will be in control of the Basin waters and that eastern states irrigators will dictate how the plan is managed.

The Basin Plan secured by Labor after years of bickering between the states is now at risk of being undermined by South Australians, being at the end of the river system, have once again been sold out by the coalition government—this time by Prime Minister Turnbull. Yesterday Prime Minister Turnbull also refused to rule out reselling environmental water entitlements in the Murray-Darling back to irrigators, further adding to concerns about the future health of environmental wetlands and South Australia's Lower Lakes.

The livelihood of irrigators in communities throughout the Basin depends on a healthy river system and sustainable extraction levels. Oversight of the Basin Plan should not become a political bargaining chip. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who personally signed off on the deal to secure the support of his National Party coalition partners, has not only traded away his own environmental credentials but shown that his only priority is his own future.

What other shabby deals did Prime Minister Turnbull make or is prepared to make to pursue his own ambitions?

**Barker Electorate: Mount Gambier Pioneers**

**Mr PASIN** (Barker) (13:43): I rise today to speak about the success of the Mount Gambier Pioneers as winners of the South East Australian Basketball League this year. The Mount Gambier Pioneers are a much loved team in my hometown of Mount Gambier. They entered the South East Australian Basketball League in 1988 and have gone from strength to strength. Indeed they are the only sporting team from Barker competing on the national stage.

Since turning 25 in 2013, the Pioneers have a three-peat in the South Australia ABL and that is no mean feat. This year they have played remarkably and the grand final was no exception. Last Saturday night, the Mount Gambier Pioneers defeated the formidable Albury-Wodonga Bandits in a nail-biting encounter. The final score stood at 87-76. The nine-point win was secured by the Pioneers through a hard-fought contest which the coach, Richard Hill, said 'took them out of their comfort zone'. Richard deservedly received the Coach of the Year award this year. United States import Damian Johnson was awarded the Hugh McMenamin Medal after an excellent exhibition of athleticism. Johnson scored 21 points and 17 rebounds, was credited with three assists and blocked three shots. Johnson was also named SEABL Defensive Player of the Year. Other notable efforts were those of Erik Burdon, scoring a team high 22 points; backcourt partner Tom Daly, with 19 points; and Brad Hill and Tyrone Lee,
who added 10 points apiece. Congratulations to Brad Hill for also making the SEABL All Star team.

Sport is a critical part of Australian society. It brings us together. It keeps us fit. I congratulate the Mount Gambier Pioneers on their outstanding achievement.

**Kingsford Smith Electorate: Health Funding**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:45): The Liberals' cuts to health care in our community just keep on coming. At the Prince of Wales Hospital, our local community hospital, the New South Wales Liberal government and the federal Liberal government have cut 26 beds, they have closed an entire ward, they have cut medical staff and allied health workers, and they have cut pharmacy positions. Recently I met with nurses at the hospital, who told me of the regular occurrence of bed block in the emergency department now. This is where patients are left on trolleys in hallways because they simply cannot get a bed. This week we learned in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that the cuts keep on coming, because this week it has been announced that the south-eastern local area health service will make another 50 staff redundant because of this government's cuts.

Many in my community are asking why this is occurring. Why has the Prince of Wales Hospital had these cuts? There is a simple reason: the Liberal government has cut $50 billion from the Commonwealth hospital budget. Fifty billion dollars has been cut from the hospitals budget throughout the country, and that has affected the Prince of Wales Hospital. And who voted for those cuts? Prime Minister Turnbull put his hand up in this chamber here and voted for those cuts. On behalf of our community, I ask Prime Minister Turnbull: will you reverse your government's disastrous cuts and the cuts to the Prince of Wales Hospital?

**Hinkler Electorate: Australia Post**

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (13:46): When the Torbanlea licensed post office closed suddenly two weeks ago, I gave a commitment that I would work to ensure local postal services were restored as soon as possible. As such, I was in regular contact with Australia Post and the office of the then communications minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to impress upon them the importance of retaining local services. As a direct result of strong lobbying by me and the local Torbanlea community, for the first time in 40 years the Torbanlea community's mail will soon be delivered directly to their homes instead of to PO boxes. Those who do not wish to install a letterbox outside their home can have their mail sent to a PO box in the nearby town of Howard for the standard rate. Unfortunately, Australia Post has been unable to secure another licensee to run the Torbanlea LPO. Residents will still be able to access over-the-counter Australia Post services in Howard, Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Australia Post will be in touch over the coming months to provide details of the changes, when they will come into effect and what actions residents will need to take.

I recognise that the sudden closure came as a shock to many, but I assured residents that Australia Post does not make these decisions lightly or without good reason. Australia Post is to be commended for heeding our concerns and acting swiftly to find a middle ground. I thank Prime Minister Turnbull's communications staff for their input. I thank the Torbanlea community for their patience, and I also congratulate them on their advocacy. They were incredibly strong on this issue. They ran a petition and they have had a success.
Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:48): Malcolm Turnbull's policies are exactly the same as Tony Abbott's. This weekend we were going to launch in Bendigo our Save Local Jobs campaign, and we had done all the preparation of material. In this material, we were calling on the then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, and the Liberal government to do more to save local jobs. We were calling on the government to sign the Hawkei contract to lock in defence manufacturing jobs. We were calling on this government to reverse its big cuts to health, education and community services and to restore jobs in those sectors. We were calling on this government to make sure that it stopped sacking public servants in our area and stopped the closures of really important front-line government agencies.

But guess what: they changed the Prime Minister, so we were a little bit worried. Could we turn it around and get the material ready in time for this weekend? Well, guess what: it was not a hard job. It was simply a 'find and replace' action on the Word document, because this government and this Prime Minister have not changed the policies; they have simply changed the person who is at the front trying to convince Australians they are the right way to go. I agree with the comments by a local cyclist in the Bendigo Advertiser: 'This bloke's a bit of a diplomat that tries to tell people what they want to hear. It's not leadership.'

Lynch, Professor Stephen, AC

Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (13:49): Today I am delighted to have the opportunity to highlight the extraordinary contribution to medicine in Australia and the world by Professor Stephen Lynch AC. Professor Lynch is in Canberra today—and, indeed, in the House with his family—to be invested as a Companion of the Order of Australia by the Governor-General. As he is in the gallery this afternoon, I want to congratulate him and pay tribute to his considerable contributions. He is a man of continuing achievement in education and training as professor of surgery at the University of Queensland. However, he is renowned for his work with liver transplants.

Professor Lynch is one of the team who in the 1980s pioneered techniques to transplant adult livers into children, and he was part of the team which performed the world's first successful liver transplant from a living donor. Professor Lynch has allowed parents to donate to their children and two patients to be saved with one liver. He and—as he would be the first to point out—his team have by default been responsible for saving thousands of lives the world over. Professor Lynch, with his usual modesty, downplays his role and highlights his team, the donors and others, including, importantly, his family, Genni, Kate and Lydia, who are with him today, and Dr Angelica. Professor Lynch and his family are indeed remarkable Australians.

Australian Public Service

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:51): I rise today on behalf of public servants in Canberra and right across the country who have been fighting this government for more than 18 months over their enterprise agreements. The employment minister's hardline approach to bargaining has not been productive at all. Close to 160,000 employees are still without new agreements, like the scientists at Geoscience Australia, who are responsible for fundamental tasks like being on early tsunami watch for Australia and its Pacific neighbours and who took
part in strike action yesterday over the offensive deal they have been offered. Their latest offer includes cuts to their penalty rates that could see them $4,500 a year worse off. It is a similar situation across other Public Service agencies. The government has been trying to cut Public Service wages while at the same time eroding hard-fought-for conditions.

These 160,000 public servants who are without an agreement are now looking to the Prime Minister to fix this mess. They are looking to him to offer a fair deal for wages and conditions. They are looking to him to appoint a minister who will take real steps to resolve this long-running dispute. They are looking to him to sit around the table and actually negotiate. They are looking for an agreement that reflects the respect that these servants of democracy to serve.

**Petrie Electorate: Sport**

**Mr HOWARTH** (Petrie) (13:52): When I was seven years of age, I started judo. I did judo for many, many years and I achieved my shodan black belt and represented Queensland. When I left school, I went for a job at a place called Toombul Music—

*Dr Chalmers interjecting—*

**Mr HOWARTH:** The member for Rankin will remember that place. It was my first job out of school. Barry Bull said to me, 'Mate, if you've got the commitment to represent the state in a sport, you're going to do really well, and I'm going to give you your first job for that.' I mention that because there are a lot of young people in my electorate involved in sport and I want to encourage them to achieve their goals and do their best in everything they do.

I want to congratulate Jacob Caruana for triathlon who recently won a young sporting champion's grant through the Commonwealth government; Duchesse Delaney for swimming; Matthew Petzer for hockey; Jordan Conroy for swimming; Chase Duffy for golf; Jade Corney for gymnastics; Jade Starr for swimming; Matthew Petzer for hockey; Jordan Conroy for swimming; Chase Duffy for golf; Jade Corney for gymnastics; Jade Starr for swimming; Jessica Bentley for ice skating; Jorden Tunstall for gymnastics; Lachlan Thomas for baseball; Maddison Jones for golf; and, finally, Sian Coates for judo. Every one of these young athletes has a great chance to achieve their goals. I want to thank their parents and their schools for motivating them and for paying for their trips to travel all around the country. I want to encourage them to do their very best in everything they do.

**Turnbull Government**

**Mr GILES** (Scullin) (13:54): What difference does it make that the member for Wentworth has replaced the member for Warringah as our Prime Minister? This is what people in my electorate want to know. They want to know what it means for them outside of this place. They have not forgotten, and on this side we have not forgotten, why the government has reached this decision point. It is not because of personality; it is because of policy. It is because of the dishonesty before the election, revealed after the election. It is because of the blind ideological pursuit of austerity and its impact, the unfairness at the core of the first budget which has been perpetuated throughout the life of this government—all those measures, every single one of them, proudly supported by the new Prime Minister. So, what difference does it make?

*Mr Chester interjecting—*

**Mr GILES:** As Morrissey said, 'It makes none—Parliamentary Secretary Chester—unless policies change.' And they will not because Malcolm is in the middle of the reactionaries in
his own parties, and the crowing Nats have extracted every ounce of credibility out of the new Prime Minister. So, his clever words, his process arguments, hide nothing. If he can walk away from that, I give him this challenge—to explain to the people of Scullin what difference his elevation means, not for him and his ego but for them.

Grey Electorate: Coalmining

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (13:55): I have spoken on a number of occasions recently about the closure of the coal fired power stations at Port Augusta that are owned by Alinta and the effect on that community, and also the Leigh Creek community to the north. Last Friday and Saturday, I journeyed to Leigh Creek and the surrounding communities of Beltana, Lyndhurst, Copley and Nepabunna to talk firsthand with locals about how they see their future and how the closure of the mine was likely to affect the town of Leigh Creek. Leigh Creek is a government owned town. It is owned by the South Australian government but, under contract, is administered by Alinta, who have a contract to keep running that community for another three years, which will be long past the time that they actually need it.

We really need some guidance from the South Australian government about what it is they plan to do with the town of Leigh Creek. Most of us presume they need to keep the school open, they need to keep the police there. But the question is: what happens to the health services? What happens to the shop, which is quite large—aside from focusing on the local population, it is a great provider for the tourist industry and the pastoralists beyond? What happens to the hotel? What happens to the desalination plant? What happens to the sewerage plant? All of these things are providing services to the surrounding communities. We need an answer from Minister Brock in the Labor government in South Australia, and the Labor government generally, to give these people guidance on where it is they need to go.

Turnbull Government

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (13:57): This week, the nation woke up to the news that the Liberal Party had sacked the previous Prime Minister and we now had a new Prime Minister, the former Minister for Communications. Australian women and the women of Newcastle, in particular, have asked, 'What difference is this going to make, given the extraordinary track record of the last two years, the appalling attack on services for Australian women?' I note, in particular, that this new Prime Minister was part of a cabinet that oversaw the savage cuts to funds for women's refuges and services. He was part of a cabinet that had few voices for Australian women. He was part of a cabinet that consistently ignored Australian women's calls for action on the elimination of domestic violence in this country.

Let us look at the information that came from a leaked cabinet document, which makes very clear that this new Prime Minister's track record in appointing women to boards is one of the worst ever. The document shows that Mr Turnbull has outstripped Mr Abbott, the former Prime Minister. It shows that, of the last 16 appointments made to boards in his former portfolio area of communications, only one was a woman. Well, is this new PM going to be true to his word and be—(Time expired)

Turnbull Government

Mr PITT (Hinkler) (13:58): Thank you for the unexpected opportunity. Unfortunately, I sat through all of the contributions from the other side and all I heard were complaints,
complaints and complaints. If there were a shadow ministry for complaints, it would fill the entire frontbench for those opposite. They have absolutely nothing.

Mr Chester interjecting—

Mr Pitt: It is a whingeing session. Two years worth of whingeing—thank you very much.

Mr Conroy interjecting—

Mr Pitt: I hear an interjection from my good friend the member for Charlton over there. I am surprised you are still here, Pat! Question time has not yet started. We know that those opposite have no plan at all. Their only plan is to complain. Their only plan is to continue to complain. Their only plan is to spend more of the taxpayers' money than they actually have.

The Speaker: In accordance with standing order 43, the time for members' statements has concluded.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Turnbull Government**

Mr Shorten (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Given that it has taken only two days for the Liberal cabinet to start leaking again, doesn't this just prove that, even though there is a new Liberal leader, it is the same policies, the same chaos and the same division?

The Speaker: The Leader of the House on a point of order.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Wakefield will cease interjecting.

Opposition members interjecting—

The Speaker: Members on my left will cease interjecting. The Leader of the House.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question is based on an argument, an assertion and an inference, none of which are within the standing orders. There is no part of the question, therefore, that can stand. The Leader of the Opposition might try and reframe it, but he cannot begin his question with a false assertion and then base the question on that false assertion.

Ms Claydon interjecting—

Mr Champion interjecting—

The Speaker: The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting, as will the member for Wakefield. Before I call the member for Watson, I will make the point that the Speaker cannot vouch for the accuracy of questions—that has always been the case—and cannot make a judgement on that. I now call the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order. On two parts of the question: firstly, asking about cabinet leaks is commonplace—although rare during the first week of a Prime Minister, I accept that.

The Speaker: The member for Watson will not give a commentary.

Mr Burke: The second issue is that the question also goes to government policies and it also goes to whether or not the policies have changed, which has to be in order.
Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Hunter is delaying me making a ruling. The aspect of the question that goes to the cabinet is within order, and I call the Prime Minister.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:02): The heartlessness of the Leader of the Opposition is in full evidence today. He has no compassion, no feeling, for the thousands of people watching question time week after week whom he bores and drives to the point of complete frustration with one pointless political claim after another. To help the Leader of the Opposition —

Ms King interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: I will reframe his question, and this is the question he could have asked. He could have said: ‘My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer the Prime Minister to a report that only —

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker —

Mr Williams interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Hindmarsh will cease interjecting.

Mr Whiteley interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Braddon will cease interjecting.

Mr Whiteley interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Braddon is warned!

Mr Albanese: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is called question time, which means that there are questions and answers not from the same person.

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat.

Mr Albanese: It implies two people.

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL: It is indicative of the engaging and collaborative style of my government —

Mr Butler interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: that I am prepared to help the Leader of the Opposition and actually show him a question. So the question could have been: ‘How does the Prime Minister react to the claim that a very small percentage of women were appointed by him to government boards?’

Mr Husic interjecting —

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: That would be a reasonable question. And I will give him the answer. The government remains committed to its target of women holding 40 per cent of positions on Australian government boards. I point to the official data —
Mr Husic interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will cease interjecting.
Mr TURNBULL: which will be published later this year in the Gender balance on Australian government boards report 2014-15.
Mr Husic interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is now warned!
Mr TURNBULL: It shows that women held 40 per cent of Communications portfolio board appointments.

Economy
Mrs SUDMALIS (Gilmore) (14:04): My question is to the Prime Minster.
Opposition members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Gilmore will resume her seat. Members on my left!
Mr Marles interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Corio will cease interjecting.
Honourable members interjecting—
The SPEAKER: It is the parliament's question time. The clock is ticking. We are ready to resume whenever the parliament is quiet. The member for Gilmore.
Mrs SUDMALIS: My serious question to the Prime Minister is—
Mr Champion interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield is warned!
Mrs SUDMALIS: will the Prime Minister update the House on the government's economic plan? How will the plan help families in places like Canning, Gilmore and other places around Australia with the cost of living pressures?
Ms Butler interjecting—
The SPEAKER: Before I call the Prime Minister, the member for Griffith is warned as well! The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:05): I thank the honourable member for her question. I trust that all honourable members note, as she does, the very keen interest in ensuring that we retain a strong, prosperous Australian economy to secure our economic future, to ensure—
Ms Rowland interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: that we remain a prosperous First World, high-wage economy with a generous social welfare net. Strong economic growth is absolutely essential to that. As honourable members know, in recent times, our economic growth has been in large part driven by the mining boom, the mining construction boom in particular. We have seen, as was inevitably going to be the case, a decline in commodity prices—
Mr Conroy interjecting—
The SPEAKER: The member for Charlton will cease interjecting.
Mr TURNBULL: and a drop in our terms of trade. The future of our economy and the future of our prosperity depend on driving productivity—and this is a pressing issue. All of the people I met with Andrew Hastie, our candidate in Canning, raised this fundamental issue about economic growth.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield has been warned. This is his last warning.

Mr TURNBULL: As I said to many of those Australians concerned about the threat that the Labor Party offers to our economic growth, the clear message has got to be that this is the most exciting time to be alive. The pace of economic change is remarkable. The opportunities are enormous. But the threats to our future prosperity are very, very real.

Now the labour movement, the CFMEU, the Labor Party have been doing their best, whether it is in Canning or anywhere else in Australia, to frustrate the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Ms Rowland interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Greenway she is warned!

Ms Rowland interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway will cease interjecting!

Mr TURNBULL: They know that the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement offers the prospect of thousands and thousands of jobs right across the board, in every industry: services, agriculture, manufacturing, design, education, tourism—without exception. That is the largest single economy in the world. The efforts of this government, the efforts of this trade minister, have seen the doors to that economy flung open and the Labor Party wants to stand in the way and say: 'Stop the future! No, go back! You should be afraid.' The Labor Party thinks they can frighten people. They will succeed, if they win government, in frightening people into poverty. Only the coalition understands the importance of growth, the importance of prosperity, the importance of ensuring that we are utterly engaged in the global economy.

Mr Brendan O'Connor: Living standards have been falling under this government.

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton will cease interjecting.

Turnbull Government

Mr BURKE (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:08): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the leak of a cabinet document marked 'Protected: Sensitive: Cabinet'. Is it government policy that there will be personal and political consequences for leaking? And, given leaks from cabinet are an offence under section 70 of the Crimes Act, what action will the Prime Minister take to address this cabinet leak, which was aimed directly at him?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:09): I thank the honourable member for his question, but I have already dealt with it in my previous answer.

Infrastructure

Ms MARINO (Forrest—Government Whip) (14:09): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development. Will the
minister update the House on infrastructure developments in my home state of Western Australia? Are there any challenges to the future of Western Australia's infrastructure development?

Mr TRUSS (Wide Bay—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development) (14:09): I thank the honourable member for her question. Her passionate support for the construction of infrastructure in Western Australia has certainly been influential in delivering the biggest infrastructure program that our country has ever seen. Our $50 billion towards major infrastructure projects around the country is at least $18 billion more than Labor committed at the last election, so there are many, many projects that this government is building that the other side has made no commitment to. That is why it is so important for the people of Western Australia to make sure that they vote for the coalition on Saturday in a crucial by-election, because that will be the vote of confidence that is necessary to ensure that this infrastructure program is maintained. Big projects like Northlink WA.

Mr Albanese: Yes, that was ours.

Mr TRUSS: Projects like the Gateway WA project—

Mr Albanese: Ours.

Mr TRUSS: the Great Eastern Highway upgrade, the Roe Highway and the Kwinana Freeway.

Mr Albanese: I opened that!

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler!

Mr TRUSS: Our $804 million expenditure for transport in Western Australia in 2015-16, and a $5.4 billion commitment between 2013-14 to 2018 compares with just $493 million spent by Labor in their last year. There is a big difference already evident in Western Australia, and we have got many more exciting projects in mind, such as the Perth Freight Link—

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will cease interjecting.

Mr TRUSS: This will in fact employ about 2½ thousand people in construction and deliver economic benefits for the state, estimated at $3.9 billion. It is estimated to save $2½ billion in travel time by reducing the length of time taken to move freight to port, bypassing 14 sets of traffic lights, so it is an exciting project. And for those interested in protecting and preserving the environment, this project is expected to save 449,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2031. This is a project that is clearly good for Western Australia. It will deliver environmental benefits. It will deliver benefits to the state's freight industry. It is a project that the federal member for Perth, who I note is absent today, described as a 'scandalous squandering of taxpayer funds'. She thinks it is a squandering of taxpayers' funds; we think it is a vital piece of Western Australian infrastructure that will make it possible to move freight more efficiently around the state, and particularly around the capital city.

Turnbull Government

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12): Mr Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. In his press conference on Tuesday, the former Prime
Minister gave an assurance that he had never leaked or backgrounded against any of his colleagues. Prime Minister, what is the government policy on leaking, and will you, the new Prime Minister, give the same assurances as your predecessor?

The SPEAKER: That question is, strictly speaking, not in order. I am going to allow the Prime Minister to address it though.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:13): Really, when one considers the big challenges facing the Australian economy, when one considers the choice that the voters in Canning are considering on Saturday—just a few days away. They are considering what is going to happen to their jobs, to the future in Western Australia. They have seen the wind down in the mining construction boom, they are concerned about growth. They want to see leadership that will show the way to a prosperous future that is not simply geared to commodities. They want to see an innovative Australia. They want to see jobs for their children and their grandchildren. And they have, in Andrew Hastie, a candidate who has served his nation as a soldier, but nonetheless keenly understands the economic challenges our nation faces as well as he understands the strategic ones.

Ms Butler interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Griffith is warned! It is her final warning.

Mr TURNBULL: They see a coalition government committed to growth and they have a Labor Party that is trying to frighten them and, in this parliament, they see a Labor leader who is not even prepared to discuss the economy.

Infrastructure

Mr KATTER (Kennedy) (14:14): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, people clearly have faith in you to make things happen. Can you justify that faith by: building, with the Queensland government, the rail line into the Galilee; mandating ethanol and biodiesel, rescuing grains, sugar and cattle; decreeing that all government cars be Australian made and our naval ships be built in Cairns and Adelaide; and instituting a reserve resource policy, rescuing steel, fertiliser and aluminium?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:15): I thank the honourable member for his question. I think we all thank him for his passionate patriotism. I recognise the great commitment he has to all of these matters—the growth of Australian industry and its infrastructure—especially in his own electorate. We understand that. The honourable member is perfectly entitled to enumerate projects like that in the House to bring them to the government's attention. That is what question time should be all about.

The government that I lead is committed to considering all of the economic challenges facing Australia and the opportunities for driving productivity and increasing economic growth to ensure that the consequence of the decline in terms of trade is offset by new industries, new jobs and greater productivity. That is the big challenge for us. I want the honourable member to know that we are taking on that task with great seriousness, careful thought and consideration. His constituents, like the constituents of every other member in this chamber, will be foremost in our minds as we ensure that his children and his grandchildren, and those of his constituents, will have a bright economic future right around Australia in the years ahead.
Trade with China

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister update the House on the competitive advantage which the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement will yield for Australian businesses? Are there any obstacles that will be presented to this?

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo will cease interjecting. The member for Bendigo is warned!

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield will leave the House under standing order 94(a). I have warned him three times in 15 minutes.

The member for Wakefield then left the chamber.

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:17): I thank the member for Moore for his question. From Western Australia to New South Wales, from the Northern Territory to Tasmania, this government has shown that every state and territory will benefit from the signing of a China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. On this side of the House, we have already informed colleagues opposite and, indeed, the Australian public of the benefits to the resources industry, the agriculture industry, the horticulture industry and the manufacturing sector in Western Australia, but there will also be benefits across the nation and, specifically, for our services industry.

This is a deal that will deliver for the people of Western Australia and the people of Australia. Competitors outside Australia understand this. They understand what the Labor Party here does not. There are advantages to us that our competitors are quite concerned about. New Zealand's Prime Minister, John Key, thinks that Australia should sign the free trade agreement despite it being against New Zealand's competitive interests. He said:

Having negotiated an agreement that is high quality, you'd like to grab it with both hands. New Zealand will be quite happy if you don't.

In other words, John Key is saying they want to upgrade their own free trade agreement with China to get what we have got. The Leader of the Opposition does not understand this. New Zealand's own free trade agreement has already delivered benefits that are 11 times greater than the most optimistic commentators could come up with, yet the Leader of the Opposition wants to reject our agreement with China. China itself sees the benefits to Australia.

Ms Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bendigo is warned!

Ms JULIE BISHOP: Madam Fu, the chair of China's foreign affairs committee, told me yesterday in Canberra that Chinese companies will be competing against Australian companies now, particularly in the beef and dairy industries. So blocking this free trade agreement means denying jobs in industries that are so pertinent to our country.

Indeed, in the electorate of Canning there are beef producers and dairy producers who will benefit from this free trade agreement. Given that there is a by-election on Saturday, the people of Canning will have an opportunity to vote for Andrew Hastie, the Liberal candidate who supports a free trade agreement, rather than the Labor candidate, who does not. They will
be voting for the party that believes in jobs and opportunity, and that is the Liberal Party with
the National Party. The coalition believes in jobs and opportunity. When the Leader of the
Opposition was a union boss, he tried to prevent an agreement with China by denying it
market economy status. The Leader of the Opposition has a history of double-dealing on free
trade agreements, saying one thing publicly and another privately. Labor terminated funding
to nine government departments and agencies to prevent the free trade agreement continuing
with China. So on Saturday the electors of Canning will have a choice: vote 1, Andrew
Hastie. (Time expired)

**Turnbull Government**

Ms KING (Ballarat) (14:20): My question is to the Prime Minister. On Monday, the
former Liberal Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, described the Prime Minister as 'an
individual who has always put self-interest before anything else'. When even long-term
Liberal leaders like Jeff Kennett know he puts his own ambition before the interests of
Australia, isn't it clear that the Prime Minister will sell out anything and any government
policy for his own ambition?

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Prime Minister is not responsible for
the comments being made by a person who is not even a member of the House, has no elected
office and is not a member of the government. Therefore, the Prime Minister should not be
required to answer that question. He is not responsible for the comments of Jeffrey Kennett.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, the objection from the Leader of the House goes to the context of
the question. The question itself goes directly to government policy. Midway through, we will
probably get told it is a new question, and he will ask one himself. But the question—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat.

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, the question did not ask about any particular policy. It was a
general slur on the Prime Minister. It did not ask about any particular policy. It did not refer to
health or education. It was just a personal attack on the Prime Minister. Therefore, the Prime
Minister should not be required to answer it.

The SPEAKER: The very last part of the question endeavoured to go to the Prime
Minister's responsibilities. I do not believe it got there. I am going to give the member for
Ballarat an opportunity to rephrase the question.

Ms KING: My question again is to the Prime Minister. On Monday, the former Liberal
Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, described the Prime Minister as 'an individual who has
always put self-interest before anything else'. When even long-term Liberal leaders like Jeff
Kennett know he puts his own ambition before Australia's, is it not clear that the Prime
Minister will sell out any policy, including health policy, climate change policy and marriage
equality policy, in order to promote his own ambition?

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will address the last part of the question.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:23): The honourable member's
question—if that is a fair description of it—is devoid of any detail. It is just another pointless
political slur, a pointless political point. Here we have the parliament of Australia assembled,
the government and all of its ministers here ready to answer questions about any aspect of
their portfolios. You could ask about the free trade agreement, you could ask about the NBN,
you could ask about health, you could ask about education, you could ask about
environment policy, you could ask me about water—that went so well yesterday; it was terrific—but instead we have questions—

Ms King: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will resume her seat.

Ms King: I have a point of order, Mr—

The SPEAKER: You have not listened to my earlier comments on this matter. There is no point of order. The member for Ballarat is being frivolous.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: The member for Isaacs is not here, but as a distinguished silk he would know that it is not often that a witness is confronted by a cross-examiner so inept that he or she has to reframe the questions. What is the question?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Gorton is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: Seriously, what is the question? The government's policies are sound. All of the government's policies have my support. The government will confront the big economic challenges that face Australia and we will ensure that, with our policies as they develop, we deliver continued strong economic growth. We have a vision for strong economic growth in Australia, and the free trade agreement of which we have been speaking a lot this week is a key part of that.

But the Labor Party, unable to add any specifics to their questions, just want to provide some sort of generalised political attack to which all that can be given in response is a 'Please have another go' type of answer. If the honourable member wants to ask me or any of my ministers a question with any specifics about any part of our portfolio, we will endeavour to answer it. But what she provides is simply an allegation, the sort of pointless piece of argument that so frustrates Australians. The thousands of Australians who watch question time would dearly love to see a proper political debate about the real issues. The slanging match should be over. The honourable member, with great respect, could ask a question that enables an informed answer to be given.

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Ballarat that she has been warned. She is on her final warning.

Economy

Mr IRONS (Swan) (14:26): My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer inform the House of the benefits of the government's economic plan to the people of Western Australia and explain how a stronger budget will benefit families in Canning?

Mr HOCKEY (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:27): I thank the member for Swan for that question. The way to help the people of Canning is to elect a Liberal on Saturday. That is the way to do it. Our candidate, Andrew Hastie, is a man of good repute. He also understands that, when Labor was last in office, on average 2,000 jobs were created every month, but that now, under us, 21,000 jobs have been created every month. That is real and that is tangible for
the people of Western Australia. It means that over 32,000 jobs have been created in Western Australia alone since we came to government. The way to get there is to support the free trade agreement with China which will open up export opportunities and new jobs and, importantly, to get rid of the taxes: the carbon tax, the mining tax, the bank deposits tax—the piggy bank tax that the Leader of the Opposition particularly liked—the car manufacturing tax and so on.

Yesterday in this place I was asked a question by someone who, I confess to my colleagues, I was not very familiar with: Andrew Leigh, the member for Fraser and shadow Assistant Treasurer. After the question yesterday, I thought to myself, 'I have to get to know this guy a little bit better.' So I went and did a little bit of research and I found this op-ed by the shadow Assistant Treasurer in The Australian. The headline is 'Pining for the good old carbon tax and the mining tax'. It is signed by Andrew Leigh and in it he says 'The bottom line is this: if the Abbott Government hadn't scrapped the carbon price and the mining tax, they would have got to surplus.' I thought: 'This is a cracker—we have finally found an honourable heir to the member for Lilley. We have finally found someone who is picking up the baton of the member for Lilley.'

I wanted to dig a little bit deeper and I found a speech by the member for Fraser. It is titled: 'With taxes, we build society.' But it gets better—I thought this was going to be compelling, so I started reading the speech. It starts like this:

Eight score years ago—
He must think he is Abraham Lincoln; the Gettysburg Address—about 45 kilometres south-west of where we meet today, people gathered for a conversation about tax.

Well, I say to you now: you now have the economic talent of the Labor Party writing the big speeches, lying upside down in a Manuka float tank!

**Budget**

**Mr HUSIC** (Chifley) (14:30): My question is to the current Treasurer. In the Treasurer's first budget, he slugged Australians with a GP tax. In his second budget, he locked in $80 billion of cuts to schools and hospitals. Treasurer, what do you have planned for your third budget?

**The SPEAKER:** That is a very broad question. The Treasurer is entitled to answer it very broadly.

**Mr HOCKEY** (North Sydney—The Treasurer) (14:31): I will answer broadly. I tell you what, whatever is planned for the third budget is a hell of a lot better than Labor's last budget. Labor's last budget cost Australians jobs. It cost Australians excessive taxes. Labor was a fiscal disaster and an economic disaster for Australia.

*Mr Conroy interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Charlton is now warned.

**Mr HOCKEY:** Everything the Labor Party touched in government was disastrous—from the pink batts they put into people's homes to the $900 cheques that they sent out to dead people. Remember that, Swannie? How proud they must be of that—or the mining tax.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer will refer to members by their correct titles.
Mr HOCKEY: I know, Mr Speaker, it is outrageous to call him by his name. Given that he has given me this opportunity and, as the Speaker said, it was a broad question, I can inform the House—I was going to do it in a statement after question time—that I have been informed by the Treasury of the final budget outcome for our first budget. That is that the budget bottom line is $3 billion better than we expected at budget time. The government is spending nearly $3 billion less than forecast, and net government debt is reduced by $11½ billion more than we expected.

I would say to you that, after Labor left a deficit of $49.5 billion, we are doing better. We are creating more jobs, we are opening up more opportunities and we are building greater prosperity.

Trade with China

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the minister advise the House on the importance of Australia's competitive position when our China-Australia free trade agreement is brought into force? What risks are there to this?

Mr ROBB (Goldstein—Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:33): I thank the member for Macarthur. As formerly a sergeant for 25 years in the New South Wales police and as a councillor on the Campbelltown City Council for 16 years, this member knows his patch as well as anyone in this place. He understands the enormous opportunities and the jobs that will flow in his electorate from the China deal.

Yesterday we introduced the enabling legislation for the China deal. From a competitive point of view, there is an enormous amount at stake in seeing this thing pass, and pass quickly. It will be transformational for our economy. The opportunities and investment that will come to help us produce world-class goods in greater qualities, our ability to provide services into that country across dozens and dozens of different services—many in the electorate of Macarthur—and the capital that flows will be transformational in our economy.

If the deal passes before the end of the year, we will see a double-whammy of two tariff cuts—one in the last fortnight of the year and the second-year one in the first fortnight of 2016. This will be another great aid to our competitive position. That is why today the Australian Food and Grocery Council CEO, Gary Dawson, said:

If the China-Australia FTA is not signed and implemented in 2015, the Australian agriculture and food sector stands to lose more than $5.5 billion a year in food export opportunities by 2018. It would be the death of the dining boom.

We have sought to structure these free trade agreements to be the bridge from the mining boom—which created prosperity and lots of jobs—to beyond the mining boom, to open up opportunities for services, goods and other sectors across our economy; other things that we are good at. One of the things that we are very good at is agriculture and all the products that are possible. If this deal does not go through, the dining boom that will fill much of the gap of the mining boom will not materialise.

This was confirmed yesterday in the comments of the New Zealand Prime Minister, as our foreign minister said. He said that while Australia should do the deal—because it will deliver 11 times what people estimate on their experience—it would be in New Zealand's competitive interests if it was to falter. They would very much like to see the unions—(Time expired)
Mr FEENEY (Batman) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Defence. Does the minister stand by his statement on Monday about the Prime Minister:

To bring on a leadership challenge within days - what is it, five days - of an important Canning by-election shows a lack of judgment in my view, and reinforces why Mr Turnbull didn't remain leader last time he was.

Is the minister concerned by what this lack of judgement will mean for government policies?

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies—Minister for Defence) (14:37): The Labor Party never learns. Here they are this week, question after question, wasting an opportunity to ask questions about the real issues facing the people of Australia. If you were interested in the people of Canning as you suggested in your question then you might be asking things which actually go to the people of Canning's interests such as the economic prosperity of this country, such as the safety and the security of the people of this country. But none of that comes from the members opposite. In the safety and security of this country, the candidate for Canning, Andrew Hastie, is someone who has put himself on the line for the people of this country. That is why we take the safety and security of the citizens of this country so strongly and so significantly.

That is why, for example, we have put in a continuous build—

Mr Chesters interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Member for Bendigo, that is your final warning.

Mr ANDREWS: of surface ships in Australia. That is why, for example, in relation to submarines we have put a competitive evaluation process in place. I see that one of the bidders has said that they can build a significant part of a submarine here in Australia—some 70 to 80 per cent. That means that we are going to have more jobs and a significant part of that build—perhaps 70 to 80 per cent—of submarines built here in Australia.

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: So submarines, frigates, offshore patrol vessels—all of these things being done because we are looking after the safety and the security of the people of Australia.

And what does that mean? That means that they are safe. It is good for Defence, it is good for all these industries around the country who are contributing to the defence industry in this country and, beyond that, it is good for jobs, workers and ordinary families of Australia. If you were concerned about ordinary families in Australia, you would be asking some questions about that, but all we get is more of this insider nonsense.

Opposition members: Your words!

The SPEAKER: Members opposite will cease interjecting.

Mr Burke interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will cease interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: I can hardly hear myself speak. As happens from time to time in politics, there are challenges that occur. They occur on both sides of the fence, and committed people say things in those challenges, but what we are doing under the leadership of the Prime
Minister, as a broad church, as a party representing conservative and liberal values—as that broad church—is getting on with the job of representing the people of Australia. Pity you're not thinking about them!

_Honourable members interjecting—_

**The SPEAKER:** The chamber is far too loud. Those who have been warned: I will not hesitate to take action. It is far too loud.

**Migration**

**Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (14:40):** My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister update the House on the role of the 457 visa in creating jobs and building the economy? How does engagement with our overseas neighbours help boost jobs and growth here in Australia? What obstacles are there to that engagement?

**Mr Watts interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Gellibrand is now warned.

**Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:41):** I thank the member for Forde for his question. He is a great local member who works hard for industry within his area and he is very supportive of small business. As all Australians know, the 457 visa program, which has been around for a long time, has been one way in which we can build Australian industry, and in WA we know that, whilst many more people came in on a 457 visa under Labor than are under this government, it has been an integral part of the way in which we have been able to grow the economy.

I was flicking through my *Daily Tele* this morning—as all good Australians should! I read a great story by Daniel Meers about the CFMEU's anti-China campaign hypocrisy. I thought: 'Our old friends at the CFMEU? That rings a bell because they've been opposed to 457 visas.' And you know what? It reminded me of the ad we referred to in question time a couple of weeks ago where the union dad was there with the union son, offering him the job in the union only to find that the position had been taken by a foreign worker. It made me go and have a look at the CFMEU website and WA CFMEU merchandise catalogue, which I have printed out because I thought it would be interesting reading.

What can you get from the CFMEU? All of these products are made in China, of course. You can get the CFMEU black T-shirt—blood resistant, can't tell the stains within the black, which is helpful for the bikies that have joined the CFMEU! You can have a look at the Eureka Stockade flag, as I understand regularly purchased by mistake, people thinking that it's a morning star, one of those medieval clubs that you can strike union opponents with! And of course there is the cap itself for $15 or, of course, 69 RMB—

**Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—**

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Adelaide is now warned.

**Mr DUTTON:** 69 RMB—just for consideration of the Leader of the Opposition.

The point is that the Labor Party is full of hypocrisy. This Leader of the Opposition is like a bad gambler with debts all over the union movement. The CFMEU offered support at the Labor Party conference to get through the temporary turn back policy that was put through. This Leader of the Opposition like no Labor leader in the past owes these union bosses in a way that would be detrimental to the future of this country. People in Canning should
remember this. Labor and the unions are full of hypocrisy and they are against Australian jobs. *(Time expired)*

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for McEwen will cease interjecting.

**Minister for Immigration and Border Protection**

Mr MARLES (Corio) (14:44): My question is to the current Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. In noting that last performance, I refer to reports that the minister texted the Prime Minister offering his resignation. Has the minister got a text back yet? In fact, has the minister discussed any government policy with the Prime Minister since Monday evening?

**The SPEAKER:** The minister can ignore the last part of the question.

Mr DUTTON (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:45): The most recent conversation I had with the Prime Minister was in relation to the 12,000 Syrians that we are bringing to our country. The Prime Minister was very supportive of this decision in cabinet, and the Prime Minister and I have discussed at length the way in which those 12,000 people can be brought into our country. This is a very important point: we have had great success through stopping the boats. We had 50,000 people arriving on 800 boats when Labor were last in power—1,200 people drowned at sea when Labor were in power and they lost complete control of our borders. But, because of the fact that we have had a very strong position as a government, supported by the Prime Minister over the course of the last two years and implemented by the Minister for Social Services, we have been able to deliver a dividend by allowing those 12,000 people to find a new home in a way that they could never have imagined.

It is important to recognise that we have 13,750 people already coming in under the refugee and humanitarian program. That means that we are more generous than any other country in the world. When I was in Europe last week, the French announced that they would bring 24,000 people from Syria into their country. The United States announced they would bring in 10,000 people and David Cameron said that the UK would bring in 20,000 people. Those numbers demonstrate that we are a very, very generous nation.

It would not be possible to create a new life for those people if we had not fixed the problem that Labor left us. We could not allow tens of thousands of people to flow illegally across our borders and still afford the opportunity to these people who are absolutely desperate in Syria.

Ms Chesters interjecting—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bendigo will leave under 94(a). She has been warned three times.

The member for Bendigo then left the chamber.

Mr DUTTON: If you are asking me what the interest of this Prime Minister is in border protection, he wants an absolute continuation of the success that we have had in stopping the boats. He wants to make sure that we can show compassion to these 12,000 people as they arrive to provide the settlement services that they need to create a new life, and that is exactly what this government will do.
Safer Streets Program

Mr WYATT (Hasluck) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Justice. Will the minister update the House on how the government's Safer Streets Program is making our community safer and is addressing the previous government's underinvestment in community safety?

Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Herbert will cease interjecting.

Mr Mitchell interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen is now warned.

Mr KEENAN (Stirling—Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism) (14:47): I thank the member for Hasluck for that question, and I note his interest in making sure that the streets of his electorate are as safe as possible. He is very aware that since we have come to office we have invested $50 million in our Safer Streets Program, which is money that we have allocated from the proceeds of crime—money that we confiscate from criminals from their illicit activities. When Labor were in office they froze the proceeds of crime account in an attempt to prop up their dodgy budget bottom line at the same time taking funding away from our front-line law enforcement officers. They were literally taking money from criminals to prop up their dodgy budget bottom line that they so spectacularly destroyed.

We made a commitment before we came to office that we would unlock this funding and return it to communities to make them safer. Without this decision, $112 million would have been locked away in this account by the financial year 2017-18. Through round 1 of our Safer Streets Program we have allocated $18 million of funding to 150 different locations in 64 different electorates. A lot of that money has funded closed-circuit television cameras, which act as a deterrent to people doing the wrong thing in public spaces—

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingston has been warned.

Mr KEENAN: and help our police to catch crooks, saving them time and saving the courts' time as well. These projects have been rolled out all across the nation. In round 1 we focused on retail and entertainment premises and commercial precincts to improve community safety. This is because we know that safe communities are strong and prosperous communities.

The electorate of Canning has benefited from the Safer Streets Program. After the strong advocacy of the previous member, the late Don Randall, we invested $250,000 in CCTV and improved lighting for the Mandurah foreshore and $170,000 for CCTV in the Armadale city centre. I was very pleased to go with Andrew Hastie, the Liberal candidate for the seat of Canning, to review some of the CCTV in action. We heard from the local council, the City of Armadale, about the impact that it had had in making their community centre safer. I was very pleased to be able to announce that we would be spending a further $150,000 in Canning to secure the Mandurah foreshore. These proceeds of crime have been benefiting local communities all around the country, and this further investment will mean the Mandurah foreshore continues to be the premier place in Mandurah for family-friendly fun.
I have no doubt that round 2 of the Safer Streets Program, which I intend to open shortly with a further $20 million investment in community safety, will be of benefit to the Canning community. I certainly am quietly confident that it will be Andrew Hastie, our Liberal candidate and a former captain of the SAS, who will be advocating as a champion for his local community to get further funds through our Safer Streets Program.

**Water**

**Mr FITZGIBBON** (Hunter) (14:51): My question is to the Prime Minister. As a former water minister and now Prime Minister, is he satisfied that the Shenhua mine project in the agriculture minister's electorate poses no threat to precious water resources in the agriculture sector? Will the Prime Minister review the decision to deny farmers the right to appeal against mine approvals?

**Mr Turnbull:** Greg, you had best take this.

**Mr HUNT** (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (14:51): I am very happy to take this.

**Mr Albanese:** He is not in charge of water anymore.

**Mr HUNT:** I am in charge of EPBC approvals.

**Mr Albanese:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Grayndler will resume his seat. The minister has the call.

**Mr HUNT:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am absolutely delighted to take this question because the first thing is that it contains an utterly false assertion.

**Ms Macklin interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Jagajaga will cease interjecting.

**Mr HUNT:** The farmers of Australia have had, will continue to have and right now have the ability to make any representation under law through an appeal, whether it is under section 487 or it is under section 5 of the Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act.

**Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hunter has asked his question.

**Mr HUNT:** It is also important to note that this provision, which you now want to criticise—

**Mr Perrett interjecting**—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Moreton has been warned twice.

**Mr HUNT:** was the very one that the entire Labor Party voted for in the Western Sydney airport bill. They voted for that same standing provision themselves, which they now want to criticise—

**Opposition members interjecting**—

**Mr HUNT:** as did you. Here he is, the—

**The SPEAKER:** The minister will resume his seat.

**Mr Albanese interjecting**—
Mr Albanese: The minister is misleading the House. He knows Badgerys Creek has had two EISs—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat.

Mr Albanese: The minister is misleading the House. He knows Badgerys Creek has had two EISs—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat.

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bass is warned.

Mr Albanese: The minister is misleading the House. He knows Badgerys Creek has had two EISs—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will resume his seat.

Mr Nikolic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Bass is warned.

Mr HUNT: They are sensitive about the fact that they voted for precisely this provision. So that is the issue in relation to standing. Firstly, there was an utterly false statement. Right now, and under any proposed alternative, farmers have the absolute right to stand up for and challenge any decision.

The second thing is in relation to the Shenhua decision. There were extraordinary provisions put in place, the most stringent in Australian history, and there are three further sets of reviews to be taken—three further sets of reviews which will be assessed. And these are standards above and beyond anything else that we have seen in Australian history.

So, yes, sometimes as an environment minister you have to deal with the things which are placed before you in the docket. They are there on the list that is before you, and you have to deal with it not on the basis of politics but on the basis of the best available science. And there was not just one or two, three, four or five but six—

Mr Fitzgibbon interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hunter will cease interjecting.

Mr HUNT: different scientific reviews. There were six different scientific reviews which set out that the conditions were utterly acceptable. More than that, I approached the independent expert scientific committee and asked them for additional comments and additional advice and incorporated every one—every one—of their recommendations.

That is the careful approach which we have taken. And I am utterly satisfied that, on the steps taken to date, no other environment minister in Australia could have come to a different conclusion on the law or the science. At the end of the day, the people elected this government to make decisions on the basis of the law and to make decisions on the basis of the science. As well as that, we have put in place three further review or plan mechanisms which will have to be fulfilled. (Time expired)

Schools

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Will the minister update the House on the success of the Independent Public Schools program in Western Australia? How is the government targeting the things that work to improve education in our schools?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (14:55): I thank the member for Cowan for his question. It is an excellent question about a serious
subject, and that is the school education of young Western Australians—in particular, in the electorate of Canning, which is facing a very important by-election on Saturday. Andrew Hastie, our terrific candidate for that seat, when he gets to Canberra—and I hope that he will—will also be a strong supporter of the sound education policies that we have put in place in our Students First plan to turn around student outcomes.

For example, we have had record funding to Australian schools from the Commonwealth and into Western Australia. Funding to government schools in Western Australia is increasing by 72 per cent, and total Commonwealth funding to all schools in WA is increasing by 42 per cent from 2014 to 2019, so we are getting the basics right in terms of funding. We brought Western Australia into the national funding model, which the Labor Party had failed to do, in fact short-changing Western Australia to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. We brought them into the national school-funding plan, and we returned that money to them. You might remember, Mr Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition removed $1.2 billion from school funding. We put it back.

There are 60 schools in Canning that are benefiting from our teacher education reforms. I am very pleased to say that all of the states and territories, including WA, have agreed to reform the way we train our teachers to give them good basic understandings of phonics, and specialists in primary school teaching in science, mathematics and languages.

In terms of the Independent Public Schools model, which the member asked me about, I had the pleasure of visiting the Ocean Road Primary School and the Neerigen Brook Primary School with the late member for Canning, Don Randall. Both of these schools are independent public schools. Western Australia were the first state to embrace independent public schooling. They have done it in the most comprehensive way of any state or territory across Australia, and they are seeing the benefits. Western Australia are at the top of the ladder in terms of NAPLAN results for their students. In fact, Peter Collier, who is the Minister for Education, said:

The Independent Public Schools initiative … has transformed public schooling in Western Australia …

… With the school and community working together, the most appropriate decisions for students can be made because they know what is needed and what works.

So at Ocean Road Primary School and at Neerigen Brook Primary School, where I have been, we are seeing independent public schooling in practice working for the people of Canning. There are 25,000 students in Canning. They are benefiting from our new app, the Learning Potential app, which is one of the top three education apps on the App Store and the Google Play store. So, on Saturday, we hope that the people of Canning will see the wisdom of supporting Andrew Hastie.

Budget

**Mr BURKE** (Watson—Manager of Opposition Business) (14:59): My question is to the Prime Minister. Can the Prime Minister confirm that the final budget outcome figures provided by the Treasurer earlier in question time mean that, compared to when the government came to office, the deficit had blown out by $14 billion and net debt by $26 billion? Why do the government not acknowledge that from budget to budget they have doubled the deficit and that net debt has continued to rise?
Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:59): The shamelessness of the opposition, complaining about the budgetary state our nation is in—

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin is warned!

Mr TURNBULL: When we left office in 2007, we left this country with no net debt at all and with cash at the bank—billions in cash at the bank. We left this nation with a budget in surplus, and then one reckless, uninformed decision after another, one panicked move after another—which many of us remember because we debated those decisions here in this House, when I sat in the chair of the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Thistlethwaite interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Kingsford Smith is now warned!

Mr TURNBULL: The Labor Party panicked and spent and spent and built up, as we predicted, a towering mountain of debt and structural deficit, which will take us years to undo, but undo it we will. It will require time.

Ms Owens interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Parramatta will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: What we see with the opposition is an extraordinary exercise in economic denialism. They feel as though the budget has just emerged from a bubble last year and they would like to forget six years of Labor government. Well, we understand that. They are, after all, only human. Everyone would like to forget it, but sadly we cannot. Australians cannot forget it, because they created the debt and deficit which we are now seeking to address, and we are reducing, as the Treasurer just said, that debt. We are bringing down that deficit, but it is a slow process.

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker, I raise a point of order on direct relevance. The question went to the deficit figure increasing since they came to office. The Prime Minister is now coming up with new facts that are completely untrue. Not only irrelevant—untrue!

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL: The bottom line about the budget is simply this: Labor spent and spent; they borrowed and borrowed. They spent far too much during the GFC. We warned them. I remember saying to the then Prime Minister, Mr Rudd: 'You don't need to spend so much money. You don't need to make these commitments. Have some restraint, and if we need to spend more money, parliament is not closing down—we can do it again.'

Dr Chalmers interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Rankin has been warned.

Mr TURNBULL: But, oh no, with the recklessness of people utterly unused to economic management, the Labor government fired all of their shots off, borrowed wildly, spent wildly, and as usual it is the coalition, the Liberal Party and the National Party, that has the job of cleaning up their mess.

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide, that is your final warning!
Mr SUKKAR (Deakin) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Will the minister update the House on how the Green Army is improving the environment and job opportunities for young people in electorates like mine, Deakin, and in Canning and across the country?

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr HUNT (Flinders—Minister for the Environment) (15:03): I am delighted to respond to the question from the member for Deakin. There was a time when people dreamt into being environmental programs such as pink batts; green loans; Bill's favourite, 'cash for clunkers'—in fact, it is a metaphor for his whole career—and, of course, the carbon tax. Well, they are all gone and we have cleaned up that mess.

Something else which is cleaning up the mess around Australia is the Green Army. It is cleaning up our waterways, our rivers, our parks and our gardens, and the member for Deakin is one of the 90 Green Army ambassadors on this side of the House. In his electorate, we have the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, where there has been weed control, mulching, path works—I have been able to visit it—and projects such as Heatherdale Creek Parklands or the Eastfield Park rehabilitation. This is practical work, cleaning up local environments and making a difference not just on the ground but to the lives of young people, and this is something that is of immense importance.

We said that we would have 250 projects within the first year; we had 300 projects. We said that we would achieve 750 projects by the end of the second year; we have already announced or commenced 700 projects. We said that we would span the country and, in fact, in Canning we have seen some remarkable projects underway. I know that the Bridging the Gap project was one of the last that Don Randall visited, and it was a wonderful project. What was very touching, and an example not just of what we wanted to see with the environment but of the human development of these magnificent young people, was that at his funeral, unprompted, unknown and unprepared by anyone on the government side, the young people chose to form a corridor to bring in a guard of honour to be there for that community. This is an example of young people being part of their community, of being engaged and then of forming connections.

This is a project that we are immensely proud of around Australia and in electorates such as Deakin and Canning and everywhere. It is about jobs, it is about opportunities, but, above all else, it is about the pride of work and engagement. So this, for us, is something that we are immensely proud of, and I believe that all members on all sides can be proud of our young people. We can say that they are doing the right thing by the environment, they are doing the right thing by themselves, but, above all else, they are being a part of the community. (Time expired)

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's earlier answer today: 'The government policies are sound; all of the government's policies have my support.' Can the Prime Minister confirm his support for $100,000 university degrees, $80 billion of cuts to schools and hospitals and
cuts to the pensions? Can the Prime Minister confirm he supports the same old broken promises and cuts?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr Whiteley interjecting—

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

Mr Pyne: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is no such policy in relation to higher education so I do not know how a question can be based on a bald-faced lie. Therefore, I would ask you to rule it out of order.

The SPEAKER: As I have said, there is a long history—and there is quite a bit on this in the Practice—that I cannot judge the factual accuracy of questions. I am going to allow the question. It gives the responder to the question the ability to deal with any such matters. I call the Prime Minister.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:07): Once again, the Leader of the Opposition has missed an opportunity—

Ms Macklin interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Jagajaga is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: to ask a substantive question. Instead, he has taken a few claims out of one of his Labor leaflets, the same one where they said they had brought the budget back into balance—remember that one—and he has put them in there and claimed they are the government's policies. The honourable member knows that his claim, for example, that the government is legislating for $100,000-degrees is nonsense. The government's policies have been carefully considered. They are the government's policies. Every policy of any rational, constructive government is always under review. Of course our cabinet—

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton will leave under 94(a).

The member for Moreton then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: will examine the challenges that we face, the policies that we have. We will develop new policies.

I would encourage the opposition leader over the next three weeks to think about changing his question time strategy. He should have pity on the people of Australia, who are crying out for an opposition that is actually interested in the economy, that is actually interested in the details of the problems that Australians face and wants to hold the government to account. But just shouting a political zinger or slogan across the dispatch box, what is the point of that? It can receive a political answer but can get nothing of substance. So I invite the honourable member, in the spirit of collaboration, of almost bipartisanship, perhaps he will agree to pity the people of Australia and have a question time where questions are genuine, serious and focused on the real challenges.
Mr HAWKE (Mitchell) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Social Services. Will the minister update the House on the government's plans to support pensioners across Australia? How is the government helping pensioners keep up with the cost of living?

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I remind the members for Jagajaga and Kingston that they have been warned.

Mr MORRISON (Cook—Minister for Social Services) (15:10): I thank the member for Mitchell for his question. He will be very pleased to know that this Sunday the pension is going up. The pension is going up this Sunday. Despite those opposite claiming that pensions are being cut, that pensions are falling, this Sunday the pension will be going up. But it will not be the first time that it has gone up under this government because already to date the pension has risen by $51.80 for singles and $78 per fortnight for couples.

The increases that we have had since this government came to power include: $14.10 for singles and the $21.24 for the carbon tax compensation which we ensured we delivered and we got rid of the carbon tax at the same time. So pensioners, as a result of us being able to deliver those concessions, those increases consistently over time, are $78 better off now for couples and $51.80 for singles. And for the almost 20,000 age pensioners in Canning who will be going to the polls on Saturday, what they need to know is that pensions keep going up under this government and that pensions will be going up on Sunday again. Those opposite like to scare pensioners. Those opposite like to scare them with false campaigns about the government's policies.

The contrast today could not have been more significant and more serious. On that side of the House, we had those who were seeking to make light of serious issues and on this side of the House there were sensible answers to sensible questions from our colleagues. Look at the contrast, as I am sure those in Canning will be doing. This has been a difficult week but it has been an important week. While those opposite would seek to sneer and make light, on this side of the House we have been getting on with the job of government. The government is continuing to govern in a sensible and secure way. For those people at home who have looked at the events of this week and had concerns, they should know they have a government that is focused on them and there is a an opposition that is focused only on their cynical political games. As a result, in Canning this weekend they can go to those polls and they will know that their pension is going up on Sunday, that this government will continue to govern in their interest and that they can have full confidence that our focus is 100 per cent on their interests.

Mr Turnbull: I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS

Annual Report for 2014-15


Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.
Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education and Training) (15:13): A document is presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Broadband

The SPEAKER (15:13): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Blaxland proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Prime Minister's mismanagement of the NBN.

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—

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (15:14): They say that revenge is a dish best served cold, and the Prime Minister has waited a very, very long time to get his revenge. It is almost six years now since he was brought down by the former Prime Minister in a leadership spill late in the year, almost in the dead of night, but the bad blood between these two men, the Prime Minister and the former Prime Minister, goes back much further than that. It goes back at least 16 years, to when they were opposite each other in the republic debate, when the former Prime Minister defeated the now Prime Minister on the issue of the republic, cost Australia a republic and broke the nation's heart.

But it goes back even further than that. I have recently stumbled upon an article that the new Prime Minister wrote 37 years ago in The Bulletin of 7 February 1978, when he was a journalist. In this article he gives a free character analysis of the former Prime Minister. Reporting about an AUS conference, he says:

The leading light of the right-wingers in NSW is twenty-year-old Tony Abbott. He has written a number of articles on AUS in the Australian and his press coverage has accordingly given him a stature his rather boisterous and immature rhetoric doesn't really deserve.

It is almost as if it could have been written this week, isn't it?

So he had the motive: revenge. He had the argument, because by any objective analysis this has been a pretty ordinary government for the last two years, a government which has made lots of mistakes and broken lots of promises. But the thing that he fails to recognise is that he has been part of that government and that a lot of those broken promises have been his—broken promises on the ABC, broken promises on SBS and broken promises on the NBN. This is the now Prime Minister's election policy on the NBN that he took to the last election in 2013.

Mr Husic: It looks thin.

Mr CLARE: It is at least 18 pages, and the most important point is on the back page, Member for Chifley, because there he says that he will build the NBN—a second-rate copper version of the NBN, but he will build the NBN—for a total cost of $29½ billion. Now,
unfortunately, we know that that is not true, because last month the now Prime Minister released this document, the corporate plan on the NBN for 2016—a lot thicker and a lot more expensive. What this report shows is that the cost of the NBN has now blown out by $26.5 billion. It has gone from $29½ billion to $56 billion. I am telling you the truth. You just need to read the document: $29½ billion to $56 billion. In other words, the cost of the NBN has now almost doubled.

Why is this happening? It is happening for this reason: because the now Prime Minister, when he was an opposition shadow minister, made mistakes in his assumptions when he was putting this policy together, and he underestimated how difficult it would be to move from building a fibre NBN to a second-rate copper NBN. I will give you some examples. He said that he would be able to negotiate an agreement with Telstra by the middle of last year. That agreement was not finalised until the middle of this year, a year behind what he promised. As a result, the rollout of the second-rate fibre-to-the-node technology is at least a year behind schedule as well. Malcolm Turnbull, when he was minister, said that he would have fibre to the node rolling out at scale by the middle of last year. Well, it is now the second half of this year and it is still not rolling out at scale.

But it gets worse, because he also said that part of his second-rate NBN would be connecting people to the NBN via HFC. In the much-vaunted strategic review document, he said that 2.61 million Australians would be connected to the NBN via HFC by the end of next year. But the corporate plan that has now been released tells us that less than one-third of Australians will be connected to the NBN via HFC, not by the end of next year but by the middle of 2017. It gets worse than that, because the IT system to run all of these different technologies, we were told, was going to cost between $180 million and $290 million. That has now ballooned out to almost $1 billion.

All of these mistakes are based on these documents, including the election policy that said it would only cost $29½ billion—at the time I remember the then shadow minister saying that this was based on assumptions which were conservative—and mistakes made in the strategic review, which said the cost had blown out from $29½ billion to $41 billion. At the time I remember the now Prime Minister saying that these assumptions were conservative and achievable, but on both occasions they were wrong—hopelessly wrong. It is not $29½ billion. It is not even $41 billion. It is now $56 billion. You have to give it to Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey. I know they doubled the deficit, but this Prime Minister has almost doubled the cost of the second-rate NBN.

It is not just the cost that has blown out. Last week was the second anniversary of the election of Tony Abbott as Prime Minister, and that night, when he was elected, he issued a public letter to the people of Australia. He said this in the letter:

I want our NBN rolled out within three years and Malcolm Turnbull is the right person to make this happen.

Three years—that means the NBN would be done by the end of next year, doesn't it? Well, that is not going to happen. It is another broken promise. The corporate plan that I referred to tells us now that the NBN will not be completed until the end of 2020, so instead of three years it will take seven years. In other words, he has doubled the cost of the NBN and he has more than doubled the time that it is going to take to roll it out. This is the failed record of the former communications minister: just like the former Prime Minister, a shopping list of
broken promises. It is now going to cost double what he promised and take twice as long to build as they promised.

But it gets worse than this, because at the end of it, when it is all built, what do Australians end up with? A second-rate NBN—an NBN that Simon Hackett, the man Malcolm Turnbull appointed to the board of the NBN, said this of. I do not know what to do, Deputy Speaker, other than to just read it out, 'FTTN sucks' and:

If I could wave a wand, it's the bit I'd erase.

There you have it. There is the expert, the man that the now Prime Minister appointed to the NBN board who says that his second-rate version of the NBN 'sucks'. Why has all this happened? It has happened, I think, because the now Prime Minister has been a bit distracted for the last few months. He has been focused on something else, focused, I think, on getting ready for something a little different.

We have seen evidence that he has been prepared to do whatever it takes to move jobs from Communications to the Prime Minister by the answers that he has given on climate change and on marriage equality over the course of the last few days. In response to our criticisms of this, he says, 'Come now, it's not the means; it's the ends.' What a most appropriate answer because, for this Prime Minister, it has always been about the ends.

If you want evidence of that, you just need to read the Good Weekend from 13 April 1991—Malcolm Turnbull, 'Humility is for saints'. In there, you get a good idea of how it has always been about the ends. In this story that is told, we hear from David Dale, the former radio broadcaster, who knew Malcolm Turnbull as 'the footballer' because of his solid frame. At a meeting, Malcolm Turnbull announced to Dale that he wanted to be Prime Minister by the time he was 40. Dale asked, 'For which party?' Malcolm the footballer responded, 'It doesn't matter.'

It tells you everything you need to know about this Prime Minister—it is not about the means; it has always been about the ends.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications) (15:24): What a measure of chutzpah. What a measure of sheer, brazen effrontery it takes for the Labor Party to stand up and criticise the coalition on the NBN. This is like somebody who has crashed his car who runs away and then comes back to the scene later to berate the tow truck driver about how he is doing the fix-up job. So passionate are Labor about this topic, so effective has the member for Blaxland been as a spokesman on this topic that he has asked only three questions of the Minister for Communications in two years of government! Only one of them was about the NBN and, fascinatingly, it was about a 1923 wooden boat co-owned by the minister and an NBN executive. This is extraordinary. The member for Blaxland seems to be keen on prompting discussion about conspicuous areas of Labor failure and coalition success, boats and NBN. We are doing what you failed to do. We are stopping the boats and we are delivering the NBN.

We inherited a hopeless mess. Labor took a plan to the 2007 election, promising 12 megabits per second, fibre to the node—a private sector government joint venture, $4.7 billion of government money only. But, of course, they hopelessly failed to execute on that plan. Their plans collapsed and, by April 2009, they were forced to go for the double-or-nothing strategy, shock and awe. So, as is now well-known, on a VIP flight between
Melbourne and Brisbane, the only time that the then broadband minister, Senator Conroy—now supposedly the shadow minister for defence, but his main priority seems to be shadow minister for defending his broadband legacy—had a chance to catch the then Prime Minister, on the back of a beer coaster with no detailed analysis they came up with a plan for a 100 megabit per second network. This was a chaotic failure of public administration. The eminent public servant Bill Scales was commissioned to conduct an independent audit of the NBN public policy process, and he had this to say:

The public policy process for developing NBN Mark II was rushed, chaotic and inadequate, with only perfunctory consideration by the Cabinet. After just 11 weeks of consideration, the Government had decided to establish a completely new 'start-up' company … There was no business case or any cost benefit analysis, or independent studies of the policy undertaken … It was one of the worst pieces of public policy execution we have ever seen in Australia. But, supposedly, according to then Prime Minister Rudd: 'Not to worry. There will still be private sector investment and the mums and dads should consider investing in the bonds that will be issued to fund it.' What a grossly irresponsible thing to say. Surprise, surprise! When the implementation report came out a year later, it turned out that the private sector experts, McKinsey and KPMG, said, 'Oh, forget about that bit where there's going to be private sector investment because this plan is so hopeless that the private sector would not touch it with a barge pole.'

Of course, they had nobody with any experience of telecommunications on the board. The chairman of the board was an investment banker. The chief executive was not somebody from a telecommunications operator background; he was, instead, somebody from a telecommunications vendor background—a critical difference, one absolutely lost on the then minister who has no private sector experience.

What did they actually deliver in government? They delivered a lot of glossy brochures, a lot of press releases, a lot of media events and a lot of promises but not much actual network. They consistently missed milestones. By the time we came to government in September 2013, after six years they had achieved a mere 348,000 premises of the 2.2 million premises that were supposed to be passed. So we saw a chaotic and incompetent approach on the part of the previous government, and they had the extraordinary chutzpah to criticise the diligent and successful delivery, which has characterised the approach of the former Minister for Communications and now Prime Minister, who has done an extraordinary job of turning it around.

Let us look at where we up to, a mere two years after coming to government—now 1.32 million premises are able to connect. That is more than triple what Labor achieved in six years. There has been a step-change in rollout speed. Some 13,000 premises per week are now being regularly passed, as this rollout scales up to an industrial-scale operation—systematic and businesslike. With the corporate plan just released, there is a credible and well-developed path forward to 75 per cent of premises being able to connect to this network by mid-2018. In achieving that extraordinary turnaround, which in years to come I am certain will be a business-school case study, we have seen very detailed analysis conducted with the strategic review to understand actually what the issues are.

The former Minister for Communications appointed competent, experienced people to the board. What a good idea! Let's have some people on the board who actually have some
experience in the telecommunications industry—not particularly revolutionary, you would have thought, but not something that Labor bothered to do. We put onto the board Ziggy Switkowski, the former chief executive of both Telstra and Optus; Justin Milne, a very experienced internet executive at OzEmail and Telstra; Simon Hackett, the former chief executive of Internode.

Mr Clare interjecting—

Mr FLETCHER: Isn’t the member for Blaxland surprised that we would have on the board somebody who would give a full and nuanced view? We want expertise and we want people to give their views and then we form a view. Under Labor, of course, already he would have been sent off to a re-education camp. He would be incurring thought re-education if Labor were in power. They just cannot understand our approach, which is to get the expertise we need to get the job done.

The minister carried out a spectacular success in renegotiating the deals with Telstra and Optus. I spent eight years of my professional life before coming into this parliament as a senior executive at Optus, on a near daily basis dealing with Telstra and negotiating with Telstra. It is tough job. Telstra has a very, very capable executive team. Under the previous government, then Minister Conroy got absolutely taken to the cleaners by Telstra. He had no idea what he was doing. It took the present Minister for Communications—the present Prime Minister—to turn it around. It is a spectacular achievement. Of course, the approach of openness and transparency that we have now seen—

Ms Rowland interjecting—

Mr Clare interjecting—

Mr Husic interjecting—

Mr FLETCHER: The rollout numbers are published every week! There is nothing to hide. It is all out there. There is a culture of transparency that NBN has been directed to achieve. This is an ambitious project with a lot to do and we have always been very clear about it. There has been an enormous amount achieved. Revenue has risen from $17 million in 2013, the last full year that Labor had control of NBN, to $164 million in the year just completed. So revenue is ramping up, connections are ramping up and the rollout is ramping up. We have 283,000 premises now passed by fixed wireless, up from 39,000 when we came to power. The first satellite is due to launch on 1 October, with services to commence by halfway through next year. So there is sustained progress and sustained delivery.

Let me make the point that the NBN is really a very telling insight into two different approaches on two different sides of the parliament. Labor think it is all about the announcement: they whip out the press release and that is all they need to do. Government is about delivery. Labor announced the fibre-to-the-premises plan in 2009. They had no idea how to deliver it. A few weeks ago, they announced that now their RET—their renewable energy target—is 50 per cent. They have no idea how to deliver it. They promised free trade agreements for years, without delivering them. They promised that they could stop the boats. They said, ‘The Malaysian solution is going to fix it. The regional processing centre is going to fix it,’ and they never delivered it.

On this side of the parliament, we are about a sensible plan and about execution and delivery: free trade agreements with Korea, Japan and China—delivered; stopping the boats—
delivered; an NBN rollout with a relentless focus on delivery, and in two years we have tripled what Labor managed to achieve in six years of government. The Australian people expect their government to deliver. What they have seen, when it comes to the NBN, is the Minister for Communications—now the Prime Minister—leading a relentless focus on execution, with a credible strategy based on the detail and getting the job done so that the number of people who are able to connect and who are able to get the service is steadily rising. There is a credible path forward so that by mid-2018 75 per cent of premises around the country will be able to connect to the network. This is the systematic, business-like, fact based, rational approach of the Minister for Communications as he remains and, as the Prime Minister, as he now is. He has delivered a remarkable turnaround on the chaotic incompetence that we inherited from Labor when it came to the NBN. We will see the same approach across all of government as the Minister for Communications becomes the Prime Minister.

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (15:34): The Parliamentary Secretary mentioned chutzpah a few times. As I said on Monday, my concern with the NBN is that we had a communications minister not focused on his day job. But, talking about chutzpah, we will start with a quick quiz. On 1 July 2013:

… Australians want an election so they can choose their government and prime minister.

As I talk with people … they are telling me that they feel let down and disappointed in a government that is focused on itself rather than the challenges facing the country …

Once again the faceless men of the Labor Party, rather than the people, have chosen a Prime Minister.

For too long, we've had chaos, division and dysfunction.

From The Telegraph yesterday:

Shrewd frontbench operators Simon Birmingham, Scott Ryan and Mitch Fifield had been appointed number-crunchers—

This was to do the PM in—

but the job was headed by Mr Turnbull's parliamentary secretary Paul Fletcher …

It is no wonder that on the Lower North Shore they are calling him 'faceless man Fletcher'. He looks in the mirror and there is nothing! Nothing!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! Member for Greenway!

Ms Henderson: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask the member opposite to return to the subject matter of the MPI. What she has said is totally inappropriate. She needs to return to the subject matter of the MPI. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Greenway has the call. It has been wide-ranging on both sides, I have to say, but I will remind the member for Greenway of the MPI which has come from that side of the House.

Ms ROWLAND: It certainly is about the NBN. On this point, we even had the Prime Minister giving us one of his pompous little lectures today about how we need to lift this place. We need to rise above politics in this place. And he said that on the first day that he came in.

Well, here is an interesting story: last night, I received an invitation from NBN Co to meet the team and learn about Australia's broadband network. It was on for two hours last night. The invitation did not say anything partisan. I was getting ready to go down and rang a few of
my colleagues and said, 'Are you going down?' They said, 'We've just come back.' I said, 'Why?' They said, 'It is a waste of time.' It got hijacked by the Prime Minister, who just gave a rant about Stephen Conroy. It was a totally un-prime ministerial little session, a little display of what he really is. It just shows you that he is just as much a pugilist as the bloke he knifed—just as much a pugilist! Let's have a look at one of these Twitter exchanges. It is pretty typical to form. This is a good one from March last year. This person says: Bought a house in Ocean Grove. No NBN. No Cable. No ADSL 2 or 1. Back to the dongle.
Malcolm Turnbull replied:
… just curious:– if connectivity was so vital to you why did you buy a house where there was no broadband available?
Lifestyle choices! When you hear this Prime Minister, he always talks about his experiences. For the last five years, especially when we were in government, you would be debating this bloke and he would always talk about—he is a big namedropper: 'Yes, I was having a brandy with Rupert the other day.' He never ever talks about consumers. But I tell you the consumers who should be concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker Bruce Scott—I know you will be very alive to this. It is the Nationals, the bush, because they have been sold out again by this Minister for Communications. Not only has he absolutely put an axe to universal wholesale pricing in a very sneaky way—

Government members interjecting—

Ms ROWLAND: You do not need to take it from me. Have a look at Nationals' Senator Barry O'Sullivan here in Queensland Country Life:

SPARKS are flying within the coalition as fiery Nationals senator Barry O'Sullivan takes aim at the Federal Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull for subjecting rural communities to "third world" services.

"It's a shame on our nation," Mr O'Sullivan said.
"I'm embarrassed to be part of a party whose government would allow this to continue.
"I think Malcolm should roll his swag out and run his ministry from out here for a month and then I think Malcolm will change his opinion.

But we know that this is a government that said, when it was in opposition, of these long-term satellites: 'Rolls-Royce! Just get NewSat to do it'—NewSat, which has gone into administration, by the way—but now it is saying that the satellites are going to be a game changer. I know the Deputy Speaker is the member for Maranoa, the area that was promised, on handshake, by the last Prime Minister to get fibre optic cable.

Mr Frydenberg interjecting—

Ms ROWLAND: I am reflecting on the former minister in this area and on his failure to deliver for the bush! (Time expired)

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass—Government Whip) (15:39): I could not believe my eyes when the member for Blaxland's matter of public importance landed on my desk. Initially, I thought it was two of my amigo colleagues having a bit of a go at me. I thought this could not be serious—Labor talking about the NBN, Labor talking about fiscal responsibility—but it appears that in moving this motion the member for Blaxland is absolutely intent on reaching the pinnacle of 'Mount Hypocrisy'. Labor's record with this national program is an exemplar
of how not to deliver a major infrastructure project. The reason why Australia, at the end of
the 2013 election, was on a trajectory to $667 billion of debt was exactly because of this sort
of wilful, disrespectful, wanton waste of taxpayer dollars.

Let us address some of the facts that the member for Blaxland so conveniently avoided.
Labor’s approach to the NBN was conceived on the back of an envelope in a 34 Squadron VIP
aircraft. I understand it was the Baldric approach to policy development—pairs of underpants
on the head and two pencils up the nose—and no cabinet process. It was rubber stamped by
then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the then communications minister Stephen Conroy.
Think about that for a moment: no business case, no cabinet process for the expenditure of
tens of billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money on the biggest, most complex infrastructure
project in Australia’s history. It is characterised by chaotic planning, flawed advice,
inadequate governance and no benchmarking. You would think, if you are going to spend
tens of billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money, you would look at other parts of the world for best
practice where this has been rolled out, you would go and talk to companies like Alcatel-
Lucent that, with noise reduction technology approved, you can shift data at 100 megabits per
second across copper, and you would go and talk to the exemplars of the wireless world that
can move data at incredible speeds. But, no, Senator Conroy and Prime Mister Rudd knew
best. They always knew best because they always thought they were the smartest men in the
room.

What history shows us is that, despite extravagant promises that were never realised over
three elections, this was probably the most poorly managed project in the Australian
Commonwealth’s history. My home state of Tasmania is a compelling case study of Labor’s
NBN catastrophe being turned around by this government. The early NBN rollout in Tassie
had ground to a halt. The lead construction partner, Visionstream, had downed tools.
Hundreds of contractors had no work. They were contacting me. Having made a significant
investment in this project, their future was enormously uncertain. Only 32,000 households
had fibre running down their streets, yet one-quarter did not even have a direct link into the
network, so they could not order a service. The then communications minister, now Prime
Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, saw this firsthand when he came to Launceston on 4 April. He
met with some of those contractors, he helped me run a public communications forum in
Launceston and he saw the gulf between the Labor maps and the reality on the ground.

In government, Labor’s embarrassment is obvious. We saw that in the first two Labor
speakers, who talked about everything but their record when it comes to the NBN. It is a clear
indicator of them wanting to put distance between them and their own record on this project.
During the past two years, much has been done by Minister Turnbull, now the Prime Minister,
to remedy Labor’s NBN disaster. I was pleased to publicise a week ago that the NBN has
topped 100,000 premises in Tasmania—more than tripling in two years—73,000 premises
now have an active fixed line footprint and 27,000 homes and businesses in smaller towns
have access to superfast wireless. By any measure, this is a dramatic turnaround that has seen
13,000 premises added to the network footprint in Tasmania alone. Construction in
Launceston is scheduled to finish by August 2016, which will make Launceston one of the
first cities in Australia to be fully networked, and NBN anticipates being able to offer a
service to every home or business in Tasmania within two years. So I say to those opposite:
reflect on your own record, stop trying to reinvent history, congratulate Minister Turnbull,
congratulate his department, congratulate Bill Morrow and NBN Co on getting this project back on track.

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (15:44): Is this for real? Are we supposed to congratulate Prime Minister Turnbull? What are you on? Every single thing that should be happening with this project is not happening. What they are desperately trying to do is go back. It is always about looking back with the Liberal Party. It is never about looking forward. It is never about taking account, right now.

They promised us a project that would cost $29 billion. It is now going to cost $56 billion. They promised us a project that would be done and dusted by 2019. Now they are looking at getting it done by 2020. They promised us a whole lot of stuff along the way, including that they would get the agreement done with Telstra. We have seen the sheer prowess of the Prime Minister! He wants to ask questions of himself so he can answer them himself. He was going to roll out, as a result of his great commercial acumen, an agreement with Telstra just by virtue of his presence! He thought that, like a Sonny Bill hologram, those negotiations would just magically transform and he would be able to get that agreement—bam, it would all happen!

Everything is being delayed, and why is that? I heard the member for Blaxland say that maybe the member for Wentworth, now Prime Minister, has been a bit distracted. Well, he sort of has been. It is the modern version of the Howard-Peacock battle. It is now all about Abbott and Turnbull. In fact, it is so good that, when Malcolm Turnbull types in 'Tony Abbott' in Google, Google asks, 'Do you mean 'revenge'?' That is all he has been focused on lately, instead of actually getting the job of rolling out the network done. It has been held up.

Those opposite operate in the belief that everything about fibre to the premises is bad and that it should not have been done. But what did Malcolm Turnbull, now the Prime Minister, first invest in? He invested in fibre networks. When he had a choice to make investments in projects in Europe, he thought, 'I'm going to make money on a smart investment. When people roll out fibre networks, I'll support that.' His own investments show what he has supported and the telcos that he has invested in in times past. But he was forced by the previous Prime Minister to embrace the notions that everything about the NBN was bad and that they would have their own alternative model. The only problem is their alternative model is nothing that Australia wants or, importantly, needs. The commercial acumen of those opposite is again on full display. When talking about fibre and what we might be able to do in getting that out to premises, what did they do? Their great commercial plan, like someone who had just been fooled by one of the best car salesmen on the planet, was that, instead of rolling out fibre, they said, 'You know what we're going to do? We're going to buy back the copper network that John Howard sold off.' That is great! That is fantastic planning! What great acumen they have!

I also see the Prime Minister and many of those opposite channelling the Deputy Prime Minister. The Deputy Prime Minister likes going around putting ribbons on himself for projects that we started and funded, and he says, 'Look, I did it!' By virtue of the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister turns up somewhere, pulls the sash out and then cuts it, he says, 'There you go; I built it!'

It is similar to the satellites that they are about to launch, which Labor commissioned when we were in government. They came nowhere near to actually making the decision on it, but
they are out there with their little toy rockets, looking forward to those satellites going up and being able to claim it was them. They will say, 'It was all us. We put those satellites up there.' The fact of the matter is it was Labor. We put everything in place. It was a huge project. The biggest infrastructure project since the Snowy Mountains Scheme itself had to be put in place. Those in the know on their side realised that fibre networks, by their very nature, take a long period of time to get up and running and in place. It was always going to take time to get that moving. What has happened is that everything has been messed up by those opposite. They have slowed everything down with review after review and political line after political line. There is no fibre, no service and no solution to the things that Australians want and need in this country.

Mr IRONS (Swan) (15:49): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Chifley; if nothing else, he is always entertaining. I am glad he did not show us his rocket! I will bring a Western Australian perspective to this debate. That the NBN in Western Australia was in an absolute shambles at the time of the election is often forgotten. You talked about going backwards, Member for Chifley. So let me take you back to September 2013—he is leaving; he does not want to hear this!—to the situation that the incoming Minister for Communications, now the Prime Minister, was faced with in Western Australia when the coalition was elected to government. At the time of the election, there was only a handful of premises connected. The work had basically stopped, with only 34 premises connected across the whole of Western Australia. It took six years for 34 premises. Well done! What an achievement!

The lead contractor, Syntheo, had announced it would be pulling out of the state and no longer continuing with the project in WA due to the difficulties it had in delivering anything. They also left a lot of subcontractors unpaid. That was all under Labor management. There were three separate investigations in WA into claims asbestos was mishandled in the rollout during the six years of Labor management, including in East Perth, Canning Vale and Victoria Park, which is in my electorate of Swan. There was also an investigation in the seat of Canning when the issue was raised by the former member, Don Randall.

The member moving this motion talked about mismanagement of the NBN. What was happening with the NBN in WA in 2013 was perhaps the worst type of mismanagement I have ever seen in my years in business and in government. The task facing the incoming minister was a massive one. As the then Minister for Communications said on 5 June 2014:

… it is much harder to get a project that has failed or that has been mismanaged back on track than it is to get a new project, from a greenfields start, on track.

But the minister has managed to turn the NBN around since the election, particularly in my electorate. It has become the electorate with the most advanced rollout of the NBN in Western Australia. You can see, by looking at the rollout map, that each of the four local government areas in my electorate now contain at least some areas where the NBN has been completed, is under construction or is in the build preparation phase, whereas in September 2013, under Labor, I think there were about 14 premises connected in my electorate.

But the legacy of Labor's mismanagement unfortunately continues in my electorate. In the time I have left I want to focus on the part of my electorate that has not yet been listed for connection to the NBN—the Ascot exchange which serves the majority of the City of Belmont. Within this exchange there are many areas where broadband speeds are poor—and
There are a number of areas where it is impossible to connect to broadband or any internet at all. These blackspots are typically in the suburbs of Cloverdale and Kewdale. One of the frustrations of my constituents in these areas is that they are often told by Telstra, when they ring up, that they will be able to connect. The official coverage maps also show that there are connections available. However the reality on the Ascot exchange, as my constituents tell me in the many letters I receive, is very different. Typically, after going through a long process the people in these areas become resigned to the fact that they cannot connect.

Labor have let the people who live in the Ascot exchange area down in many ways. Back on 17 September 2007, exactly eight years ago today, the then member for Swan—Labor—wrote to a constituent in my electorate and said the following:

Labor's National Broadband Network will solve Ascot's broadband problems.'

He also wrote, in reference to how much broadband was going to cost:

Labor will invest up to $4.7 billion to establish the National Broadband Network in partnership with the private sector.

Where the hell did he get that figure of $4.7 billion from? Talk about an understatement by the Labor member for Swan, Kim Wilkie!

We then had six years of Labor government after Mr Wilkie had promised in that letter that Labor would fix the Ascot exchange. Early on in that time, in 2008, the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council commissioned a detailed broadband blackspot survey of the Ascot exchange area, and this survey definitively documented all the problems in the area. This survey went on to become the basis of a submission to the federal Labor government for the Ascot exchange to be prioritised in the NBN. This submission was rated extremely high by the minister's own department. Yet, when the time for the rollout announcement came, Belmont and the Ascot exchange were left out by the Labor government. They let the people of Belmont down for political reasons—and with their mismanagement.

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (15:54): There are so many policy areas that make me incredibly proud to be a Labor member of this parliament. Whether it is the fairness that we put into our health policies or the equity in our education policies, we are a party that are very clear about what our values are, and we build really good policies around them. But there are few policies that make me more proud of the work we on this side of the House have done than the National Broadband Network policy.

We have watched in the last few days and weeks as those on the other side have constantly turned back and looked to their past. We have seen them have these awful fights between themselves, cabinet leaks and so on. But, while all that has been going on, those of us on this side of the House have been looking to the future. What we are concerned about is the massive transformation taking place as a result of the digital revolution.

My friend the member for Gellibrand is sitting in front of me, and one of the fascinating facts that he likes to talk about is that these smartphones we all carry around in our pockets are more powerful computer systems than the computer systems that put two men on the moon. The implications of this revolution for the way we live and work in this country are absolutely profound. In 2013, an Oxford University study showed that about half of all the jobs that exist today will be gone in two decades—because of technological change. In the
face this, what we on the Labor side of the House do is think about what this means for the country and what we can do to help the people we represent prepare for this transformation.

We know that the pieces of infrastructure we need to help us build prosperity in the future are going to be different from the ones that helped us in the past. What we need is world-class broadband to underpin future innovation and our future prosperity. So we put forward a visionary, nation-building policy. It was a policy that was so necessary, because the performance of Australia's broadband is really quite terrifying. In the two years that the current Prime Minister was the Minister for Communications, we saw Australia fall further and further back in global rankings. Now, according to the recent Akamai report, we are 44th in the world for broadband speeds. Look at the countries that are whipping us on this. They include countries like Latvia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Taiwan and Russia. We are trying to compete in a global economy and support a high-skill, high-wage, prosperous nation, but we have this problem sitting in front of us.

We had a good policy, a real policy, that was going to solve this problem: fibre to the home for 90 per cent of Australian households. But this Prime Minister who thinks he knows everything—we saw that today in question time; it is a little bit embarrassing, I have to say—brought that hubris into the communications portfolio, and what did we see? What has come out the other end after two years? What we saw was a minister who thought he knew better come in and say that he could deliver a similar product at much lower cost. He told us that the NBN was going to cost $29.5 billion. After two years, because of his mismanagement and because of his lack of understanding of what needed to happen to get the policy implemented, the cost has almost doubled. That is not all: the speed of the rollout is going to be completely different. We were told by this minister that it would be a three-year rollout. Instead it is going to be seven years before my community of Hotham sees the big difference we need to see—and the mix of technologies that is being put forward by the then communications minister, now the Prime Minister, is going to deliver broadband of a much lesser quality. This is broadband of the past, not the broadband of the future that Labor was proposing.

I really feel this in my role as the member for Hotham. Some in the chamber may not realise this, but we have incredible problems with internet connections and internet speeds in my electorate. And I do not represent an electorate that is hundreds of kilometres from a major centre; I am 20 kilometres from the inner city of Melbourne. Yet I am constantly getting complaints from people in my electorate who cannot get connected to broadband. We are sick of it. It is ridiculous that a country like Australia has not solved this problem—and we have not solved it because of the poor performance of the current Prime Minister in his former role as Minister for Communications.

This is not just a problem affecting homes in my community. Highlighting the economic importance of this subject, recently all of the mayors in my electorate—Liberal, Labor and non-aligned—wrote to me. They were desperate to know how we were going to get broadband into our local businesses. They did a study of people in industrial areas near the south-east region of Melbourne. It showed that 85 per cent of businesses in this area are relying on ADSL. This is not a policy for the future; this is a policy of the past. We can do better and the communications minister should know that.

**WYATT ROY** (Longman) (15:59): It is a great honour to rise on this matter of public importance. I think we should begin with a framework for the discussion we are having in the
House today. The first thing is the simple principles that guide the debate around broadband in Australia.

Of course members on this side and the Labor side want all Australians to have incredibly fast internet, the fastest possible internet. Members on both sides would probably like it, if all Australians had that internet yesterday and that it took no time to roll out. I think members on the Labor and the Liberal side would like it if it was incredibly affordable and, if possible, did not cost anything at all.

But of course we have to deal with the real world; we have to deal with reality. The reality is that time and money matter. In my community, we have thousands of locals who, quite frankly, live in an internet wasteland. They have some of the worst internet connections in the country. My priority is not that they wait many, many years for an expensive internet nirvana; it is that they get the highest-quality possible connection as soon as possible and at the most affordable rate so that they can unlock those gains that come from increased productivity from a very good internet connection.

It is no good sitting around waiting for seven, eight or nine years. As the NBN strategic review showed, under the former Labor government's proposal, the NBN would not have been rolled out completely until 2024. It is no good waiting that long for an internet nirvana. They would have given them a very good internet nirvana, a very expensive internet nirvana, but why sit in an internet wasteland for so long where kids cannot do their homework and people cannot run their small business from home?

When we came to government, we said, 'Of course, we want Australians to have a good connection as soon as possible at an affordable rate,' and we went about ensuring that we could deliver that. That means people in my community are going to have a very, very good internet connection literally years sooner than otherwise would have been the case, if the Labor Party had been re-elected. That is because we have done a few things.

When we came to power, the first thing we did was change the board of the NBN Co. We actually thought it would be a good idea, if people had telecommunications experience on the NBN Co board, so we changed the board. The next thing we did was conduct the myBroadband internet review—the first time in the country's history that we have actually done a review of internet availability in the country. So we mapped out where everybody's internet connections were and we could see who had the best and the worst internet connections.

We gave that to NBN Co and we said, 'Instead of rolling this out based on politics and ensuring that people in Sydney who already have a very good internet connection have an even better internet connection, prioritise the areas of most need first.' So people in my community, who have terrible internet connections, were prioritised over those people in Sydney or Melbourne, who already have quite good internet connections.

The next thing we did was trial the rollout of the FTTN network. That means people in my community—for 37,000 homes that have been part of this trial—will get a connection to the NBN literally years sooner than otherwise would have been the case.

The construction has already been completed, and they are now trialling this network, making sure that it is functioning properly. By February, locals—and I will go through some of the communities: all of Bribie Island—so Bongaree, Woorim and all of those communities;
on the other side of the bridge, Caboolture, Caboolture South, Morayfield, Elimbah, Moodlu, Wamuran and Upper Caboolture; and down the road in Dakabin and Kallangar will all have access to incredibly fast internet by February. We have already started construction on another 5,000 homes in Beachmere, Goodwin Beach—I feel like I am singing 'I've been everywhere'—Ningi and Sandstone Point. They will have access to incredibly fast internet years sooner. If they go outside now, they will see that construction taking place.

This is a way of ensuring that we recognise the real world. That time and money—they mean things. For locals in my community, who would have otherwise had to wait years and years for an expensive internet connection, they will instead be connected to an incredibly fast network in the very near future, meaning they can do their homework, grow their businesses and enjoy that productivity.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (16:04): You heard the member for Longman speak about internet nirvana—speaking of Nirvana, perhaps the coalition ought to be all apologies, because of course to get fast broadband access you need a federal government with vision and the ability to deliver. They have shown themselves completely unable to be that federal government.

Australia's federal government should be focused on how to build the infrastructure our country needs for our digital future. Recently, Ros Page, a journalist writing for *Choice*, said:

Constructing a national broadband network (NBN) is a nation-building project on the scale of freeways and railway. Like most grand schemes, it requires vision and should deliver benefits to consumers into the future.

Unlike the coalition, Labor has a vision for fast broadband access. The previous Labor government's policy of building a national broadband network was unabashedly ambitious and bold—the sort of vision needed to build a more productive future, promote growth and make sure that everyone gets a chance to share in the benefits. Our vision was for fibre cable to be connected to homes and business premises. We also planned to expand satellite and fixed wireless connections for remote areas. In government, we were delivering on this vision.

The coalition never had this sort of vision for our nation's future. In 2010, the then Leader of the Opposition was suggesting that they would not even go ahead with the National Broadband Network; however, the now Prime Minister knew that they had to have something that looked like an NBN policy, so they came up with the idea of running fibre cables to nodes, claiming that this would cost $29½ billion. According to the conversation, their NBN speeds were to be about 20 times slower than Labor's.

But, after winning the election, they broke their broadband promises, as inadequate as they were—just like they did in all the other areas like health, education and pensions. Instead of the fibre-to-the-node plan, we got a new idea: something called the MTM. It should stand for 'Malcolm Turnbull's Mess' but it stands for multitechnology mix. Our new Prime Minister's NBN is mixed technology, not fibre optic cable. It is a second-rate NBN.

Ms Page, who I mentioned before, reported a Q&A with Mark Gregory, an engineering academic at RMIT and a columnist. She asked him:

Do we all really need fibre?
He said:
Yes. We need increased download speeds, less traffic shaping and far better backhaul capacity in Australia to provide improved quality of service for the applications that we use now and into the future.

And she asked:
Should the FTTP NBN use existing networks to save on cost—
as seems to be the plan under the Turnbull NBN. He said:
This should only be an interim measure while FTTP is being built. It could utilise fibre networks that go to dwellings …

The point was it should be an interim measure, because we all know that this is a second-rate NBN and what people really want is fibre.

So this Malcolm Turnbull's Mess NBN is a second-rate NBN and it costs more than Labor's plan. As I said, before the election, the now Prime Minister promised the NBN would cost $29.5 billion. After the election, he said $41 billion. Now he is saying $56 billion. That is almost double the amount in his original promise.

And the now Prime Minister's original commitment was that everyone would have 25 megabits per second by the end of 2016. Now that timeframe has more than doubled to the end of 2020, and yet, as The Conversation has recorded, demand for broadband has grown at about 30 to 40 per cent per year. The Conversation has said:
… it’s likely that domestic broadband domestic customers will be seeking bandwidths of more than 100 Mbps by 2020 and about 1 Gbps by 2035.

So this second-rate NBN that this government said it was going to try to deliver is completely inadequate for the needs of Australia's future.

And it is not a surprise, because, unfortunately, this Prime Minister, who was also the communications minister under this government, is completely unable to deliver the NBN that this country needs. His incompetence in the portfolio has been remarked upon widely within the sector and within the community. In fact, in his article entitled 'Malcolm Turnbull was Australia's worst ever Communications Minister', published on Monday of this week, Renai Le May of media outlet Delimiter said—

Dr Chalmers: What's it called?
Ms BUTLER: It is called 'Malcolm Turnbull was Australia's worst ever Communications Minister'—what a great title for an article! He said:
He might be charismatic, he might be popular, and pretty shortly he might be Prime Minister.

That turned out to be right. This was Monday.

But when it comes to technology policy, Malcolm Turnbull has been a disaster. The Member for Wentworth will be remembered as Australia’s worst ever Communications Minister …

And isn't that true? He was a hopeless communications minister. (Time expired)

Dr GILLESPIE (Lyne) (16:09): It is a great opportunity to come and speak in the House today about the NBN and this MPI. I think the first thing you have got to remember is how the NBN came into being. You talk about cloud computing; well, this is really a plan right out of the clouds—literally. It started off as a plan from two government ministers—Minister Conroy and Prime Minister Rudd—on the VIP. They managed in 2010 to get a plan up to
spend $4½ billion, and everyone was going to get a Rolls-Royce internet service. It was not their final cost of just under $30 billion; they sold it first in 2010 at $4½ billion, and you know what it is costing now.

Minister Conroy promised everyone a Rolls-Royce, but you were lucky to get a Hyundai. Look at the figures. Only two per cent of the Australian potential market was covered after three years and $6 billion. Many areas were serviced, but, when you scratched the surface, the service level was 'zero', which is an obscure way of saying 'nothing'. The Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia were not receiving any activity. The work in Western Australia and Tasmania had ground to a halt. The NBN then was only meeting 17 per cent of their targets. They promised one million users, and they delivered it—in another euphemism, 'passed by'—to 163,000 premises. That was not joined up.

Connections were estimated to cost between $2,200 each to maybe $2,500 each, but it was actually $3,600 before you added in the huge fee they paid to Telstra which meant each connection was costing $4,300. It was almost double what they estimated.

Rural demand was estimated at only 230,000 people. Blind Freddie would have known that that was a ridiculous estimate and it was at least 600,000, so no wonder the international satellite service was totally underwhelmed. Most people now get slower or just as good as dial-up speeds. It is pathetic. Thank goodness we have got a couple of satellites on the way. In fact, the first one is about to launch and, as of 1 October, there will be something circulating up there. Service will come on next year.

Another unique thing that has happened is it is actually making money. When the previous government was administering the system and the NBN had a different board, after all that $6 billion worth of spend they had the princely sum of $17 million income. That is a really amazing spend to get very little income. The latest figures reveal $164 million, and the trajectory as well as the service level are going up. We have got 1.2 million customers, including 283,000 fixed wireless customers.

Just a few words about NBN in the Lyne electorate: everyone knows that there are many areas in the Lyne electorate that are poorly served. That is why I have been beating a path to the now Prime Minister's door, and we have got some major wins on the board. The town of Taree, the beating heart of the Lyne electorate, on the banks of the Manning River with a bustling CBD area, in the previous plan was totally left out. They had a huge doughnut in the middle of their NBN fibre-to-the-premise plan. Thank God we were able to get that changed and now it is being rolled out as we speak. It is also going into Wingham and Cundletown, and there are over 4,000 business and homes already signed up, with another 4,800 homes and construction underway.

In fact, across the whole electorate there are 14,700 premises that can ring up now and ask to be connected to a service. In the rollout plan that has been announced for there will be another 22,000 premises. That is fantastic. I will mention a few of those areas. Just up the road from where I live in Wauchope there is Beechwood and King Creek. Then there is Black Head, Diamond Beach, Hallidays Point, Nabia, Fernbank Creek, Riverside and Thrumster. And—hallelujah!—it is coming into Port Macquarie. We were not even on the radar of the previous plan for 10 years. This is the biggest commercial centre in the electorate, and it was not even covered. This is a great improvement. I commend the current Prime Minister's management of the NBN. It is a vast improvement.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Vasta): The discussion is now concluded.

COMMITTEES
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
Report

Leave granted.

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON: On behalf of the chair, I rise to speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights's twenty-eighth report of the 44th Parliament.

It examines the compatibility of bills and legislative instruments with Australia's human rights obligations. This report considers bills introduced into the parliament from 7 to 10 September 2015 and legislative instruments received from 14 to 27 August 2015. The report also includes the committee's consideration of three responses to matters raised in previous reports.

The one new bill examined in this report is assessed as not raising human rights concerns, and 43 instruments raise matters in relation to which the committee will seek a response from the legislative proponents. The committee is also continuing its examination of instruments made under two acts. The committee has concluded its examination of two bills and deferred its consideration of five bills.

The one bill for which the committee has concluded its examination is a private senator's bill titled the Criminal Code Amendment (Animal Protection) Bill 2015. The bill would introduce an offence provision to provide that a person recording malicious cruelty to animals commits an offence if they fail to report that event to the police. The committee considered that the bill engages and limits the right not to incriminate oneself because providing a recording of cruelty to animals to the police may provide evidence of the individual who made the recording committing an offence, such as criminal trespass.

The privilege against self-incrimination is a core principle of both the Australian common law and international human rights law. In its analysis the committee has drawn on the Guide to Framing Commonwealth Offences, Infringement Notices and Enforcement Powers. This guide was developed by the Attorney-General's Department to assist Australian government departments to frame criminal offences and provide detailed information on when the privilege against self-incrimination may be limited.

While the guide does not consider international law principles directly, where the guide is followed in drafting a provision that limits the privilege against self-incrimination, the provision is highly likely to be a justifiable limitation on the privilege against self-incrimination under international human rights law. Accordingly, as the guide was not followed in the drafting of the bill, the committee has sought to make helpful recommendations to the legislation proponent to improve both the drafting of the offence
provisions in the bill and, consequently, their compatibility with international human rights law.

The report also includes the committee's continued consideration of a number of instruments made under the Autonomous Sanctions Act 2011 and the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945. The committee, in considering 30 instruments made under these acts, has focused its analysis on measures that freeze the assets of designated persons or prevent declared persons from travelling to, entering or remaining in Australia. These instruments expand the operation of the sanctions regime and so, to assess whether the instruments are compatible with human rights, it is necessary to assess whether certain aspects of the sanction regime are compatible with human rights.

The committee recognises the importance of Australia acting in concert with the international community to prevent egregious human rights abuses, and agrees that laws designed to prevent such abuses pursue a legitimate objective under international human rights law. However, the committee considers that further information is required to conclude that the process of designation of persons under the sanctions regimes is proportionate to the stated offence.

While the committee is unaware whether anyone in Australia has been affected by these measures, I note that the committee's mandate is to examine acts and legislative instruments for compatibility with human rights and whether legislation could be applied in a way that would limit rights. It is on this basis that the committee has applied its usual analytical framework to engage in a constructive dialogue with the minister in relation to this matter.

As always, we encourage my fellow members and others to examine the committee's report to better inform their understanding of the committee's deliberations.

With these comments, I commend the committee's 28th report of the 44th Parliament to the House.

BILLS
Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015
Statute Law Revision Bill (No. 2) 2014

Second Reading
Cognate debate.

Debate resumed on the motion:
That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (16:21): This red-tape repeal bill represents this government's continuing commitment to remove the burden of regulation from the lives of all Australians. It is an absolute pleasure to stand here today to commend this bill to the House. When the government were elected, we set about the enormous task of chopping red tape, cutting red tape, hacking red tape and doing everything we could to diminish red tape to ensure that red tape no longer continued to strangle business and individuals in our nation. We have done it successfully and, as this bill shows, we are continuing to do it successfully.
All over Australia, we found the remnants of Labor's legacy, the red and green tape that was weighing down our economy, and we have systematically gone about the process of ensuring that we are eradicating it, bit by bit, piece by piece, morsel by morsel. When we came into government, Commonwealth regulation was costing Australians $65 billion each and every year. It is worth repeating: $65 billion was the cost, the deadweight cost, to our nation from Commonwealth regulation.

This is more, and it is nearly a third more, than what the government spend on our largest welfare payment, the age pension, which is $44 billion. Just think about that. Our greatest outlay on welfare is $44 billion, yet Commonwealth red tape, Commonwealth regulation, is costing our nation $65 billion. We can continue to reduce it. We can continue to free up our nation. That is billions of dollars which can go into the productive parts of our economy, which will ensure—absolutely ensure and guarantee—that we continue to grow our economy and have the money to be able to put towards those areas which we need to put it to, such as the age pension, the $44 billion we spend on our largest welfare payment.

This cost, $65 billion each year, is equivalent to 4.2 per cent of our GDP. That is not only to individuals but also to businesses, so that is quite significant: 4.2 per cent of GDP.

This government remains proud of what it is doing in this area. I think we all remember the six years of Labor. In particular, we remember the last three years, when we had a hung parliament. The then Leader of the House used to stand up on a six-monthly basis, saying how wonderful the amount of legislation which was passing through the House was. He would get up and he would proverbially boast about it, beat his chest about it, with a big smile: 'Isn't it great? We've got all this legislation going through the parliament.' Nothing was being done to see what the regulatory cost of it was. Were there proper RISs, regulatory impact statements, being done on it? Was the cost of what it did to businesses or individuals being considered? No. It became a chest-beating exercise for those opposite. It became a marker for them for how wonderfully they were doing as a government: 'Let's get all this legislation through, and let's chirp about it. Let's say how wonderful it is. Let's not consider the burden that it's creating for individuals or businesses.'

That is not the way of this government. The way of this government is to ensure that unnecessary regulation is being taken off the statute books. I remember the first repeal day that we had, where we went through and we systematically said, 'Okay, this is all the irrelevant legislation on the statute books that we need to get rid of.' We were honouring a commitment to get rid of $1 billion of red tape every year. We did that in the first year and we are doing it in the second year. Think about the dividends that that is creating for our nation.

**Dr Leigh:** Trivial!

**Mr TEHAN:** And we are doing this by doing the simple things. I see those opposite say that this is trivial, that this is trivial—that removing red tape and regulation is trivial. I can see now why they boasted so much when they just put legislation upon legislation upon legislation through this place and thought it was wonderful. They thought it was wonderful, just weighing down our economy. Unbelievable!

Productivity in this century is not going to be gained for businesses and individuals by applying more and more regulation, by making people work longer and harder by requiring them to do more paperwork. It is going to succeed and it is going to improve by making
people work smarter and work faster. In these repeal bills, we see this writ large because here we have technology delivering the necessary productivity dividends. Here we see technology reducing the red tape and regulation. In this latest legislation, over $80 million in savings is being achieved by putting services online or making online processes simpler for all Australians.

Those opposite might consider that as trivial; we on this side do not. We on this side see this as getting government out of people's lives. We do not want government in people's lives. We want people to have the pleasure of being able to live their lives with the amount of government in their lives reduced. We are not like those opposite, who want to legislate to have government in every part of their lives. We actually want to remove government from their lives so that they can get on with doing what they want to do.

That is what this legislation is about, and that is why we have $80 million in savings by putting services online or making online processes simpler for Australians. We want to let Australians communicate with the government from home or even on their smartphones because that frees them to be able to use spare moments, where they might be twiddling their thumbs, to deal with government, rather than when they can be productive when it comes to their businesses.

The bill will implement extra power to the already successful myGov website to allow Australians to update their details online and in one place. Rather than having to visit a Centrelink or contact a government office, Australians will be able to carry out this task when they want to, any time of day or night. There will be no more dashing out during the lunch hour or stopping work for an errand. This is a simple government change to make life simpler for Australians.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) (16:30): It being 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Sharing Economy**

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (16:30): This has been a week in which the national spotlight has focused almost exclusively on the game of politics. We have seen a spill and a new Prime Minister, and now speculation about a new cabinet. In a week like this, I feel compelled to focus beyond the political machinations in this building and instead on the opportunities that are out there on the policy horizon, because being here in this place is not an end in itself—it is a means to making Australia a more innovative, connected and creative place.

The sharing economy is one of the big opportunities I see on the horizon. The sharing economy is changing how Australians buy and sell goods and services. It is also changing how we think about work and the dividing line between private goods and public assets. Two things are clear about the sharing economy. First, it has the potential to dramatically disrupt existing business models and labour market practices. Second, its growth over the past few years has been incredibly rapid. Both are true in Australia and in many other countries around the world.

So why should government take an active interest in the sharing economy? Why not just let it happen? The arrival and development of the sharing economy have outpaced our existing
regulatory regimes. This is not a problem just faced by Australia. Around the world, governments are grappling with the question of how to harness the sharing economy’s benefits, while mitigating its risks—and the benefits are potentially manifest. Whether it is via freelancing services such as AirTasker, goods-sharing services such as OpenShed, parking services such as Parkhound or pet-minding services like Pawshake, the sharing economy gives consumers access to a broader range of goods and services, potentially at a cheaper price. That has got to be a good thing for ordinary Australians. The sharing economy can help us make better use of surplus bedrooms, cars and other goods that would otherwise be under-utilised. With our cities facing the challenges of congestion and housing affordability, the sharing economy can potentially make us better off.

While there may be much to welcome, I am not an uncritical cheerleader. Some sharing economy services operate outside of existing rules and regulations that serve to guarantee workers’ rights, protect public safety and ensure people pay their fair share of tax. We cannot just sit back and say, ‘She’ll be right,’ but neither should we seek to spoil the benefits of the sharing economy by over-regulating it. Labor seeks a sensible middle ground.

In contrast to the coalition’s policy vacuum on the sharing economy, I have spent the last six months speaking with members of the public, sharing economy companies and peak bodies about how to get the right balance between freedom and regulation. Over 500 people and organisations have responded to Labor’s sharing economy discussion paper, which I released in March of this year at the National Press Club. Those concerns have informed Labor’s thinking on the issue.

The top concern raised was public safety. More than half of those who responded said we need better rules to keep people safe when using sharing economy services. Wages and working conditions were another big theme coming out of our consultation. Four out of 10 people told us that they want to see people who deliver services in the sharing economy get paid a decent wage and enjoy good working conditions. Then there is tax. One in three people said they are worried some sharing economy companies, and the people delivering services through them, are falling through our tax system and are not paying the right amount of tax. I know this is a concern for good sharing economy providers too, who believe that they have a competitive edge that does not rely on underpaying their taxes.

Another big issue that came up in our consultations was accessibility for people with disability. There were issues around fair competition with existing service providers, transparency in how sharing economy companies operate, and ongoing innovation—the need to make Australia a place where good companies and ideas can take root, such as the caravan sharing service, Camplify, which I visited in Newcastle with the member for Newcastle, Sharon Claydon.

Labor is now working on a response to these consultations and a blueprint for how we balance these important priorities. The sharing economy is racing ahead. It’s time we, in this place, took our fair share of responsibility for developing regulatory architecture that can keep up, because Labor wants to see all Australians—customers and workers alike—share in the benefits of the new economy.
National Police Remembrance Day

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (16:35): Each year, 29 September holds special significance for police and their families throughout Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and the Solomon Islands. It is a day to pause and honour the police officers whose lives have been cut short while performing their duties, protecting the community and putting their lives on the line each day for the greater good. It is a day to acknowledge their sacrifice and express our gratitude to their commitment. It is also a time to acknowledge the courage and strength shown by the men and women currently serving, who continue to devote their lives. They are too often taken for granted.

This year is also a milestone for the New South Wales Police Force, with the celebration of 100 years of women in policing, which also signifies the progression of gender equality in the force. It was in 1915 when two women were first given the opportunity to join the police force, and 500 women applied for the job. In 2015, the NSW Police Force now includes 4,542 female sworn officers and 2,581 female unsworn officers. To celebrate 100 years, a custom-made relay baton made its way across the 76 local area commands in New South Wales, concluding at the Sydney Opera House earlier this month. Police Remembrance Day is an important time to reflect on the National Police Memorial in Canberra, which pays tribute to Australian police officers who have lost their lives while on duty or as a result of their injuries. The memorial also recognises the unique nature of the police service and the dangers that officers face in their daily duties. As of September last year, the wall and honour roll at the Police Memorial contains the names of 757 fallen police officers. The earliest entry on the roll dates from 1803.

While reflecting on the courageous police officers we have tragically lost, I would like to make mention of Detective Inspector Bryson Anderson, who was based at the Hawkesbury Local Area Command in the Macquarie electorate. Detective Inspector Anderson was tragically killed while on duty, responding to a neighbourhood dispute in Oakville in 2012. Bryson's name is the second most recent entry on the wall and honour roll. Detective Inspector Anderson was a loving father and husband, a brother, son, grandson and a great friend and valued colleague to many. Upon hearing the news of Bryson's untimely passing in 2012, I can still vividly recall the sadness and disbelief that spread through the Hawkesbury community, across NSW and throughout Australia. Bryson was a man who put himself on the line shift after shift to selflessly serve the community he loved, cared for and devoted himself to.

It is important that we continue to acknowledge and respect all police officers who, despite the challenges they face, continue to look after the best interests of the community. It is also important to acknowledge the sacrifice that their families make. We need to keep at the forefront of our minds that every day there are police officers simply carrying out their job with the best of intentions when they put on their uniforms and head out into the community. It is an honour to be able to reflect on the positive impact Detective Inspector Anderson had on the Hawkesbury community, and my thoughts and prayers continue to remain with his family.

While Police Remembrance Day signifies the acknowledgement of loss, it also represents a time to reflect on and celebrate the lives of our fallen officers and their achievements. Detective Inspector Anderson had a long career in the NSW Police Force, joining as a trainee
in 1986. He was initially posted to Parramatta before being transferred to Granville in 1987. He commenced a career in criminal investigation at Granville in 1991 and from there performed duties at Granville, Castle Hill and at Special Crime and Internal Affairs before commencing as a duty officer at the Hawkesbury Local Area Command in 2010. He was also involved in the local sporting associations that his children were involved in on weekends.

I would like to thank the dedicated men and women in blue and plain clothes in the electorate of Macquarie, many of whom were colleagues of Bryson, who continue to serve and work for the greater good of the Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains. From September 22 to 29, I encourage my fellow MPs and members of the community to show their support by wearing a Police Remembrance Day ribbon.

**Migration**

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (16:39): In 2005 John Howard had been Prime Minister for nearly a decade and did not look particularly vulnerable. But then he decided to ramp up Australia's migration intake. Net overseas migration jumped from the 100,000 it had been in 2004 to over 200,000 in just a couple of years. In 2005 migration overtook natural increase as the dominant driver of population growth and we entered an era of rapid population growth, which we are still in. Our population now increases by a million people every three years.

The era of rapid population growth has also been one of great political instability. John Howard lost the 2007 election and indeed lost his own seat. His successor, Kevin Rudd, maintained and even increased net migration. When he was questioned about rapid population growth in 2009, he declared he was in favour of a 'big Australia'. His personal approval ratings had been high until that time but then they started to fall. He was replaced by Julia Gillard in 2010.

Julia Gillard was aware of the damage that 'big Australia' had done to Kevin Rudd and said she was not in favour of 'big Australia'. But she did not change the migration intake much and the problems of rapid population growth persisted. She was replaced by Kevin Rudd in 2013. He in turn lost the 2013 election, and the Liberal Party came to power with Tony Abbott as Prime Minister. Tony Abbott maintained Australia's net migration intake at over 200,000 per annum and rapid population growth continued.

Now, just two years later, Tony Abbott has been replaced by Malcolm Turnbull. Australia has been described as the democratic coup capital of the world, and our political instability has been the subject of international comment. Now of course there are many factors at work in every political setting. I acknowledge the role of WorkChoices in the demise of John Howard. I acknowledge the role of internal undermining and the difficulties of managing the hung parliament in the demise of Julia Gillard. I think that Tony Abbott made a Faustian deal with the devil by promising that there would be no cuts to health, education or pensions when he was opposition leader, only to renege on these promises in the 2014 budget.

But those factors are insufficient to explain the political instability of the past decade, especially when you see it going on at a state level too. In Victoria and Queensland, we have seen right-wing governments elected then defeated after just one term, with the elected
Victorian Premier toppled in his first term by his own party, just as happened to Kevin Rudd and as has just happened to Tony Abbott.

In 2011 I gave a speech which I called the Witches Hats Theory of Government. Having studied a lot of countries around the world, I had come to the conclusion that countries with large and rapidly growing populations had more political instability than countries with small and relatively stable populations. I compared governing a country, with various public policy problems you have to solve, to an advanced driving course, where you have to navigate a road without knocking over strategically placed orange traffic cones known as witches hats. Each public policy failure be it education, unemployment, aged care, planning, represents a witches hat knocked over. If you knock over too many witches hats, you fail the test—that is to say, the electorate or your party votes you out.

I noted back in 2011 that if a country was stable or only growing slowly its leaders seemed to have fewer problems, more time to solve the problems, a more content population, and much better political longevity. But if a country was growing rapidly, problems such as traffic congestion, housing affordability, planning disputes and infrastructure shortfalls generated political instability. It is like driving a car at great speed—inevitably you are going to hit more hats. Infrastructure is a particular difficulty. A country or community growing at two per cent has double the infrastructure task of a stable community, which is why pensioners and retirees feel particularly under the pump from utility charges in a rapidly growing population.

The Abbott government had little support from young people, who are the victims of job insecurity, housing unaffordability and rising student debt. All of these things are made worse by rapid population growth. When the jobs at 7-Eleven and numerous other retail outlets are all going to easily exploited temporary migrant workers, how are young Australians supposed to become financially independent and get entry-level work experience?

The Abbott government also lost the support of older people with its broken promises over cuts to education, health and pensions. It was looking to find money to deliver on Mr Abbott's promise to be the infrastructure Prime Minister and avoid a witches hat which would not have been there if our population growth had not been so rapid. So the witches hats have claimed another victim, and I offer this advice to Prime Minister Turnbull: if you want to last, stop driving so fast.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (16:45): I rise today to celebrate the historic signing of the National Disability Insurance Scheme by the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian governments in Canberra. I also acknowledge the members for Dobell, Chifley, Wills and Higgins, of whom the first two are from New South Wales and the last two from Victoria.

The NDIS is one of the largest social policy reforms in Australia's history, and yesterday was a huge milestone in its delivery, illustrating the government's unwavering commitment to delivering the scheme in full. Yesterday's signing has been years in the making and gives certainty to more than half of the eligible population in Australia that people with a disability and their families will benefit from the NDIS.

The coalition is committed to delivering the NDIS in full, and we have given our full support from day one, from the work of the Productivity Commission to the legislation and
establishment of trial sites. By 2019-20 the Commonwealth and the states and territories will be jointly spending around $22 billion to implement the NDIS in full.

In the two years since the scheme's operations commenced, 19,817 participants have become eligible for the scheme, in line with expectations. Of these participants, 17,303 had approved plans at a total cost of $953 million, which was consistent with the original cost estimates, so the scheme is therefore on budget. Most importantly, however, client satisfaction is at over 90 per cent.

This scheme is going to be fantastic for people with disabilities in my electorate of Macarthur, who do not have to wait long, thanks to the government's consistent support for and dedication to this scheme. In this year's budget we announced $143 million to build a new ICT system for the full scheme, and we are committing nearly $700 million for the NDIS this year alone. This financial year the government is investing $20 million in Western Sydney to deliver the NDIS early for 2,000 children and young people.

I am delighted to announce that my electorate of Macarthur is part of the 2016-17 rollout, which builds on the existing NDIS trial site in the Hunter area and the transition that commenced in the Blue Mountains, the Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith in July this year. The NDIS will become available in the South Western Sydney district, which covers the local government areas of Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly, from July 2016.

The aim of the NDIS is simple but profound: to provide all Australians who acquire a permanent and significant disability before the age of 65 with the reasonable and necessary support they need to live a life of inclusion. The NDIS takes a flexible whole-of-life approach to working with participants and their families and carers to develop individualised plans. The NDIS provides more choice and control over how, when and where their supports are provided. Participants are introduced to an individual planner who will discuss the individual's needs, goals and aspirations before constructing a support plan to cover a 12-month period based on what the needs of the person and their family are.

The virtue of this scheme is that it is designed to take into account both the participants and their families and carers, who are vital for each other. Also, reviewing the individual's plan every 12 months means that as the needs of the individual change so does the plan, ensuring that a person receives the appropriate services and support as they develop and grow.

The NDIS aims at filling in the gaps of services that people with disabilities are not already accessing. It works to connect participants with community and mainstream supports, and in Macarthur there are many well-established organisations, such as Macarthur Disability Services, who will be important in helping people prepare for the NDIS.

If required, the NDIS will also fund reasonable and necessary supports that help the participant achieve their goals, such as therapies, equipment, home modifications, mobility equipment, taking part in community activities or assistance with employment. The NDIS, for instance, will now help fund vehicle modifications, which were not available previously, and is going to be of enormous benefit to families, who will be able to live their lives as they want to, free from previous logistic or financial limitations.

With the NDIS, the individual and their family and carers have the power. This is a radical departure from the welfare model of disability as well as conventional thinking about how best to support carers. The NDIS represents a new dawn for people living with a disability in
Macarthur and throughout the country. It will benefit the participants, and their families and carers too, as it leads to greater independence and participation. I sincerely hope that this historic scheme will remove the barriers to equality and opportunity that currently exist for people with disabilities. In all sincerity, I acknowledge the bipartisan approach to the NDIS by all members of this House.

**Domestic Violence**

Ms CLAYDON (Newcastle) (16:49): Following the dismissal of the former Prime Minister Abbott by the Liberal party room earlier this week, there has been much conjecture about ministerial responsibilities, reshuffles, demotions and promotions, and the nation has been left in a state of limbo when it comes to a range of vital portfolio areas that help drive and shape our economy, our communication technology, our employment needs and our vision for the future. But what has gained little attention in the last few days is a portfolio area that has sadly been lacking any real focus or commitment for the last two years since this Liberal government was elected, and that is the portfolio of women. When Tony Abbott became Prime Minister, he abolished the position of Minister for Women and transferred responsibility instead to the office of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Many argue the minutiae of title changes and portfolio responsibilities, but few could argue the importance of having a senior minister in the cabinet with adequate resources dedicated to women, when Australia is facing an epidemic of violence against women.

Prominent journalist Lisa Wilkinson wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister last week outlining the situation eloquently. She said:

… when it comes to acts of violence against women, this country is in crisis.

With 62 women now dead this year alone, and countless others either maimed, emotionally scarred, or living in fear on a daily basis, something is broken in this country, and it urgently needs to be fixed.

I agree with Lisa, and so does the Labor Party. With 62 women killed this year alone and one in three women affected by this violence, we need concerted action and change, and we need it now.

I commend the Leader of the Opposition for his very prompt action in writing to the new Prime Minister offering bipartisanship to help eliminate violence against women. Labor has already made a range of commitments to this end, and we would welcome genuine engagement with the new Prime Minister to coordinate a national response to family violence.

State governments in Queensland and Victoria are already moving forward with purpose and urgency, and should be acknowledged for their strong advocacy. But we need intervention at a federal level too if we are to adequately address this crisis across the nation. The new Prime Minister has had a lot to say about eliminating violence against women and now it is time for his words to be matched by action. I strongly urge Prime Minister Turnbull to make the elimination of violence against women a priority for our nation and the government he now leads.

In June this year, I stood in this place and named the 43 Australian women who had lost their life in acts of violence this year. That number, as I mentioned earlier, has tragically climbed to 62 women just three months later—another 19 lives unjustly lost.

Today, I wish to acknowledge these women who have joined the long list of indescribable tragedy. I acknowledge: Rebecca Webb, aged 36; Norma Ludlam, aged 75; Tiffany Taylor,
aged 16; Ann Hay, aged 55; Nadia Cameron, aged 52; Roxanne Wilkinson, aged 50; Jacinta
Pompei, aged 32; Leah Anne Appleton, aged 34; Donna Gusman, aged in her 40s; Jayde
Kendall, aged 16; Tara Brown, aged 24; and another eight other unnamed women.

We know that for young women under the age of 45 the most likely cause of death or
injury is domestic violence. This is a scourge. It is an epidemic in our society. This senseless
killing must stop and it must stop now. These women must not die in vain. Please, if you or
someone you know is impacted by sexual assault or domestic or family violence, call
1800RESPECT or 1800737732 for help.

New South Wales Police Force

Dobell Electorate: Policing

Mrs McNAMARA (Dobell) (16:54): I do concur with the member for Newcastle and join
her in her commitment to raising awareness about domestic violence.

In my home state of New South Wales, the New South Wales Police Force protects
and keeps our community safe. The New South Wales Police Force have existed in numerous
forms since the foundation of the New South Wales colony. Initially, the Royal Navy Marines
patrolled Sydney Cove. In 1789, in order to protect the new settlement against petty criminals
after dark, Governor Phillip authorised the formation of a night watch, which consisted at the
time of eight of the best-behaved convicts. In 1811, Governor Macquarie restructured the
Police Force in establishing a basic system of ranks and control, and recruiting free men into
the force instead of convicts.

Initially in rural areas, police were appointed by the local justices of the peace and became
known as bench police or 'benchers'. As the colony evolved, so did the Police Force. In 1825,
the Military Mounted Police were formed, following clashes between Aboriginals and settlers
in the central west. This groups later disbanded and in 1850 civilian mounted police became
the foundation of today's New South Wales Mounted Police Unit. Other specialist segments
of the Police Force included the Gold Escort, following the discovery of gold, and an early
version of the highway patrol was formed in 1925 and the aviation unit in 1946.

Throughout its history, the New South Wales Police Force has been well-regarded for a
number of high-level challenges in ensuring public safety, none more so than the 2000
Sydney Olympic Games. However, with the multicultural issues culminating in the Redfern,
Macquarie Fields and Cronulla riots, the New South Wales Police Force demonstrated their
professionalism under pressure.

On the Central Coast, we are fortunate to have two outstanding local area commands. The
Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes local area commands cover the Dobell electorate.
Superintendent Danny Sullivan of Brisbane Water LAC and Superintendent David Swilkes of
Tuggerah Lakes LAC and their teams serve the Dobell community with utmost
professionalism and integrity. Superintendent Sullivan of Brisbane Water LAC recently
informed me of a sustained trend of crime reduction that is greater than the state average.
Superintendent Sullivan points to community engagement as the best strategy in crime
reduction across the Brisbane Water LAC. A strong partnership with the community coupled
with an online presence is at the forefront of this community engagement. Justifiably, the
Brisbane Water LAC is proud of their Facebook page, with the largest following of all police
LAC command pages in New South Wales. This Facebook page is utilised to provide our
communities with a trusted source of information and is a key tool in their crime reduction approach.

Acting Superintendent of Tuggerah Lakes LAC, Rod Peet, provided a number of examples of the excellent policing undertaken by the Tuggerah Lakes command. The focus of this command has been on crime hotspots and repeat offenders as part of an overall push to lower crime rates on the Central Coast. Acting Superintendent Peet stated, 'By channelling resources to areas where crime is highest, we are often able to make immediate impacts and crime reductions.' The contribution of Tuggerah Lakes command's focus on repeat offenders is delivering results for which our community is proud. The work being undertaken by both commands is outstanding and the entire Central Coast community is benefiting from their continued efforts.

This year, we celebrate 100 years of women in policing. 'Two of our living legends' were the words used by Superintendent Sullivan to refer to Detective Senior Sergeant Vivienne Crawford and Senior Constable Corina Hassett. Both of these officers have dedicated over 35 years of service to the community and are at the front of the Brisbane Water LAC community engagement on the Central Coast. Similarly, at the Tuggerah Lakes command, Acting Superintendent Peet paid tribute to the most senior serving female police officer on the Central Coast, Inspector Chevonne Greene. I am extremely impressed with the female representation on the Central Coast Police Force and make special mention of the contribution and dedication of female officers serving in our local commands.

Earlier this month, I was privileged to attend the retired police day ceremony. The Brisbane Water and Tuggerah Lakes commands coordinated this highly successful event. All those present expressed their appreciation for being able to pay their respect to the men and women who have served in the Police Force. To all those who have served and are currently serving in the NSW Police Force, particularly on the Central Coast, I thank you for everything that you do.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00

NOTICES

Mr Pyne: to move:

That so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent the Member for Kennedy's private Members' business notice relating to the disallowance of the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Amendment (Firearms and Firearm Magazines) Regulation 2015 being called on immediately.

Mr Champion: to move:

That this House:
(1) notes that:
   (a) people with dyslexia have difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters and other symbols;
   (b) dyslexia does not affect general intelligence; and
   (c) the primary symptoms of dyslexia are:
      (i) problems learning the letter sounds for reading and spelling;
      (ii) difficulty in reading single words, such as on flash cards and in lists (decoding);
(iii) lack of fluency;
(iv) reading slowly with many mistakes;
(v) poor spelling; and
(vi) poor visual gestalt/coding (orthographic coding);

(2) acknowledges:
(a) the hard work of support groups, educators and families in raising awareness of dyslexia;
(b) the many programs and services helping students to achieve their best every day; and
(c) dyslexia as a disability through the Disability Discrimination Act 1992; and

(3) calls upon the Government to consider:
(a) continuing to work with the states and territories to complete the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability program and implement the disability loading recommended in the Gonski report;
(b) developing a national program which encompasses accreditation and development of schools which specialise in dyslexia, including early identification, teacher training, school autonomy, assessment and examination;
(c) adopting models such as the United Kingdom model for dyslexia, the Education, Health and Care Plan; and
(d) Dyslexia Aware School accreditation education programs in South Australian schools.

Mr Danby: to move:
That this House:

(1) condemns the ideology and actions of DAISH, including the:
(a) brutal and systematic rape of and sexual violence towards women and children, including the trafficking of these women and girls;
(b) use of sadistic violence as a means of oppression; and
(c) ongoing, genocidal destruction of culture including the destruction of historical artefacts and sites of cultural significance; and

(2) calls on the international community to do all that it can to bring an end to these horrific acts perpetrated by DAISH and bring all of those involved to justice.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott) took the chair at 09:30.

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Red Cross Blood Service

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (09:30): I want to talk to the House about a very important event I attended on 2 September with one of my great staffers, Alison Byrnes, and our partners Paul Scully and Gino Mandarino. We joined the team of Illawarra Young Labor people for a blood drive at the local Wollongong Red Cross blood bank. I want to acknowledge all of the participants who came along: Kieran O'Connor, Peter Munford, Alex Costello, Dale Norris, Jarrod Della Penna, Caitlin Roodneys and Alex Napier. We turned up in a group. Jessica Sparks, who is a member of Young Labor locally, had organised the event. Jessica is a double lung transplant recipient. She advocates tirelessly for the issue of transplants but also for the importance of blood donation. She had booked us a bank of seats on which to donate blood, and along we went.

I commend the Illawarra Young Labor group for what was a great initiative. It will be ongoing, as we will be doing this on a regular basis. I take the opportunity to put on the record to my community, but also to the chamber and to the country, the importance of participating in the Red Cross blood bank processes, if you can. People who want information, who are enthused enough to think, 'I will have a look at this,' can go to donateblood.com.au. I am an O negative blood type, so I am always very conscious of the call-out for O negative donors. I am pleased to be able to participate on an ongoing basis.

Blood is obviously vital to life. The Red Cross Blood Service website gives people plenty of information about how important their work is. It makes the point that currently about one in 30 Australians donate blood, but—and this is where the pressure point comes—one in three people will need blood in their lifetime. So we must put all our efforts into getting more people who are able to donate to participate in this very important program. Obviously blood donations cover a wide range of needs. There is a high demand in the area of cancer and blood diseases. Donations are also needed for anaemia sufferers, people having open heart surgery, burns sufferers and people with kidney, heart and stomach diseases. I am sure we all know someone who needs blood. If you have not done it yet, get out there; it is not that painful. Donate blood and participate in a great program. Congratulations also go to the staff at the Wollongong Red Cross Blood Service.

Cowan Electorate: Community Initiatives

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (09:33): They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, so I thank all the South Ward Labor councillors of the City of Wanneroo for basically imitating my initiatives. I speak of how they tried to pick up my initiative on the fight to secure funding for the complete lighting of the Kingsway netball complex and also my support for getting a crossing guard on Hartman Drive for school students who have to cross that very busy road to get to school each day.

On the lighting of the netball complex, there was no action for years by any of these South Ward councillors, yet weeks after I launched my campaign for funding, suddenly a motion...
was put forward by an ex-Labor state candidate and current councillor, who is also seeking re-election and also running for mayor, to start asking the state government for the money. That motion was also put forward after I had already written to the state Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Hon. Mia Davies, about the project and after she had already even been to the complex to look at the needs. I thank her for her strong interest in the project.

Similarly, there was silence from those Labor councillors on the need for a crossing guard on Hartman Drive until I contacted the police minister's staff in August and sent the Hon. Liza Harvey MLA a letter on this important issue on 1 September. That letter was sent to a primary school where parents were concerned about this long-term issue, and then another motion was suddenly put forward by these Labor councillors. One of these Labor operatives then said on Facebook that they had been working on this for months and that they were pleased to have delivered for the local community.

There are two problems with this deception. Firstly, the school that will put the application in has never been contacted by these councillors. The second, more important, problem is that delivery has occurred when there is a crossing guard in place, not when councillors finally get involved and tick off on a motion. If they were to believe these Labor councillors, when students from Madeley approached the very busy Hartman Drive this morning in order to cross it and go to school, there would have been a crossing there. But they should not believe these people, and the deception will be plain to see. These councillors in the city have not delivered anything. I promise that I will pursue these issues until the netball courts are lit and the students who cross Hartman Drive have a safer way to do so.

The trouble with these Labor councillors is that they spend too much time using their positions to advance, on social media, anti-state and anti-federal government agendas as directed by Labor Party headquarters. Now, with the local government elections just a month away, they are scrambling to justify their case for re-election. I look at their self-promotional posts, and how sad it is that they have to end up liking their own posts to get, in some cases, a single like. If there is more than one like, you look at the names and see that they are just the other Labor south ward councillors. I guess it just goes to show that, at the community level, people are sick of these people pushing their loaded political agendas and want councillors who concentrate on the needs of the community and do not push their political agenda. I urge the people of the south ward to support candidates who commit to the local community and who commit to not getting involved in pushing party lines or abusing the trust of the people.

### Medical Workforce

**Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (09:36):** Yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting one of my constituents, Laura Raiti, who is a fourth-year Doctor of Medicine student at the University of Melbourne. Laura and the Australian Medical Students’ Association tell me that Australia is currently experiencing a crisis, with a finite number of clinical rotations for the increased number of medical students coming through. The prospect of new medical schools threatens to dilute educational resources and further add stress to Australia’s current medical training crisis. They say new medical schools should not be supported until the provision of sufficient high-quality internships and subsequent postgraduate training positions can be guaranteed.

In the last 10 years, the number of medical graduates in Australia has almost doubled. Medical student numbers are at an all-time high. This has serious implications for the quality
of medical student training and for the government's ability to guarantee internships for domestic students. While there has been an increase in medical student numbers, what seems to have been overlooked is the need to match this increase in numbers with a sufficient number of internships and prevocational training places.

Despite warnings, a lack of workforce planning and commitment to a sustainable supply of trained doctors has meant that the issue of unemployed medical graduates is now a reality. Graduates who fail to secure internships will be forced either to continue their training overseas, lost to the Australian healthcare system, or to work in industries outside of medicine. Further down the training pipeline, registered medical officers are being left unemployed, and, in 2013, there were 2,000 applicants for specialist training, including generalist training, in Western Australia for only 700 positions available. Increasing student numbers and opening new medical schools is not the answer to a current severe training bottleneck that is preventing junior doctors from progressing to become useful independent practitioners. This training bottleneck is a result of a failure of nationally coordinated workforce planning between universities and federal and state governments. The bottleneck will worsen in future years as graduate numbers continue to climb and pressure rises on the availability of specialty training places.

The solution the students recommend is to redirect funding into providing more prevocational training places and a commitment from the federal government to fund a sufficient number of quality internship places for graduating medical students. Interest in the Commonwealth Medical Internships initiative, which carries a return-of-service obligation in a rural and remote area, demonstrates that the graduates being forced overseas are willing to work in rural Australia if given the opportunity.

The number of internship positions should align with Australia's healthcare needs. I ask the federal government to consider a nationally coordinated approach to regulating medical student numbers such that they reflect national workforce needs and the feasibility of a nationally coordinated process for internship applications.

**Banks Electorate**

**Mr COLEMAN** (Banks) (09:39): I recently attended the Marist College Penshurst advisory council meeting. The school is currently transitioning from being a boys only school to a coeducational school and is also transitioning from years 7 to 10 only to years 7 to 12. It is the largest high school in my electorate and will have its first HSC candidates next year, in 2016. The school is also undergoing large capital works changes to accommodate the additional students, assisted by a grant from the federal government of over $3 million. The principal, Mr John Finneran, will be leaving the school at the end of the year to take up another opportunity. I want to thank him for his tremendous leadership in leading what is, as I say, the largest high school in my electorate. I very much enjoyed attending the advisory council meeting and look forward to further meetings in the future.

I would also like to congratulate the Connells Point Rovers on their annual awards ceremony which I attended last Sunday. The Connells Point Rovers Football Club is the largest sporting club in the entire St George region in Sydney. Hundred of families attended the awards at Club Central in Hurstville last Sunday morning. I presented the Banks Outstanding Sporting Achievement Awards to kids from each of the age divisions between under 6s and under 9s—more than 50 recipients in all. I want to thank the club president,
Steve Matthews, and the club secretary, Luciano Benedet, for the work they do in organising all of the club's activities throughout the year. It is a very large undertaking, because there are some 1,000 people involved in the club. Steve and Luciana do a fantastic job.

I would also like to reflect on the success of the annual Bankstown Children's Festival which was held last Saturday, 12 September. The celebration is a focus on the multicultural community of Sydney. Literally thousands of people attended this event, where there were food stalls and cultural stalls. The highlight of the event was the ceremony at the beginning of the formal proceedings when kids come in in national dress from scores of countries around the world. It brings out community together, and has been doing so for 17 years. This was the 17th annual event. The festival was attended by the Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. David Hurley, reflecting its importance. I would like to particularly thank Thuat Nguyen OAM for his hard work in organising this event. He is a dedicated and selfless servant of Australia and a person who is an inspiration to many, and I thank him for all his efforts.

**Holt Electorate: National Security**

**Mr BYRNE** (Holt) (09:42): On 23 September last year terrorism visited by electorate. On the evening of 23 September a young man tried to kill two police officers by stabbing them to death and, had he been successful, would have then gone into the Endeavour Hills Police Station tried to kill as many people as he could. If it were not for the bravery of two very fine men, an Australian Federal Police officer and a VicPol antiterrorism officer, he would have been successful. The young man who attempted to murder those officers was killed by one of those officers.

Coming to the anniversary of this particular event, I want to say how proud I am of my local community. I am proud of our local police force and the work that they have done, and did, to protect our community and those two fine men on that very awful night 12 months ago. I am proud of the people of the Endeavour Hills Police Station, led by Sergeant Phil Byrnes, for what they did that night, in a scene that was like something out of a horror movie. I am proud of the Narre Warren and Cranbourne police stations as well, given their role and the subsequent concerns that they had post the Anzac Day plot. I am also very, very proud of the local Afghan community who, when this event occurred, came to my office and said, 'What can we do to help? What can we do to prevent this occurring again?' I am proud of the efforts they made.

I would also like to commend the American Ambassador to Australia, Ambassador Berry, for the work that he has done in this area and for a meeting that he attended with me with the local Muslim community leaders. We met in pretty challenging circumstances after the Anzac Day raids in the City of Casey. Tensions were high, but we worked through those tensions, and there has been a productive and ongoing dialogue. I also had a subsequent meeting with Afghan community leaders at the John Pandazopoulos Hall in June this year.

You read a lot of bad things about my area—it does not take much for you to read trash written by stupid press—but you do not read about the incredible work that is being done by every member of my community. They did not overreact. They were calm, they were strong, they were resilient and they were committed to community wellbeing. Everyone worked together to deal with this terror. The fact is that it would be nice if the idiots from the media occasionally wrote that staff instead of some of the wedge politics. I am not apologetic. The media have a role in terms of some of the portrayals—portrayals of the brave officers,
portrayals of the Islamic community. Take a leaf from us. We dealt with this situation. It is a pity that this damn press did not actually report that.

**Herbert Electorate: Trade with China**

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert) (09:45): I was in the chamber yesterday when Andrew Robb was putting forward the legislation enabling the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement. It was a set of bills which removes tariffs. There are no bills or regulation changes relating to industrial relations, immigration or the 457 visa process—none. Currently my electorate is beset by CFMEU robocalls telling people they should be afraid of the future. The Labor Party, with its joined-at-the-hip backing of this campaign, wants North Queenslanders to be afraid of our future. We are not. The funny part about it is the caller states that she is a local and implores people to call my office. She then recites the number starting with '07'. The thing about that is that to dial 07 you have to be out of the state or in Melbourne, where this 'local' actually lives. You do not dial 07 if you are even inside the borders of Queensland. This campaign is xenophobic at best and blatantly racist at its worst. If people in my electorate are worried about this give my office a call and come and see me. My number is 47252066.

Townsville and North Queensland have been our export powerhouses since we were settled—from Mt Isa to the west to the Mitchell Grass plains and the endless fields of sugar all the way along our coast. We have an export friendly attitude, and we have had that attitude forever. We know we rely on trade and we welcome it. We want the future to be about getting our region to achieve its potential and understand that investment must be made to do so. With my government's $5 billion concessional loan facility, our councils and regions will be able to build the infrastructure required to get these things to our port and to the customer. That brings jobs—not taxpayer funded government jobs, but jobs in small businesses, which then create wealth and opportunity for other people in our regions.

The member for Bendigo stood in this chamber and said that we would have unqualified Chinese people turning up to pensioners' houses masquerading as electricians and plumbers. What she does not tell, and what the CFMEU campaign does not tell you, is that they must be registered by state governments to operate in our country. It cannot happen. It will not happen. The union campaign shows the stark difference between the two major parties in this country. Labor has fallen back to what it stood for around the Great Depression and before the Second World War—making Australians afraid and keeping them ignorant. My party welcomes the future; we need the future—not the future for members of this place but for children in our school community who want the opportunities that will present themselves through this. The free trade agreements are all about jobs for all Australians. They are about opportunities for all Australians, and they are about the future for all Australians, but especially those in North Queensland and Townsville.

**Griffith Electorate: Schools**

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (09:48): It is a pleasure to rise to tell the parliament about a few of the schools in my local electorate that are celebrating some significant milestones. I have spoken previously in this House about a couple of schools: Seton College, which had its 50th anniversary last year, and St Laurence's College, which had its 100th anniversary this year, its centenary. It has been an absolute honour to attend some of the events in celebration of those milestones.
I also wanted to mention a couple of primary schools, each of which has reached 100 years this year. The first I would like to mention is Cannon Hill State School, which is a school in my local suburb. It has been the centre of the community that it services from its opening in 1915 until the present day. Throughout its life, the school has been the venue for countless events such as dances, socials and concerts, dramatic performances, fancy dress balls, agricultural shows, welcoming home soldiers from the First World War, political meetings and elections, cat and dog shows, fetes and fairs, lectern lectures and flower shows. The original 1915 school building was described as the most scientific building in Queensland and a high mark in school architecture. A lot of thought was given to the positioning of the buildings—

*Mr Ewen Jones interjecting—*

*Ms Rowland interjecting—*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott):** Order! Would the member for Herbert and the member for Greenway like to conduct their conversation outside of the chamber? The member for Griffith has the call.

**Ms BUTLER:** As I was saying, the school buildings are well known for the work that went into positioning them for the healthy education of children. In 2005 the school was nominated for and secured a place in the Queensland Heritage Register.

Past students of the school include Hayley Lewis, who of course was an Olympic and Commonwealth Games swimmer and medallist, and Wally Lewis, the Australian state of origin and Gold Coast club rugby league captain. Both of those people are very well known locals and still contribute a great deal to the local community. In fact, if you go to the Cannon Hill swimming club you often hear of the work that Hayley Lewis does to support that club, and of course the work that Wally Lewis does in our community is well known to everyone. A centenary dinner dance will be held on 23 October, and I certainly wish them well for that and the centenary fete the following day.

On the weekend I also had the great pleasure of going to the Greenslopes State School, which actually celebrated more than 100 years. It celebrated 125 years, believe it or not. It was opened in 1890 and it was called Mount Pleasant Provisional School at the time and then renamed Dunellan Provisional School as it stands on Dunellan Street. It was the 614th school built in Queensland and on the second day of opening boasted an enrolment of 65 children. Students were drawn to the school from surrounding farms, shops and local industry, and by July 1923 all of the land currently used by the school was purchased and the school was renamed Greenslopes State School. It is an absolutely beautiful school and it was such an honour to get to celebrate the 125th anniversary with the school community that day.

**Leichhardt Electorate: Aged Care**

**Mr ENTSCH** (Leichhardt) (09:51): On 21 September Australia's largest private aged-care provider, Bupa Aged Care, will welcome its first residents into its newest home, Bupa Cairns. With room to care for 144 residents, including 34 dedicated dementia beds, Bupa Cairns will employ more than 150 people when it is at full capacity. Given the focus that has been in my region lately on the shortage of available aged-care beds and the impact that this has had on the Cairns Hospital's ability to admit new patients, I think this is absolutely welcome news.
To celebrate the opening, a family day was held on 12 September which I was pleased to attend. The event was opened by traditional owner Seith Fourmile and Indigenous dancers. There was a real family atmosphere. There was face painting, balloons—a real community event. People took guided tours around the home, talked to qualified professionals about aged-care options and discussed caring for loved ones with dementia.

On the 21st, around 50 people will move straight into the facility, some coming from other facilities around Cairns, including from Bupa's other aged-care facility at Mount Sheridan. There is clearly a great need for this service. I was really impressed by the facilities. The rooms are really outstanding, all with ensuites and beautifully decorated. Each of the four 'communities', as they call the four sections of the facility, features a comfortable lounge and dining area. Outdoors, residents and visitors can enjoy the Cairns weather in landscaped courtyards. They can even be pampered in their own hairdressing salon, can take advantage of the men's shed they have outside for those wishing to participate in those types of activities, or use a private dining room to entertain friends and family. The home will have a dedicated bus to take residents on outings and daytrips so they can continue to be actively involved within their community.

It is easy to see why the staff are already very committed. Some of them have only been employed for a week, and these staff volunteered their time for the open day. At this stage they already have enough staff there to service more than 70 residents and they will continue to work on attracting more highly qualified carers. It was great to meet some of the dedicated staff including Davida Webb, Bupa Aged Care's regional director for Queensland; and Gaye Clark, Bupa Cairns's general manager. Davida is a proud local and says that, given the ageing population, the community needs more high-quality aged-care services which are flexible for people's changing needs.

I was happy to hand over to Jean Kent and Dennis Manson to cut the ribbon. They are the first two residents to move into this new home. They will be moving in there on the 4th. There are still affordable rooms available and employment opportunities for people committed to aged care and passionate about delivering these services. If you are interested, please contact Bupa Cairns. (Time expired)

**Greenway Electorate: Sport**

Ms ROWLAND (Greenway) (09:54): I rise to mention the outstanding sporting achievements of Patrician Brothers’ College, Blacktown, and specifically their rugby league team who made it to the GIO Schoolboy Cup grand final for the fourth year in a row. This is a remarkable achievement and something to be celebrated. Unfortunately, St Pats went down in the grand final yesterday to Townsville's Kirwan State High School at Pepper Stadium in Penrith.

I pre-empted the member for Herbert, who I thought would be keen to rub it in. But he told me something quite touching. John Livingston, who had been the principal of Kirwan State High School for 27 years, died of brain cancer earlier this year. The team also had to cope with the death of one of their star players earlier this year as well. I give credit where it is due to Kirwan State High School for their win under quite remarkable circumstances with those all of those difficulties going on.
It is also worth noting that yesterday’s final marked 40 years since the first schoolboy rugby league grand final which featured Fairfield Patrician Brothers’ College and Blacktown Boys High School in the then named AMCO Shield. It is true to say that we have a bit of a rugby league nursery in Greenway.

In the semifinal, St Pats beat the Hills Sports High School, also in my electorate, to make it through to the grand final in what was, by all accounts, a thrilling match that saw Patrician Brothers’ five-eighth Jarome Luai kick a field goal at the death to give Pats a 9-8 victory. Jerome also plays in the Holden Cup for Penrith, so watch this name. He will go very far.

Well done, also, to Hills Sports High School on a wonderful season. As two-time winners of the schoolboy competition, I know they will be in the mix again next year. To the Patties boys: sorry about your loss yesterday. Please know you have done your families and your school community very proud. To reach the grand final for a fourth consecutive year, out of the field of 450 schools, is a fantastic achievement and one that the entire school can celebrate. I also want to congratulate the coach, Greg Beacroft, and all the coaching staff at St Pats for their hard work and commitment to these fine young men. To their principal, Santo Passarello: Mr Passarello, congratulations on this achievement. I commend you and your school for representing the area of Blacktown so well both on and off the field.

**Corangamite Electorate: Environment**

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (09:57): I rise to express my dismay and deep concern over the decision by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, AFMA, to overturn the night ban on the mid-size trawler, the Geelong Star. For many months I have been calling for the Geelong Star to be banned. A night-time ban on the small pelagic fishery was put in place in May this year because of the fact that eight dolphins were killed during the first two trips of the Geelong Star. As dolphins feed predominantly at night it is almost certain that overturning this night ban will lead to more dolphin deaths. The trawler’s owner, Seafish Tasmania, has not been able to provide evidence that its marine mammal exclusion device is fail-safe. ACMA has in place a trigger limit on dolphin mortalities—that is, the management measure that if a single dolphin mortality occurs in any one of the seven pelagic fishery management zones, then that zone will be closed for six months.

However, I do not believe this is good enough. Today I am seeking the urgent intervention of the Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce. Two weeks ago on 4 September, I wrote to Minister Joyce about this matter and raised my very significant concerns. In my letter I pointed out that Seafish Tasmania has not responded to my representations, even in relation to the naming of the vessel. Frankly, to call this vessel the Geelong Star is a real slur on our city. This vessel is no star of Geelong.

In my electorate of Corangamite, which includes 188 kilometres of coastline, there is a very significant opposition to this trawler. The scientific evidence to support the fishing of the small pelagic fishery in the manner being proposed is simply not conclusive. Regrettably, Seafish Tasmania has declined a request by the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation not to fish in certain high-value recreational fishing waters. Accordingly, on both environmental and recreational fishing grounds, I believe a ban is justified.

I have been working closely with many members of my community, including Jason O'Neill from Barwon Heads, who was instrumental in organising a rally against the Geelong Star.
Star in June. For these reasons, and because I believe AFMA's decision is inexcusable, I am pleased to announced that Jason O'Neill and I will be organising a large community rally in Torquay on Sunday, 25 October. The rally has the backing of the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation and VRFish. In fact, VRFish has just tweeted:
… lifting night ban is not ok when rec fishing concerns have not been properly addressed.
The rally will bring together: concerned fishers, families, boaties and people concerned about the environment, oceans and our fisheries. We will have more details to come. I am a proud warrior of the environment that is why the Geelong Star must be banned.

**Ballarat Electorate: Sport**

**Ms KING (Ballarat) (10:00):** Last weekend was the opener of the Australian Football League finals. My own home was deeply divided between the ever faithful Richmond supporters—me—having to concede defeat to the North Melbourne supporters—my husband and seven-year-old son. However, for many members of my electorate last weekend was the main event: the grand final.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Southcott):** This is not for family grievances; rather, it is for members statements!

**Ms KING:** Of course, Deputy Speaker! What is incredible are the number of teams playing in an extraordinary number of competitions across my region. Springbank took home the trophy in both the Central Highlands Football League and the netball league grand finals, at the top of both sports. But there were a huge four finals games for football and six for netball. Local sports enthusiasts were spoilt for choice and, what is more, we are going to do the same all again this weekend, with the Ballarat Football League grand final playing out on Saturday and with three levels of football fighting out finals matches and five divisions of netball doing the same. I should also mention that in the Ballarat Victorian Junior Basketball League the men's under-18 side took home their premiership in a hard fought game. They were the first Ballarat side to reach a VJBL final and it is a great achievement. Well done.

There is an incredible number of people who play sport across my region, but it is really more than that. It is the mums and dads who drive their kids to play, the community groups that get together to put out sandwiches and cut oranges and the juniors who will one day be the senior players who bring premiership medals home to their clubs. It is not a multimillion dollar sporting event. Areas like mine are full of people who give their time and energy to community events.

I particularly want to mention one of those people, who we lost just yesterday. Noel Pidgeon has been a stalwart of the Ballarat community for a very long period of time and I was very sad to learn of his death yesterday. He gave almost 20 years of his retired life to sport and to young athletes in the community through the Ballarat Sports Foundation, which is an organisation that raises money and then donates that to young athletes in our community. He was really fantastic in that. He also served with me on our Local Sporting Champions committee and provided invaluable advice to young athletes across all sporting disciplines for a long period of time.

I think many in our community know how incredibly fit Noel was throughout his entire life, but also how he was very passionate about young people's sport and, particularly, promoting young people from our regions' capacity to participate in state, national and
international competitions. He passed away on Wednesday morning. I want to express my condolences to his wife, their three children and their families. They have lost a wonderful person. It is the effort and spirit of people like Noel that we see in any sporting match or any competition that you might watch in the country. Our community is much better for having had him with us.

**Workplace Relations**

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (10:03): A lot of very regrettable and avoidable argument goes on in this place between unions and employers, when in reality workers and their bosses get on well 99 per cent of the time. What we have in my electorate, of course, is the unions attempting to intimidate one of our non-profit sporting clubs because they have simply move from a penalty rate arrangement onto a wage bargained agreement.

This has been done using an authorised wage agreement that has been run through the fair work office. In fact, when we look at the commissioner who approved this wage agreement, it was a Bob Carr and Kevin Rudd Labor appointed New South Wales union representative in the commission who decided this wage agreement was completely fair and that workers were no worse off. It makes you wonder then why Queensland unions have decided to take on one sporting club for taking on this wage agreement.

If I can quote a letter from United Voice: 'United Voice will continue to campaign until penalty rates are reinstated.' It is not that the workers are better off or that they are earning more money; no, it is until penalty rates are re-established, because that is what unions really care about. 'The issue of penalty rates', says the union, 'reaches far beyond the sports club and is set to be widely debated leading up to the next election.'

In their final threatening and intimidator statement, complete with a dangling preposition at the end of it, they said: 'This debate is not one that I would think the Capalaba Sports Club would want to be at the centre of.' There; it is clear. They are going to take down this club if they have to, to make the simple point that they want penalty rates paid to workers—even if that is not what the workers want. Let's find out. What do the workers want? Thirty-seven out of 38 workers are straight back to work, because they know they are better off. One worker is not happy; therefore we have a union campaign.

We do not have workers queuing up around this sports club saying they are being unfairly treated. The workers are back at work. The workers are back looking after the tables, the pokies and the bar. The workers are even organising fundraisers for their colleagues, at the club, happily employed. Not good enough for the unions. Now we have an order to raid the club. That is right. They are going to raid a non-profit community club, run a social media campaign and drag this club through the mud.

They have walked away with copies of all of the payment agreements and have created a graph. Here is this pretty graph. But there are a few flaws in the union graph. It claims that if you are working at looking after the pokies or the bar you are going to be earning $58 an hour on a public holiday. Wrong. The union guy who made this graph did not realise that you do not double-time the casual loaded rate, you double-time the award rate. So the graph is complete rubbish.
Lastly, they could not even compare the award amount with the hospitality X amount. So we ended up with the truth provided by the club, complete with pay statements. It is: workers are better off under the new deal. Up goes the union campaign in smoke. *(Time expired)*

**Rural and Regional Australia**

*Lang, Dr Donald*

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (10:06): On behalf of my constituents and those who live in rural and regional Australia right across this great country I want to express my concern about a very serious misleading of them by the National Party and, in particular, by Minister Joyce, the agriculture minister.

In the lead-up to the change in leadership of the Liberal Party Barnaby Joyce, in particular, expressed concern that the election of Malcolm Turnbull as Liberal leader and therefore Prime Minister would be a bad thing for rural and regional Australia. He made plenty of noise. After the event, after some initial criticism he went somewhat quiet, claiming that the National Party had entered into a new coalition agreement in which they had extracted all sorts of additional concessions for rural and regional Australia. He implied that the coalition agreement struck in 2013 was not an optimal one for rural and regional Australia. What Barnaby Joyce was trying to say was it is okay now for Malcolm Turnbull to be the Prime Minister. It is okay for rural and regional Australia because we have reached a new agreement that will result in new spending and offers to rural and regional Australia.

We now know that was untrue. Minister Joyce misled rural and regional Australia, including his own constituents. I have with me a huge photo of Minister Joyce in the *Northern Daily Leader*, in his own electorate, which pronounces Joyce the winner in the new agreement. It suggests that the coalition agreement has been consigned to the scrap heap and a new one put in its place.

I have been asking these questions for a couple of days now. Finally, the Deputy Prime Minister, no less, appeared on Sky News yesterday and said there is no new agreement. There is a letter of understanding, which seeks to confirm the old agreement and everything contained within it. There is no new money or new programs and nothing for rural and regional Australia. Those residents have been misled.

I close by acknowledging the passing of Dr Don Lang at the age of 92. Don Lang was a general practitioner in Cessnock, my home town for almost 30 years. Indeed, when I was a young lad he was my own doctor. He was a war veteran, a life member of the Australian Labor Party and, over his many active years in the community, he had been the local president of just about every local community organisations. He was very heavily involved in St Vincent de Paul, for example. He was a great Australian. I pay tribute to him and express my sympathy to his six children and his grandchildren.

**Capricornia Electorate: Beef Industry**

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (10:09): Rockhampton, Australia's real beef capital, forms an important part of our nation's beef and cattle industry economy. Indeed, this title is recognised by the fact that every three years our city hosts Beef Australia, the nation's premier cattle industry expo, showcasing the Australian industry to the world. I am therefore pleased that the Deputy Prime Minister has announced that Rockhampton will host a high-level industry round table next month to identify funding priorities for the coalition government's $100
million Northern Australia Beef Roads Fund. The meeting will be held in Rockhampton on 2 October. The Deputy Prime Minister says the round table will give industry representatives the chance to shape investment priorities for roads which are vital to northern cattle supply chains.

As a nation we farm about 31 million head of cattle. When it comes to beef production, we punch above our weight. According to data from Meat and Livestock Australia, Australia is one of the world's most efficient producers of cattle. In terms of consumer expenditure and export value, the off-farm value of our beef and cattle industry is worth $12.75 billion. MLA tells us that Australia has four per cent of the world cattle inventory, behind massively-populated countries such as India, Brazil and China. We are the third-largest beef exporter in the world.

In the future we hope that the position of our beef sector on the world stage will strengthen further, with recent free trade deals and a long-awaited FTA with China—currently being stalled by the Labor Party. But our coalition government is committed to building better infrastructure and driving down operating costs for Northern Australia cattle operations.

Our government has committed $100 million through the Northern Australia Beef Roads Fund to improve roads which are critical to transporting cattle. I am pleased that the Deputy Prime Minister will bring the first of the three round tables to be held in Northern Australia to Rockhampton, where industry representatives can have their say about where available funding can be best spent. The sheer distances and logistics in transporting cattle contributes significantly to the cost of production, with land transport costs comprising up to 35 per cent of the market price of livestock.

The Deputy Prime Minister says that this program aims to reduce the cost of transporting cattle in the north, which involves some of the longest land transport distances of any Australian commodity. A more efficient beef sector means making us more competitive on the world stage. This road improvement program also brings with it the possibility of creating more jobs. A further two beef road round tables will be held in Western Australian and in the Northern Territory.

**Bendigo Electorate: Multiculturalism**

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (10:12): Last night there were scenes in Bendigo that should be condemned by all of us. The City of Greater Bendigo held a council meeting and the meeting was interrupted by quite violent threats of intimidation. I stand here as the federal member for Bendigo to say, yet again, that these are not the actions of the majority of people who live in our great city. We are a town, and the City of Greater Bendigo region, of 100,000 people and these are the actions of a small few—a small few who are upset that the council made a decision many months ago to approve a planning application to build the city's first mosque.

Bendigo is an inclusive community. Since the gold rush days we have had many people from many different countries migrate, set up and establish themselves in our home town and in our city. That has added to our social fabric and made us an inclusive, exciting and diverse community. We are, at the same time as this planning application to build our first mosque, building the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, which we believe will be a pilgrimage point for many people who wish to embrace, celebrate and share the Buddhist religion.
We are also home to one of the most beautiful Catholic cathedrals in Australia. The actions at last night's council meeting were not a demonstration of freedom of speech. The council meeting was shut down. Anybody who saw what happened in the media would have felt themselves intimidated. This was not peaceful protest. This was not exercising democratic rights or freedom of speech. What we saw last night—like we saw at previous rallies in Bendigo—were threats of violence and intimidation, and they should be condemned.

Last night I made a statement like that on my Facebook page, and it has received a lot of comments locally. One person said, 'I am concerned about the mosque being built and about religion. We don't want those kinds in our town.' That is unacceptable. What I usually do when somebody makes that kind of comment, is I send them a link to the citizenship document, to remind people about our rights and obligations as Australian citizens, to remind them that we have freedom of religion and freedom of speech and that we are an inclusive society and community.

I have to say that last night I did not send that link, because just recently the document changed. I did not send the link because I believe the new document will actually incite further fear in my community. It no longer talks about being an inclusive community. It may, on the first few pages, talk about some of our rights but, once you get to page 5, it starts talking about home-grown terrorism and terrorism in our society. This is no longer a document that I am proud of. (Time expired)

**Ryan Electorate: Innovation**

**Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (10:15):** One of the great privileges of being the member for Ryan is being able to celebrate the achievements of many of our residents. Ryan is full of educated, smart and innovative people. I am frequently amazed at the quality of innovation that comes out of the University of Queensland and other research institutes. Indeed, I have had the pleasure of sharing some of these with parliament on several occasions this year. Now, the latest in a long line of innovators in Ryan is Ethos, a start-up company based in Toowong. Ethos have identified an increasing trend in modern workforces for employees to seek out and stay in jobs that foster positive workplace cultures. They have developed an application called Work-Life-Connect, which supports organisations to develop cultures that promote positive health, wellbeing and social values.

I am pleased to inform the House that Ethos have been successful in securing a grant of more than $209,000 from the Commonwealth government to accelerate the commercialisation of their Work-Life-Connect application. This has been made possible by the government's Entrepreneurs' Program, an initiative by the Minister for Industry and Science, Minister Ian Macfarlane. Since April this year, more than $30 million has been committed through the program to 55 companies from across Australia. I commend the minister for this program. It is very well targeted, because it seeks to directly address the biggest challenge faced by innovators with good ideas: the challenge of commercialisation.

I have spoken on many occasions in this House about the need for governments of all political persuasions to do more to support the commercialisation of good ideas in Australia. We are an educated nation. We are full of thinkers and dreamers and new ideas. But, far too often, our thinkers and dreamers face insurmountable challenges in getting their good ideas to the market. There is a role for government in helping businesses get over this hurdle. Without assistance, businesses—and particularly start-ups such as Ethos—are not playing on a level
playing field when it comes to debt financing for commercialisation. Commercial loans are only available at high rates of interest, if at all. Equity financing is perhaps even more difficult to obtain. The venture capital market in Australia is in its infancy and, to the extent that equity financing is available, investors demand a large share of the returns.

When targeted effectively, the Entrepreneurs' Program can provide a capital boost to start-ups and small businesses at the commercialisation stage of product development—at the very time they need it most. For Ethos this grant is exciting news indeed. Through my office, I have been in contact with representatives of the company to congratulate them on their success and to wish them well. With a great idea, a committed team behind it and the support of government through the Entrepreneurs' Program, the team at Ethos have every chance of becoming the latest business success in Ryan. (Time expired)

Lalor Electorate: Infrastructure

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (10:19): The day after former Speaker Bishop was on every front page photographed exiting a helicopter, having taken a short ride from Melbourne to Geelong, now Prime Minister Turnbull tweeted his excitement in catching the new Regional Rail link service to Geelong. This was one of many photos of him using public transport across the country over the past year. I am heartened that Prime Minister Turnbull is such a fan of rail travel, because hopefully this means he will reconsider the poor treatment of Victoria in the last budget and inject some much-needed infrastructure funds into my home state.

In 2014, then Prime Minister Abbott slashed billions of dollars of investment in urban rail projects across the nation. The 2014 budget reallocated those funds to untested road projects, including the East West Link in Melbourne, which would have returned a paltry 45c in public benefit for every dollar invested. In the budget back in May, Mr Abbott stuck with those cuts and made further cuts, meaning the traffic congestion that is crippling productivity growth in Australian cities will only get worse. The 2015 budget callously punished the people of Victoria for voting for Labor in last year's state election. It slashed the state's infrastructure grants by $3 billion. If Mr Turnbull takes the same approach and fails to act, it will further damage productivity and jobs growth in Victoria.

Victoria has many infrastructure projects underway. The Metro Rail Project is much needed to create additional capacity in the rail system to allow for future growth. Victoria is calling for its fair share of infrastructure funding, and I hope our new Prime Minister, Mr Turnbull, will make sensible decisions about ensuring that we receive our fair share. I call on our current Prime Minister to demonstrate once and for all that his passion for trains and for public transport was more than a point of difference to score political points against our road-obsessed former PM. I call on this Prime Minister to put that money back into Victoria, to stop dudding Victoria and to make sure that all Victorians get their fair share of the infrastructure budget. The Metro would be a great project funded by this government. Victorians are tired of being dudged by this government, and we demand our fair share.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mrs WICKS (Robertson) (10:21): I rise to acknowledge the milestone announced by the coalition government this week in rolling out the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and I am pleased to confirm that the Central Coast is among the first locations where the NDIS will
be delivered as part of the transition to the full scheme. This landmark scheme will be phased in from 1 July next year through to 30 June 2017. The rollout will provide coverage to about one-third of the population in New South Wales, and by the end of the transition the full NDIS is expected to have around 115,000 participants. The agreement also provides for another 26,000 people who are not currently receiving services to enter the scheme from July 2018. Overall, this gives certainty to more than 140,000 people with disability in our state and ultimately around 460,000 Australians and their families when the scheme is rolled out in full.

I commend Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and New South Wales Premier Mike Baird for signing this agreement yesterday here in Parliament House and thank Assistant Minister for Social Services Mitch Fifield for his work in rolling out this huge project. In fact, he will be aware firsthand of how this rollout will benefit people in my electorate of Robertson and the value of supporting disability services on the Central Coast, because just recently Assistant Minister Fifield joined me in Point Clare for the opening of a new coffee shop run by Fairhaven Services. As we enjoyed some of the wonderful coffee and cake that they provide at Fare Cravin’, the assistant minister acknowledged how incredibly fortunate we are on the Central Coast to have organisations such as Fairhaven that are so focused on ensuring that people who have disability have the opportunity to work. He described it as a day for celebration for a wonderful community business, and it is a wonderful community business.

We were also able to announce on the day funding to deliver employment certainty for around 200 people with disability on the Central Coast. As part of our investment of $650 million for Australian Disability Enterprises over the next three years, we confirmed $6.3 million of funding to three organisations in my electorate, including Fairhaven, Terama Industries at Gosford, and Lasercraft Australia at West Gosford. The chief executive of Fairhaven, Jim Buultjens, was saying to me that it would deliver more varied work options for more than 140 employees, such as at the cafe at Point Clare and, of course, also at their factory in West Gosford.

The new contracts will reduce red tape and, vitally, especially after this week's announcement, assist in the transition from current arrangements to the new claiming process on the NDIS. I understand that people currently receiving support through the New South Wales government specialist disability service will be moving to the NDIS first. Importantly, people currently receiving state or Commonwealth supports will continue to do so until they transition to the new NDIS. We are delivering the NDIS on time, within budget and in—

(Time expired)

Canberra Electorate: Broadband

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (10:24): I rise today to speak about an issue that is affecting tens of thousands ofCanberrans—that is, the lack of decent internet connection. In June I hosted an NBN community forum with the Shadow Minister for Communications, Jason Clare. More than 100Canberrans turned out to voice their frustration about their internet, or lack thereof, and also vent their frustration about the lack of NBN progress in Canberra's south.

There are a couple of small pockets in my electorate that have the NBN, mainly greenfield suburbs, and the rest of the electorate has been completely left off the map—it is just one big blank page. On that night in June I launched a campaign to have Canberra's NBN rollout prioritised. I have started a petition which now has hundreds of signatures.
Since the forum, hundreds of people have contacted me with their concerns. Up until this point, these Canberrans were just suffering in silence. Suffering may sound exaggerated, but I would like to read some of the comments I have received from people to emphasise the seriousness of this situation. Rod said:

I work from home in the IT industry and rely enormously on Internet connectivity. I am challenged daily in comparison to my colleagues interstate and around the world due to the poor state of the Internet in Tuggeranong. It has an impact on all aspects of my life as a result, taking me away from family and friends, impacting my health, my finances and my general state of well being as the expectation is that connectivity is better than what is available. This current government appears to massively underestimate the impact our poor infrastructure is having on the economy and the watered down NBN will leave us lagging behind our competitors for generations to come.

Prime Minister Turnbull, if you are interested in promoting small business and new start-ups, provide the infrastructure to facilitate success!

James said:

Australia needs an infrastructure upgrade and it needs to be fair if my taxes are being used. NBN as originally planned please.

Praveen said:

Now my kids are in college and high school and they are in a disadvantageous position when compared to their colleagues.

Sy said:

Theodore and Monash have the lowest rated internet in the Country yet we aren't even on NBN's radar? Why not?

Under Labor, every home in the ACT would have had access to the world-class fibre-to-the-premises version of the NBN. Canberra must be placed on the rollout map, and it must be placed on the rollout map now. There is a digital divide in the ACT, which is placing my constituents at a serious disadvantage. This inequity is impeding their ability to maximise opportunities and realise their potential in small business, education and civil society. We want our NBN and we want it now—in fact, we wanted it yesterday.

Gippsland Electorate: Youth Allowance

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence) (10:27): I rise to speak in relation to an issue which I know is dear to your heart, Deputy Speaker Broadbent, and that is the system of student income support, commonly referred to as Youth Allowance, and the impacts that it has on regional students and their families.

This is one of the most significant and pressing issues for many families in Gippsland, particularly at this time of year as VCE students in our community approach their end-of-year exams and are very conscious of achieving the best possible result. There is still enormous uncertainty for those students, even if they achieve the results they desire, about whether their families can actually afford to send them away from home to attend the university of their choice.

Deputy Speaker, you, like many other regional members—I note the member for Capricornia, the member for Mallee, the member for Wannon, the member for Forrest, the member for Grey, Senator Bridget McKenzie, and many more; in fact, all of my regional colleagues in the coalition—are interested in this issue. We understand that the current
system, a system we inherited from the previous government, is still too confusing and unnecessarily bureaucratic in its structure.

This is an issue of significant social and economic consequence. From a social perspective, we have young people in regional communities not able to achieve their full potential because they simply cannot afford the costs of relocating to attend university. These are the same students who we expect will learn new skills and then return to those regions and fill the skills gap that we face in many of our communities. Our regional students are underrepresented at universities, and it is a challenge for this government, just as it has been a challenge for previous governments.

From an economic perspective, the other challenge is: we see a direct wealth transfer from the pockets of regional mums and dads into those of city based landlords. I do not begrudge the city based landlords—they have got investment properties and they are quite entitled to make a profit from them—but we are seeing a direct wealth transfer from the pockets of mums and dads in country communities to those of city based landlords who then achieve a tax advantage from having that property.

I believe we can do better. I am very heartened by the fact that the work by the responsible coalition ministers is underway. They have been working with regional MPs to develop a fairer system in the future. I am confident we will see changes to this system as a result of this week's renegotiated coalition agreement. I congratulate the new Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Warren Truss, on their negotiations this week.

I am not in a position today to make announcements, in particular regarding specific measures around youth allowance, but I note the media coverage, which pointed out that one of the key points of the coalition agreement renegotiated this week was to implement a plan to overcome financial barriers in accessing higher education for rural, regional and remote students. This is not just an issue for National Party members; it is also an issue for Liberal Party members and, in fact, all regional members of parliament, who understand there is a significant barrier right now to our kids, our regional students, achieving their full potential. I am confident that this coalition government will work in a constructive way to achieve the best possible outcome for regional students to allow them to have the same opportunities as their city cousins.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Broadbent): Order! The time for constituency statements has concluded.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence) (10:31): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

Broadband

Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (10:31): I have lost count of the number of times I have stood in this place and raised the issue of the National Broadband Network. In Lalor, in our high-growth community, there have been no new areas added to the NBN rollout since the 2013 election. This is creating a digital divide in the suburbs—the streets with fixed internet access and the streets without; the businesses with fixed internet access and the businesses without. Note that I am not saying 'NBN access'; I am saying 'internet access' because, as new
suburbs are built, there is no copper rolled out. People are told, 'The NBN is coming', so there is a heavy reliance on costly wireless provision. We have businesses not being able to compete. We have home based businesses—designers, drafts people and advertisers—that save files and head to the local library to send. We have students unable to access the internet for study purposes. In a community where so many are migrants to this great nation, we have families that want to stay in touch with overseas members of their family but cannot do this from their homes. Some are staying after hours at work to make contact. 'The NBN is coming,' they are told—but when? Remember, there have been no new areas added to the rollout maps since 2013.

The NBN will be a powerful tool—businesses know that; families know that; our hospital and education providers know that. Google recently outlined the impact of reliable internet provision for small business. In an electorate with over 9,000 small businesses, I know that the people of Lalor know that. Small business in Lalor accounts for one-third of our economic output. Businesses are being held back by the poor provision of the internet. My recent broadband survey was an opportunity for locals to share their experiences and frustrations. To quote a few:

I live in … Tarneit. We've been here for 16 months. We've not been able to get any internet connected to our home AT ALL! No ADSL, no cable … nothing, because we're told there are no ports available, and Telstra will not be releasing anymore while NBN is being rolled out.

Another:
Our internet connection is very slow impacting on our daily lives and on our children currently doing VCE it is really unacceptable considering our world and society is now heavily based on technology.

And another:
I live 4 kilometres from the Werribee exchange and run a home-based business. The internet speeds are pathetic, making it difficult for me to maintain online backups of my work and send work to clients over the internet

I have raised this issue on several occasions and I know colleagues have too.

In my diary yesterday was an event with 'Must attend' noted next to it. It was the NBN showcase. I was keen to attend, to understand the issues and, hopefully, to hear about progress and solutions. In this place, most of us are solutions-based. We are here to represent our communities and to ensure that they are getting what they need from this government. I wanted to know more, so I could better inform the Lalor residents, our health and education providers and the local businesses, about the rollout, about time lines, and about the technology mix.

I expected—perhaps naively—that this would be a bipartisan event. Most events of this nature held in Parliament House are. The new PM and current Minister for Communications was to be there. I was so incredibly disappointed, then, that Prime Minister Turnbull decided to turn this into an opportunity to resort to very partisan comments. An opportunity to celebrate the power of the NBN was missed. I am not sure how they do things in Point Piper, but in Werribee the kids are told to behave when the guests come into the house. We also know in Werribee that when it is clear that you are not welcome, you leave. And last night, many did. Many left the event because, instead of being a celebration of technology and finding solutions, it turned into a petty point-scoring event.
I expect those opposite know the NBN currently being delivered is a poor and expensive cousin to the original model. There is a level of embarrassment that, after two years, all that has happened is a digital divide and a community still on hold.

**Bass Electorate: Infrastructure**

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass—Government Whip) (10:36): I remind the member for Lalor and the member for Canberra that there was a back-of-the-envelope calculation with the former Prime Minister, Mr Rudd, and Mr Conroy, on the NBN, which was totally fanciful. What we have done in the last two years is bring the project back into some sort of good order. NBN connections in my community of Tasmania have topped 100,000 premises. That compares to only 32,000 premises at the time of the September 2013 election. By the end of next year, Tasmania will be one of the few places in Australia that is fully networked when it comes to the NBN. We have made great strides in a project that the Labor Party did not initiate in any sort of reasonable way, so if we are going to talk about partisan politics and petty point-scoring I would remind members opposite of that.

I acknowledge my wife, Christine, and daughter Julia, in the gallery today. I thank them for their love and support. I also welcome them so that I can provide an update on recent developments in my electorate of Bass, where the coalition government continues to make inroads into addressing key priorities.

I note in particular the announcement by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott in Tasmania just a couple of weeks ago, about a $72 million boost for the Tasmanian economy. Some may recall that the coalition promised $16 million during the 2013 election towards the upgrade of Cadbury's tourism activities. But in March this year Cadbury's parent company cancelled the project. That money has now been redirected to a $24 million co-investment fund, with $16 million from the federal government and $8 million from the state government, with successful applicants required to put in $2 themselves for every dollar put into the fund. What that does is leverage, potentially, $72 million of new investment in job-creating projects for Tasmania. Applications will be encouraged from all industry sectors, but there will be an emphasis on tourism, agriculture, aquaculture and advanced manufacturing, which, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know is a priority for you in Corangamite as well.

These are areas of particular strength in Tasmania, and it reinforces the message that Tasmania is open for business. Detailed funding guidelines will be developed over coming months, with the aim being to open applications before the end of the year. This announcement is undoubtedly a huge boost for Tasmania. It is a great example of state and federal governments working together to promote economic growth and create more local jobs.

I am also pleased to inform the House that on 7 September I officially opened the new-look Invermay Park sporting facility in Launceston. The federal government's partnership with the city of Launceston has delivered this important upgrade for one of Launceston's traditional sporting precincts. It is a multi-user facility, and the place where the boy from Mowbray, former Australian test cricket captain, Ricky Ponting, started his career. Generations of Launceston sportsmen and sportswomen have started their career at this beautiful ground, and with new lighting and new drainage it is going to serve future generations of sportspeople in Tasmania. Like this wonderful upgrade to Invermay Park, the benefits of this investment will flow to the people of northern Tasmania for many years to come.
Very close to Invermay Park is the site of our new $9 billion North Bank redevelopment. At the moment it is a dirty and disgusting industrial site. We are going to turn that into a beautiful, family friendly facility, which will enhance our riverfront and make our city turn back to the river. When we couple that with the $3 million that we have put in for a cleaner Tamar River, the private sector investment from Errol Stewart and his Silos development and Joe Chromy and his development at the Penny Royal, it will be a riverfront that our city can be truly proud of.

It is even more exciting to see the environmental and economic outcomes that will result from this investment. The North Bank project itself will have an economic impact of $12.35 million in private sector investments. I mentioned Errol Stewart's Silos Hotel, at $15 million, and the rowing precinct expansion, estimated at $2.2 million. That means a total of $35.57 million in local expenditure. The federal government has made this major investment in Tasmania as part of our economic growth plan. It is a plan that is working and it is a plan that will enhance the future prosperity of my community in northern Tasmania.

**Defence Housing: Seaward Village**

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (10:41): I rise today to speak about a number of concerns that have been raised with me about the future of Seaward Village, at Swanbourne in Western Australia. Seaward Village is owned by Defence Housing Australia and consists of 153 homes. In June this year I visited Seaward Village, and the shadow minister for defence, Stephen Conroy, visited there in May. We were shown around the village and spoke with SAS families who lived there.

Earlier this year DHA announced plans to replace all of the homes in the estate, on the grounds that it is necessary to meet new standards. DHA also plans to sell off part of the land at the village for private non-Defence housing. Due to the sensitive nature of their work, SAS members and their families feel they are restricted from speaking out publicly against the proposed development. Instead, their concerns have been voiced by SAS Association Vice Chairman and former SAS Major, Anthony Lay, and by the Chairman of the SAS Association and former commanding officer of the regiment, Brigadier (Retd) Terry Nolan. One of their main concerns is the development of private non-military housing close to their homes and the threat that this could pose to their security. As you know, the identities of SAS members and families are often protected, and any influx of non-Defence residents into the area could pose a serious security risk.

Aside from personal safety, residents are also concerned about the risks, safety and security of Campbell Barracks. Defence has undertaken a full security review of the proposal, which was supposed to have been completed by the end of June. However, the reviews findings have not yet been made available to residents or to the opposition.

Aside from security concerns SAS families are also concerned about a range of other elements of the redevelopment. Many of the residents would prefer that their homes were refurbished instead of being knocked down and rebuilt, particularly as they understand that to meet new standards and regulations the homes only need to have an additional ensuite and a new carport. All they need is an additional ensuite and a new carport in order to meet the new standards and regulations. Residents would prefer to stay in their homes and keep the current size of their plots, which is set to be reduced under the proposal. The residents are also unsure about the time frame for the proposal. How far along is the plan? Is it in the concept phase, is
it in the planning phase or is it a done deal? DHA has said in a notice to residents that it is moving to submit the plans to the WA Planning Commission for approval next month. However, residents feel that there has not been adequate consultation. In June last year DHA said it would conduct a proper, full survey to gauge the residents' response to the proposal, yet apparently it has not done this.

Residents are also unhappy about the disruption that will be caused to families during the redevelopment. According to information provided by DHA, some residents who choose to stay within the village during construction will need to move—at least twice—during the redevelopment program.

Finally, there is some confusion about how this redevelopment proposal even came about. It says the community was under the impression there was a covenant, from 1991, that prevented the sale of land into the private sector. When this question was raised during Senate estimates, DHA responded with no further explanation. They said:

DHA and Defence have agreed to remove the covenant to enable the redevelopment. Upon completion, a new covenant will be placed on the new Defence houses.

As you can see, there are a number of valid concerns associated with this redevelopment. These concerns have been backed up by local community group Friends of Allen Park Bushland Group.

Significantly more work needs to be done in responding to these concerns before the redevelopment goes ahead, particularly for those residents living in the barracks, on the village. They have significant concerns about having to move. They want to know what the future is, what the plans are for the redevelopment. They want to know why their houses need to be refurbished or rebuilt given the fact that the new standards and regulations really only require an ensuite and a carport.

I call on the government and Defence Housing Australia to improve communication and consultation on the redevelopment of Seaward Village and to address the very legitimate concerns of the residents of Seaward Village, many of whom have been living for a protracted length of time.

Trade with China

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (10:46): I rise today in this adjournment debate to add to the discussion regarding the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement or ChAFTA as we like to call it. I have particularly enjoyed question time over the last few weeks, when many of the exaggerations and, in some cases, outright lies surrounding this agreement have been tested in parliament. Questions have been asked, but the answers are very straightforward. A lot of people who have heard what the unions and their puppets on the frontbench of the Labor Party have been saying have had many of their fears put to ease. I will talk today about some of the benefits ChAFTA will bring, particularly to the Northern Territory.

As you know, seafood is a big industry in the Top End so I was keen to know about the seafood industry and what they thought about ChAFTA and what the bearing of the agreement would have on their industry. It may surprise some of my fellow members of the House, particularly those opposite that like most major industries the seafood sector is a big supporter of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement.
I refer to a press release issued by the National Seafood Industry Alliance. It is titled 'ChAFTA represents jobs and growth'. The title alone probably sums up the sentiment of the document but let me share some of the detail with you.

ChAFTA enabled businesses to make longer term decisions about their operations which in turn would facilitate greater re-investment of the profits into upgrading infrastructure, equipment and plant, training staff, research programs and developing additional products and markets.

The media release goes on to say:

We … have a huge potential to develop a substantial and profitable aquaculture sector that is managed to the world's highest standards of environmental rigour.

That brings me very nicely to the topic of aquaculture, which is a booming industry in North Australia.

Mr Williams: Hear, hear! All over Australia.

Mrs GRIGGS: All over Australia, but particularly in North Australia.

Mr Williams: And South Australia!

Mrs GRIGGS: Of course! Yes, I acknowledge, also in South Australia. Just a few months ago I represented the Deputy Prime Minister at a ceremony to mark the fast tracking of a $1.45 billion aquaculture investment in the Northern Territory. Aquaculture requires huge investments and a large capital outlay and involves ongoing costs. To make those sorts of investments, businesses need confidence, and that is exactly what ChAFTA will bring—the assurance of access on reasonable terms to the world's largest single market.

Just outside my electorate of Solomon is the Humpty Doo Barramundi farm. A decade ago the farm was producing a very respectable tonne of barramundi each week. By investing heavily in the operations and adopting world's best practice techniques, this enterprise is now producing 1,500 tonnes a year. By my calculations, that is a 29-fold increase over the course of a decade. This is one example of what Territorians can achieve.

For the Northern Territory, all the pieces are falling into place. We have a federal government absolutely committed to realising the economic potential of north Australia, setting aside billions for nation-building infrastructure across the tropics. We already have free trade deals with many significant markets in Asia. Federally, and in the Territory, we have sensible economic policies in place, boosting business confidence. Private sector investors are already moving in. All these factors are combining to create a snowball of investment, jobs and growth. The final and one of the biggest pieces yet to be locked down is the China free trade agreement. Once that agreement is in place, the sky is the limit for north Australia and, indeed, for the rest of the country—because, as we have heard before, if north Australia is doing well, the rest of the country is prospering.

Trade with China

Plebiscites

Mr DANBY (Melbourne Ports) (10:51): Yesterday in the foreign affairs committee we heard similar pro-China sentiments to the ones we just heard. I look more towards Australia's traditional allies. I do see that there are differences between us and China over issues of security. There is no point skating over the fact that great and powerful allies like the United States are democracies. China is still a communist country. We have good trading relations
with China—and we should have—but we should not enthuse about China to the extent that we ignore our past friendships and alliances. David Rothkopf, the very celebrated editor of *Foreign Policy*, just yesterday said in an important article:

Australia is among America’s most trusted and closest international partners and has been for most of the past century. But throughout that period, Canberra has played a secondary role. Given Australia’s economic growth, resource strength, vital positioning in the Pacific, and growing identity as an Asian nation, it seems poised to supplant the United Kingdom in America’s hierarchy of friendships in the century to come.

I hope that the new Prime Minister bears that strongly in mind in restating our foreign policy.

Yesterday in parliament, when talking about the progress of Australia, the Prime Minister undermined that progress by taking a cheap shot at the superficial appeal and cheap populism of supporting having plebiscites. One of the great dangers that former Prime Minister Gillard pointed out with these plebiscites and referendums is that they undermine the belief that parliamentary decision making is adequate. It suggests that it is a shoddy way of creating change. I should point out that, in relation to the plebiscite that the Prime Minister was talking about, no constitutional change is needed. As former Prime Minister Ms Gillard said:

Enabling voters to express their views via the ballot box does not require a plebiscite or referendum. If all political parties had a conscience vote or clear policy, then in line with our normal democratic workings, people could question political candidates—

about their attitudes to issues—

at the next election and decide to vote for a candidate who reflects their views.

As I said, support for plebiscites and referendums in my view is cheap populism and superficial only. References to them as an alternative to politician's choice are a disgrace to this parliament. We are all politicians here. We are all parliamentarians, including the Prime Minister. To make those derisory references on one particular issue is, as I said, just populism.

Something truly absurd that former Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, said in her fourth Justice Kirby talk was about ‘politicians themselves inviting the public to conclude that politicians are not up to making the decisions, particularly so, when it is actually in our nation's interest to be bolstering the belief in the capacity of our parliamentary system.' What is next? Where we will we go? Will we vote on fluoridation? Will we vote on what percentage of the GST is to be imposed?

I would remind you of that great film by Peter Cook and John Cleese *The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer*, where a cheap advertising agent establishes direct democracy. The public is initially enthused but wearies of being summoned in the middle of the night, by a siren on top of their television, to vote on urgent issues. The public ultimately end up transferring untrammelled power to the dictator, which has been the purpose from the beginning.

Edmund Burke, the great conservative philosopher, has a message for the new Prime Minister—with both this plebiscite and any other cheap-jack attempts to abrogate the rights and duties of this parliament. Burke said:

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays …

And he is talking about you, the constituent or the voter—

instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.
'This is a great country and a growing country,' Mr Rothkopf said, and 'probably the future major ally of the United States in Asia.' We ought to be going through with confidence, and one of the important things is that we stick to parliamentary democracy and not devolve into cheap-jack tricks like having plebiscites and referendums on every difficult issue.

**Childhood Cancer**

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (10:56): Cancer, as we all know, is a killer. I for one know this too well with family members and friends suffering from this insidious disease. The impact we all know is incredible. That is why, this Sunday, I will be running The Sunday Mail city to bay fun run, which runs through the Adelaide CBD through my electorate, to Glenelg, and I will be raising money for childhood cancer as a member of the Bartons to Bay for CCA team.

Astonishingly, Australia has one of the highest incidences of childhood cancer worldwide. One in 500 Australian children will develop a cancer before 15 years of age—that is, 600 Australian children diagnosed every year. Childhood cancer is the greatest single cause of death from disease in Australian children with three children losing their lives to cancer every week.

This year Bartons accountants and financial advisers are dedicated to raising awareness for childhood cancer and they are partnering with the Childhood Cancer Association in South Australia. Last year they raised over $50,000 for childhood cancer. I am proud not only to try and beat my time in the city to the bay but also to raise money.

Bartons was originally established in 1965 in Jetty Road, Glenelg, and I was pleased to attend their 50th anniversary celebrations recently, so congratulations to Stuart Brown and the team at Bartons. It is great that they have been in my electorate for all of that time as well.

The Childhood Cancer Association is South Australia's key childhood cancer support organisation and does an outstanding job providing ongoing tailored support to meet the individual needs of families. I recently attended a moving presentation by their president, Chris Hartley, on the personal impact that childhood cancer has had on his family.

Fifty years ago only two per cent of children with cancer survived. Medical research alone has improved overall survival rates to 80 per cent, but more can be done. This is another reason why I am so proud of the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, or SAHMRI, and the government's Medical Research Future Fund which will allow research professionals to advance medical research projects, development treatments and cures, and, ultimately, deliver improved health and medical outcomes for all Australians.

In addition, I have been working to have a dedicated cancer centre built in South Australia with the Cancer Council of South Australia for over a year now. With one in two people being diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85, we need to ensure that we have the best treatment facilities so that South Australians can beat this insidious disease. That is why I organised a letter from the South Australian Liberal federal members of parliament to the former Prime Minister on this important issue highlighting why we believe this is a worthy project.

Anyone who has a loved one go through the trauma of cancer treatment knows what a hard process it is on a patient and their family. The cancer centre will hopefully make this treatment just that little bit easier, ensuring that more people finish their treatment and deliver better outcomes. Under this proposal, the Cancer Council SA will move all of their facilities
into a one-stop-shop for cancer treatment and will continue to fight for this cancer centre in South Australia. The activities undertaken at the cancer centre will include out-of-hospital services, including pre- and posttreatment and chemotherapy management, and possibly some research to complement the work undertaken at SAHMRI and other South Australian health institutions.

As a $60 million development, to which Cancer Council SA will be the major contributor, the project has implications for job creation and economic development in South Australia as well. With the federal budget providing $208 million more over four years for South Australian hospitals, I am always looking for ways in which we can help provide better health outcomes for South Australians. I have written to Prime Minister Turnbull to bring this project to his attention and will continue my efforts to work with the Cancer Council in South Australia for a dedicated cancer centre. I have also started a petition, which has been signed and supported by over 4,000 people, and I urge South Australians to add their names to mine to support South Australians who have cancer.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Karen McNamara on her very successful Big Aussie BBQ at Parliament House yesterday. It highlighted the impact of prostate cancer, which claims the lives of over 3,000 Australian men each year, and I was happy to support this great event.

**Education Funding**

Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (11:01): As shadow minister for Indigenous affairs I have travelled to many remote communities around the country. As I have gone around to those communities and looked at some of the schools in some of those communities and regional communities I know that it is a fact that Indigenous children, as well as kids from a non-Indigenous background, are often two years behind children living in urban areas, like Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. But also in regional areas they can be up to one year behind—say, in a regional country town in Queensland. This is why it is so tragic that in its first budget the Abbott government, now Turnbull government, ripped $30 billion away from schools, including $12.5 billion from country classrooms.

When Labor was in government we brought in the Gonski reforms. About 40 per cent of the additional investment was set to flow to regional and remote classrooms on the basis of student need. The additional funding was for small schools, remote schools, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, Indigenous students, students with disability and students with low levels of English. The tragedy of this government is that they cut $80 billion from schools and hospitals over the next 10 years. It kicks in from 2018 onwards. In my region, in the Ipswich region, we are seeing a cut of $601.48 million from the region's schools That includes, of course, the electorates of Oxley and Wright. In the electorate of Blair specifically it is $228 million; in Oxley, $192.8 million; and in Wright, $180.75 million. These are the regional areas west and south-west of Brisbane. There are 71,712 students enrolled in 176 schools in this region, and not all of them are living in the best of circumstances.

I recall before the last election the corflutes that were placed around school gates, at polling booths, by the coalition that said that when voters went into those polling booths in those state schools it did not matter who they voted for because the coalition and Labor were absolutely on a unity ticket with respect to school funding. The now minister, then spokesperson, the
member for Sturt, said that you could vote Liberal or Labor and you would get exactly the same amount of funding for your school. Indeed, the then opposition leader and former Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, the member for Warringah, said:

So, we will honour the agreements that Labor has entered into. We will make sure that no school is worse off. We think that money is important.

I have about 80 schools in my electorate, ranging from very large schools, like Bremer State High School, where there are nearly 1,900 students, to little schools like Linville, up in the top of the Brisbane Valley, and the school at Mount Kilcoy as well as the one up near the state forest near Jimna. These schools will all benefit from the Gonski needs-based funding.

I call on the new Prime Minister to reverse the government's school cuts. They have put students at risk in terms of their educational outcomes and employment opportunities. Every school principal I have gone to in those schools in my electorate has told me that the No. 1 thing that could be done federally would be to bring in the Gonski needs based funding. I call on members of the LNP and the National Party to finally grow a backbone and do the right thing with respect to school funding. Improve our country, regional and remote schools. Now is more than ever the time to do it. They have an opportunity to do this with a new Prime Minister, but I do not have much hope because the National Party always seems to speak loud back in the constituency and in fact do little in Canberra with respect to standing up for people in regional areas.

The state schools in Queensland by 2023-24 will be worse off by $3.4 billion. That is the fact, and I call on the government to do the right thing. I commend the Queensland Minister for Education, Kate Jones, who has pointed out to the public in Queensland that the Turnbull government proposes to rip $6 billion from Queensland schools. New Prime Minister, do the right thing—reverse the cuts.

Higgins Electorate: Very Special Kids Hospice

Ms O'DWYER (Higgins—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (11:06): On 12 June I was absolutely delighted to be part of the coalition government's announcement about providing $4 million to Very Special Kids, to enable them to pursue the purchase of their purpose-built palliative care facility in Malvern, within my electorate of Higgins. Very Special Kids is Australia's oldest and largest children's hospice. They provide a range of services for children with life-threatening conditions. Their services range from family counselling to, in the saddest of circumstances, end-of-life care. Every year, they help 900 Victorian families, not just in their eight-bed hospice in Malvern but also through their family support services provided in Malvern and their seven regional offices in Ballarat, Brunswick, Hastings, Shepparton, Torquay, Traralgon and Warrnambool.

Since first becoming the member for Higgins, VSK has inspired me as it is one of the most extraordinarily self-reliant and resourceful services, filled with great compassion. Each and every year, Very Special Kids raises 70 per cent of the funds required to provide their services through the community. Last year, this was in the order of $5 million. The $4 million from this coalition government will go a long way to securing Very Special Kids in their Malvern site, providing the continued high visibility needed for this extraordinary charity. It will also enable Very Special Kids to remain connected with their donors and 400 committed
volunteers. In addition, the Malvern site has great transport connections to greater Melbourne and country Victoria.

This wonderful organisation has a longstanding lease with the state government which is expiring this year. The $4 million that this coalition government has provided will support VSK in their bid to purchase the site outright from the state government. Relocation is not an option for VSK. It would risk the philanthropic, volunteer and community support that it has fostered over more than 21 years, which is in essence the secret to its success. I implore the state government to come to the table with a discounted sale. An outright purchase will save VSK $300,000 in annual rent and secure its future for the benefit of Victorian families.

I am lucky and proud to represent Higgins, home to a number of vibrant and modern community centres that traditionally have been shopping strips but in recent times have evolved to increasingly be focal points of restaurants and night-life. That is why at the last election I promised the people of Higgins that I would secure $100,000 in funding for two of these centres, both along Koornang Road in Carnegie, as well as along Chapel Street in South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor.

This month I attended a Carnegie Traders Association breakfast where I was able to inform the traders of the good news that the Minister for Justice, the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, had agreed to provide $100,000 directly to their association. The traders association will be able to use the grant under round 1 of the Safer Streets Program. This will help to enhance the street lighting and install CCTV cameras along Koornang Road. They are important tools in helping to deter criminal activity and antisocial behaviour and improve the safety for those shopping, dining, working or living in Carnegie.

Prior to the last election, the Glen Eira City Council refused the offer of $100,000 to upgrade public safety. It is therefore very satisfying to now be able to say to the people of Carnegie that the safety upgrade will now go ahead because the money is going directly to the traders. I thank Graeme Callen, chairman of the Carnegie Traders Association, and his members for their hard work in pursuing this matter. Following the signing of the funding agreement with the Attorney General's Department, the association hopes the new system will be installed over the next few months.

I am also pleased that I have been able to deliver on my election commitment to the residents of Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor. Mr Keenan confirmed a grant of $100,000 to the City of Stonnington to enhance their CCTV cameras along Chapel Street. This will see CCTV installed around Prahran town hall, at the South Yarra station, on the corner of Punt Road and Toorak Road, the corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street and the corner of Commercial Road and Grattan Street. The installation of these CCTVs and improved street lighting will go a long way to making the suburbs of Higgins safer and more enjoyable for all to experience.

It is wonderful to be able to represent the diverse and vibrant community of Higgins, where, in this place, the government is able to focus on their needs. I also look forward to being able to come into this place to make further announcements regarding, in particular, the infrastructure needs of my electorate and the challenges that face my electorate in this regard. It is important not only for our society in Higgins to be able to function even better but it is also important for our economic prosperity.
Mr WILKIE (Denison) (11:11): I made the point in question time yesterday, and I am going to make it again today, that both the Liberal Party and the Labor Party have regrettably both given up on job creation in the Glenorchy City Council area, which is about half of the Denison electorate. I made the point yesterday that the decision by the federal government, supported by the Labor Party, not to go ahead with the injection of $16 million of economic stimulus—a need clearly identified by the then Liberal-National coalition opposition before the last federal election. The decision to not go ahead with that injection is giving up on jobs growth in that city, and that is very regrettable.

But that is but one piece of evidence. I will tender three more pieces of evidence here today in this place to reinforce the point that both Labor and Liberal have given up on job growth in Glenorchy City. Another example I would like to give is the cuts to CSIRO. The Denison electorate is a very important base for the CSIRO, both in Tasmania and nationally. But the previous Labor government reduced the funding such that 139 jobs were cut from the CSIRO in Tasmania, and the current conservative federal government has made further cuts to CSIRO funding, which has cut another 59 jobs from the facilities in Tasmania.

Another piece of evidence are cuts to the tertiary sector. Denison is a university electorate. It is the home to the main campus of the University of Tasmania, which is a very important academic institution. It is also a very important social and economic driver in the state and is very important to the Denison electorate. But the previous Labor governments cut some $4 billion from university funding over a period of years and, if this federal government gets its way, another $5 billion will be cut from universities, making a total of $9 billion of cuts from the tertiary sector. We are already chronically underfunded in that sector relative to so many other countries in the world and by OECD standards, and the prospect that $9 billion would be cut is just unforgivable. It is further evidence that, despite all the rhetoric and all the talk, both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party have, in reality, given up on jobs growth in the Denison electorate.

Another piece of evidence I would like to tender goes to the fact that Denison has a marvellous manufacturing industry, entirely suitable to contribute to defence work. In fact, Incat alone makes the world's best high-technology, high-speed wave-piercing catamarans—vessels that have already been used from time to time by the Royal Australian Navy and the US Navy. Despite all of the talk of making Prince of Wales Bay in the Denison electorate a Defence precinct, the reality is that next to no work has gone to that so-called Defence precinct. The previous Labor government was there for six years and it only started to talk about Defence work in Denison in the last 12 months, really as some sort of theatrical political stunt to boost the Labor candidate at the time. In fact, it was so theatrical they had the Labor candidate before the 2013 election leading delegations of politicians up to Canberra to try to drum up Defence work. But, when you look at the track record of those six years of Labor, virtually no Defence work went to the Denison electorate. In the current environment, the current government is tripping over itself to send Defence work to South Australia, largely for political considerations. My fear is it is about to do the same with Western Australia—again for political considerations—when, by any reasonable measure, on its merit the Denison electorate and the Prince of Wales Bay Defence precinct in particular should be getting a big chunk of Defence work, including boatbuilding work.
So I make the point again: there is a lot said about jobs, particularly around election time. I suppose we are now only 12 months from an election, and a lot more will be said about jobs. But, when you look at the track record of the previous Labor governments and the current Liberal-National government, the reality is that there has been precious little investment in the Denison electorate. There has been precious little investment in things that would create jobs. So much of the talk to this point in time has been rhetoric when what we really need is genuine talk and a long-term, sustained plan.

**Capricornia Electorate**

*Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (11:16):* I want to focus now on the northern part of my electorate of Capricornia. Recently, I was joined by Senator Matthew Canavan and Senator James McGrath at the launch of my new office in Sarina. The shopfront, believed to be the first federal MP's office to be based in the town, is located at the Sarina Beach Road Shopping Centre. I promised to establish a second Capricornia electorate office outside Rockhampton during the last election campaign. I am now proving that I am listening and delivering to northern constituents.

Capricornia is an enormous area with a land mass of 91,049 square kilometres. The northern part of our electorate is an important economic hub, taking in West Mackay, Sarina, the beautiful Pioneer Valley area and, further inland, Nebo and the central Queensland coalfields. This area is the home of central Queensland's sugar and shipping belt and represents an important part of the state's economy. I am honoured to work hard for the people in this area of the electorate. The work I do means better deals for mums and dads, small business owners and farmers in this region. For this group, I was among those to lobby for tax cuts and tax depreciation reforms in the recent federal budget that resulted in the most significant package aimed at growing small business in 50 years.

I am not afraid to take a stand for the people in this part of my electorate when there is a clear disadvantage in policies and programs—for example, on the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement with countries like the United States, which diminished the role of our Queensland sugar industry. I called it for what it was—an unfair deal. I asked for a halt to these talks until Queensland sugar interests were better represented. I will not allow sugar to be dismissed so easily.

I am also not afraid of pushing for a fair go when it comes to improved services for bush people, such as mobile phone black spots. Some of the constituents who contacted me on this topic had such poor mobile and digital coverage that their local school took up to 20 hours to download the curriculum. I am pleased that our federal government is funding a new mobile base station at Gargett in the Pioneer Valley under our $100 million Mobile Black Spot Program. There will also be improvements in coverage along the stretch of the Bruce Highway between Marlborough and Sarina.

Northern Capricornia roads have also benefited from my hard work. I have lobbied solidly for repairs, enhancements and developments to local roads and highways to the value of $209.5 million. This includes $35 million to replace four old bridges between Mackay and Nebo with concrete structures and $166 million to fix a deadly stretch of the Peak Downs Highway near Eton. We have also constructed $8.5 million of new overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway between Koumala and Sarina under federal funding to make the highway safer and save lives.
I relish my role not just because of the difference I can make but also because I get to meet everyday Aussies like the Sarina RSL sub-branch. Brendan Maguire and his committee received federal funding of $21,000 to publish a local history book titled *More Than Just a Name*. The book depicts the lives and service history of men and women from the Sarina region who served in World War I. As well, west of Mackay in the Pioneer Valley is the township of Marian, where the Australian government contributed $500,000 towards the newly revamped Edward Lloyd Park. It is a great stop for locals and travellers. I also announced an overhaul in incentives to attract doctors to rural communities. The fairer system means 10 rural towns in my electorate, including Marian, Hay Point and Sarina, will now find it easier to attract GPs to their rural communities.

I am always listening to what people have to say, so I am officially launching a period of electorate-wide listening tours. On Monday, I will be kicking off my 'all ears' listening tour around Capricornia, starting in Sarina, Clermont and Middlemount. I am, to use the expression, 'all ears', listening to any issues people have to raise. Joining me will be Queensland Senator Matthew Canavan. The tour will visit Sarina at 5.30 on Monday, 21 September, at the Bob Wood Cultural Hall; Clermont at 5.30 on Tuesday the 22nd, at the Commercial Hotel on Capella Street; and Middlemount at 10.30 on Wednesday, 23 September, at the Catholic Church Hall on Howard Jones Drive. Visit my Facebook site for RSVP details. Thank you.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Prentice):** Thank you, Member for Capricornia, and congratulations on your new office.

**Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (11:21):** I rise today on an issue that I have been passionate about my entire life. I have raised it in this parliament from my first speech and will continue to do so for as long as I am here. That is the health of the great Murray River and the importance of water to South Australia. We know that one of the first things that the member for Wentworth has done as Prime Minister is to put Barnaby Joyce and the National Party in charge of water policy. This is a very real risk for South Australia and for the River Murray. We know that getting their hands on water policy was such a priority for the Nationals that it was included in their deal with the member for Wentworth when a range of other issues were excluded. They could have stood up for regional schools. They could have stood up for regional health. But they chose water as the issue that they wanted to progress.

So it leads us to ask the question: what motivated the Nationals to include water policy in their negotiating terms with the Prime Minister? I can bet that it was not because they care so much for the environment and for the environmental water entitlements that they wanted to ensure that they are well protected forevermore. In this very move, you can see just how much the Prime Minister was prepared to sell out for his own political gain. If there is anyone in this parliament who should know the importance of keeping water policy in Environment, it is the former minister for that exact portfolio, the member for Wentworth.

We know that in 2007, after a decade of drought, it was John Howard who took responsibility for water away from the agriculture minister and put it in the Environment portfolio, and there were very good reasons for doing that. It was a historic recognition that water policy needs to be based on science and that the first step in securing water supplies is to make sure that our river systems are healthy environments. The old approach of simply
taking as much as possible from our rivers has failed, and it must never, ever be allowed to return. The mouth of our precious Murray was closed, invaluable environments were dying of thirst, and Adelaide's very water supply itself was seriously threatened. We do not want to return to those days because of the now Prime Minister's dirty deal in order to get power.

The Prime Minister understands the importance of this change in approach and why it was necessary. Why? Because he was the person who was appointed Minister for the Environment and Water Resources in 2007, when John Howard declared that water needed to be in the Environment portfolio. This makes his decision to abandon responsibility for water to the Nationals truly galling. We see how low he is willing to go for his own political career.

This is putting a vested interest in charge of water when what we really need is to listen to the science and to get the balance right. We have come so far in building a better future for the Murray. Under the last Labor government, more than a century of bitter division was put behind us with the finalisation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Now this progress is at risk because of a backroom deal by the Prime Minister to shore up support from the Nationals.

This will have the biggest impact on South Australia, despite the fact that there is not a single National Party representative from our state. As we saw when it came to Holden, as we saw when it came to the broken promise on submarines, it seems that once again the South Australian Liberals are prepared to sit silently by and let our state's vested interests be sold up the river.

Yesterday the Prime Minister had a clear opportunity in question time to reassure South Australians that he would not rip the heart out of the Murray, but he could not say the words. The Prime Minister yesterday refused to rule out selling environmental water entitlements in the Murray-Darling back to irrigators, and that says it all.

South Australians know the dire consequences of hurting the river Murray. I want to share the words from some South Australians themselves, like Cheryl, who said, 'This is a vital resource to Australia and should be nobody's political plaything,' or Jude, who said, 'Well done, SA Libs—you just handed the Murray-Darling Basin over to the Queensland and New South Wales Nats.' Both Sandy and Craig said that this is 'like putting the fox in charge of the chickens'. Paul put it another way, saying: 'It's like putting the cookie monster in charge of the cookie jar.' John said: 'This is amazing bad. When one thinks of the work that Tony Burke did to fix this, and Malcolm wants it messed up again. Very, very sad.' Carey said he has 'never seen somebody change their views so radically just to get a promotion'. We will keep fighting for a healthy Murray River and the South Australian Labor Party will actually speak up against this move.

Multiculturalism

Mr GOODENOUGH (Moore) (11:26): I rise to speak on the notion of selective multiculturalism as the way forward in modern Australian society. Historically, the policy in Australia on the issue of multiculturalism has been assimilation with the prevailing Western culture on which Australian society was founded. Generations of migrants were expected to conform to Western culture. In subsequent years, there was a change in policy, with a more enlightened politically correct movement which promoted a blanket approach to multiculturalism, without due consideration of the potential for incompatibility of cultures or what course of action should be taken in the event of cultural conflicts.
Consider the proposition that multiculturalism can take three forms: synergistic, complementary and conflicting. Synergistic multiculturalism occurs when two or more cultures combine to form a hybrid culture that yields spectacular results. For example, the fusion of Western capitalism with the Chinese Confucian philosophy has resulted in hugely successful emerging Asian economies by combining Western methods of efficient production and eastern discipline. The bleak factory landscapes of several emerging Asian economies are not dissimilar to the scenes from a Dickens novel which portrayed Britain during the industrial revolution, which turned Great Britain into a dominant power in the world.

Complementary multiculturalism occurs when two or more cultures interact in a positive way and provide greater diversity and choice. For instance, migrants have brought a rich selection of foods and cuisines to Australia, offering diners a greater selection, variety and choice. Even the great Aussie barbecue benefits from having satays, kebabs and koftas added to steaks, chops and sausages, providing an international smorgasbord that can be shared with neighbours from all over the world. Likewise, arts, music and cultural performances are all complementary.

Conflicting multiculturalism is an awkward topic which politically correct society seeks to avoid. What happens when cultures collide? Which culture or legal system prevails? Will one be criticised for intervening on the basis of being prejudiced? There are many cultural conflicts in a multicultural society which are often left unresolved. For instance, different cultures have different views on issues such as the equality of women, attitudes to work and what is acceptable social conduct.

What happens when new cultures conflict with long held Australian social norms? As a nation, we have struggled with this dilemma and have been reluctant to publically debate and resolve cultural conflicts. It is a reality that we cannot be all things to all people, yet we can select from the best in the world and adapt. The recent issue of radicalisation of youths leaving the country to take up arms, against Australia, has its origins deeper and over a longer period of time than simply over the internet and social media. There has been a clash of cultures in existence for some time in certain communities across Australia. These matters have not adequately been resolved, due to the politically-correct regime being reluctant to offend.

Years ago, I was surprised when a 15-year-old new immigrant from a Middle Eastern war-torn country, whom I attempted to befriend, asked if he could borrow my shotgun to use against members of a different ethnic group. Old hatreds, dating back centuries, have no place being transplanted in Australia. Selective multiculturalism is the notion that Australian society should be selective and only adopt those aspects of multiculturalism that are synergistic or complementary and that Australian culture should prevail where foreign cultures are inconsistent with long established social norms. I subscribe, wholeheartedly, to embracing the synergistic and complementary aspects of multiculturalism. However, where there is a clash of cultures, a conflict of ideals, then I advocate adherence to the prevailing Western system of Australian culture, in terms of conforming to social norms, maintaining the protestant work ethic, being diligent, embracing scientific principles and methods and being respectful—which are the things that make our society strong.
Shortland Electorate: Centrelink and Medicare

Ms HALL (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (11:31): When I speak in the adjournment debate, I like to raise issues that are very prevalent within the electorate I represent. In Shortland, one of the biggest issues in recent times has surrounded Centrelink and waiting times, and the inability to access appointments and to discuss issues with Centrelink officers. Changes have happened. I understand that Centrelink is very stretched because of the drastic cuts to staff that have taken place. But Shortland is an older electorate, and, when a pensioner turns up at the Centrelink office, staff walk up and greet them—and the staff are very polite—and tell them to use the computer. Some constituents find this overwhelming. They feel very threatened by this. Alternatively, constituents are also given a number to ring if they do not want to try the computer. There is story after story of people ringing that number, waiting for half an hour, three-quarters of an hour or an hour, only to find that they are then cut off, and they are back where they started.

At one of my seniors forums at Belmont about two weeks ago, Centrelink came along. The presentation by Centrelink was fantastic. The Centrelink officer comes and makes presentations at most of my seniors forums and she does a wonderful job. She meets and talks to people during the lunchbreak. But, overwhelmingly, seniors raise the issue of the lack of service and their inability to cope with Centrelink the way it is operating for her. The minister has addressed some of the issues I have raised, but this issue goes on and on. This is also the case with Medicare payments; when a person goes in, they are directed—once again—to a computer. I need the government to understand that computer technology and using computers is a fantastic and efficient way to do things. To do things online is great, but not everybody can do it.

The people I represent in this parliament are very upset about this push to make them use computers when they are extremely uncomfortable about using them. They are very disappointed with the way Centrelink are delivering their services at the moment. I am particularly concerned, and I have spoken to the minister's office. They were quite helpful. The combined Medicare and Centrelink office at Belmont, in my area, had their lease come up for renewal recently. They had a three-year lease. The retailer offered them a five-year lease but they did not want that. The retailer then offered them a three-year lease—and they were really favourable terms, much better terms than they have at the moment—but they did not want that either. In the end, they agreed to a one-year lease.

This is a Medicare office the Howard government closed. It is a Medicare office that Labor, when in government, reopened with the extra Centrelink service available. It was a Centrelink service that used to give people appointments but now no longer does this, because they are not allowed to. The fact that the lease is only being extended for a year is a great concern for me, which is why I call on the government to ensure that the Medicare Centrelink office remains in the Belmont area—an area where there are a lot of elderly people.

I conclude by adding my voice to the many calls from people on this side of the parliament who are asking the new Prime Minister to stay true to his values and not just cater to the conservative elements within the Liberal Party. Leadership means nothing if you do not stand up for what you believe in. You need to be what you believe in. You need to stand up for the people you represent. You do not need to be a second-rate Prime Minister who only caters to the needs of those in your party. (Time expired)
Mr PITT (Hinkler) (11:36): This is been a week of highs and lows, of losses and triumphs, but I will leave it to the commentators or so-called experts to pick everything apart. Today, rather than focus on any of the negative, I want to reflect on what it all means for the people of Hinkler. They are, after all, my No. 1 priority and the reason I am here today.

I am a member of the Liberal National Party in Queensland but in Canberra I sit with the Nationals. This means I do not get a vote on the Liberal leadership, just as those who sit with the Liberal Party do not get a say on who leads the Nationals. In 95 years the Nationals have had just 12 leaders. Our party continues to be a strong voice for regional Australia.

On Wednesday, the Nationals negotiated a new coalition agreement with the Liberal Party to form government, with Malcolm Turnbull as Prime Minister. The agreement contains some very significant wins for the Nationals, and I applaud our leader, Warren Truss. He is a man who gets things done, not via the media but through steadfast negotiations behind closed doors. I have strongly expressed my views on the renewable energy target previously and the impact it will have on electricity prices for those who can least afford it. While I do not agree with all our policies on climate change, I am pleased we have been able to get a guarantee that they will not be broadened or increased under a Turnbull government.

The responsibility for water policy will be transferred back from the environmental portfolio to agriculture, where it belongs. Farmers are the great guardians of water, because without it they do not survive. Our policies and programs, to date, have already started having a positive impact on my region's local unemployment rate. The establishment of a new jobs program specifically focused on regional Australia will only further the positive trend.

The coalition agreement also maintains the existing policy on same-sex marriage, to hold a plebiscite of the people, should we win another term. We will increase family tax benefit part B payments to stay-at-home-parent families with a child below the age of one eligible. Importantly, we have agreed that cabinet will give proper consideration to amendments to the Australian Competition and Consumer Act that were recommended in the Harper review. The Harper report made 56 recommendations, laying the ground work for a more competitive and flexible economy to make markets work better for all Australians. The key one for cabinet consideration relates to section 46 and the abuse of market power. Some argue it will reduce productivity, chill investment and lead to higher prices. The reverse is true. The current laws have failed to protect consumers and smaller competitors, with only one case every two years making it before the courts. The system favours firms which can afford legal representation to help them engage in anticompetitive behaviour while remaining just within the bounds of the law. Strengthening section 46 would be a significant win for the consumers and especially businesses in my electorate: the farmers, food manufacturers and commercial fishers. In relation to Tony Abbott, I will say this: he delivered on his key election commitments. He got rid of the carbon tax, he got rid of the mining tax, and he stopped the boats. Everyone said that it could not be done, but he did it.

Border protection and national security is one of the top issues of concern among my Hinkler constituents. ‘Stopping the boats’ is not just a three-word slogan; it is backed by a policy of tough measures that have deterred people from risking their lives at sea. In the 12 months before the coalition introduced Operation Sovereign Borders there were 401 illegal boat arrivals carrying 26,542 people, compared to only one illegal boat arrival in 2014. Since
coming to government two years ago our policies have resulted in the closure of 13 immigration detention centres, saving the 2015-16 budget $500 million. We have reduced the number of children in detention by 90 per cent. As a result, we have been able to increase the humanitarian program from the current level of 13,750 places per year to 18,750 places per year by 2018-19. It has also enabled us to take 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees, in addition to the 4,400 we settled last financial year.

Over the past two years I have enjoyed a good working relationship with Malcolm Turnbull as a member of the parliamentary Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications, and I expect that will continue. I wore a path to Mr Turnbull’s door in relation to the NBN rollout, and I thank him for heeding my concerns and agreeing to list Bundaberg as one of 10 sites prioritised nationally for the fibre-to-the-node rollout. It is expected to be switched on toward the end of this year. The fact that Bundaberg is a point of interconnect for the NBN bodes well for further expansion across the electorate. More than 20 fixed wireless NBN towers are either delivered or under construction in the rural parts of the electorate. I look forward to working with Prime Minister Turnbull to continue doing exactly what I have been doing for the past two years, and that is delivering for the people of Hinkler.

**Taxation**

Mr SWAN (Lilley) (11:42): This Liberal-National government is the best friend multinational tax avoiders have ever had. The contrast here with Labor’s record in government could not be starker. Labor has a proud record of addressing corporate tax avoidance. While in government, in the 2013-14 budget we included an integrity package to address the erosion of the corporate tax base that would have yielded $1.4 billion over the forward estimates. The budget dedicated $109 million to help the ATO target foreign marketing hubs, counter aggressive tax structures and close a range of loopholes which have facilitated profit shifting by multinationals. In addition, we passed a bill in 2013 which closed loopholes in transfer pricing rules in order to counter tax avoidance and multinational profit shifting. The coalition voted against every single one of those initiatives. This followed the coalition’s attempts to block Labor’s 2012 cross-border transfer pricing bill, which sought to wind back multinationals’ overvaluation of assets in international transactions.

The coalition’s record very clearly spells out the extent of their reluctance to stop multinational tax evasion and minimisation. We can see the roots of the current multinational tax evasion bonanza as far back as the Howard and Costello years. They introduced complex tax legislation which opened loopholes that mining companies, banks and other large businesses exploited, to the disadvantage of taxpaying domestic firms, and at the expense of the efficiency, equity and sustainability of the tax system. Since taking office in 2013, this Liberal-National government has remained frozen on its G20 obligations, having paid lip service to only four out of the 15 actions on the OECD’s action plan. Australia will be lucky to have implemented even one of the plan’s 15 recommendations. Australia’s progress in closing loopholes—get this—is slower than that of Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

The coalition government’s deliberate avoidance of tax avoidance betrays the true meaning of the commitment that Mr Hockey and Mr Abbott made of being open for business. They are certainly open for multinational tax avoiders; we are absolutely certain of that. Since taking office, the coalition has rejected Labor’s proposals to tackle multinational tax avoidance, which would net the government $1.1 billion. They have sacked 4,700 staff from the ATO. In
the same week as the Senate inquiry into corporate tax avoidance handed down its recommendations for closing loopholes, the Abbott government introduced into the House of Representatives a bill that would shield almost half of Australia's top 2,000 companies from having to report the tax that they pay.

Faced with the difficulty of identifying multinational tax avoidance, some governments are now taking the legislative low road and are instead saying, 'Don't worry about that; let them walk away from their obligations. Let's just jack up a regressive GST on all of the punters who work hard, on all of the farmers out there and all of those people who make this country great. Why don't we tax them more?'—just because they are reluctant to actually tax multinational companies.

The argument goes that the GST is relatively easy to collect and those who are disadvantaged can be compensated by adjusting income taxes. The GST hits everybody, but its incidence is particularly acute for households on low and fixed incomes. Historical experience shows that, after compensation is paid to these households, governments collect a lot less taxation revenue than they had anticipate. In fact, the original GST package introduced by Treasurer Costello ended up costing the government $21 billion after compensation was paid. Compensating cuts to personal income tax, indirect taxes and the abolition or reduction of state taxes meant that the government had to spend $1.15 for every dollar raised from the GST when the package was first introduced. Moreover, most of the personal income tax cuts given by Howard and Costello as compensation were simply handing back bracket creep since the tax cuts given by the Keating government in 1995-96. There is no new revenue bonanza from a GST. There is no money left over if you compensate properly for health and education and company tax cuts—none whatsoever.

Often Australia's company tax is deemed a hurdle too high for multinationals, who would rather book profits in more favourable tax jurisdictions. The truth is, whatever the rate, they will be out there trying to avoid it here and around the world. That is why we need fair dinkum international action. (Time expired)

Flynn Electorate: Industry

Mr O'DOWD (Flynn) (11:47): Today I rise to talk about industry, the costs for industry and the alarming rise of electricity prices in my electorate of Flynn and in Queensland as a whole.

As we settle into the FTAs that we have with nine nations now, our farmers and anyone else who wants to export to these nine countries must be competitive. I know, having been on this earth for quite a few years now, that cheap water and cheap power were the success stories of Queensland in past years. This is not currently the case. Ergon Energy and Energex are GOCs, government-owned corporations, and there seems to be no government control when it comes to how they administer their job and how they continually put up prices—prices which astound me—seemingly, without giving a reason as to why these prices are going up so quickly and so sharply. If you compare the prices in New South Wales and Queensland, you see that they are something like 35 per cent cheaper in New South Wales. In Victoria they are even cheaper. They are 65 per cent cheaper than in Queensland.

Most of the industries in Flynn use a lot of electricity. This was highlighted to the member for Hinkler and me last year when Bundaberg was going through a particularly dry period and
the cane crop was at a critical stage and needing water. You could not get the water from the sky. There was water in the two dams close to Bundaberg, but the farmers could not afford to water their crops because of the price of electricity. That is a fact. So the crops withered and died in the field.

This issue affects a lot of industries. If you go to the west of Bundaberg you get into the Gayndah and Mundubbera areas where we grow a lot of fruit. When fruit is grown it has to be chilled and stored in cold storage. As we know, once you go into cold storage, bringing the fruit down to about four degrees centigrade, you are going to use a lot of electricity.

The caravan rolls on to Emerald at the 2PH Farms, where a lot of their fruit is exported to China and South America. They have very large cold rooms, as do Gayndah and Mundubbera—cold rooms so big that you could drive trucks and tractors into those cold rooms. That is how big they are. So you can imagine the electricity used to keep those products chilled and ready for market, whether it is in Australia or overseas.

This is the problem we have. I have got three coal fired power stations in my electorate: at Stanwell, at Callide and near Biloela, and of course at Gladstone, which is the single biggest power station in Queensland. These are all coal fired power stations. As we know, along with other commodity prices, coal is the cheapest it has been for a long time, and that includes thermal coal, so why are the power prices going up so high? I think it is up to the minister in charge of the Queensland government to talk to Energex and Ergon and try to get some satisfactory reply as to why Queensland prices are so high compared to the rest of Australia, because it is going to do damage. It is doing damage now to our industries. Aluminium and other metals and resources are very much at rock bottom. They are a lot lower now than they were before the GFC. It is critical for the aluminium industries and other industries in my electorate that they have cheap, affordable power. Here we are, exporting coal and gas and uranium to other countries in the world, and they have cheaper electricity than us, but they have no natural resources. This is a ludicrous situation, and it must be addressed by the Queensland government, Ergon, and Energex. Thank you.

**Turnbull Government**

**Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (11:52):** What an extraordinary week it has been in politics. I feel really lucky to have had this adjournment booked in for some time so that I can provide some reflections on this extraordinary turn of events. It is not every day that we come up to parliament here and start the week with one Prime Minister and end the week with another one.

What I thought might be fitting to use in this five minutes is to provide some thoughts to our new Prime Minister on behalf of the people I represent in Hotham, and it is a little letter that I have written on behalf of my constituents outlining three big things that I think and we think need to change.

Dear Malcolm. On behalf of the people of Hotham, I want to congratulate you on ascending to the Prime Ministership, the most important position in our country. We hope, we truly do, that your ascension will bring to your government a measure of fairness and competency that has so been lacking over the past three years. We hope for a period of more collaboration and less division, because that's what our country needs.
As our sitting period draws to a close, we find ourselves with a few days to reflect on what has occurred this week. We are going to need some quiet time with our families. But you, having taken on this role, are not, probably, going to have the time for reflection that you need.

Instead, you will be a very busy man this weekend. The phones will be running hot as colleagues jostle for ministerial portfolios, removalists will be grappling with the really tremendous task of shifting your prominent residence across Sydney Harbour. And, as you pack and lug boxes, I wanted to suggest three big things to reflect on. Three big changes we see will get your government back on track.

The first, Prime Minister, is to get your party, no matter how much kicking and screaming is required, into the 21st century in its climate policies. You have spent long parts of your career fighting for real climate action. You know that your party is not delivering it. Letting the real Malcolm shine through has to mean real action on climate change.

The people of Hotham, their children and particularly their grandchildren will have their quality of life in large part determined by the policies that we, and in future the globe, set down on climate action. You cannot, and should not, let them down.

Please do what you know and I know to be the right thing. Set down real targets that will help keep global warming within two degrees. And support Labor's push for an economy that sees renewable energy as one of the growth areas of the future and celebrates the thousands of jobs that can be created if we do the right things from a policy perspective.

The second area, Malcolm, is supporting the representation of women on your frontbench. You have professed to be a very strong supporter of women and I truly, truly hope this to be the truth. A newspaper report today, though, suggests that you appointed fewer women than Tony Abbott to senior roles in your previous ministerial portfolio.

You cannot do any worse than Tony Abbott in his cabinet appointments. He appointed just one woman to cabinet, in his first cabinet—that, I think, put us lower than the cabinet of Afghanistan. We know that you can do better than that. I would invite you to look at our party and the incredible contribution that senior women play. Without Tanya, Penny, Jenny, Kate and all the other incredible senior female contributors, our party would be a lot lesser place to be. You need to find these women in your own party and give them the support they need to play on an equal footing to their male colleagues. I really hope you do that. Our nation and your party will be a lot better off for it.

Finally, Prime Minister, I want you to do what you know is right on marriage equality. This is an issue that is core for thousands and thousands of Australians. Do what is right and allow those people that care so much about this issue to have their representatives debate this issue in our nation's parliament and not just in the confines and the closed doors of your party room.

Malcolm, a plebiscite is a delaying tactic. You know it, I know it and it was put forward by the people in your party who simply want to stop marriage equality from occurring. You call yourself a liberal. All we ask is that you act like one. You know and I know it is an insult to the thousands of Australians for whom this is a burning and life-defining issue to make them go through a plebiscite.

FEDERATION CHAMBER
These three things will be the building blocks for a better style of government and they all boil down to one thing: let Malcolm be Malcolm. Best regards and good luck. The people of Hotham.

**Canning Electorate: By-election**

**Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:56):** There are two days to go until the Canning by-election in my home state of Western Australia, and all of the pressure is on the WA branch of the Labor Party following their worst performance on record at the last by-election held in Western Australia, in 2014, which led to WA Labor being branded a national disgrace by Labor figures in the east.

There must be a by-election on, because we suddenly have a flurry of speeches and motions on or about WA from the opposition, who we never normally hear from. On Monday, I was scheduled to speak on one such motion put forward by the member for Perth on the WA economy but, unfortunately, the member for Grayndler, who is not even from WA, used up all of the allotted time for the debate and denied a Western Australian member a say. It reminded me of 2009 when, at 4.24 in the morning, the member for Lilly cut the debate off on the global financial crisis just as I was about to speak. For those members who have not been up at 4.24 in the morning, that was under the Rudd well-controlled and well-managed era.

The opposition leader, at that time, then warned that the nation’s finances would be ruined if the Rudd government proceeded with the $900 cheque and the school halls. History has certainly proven him right. There is a bit of deja vu with the motion and the member for Perth. It certainly takes me back to that earlier time in 2014 at the other election. The loss of the Senate ballots, cast at the federal election recount, forced the people of WA back to the polls to elect six new senators, and Labor saw this as their big chance in the West.

At the time, we had motion after motion from the Labor Party and the member for Perth on WA matters. It was the member for Perth, back then, who was asked to spearhead the activity for the opposition, but I think it was a task she found difficult as Labor had gone years without showing much interest in WA at all. There was also the legacy of the disastrous mining tax to deal with, which is still remembered by voters in the West and almost caused a wipe-out of WA Labor MPs in 2010. All of a sudden, back in early 2014, we had weeks of questions, motions and MPIs on Western Australia from the opposition, as we have seen this week as well.

It was great because it provided an opportunity to talk about all the good things going on in Western Australia, and an opportunity to call out the member for Perth on her record and misplaced priorities, such as pushing a South Perth train station no one wants, instead of a Manning Road on-ramp, in my electorate of Swan, which everyone wants. I know my Liberal colleagues from WA were also keen to call out Labor on their record in WA. In the end, the strategy backfired on Labor because, after all their motions, they won just one of the six Senate spots in WA, at that election: I think their lowest vote on record. I remember at the time Labor figures from the east shaking their heads and calling the WA branch of the Labor Party a national embarrassment.

Since the Senate election, we have heard almost nothing constructive from Labor about Western Australia. The only position they have taken in that time is to oppose a major road investment in WA to appease the Greens, which is an echo of Labor's opposition to road
projects in other states. Since the Senate election, there have been no motions or MPIs about WA that I can recall. For Labor, it was back to their status quo of ignoring the west and putting it in the too-hard basket.

On Saturday we will have the by-election in WA, in the seat of Canning, and—hey presto!—suddenly we have had all these motions appearing out of thin air. I say to the Labor Party: if you repeat the same tactics, you should expect the same result. You cannot just go and switch it on and expect the people of WA to buy it. It is not good enough to only talk about WA when by-elections are on. As Liberals, we talk about WA week in and week out in this place. Our WA members are proud to be from WA and happy to talk about WA and its people.

I will now turn to the content of the member for Perth's motion. It is amazing that the member never finds anything positive to say about WA, because it is a place that is really transforming at the moment, with cranes in the sky everywhere you look around and lots of building and major infrastructure projects happening in our state.

Sunday was a momentous day in Perth's infrastructure development, with the Prime Minister, the Premier and I officially opening the Grand Gateway component of Gateway WA, some four months ahead of schedule. Roads that opened on Sunday included Airport Drive to Leach Highway westbound and the final section of the Tonkin Highway-Leach Highway interchange, which is the main interchange for Gateway WA.

On Saturday, as I said, we will go to the polls in the by-election for Canning, where my good friend and colleague Don Randall held the seat until he passed away. I know that Don would be out there doorknocking if he possibly could, but his spirit will be with Andrew Hastie, our candidate. I would like to congratulate Andrew Hastie and remind the people of Canning that Labor has failed on jobs and the economy time and time again. Who will put the interests of WA people first? The answer is the coalition every time.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 12:01
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Agriculture: Consultants
(Question No. 946)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Agriculture, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In respect of the use of (a) consultants, and (b) contractors, by the Minister's department(s) in 2014-15, (i) what total sum was spent, (ii) what services were provided, and (iii) which firms provided the services.

Mr Joyce: The Minister for Agriculture has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
A list of all consultants and contractors used by the department with a value of $10,000 or more, including the costs involved, the services provided and the firms which provided the services, can be found on AusTender at www.tenders.gov.au.

Employment: Media Monitoring
(Question No. 961)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
What sum was spent by the Minister's department(s) on media monitoring and associated services in 2014–15.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
The Department of Employment spent $577,083 (GST exclusive) on media monitoring in 2014–15. The Department of Employment also spent $19,238 (GST exclusive) on social media monitoring services during the same period.
Following being sworn in as Minister, the Opposition has been given access to media clippings noting that my predecessor had previously refused such a request while the Coalition was in opposition despite there being no extra cost to the taxpayer.

Employment: Departmental Staff Training
(Question No. 1277)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:
In 2014–15, (a) what sum was spent on training for departmental staff, (b) on what date(s), and at what location(s), did the training occur, and (c) what outcomes were achieved.

Mr Pyne: The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:
(a) Decisions and budgets for staff training and development are largely devolved to line areas in the department and manually collating agency expenditure on these items would involve an unreasonable diversion of departmental resources. The exceptions to this are some training programmes where attendees were from across the department and costs were funded corporately. The total expenditure on corporately funded training in 2014–15 was $558,994.
(b) See Table 1.
(c) The results of the 2015 APS Employee Census indicate that the majority of the department's staff consider that they have access to effective learning and development.

**Table 1**

**Training details 2014-15 Department of Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Details</th>
<th>Total expenditure (GST incl)</th>
<th>Date of Training</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Corporately funded training</td>
<td>$558,994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment: Ministerial Hospitality**

(Question Nos 1455 and 1456)

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Employment, in writing, on 17 August 2015:

(a) what total sum was spent,
(b) for what functions was the catering and hospitality,
(c) on what date(s) did each function occur, and at what location(s), and
(d) for each function, what sum was spent on (i) meals, (ii) drinks, (iii) hospitality staff, and (iv) other costs.

**Mr Pyne:** The Minister for Employment has provided the following answer to the honourable member's question:

I am advised by the Department of Employment that it met the costs of events and official hospitality within the entitlements set out in the Ministers of State Entitlements Handbook.

For 2014–15, total catering and hospitality expenditure for the Minister for Employment was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost ex GST</th>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>G20 Labour for Employment Ministerial Meeting</td>
<td>$480.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Dinner with senior executives from the Australian Public Service</td>
<td>$636.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Afternoon tea for Australian Public Service Graduates</td>
<td>$277.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,394.30</td>
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