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SITTING DAYS—2016

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FORTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—EIGHTH 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,
Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP, Mr Patrick Martin Conroy MP,
Mr Ian Reginald Goodenough MP, Mrs Natasha Louise Griggs MP,
Ms Sarah Moya Henderson MP, Mr Stephen James Irons MP,
Mr Craig Kelly MP, Ms Michelle Leanne Landry MP, Ms Clare Ellen O'Neil MP,
Mrs Jane Prentice MP, Ms Melissa Lee Price MP,
Dr Andrew John Southcott MP, Mr Michael Sukkar MP,
Mr Ross Xavier Vasta MP and 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—Ms Nola Bethwyn Marino MP
Government Whips—Mr Ewen Thomas Jones MP and Mr Brett David Whiteley MP

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

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives
### Members of the House of Representatives

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<td>Wilkie, Mr Andrew Damien</td>
<td>Denison, TAS</td>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Members of the House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Mr Matthew</td>
<td>Hindmarsh, SA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Mr Richard James</td>
<td>O'Connor, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, Mr Jason Peter</td>
<td>La Trobe, VIC</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyatt, Mr Kenneth George, AM</td>
<td>Hasluck, WA</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zappia, Mr Antonio</td>
<td>Makin, SA</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmerman, Mr Trent</td>
<td>North Sydney, NSW</td>
<td>LP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Clerk of the Senate—R Laing  
Clerk of the House of Representatives—D Elder  
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—R Stefanic  
Parliamentary Budget Officer—P Bowen
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Women</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Counter-Terrorism</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Angus Taylor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Cabinet Secretary</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Anne Ruston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Keith Pitt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Julie Bishop MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Trade and Investment</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Steve Ciobo MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for International Development and the Pacific</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Tourism and International Education</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Investment</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attorney-General</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Michael Keenan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Vice-President of the Executive Council)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Justice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Scott Morrison MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Small Business</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Kelly O’Dwyer MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister to the Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Alex Hawke MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Deputy Leader of Government in the Senate)</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Minister of State</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Dr Peter Hendy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Finance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Regional Development</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Darren Chester MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Deputy Leader of the House)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Paul Fletcher MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Christopher Pyne MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Leader of the House)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Northern Australia</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon Matt Canavan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Science</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Karen Andrews MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Innovation</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Wyatt Roy MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Immigration and Border Protection</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Peter Dutton MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant Minister for Immigration</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon James McGrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for the Environment</strong></td>
<td>The Hon Greg Hunt MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Minister</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Health</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Aged Care</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Sport</td>
<td>The Hon Sussan Ley MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Rural Health</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care</td>
<td>The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Marise Payne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of</em></td>
<td><em>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Defence Materiel</td>
<td>The Hon Dan Tehan MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td><em>The Hon Michael McCormack MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for the Arts</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Manager of Government Business in the Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Regional Communications</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Fiona Nash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Employment</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Social Services</td>
<td>The Hon Christian Porter MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Human Services</td>
<td>The Hon Alan Tudge MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Disability Services</em></td>
<td><em>The Hon Jane Prentice MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistant Minister for Multicultural Affairs</em></td>
<td><em>The Hon Craig Laundy MP</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Education and Training</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Vocational Education and Skills</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Scott Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister for Tourism and International Education</td>
<td>Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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. Assistant Ministers in italics are designated as Parliamentary Secretaries under the Ministers of State Act 1952.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Bill Shorten MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader for Science</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Kim Carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on State and Territory Relations</strong></td>
<td>Senator Katy Gallagher*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Women</td>
<td>Senator Claire Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Jacinta Collins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Michael Danby MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</td>
<td>Hon. Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary Assisting with Digital Innovation and Startups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (Senate)</td>
<td>Terri Butler MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development</td>
<td>Hon. Tanya Plibersean MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Penny Wong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Trade and Investment</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Senator the Hon. Stephen Conroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC</td>
<td>Hon. David Feeney MP</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Anthony Albanese MP</td>
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<td>Shadow Minister for Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Local Government</td>
<td>Hon. Julie Collins MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Western Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia</td>
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<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for External Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Treasurer</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Chris Bowen MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Small Business</td>
<td>Michelle Rowland MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Dr Andrew Leigh MP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Competition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation</td>
<td>Dr Jim Chalmers MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Assistant Minister for Productivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Treasurer</td>
<td>Hon. Ed Husic MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business</td>
<td>Julie Owens MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title | Shadow Minister
---|---
**Shadow Minister for Finance**<br>Manager of Opposition Business (House) | Hon. Tony Burke MP
**Shadow Special Minister of State** | Hon. Gary Gray MP
**Shadow Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water**<br>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Water | Senator the Hon. Lisa Singh
**Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry**<br>Shadow Minister for Vocational Education | Hon. Sharon Bird MP
Shadow Assistant Minister for Higher Education | Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Manufacturing | Nick Champion MP
**Shadow Minister for Communications** | Hon. Jason Clare MP
**Shadow Attorney-General** | Hon. Mark Dreyfus QC MP
**Shadow Minister for the Arts**<br>Deputy Manager of Opposition Business (House) | Hon. David Feeney MP
Shadow Minister for Justice | Graham Perrett MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Shadow Attorney-General | Hon. Michael Danby MP
**Shadow Minister for Education** | Hon. Kate Ellis MP
**Shadow Minister for Early Childhood**<br>Shadow Assistant Minister for Education | Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Early Childhood Education | Julie Owens MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for School Education and Youth | Senator Sam Dastyari
**Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**<br>Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs | Hon. Joel Fitzgibbon MP
**Shadow Minister for Resources** | Hon. Gary Gray AO MP
**Shadow Minister for Health** | Hon. Catherine King MP
**Shadow Minister for Ageing** | Hon. Shayne Neumann MP
**Shadow Minister for Mental Health** | Senator Katy Gallagher
Shadow Minister for Sport | Dr Jim Chalmers MP
Shadow Assistant Minister for Health | Stephen Jones MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health | Tony Zappia MP
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Aged Care | Senator Helen Polley
**Shadow Minister for Families and Payments** | Hon. Jenny Macklin MP
**Shadow Minister for Disability Reform** | Senator Claire Moore
**Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness**<br>Shadow Minister for Human Services | Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
**Shadow Minister for Carers**<br>Shadow Minister for Communities | Senator the Hon. Doug Cameron
**Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Payments** | Senator Carol Brown
**Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Child Safety and Prevention of Family Violence** | Terri Butler MP
**Shadow Minister for Immigration and Border Protection** | Hon. Richard Marles MP
**Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multiculturalism**<br>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration | Michelle Rowland MP
| Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite MP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Shadow Minister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Shayne Neumann MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Warren Snowdon MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations</strong></td>
<td>Hon. Brendan O’Connor MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadow Minister for Employment Services</td>
<td>Hon. Julie Collins MP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shadow Cabinet Ministers are shown in bold type.

* Senator Katy Gallagher’s appointment to the Shadow Ministry is effective from 1 November 2015. Senator the Hon. Jan McLucas will serve as Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Mental Health, and represent the Shadow Minister for Northern Australia, the Shadow Minister for Health, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Health, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs in the Senate until 31 October 2015.
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Australian Federal Police: Samuel Smith & Sons Pty Ltd Tender—
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The SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Smith) took the chair at 09:00 and made an acknowledgement of country and read prayers.

COMMITTEES

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Membership

The SPEAKER (09:00): I have received a message from the Senate informing the House of changes to the membership of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. As the list is a lengthy one, I do not propose to read it to the House. Details will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings.

BILLS

Biological Control Amendment Bill 2016

First Reading

Bill and explanatory memorandum presented by Mr Joyce.

Bill read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr JOYCE (New England—Deputy Prime Minister) (09:27): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Established pest animals and weeds are a significant economic, environmental and social burden for Australia, especially rural Australia.

The cost of agricultural production losses attributable to pest animals was estimated to be more than $620 million in 2009, and a 2004 study estimated the agricultural cost of weeds to be nearly $4 billion per annum. Anecdotal evidence suggests that those figures are now likely to be significantly greater.

Pest animals and weeds are also a major threat to Australia's biodiversity, and to the condition of our natural resource base. By accelerating the erosion of fragile soil, stirring up waterways and reducing water quality and outcompeting native species, these all cause massive damage. The social impacts of pests and weeds are difficult to measure, but are no less significant than the economic impacts.

The ongoing management of pests and weeds requires significant effort and investment by landholders and governments. It is a burden of every landholder that they always have in the back of their mind the jobs they have to do in respect of pest and weed control. Biological control—which is the management of a pest through the use of its 'natural enemies' such as insects, fungi and viruses—is an important tool in the arsenal, and one with a proven track record.

Perhaps the most well-known biological control success story in this country is the release of the myxoma virus—which causes myxomatosis—in 1950. This was the world's first vertebrate pest biocontrol, introduced in an attempt to control wild rabbits. In the 1920s, just 70 years after being introduced into Victoria, rabbit populations had exploded to more than 10
billion across Australia, and the impacts were devastating. Some farms were abandoned because of rabbits. The release of the myxoma virus in 1950 killed 99.8 per cent of infected rabbits and brought huge relief to our farmers, and reprieve for the natural environment. It was an instance I well remember, that sides of hills even in the early seventies would be just bare because they were said to be rabbit struck.

Resistance to myxomatosis began to build over time, and to combat this calicivirus was released in 1996. The combination of myxoma virus and calicivirus currently limits wild rabbit populations to about 15 per cent of their potential numbers. Without these biological control agents, the annual cost to agriculture alone would be in excess of $2 billion. Even with the biological control agents, rabbits cause more than $200 million in production losses every year.

The Commonwealth Biological Control Act 1984—and mirror legislation in the states and the Northern Territory—provides a legislative framework for assessing proposed biological control activities to ensure that they are in the public interest. The act also includes structured consultation requirements, which provide an opportunity for the community to have their say about proposed biological control activities.

The act then provides for the declaration of 'target organisms' (for example, the weed Paterson's curse) and 'agent organisms' (for example, the crown weevil), and contains provisions to ensure that biological control activities are subject to liability protection and can proceed without interruption by litigation.

Today the government brings forward the Biological Control Amendment Bill to provide clarification and greater certainty for future biological control programs where the scientific consensus recommends the use of viruses to control damaging pests or weeds.

The bill provides that the definition of an organism under the Biological Control Act specifically includes viruses and subviral agents. Subviral agent is a taxonomic category that includes viroids, satellite viruses and prions—agents that are smaller than viruses and have some of their properties. This category is included because it is plausible that subviral agents may also be useful as agents for biological control in the future.

The need for this bill has arisen out of ongoing contemporary scientific debate as to whether a virus can be classified as an organism. A living thing must meet certain taxonomic criteria relating to structure and function in order to be considered to be an organism. Because viruses are incapable of reproducing without a host, the majority scientific views at this point in time is that they are not organisms.

It should be noted here that some scientists would, however, consider a virus to be an organism, and biological science by its very nature is constantly evolving in light of new knowledge and evidence. Given that there is also debate about whether a virus can be considered to be a living entity (as it is neither alive nor dead), the bill also omits the term 'live' from references to agent organisms.

These minor amendments are proposed in order to avoid doubt and to remove ambiguity, making it clear into the future that, despite the scientific debate, the act is intended to support the declaration of viruses as agents and targets for biological control activities. This will provide greater certainty for stakeholders who research, deliver and benefit from biological control programs, including scientists, farmers, land managers and the community.
The proposed amendments are consistent with the original intent of the act, which was established to provide an equitable means of determining whether a proposed biological control program is in the public interest and, where appropriate, authorising the release of biological control agents.

The act is part of a suite of approval processes which are in place to ensure that there are no unintended consequences or ongoing adverse impacts associated with biological control programs. Candidate biological control agents undergo extensive testing to assess risk to domestic agricultural and native species, and release of a biological control agent requires approvals under the Quarantine Act 1908—which will be replaced by the Biosecurity Act 2015 in June of this year—the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code Act 1994.

The bill will support future biological control programs, including the proposed national release of a new naturally occurring strain of rabbit calicivirus, known as K5 because it comes from Korea. Pending approvals, the release of K5 will boost existing biological control agents, and help to overcome resistance that is building in wild rabbit populations. Importantly, there is an effective vaccine available to protect domestic and farmed rabbits against the K5 strain. The benefit cost ratio of the calicivirus boost program is estimated at 563 to 1, taking into account the benefits for agriculture and for carbon sequestration. We simply cannot afford to compromise such an opportunity.

The bill also supports the potential future release of a biological control agent for common carp. Carp are the worst freshwater aquatic pest in south-eastern Australia, currently making up 80 to 90 per cent of total fish biomass in the Murray-Darling Basin. Following seven years of testing, Australian scientists have determined that the naturally occurring Cyprinid herpesvirus offers a genuine option for the biological control of carp.

Considerable work is required before a release of the virus could occur, including further research, legislative approvals and community consultation. However, should it be recommended that Cyprinid herpesvirus be listed as an agent organism under the Biological Control Act, the bill will ensure that there will be no ambiguity as to the legal status of the declaration.

The state and Northern Territory governments, as owners of the mirror laws to the Commonwealth Biological Control Act, have been consulted during the drafting of the bill. The successful operation of the mirror law scheme is dependent on national consistency, and complementary amendments are expected to be pursued by the state and Northern Territory parliaments. This is in keeping with the original purpose and spirit of the scheme, to ensure that the administration and legal status of biological control has a uniform basis throughout Australia.

The bill supports this government's strategic approach to farming smarter, as outlined in the 2015 White Paper on Agricultural Competitiveness, which supports giving farmers better tools and control methods for pest animals and weeds. It also invested vast amounts of money in research and development, and it has been great to be part of some of those further studies and release of funds to assist in those further studies into biological controls. Biological control is a cost-effective, highly specific and self-sustaining control method, but one that should be used as part of an integrated approach to pest management—experience has shown
that a combination of control methods used together ensures a longer term effect on the target, be it a pest animal or a weed.

The bill will not affect the existing basic scientific, technical or safety procedures and standards applying to biological control. Biological control agents will continue to be subject to considerable testing prior to release in Australia. Further, the bill does not compromise the original purpose of the act, which is to provide a publically acceptable and equitable means of determining whether a proposed biological control program is in the public interest.

Mr Deputy Speaker Scott, I know you are also very aware in your area of the great work that has been done by this nation in the past, especially with the cactoblastis moth in the control of prickly pear. It was the case that certain land was basically unsaleable because it was completely infested with what had been brought in as, I think, a garden plant. All through this nation's history we have had times when pests and weeds have unfortunately been brought in and then gone wild. We have got so close in other areas, such as in the development of an agent to control blackberries, which are a scourge from along the tablelands right down towards Victoria. If we can continue to put our efforts and our minds and the great acumen of those people at the universities and research facilities into continued biological control, we will have a much stronger agriculture sector.

Debate adjourned.

Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016
Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (09:13): Before I was interrupted by the business of the House last night, I was reflecting on the clear link of one of the Safe Schools program's authors to her clear, self-proclaimed interest in a Marxist future. With regard to Marxism, communism and socialism, obviously these are failed political and economic systems, which stifle innovation and entrepreneurship. They fail because they try to lock in no rewards for hard work or better ideas. They denigrate free thought and alternative ideas. As I have shown, activities taking place within this program attack alternative viewpoints without tolerance.

The opposition and Senator Wong in recent days have tried to censure debate with their moral catchwords or by calling critics 'right wing'. But the real concerns that Australians have cannot be dismissed with a trump word; more substance is required than that. It may have been okay when Stalin made a decision just to dismiss alternative views; it may have been okay during the days of the Soviet Union just to decide what was best for everyone and follow the party line, but over here we do have our own views. We are not thrown out of the party for having an alternative view; whilst free speech may be stomped on in caucus and everyone follows orders if they do not want to lose their pre-selection, that is not the way we operate over here. Nor is it the way this country should operate either.

Those opposite are reduced to name calling, and the moral trump words of which I speak are terms such as 'homophobia'. To take that case in point, it is defined to mean an extreme or
irrational fear of homosexuality. This is therefore a much-used word to stomp on any form of commentary on issues such as this, but it is also used wrongly. I have never met anyone that displays an extreme or irrational fear of homosexuality. I have an Army background and a sporting background and never have I met anyone who has such 'fears'. It is not properly used to reflect reality, it is merely used to stop people from talking or commenting on any issue to do with same-sex matters.

Clearly, this is exactly the way that term is being used in the current public debate. Furthermore, stories in recent days in the media have also brought back one of former Prime Minister Julia Gillard's favourites—again, from the trump word school of censorship. Just call anyone you disagree with 'extreme'. This example is from *The Sydney Morning Herald* recently:

But the move was slammed by the Australian Education Union, which said Mr Turnbull's decision was a "disappointing capitulation to extreme conservatives within the Coalition".

Then they also had this quote:

Labor education spokeswoman Kate Ellis said the Prime Minister had bowed to a "misinformed scare campaign" and "put the views of extremists in his party ahead of the interests of vulnerable young Australians".

It is my view, as I have said before, that this program is fundamentally flawed and should be axed. But if that does not occur, every parent in this country must have their permission sought before this program or any one of its documents are used in any school.

I say this not because of any lie about me having an 'extreme or irrational fear', as I have no phobias of any kind, but surely because there is evidence of the legitimately held views of young Australians being intolerantly maligned based upon the influence of the Safe Schools program. I do raise these concerns, not under the shadow of an 'extreme' viewpoint but because there is evidence of standover tactics to belittle and isolate young Australians. As the evidence in recent days clearly shows, those opposite do not care about such tactics, and they clearly stand by them with their comments.

Safe Schools is apparently about stopping bullying. Interestingly, I note from the Bullying. No Way! federal website, the suggestions do not mirror what Safe Schools is about. With regard to schools helping students, Bullying. No Way! talks about teaching and learning programs to develop students' communication, social, assertiveness and coping skills. It includes increased teacher supervision, support from school counsellors, mediation, technology access changes, class changes and disciplinary action. This is what is required, rather than the enforced doctrine of Safe Schools. No wonder this program is questioned so strongly. It needs to end now.

**Mr WATTS** (Gellibrand) (09:18): The Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and related bill before the House propose financial appropriations from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the activities of the government. It is the money that keeps the government running, and that begs the question: what is this government doing? Where is the government's agenda? In particular, where is the economic agenda of this Prime Minister?

When Malcolm Turnbull announced his challenge for the leadership of the Liberal Party and the prime ministership, his critique of the member for Warringah was that he had failed to
articulate a coherent economic plan for the nation. The member for Wentworth told his colleagues and the nation:

... the Prime Minister has not been capable of providing the economic leadership our nation needs. I had some sympathy for this argument. The Abbott government's economic agenda was a mass of contradictions, accentuated by daily displays of incompetence.

After telling voters throughout the 2013 election campaign that we faced a 'debt-and-deficit disaster' the Abbott government proceeded to double the deficit once it came to government. The former Prime Minister promised Australians at the 2013 election that there would be 'no changes to the pension' and then proceeded to increase the pension age to 70 and made a series of changes to pension indexation, the assets test and pensioner concessions. The former Prime Minister promised no cuts to health and education during the 2013 election campaign, then cut $80 billion from health and education in the 2014 budget. The former Prime Minister promised not to increase fees for university students or to change the funding structure for our universities during the 2013 election campaign, then sprung the biggest change in higher education policy in this country for 30 years on the Australian people in two lines in the 2014 budget speech—introducing full university fee deregulation without a skerrick of consultation with anyone.

For a Prime Minister who had promised, as opposition leader, to run a 'no surprises' government, I can understand the member for Wentworth's critique of his predecessor. I can understand the member for Wentworth's desire to 'restore responsible cabinet government' after the chaos of the member for Warringah's 'government by captain's call'. I can understand the member for Wentworth's argument that Australia needed 'advocacy, not slogans' in the face of the patently unsustainable three-word slogans proffered by the member for Warringah and former member for North Sydney in the place of economic leadership and advocacy.

But five months later, what has changed? What is different about Australia as a result of the ascent of the member for Wentworth to the prime ministership? How has the economic agenda of the government changed? We all know the sticker price for the member for Wentworth's ascent to the prime ministership; we know the deal he had to do with the extreme right wing of the coalition in order to be accepted into the role.

We know that he had to sell out his long-term beliefs on issues like marriage equality and climate change. So we know that as a result of that deal the $160 million plebiscite into whether we should allow same-sex marriage in Australia—Tony Abbott's marriage equality policy—remains Malcolm Turnbull's marriage equality policy. We know that in climate change Malcolm Turnbull, despite his long-held principled support for an emissions trading scheme and a price on carbon, was forced to sacrifice this and commit to continuing to implement Tony Abbott's Direct Action policy—Greg Hunt's magic-bean acquisition fund—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mitchell): I would just remind the member to use members' correct titles, please.

Mr WATTS: The assistant resources minister's magic-bean acquisition fund.

The same story is true in economic policy. While the government's schools policy certainly has not changed since the member for Wentworth ascended to the prime ministership, on this side of the House we know that education policy is a crucial plank in any government's economic agenda. The investments that we make in human capital, skills and ingenuity today
are essential to realising economic growth dividends in the future. You cannot have an ideas boom without investing in the minds of young Australians, yet in the 2014 budget the then Prime Minister defunded years 5 and 6 of the needs based education funding Gonski model.

Since becoming Prime Minister the current Prime Minister has done nothing to reverse those changes. Under the current government an average of $3.2 million has been cut from each and every school in Australia. It is the equivalent of sacking one in seven teachers. It is around $160 million from schools in my electorate alone. It is money these schools desperately need.

We see the same story in higher education. Before the last election Tony Abbott said: We will ensure the continuation of current arrangements of university funding.

His Minister for Education, now the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science said after the election:

… we're not going to raise fees …

… … …

I am not even considering it because we promised that we wouldn't …

However, in the government's first budget they announced a massive cut in university funding and a proposal to deregulate undergraduate university fees.

The Abbott-Turnbull government has continued with the policy of its predecessor and continues to hold universities hostage. The government still plans to deregulate university fees but has simply postponed the changes. We know what they want to do; they just cannot work out how to get it through the parliament. Indeed, in a statement on 28 October 2015, the Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, made it clear that these changes had only been delayed. Deregulation remains the official policy of the government; they just cannot work out how to get away with it.

Health policy too remains unchanged. Tony Abbott cut $60 billion from health in the 2014 budget. The current Prime Minister has done nothing to reverse these cuts. He has ignored calls from the industry to reverse the freeze on the Medicare rebate. As of March, Victorian hospitals will be another $73 million worse off after government changes earlier this month. That is on top of the government's $17.7 billion cut to Victorian public hospitals over the next 10 years.

Yesterday the Prime Minister said the federal government would provide extra funding to the states for hospitals and health care, but that is in direct opposition to what the Treasurer said last week when he said:

I don't think states are branch offices of the Commonwealth. I think they are sovereign governments.

… … …

… in no business in this country would anyone just accept someone walking into their office and saying the increase in cost is 8 per cent, give me the cheque. We all have to manage our Budgets. The States almost without an exception … are in surplus at the present.

It might strike someone as odd that the Prime Minister and the Treasurer are at direct odds on this issue, but in this parliament we are becoming familiar with this state of affairs.

Who should we believe? We can form a judgement about the Prime Minister's future intentions in health funding by looking at his past behaviour. We should ignore what he says
and look to what he does. In his first economic statement the current Prime Minister cut $650 million from Medicare by cutting bulk-billing for diagnostic imaging and pathology, cut health workforce training by $595 million, cut $146 million from health prevention and e-health programs, continued with the Abbott government's $1.3 billion hike in the price of medicines, continued with the Abbott government's freeze on Medicare rebates for GP visits and refused to reverse the Abbott government's $267 million cut to the Medicare safety net. The $650 million that the government cut from diagnostic imaging and pathology by scrapping bulk-billing will mean that patients pay more for CT scans, CAT scans, MRI scans, X-rays, mammograms, Pap smears and other pathology tests.

It is clear what this means. Patients will have to pay the entire cost—often hundreds or even thousands of dollars—up-front. Patients will only be able to claim a portion back through the Medicare rebate. People will be less likely to take preventive healthcare options. It is a short-sighted savings that will end up costing the health budget much more in the long term. Many of these scans are invasive. They are a hassle. People do not need more of a disincentive to have them. We know that prevention is better than cure. It is a far cry from the advocacy and economic leadership promised by the Prime Minister. These are short-term cuts with a long-term cost.

In contrast to the government, Labor has articulated a progressive and comprehensive economic agenda. We have done the hard yards in opposition. We have shown the economic leadership that the current Prime Minister promised but has failed to deliver. In education policy we have announced 'Your Child. Our Future'. It is a plan that will build the education system our children and our nation need for the future prosperity of our economy.

A Labor government will fully implement and fund the Gonski reforms on time and in full, meaning that every student in the country will benefit from increased needs based funding. It will see an additional investment in Australia's education system of $4.5 billion over school years 2018 and 2019 and a total provision of $37.3 billion for the package over the decade. Under Labor's plan every child will benefit.

We have also made the tough calls about how to fund this important investment in our nation's future economic prosperity. Labor has outlined budget savings measures to the tune of over $100 billion over the next 10 years. These include changes to superannuation taxation, combating multinational tax avoidance, increasing the tobacco excise, abolishing the Emissions Reduction Fund, and changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax. It is an unprecedented move from an opposition party. Labor will reform negative gearing and the capital gains discount to ensure that our tax system is fair, sustainable and targets jobs and growth. We have announced that we will limit negative gearing to new housing stock from 1 July 2017. We have also made it clear that all investments made before this date will not be affected by this change and will be fully grandfathered. There will be no retrospective application of these changes. This will mean that taxpayers will continue to be able to deduct net rental losses from their wage income, providing the losses come from newly constructed housing stock.

From 1 July 2017 losses from new investments in shares and existing properties can still be used to offset investment income tax liabilities. These losses will also continue to be carried forward to offset the final capital gain on the investment. Labor will also halve the capital gains discount for all assets purchased after 1 July 2017. This will reduce the capital gains tax
discount from the current 50 per cent to 25 per cent for assets that are held longer than 12 months. All investments made before this date will not be affected by this change and will be fully grandfathered. Unlike the government, we are not looking at retrospectivity in these changes.

This policy change will not affect investments made by superannuation funds—another distinct difference between Labor and the government—and the CGT discount will not change for small business assets. Labor will consult with industry, relevant stakeholders and state governments on further design and implementation details ahead of the start date for both of these proposals. This is the way you provide economic leadership, this is the way you provide a comprehensive tax reform policy and this is the way you offer an economic agenda to the Australian public. It shows that Labor is the only party with a clear vision for tax reform and Australia's future.

What has been the government's response to the kind of economic leadership that the member for Wentworth himself promised Australians? Unfortunately, it has been a reversion to Abbot-style scare campaigns. Instead of articulating a policy alternative, instead of having the debate of ideas and instead of having a contest of policy alternatives, the Prime Minister reached for the vacuous sloganeering of his predecessor. The Prime Minister told the House, in the crudest terms, 'Vote Labor and see your house price go down,' and, 'Vote Labor and get poorer.' Never mind the modelling done by the Australian National University of this question; never mind the views of eminent economists like Saul Eslake, one of the most preeminent experts on the Australian property market. They both expect Australian property prices to continue to rise sustainably under Labor's negative-gearing policy.

You would expect this kind of scare campaign and argument from the vested interests. You would expect this kind of self-interested argument from groups like the Property Council of Australia, who have a direct financial interest in the status quo. However, I must say that, if I was a member of an industry association like this that chose to use the image of a house of cards to represent the industry that I worked in, I would be a little perturbed. If my industry association was funding an advertising campaign telling the nation and potential investors that my industry was so fragile it would collapse if a government policy providing favourable tax treatment to a class of investors was changed, I would object strongly. This kind of imagery is particularly difficult to understand given that a report the Property Council commissioned from ACIL Allen Consulting said:

… it is not sound analysis to simply consider the effects of taxation arrangements on house prices. The cost of housing is shaped by a range of factors influencing demand and supply and hence it is hard to analyse the housing market in isolation from other markets and without considering the local, national and international interconnections.

That is a reasonable perspective. There are many factors at play here.

But the Prime Minister, the member for Wentworth, has eschewed this kind of rational engagement with the facts. He has ignored the nuance and reached straight for the sloganeering that he promised would leave with his predecessor. Worse, the member for Wentworth does not have the excuse of vested financial interest to explain or justify his misleading scare campaign. The only explanation for the Prime Minister's behaviour is political self-interest. He has found, in his five months on the job, that providing economic
leadership is easier to promise than to deliver. It is easier to say than to do. It is easier to talk about tax reform than it is to steer it through his cabinet and his party room. It is easier to hold a national soliloquy and a Hamlet-esque ‘to be or not to be’ discussion about tax reform than it is to actually roll the sleeves up, make a commitment, articulate a policy and fight for it. It is easier for him to say one thing and do another—and that is the story of this prime ministership.

Mr BROADBENT (McMillan) (09:33): If you ask any constituent of mine for the No. 1 issue that affects them in the electorate, 90 per cent will say, 'Roads.' So it is very important when the government spends money that that money is targeted and targeted well. The benefits to my community of targeted spending are numerous, but I would like to focus on two key areas today. Both, in their own way, concern the health, safety, prosperity and wellbeing of the people of McMillan.

I represent a party that, among its ranks, counts the greatest number of rural representatives—the Liberal Party. Federal political parties can often be accused of neglecting the needs of their rural constituents. Fortunately, the coalition government is reversing the damaging trend set by previous governments by reinvesting in rural and country Victoria and Australia. While the previous government’s spending in the bush all but dried to a trickle, this government has been responsible for helping to pump life back into rural electorates through targeted spending. Through those targeted spending initiatives in my electorate of McMillan, some $62.5 million has been committed to targeted programs, particularly on roads and infrastructure. The Roads to Recovery Program is a prime example of a spending measure that meets these goals. Three hundred and eighty-five million dollars to the budget of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, primarily to extend the reach of this program, is money well spent. In saying that, I record my appreciation of the former minister, Warren Truss, for his diligence in this area, his work to build regional Australia and his commitment and outstanding contribution to this parliament.

As just about any McMillan resident will tell you, at the top of their priority list is: 'Roads, roads, roads.' In an electorate like McMillan, where the distances from home to work, home to school, home to weekend sport and home to family—where we will all be going tonight, with a bit of luck—can be vast. The importance of roads is paramount. Mr Deputy Speaker Mitchell, as you know, the Roads to Recovery Program targets those roads maintained by our local councils. Believe me, as you would know in your electorate of McEwen, as a local federal member I know only too well how desperate local governments have been for extra funding to channel into road maintenance and difficult areas. In McMillan, the condition of narrow dirt roads, which are often battered by extreme weather and, nowadays, large, heavy vehicles, has become of particular concern in recent years. As one example of the benefit to local government and the local community, the coalition's record $3.2 billion investment will deliver the Baw Baw Shire Council $11.5 million over five years. That is a $4.9 million increase to that provided under previous programs. In 2015-16, the Baw Baw Shire Council will receive $3.6 million to repair and improve local roads. That is a 286 per cent increase in 2015-16. In 2016-17, the Baw Baw Shire Council's Roads to Recovery allocation will go up again to $4.1 million, a 330 per cent increase.

There are similar stories in McMillan. The Bass Coast Shire Council is set to receive more than $6 million; the Cardinia Shire Council more than $10.7 million; the Latrobe City Council
$10.9 million; and the South Gippsland Shire Council a whopping $15.3 million under this impressive program. Under the government's expanded black spot program the Baw Baw Shire Council will also benefit from almost $2.5 million in 2015-16, up from $103,000 in 2013-14, to fix dangerous and accident-prone sections of local roads. That is an amazing increase. Across the electorate the total cut in black spot funding for local councils has risen from $1.8 million in 2013-14 to $5.3 million in 2015-16. That is not just money to help the flow of traffic or to move somebody more quickly down a country road; it is money to save lives. The black spot program is specifically designed to address the safety issues surrounding our most dangerous roads. That is a direct investment by this government to ensure that mum, dad and the kids, not to mention the bus drivers, delivery drivers and milk truck drivers, all get home safely and are able to do their jobs. The black spot program will fix accident hot spots at 33 separate locations.

Elsewhere, this government has made major investments in the region's main thoroughfares: $22.5 million on the Princes Freeway East, particularly the Sand Road interchange; $157,500 on the planning for the South Gippsland Highway Koonwarra realignment; and $3.8 million on the South Gippsland Highway Leongatha heavy vehicle alternate route. Again, these three projects are all about keeping motorists and pedestrians safe and making sure that the wheels of commerce and community keep turning.

Elsewhere in these appropriation bills $108 million has been allocated to the National Disability Insurance Agency for the transition to the full National Disability Insurance Scheme, something that will be welcomed across the electorate of McMillan and across the nation. As a life governor of Minibah, now called Outlook Disability Services, it has been extremely important to my life's activity. I have said that the NDIS is very close to my heart, my efforts and my inspiration, and I have always said that while this program is important it must be monitored to the point where we are able to pay for the words that come out of our mouths.

I have long been an advocate for people with disability and I know well the difficulties families face when deciding what will happen with loved ones when mum and dad are no longer around. According to the most recent figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 7,389 people in my electorate of McMillan have been declared as having a disability. Given the amazing population growth in the electorate since the census was taken and knowing that 19 per cent of the general population has some sort of disability, I believe this figure would be much higher now.

I support this government's and the previous government's practical commitment to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Speaking recently to Outlook's CEO, Tony Fitzgerald—a man I have known since 1989—I have been buoyed by the prospect of the NDIS's full implementation. Recently Outlook held a major event for people with a disability and their families, with 105 people attending. Discussions were centred around what the NDIS would offer those who had waited so long for help. Much of the discussion at the event was about what was happening with the Barwon NDIS trial. Tony was happy to tell the people that the Barwon trial was a resounding success. It moved a lot of people who had been waiting for disability services off the current waiting list and, almost as importantly, gave them hope for the future. He told me:
It's the greatest social reform since Medicare. The trials have been absolutely life changing. The trials have been fulfilling the outcomes promised and meeting all targets. It has had a significant impact for people with disabilities and their families.

What Tony also told me about suicide, marriage breakdowns and the despair of people who need more care than they can afford tells me that not a lot has changed in recent years for people with disabilities. There will always be more that we can do.

But I am hopeful that when the NDIS comes to McMillan in 2018 a lot of these problems that we have today will be rectified. I have said in the past that the NDIS will not solve all problems in the disability area, but I certainly hope it will bring the kinds of changes Tony has spoken about. As Tony also said, lack of transport and lack of employment options remain major stumbling blocks for people with a disability in Outlook's service area. Again, these issues are ones that have stubbornly hung around for years. It is worth noting that the relative income of people with disabilities is approximately 70 per cent that of those without a disability, and 45 per cent of people with a disability live in poverty or near poverty, a situation that has worsened since the mid-1990s.

Tony said he had spoken to people with severe disabilities in the Barwon trial area who had lived through the most dire situations, in some cases unable to clean themselves after going to the toilet but unable to do anything because their care package had run out. He said: People have told me their lives have changed because now they have a care package that is meeting their needs. People who had all but given up hope are now looking towards employment. For many people with a disability there are no employment prospects because they simply can't afford the clothes that would be suitable for a job interview or working. They lose confidence.

Tony said carers in the Barwon trial region are now going to work, because families are finally getting the right level of support to enable that to happen.

In McMillan there are many groups and individuals like Outlook, like Tony, like the clients of Outlook and their families, who have fought long and hard to see the NDIS come to fruition. They will soon have their day. In the end, if we can improve the lives of people with a disability, bring them out of poverty, see them attend essential doctor appointments, see them enjoying life without loneliness and see their families living without the stress of wondering where the money will come from to look after them, we will have achieved something that this nation can be very proud of. To this end, I commend the $108 million that has been allocated to the National Disability Insurance Agency as another important step forward in this process. A government must be judged on its achievements—those things implemented, those projects launched, those pieces of infrastructure built or repaired. On that score, this government has many things to be proud of. However, other achievements, like inspiring hope and giving people control of their lives and a sense of belonging, are harder to measure.

I know that this government, whether investing in people or projects, is on the right track. We are spending money well and achieving results. My electorate is perfect proof of that.
what have informed me in choosing the topic for this response to the Turnbull-Joyce
government priorities as set out in the appropriations bills.

As a teacher, I taught in public schools and in private schools. I taught in regional areas,
including up near Cairns, and in the inner city, in Brisbane. From my time as a teacher and
then as a parent and as a member of parliament, I have always had a passion for education and
the importance of education for every child—the gifted, those in the middle and those that
need extra assistance. The Labor Party is my natural party because I believe passionately in
the right of every Australian child to have access to a quality education, irrespective of their
background, their economic circumstances or their geographic location. In 2016 education
should be the cornerstone of our social and democratic traditions. It is central to our economic
success and future prosperity. Productivity gains will come through investing in education.

The Gonski reforms, known by so many in the education sector, were based on a simple
core principle—that every child should get a great education, providing opportunity for all. I
thank, on the record, former prime ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard for the great legacy
that came from their investment in the Gonski reforms. Remember, the Gonski reforms came
from that focus on productivity. That is why we had a banker doing the analysis—not a
teacher, not a social worker but a banker. The question was: how can Australia do better in
the future?

Under Gonski, a nationwide funding standard was determined based on the cost of
delivering a high-quality education for all children. Additional resources were to be
distributed on the basis of need, and future funding for schools was to be evidence based. We
lost a bit of bark as a government when we brought in that evidence based funding. I know
NAPLAN is not perfect, but it is part of gathering that evidence. Irrespective of the sign
above the school gate, in my electorate and the 149 other electorates, children would receive
funding based on need. Irrespective of the sign over the school gate, all would be treated the
same when it came to evidence based future funding. The aim was to reverse sliding student
performances and to close the gap between the educational haves and the educational have-
nots.

It is unacceptable that assessment results indicate currently a two-year difference in
mathematical performance dependent on how well-off a student's parents are. Socioeconomic
status should not be an albatross around the necks of our brightest children. Improving
productivity, which is the only indicator of an economic engine running well, demands that
we bring on our brightest students. We should not condemn them because of their being
Indigenous, or rural and remote, or from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or
because of their economic status. This is just one of the reasons that the Turnbull-Joyce
government's decision to withdraw from the Gonski reforms is so disappointing. It is more
than disappointing. It is actually gutless and deceitful to see such a backflip after the
commitment that was given on the corflutes in my electorate of Moreton—and in the member
for Kingston's electorate, I am sure. There were commitments at the election, saying 'We will
fund Gonski in years 5 and 6.'

Ms Rishworth: Dollar for dollar.

Mr PERRETT: Dollar for dollar, on the same page. You have heard it all before. That
gutless backflip cannot be forgiven, and nor will it be forgotten. If we do not get the
fundamentals right at our schools, how can we aspire to a future that is innovative and agile?
All this talk about being innovative and agile and letting the ideas boom, while you are underfunding, defunding and breaking your commitments, is deceitful, as far as I am concerned. It is clear that the Turnbull-Joyce government do not really care about our education system. We all heard their hollow promise before the 2013 election: 'No cuts to health, no cuts to education'. We saw it on billboards. We saw it on corflutes. We heard the then shadow education minister, Mr Pyne, say it. They talked about improving teacher training, then ripped $80 billion out of the education system. Sorry—

Mr Ramsey: That's not right.

Mr PERRETT: The $80 billion is out of health and education. I should get that right. But still the budget papers from 2014 show an $80 billion cut to health and education and about $30 billion being ripped out of the education system. My home state of Queensland will be more than $6 billion worse off. In my electorate of Moreton, schools will be over $179 million worse off. Each school will be, on average, $3.2 million worse off. These cuts are the equivalent of sacking one in seven teachers and, if reversed, would be enough to employ an extra 179 teachers for the next 10 years in Moreton electorate alone. Imagine what could happen with those extra teachers and educational workers in our schools. In Moreton, we saw about $1,000 per student, per year, in educational support cut, directly affecting over 32,000 students. This is just one electorate. Every student in every school will be worse off from these cuts—government schools, Catholic schools and independent schools. And the students who need the most help will be the ones hardest hit—in schools that are rural and remote, schools with significant numbers of Indigenous Australians, schools with significant numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students and, obviously, those in the poorest quintile as well.

The Gonski funding model implemented by Labor also included loadings for students with disabilities, and $100 million was put forward by Labor as an interim measure to provide support for children with disabilities in schools as a consistent method of funding was determined. That figure has unfortunately been stripped by the Turnbull-Joyce government. Making sure that students with disabilities are supported is the unfinished business of the Gonski reforms. Schools throughout my electorate are concerned about the reduced funding for children with disabilities, a funding differential that only becomes greater when higher levels of support are required. Students with disabilities need resources to level the playing field. They should have every opportunity, like all children, to reach their full potential. I know not every student is going to excel in education, but we can always lift their standards.

Schools in Moreton are doing a remarkable job despite the best efforts of this government to undermine their educational outcomes. Their spirit may be bruised by the disappointment of this reduced funding after that election commitment, but the children's education is not yet broken. The resilience of these hardworking parents and teachers never ceases to surprise and amaze me as I wander around my schools.

The president of the Coopers Plains State School P&C, Katrina Marschke, said that their school 'hosts events every term to assist with family participation.' The program, aptly named the 'Family Connection Program', offers both morning and night events so that they are accessible to all families. I am seeing the results flow in Coopers Plains State School.
For the past 40 years the P&F—the parents and friends group—at St Sebastian's school at Yeronga has hosted an art show. They raised $40,000 to $50,000 at this event and then put it back into wonderful events. The P&F president, Nathan Groenhout, said that last year they raised $50,000 for the school and that money has been spent on things like a softball play area in the playground, bus transport for sporting events and an annual trip to Canberra. I am sure every MP would recognise it is crucial for every student to understand our democracy. They also spent the money on before- and after-school sporting programs and school technology equipment.

Mike Ennis, the hardworking principal of MacGregor State School, praised the exemplary leadership of the former P&C president, Waikay Lau, and Leanne Hill the vice-president. Mr Ennis said that the P&C have a close and respectful relationship with the school and the school council, and they are all about maximising learning opportunities for the student. They have businesses such as out-of-school-hours care, the tuckshop and the uniform shop. The money they generate from things such as the Mayfest is ploughed back into the school. I wish the new president, Ken Howard, well. He has very big shoes to fill, but because he is such a big man I am sure that he has big feet as well. The P&C are blessed with many volunteers. I look forward to catching up with them at Mayfest.

The Wellers Hill State School P&C also have some wonderful projects in train. Their before- and after-school care provides funding for many of these projects, such as the recently completed air conditioning at the school and the swim club. They have also recently received a grant to renovate their school hall.

The P&F at St Elizabeth's—also in my electorate but right on the border with Griffith—has a huge agenda for the year, including their annual fete. The theme this year is 'Celebrating Heroes'. They have had a successful welcome function with 350 families attending. They are soon holding a disco and later in the year a trivia night. They are working on some projects to get some drinking taps for the children and a building program to get some more covered areas.

The Watson Road State School P&C in Acacia Ridge is currently preparing for their AGM. They are focused on gaining a broader community cross-section as part of the executive. There is never great competition for leadership roles in these P&Cs and P&Fs, unfortunately. Some of their initiatives include revitalising the healthy tuckshop, which is all about educating kids about foods, a refit of the facility and restarting their community garden after the very hot summer we have had in Brisbane.

The Oxley State School P&C have also done some amazing work in the past year. They had their community festival in March. They installed some new sun shades, as well as some additional air conditioning in the administration block. This year the P&C will fund some writing workshops for students to complement the school's particular focus on writing and literacy. They are also planning to install a fan in the big school hall. This a very important part of the community, as we saw with the floods in 2011 where it was on the high ground and a lot of people flocked to receive support—not that I am hoping there will be any floods, but that is the reality of climate change, I guess.

The hardworking parents from all of these schools know the importance of education for their children. I would also particularly like to mention two other schools that I have had
some contact with: St Brendan's at Moorooka and Yeronga State School. I know they are doing fantastic work.

Of the more than 32,000 school students in my electorate all will suffer because of the Abbott-Turnbull government's, or the Turnbull-Joyce government's, cuts to education. There is a community cost when these cuts are rolled out. The economic cost of failing to lift achievement for all students is significant. The OECD calculated that Australia will forego a GDP boost of 2.8 per cent unless our students graduate high school with the foundational skills required for the global economy by 2030. That is roughly equivalent to $44 billion in today's terms. It is the kind of figure that should make a Prime Minister, who supposedly prides himself on economic leadership, sit up and get out from under the table he is cowering under—curled up in a ball and sucking his thumb—and actually show some economic leadership.

The government's $30 billion school cuts mean that any student who falls behind is less likely to receive the support they desperately need to catch up. The educational impact of this can be carried forward through not only any remaining education but also, potentially, the workforce. Failing to properly invest in education funding lacks foresight. It is not about courage; it actually shows that you are not thinking of the economy.

There has never been a more exciting time to be an Australian if you are not in the school system. Under Prime Minister Turnbull and Minister Birmingham, things are only set to go downhill from here. This educational leadership team is locking in mediocrity, systemic inequality and an uncertain future for our children. Labor has been, and will continue to be, the party of educational reform and investment.

Labor's Your Child, Our Future policy will ensure the full implementation and funding of the Gonski reforms. It will see an additional investment in our education system of $37.3 billion over the decade. A world-leading and visionary education system is required to create our future teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and leaders. Labor's Your Child, Our Future is a sound policy, not a political tactic or an election ploy. It has a strong focus on every child's needs, more individual attention for students, better trained teachers, more targeted resources, better equipped classrooms and more support for students with special learning needs. With Labor's policy every Australian child will benefit. Labor's Your Child, Our Future policy is a significant investment in the future of Australia. So, rather than put a $1,000 cut on the head of all 32,000 students in the electorate of Moreton, I ask the Turnbull-Joyce government to reconsider and invest in education. (Time expired)

Mr RAMSEY (Grey) (09:59): This debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and a related bill gives me an opportunity to reflect. Often when it comes to government expenditure we are prone to say: 'Thank you very much. What have you got for me today?' But I thought it would be a good exercise for me to go back and look at what we have achieved and what is in the pipeline.

There has been a strong flow of capital works programs across the Grey electorate across a wide range of assets. In fact, in the last round of funding under National Stronger Regions Fund we were able to announce $5 million for the Ceduna fish unloader at Thevenard. Thevenard is the second-busiest port in South Australia; not many people even know about it. It is in the far west of the state. Its main tonnage comes from gypsum—which provides around 85 per cent of the gyprock that is used in the Australian building industry—grain, salt,
mineral sands and the fishing industry. Increasingly the port is becoming overcrowded, which has led to the downsizing of the fishing effort in the area. There is also exploration occurring in the Great Australian Bight at the moment, with a number of major investments in the area led by BP, who are planning to dig four exploration wells. Another seven are planned by other companies for a total expenditure of about $1 billion. There is a supply line for these drilling rigs and that also will need space at the Thevenard port. The separate wharf that will now be provided for the fishing industry will allow for extra activity and, we hope, some of the fishing effort that has left the Ceduna area will relocate there, and we are hopeful of picking up some processing activity to go with it. That is a very good investment.

In Whyalla, $150,000 was allocated to the Whyalla Leisure Centre as part of a $1.2 million refurbishment. As I have said on a number of occasions in this House, Whyalla is under great stress at the moment, with issues in the steel industry, but this is an injection of funds into that community. The only public pool in Whyalla is at the leisure centre, which also includes squash courts and a gym. It already had something of a revamp and it is an excellent centre but, like many 30-year-old pieces of infrastructure, it needs some extra maintenance. The refurbishment program will go a long way towards transforming it into a 21st century service.

There is $990,000 to extend the Barunga nursing home facility in Port Broughton. It is a not-for-profit facility and community owned, and the associated Barunga Village received $3 million in 2014 for extra units. Port Broughton, a beautiful little seaside town, has made an industry out of providing services to our ageing population. It has become one of the great economic drivers of that community. This extension of the nursing home facility will be greatly appreciated.

At Kadina there is an investment of $4.8 million in the revitalisation, expansion and rejuvenation of the Kadina sports centre. When the centre was built 40 years ago it was a trendsetter but, like many other things that were built 40 years ago, it has become tired and it needs serious upgrading; then it will be good for another 40 years. Kadina is central to the Copper Coast council. There are three major communities there in Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo, and all of those will be able to access this centre at some stage.

Very importantly, an investment of $5 million we announced under the Stronger Regions Fund will contribute to a $15 million project in Port Pirie, which the council and the state government will partner on. That will be the building of a new sports centre. A fantastic new centre has been built with Commonwealth support in Port Augusta, and this one will be not the same but certainly of a similar standard and will provide a central point for sports in Port Pirie. In fact, it will enable the council to make some efficiencies around the number of ovals they run—saving water and resources—so it is a good outcome. It will bring a string of new sporting events to Port Pirie, which has a long history of providing a venue for the senior sports activities.

This funding is not only about stronger regions. Grey scored a major win in the last round of the Bridges Renewal Program as well, with $2.2 million invested in replacing the London Street bridge in Port Lincoln—not the London Bridge but the London Street bridge. Some people are a little bit timid about driving in Adelaide and I often say to them, 'If you can drive in Port Lincoln you can drive in Adelaide.' It is a very tight city centre. In fact, around 30 to 40 per cent of the two or three million tonnes of grain produced on the Eyre Peninsula goes through the main street of Port Lincoln on road trains. At the moment they cannot cross the...
shortest route to get to the silos, because the London Street bridge—which is a piece of ageing infrastructure that goes over the railway line—has a 10-tonne limit on it, which is not very handy for road trains. So this investment will allow for decongestion. It will allow the traffic to move better in Port Lincoln and it is an excellent project.

Last year, the member for Barker and I had the opportunity to pitch for a special road funding allocation on the back of some unspent funds allocated to South Australia that were in danger of returning to the Treasury. There is nothing particularly wrong with that, but we could not see why that money should go out of South Australia. South Australian councils had lost a line of funding called the supplementary road funding package, which was attached to the financial assistance grants, or FAGs. Previous governments had addressed a flaw in the FAGs funding formula for councils in South Australia. We received something like five per cent of the national funding in the road package, and we have eight per cent of the population and 11 per cent of the roads. So there had been this extra road funding, called the supplementary road funding package; unfortunately, the Labor government did not extend that past 2013, so there was no future funding left for it at that stage. So it was retired. That has caused a fair bit of anxiety around local councils in South Australia. The member for Barker, Tony Pasin, and I approached Jamie Briggs, who was the minister at the time, and a little over $20 million was redirected from the funds that were to return to Treasury to go back to roads in the electorates of Grey and Barker. All this requires is a 20 per cent top-up from the state government. They are going to get $20 million and all they have to do is put in $4 million.

Mr Champion interjecting—

Mr RAMSEY: It is very important infrastructure, member for Wakefield, stuff that you would be very pleased with because people have to drive down the National Highway to get to Wakefield. Part of it will go on passing lanes south of Port Augusta. There is over $3.3 million to sort out a bridge crossing and provide extra passing lanes. There has been a lot of anxiety in the Whyalla community in particular after a spate of road accidents a little over 12 months ago, and $4 million is designated to go to passing lanes between Port Augusta and Whyalla.

Another $800,000 is allocated to shoulder widening of the Tod Highway. The Tod Highway is on the Eyre Peninsula. It runs from Wudinna down to Cummins and then on to Port Lincoln, and in fact is another of the major grain routes into Port Lincoln. It has become narrower and narrower, which is one of the things that happens to bitumen roads from wide transport. When truck wheels go off the edge—and you can see the little gutter at the edge of the bitumen that gets blown out by the wind from vehicles that go past—pieces of bitumen get chipped off. So these roads which were once much wider get narrower and narrower, and, as the trucks get drawn towards the middle, eventually they get to the point where sometimes they lose a rear vision mirror as they pass each other going down the middle of the road. This is obviously an unsafe situation for these highways to be in. It is a state highway, but $800,000 has been allocated for the shoulder widening. That particular stretch of road has also benefitted from some funding from the national road Black Spot Program. There is also $400,000 allocated for shoulder widening and upgrades on the Copper Coast Highway between Kulpara and Kadina, one of the busiest roads in the electorate.
All this is still waiting for a 20 per cent contribution from the SA government. I have been working very hard with the Minister for Regional Development, Geoff Brock, who has approached the minister on a number of occasions. I keep getting the message, 'The state government is on board, don't worry about this,' as I have been working with the member for Giles, Eddie Hughes. I have recently written to the minister as well. I remain confident they will come on board. My community, particularly in Whyalla, is becoming increasingly agitated over the fact that it has not yet been nailed down in the budget cycle.

In the nicest possible way, I say to the South Australian government: 'There is $20 million on the table. It requires $4 million from you. Don't let that opportunity pass by. These are important projects. They are lifesaving projects. We need your cooperation.' I urge the minister to put this at the top of his pile and get it happening because we are approaching a parliamentary break and the end of the financial year. These things may or may not be retrievable afterwards, so it is important that we get that work done.

The coalition government continue to invest in a range of projects across Grey, including the $85 million upgrade of the main road into the APY Lands. Talk about rough roads, the cost of living in remote areas, smashing your car or smashing your truck to bits and adding to the cost of food, perishables and everything else that goes to supplying these remote Indigenous communities. This investment will make a significant contribution to the way of life there. There is $50 million to be invested in installing advanced train management systems on the main north-south and east-west lines. This will allow freight trains to run closer to each other, which will improve the productivity of the railway lines and reduce freight rates. These are good investments in productive infrastructure.

There is investment for rest areas on the National Highway. Traffic increases as the national freight task increases, so we need to look after our truckies and the people who share the road with them. There is the doubling of the Roads to Recovery program over two years for local councils. There is $1½ million for the remote aerodrome program and $800,000 for the Elliston walking trail. This will all be provided through $7 million from the road Black Spot Program.

There is also terrific support for a number of veterans' organisations, the most prominent of which would probably be $138,000 for the Crystal Brook RSL. The Crystal Brook RSL was in danger of disappearing a few years ago; it now has over 100 members. There has been a complete renewal of interest in this area that is a result of successive governments—and I mean this in a non-partisan manner—recognising the importance of our Anzac history and our armed forces. We have focused on contributing to Remembrance and Anzac Day commemorations each year, coming on the back of the 100-year commemorations.

There has been a complete renewal of interest around Australia. The marches get bigger every year. It is so important that we honour that service so future generations know exactly what those who have gone before them did for their country. This is all part of that program; making sure the RSLs and the Vietnam veterans' organisations survive, prosper and provide good services to their members. That investment will continue and in the distant future, if there is a change of government in Australia, I hope it will continue even then.

Mr CHAMPION (Wakefield) (10:14): I am sure that we will have bipartisanship support for RSLs. The member for Grey and I share a common border and probably some of the same veterans. So I would certainly like to add to that sentiment.
Today, in rising to speak on Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and related bill, I want to talk a bit about jobs. I want to talk about the importance of them and the importance of consistency in public policymaking on jobs. Labor is the only party in this parliament or outside of it that gives consistent policymaking on jobs and wages. Mr Turnbull's government, the coalition government, has had two Prime Ministers; two Treasurers; I do not know how many industry ministers—probably just two—three defence ministers; and 14 other ministerial changes. It is a government that is divided from top to bottom. It is a government that is driven by its backbench.

I was reminiscing the other day about some of the rhetoric we hear. Nowadays we hear rhetoric about the tech sector, about the ideas boom and about the Prime Minister's wonderful new economy. We used to hear about Tony's tradies. That was the slogan of the previous Prime Minister—he was out there 'backing in the tradies'. You never hear about the tradies anymore from those opposite. You do not hear about working men, carpenters or electricians. You do not hear about them nearly as much as you once did. That is because this government is both inconsistent and incoherent in its policymaking.

You can see that in the tax debate. First of all we had the inconsistency on capital gains tax, with the Prime Minister ruling out any changes and then we found that they were considering changes on capital gains tax on superannuation. Then we saw Phil Coorey writing in the *Australian Financial Review* a day ago, 'Cabinet digs in as PM backflips on CGT'. What is the business community and the tradies and subcontractors out there in the community supposed to make of that? Then we saw the strange attack on Labor's negative gearing policy. We have a tax policy, unlike the government, which does not have a tax policy. It is an extraordinary position for a government to be in after a couple of years. They do not have a tax policy at all. On the one hand, the Prime Minister was in here saying that prices were going to go down and then the member for Higgins, who is a minister of some sort—I cannot remember her title, because they change so often—was on Sunrise saying that prices were going to go up. So you had two completely contradictory scare campaigns. You can have one side of the argument but you cannot have both sides of the argument, and if you try to have both sides of the argument—guess what?—it absolutely destroys your credibility. The government are incoherent, divided and inconsistent. What does that do for jobs and wages? It does not do them any good at all.

Labor has been providing leadership on these issues. It is Labor who has been providing leadership. One of the things that we have not been talking about in this parliament is how our negative gearing policy will back in those tradies in the expanding suburbs—the people who build new homes, who rely on construction for their living. That is where this investment will be channelled—into new homes. People will still be able to negatively gear. Those who are already in negative gearing will be able to retain that tax deduction and those who want to grow their wealth through negative gearing will still be able to do so, but they will do so by adding to the housing stock, by building new houses, which will back in the people who we do not hear about from this government anymore—Tony's tradies. That is because we do not hear much about Tony, the member for Warringah, anymore. He is hidden away, though he does his best to make it into the headlines on defence matters—and I might go into that at another time.
We have seen this inconsistency and incoherency most of all in my own home state of South Australia. We saw it in the automotive sector. It was not so long ago that we had a Liberal Treasurer in this House—who is now the Ambassador to the United States, and I am sure he is doing a good job in the national interest—about whom there was an article in the Australian Financial Review of 11 December 2013 under the headline 'Hockey dares GM to leave'. With that sensational attack on the car industry, this government waved goodbye to a billion dollars in investment in the automotive area and waved goodbye to 10,000 jobs in South Australia, 30,000 in Victoria and thousands more elsewhere. What does that do for economic confidence? I can tell you that it absolutely smashes it. People who have a blue collar or who wear a fluoro vest to work in South Australia are looking down the barrel at a very difficult labour market.

Talking about consistency, I noticed on Chris Pyne's website the other day 'Statement—Meeting with Holden'. It is a press release of 24 February, talking about how the industry minister met with Holden on 24 February and how he 'reiterated' his 'strong support for the Punch proposal and urged General Motors to carefully consider it as a viable option for continuing the auto industry in South Australia once the company leaves next year.' We are all supporters of the Punch proposal in South Australia. But, if you were an alien who had jetted down into South Australia or into Australia, you would question the consistency of this government's decision making, because on the one hand we have the former Treasurer, Mr Hockey, callously and in a cavalier way waving goodbye to GM and then you have the industry minister, the member for Sturt, now backing in this new proposal. So you can understand how people might be confused and how confusing that inconsistency around jobs in the automotive industry might be.

It is interesting to note that the Liberals are not the only ones who are confused about investment in the automotive industry; we also have the Nick Xenophon Team. We know that Mr Xenophon is very supportive of automotive manufacturing in South Australia, and I welcome his support, but his running mate, Stirling Griff, was quoted in an InDaily article in the Adelaide media, under the heading 'Xenophon sidekick says he wouldn't support Holden handouts', as saying: I would not be supporting giving automotive companies further subsidies.
I do not find that the ideal way to go (but) I think Nick has a different view on that.

So there is an inconsistency. In fairness, I might say, they are now, apparently, in furious agreement about it, but there is an inconsistency in public policy toward the automotive industry. And that costs jobs; it costs jobs whether it is the Liberal Party or Nick Xenophon's Team party.

We need consistency, and Labor is the only party out there providing consistency on jobs. It does not matter whether it is the automotive industry, the submarine and shipbuilding industry or the steel industry, Labor is the consistent voice for working Australians and for those who want an economy that is diversified, makes things and employs people. We have a steel policy out there. We have a comprehensive policy about building submarines in this country in our national interest and for our national defence which has a comprehensive and sensible way of procuring those submarines into the future and making sure that our shipbuilding has a continuous build.
For all of this government's rhetoric, and I know that its defence white paper is coming out, one of the things that has not been put into a press release is that, for the two supply ships which have been sent off to Korea with, apparently, a Spanish company building them—I would not want to be writing the instruction manuals for that build; Spanish into Korean—we still have not had that announced by this government. One wonders if it is leaving it until after the next election. So Labor is the only party with consistent policies and consistent leadership, led by Bill Shorten, on jobs.

That brings us to the other important thing: if you have a job, it is important for it to be well paid, it is important for you to have some respect and it is important for you to be renumerated for the work you do and when you do it. It is so important for working Australians in retail and hospitality, in factories, in transport and in emergency services to have their penalty rates. I cannot tell you how important it is. We know what the Liberal Party's attitude is on penalty rates. It has been the same for 100 years. But, just to remind people: this was the headline in The Australian on 30 September 2015: 'Penalty rates outdated, deter weekend work: Michaelia Cash'. Also, there was this in InDaily—in the Adelaide media—on 7 October 2015: 'Briggs—that is, the member for Mayo—steps up Turnbull attack on penalty rates'. Working Australians should be in no doubt about what the plan for penalty rates is of those opposite. It is to remove them. It is the same policy they have had for 100 years. At least on this they have been consistent. They have never had an original idea in workplace reform in the Liberal Party. It has always been 'feed the donkey less and whip them harder', for want of a better word.

When you look at other parties, it is disappointing that Family First and Bob Day want to cut penalty rates. He wants to get rid of the minimum wage for young workers. With the Nick Xenophon Team party, I noticed that at a Senate doors press conference yesterday Senator Xenophon said: 'I made a mistake about calling for a change in penalty rates in the way I did. My motivations were all about the level of youth unemployment. I think a much more sensible approach would be if we were to have a system of penalty rates where the independent umpire, the Fair Work Commission, determines what penalty rates are. But I also think there is a case for small businesses employing less than 20 full-income employees.'

This is not the first time that Senator Xenophon has said that he made a mistake. He said it on 27 January 2016 in a reply to a question that I posed to him about penalty rates and the bill he had presented to the Senate. He said, 'I made a mistake.' Just to remind people what he said when he introduced his bill:

I think that there is a special case, only for small businesses with 20 full-time equivalent employees or fewer and only in the hospitality and retail sectors, to look at a more flexible working arrangement where you do not have penalty rates of 175 or 200 per cent, which has been a job killer.

When voters in South Australia hear Nick Xenophon, the leader of the Nick Xenophon Team party—or maybe he is the convener; I am not sure what role he really plays in that party, but it seems to bear his name—it would seem that there is some inconsistency there. On one level, he says that he has made a mistake, or that he wants to clarify his position. But, then, in substance, his position has not changed. When he says to voters, 'Don't worry, the Fair Work Commission will be deciding your penalty rates,' that should be no reassurance at all. His lead Senate candidate, Mr Stirling Griff, formerly of the Australian Retailers Association, in 2003 went down to the South Australian Industrial Relations Commission to vary the retail industry
award to reduce the penalty rates payable on Sundays. He was successful in reducing penalty rates on that occasion through an application to the Industrial Relations Commission.

What we have here is a false assurance about penalty rates given by the Nick Xenophon Team. On one hand, it is a seemingly sensible policy to refer it to the Industrial Relations Commission as some sort of guarantee for workers; but, in reality, there is an unrelenting drive to cut penalty rates for retail and hospitality workers—thousands of people in my electorate. Those people need their penalty rates and they do not deserve to have confusion. They want clarity. The clarity should be: only Labor has a consistent policy on wages and conditions and on jobs and industry. That is the position we will be taking to the election.

Mr PITT (Hinkler—Assistant Minister to the Deputy Prime Minister) (10:29): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016. In my electorate of Hinkler, there are many things underway, things which will help improve our local economy and provide jobs. One of those is the Fraser Coast Military Trail, which is being proposed by the Fraser Coast Regional Council. The Fraser Coast Military Trail will be a huge positive to the region and has the potential to draw in large number of tourists to my electorate of Hinkler. The trail, which will link existing military sites around the region, is progressing well, with the RSL recently receiving $900,000 under the Stronger Regions Fund for stage 2 of the Duncan Chapman Military History project.

I must note that grant was secured by the member for Wide Bay, our former Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss. Maryborough of course is in his electorate, but the member for Wide Bay and I share many other things: we share boundaries, we share a local council in the Fraser Coast Regional Council and of course we both work for the common good for the people of both Wide Bay and Hinkler. While I have the opportunity, I would like to congratulate the former Deputy Prime Minister on the announcement of his retirement. Warren has been a great colleague of mine and a friend of the people of Hinkler for a very long time. He has served not only the people of Wide Bay but also the people of Queensland, the people of regional Australia, the people of Australia in total and the Nationals for almost 26 years. The member for Wide Bay is one of those people—and I have known many of them over my working career—who, when they get to the point of retirement, you want to be able to tip upside down, give them a quick shake and have all of their knowledge fall into a bucket as something that you can store on the shelf and reach into in times of need. Unfortunately that cannot be done, but I must thank the former Deputy Prime Minister for all the advice and assistance that he has given me in the time I have been in this place. He has been an absolute servant for the people of Australia, and I congratulate he and Mrs Truss on their future retirement and I wish them well.

Stage 2 of the Duncan Chapman Military History project will feature an eight-metre high representation of the cliffs of Gallipoli ahead of the statue in Maryborough's Queens Park. It will also include information bays between three panels of cliffs, which will convey the Gallipoli story, and sculptures will depict the landing scene at Anzac Cove. A trench walk depicting the Western Front and a memorial commemorating the battle of Pozieres, where Major Duncan Chapman was killed, will complete this unique, interactive, memorial. The tourists that are attracted to this site will also be attracted to the areas inside my electorate.

Beginning at the Maryborough military museum, which is home to over 7,000 items of military memorabilia, the history trail will include a Vietnam War museum in Toogoom, the
Duncan Chapman statue and the training ground on Fraser Island of the famous former Z force from World War II. I must congratulate the sub-branch of the RSL at Toogoom, which has just secured an APC from the Vietnam War era. It is an armoured personnel carrier, which they will have on display, which I believe will arrive in future weeks.

I would also like to throw out my congratulations to those surviving members of Delta Company from the battle of Long Tan, who celebrate a very significant memorial date this year in August. There are a number of Delta Company vets in Toogoom and in Hervey Bay. Lt Col. Harry Smith, retired, a former Hervey Bay resident who has just recently moved back to the Sunshine Coast, is a very well-known advocate for the members of Delta Company from the battle of Long Tan.

A military dive wreck, which I have been advocating for my electorate since I was elected in 2013, would be a fantastic addition to the military trail. While the fate of the HMAS Tobruk has yet to be decided, I acknowledge there is strong competition for it with both Tasmania and the Gold Coast expressing interest in having it scuttled in their waters. A Wide Bay Burnett regional dive wreck advisory group has said that while the HMAS Tobruk is the ideal vessel—as it is possible to swim through it from one end to the other—there could be another vessel that would be just as suitable. If the Department of Defence do have another vessel they think is suitable, the advisory group would consider it as an option. There is a strong need for a new tourist attraction in my electorate of Hinkler to stimulate the local economy and create jobs. The dive wreck advisory group estimates that a military dive wreck would contribute between $1 million and $4 million each year to the local economy—that is a great boost. Another flow-on would be an increase in domestic and international visitations to the Wide Bay Burnett region. In New South Wales, for example, about 5,000 divers explore HMAS Adelaide with at least 90 per cent of divers coming from outside the region, including 20 per cent who come from overseas.

For tourism, it is no secret to my constituents that Hinkler is a fantastic place to visit and live; we have everything right here on our doorstep. Just last month, Flight Centre announced its top 10 Australian holiday destinations for 2015 and Bundaberg, at the northern end of my electorate, was ranked No. 6. Rising in popularity by nine per cent in 2015, more Aussies are taking advantage of Bundaberg's laid-back appeal and easy access to the country's largest concentration of nesting marine turtles. Each year, from November to March, around 30,000 visitors witness the majestic marine turtles laying their clutches on the shores of Mon Repos beach, which has the most significant loggerhead turtle nesting population in the South Pacific region. And the Fraser Coast recorded Queensland's strongest domestic overnight visitor growth, with a 21.4 per cent increase—nearly triple the overall state increase of 7.9 per cent—for the period ending September 2015. Fraser Coast Opportunities reported a major 35.9 per cent boost in intrastate visitors to the area. 'Holiday makers' and 'visiting friends and relatives' were the primary purposes for those trips, with raw figures of 294,000 and 264,000 visitors respectively.

The Hinkler electorate is a wonderful, community minded place to live with many groups and organisations providing support and friendship to our residents. The coalition government is providing funding opportunities to these groups, through the Stronger Communities Program. Eligible community groups can apply for grants of between $5,000 and $20,000 for small capital projects. Each federal electorate is allocated $150,000 a year over two years. In
my electorate, we have already presented three community organisations with their grants and there are more announcements to come.

Rum City Rods and Customs was awarded $5,775 to replace the roof on their hall in Bundaberg. The club was formed around 1994 and was originally named the Rum City Rodders. The club's main objective is to promote and encourage community interest in the sport of constructing, showing and driving street legal rods. I must say, having seen some of the members' cars, they are just incredible pieces of workmanship. The long-awaited upgrade will provide the club's 70 members with a central meeting point that is safe and dry, and the hall can now also be utilised by other community groups.

The Bundaberg Steam Tramway Preservation Society received a grant of $18,182 which will go towards replacing the existing timber sleepers with concrete sleepers along the two-kilometre line. Since it was built in November 1988, the Australian Sugar Cane Railway has carried more than 500,000 locals and tourists. It is a sight to behold—a true coal-driven steam engine towing around the botanic gardens. The society is committed to keeping ticket prices low so that children of all ages can enjoy the botanic gardens and learn about locomotive and sugar cane history. These upgrades will reduce the number of track maintenance closures, which will enable the railway society to entertain and educate more families.

We Care 2, an organisation which provides meals and assistance to about 1,000 disadvantaged Fraser Coast residents each week, was awarded $10,000 to purchase new freezers. These freezers will enable the team at We Care 2 to continue providing vital assistance across the Fraser Coast, whether it is through Extra Choices, the Community Connect Food Van, school breakfasts, emergency relief or to support the Comfort Kitchen weekly dinner for the disadvantaged.

I will have several more projects to announce through round 1 over the next few weeks, which will benefit community groups right across the electorate. The second round of Stronger Communities funding opened last week, so I encourage any community groups in my electorate to consider whether they might be eligible and submit an expression of interest.

In Queensland we have local government elections underway right now. The upcoming elections, which take place on 19 March, have attracted a lot of interest. We have six candidates vying to be mayor of Fraser Coast Regional Council and 35 candidates standing for council. In Bundaberg Regional Council we have five running for mayor, with 33 candidates running for council. I take this brief opportunity to wish all candidates well for their campaigns.

In relation to aged care in my electorate, construction has begun on a number of aged-care facilities. Builders Woollam Constructions have just turned the first sod of a $40 million aged-care home at Kawunungan, which will bring not just 150 beds but also more than 100 jobs. A $30 million Premier Health Care facility in Urraween's Medical Place will offer 145 new beds, with construction due to start next month. In Bargara, a $25 million, 160-bed aged-care facility is being built beside the existing Palm Lake Resort. It is expected to open in April. Attracting investment to our region to deliver more aged-care facilities is something I have been particularly vocal about since my election in 2013. It requires a team effort from all three levels of government and the private sector. Our senior residents deserve to live out their remaining days with dignity, and Hinkler is an idyllic place to do just that. While the federal
government provides the recurrent funding for the daily operation of aged-care facilities, development and planning is controlled by councils and the state government.

There are many things that all levels of government can do to make our region an attractive investment option. This includes providing land, reducing red tape and speeding up approval processes. I am very pleased to see so many new facilities being built across the region, which will reduce wait times and stimulate our local construction industry.

We should be celebrating the fact that Australians are living healthier, longer lives, rather than focusing on the economic challenges presented by having an aging population. As the baby-boomer generation ages and demand for quality aged care and retirement villages continues to grow, there will be enormous opportunities for employment in the construction industry, mobility retail sector, medical technology and innovation, pharmacy, nursing and allied health care.

While I am on my feet, I would also like to congratulate Knauf. Knauf is another significant project which has started in my electorate. It is the construction of a plasterboard manufacturing plant at the Port of Bundaberg. Civil works began on 1 February on the $70 million plant, which is expected to create around 200 jobs during construction and around 70 permanent jobs once completed. Knauf are importing more than 200 containers from Europe for local companies to install. The Bundaberg facility, which is expected to be operational by the beginning of 2017, will be the company's third facility in Australia, with manufacturing plants also in Sydney and Melbourne.

The project will include gypsum handling and processing facilities to support plasterboard production and for the sale of gypsum to our very important local agricultural sector. For those who know the Bundaberg region, it is one of the largest horticultural producing areas of Australia. We are the biggest producer of heavy vegetables, so to have a company that can import lime directly and make it into a pelletised product at a much reduced cost will be a big benefit for our local farmers. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (10:41): When it comes to Parramatta, there is something seriously wrong with the planning processes in New South Wales. It is not that nothing is going on—in fact, if I look out of my window I see cranes everywhere over the skies of Parramatta. That is a good thing. There is lots and lots of construction activity, and Parramatta depends on the construction industry for around seven per cent of its employment. When I talk to people who do not come from Parramatta, they tell me how great the development is in Parramatta and how Parramatta is really coming ahead. But when I talk to people who actually live there I get a different, quite concerning story.

There are literally tens of thousands of new residences coming online in Parramatta. There are huge increases. When you add them all up it is between a 50 and 100 per cent increase in the number of residences in Parramatta over the next 10 to 20 years. It is a substantial increase. In fact, when you look at the council's promotional video on why you should come to Parramatta, it looks a bit like a *Game of Thrones* opening title—everywhere there is open land, up goes a building. That is pretty much what is happening in Parramatta. There are lots and lots of new buildings, but unfortunately there has been very little attention to infrastructure that supports existing residents, let alone the tens of thousands of new ones, corralled as they are into really quite small spaces in our suburbs.
Where there is new infrastructure, it is off in the never-never and it is not what was wanted by local councils and residents. It is very much infrastructure that suits the developers, not the people who actually live in our cities. We in Parramatta, Westmead, Carlingford and Toongabbie know how overstretched our infrastructure is now, and we look for the work in the area that will support the growth of our population. It is just not there. We know how many of us get into cars or trains in the morning and head off somewhere else for work, spending two to three hours in transit every day, and we wonder where the jobs will come from for all these new residents. We look for the business centres and we see current business and light and heavy industrial areas being bulldozed for high-rise residential. We look for amenities and we see public land being sold off for medium- or high-density residential. We look for facilities and we see our local pool being closed for development of the stadium. For those who moved to Northmead because the M2 made an easy bus ride into the city, they have just closed the bus lane while they upgrade the M2, so a half-hour trip in the morning is now an hour and a half. One hour a day becomes three hours. We have people living in Northmead who are now pulling out of their local gyms and going to the gym in the city because that is the only way they can delay their trip one way or the other. We lose locally and someone else gains from these really quite appalling decisions that our state government is making.

We see our suburb being turned into a dormitory, a place to sleep but not a place to work or live in our waking hours, a place where you get into the car in the morning and leave and return too late to spend time in your suburb with your neighbours, friends and family to build community or spend money locally in the morning, at lunch or in the afternoon and evening in support of our local economy.

I am not against development. In fact, I believe that there are areas in and around our suburbs where the council should have bitten the bullet on zoning years ago. There are areas where we went to 2½ storeys which are close to stations, public parks and large employers like hospitals, and where the surrounding facilities and jobs would have supported a much higher density, but we did not go there. But we are now going very high density in areas that do not have the facilities to support the growth in population, and those facilities are not even on the planning schedule.

Residential planning seems different from everything else, and the systems and community structures that we need to make a community livable are being ignored at the expense of high-rise residential. I understand the state government’s need for revenue and I understand that residential creates an enormous immediate benefit to state governments, but for long-term community development we really have to think of the broader infrastructure that we need.

Planning is not about where a person lives; it is about how a person moves through their city—the extent to which they can recognise their neighbours. It is about being able to drop your kids at school and get to work on time; or having a coffee with or meeting a friend at the local gym in the morning or at a park for a run; or about getting home in time to meet friends for dinner within walking distance from your home. It is about how we live. It is about building livable cities, not just places where we live.

Planning needs to leave space for small businesses to set up and grow. We want our communities to be supported by our own. We are bulldozing older business areas and moving small and emerging businesses out from those low-rental areas and replacing them with glass
residential towers. There will not be room for smaller businesses to innovate and incubate if this plan continues to go the way it is going. Big companies like Deloitte are moving in, and that is great, but they do not come in in order to crowd out the small. They come in to support the growth of the small and to grow with them.

Being a city means finding space for new ideas and it means finding lower-rental areas. They are sometimes a little shabbier but are affordable for people to start out in new, innovative businesses. That is as true for business as it is for people trying to buy their first house.

And we need our history. In the north of Parramatta we have a heritage precinct that contains around 70 heritage buildings—more heritage buildings than the Rocks. It dates back to convict times. We have the female convict factory, designed by Greenway; we have the Roman Catholic orphanage; the Gipps Yard, which is the sandstone yard where the convict women were taken straight off the boats and put to work, and is where they lived; and we have Bethel, the first children's hospital in Australia. We have an area which demonstrates the history of incarceration of women for over 220 years. It is estimated that one in five of us are descended from women who were incarcerated there.

And because it was a mental asylum for many of those years it has some of the greatest civic architecture examples in Australia, all within one or two blocks. Virtually every major civic architect is actually represented in that small area. There is less standing of the Cascades Female Convict Factory in Tasmania, it is later than ours and it is on the World Heritage List. Ours is better, still intact, and the state government has even resisted it being on the national register, although it is on the list for consideration now—and I thank the minister for that.

The state government's original plans were to put four- and eight-story residential buildings inside the Gipps Yard—inside the existing sandstone courtyard where the convict women lived, right up against a flying fox colony which is supposed to have a 300-metre exclusion zone. There is very little consideration for the value of this heritage in UrbanGrowth's plans for this site. They have no plans for the heritage. My view has always been that when you have something that valuable you decide what to do with the heritage assets first and all other development comes after that. The heritage cannot be replaced and it is not acceptable to my community that we have one of the great convict heritage assets of Australia totally surrounded and overshadowed by buildings as high as 24 storeys without consideration of the heritage assets. It really is an extraordinary plan that the state government has for this particular area.

It also does not provide the amenities in that area that people need. The original area for development included the swimming pool. The original plans had the swimming pool rezoned as residential. The state member at the time, Geoff Lee, said, 'Oh no, that's just a typo.' It was a typo on three places in the plan, but let's believe it was actually a typo! So we all breathed a sigh of relief and thought, 'Okay'. Then I was told a month ago, when UrbanGrowth came to my office, that they had delayed all plans about the swimming pool because they were reconsidering that whole precinct. Then we found out four weeks later—just last week—that there are plans to close the pool completely. The council was told the pool would close because the larger Parramatta Stadium would be on its footprint.

I am a great fan of building a larger stadium, by the way. The Wanderers and the Eels use that stadium and we should have a larger stadium. But it seems nonsense to me that we would
close the 50-year-old Parramatta War Memorial Pool. It is the best pool in Western Sydney for training and for diving. It has a high-diving tower—there are only two in Sydney—and it has a water polo pool, a kids pool and a water slide. Five hundred kids come there every day from the schools to learn to swim. We have an active learn-to-swim program there. Why would we close a place where people actually exercise in the middle of their work day in the CBD, or learn to swim, in favour of a place where people go to watch people exercise? Now, I understand that watching people exercise is also a way to encourage people to exercise. But you do not close a place where people do exercise in order to build a bigger place to encourage people to exercise when there will be nowhere then to exercise. It is just nonsense. The community is incredibly concerned about this.

Meanwhile, the state member is saying, 'No, no, no—there is no plan.' Well, the Wanderers are tweeting about the demolition date. The original announcement said that the stadium was going to be over the pool. Now the member is saying that there is no plan. He is also saying that the state government should move the pool, but there is no plan to do that either. There is no plan. We are talking about losing one of the fundamental exercise and recreational spaces within Parramatta at the moment and it is not necessary: we can have both! We can have a place where people do exercise and a place to watch it. We can have both a community facility for recreation and a commercial facility for recreation. We can have both, and we should.

Then, of course, we get to the areas where they are improving infrastructure. WestConnex is supposed to be a great improvement in connectivity for the west. When the original announcement was made, it looked pretty good. There was a $30-million plan to ease congestion around the WestConnex motorway and Parramatta that would reduce travel times for Parramatta workers and residents. We all know you cannot get onto WestConnex at the moment. You cannot get onto the M4; it is a car park. It always seems to go past Parramatta. To get into Parramatta you have to do a bit of a detour and go down some suburban roads, so you cannot really get in or out of Parramatta onto the M4. It is not particularly effective.

The state government announced when they announced WestConnex that they were going to build two new roads linking Parramatta to the M4 to encourage growth and would remove five sets of traffic lights for people getting out of Parramatta and onto the main freeway that passes us by. Then a couple of weeks later they said: 'Oops, made a mistake. That's not true. Sorry. Didn't mean it.' The announcement was huge and major. The withdrawal was much softer. They have basically left Parramatta off the WestConnex plan completely. We are the second CBD, have a huge economy—the capital of Western Sydney—and we are off the plan. Everybody in Parramatta knows that, no matter what they do to WestConnex, if you cannot actually get onto it, it is not much use.

Along the M4, of course, they have the Granville proposal, which is, I think, an additional 7,000 residences. I am not actually going to bet on that number. It was originally 20,000 residences in Granville between the train line and the freeway. I think it is down now to about 7,000. They have been pushed down by the community. But this is a traffic island. If you want to get out of that area between Granville station and the freeway—particularly Granville station and Parramatta road—you have to cross either the Bolt Street bridge, which is already a car park, or Parramatta Road. Anybody who has tried to cross Parramatta Road at two o'clock on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon knows that you do not try to do it at peak hour.
It means we will have thousands of primary school children living in this area without a primary school. They will have to cross Parramatta Road or Bold Street bridge to get to school in the morning in an area that is already so overcongested that the government has put Parramatta Road on its strategic plan. The traffic is so bad that they need to fix it, and the fix is to put an extra 200,000 residences on it, including 7,000 in Granville. It is just extraordinary. You will have more people trying to get onto WestConnex when there is no link to WestConnex. To get out of Granville you cross the Bold Street bridge or you cross Parramatta Road, and both of them are a disaster and will only get worse because of these plans.

And then, of course, we have the light rail project. It is a good project as far as it goes. It duplicates the heavy rail line into Strathfield. Some people criticised that. It goes from Westmead to Strathfield. It is not what councils wanted—councils wanted north-south lines and lines up to Castle Hill—but it does, according to the government, open up the area along that line, including for 10,000 more homes to be built at Camellia, which is currently a heavy industrial site. Let's close down the place where we have jobs and build a place where people live!

These are net job losers. Granville is a net job loser. Camellia is a net job loser. The North Parramatta heritage precinct is currently a hospital site where government departments have their offices. They are all closing, and we will end up with a little bit of extra retail. They are net job losers. The full-time, skilled jobs disappear and the part-time, casual jobs in hospitality and retail partially replace them. This is a folly.

Just to make things better, the state government is going to put a levy of around $20,000 a unit on any new apartment or residence that is built along that train line. In which other part of Sydney do individuals put their hand in their pocket and shell out that kind of money because the state government is building light rail? And the light rail network rips up the heavy rail to Carlingford for which the Labor government put money on the table to extend it to Epping. The state government gave it back. Now they are going to rip up the heavy line and put in light rail. It is quite extraordinary. On that light rail they are going to put thousands of new residences at Telopea as well. Those people will need to get on the light rail and go into Parramatta rather than going over Pennant Hills Road to the huge employment areas at Macquarie Park and Ryde.

Every plan the state government has is retrospective for the community of Parramatta, and I really think they should rethink on the whole and not in part. (Time expired)

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (10:56): I rise today to speak on the appropriation bills for 2015-16. I am pleased to speak on these bills today, as they help provide a road map to aid us in achieving our budgetary measures. When considering these bills, I think about the concerns and funding needs of my own constituents. We are working to produce real outcomes as we continue to build a strong and more prosperous economy for the safety and security of Australia. Our future very much depends on what we do as a nation today. After a disastrous Labor government for six years it is our turn to rebuild this nation. It is our turn to contribute so that generations to come may enjoy a prosperous quality of life.

I want to take this opportunity to update the House and my constituents of Paterson on what action has been recently taken to advance their cause, as we have recently seen some great outcomes in both Paterson and in the wider Hunter region.
I welcome today's release of the defence white paper and what it will mean for national security and, importantly, for the much-needed jobs in our region. This will occur through increased air, naval and land warfare superiority. Whilst RAAF Base Williamtown will continue with its nearly $1 billion upgrade program, in particular for the Joint Strike Fighter, there are issues emanating from the base that are affecting my community. In particular, the issue of firefighting foam contamination of perfluorooctane sulfonate, otherwise known as PFOS, originating from RAAF Base Williamtown has severely impacted on my community and will no doubt have budgetary ramifications in the future. The contamination of PFOS has leached across all the way from the RAAF base through to Fullerton Cove and Tilligerry Creek.

There are PFOS levels reported as 100 times higher the acceptable health risk. The PFOS contaminant originates from the RAAF base. Therefore, the Department of Defence and the Commonwealth are 100 per cent responsible and bear 100 per cent of the responsibility to remedy the situation. The impacts on local industries are not insignificant. There are now reports that the banks are black-listing for bank loans in the red zone investigation area.

I have been meeting with defence ministers and Defence, and my message is simple and clear: tell me what you can do, not what you cannot. Defence's evidence to the Senate committee hearing in October was that it was monitoring rather than containing contaminated surface water leaving the base. The first thing that has to be done is to contain the discharges from RAAF Base Williamtown. If you have a hole in a boat and it is leaking water, you do not just bail the water; you stop the leak—simple logic. The contamination levels need to be contained, not monitored, because in the next storm even more PFOS will be flushed from the base into my local community.

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed and addressed urgently. What need to be addressed are the health issues, water-bore sampling and, importantly, the mental health issues, which are exacerbated for those whose incomes have stopped. Whether they are commercial fishermen or those who produce eggs, chickens or beef, all have been stopped from earning their income by this contamination. I say to the Department of Defence, to the minister and to the government as a whole: listen to what is being said by all sides of politics, because all sides of politics at one time or another have been responsible for this issue. More work needs to be done and there needs to be better coordination, but, more importantly, relieving the stress for those who have lost their income must be a matter of priority for this government, because it is not the fault of those people that they have lost their income due to this contamination. The community needs and deserves a solid plan of action, not just words and intent on this issue.

I am also pleased today to report that around 6,700 more premises on the Tomaree peninsula and 5,500 residences in the Maitland area are a step closer to getting access to the National Broadband Network, with construction on the fixed-line network well underway. This is an important milestone in the area, with greater certainty for homes and businesses as they prepare for super-fast broadband. The message for local residents is clear: super-fast broadband is on its way. Final network designs are now complete, meaning that, in the coming weeks, nbn co contractors will be seen in the streets of Telarah, Shoal Bay, Fingal Bay and Nelson Bay. The work includes laying out optical fibre and building cabinets to house the electronics needed to supply the super-fast broadband. This is a part of the
government's ongoing reform of the NBN project, to ensure that super-fast broadband can be rolled out quickly, more cost-effectively and with minimal inconvenience to households. Speeds on the new network will easily support high-definition streaming on multiple devices all at once. The NBN project will provide much needed relief for the region, which in some areas has very poor broadband infrastructure. We have taken steps to get this project on track after so many years of misinformation, frustration and, in particular, poor planning. The NBN will truly revolutionise the way people connect in their homes and their businesses. It is vitally important that our community do not waste another decade or longer waiting for a gold-plated broadband upgrade. What they want is effective, efficient and fast broadband, today and now. Total connections to the NBN's various networks, including the fixed-line and wireless networks and the interim satellite service, now stand at over 700,000. Earlier this year, nbn co released an updated national rollout plan indicating that, by September 2018, three-quarters of all homes and businesses across Australia will be able to connect to the NBN or have construction underway in their neighbourhoods. nbn co will continue to update its online information for residents about when the network will be ready for their service, and people can also register their details to be provided with future updates.

The Australian government recently announced that the application deadline for round 2 of the Safer Streets Program has been extended by two weeks to 2 pm, Wednesday, 2 March 2016. The closing date has been extended to ensure all local government organisations and eligible incorporated not-for-profit organisations have the opportunity to support their local communities by implementing new safety and crime prevention initiatives. Under round 2 of the program, the government will invest $29.4 million in individual grants to help reduce the fear of crime and contribute to greater community safety and resilience. This investment will build on the more than $19 million in funding the government has already awarded under round 1 for projects across 150 locations to deliver security enhancements such as better lighting and CCTV in retail, entertainment and commercial precincts. I have encouraged all potential applicants to submit their project applications as soon as possible, to ensure the area has the best chance of receiving funding from this vital community safety initiative. The program is already working to improve community safety across Australia by preventing, deterring and detecting crime and antisocial behaviour. Round 2 funding will help boost these efforts in my electorate in particular. Importantly, the Safer Streets Program uses the proceeds of crime, confiscated from criminals, to fund these local crime prevention programs. It means that the crimes of yesterday can help prevent the crimes of tomorrow.

In last year's budget, the coalition government announced the Stronger Communities Program to fund small capital projects in local communities across the country. The aim of the Stronger Communities Program is to fund small projects which will deliver social benefit for local communities and help contribute to more vibrant and viable communities. Local government and incorporated not-for-profit organisations are eligible to apply for a grant of $5,000 up to a maximum of $20,000, matched, of course, on an in-kind or contributory, dollar-for-dollar basis. Each electorate has $150,000 of funding allocated to it. The independent community consultation group that I formed for round 1 will again shortly consider the expressions of interest and determine priority projects of the most merit to proceed to the formal grant application.
In this House, people have heard me talk endlessly about digital television reception. Since the switch to full digital television services in 2012, many of my communities have been struggling to get decent television reception. The co-channel interference from out-of-area signals affects viewers who receive their broadcast from the Mount Sugarloaf site. This interference can range from annoying minor signal video and audio break-up to complete signal loss. Always worse in hot weather, it has made for three years of very long, hot summers for those who have been affected. Regional Broadcasters Australia has been working to upgrade the problem following my continued and consistent lobbying to secure federal government funding. I am beyond delighted that the upgrade to Gan Gan tower and the new Wallaroo digital television towers are now up and running. This will help residents on the Tomaree and Tilligerry peninsulas as well as in Medowie and Salt Ash to gain improved television reception.

Green Army projects continue to thrive in my electorate. New projects include the one to be undertaken on the Worimi Conservation Lands, located at Stockton Bight, Port Stephens, and will build on a previous stage. The lands form an important coastal link within a network of protected areas. Human induced impacts are causing fragmentation of native vegetation in the foredune system, wetland swales and hind-dune vegetation, limiting pathways for dispersion of flora and fauna, including threatened species. The project will improve the condition, extent and connectivity of native vegetation through on-ground works, including dune stabilisation, management of four-wheel drive access, weed control and revegetation. Recruitment strategies will target Worimi youth and other Indigenous Australians to build the team. These participants have not only generated real environment and conservation benefits for our community but also gained valuable practical training and experience to help them prepare for the workforce, pursue further training or improve their career opportunities.

As the Green Army grows so do the opportunities for young people around Australia to be involved in these worthwhile projects. The Green Army is a key government commitment with more than $700 million budgeted over four years. The program encourages practical, hands-on action to support local environment and conservation projects across Australia and will have provided training to 15,000 young Australians by 2018.

Road infrastructure is critical. It is the pathway to success. I am excited that the New South Wales government is finally providing $3 million in 2015-16 to continue the planning for the future extensions of the M1 Pacific Motorway to the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace, eliminating the bottleneck that occurs at John Renshaw Drive. I remember back to around 2000 when the then roads minister in the New South Wales government, Michael Costa, put forward this proposal. It has always required the state government to prioritise this project so that the Commonwealth can contribute and we can finalise this Pacific link road.

The community has had a chance to comment once again on the design and the new report is expected to be published soon. The M1 Pacific Motorway and the Pacific Highway are critical links in the National Land Transport Network and are amongst the busiest transport corridors in Australia. Planning for the M1 Pacific Motorway extension to the Pacific Highway at Raymond Terrace began in October 2004 and has involved an extensive community consultation program to identify preferred routes and to develop a concept design. A design was displayed for community comment in 2008 with feedback considered to develop a refined design which was finally announced in 2010. The route was reserved in the
Newcastle and Port Stephens local environmental plans. Roads and Maritime Services has since reviewed the 2010 design to ensure the proposal provides the best outcome for road users, for the environment and for our community as a whole. The revised concept design includes major improvements for connectivity to surrounding road networks and minimises the environmental impacts.

The New South Wales government has committed $200 million under Rebuilding NSW to get the project ready for construction. Timing for construction is not yet confirmed and would depend on planning approval, future traffic needs and funding availability. I urge the New South Wales government to move forward as quickly as possible with this link project. Federal funding will be a matter of course as there is an agreement between the state and federal governments to fund these projects, but make no bones about it: this project is critical in stopping the bottleneck that occurs when you leave Sydney on your way to Brisbane on the Pacific Highway. I urge people to move forward with speed to deliver this project so we get real, beneficial outcomes not only to my constituents but also to all Australians, and in particular the heavy transport industry, as they use this vital road infrastructure. I commend these appropriation bills to the House.

Mr GILES (Scullin) (11:11): I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016 and, in supporting supply and the appropriation of around $2.2 billion, to consider in this context the economic record of the government led by Mr Turnbull. All of us here remember the now Prime Minister's commitment to changing—or perhaps 'finding' might be a fairer way of expressing it—an economic narrative for this government. Well, how is this going? The member for Wentworth was right, of course, to identify this as a key failing of his predecessor, but instead of addressing it he and his hapless Treasurer have compounded the problem. They are telling the same story absent any conviction.

Having promised sophisticated policy debate, the Prime Minister has already walked away from the serious conversation about economic reform that Labor has been leading through the work of the opposition leader and the shadow Treasurer, and instead has resorted to a scare campaign—old politics, not innovation. It is rich in irony too; the man who spoke at some length in this place last year—who Malsplained about a not very scary scare campaign in terms of the government's clear agenda to foist on the Australian people a regressive increase in the GST—he now is playing Hanrahan. We are 'rooned' he says, over and over again, leading, or perhaps trying to lead—trying to corral—a confused reaction to Labor's positive plans. When he spoke of evidence based policy making as another one of his commitments how were we to know that the only evidence he seems to be interested in are the certainties that are in his head?

We do know one thing now, though, when it comes to managing the economy, this government are not in the business of helping Australians maintain their standard of living and they are not interested in investing in the foundations of a fairer future. And so, as we consider the bills before us, we must recognise that inequality is rising in Australia and that this has been happening not simply by reason of some force of nature; it has been accelerated by political choices made by this government, under this Prime Minister and under Prime Minister Abbott. The Prime Minister and his Treasurer both are unconcerned by inequality and its consequences for individuals and the wider economy, and they should stand
condemned for this. They should also be concerned. They should be undoing those decisions which are exacerbating inequality and failing us not only when it comes to equity but equally when it comes to economic growth. This is beyond a callous ideological indifference to those who deserve a government fighting in their corner; it is a rejection of evidence from around the world, from bodies like the IMF, to the effect that inequality harms growth.

When we look at the Prime Minister's contribution to economic debate since coming to the high office he holds we see that he pointed at two areas of distinction between the government he proposed to lead and that led by the member for Warringah. Firstly, he talked about innovation. In this regard, I think he gets plenty of marks for his salesmanship. A reheated bundle of policies late last year, heavy in rhetoric, allowed him to attract some temporary support, but the lack of substance in this agenda has shown through, and this is even more so when it comes to the other policy area he sought to emphasise, in terms of his avowed appreciation of the need for the Commonwealth to take seriously urban Australia, to take seriously a cities policy. Again, how has this worked out under Prime Minister Turnbull? We had one cities minister appointed and then very quickly unappointed, and now the role has been degraded to half the responsibilities of an assistant minister. We now have a part-time parliamentary secretary dealing with one of the Prime Minister's two priority areas. This is deeply concerning in a country like Australia which is an urban and indeed a suburban nation, where the infrastructure challenge we face is huge and the role for the national government critical if we are to maintain productive, livable and sustainable cities, the places where eight in 10 Australians live and a similar proportion of GDP is generated.

These bills before us go to many of the changes from last year's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Obviously that is where the appropriations are located. This statement is a pretty troubling and telling indictment of the government's record, where we see a deficit that has blown out and debt that has increased. Projections of economic growth have been slashed. Living standards are falling. Capital expenditure is falling. And consumer confidence is falling, roughly in line with the confidence of backbench members in the performance of the Prime Minister's leadership.

Many of the changes in MYEFO are reflected in these bills, and they go to deep standard-of-living concerns for people in the Scullin electorate. This is especially so at a time of such high unemployment, with worse to come in Melbourne's northern suburbs as the automotive shutdown takes effect, and especially in the context of the news today of record low wages growth. In this regard, it is more than a little ironic that the Treasurer has become interested in bracket creep. Of course bracket creep is a concern, of course it is a regressive impost, but to be concerned about bracket creep now, with wage growth at a record low level, is confusing to say the least.

Last year's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook contained serious cuts, including cuts to diagnostic imaging and pathology services, another attempt to undermine Medicare and universal health care in Australia, this time through the back door rather than the direct approach the former Prime Minister took. MYEFO also confirmed that this government, under this Prime Minister, continues to endorse some of the most regressive, most unfair and indeed most unpopular policies of the former Prime Minister, including $100,000 university degrees, the increase in the pension age, $80 billion worth of cuts to schools and hospitals and an increase in the cost of pharmaceuticals.
In this regard, I have been spending the summer listening to people right across my electorate, in suburbs as diverse as Epping, Thomastown, Bundoora, Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Yarrambat, and they are giving me very similar messages, wherever they come from: 'Why is the Turnbull administration, despite the sense of hope the Prime Minister sought to engender in the community, continuing the harmful policies of the Abbott government? Why is he continuing to attack vital services, the foundation of the Australian social compact, in universal health care and quality education?' Fundamentally they say to me this: 'What is the point of Malcolm Turnbull and not Tony Abbott being our Prime Minister?'

There is no sense of excitement today in Melbourne's north when it comes to this government. The people in the communities that make up the Scullin electorate all know that governments now should not be cutting vital services, making health care and medicines more expensive and making education—the key to sustainable and secure employment—unreachable for many. They know there is no justification for forcing hardworking people to work longer before they can access their pension and retire in dignity. In the Scullin electorate we are a vibrant multicultural community. This government's recent but deeply cruel and unfair changes to portability rules mean that pensioners who wish to go and visit family and friends overseas—often elderly and unwell family and friends—will lose their pension after only six weeks. This has infuriated not only the pensioners themselves but also their children and grandchildren.

It is important, as we consider these bills and providing supply—and of course Labor supports the continuation of government—to reflect on the massive human impact of the policies referred to in these bills. Australia is facing some significant challenges. That is not in doubt. That is why Labor has proposed some significant changes—significant changes to capital gains tax and to negative gearing, targeting multinational tax avoidance practices, reducing superannuation concessions for those earning very high incomes, increasing the tobacco excise, abolishing the ridiculous and wasteful Emissions Reduction Fund and scrapping the baby bonus that has recently been introduced by this government. These policies together represent a very significant budget overhaul. They are positive reforms, reflecting a positive, indeed exciting, vision for Australia and for Australians. A Labor government will use this approach to economic management to invest, to make sure that every child has the best resources available to them at school, to make sure teachers have the support they need to teach. We will ensure that our hospitals are properly funded and likewise other health services such as IVF and diagnostic imaging, which are presently under extreme threat.

Labor does stand for growth and opportunity. Members opposite talk about this a lot. Our approach to growth and opportunity is that they are for all, not just the top one per cent. If Australia is to prosper in the coming years, we need to make sure that no Australian falls through the cracks. This is the lesson of inequality's harm at a wider level as well as at an individual level. We need to ensure that every child gets their fair chance at education and everyone can afford a first home, not a seventh. We need to invest in protecting our natural environment and to secure the great opportunities that are presented in renewable energy.

The coalition, whether under Prime Minister Abbott or Prime Minister Turnbull, are all scare campaigns and no substance. It is clear that the Australian people, having had an opportunity to take a good look at the new Prime Minister, can see through him. The
Australian people are concerned to see economic leadership, this being the very thing that Mr Turnbull said he would bring to the table. But again, as in so many other areas, his words do not match his actions. This is just another addition to a long list.

We have a Prime Minister who says he supports same-sex marriage, yet he supports a damaging plebiscite when many members of his government have said they will not heed its result. The Prime Minister stepped down, of course, as opposition leader, saying that he would not lead a party that does not act on climate change, and a few years later he discarded that principle as well. The Prime Minister committed to serious evidence-driven policy debate and economic leadership, so perhaps we should be unsurprised that he has walked away from those commitments as well.

Greg Jericho in *The Guardian* summed this up when he wrote a couple of days ago:

> Turnbull should leave the dopey fear campaigns to his predecessor, and Morrison should either learn the basics of economics or tell his boss to trade in his treasurer for a newer model.

That is bluntly put but a fair reflection of where this government's economic leadership is at. In the short life span of this government—under two prime ministers—we have seen several clumsy and unfair attempts to punish everyday families in the supposed goal of budget repair. Cuts to Medicare, cuts to schools, cuts to disability services, cuts to the age pension and threats of an increase to the GST. It seems that this government, whoever leads it, has never met a low- or middle-income family that it did not want to take money from. It has also compounded these by failing to support our families through a meaningful infrastructure agenda—the sort of national building that Labor governments, from Whitlam, Hawke, Keating, Rudd and Gillard, made a priority.

In Victoria this is particularly acute. With Melbourne growing at an extraordinary rate, it is simply unacceptable that Victoria could be receiving eight per cent of the Commonwealth infrastructure spend when we have such vital projects like the Melbourne Metro and, indeed, the Aherns Road interchange in my electorate that need to be progressed if we are to maintain our productivity, as well as addressing bus congestion and maintaining the liveability of our suburbs. These are critical questions that require proper engagement with infrastructure and action, not simply words, when it comes to national urban policy.

It seems the Treasurer is discovering that government is hard work. You cannot pass by in that job with four-word slogans, and, as has been observed in the papers today, you cannot pass by without being able to have a conversation with the Prime Minister. You also need ideas and a shared vision. The Prime Minister and his Treasurer have wasted 5½ months dealing with infighting and indecision. This policy paralysis has crippled confidence, not just on the government benches but it is holding Australia back. If we are to meet the challenges of the future head on, the Prime Minister and his Treasurer need to look to Labor's example and articulate a cohesive and comprehensive policy direction and stop treating the Australian people like mugs.

Thousands of people in the Scullin electorate stand to be worse off because of the policy agenda of this government. I stand here representing and defending their interests. This government's continued support for unfair attacks on working people should not be tolerated simply because we have a different salesperson.
The bills before us now reflect MYEFO—a document which is symbolic of the contempt this government has shown for the Australian people, particularly low- and middle-income people, particularly for Victorians and particularly for Melbourne's north. I am very proud to stand here as a member of the Labor opposition that is offering a very clear alternative: a pathway to a sustainable budgetary position that will fund the investments we need for a fair future, a pathway for ordinary Australians to buy a first home, a pathway to jobs and secure jobs for our children and our grandchildren, and a pathway to a society in which everyone has a fair say and a stake.

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (11:26): I rise today to support the passage of Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and cognate bill. I will talk about how this $2.2 billion is a great investment in this country and particularly in my seat of Canning. Before I do that, I want to note in the House that my thoughts are with the 390 workers from South32 who have lost their jobs today at the alumina facility at Worsley in my electorate. I will be doing everything I can to ensure that we help them transition from South32 into jobs elsewhere.

As you know, Canning takes in the Peel region, which is about an hour south of Perth. The Peel region was established in 1829 by Thomas Peel with just a few hundred settlers. Of course, the Noongar people have long been the custodians of the Peel region. When we consider it today, we now have 129,000 people living in the Peel region. To give you a bit of context on how fast our growth has been in the last 10 years, we had 45,000 people move to the Peel region between 2004 and 2014, with a projected population growth predicted to reach 440,000 by 2050.

The Peel region is made up of five local government authorities. We have the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale is one of the fastest growing local governments in the country. It is full of young families who are aspirational and seek to make the most of educational opportunities in the region. We have the Shire of Murray, which has a population expected to grow 4.7 per cent annually over the next two decades. The Shire of Boddington is home to the two major resource operations of South32 and Newmont, which is Australia's largest goldmine. We have the Shire of Waroona, which is facing the challenging of meeting increased demand for rural lifestyle properties while maintaining a sense of community. I should add that Waroona was devastated by the fires in January last month. To give you sense of the damage: 3,000 kilometres of fencing was destroyed in those fires; 2½ thousand kilometres reside in Waroona. Thinking about fencing the distance from Sydney to Melbourne, that is how much fencing was destroyed. So there are a lot of farmers who are trying to recover. They have done a great job so far, but they need our continued support. Finally, the City of Mandurah sits in the heart of the Peel region and is one of Australia's largest and fastest-growing regional cities. It is full of young families and a lot of talent, and it is an exciting place to be. My wife and I live there with our son, and it is a pleasure to represent the people of Canning.

Juggling the competing demands of rapid growth, jobs, infrastructure, education and community service requires a clear vision, and I am pleased to note that the coalition government continues to deliver this for Canning.

Employment is arguably the greatest challenge in the Peel region, with overall unemployment in Mandurah at 8.6 per cent in December last year and youth unemployment currently as high as 20 per cent. To combat rising youth unemployment the federal government has implemented a number of successful Green Army programs across my
electorate, including the Harvey River Restoration Taskforce, the Len Howard Conservation Park and Peel Inlet reserves, and the Birriga Brook and Darling Downs Equestrian Estate. Having attended the Len Howard team's graduation ceremony, I have witnessed firsthand the skills, knowledge and self-belief that the participants gain from their Green Army experience. It facilitates their transition from uncertain youth to asset-rich employees in a highly competitive labour market. Importantly, it teaches participants about the role of individuals in the stewardship and preserving of our environment. I am all about people self-governing and I believe that nowhere is this more important than in the area of the environment. The environment is a shared asset that cannot be sold on or squandered, so we need to preserve it for future generations. The Green Army project encourages employment for youth but also encourages individual stewardship of that precious resource.

Equipping our youth with tools for the future means we need to provide them with options, and there are a number of schools in the Canning electorate facilitating this. In November last year I had the pleasure of visiting the Dale Christian School to see their new state-of-the-art learning facility which was made possible with a $1 million contribution by the federal government under the Capital Grants Program. It was great to see the excitement among staff and students about the pathways the school can now provide thanks to its new facilities, which include a home economics kitchen, industrial arts room, soundproofed music rooms and well-equipped science labs. I was given a personal tour and it was great to see young people learning how to cook, preparing them with the skills that they will need once they finish high school.

Other schools in Canning have also received funding under this program, and I look forward to seeing the four science labs, science preparation area, general learning area, practical skills rooms, staff rooms and other amenities being built at Austin Cove Baptist College this year. That school sits in South Yunderup, which is another aspirational suburb which has seen a lot of development over the last few years.

I am also a very strong believer in vocational education, especially in an electorate where access to university education requires either a long commute or relocation for many students. Canning has the second-highest number of male tradesmen in the country and the third-highest number of Certificate III and IV holders in the nation. With over 3,000 students partaking of technical education courses this year in Canning, the future looks bright, especially when you note that construction makes up 25 per cent of business in Canning. We need every highly-skilled tradesman we can get.

Much of Canning is reliant upon primary industry such as agriculture and farming, manufacturing, construction, mining and resources and forestry. In the face of unprecedented growth, it is vitally important that we continue to boost Canning's key industries to encourage economic prosperity and sustainability whilst creating local jobs. The signing of the free trade agreements with China and Korea, the economic partnership agreement with Japan, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership with our closest regional neighbours will cement Canning businesses as key suppliers of quality produce to local and international markets. One such business example that I have already mentioned in this House is Mundella Foods in Mundijong, owned by the Hectors. This business was borne out of necessity and has since become the state's premier dairy company.
Another prime example of a local business adapting to a competitive international market is Capogreco Farm in Hamel. This is a family-owned business that was started in 1988 and exports broccoli, melons and other fruit to the Middle East and Asia on a daily basis. Last week I visited Charlie, Dane and Bruno Capogreco to learn more about how they employ 60 staff. I saw 60 backpackers at work and we spoke about the potential impact of the backpacker tax. I stated my opposition and I state it now in the House publicly. Every year Capogreco Farm employ up to 60 backpackers. They house them in facilities that were purpose-built to make the most of this international labour, and I have also spoken to the Hills Orchard Improvement Group and they have expressed their concern. Capogreco Farm and all the orchardists in Canning stand to suffer if we hurt the backpacker labour market that comes each year.

Increased economic expansion, market base and international competitiveness of the region's agribusiness sector through innovation in production methods and renewable water and energy supplies is the key to moving forward. No-one knows this better than K8 Wealth Creations in the Shire of Boddington. This small business, specialising in the domestic and international distribution of home-grown gourmet olive oil products, has just been granted a payment of $1,387 for the owner to undertake permaculture design study. This course, funded by the federal government through the Industry Skills Fund, will allow the owner to establish sustainable, water-wise and integrated growing systems to improve the overall business model. Upskilling employees is just one way the government is contributing to sustainable growth in the Peel region.

The coalition government has also invested heavily in local infrastructure. Through the government's Community Development Grants Program, the City of Mandurah received $10 million to complete the redevelopment of its aquatic and recreation centre. I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the Mandurah Aquatic and Recreation Centre, alongside Australian legends Dawn Fraser and Betty Cuthbert, and saw for myself the importance of this facility to the local community and how it provides a world-class space for school children and community groups to make the most of sport and staying fit. These grants have also been put to good use for the redevelopment of the Port Bouvard Surf Life Saving and Recreation Centre and the repairs on the Darminning Room at the Boddington Community Resource Centre.

Given the region's increasing popularity and proximity to Perth, investment in roads is vital for maintaining the arterial trucking and tourist routes to, from and within Canning. It is arguable that no-one knows the importance of safe, reliable local roads better than John Mitchell, owner of Mitchell's Transport in Waroona. John's team transports more than 550,000 cattle to over 1,500 delivery pick-up and delivery locations in any given year. Thankfully for John, the coalition government also recognises the importance of safe and reliable roads.

Through the Community Development Grants Program, the federal government has provided $380,000 for the Coronation Road bridge project in the Shire of Waroona. In addition, we have committed over $15 million worth of funding under the Roads to Recovery Program to the Canning electorate to link Coolup to the Perth Bunbury highway, upgrade pedestrian and vehicle pathways in Mandurah and upgrade local roads in Boddington and Waroona.
Funding has also been received under the Bridges Renewal Program to replace the decks of two bridges in Byford, a town with a rapidly expanding population. And let us not forget the Mandurah pedestrian bridge, a project which the federal government committed $5.4 million to under the Building Better Regional Cities Program. This bridge will form a vital link between Mandurah's transport hub and the new residential and commercial developments already underway opposite in the greenfields site where a new Woolworths will be put in.

This brings me to my final point. There is no point in the coalition government investing in jobs, education and infrastructure in the Peel region if it does not also invest in helping to create a safe and vibrant community for local residents. I am proud to say that, through a number of remarkable grassroots initiatives, this government is making a positive impact in local Canning communities. Thanks to the government's Safer Streets Program, the City of Mandurah has been able to implement its family friendly foreshore project, which involves the installation of five CCTV cameras and 16 light poles in the western foreshore precinct to improve community safety and security, and deter criminal and antisocial behaviour. I recently went down to the foreshore to launch another part of this project, the urban art mural, designed by local Peel artist Steve Browne. I am glad to report back to the House that the project is money well spent. He has done a beautiful mural on the wall, which incorporates the history of Peel with both European and Indigenous intersecting over a number of very colourful paintings. It looks great.

Another initiative vital to Canning is the National Stronger Regions Fund. I cannot stress enough the importance of this funding program to my electorate. Given the rapid growth across the vast majority of Canning, local governments can find themselves struggling to keep up with the demand for better services. Under round 1 of this program, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale was recently awarded over $5 million for the Byford town centre access and safety improvement project, designed to improve road user safety and accessibility to the new town centre by way of upgrading Abernethy Road. This is a significant part of the shire's Byford town centre redevelopment project and I know they are thrilled to be able to deliver better services for their local community.

I will be advocating strongly for the other great projects being submitted under round 2 of this program and hope to deliver more great news for Canning after those decisions have been made.

Finally, I applaud the government for the Stronger Communities Program, aimed at helping not-for-profit community groups and local governments deliver small capital works projects that benefit the wider community. In Canning, we have already had one of our round 1 projects approved: $20,000 to the shire of Murray for the Don Sparks Reserve play space project. This project will enable the creation of a social meeting place and safe playground for parents and families in Coolup, as well as providing currently nonexistent services for locals and tourists alike such as shelters, barbeques, tables and benches. This is a great outcome for the Shire of Murray. Without the Stronger Communities Program, the shire would have faced considerable difficulty in allocating money to this project, given the pressure it is under to provide for a rising population.

With that, I reiterate that the coalition government has a proven record of delivering for the people and communities in Canning, and I look forward to continuing this legacy in 2016 and beyond.
Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (11:41): Today, I want to talk about two issues that impact on the health and welfare of children: one overseas and one within Australia. I first of all want to raise the issue of orphanage tourism. I note that in schools in my electorate, across Perth and, no doubt, across Western Australia, we are seeing a rise in the phenomena of orphanage projects being embraced by schools, usually private schools, who are taking their senior students to volunteer in orphanages in Asia. I speak here mainly about Cambodia because it is the area to which I have had some exposure. On a recent parliamentary delegation to Cambodia, I was quite shocked and horrified to learn what was, indeed, developing in Cambodia as a result of this orphanage tourism.

I want to acknowledge that I absolutely understand that the schools, the parents and the students are acting with the very best of intentions. The students, usually in middle high school years, go over, in this case, to Cambodia, and they undertake some maintenance and building work, and spend time playing with the children in the orphanages. Schools, understandably, see these visits as an opportunity for their students to engage in philanthropic activity to help others but also, importantly, to gain perspective on their privilege. I think these are very worthwhile aims. We want our young people to be good global citizens and to have a very strong sense of the need to help others who are less fortunate than themselves.

After having several briefings now from Friends-International and from Save the Children fund, I am deeply concerned that what we are doing, unwittingly, with this exercise is creating this business model of orphanage tourism. There are around 300 registered orphanages in Cambodia and hundreds more that are not registered. The really frightening fact is that an estimated 75 per cent of the children inside those orphanages were not orphans at all or had one or more living parents. It is not the case that these are situations where parents are simply incapable of providing for their children, although we do recognise that, particularly in rural Cambodia, there is massive poverty. Save the Children and Friends-International tell us that parents are actually being pressured to put their children into care, to ensure orphanages have their population—that they have their basic product—and that the operators of these facilities then rake in the money from well-intentioned volunteers both from schools and from the general population.

The majority of these orphanages in Cambodia are owned and operated by foreigners. The concept in Cambodia was an introduced one. There is certainly a misconception that people do not care about their children because they give them up to orphanages. This is not true, and a great deal of misrepresentation is made to the parents about the type of life that will be offered to their child in that orphanage. The orphanages regularly use children to raise money by handing out flyers and putting on shows and, in some, they try to encourage the kids to look malnourished to encourage donations, and there are many, many other tricks involved in the whole process.

There is also another problem. As you have this constant stream of well-meaning people coming to these orphanages, these kids, without the support of a family, obviously gain attachments to those people who come through. The psychological damage experienced by children having this constant stream of people coming to the orphanage—they form a bond and then they leave and are replaced with someone else—is really quite horrific. I really do think that we have to ask our school community and the broader community to think very deeply about what the unintended consequences of your well-motivated actions are here. We
do not want to discourage schools from visiting foreign countries, from visiting Third World countries or, indeed, from being involved in assisting those countries in raising money.

By way of a contrast, I would just talk about a project which I think is very worthwhile. I want to commend those schools in Perth that are involved in the Angkor Project. This is a project where schools, and often quite working-class schools like Morley Senior High School, adopt a sister-school relationship with a Cambodian school in a particular province and the kids then raise money and that money goes over to the sister school and the school community determines what they are going to spend that money on. I was very, very proud to visit a school just outside Phnom Penh, where I arrived to see, in great big letters, 'Morley Senior High School Toilet Block'. This had been a very important development, because young women, once they reach puberty, are very reluctant to go to school if they do not have access to toilets. So the introduction of a toilet block, funded by the fundraising activities of the kids at Morley Senior High School, has had a very real impact on the ability of girls to maintain their education in that area.

The kids at Morley have raised around $30,000 for the sister school, for the toilet block, for the Morley Senior High School computer room, where kids have computers, and for a variety of other science equipment that has enabled the school to offer programs that they would otherwise be unable to provide. This is all being done in the context of the traditional family structures. Children from poor environments are being helped to get their education without those children being used as a business model for some pretty unethical behaviour.

So I do think it is important that we reflect on our actions and what our well-intentioned actions can sometimes result in. I urge schools to look at alternative processes, like the Angkor Project, where you can in fact provide that assistance and get an enormous amount of satisfaction from helping a school in Cambodia without having this destructive impact on the fabric of society and on so many young people. My friend and colleague the member for Canberra is equally concerned about this, as is, I understand, Senator Linda Reynolds, and I hope that we can get together and work with the schools here to perhaps get them to understand that there is a less destructive model that exists where their students can get the benefit of understanding more deeply another culture and providing financial assistance without being a destructive force.

The second issue of the welfare of children that I want to raise relates to the unintended consequences of a change in the childcare package and policy. The government has been very proud of its new childcare policy and the packages that it is putting forward in its Jobs for Families package. This, unfortunately, is going to have very, very substantial consequences for Aboriginal communities across Australia. I particularly want to focus on Fitzroy Crossing, where Emily Carter and June Oscar have led the development of an amazing early learning centre and a child-parent centre through the Baya Gawiy centre, which is an absolute standout in providing a deeply engaging environment for young children to ensure that young Aboriginal children from some of the most disadvantaged communities in this country are able to get their developmental needs met.

We all understand—and Fiona Stanley put this very profoundly yesterday in a video to members of this place—that those early years, those first three years of life when a child has its greatest neuroplasticity, is the time when we must ensure that children are being exposed to a stimulating and nurturing environment. Through that, they develop their neural...
architecture that enables them to have a chance to succeed at school. It is without doubt the time when you need the clearest intervention. It is the time when you get the best cost-benefit return, because you are laying down that fundamental architecture of the brain that will last with the child for the rest of their life. If we do not get that right, then the ability for us to intervene through the time of formal education becomes highly compromised. We all know that. The science is beyond doubt.

By introducing increased standards for the activity test, it means that, for the average child in Fitzroy Crossing who currently has access to 20 to 24 hours a week of this stimulating, nurturing environment, that will now be reduced to around 10 to 12 hours a week. This is a massive backward step. The activity test is just not going to work in these Aboriginal communities. What we are trying to do is to break that cycle of intergenerational poverty. To say you can only put your child into these childcare centres if you are out there looking for jobs, working or doing something like that is to totally miss the point—that is, we have to have a strategic intervention in these communities.

I know that the government is saying, 'We have this other packet of money. We have this other magic pudding, the Community Child Care Fund, which can be utilised.' But that can only be accessed if you have a plan that shows, after three years, you will not need access to those funds. We are not going to turn around the situation in Fitzroy Crossing or in any other remote Aboriginal community in three years. This is something that we have to stick at for the next 10, 15, 20 years to break that cycle to ensure that the kids coming through are able to get a good-quality education and that they are developed to the point where they are able to seize the opportunities that we can offer them at school and post school. So this fund, the magic pudding at the side, is not going to be the answer to this problem.

I urge the government to look at this again to ensure that these changes to the activity test do not apply to these Aboriginal communities because they will undermine the very positive work being done by people like Emily Carter and June Oscar in Fitzroy Crossing. They are people who are actually showing leadership, going out there and really wanting to build social sustainability and social resilience within their communities.

**Mr WHITELEY** (Braddon—Government Whip) (11:55): It is a pleasure to be able to speak on Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016. It gives us all an opportunity to talk about a number of things. We can talk about the overall economic standing of this great nation of which we are all so proud. Also, we can talk about the economic conditions in our states and, in particular, as House of Representative members, in our seats.

I will just make a couple of overarching comments in relation to these bills. Obviously, when we talk about appropriation, we talk about money. It is great opportunity just to remind the people of Braddon—thankfully, many of whom follow me on Facebook and YouTube—that this government is in the business of repairing the budget. We are in the business of moving the budget back into a more positive position where we actually spend less than we earn. It would be a very good start if we could get back to that point. It is going to be a long way back, given what we inherited, but we are committed to it.

I feel nauseous every morning, but not for the obvious reasons, when I wake and I realise that, ka-ching, today we are spending another $100 million more than we are earning. I will wake up again tomorrow, and there it will be again. It is a bit like Groundhog Day—every
morning that we wake up we are spending $100 million more of taxpayers’ money than we are earning. Any idiot or any clown in any circus could tell you that that is unsustainable and that it must come to an end. With that as the backdrop to this bill, this government remains committed—absolutely committed—to reducing expenditure and getting the budget back into a repaired state where we are at least balancing the budget and, obviously, moving to a surplus so that we can pay off much of the mountain of debt that was left to us in 2013.

I must take the opportunity to say that when we left office under the direction of Prime Minister Howard and Treasurer Costello there were billions of dollars in the bank and the budget was $20 billion annually in surplus. That was the condition we left the books in in that year of 2007. The people spoke—democracy is a great thing—and they decided to elect a new government full of great ideas and, apparently, fiscal conservatives, according to the Prime Minister elected, Mr Rudd. We were only to find that, after six to seven very short but very long years, we had come back to a position where the budget was in absolute disrepair, we had ratcheted up borrowings over $300 billion and we were paying over $12 billion a year just in interest—no capital. Just imagine if that was your mortgage: no capital, just the interest. One billion dollars—that is one thousand million dollars every month just for the interest. As I said, while we are doing that, we are waking up today and spending $100 million more than we are going to earn. So that is the backdrop to this bill.

I would now much prefer to talk about some of the positive things that this government is doing and the impact of those decisions on my electorate of Braddon in North West Tasmania—of course, complete with King Island. They always get a little touchy over there, my good friends on King Island, when I say, ‘North West Tasmania, plus King Island.’ It is a great place. I had the privilege just recently to visit. I will be going over to be a part of an official launch of two new golf courses on King Island that are going to be ranked on the top 15 best-links golf courses in the world. If you add those golf courses to the best beef in the world and the best cheese, you are in for a pretty good couple of days on King Island if you want to take your clubs.

I do want to report to the people of Braddon some of those things that I have had the honour and privilege of leading in the last 2½ years. The people of Braddon elected me to be an advocate in this place and to be a part of the government at a macro level to get the budget back into repair, but at a micro level they want a member who is prepared to stand up and fight for them on the issues that are important and they also want a member who is not prepared to always promise the world for the sake of popularity, only to disappoint. They want a member they can not necessarily like all the time but a member they least respect for consistency, telling the truth and being honest with people. When someone says, ‘Can you do this?’ it is far better to say, ‘Well, I doubt that I can.’

Having said that, I was thrilled—as one of the first duties as the newly elected member of Braddon—to be able to be a part of the Centenary of Anzac, the government local program of grants for the Centenary of Anzac. We had 12 projects in Braddon, totalling well over $120,000. It was a thrill in the early stages of my being the member to guide particularly RSL clubs through that process: the Devonport RSL; the Latrobe RSL; the Tullah Progress Association; the Wynyard RSL; the Gunns Plains Community Centre Association, a very small community; and the Ulverstone RSL.
We were able to buy uniforms for a group called Historical Military Reenactments, who are now making the very ridgy-didge uniforms of 1915 available at each of the local communities in my electorate for people to march in and be seen in. The younger people can identify what those men and women—but particularly the men, of course—looked like in 1915 in those uniforms. The grant program went right down to the west coast mining town of Queenstown; the Burnie Regional Museum, who put on a magnificent display; the Smithton RSL; Spreyton Primary School, where the kids came up with a tremendous mural in their school to commemorate the great sacrifice of the great war; and—not to forget—the little town of Penguin, who were also recipients.

Or on top of that, we have been able to have a tremendous program of addressing black spots on our roads. We have funded nine or 10 in my electorate since I was elected. Nearly $2 million worth of funding has been contributed by the federal government to improve the safety of our roads. Those are just little improvements in small areas with black spots that have become dangerous for travelling motorists.

I look back now over three years, and I am sure all of us in this House will remember that, about this time three years ago, we were always treading the boards, out on the doors, hustling for votes, listening to communities about what was important to them and making sure that we were advocating for them. It was a thrill to be able to have a number of projects—some of which I will go through now—that were a part of my election campaign, if I can call it that. As the successful candidate, I have been able to deliver on each and every one of those projects.

The people of the city of Burnie, which is the second biggest city in my electorate, were absolutely thrilled when we as a government promised $3 million to help build a new 25-metre indoor pool. I am pleased to report to the parliament that that is probably 70 or 75 per cent complete. I had a visit there a week or so ago. There will be a tremendous new facility linked in to the PCYC, giving much more access to the community and giving all-round weather access. That is pretty important in Tasmania, where we have a significant amount of the nation's rainfall.

We need to capture more of that rainfall, I must say, as I talk about that. We are going through a very dry spell. We need to be seeing more water infrastructure—dam and storage infrastructure—around the country, but particularly in Tasmania. I want to take the opportunity to thank the now Deputy Prime Minister, who has responsibility in that area, for his support and for his office's support with the cooperative partnership with the state government, Tasmanian Irrigation and the farmers. We are entering into a fund of well over $100 million for at least five new irrigation and dam water storage projects.

I will get back to the point: the aquatic centre is about to be opened soon. It was tremendous to be able to see the Devonport soccer club, who every week have about 600 young people playing on that in mud because of the weather—again, I come back to the weather in Tasmania—provided with some funding for synthetic surfaces for both of those fields. There were new turf replacements for the Meercroft Park hockey club. The list just goes on and on.

At election time obviously sporting facilities and community facilities do get a lot of attention, because during the term of a natural government the federal government in particular does not have any specific funding for sports infrastructure generally. It is not
something that federal government's normally, through the course of their term, get involved with. That is normally left to local and state governments. Obviously federal election time gives the one and only opportunity through that three-year cycle to work with local governments and state governments to provide the sort of community infrastructure that our communities are desperate for.

We provided, through the first round of the National Stronger Regions Fund, $10 million to the city of Devonport for their quarter of a billion dollar vision to rebuild a living city. This is the city where the two big ships come in from Victoria, bringing hordes of tourists and an ever-increasing number of people visiting the great state of Tasmania. The Devonport City Council have a grand vision for the rebirthing of that city as the gateway to Tasmania. I was pleased to be able to lobby very hard last year to have them among the successful applicants of the National Stronger Regions Fund’s grant. I will be turning the sod—in fact, a sod will be turning the sod!—next week for this $10 million grant.

We also had the Regional Development Australia Fund funding three projects in Braddon, including an upgrade to the King Island Airport. As I said before about the golf courses and charter flights that are now going into that island, it was important to make sure we got that airport upgraded. There was in fact over $8 million in that area. We have a whole heap of money for Roads to Recovery. We have mobile tower black spot funding, and the list, as I said, goes on and on.

I would also like to refer to a number of the other projects that we have been involved with. We are working with a number of industry groups with co-investment, which is really important—backing those people who want to back themselves, at least dollar for dollar if not two for one. One is Costa, growing an enormous new industry in horticulture and berry growth. It is not just Costa but other companies around the region that are now providing a huge number of jobs for locals, and I think that is amazing work that they are doing there. There was $9 million invested in a major irrigation scheme, the Dial Blythe Irrigation Scheme, which still has some water in it, and that shows how good it is. We have been working with the Haulmax, an advanced manufacturing business in the north-west, and they have $3 million to help them work on prototypes for a new mining truck. I talked about Hydrowood in this chamber before. They are taking cranes and backhoes out into the middle of old hydro dams to float out there on the water and pull up the older timber. They are pulling up the rich timbers of Huon pine, myrtle and blackwood. They are reaching into the depths of the dams and pulling them out and harvesting this timber for fine furniture projects and so on and so forth. We have been working with the dairy industry, investing in that major growth industry. I will be opening officially in the next few weeks a new pickled onion production facility in Ulverstone. You would be amazed at where the bottles of those pickled onions are going around the country and around the world. We have been working with the Ta Ann Tasmania plywood mill. Having another 50 or 60 jobs in a regional community like Smithton is so important.

Braddon is a very special part of the nation. It has had its challenges and continues to have its challenges. We have recently had to cop on the chin that Caterpillar, a major multinational company, has made a decision to move its manufacturing production to Thailand, leaving only its research and development. That has cost 300 to 400 jobs, which is a huge blow for a small community. But I can report today that there is still hope in the eyes of everyone in
Braddon, including me, as the federal member for this great electorate. I am working really hard with the local business, the Elphinstone group. They are part of a significant bid that will hopefully be announced for down-selection in the next few weeks. We are putting in a bid for the new LAND 400 defence contract. I believe we have the competency and I believe we have the capacity and facilities to deliver on this as a part of the Team Sentinel bid. I wish them well, because this is the hope we have in our eyes, of the advanced manufacturing area and the advanced food production area. This is our hope; this is our future. I am pleased to be the federal representative for our place, Braddon, and I am pleased to dedicate myself to our future.

Ms BUTLER (Griffith) (12:11): In standing to speak in respect of Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016 and the related bill, I think it is important to remember that there are big challenges ahead for our nation. The coming election of course will be an opportunity for the government and the alternative government to make our pitches to the people. The pitches will obviously be about individual policy measures. Those are very important, but overall the pitch is really about vision and values. It is about what sort of country Australia should be.

For my part, I believe that Australia should be a country where we recognise that everyone deserves a great education, everyone deserves to get the health care they need for their own personal circumstances and people deserve dignity in old age. Old age is getting longer nowadays as life expectancy increases, and of course there are challenges for our nation as population ages. But let us all agree that if you have worked hard your whole life part of the reward for that should be dignity in retirement and old age.

I think everyone would agree that most of all what we want for our country is for it to be the country of the fair go. A fair go means that in a strong and thriving economy, where there is great growth through great productivity and innovation, everyone gets the maximum opportunity to participate in the benefits of that growth and that strong economy. That means having a big and strong and thriving middle-class and making sure that working and middle-class households get to share in the economic benefits—that we do not just see a situation, as is unfortunately happening in some states in the US, where the benefits are largely accruing to the top one per cent of income earners. There was an article earlier this year that indicated that, in 10 states in the US, while the incomes of the top 10 per cent had been increasing there had actually been a decline in incomes in the middle classes.

That is not the sort of thing we want to happen here, and of course I do not mean any disrespect to our American friends, of whom I am a great supporter. And I think it is important to recognise that economies are complex. But when you boil it down there is a question of fairness and of what is a fair go. Whatever your background, whether you were born here or came here as an adult or a child or whether you are a first nations person or a more recent arrival or whatever your postcode is and whatever your cultural background is and whatever your income is, it is about making sure that you get that fair go and those opportunities to benefit and share in all that this nation has to offer. It is about having that sort of country.

To have that sort of country where everyone gets a go, we have to have a strong economy to pay for the services that governments should deliver, like health and education. We have to have a strong economy so that people can get those sustained and increased living standards that Australians have come to expect. That takes not just the right tax settings, although those
are obviously important; it takes a lot of other things too. It takes confidence, and we have seen under this Turnbull government unfortunately the battering of consumer and business confidence in the 2½ years that the current government has been in power. We saw that battering of confidence almost immediately after the 2014 budget and in the months since then. But also that growth and strong economy that I was talking about requires the right skills, knowledge and experience for Australians. That in turn depends on the strength of our education system from infancy and right through life. Having a stronger economy really turns on the capacity and culture of Australian firms and managers of Australian firms. It depends on investment in business from both domestic and foreign sources. And to have a strong economy we need a society in which we really take seriously the challenges of disadvantage and poverty and the need to pay attention to living standards for people across the income distribution and across the wealth distribution.

Government alone cannot fix all these things, of course, but it does fall to government to take a leadership role to contribute to a stronger and growing economy and to provide the services that the private sector cannot or will not. For that to happen, we need a strong government. We need a stable government. We need a government that the Australian people can trust and a government that engenders confidence amongst the Australian people. Unfortunately, what we have is the Turnbull government.

The Turnbull government is an utter mess. Between the almost fortnightly frontbench reshuffles, the unicorn protection policies of the Treasurer, ministers contradicting the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister contradicting himself from day to day and the aimless flopping around on tax reform, the Liberals and Nationals have been exposed as a government that is incapable of government—and, if so, what is the point? What is the point of the Turnbull government? What is the point of a government that is incapable of governing?

In sharp and clear contrast, Labor in opposition has been listening, consulting and engaging. We have been developing policies aimed at increasing the prosperity of this nation and making sure that everyone gets an opportunity to fairly share in the benefits of that prosperity. Take education. Before the election, the Liberals promised 'no cuts to health' and 'no cuts to education' in a now infamous commitment that was made. They said that they would be 'on a unity ticket' with us when it came to education funding for schools—the Gonski model. In fact, there were corflute signs put up around the election saying, 'We'll match Labor's funding dollar for dollar.' But it was not true.

After the election, the Liberals decided to just dump the Gonski reforms and rip over $30 billion from Australian schools. Over 10 years, Prime Minister Turnbull's cuts mean over $6.2 billion ripped out from classrooms in my state of Queensland alone. It is over $2.1 billion in schools funding in the Greater Brisbane region. And it is over $236 million in classrooms in my electorate of Griffith, on the south side, alone. These cuts are equivalent to sacking one in seven teachers, and they affect all schools. They affect public schools, they affect independent schools, and they affect Catholic schools—and I have each of those types of schools in my electorate.

In contrast to the reckless gutting of our education system that this government has undertaken, we have announced that we will deliver the most significant improvement in school education in Australia for two generations. A Shorten Labor government will fully implement and fund the Gonski reforms. Labor's 'Your Child. Our Future' plan will see an
additional investment in our education system of $4 ½ billion over the 2018 and 2019 school years and a total provision of $37.3 billion for the package over the decade. That is a massive reformist package. Our policy means a strong focus on every single child's needs. It means more individual attention for students, better training for teachers, more targeted resources, better equipped classrooms and more support for students with learning difficulties. Every Australian school and every Australian child will benefit. Every Australian school and every Australian child will benefit from Labor’s education policy.

That schools policy stands alongside our plans for a stronger vocational education sector through our TAFE funding guarantee, and a quality university system without Prime Minister Turnbull’s $100,000 degrees. Quality education is so important to our nation’s future economic prosperity. The government’s work on innovation and entrepreneurialism—a lot of which I very happily support, not just because it owes a debt of gratitude to Labor’s earlier detailed and comprehensive policy—is, sadly, completely undermined by the government’s failures, in their cuts and the effect that their cuts will have on the education system, to equip Australians with the skills, knowledge and experience they need, through the education system in this country.

In speaking about education as an economic benefit, of course I do not want to ignore its inherent value as an end in itself, not just as a means to other ends. But in this debate it is appropriate for me to talk about the wider ramifications for the economy of individual policy measures.

More broadly, I want to make some observations about Labor as the best party to ensure that the actions of government contribute to a strong national economy with benefits in which people across our nation can share. Labor has a strong economic record. We constantly hear claims from the Liberals and the Nationals that they are the superior economic managers, but nothing could be further from the truth. It is Labor that has had the courage and foresight to embark on the important economic reforms that have driven a quarter century of economic growth, that have ensured quality access to education and health care and that have helped to maintain and secure the jobs and living standards of Australians.

Prime Minister Whitlam’s university reforms provided access to higher education to a much broader range of Australians, setting this country up to be the high-wage, high-skills nation we are today. It was Prime Minister Whitlam, for example, who had the fortitude to establish diplomatic relations with China, of course now one of our most important trading partners. And it was him who established Medicare—again something that those opposite opposed, and it is still at risk from them.

If you want to talk about the clear difference between what the conservatives, the Liberal and National parties, think and stand for and what we on the Labor side believe in and seek for the Australian people, take Medicare as an example. Over there you have a government that want to cut Medicare. It is not just the $80 billion worth of cuts in health and education funding to the states over the decade from their first budget papers, which are still going ahead, but the cuts to Medicare.

During my by-election, they sort of floated the idea of a GP tax. The candidate who was running against me thought it was a good idea. The Prime Minister came to town and suggested that I was running a scare campaign about the GP tax and said that there would not be one. Of course, five minutes later there was going to be a GP tax. It was our advocacy that
stopped that from being made a reality in Australia, and I am very proud of that. It is also
Labor that is standing up against the cuts to Medicare, the attacks on Medicare and the
attempts to privatise Medicare that are the stock-in-trade of the Liberal and National parties.

I have spoken a bit about our historical legacy, and I have spoken about Prime Minister
Whitlam. Of course, I would also add that Prime Minister Hawke and Prime Minister Keating
really modernised this country's economy by reducing tariffs and by opening us up for
international trade and investment. They were a couple of guys who knew good international
trade and investment when they saw it. They really opened up opportunities for trade in our
nation. I would also add to those people our most recent Labor Prime Ministers—Rudd and
Gillard. They are two people who oversaw the sort of economic management we really
needed in a time of crisis. Think back to the global financial crisis and what Prime Minister
Rudd did not just with the stimulus but with the bank guarantee. Imagine if there had been a
run on our banks in that crisis.

Frankly, it was the bold, strong and resolute response of the Labor government during that
period that was so important for allowing Australia to come out of it. We were the 12th
largest economy in the world and had a AAA credit rating. Unemployment was lower in the
GFC than it is under this government. It was that management that was so important to
Australia weathering that serious storm. But you will not hear the Liberals and the Nationals
speak of it of course. You will not hear them paying the tribute I have just paid.

The government have had an opportunity in the past 2½ years to really show some
stewardship and leadership on the Australian economy, but what have they done? What have
they actually delivered for the Australian economy? They have doubled the deficit and have
increased the debt. Unemployment is at six per cent, which, as I said, is higher than it was
during the global financial crisis. They have been unable to articulate a coherent tax reform
plan let alone execute one. They have flopped around on reform and on tax reform. The
question for the Australian people at the election has to be: they have had this period of time
in which to act and they have been unable to show anything for it, so why on earth would you
continue with this government? Why on earth would you let them wreak more damage?

In strong contrast, we are a party that stands ready to govern. We have a strong and clear
policy package. I spoke about education. We have strong policies on, for example, the
revenue issues in this country. We want to close the tax loopholes for multinational
corporations. The mob over there talk about it. They wanted us to agree to a bill that was
going to reduce transparency for private firms with $100 million in turnover. As if we would
vote for that. We want meaningful action on multinational tax evasion. We want to close
superannuation loopholes that accrue to people at the top of the income distribution and not to
people in the middle.

Negative gearing and capital gains tax actually make it very difficult for our country to
manage housing affordability, and they do so at great cost to the budget. That is why we have
announced a bold negative gearing and CGT policy. Listen to the reaction from the Australian
people. We are hearing grave disappointment—the puncturing of the expectations that the
Liberals built under new Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his rhetoric—and at the same
time an overwhelmingly positive response to not just our policy package on improvements to
schools, health and dignity in retirement but also our general economic policies that will stand
this country in good stead for the future.
Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (12:26): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the appropriation bills as a strong voice for North Queensland, a region that is strong and resilient. It was built with grit and determination by people who never gave up and who will see it through the tough economic times that it currently faces. The member for Griffith, who spoke before me, used the words ‘bold, strong and resolute’. Those were the attitudes that got us through the GFC. I have to say that it was not from the Rudd or Gillard governments; it was from the hardworking men and women in my electorate and electorates like mine doing mining and agricultural work to keep the economy afloat. It certainly was not $100 cheques in the mail, overpriced school halls and pink batts that burnt houses down.

Although this phrase has been attributed to JFK’s father, Joseph Kennedy, it is probably better remembered when best sung by the great Billy Ocean in his 1985 hit When the Going gets Tough, the Tough get Going. The going in North Queensland is tough indeed. The much publicised 237 job losses at the Yabulu nickel refinery came after a string of bad news over the past 2½ years. Peabody mining cut 450 jobs in the Bowen Basin. Glencore Xstrata cut another 450 jobs. BMA cut 700 jobs in the Bowen Basin. There were 481 jobs lost at the Callide mine and 727 jobs lost at the Dawson mine. These are just a handful of announcements. In July last year Anglo American announced thousands of jobs will be cut from its operations, including four mines serviced from Mackay.

The regional town of Mackay is the epicentre of the resources downturn. Thousands of homes are for sale and the rental vacancy rate has gone from zero to 10 per cent. The pain is acutely felt in the small town of Bowen, where dozens of businesses have closed down. They desperately hung on for as long as they could—for three years or more—waiting for the expansion of the nearby port at Abbot Point. But when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

This government is rolling out the largest infrastructure investment program in Australia’s history. The most important element for North Queensland is the $6.7 billion investment to fix the Bruce Highway. Major highway projects generate immediate jobs in construction and also result in future economic growth through increased efficiency and productivity. Construction projects under this government have included: pavement widening; safety upgrades; overtaking lanes, such as those constructed at Coningsby near Mackay; the Burdekin Bridge upgrade; fixing black spots in a range of areas; and new rest areas on the highway.

Some of the big projects this government has already completed are the $137 million Vantassel Street to Cluden duplication in Townsville; the $50 million upgrading of the highway from Sandy Corner to Collinsons Lagoon, with the overpass they have there just north of Brandon and the Burdekin; and the $13.8 million upgrade and extra lane at the pivotal showgrounds intersection in Mackay. Other major works currently under construction or due to start any day include the $45 million flood proofing of the highway at Yellow Gin Creek in the Burdekin and the $57 million flood proofing at Sandy Gully near Bowen. Other investments in productivity and road network efficiency under this government include black spot funding, Roads to Recovery funding, and the financial assistance grants program to local councils, which have delivered such projects as a major upgrade to Malcolmson Street at Mount Pleasant in Mackay; an upgrade to Milton Street in Mackay; the Melton Black intersection in Townsville, where Lavarack Barracks is; the Old Clare Road upgrade from
Giddy Road near Ayr; and the construction of a new roundabout as you drive into the township of Bowen.

Reliable road networks are essential for productivity in regional areas, but the government also believes in building community infrastructure, which creates immediate jobs once again and leaves the community with a lasting legacy. In Dawson, we have delivered on the $17 million public realm improvement in Mackay’s city heart; the $17 million development of CQUniversity's engineering precinct, and also extra money that has gone into creating the new city campus of CQUniversity in Mackay; the $750,000 construction of the extension to Mackay Gymnastics' new facility; and the $2.3 million relocation of the Mackay Junior Soccer Grounds.

Since being elected, the Liberal-National government has focused on growing existing industries and creating new ones. That is where major job benefits come from. One of the most exciting success stories for the North is in the development of aquaculture. Pacific Reef Fisheries, which operates a prawn farm in the Burdekin, has been trying to establish a new prawn farm at Guthalungra north of Bowen. The process began, I am sad to say, back in 2001, but I have worked very closely with the project proponents to get this farm up and running and through all of the bureaucratic nightmare in this term of government. The final approval, I am happy to say, came from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. It was issued late last year, and Pacific Reef Fisheries are soon to be employing more than 100 full-time staff for their operations and a further 70 to 100 workers during peak harvest times once that new farm is constructed.

The largest job creation project there could be in North and Central Queensland right now is the Carmichael coal project. It will create 10,000 jobs, direct and indirect, over the life of the entire mine, including in the construction not just of the mine but of the railway line that leads to the port and the expansion of the port at Abbot Point. All of that, directly and indirectly, will create thousands of jobs. The figure that has been put out by Adani is 10,000 jobs. While the green movement have tried to claim that it is not, it actually is. The figure that they are spouting about is for stage 1 of the mine only, not including the railway line, the port expansion or the indirect jobs that flow on from it.

The federal government has issued all the required approvals. I have to say it is now up to the state Labor government to stop sitting on its hands and issue the mining lease and the final approvals for the port expansion. I believe there are three approvals that are yet to be issued. It is disappointing to see the Labor Party refusing to back this project. I understand that even in the Senate just recently the Labor Party joined with the Greens to vote against a motion calling on the state government to get on with issuing the mining lease.

It is also disappointing to see the state Labor government sitting on its hands with two of the largest Bruce Highway projects in my electorate: the Mackay Ring Road, valued at $540 million, and the Haughton River Bridge replacement, which is also around half a billion dollars. The contract for planning and design of the Mackay Ring Road was awarded in March last year, almost a year ago, and we have the state Labor government telling us that it will not get to construction for another year. The federal government is stumpung up 80 per cent of the funding for this project. We have offered to get that money to the state government sooner rather than later, as soon as they can get to construction, but they are telling us they cannot do it. They need to pull their finger out and get going with this project. I have spoken
to senior engineers in New South Wales Transport, who tell me a project of this magnitude should not take more than nine months to be designed. Yet we are having to wait until next year through the dillydallying of Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and her ragtag bunch in that minority government there to get going with this most important project, which will create 600 jobs that are needed in our region right now. They demonstrate no sense of urgency with that project or the Haughton River Bridge upgrade, which is also an important project for safety and also jobs in the northern part of my electorate.

In fact, the only road project between Mackay and Townsville that Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk nominated as one that she would be willing to fast-track turned out to be one that was actually fully funded—100 per cent funded—by the federal government, and she said that she was going to fast-track it and bring it on for construction early this year. In fact, on 11 November last year I announced that we were fast-tracking the project by bringing the money forward and it was going to go ahead in early 2016. So they did not do anything there at all. Not surprisingly, a local company, Vassallo Constructions, has already started constructing those overtaking lanes at Thomsett's Road, near Bloomsbury, and that is a great outcome for local jobs—having a local tenderer out there doing the job and keeping infrastructure investment dollars in our region.

Overtaking lanes are also under construction at Alligator Creek near Townsville, and there are some projects outside my electorate that have an impact on local jobs and productivity in my electorate. I include in that the Hay Point turnoff intersection, which is being upgraded, and the Peak Downs Highway upgrades, which include a new pathway through Eton Range and the replacement of bridges under the Liberal-National government's Bridges Renewal Program on the Peak Downs Highway.

Along with all that good work that is being done in infrastructure, we need to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow and get all that preparation work done. An alternative line in that Billy Ocean classic is, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get ready.' Much has been said over the years about the potential of the North, but in this government's first budget we backed a commitment with money on the table for developing the North. It came in different packages and it came in the form of billions of dollars: $6.7 billion package to fix the Bruce Highway to facilitate growth, prosperity and jobs; $5 billion for the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, or NAIF, to provide concessional loans for building the infrastructure needed to create jobs, new industry, and a stronger economy throughout the North; and $500 million for the National Water Infrastructure Fund, with money specifically earmarked for dams in Northern Australia.

The concessional loans from NAIF will develop new ventures and industries and will overcome one of their major hurdles to getting ahead: affordable finance. The NAIF scheme is an incentive for projects such as the proposed ethanol plant in the Burdekin, which will create a new avenue for income for the many sugarcane farmers who are at the mercy of world sugar prices and foreign owned mills which they have to sell to. The NAIF scheme is an incentive for a new bio-energy plant in Mackay. That will expand the region's production of energy from biofuels, which currently includes an ethanol plant in Sarina and the Racecourse Mill power generator. The NAIF scheme is also an incentive for a new freight and logistics centre at Mackay Airport, which will open the door for greater exports, including...
agricultural produce sourced from the wider region and boosted by the government's commitment to water infrastructure.

Last week, I drove up to the Eungella range, to the west of Mackay, with the member for Capricornia. We spoke to a local sawmill owner while we looked out over the massive water catchment that will become Urannah Dam. That dam will be very deep with a small footprint, limiting losses to evaporation. It is high enough to enable the gravity feed of water to dry agricultural land on the coast and in inland areas, opening up massive new agricultural opportunities. For the sawmiller, there will be an opportunity to mill the timber before it is cleared and burnt prior to flooding. That dam has been talked about for 40 years, but two new developments mean that talk is now very serious. First, private investors are on board, with the support of the local traditional owners, who are also the leasehold owners of the site. Secondly, this government has the will and determination to build new dams and money on the table to support them.

Once Urannah Dam is under way, I will be fighting to get the Elliot Main Channel project resurrected. The channel, linking the Burdekin River to good but dry agricultural land between Bowen and the Burdekin, needs to go ahead. It was partly built many years ago, but, with our real commitment to water infrastructure, the time has come to deliver on the Elliot Main Channel. There is also an opportunity to raise the Burdekin Falls Dam, which was an expansion option included in the dam's original design. Water is the key to agriculture, and investing in dams enables huge growth in agricultural production.

In just two years of government, we have secured free trade agreements with Korea, Japan and China. Together with the TPP, these agreements open the doors to more agricultural exports. Some markets will require faster freight services, particularly for perishable products. There are two airports in my electorate seeking to expand to accommodate international flights. That will create more jobs, not just for exporting products but also with the tourists it will bring in, particularly into Mackay and the Whitsundays. I have sought and received a commitment from the government to waive the costs associated with customs and border protection services for an indefinite period, should the airports at Mackay or Whitsunday secure an international carrier.

I am also working on a brand-new industry for the Whitsundays, where the reef, island and world-class Whitehaven Beach are major international drawcards. It is the perfect base for a superyacht industry. We are close to overcoming obstacles in order to introduce this major creator of new jobs and a source of income for the local economy. A single superyacht reaps $50,000 per day while based in a port such as the Whitsundays.

Another brand-new industry that the government is in the process of creating right now is the cultivation of medicinal marijuana. Now that legislation has been passed in this place, there is an opportunity for growers in North Queensland. I am going to be speaking to people tomorrow about that.

I have more ideas that we can use to build the North. I will be speaking on them in coming weeks.

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (12:41): The 2013 election might seem to be in the distant past to many people, but I am sure that few Australians have forgotten that on the eve of that election this government, the Turnbull government, promised 'no cuts to education, no cuts to health,
no changes to the pension, no change to the GST and no cuts to the ABC or SBS’. Australians were also promised a better government.

What Australians got after the election was the most shambolic government that I can recall. Key election promises were broken, and, whilst voters will say that they always expect promises to be broken, they nevertheless hold out hope that the government that they vote for will, on this occasion, be different. They hope that it will honour key election pledges, particularly when those pledges were made by a party that, when in opposition, made election promises central to its campaign.

But this government has not done so. This government has not only betrayed the Australian people's trust, but, in its first budget, cold-heartedly cut support to Australia's lowest-income households. The government also cut $80 billion of forward spending from health and education. Since then, it has cut about another $10 billion in health spending. It decimated national science and research institutions, cutting hundreds of millions of dollars from them. Climate change responsibilities were off the agenda. Only recently, Australia agreed in Paris to strengthen climate science, yet, after the Paris talks, the government came back, rene gadgeted on that and cut further into CSIRO's climate science division, with hundreds of Australia's most experienced climate scientists likely to lose their jobs. The effects of that will be that we cannot have the information that we need in order to put together a constructive climate change policy into the future.

We then saw the ABC gutted. Industry assistance was slashed across the nation, which ended with Australia's auto industry closing shop. The naval shipbuilding industry is not far behind. Not only have several of the shipyards already closed but places like the ASC in Adelaide are projected to lose another 1,300 employees within a couple of years. The government now talks about the fact that it is having discussions with the Punch Group about re-energising auto construction in South Australia. Yet when it really mattered, when we had an industry there, they turned their back and walked away from the industry, the hundreds of small businesses that relied on it and the thousands of people whose employment was dependent on car making in this country.

We then saw the coalition effectively bring back its failed Work Choices legislation by stealth. It did that by opening the doors to Australian jobs for low-paid foreign labour and by simultaneously allowing imported products, which are often substandard, to come into the country, all of which directly affect jobs for Australians. We saw a classic case of that with the MV Portland and CSL Melbourne ships in recent weeks. The CSL Melbourne, previously a ship that was crewed by Australian seafarers, was replaced by a Liberian flagged ship operated by Greek company with a Filipino crew. It has been given a licence to operate in Australian waters to do Australian work. Which other country would have allowed that other than this one? And for no better reason than to try and push down the conditions and pay of Australian workers.

This is a government that has pursued its ideological policies—tearing down the Public Service, cruelly cutting welfare programs, pushing up university degrees to perhaps $100,000, and bringing down wages and working conditions. We now have the government also trying to attack the penalty rates system in this country—again, a system that supports the lowest income workers the most. Whilst the government says that is not its policy, the reality is, when you listen to the rhetoric and look at what it is doing, that is very much a part of the
government's agenda. Simultaneously, we have a government that has presided over the sorting of tens of millions of dollars by bogus registered training organisations that have been ripping off not only the government funding but also the trainees that enrolled in many of their courses.

Whichever way the Australian people turn, they are being hurt by the coalition government's warped ideology or its incompetence. This is an arrogant government that keeps treating Australian people with contempt, a government that has miscalculated the backlash of the Australian people. Not surprisingly, within a year of being elected as Prime Minister, Tony Abbott was under siege from his own party and, within another year of that, he was replaced only to see the chaos worsening and the cruel cuts continuing—more cuts to health, more cuts to industry and science, more cuts to welfare—and more chaos in the coalition with ministers being sacked, replaced or resigning from parliament. Indeed a quick count that I made would suggest that there have been 56 ministers or assistant ministers in the time of this government. Ministerial turnover has been unprecedented.

Above all, and perhaps worst of all, the government has failed and continues to fail on two critical matters. It has failed miserably to articulate a national economic vision for Australia or to get the nation's finances in order. Budget deficits are out of control, now up to $37.4 billion according to the latest forecast. Gross debt is headed towards $550 billion by the end of the forward estimates. Trade deficits keep growing and, for 2015, the trade deficit was $32.7 billion. This is despite all the government's rhetoric about free trade agreements.

What we have seen and what we have now is a reactionary, knee-jerk policy announcing government that is prepared to do grubby deals with the crossbench senators in order to get its legislation through parliament. We see the continuing infighting and leaks coming from the government. In desperation to hold onto government, the government now resorts to the old tricks of pork-barrelling, scaremongering and electoral manipulation. Voters simply have to read the adjournment speech of the member for Bass from only two days ago to understand pork-barrelling. They can also look at the Regional Development Australia funding distribution—$231 million going to coalition seats compared with $62 million for non-government seats. Even if you allow for the difference in the number of seats that both sides of politics hold, the difference is stark; it is clearly a case of pork-barrelling.

Then we see the electoral manipulation. Only this week we saw the Senate voting on legislation rushed into this place to change the Senate election system. It has been done for no other reason than to ensure that the government gets the most votes it can out of the Senate voting system. And it has done that after putting together a deceitful deal with the Greens and with Senator Xenophon. It is a deal that will shut minor parties out of the next election. We then saw a pretentious half-day hearing, which supposedly ticks the boxes of public consultation, when we all know that the deal between the Greens, Senator Xenophon and the government has already been signed and sealed.

The Prime Minister worked out that Australians are angry about multinational tax avoidance. Probably his focus groups told him that and so what we have now is the government jumping on the bandwagon of doing something about multinational tax avoidance. It is all rhetoric and lots of threats but there is very little substance to those threats or to that rhetoric. Labor in fact only recently put forward a policy to do with fixing up the budget. I am referring to the negative gearing policy that Labor put forward, a sensible policy
on negative gearing where no existing investor will be affected, where future negative gearing will be allowed to continue for new construction, that in turn will create thousands of jobs as a result of the new homes that will be built. It is a policy that has widespread support across reputable economists and business commentators.

This government, the Turnbull government, is trying to dismiss Labor's policy and criticise it. In fact, the Prime Minister, in absolute desperation, jumped onto the fear campaign of warning that the sky is going to fall in, housing values across Australia are going to fall and people's assets will be lost. Of course the Prime Minister has no independent analysis to support his fear campaign, only his self-proclaimed superior intelligence. This is the kind of fear campaign put forward by a Prime Minister who is rattled, and the coalition government has a track record of doing that. When governments are faced with an election, they usually play the fear card and this is a campaign of fear that everyone's assets—that is, their personal homes—are going to lose value somehow as a result of Labor's well thought through negative gearing policy.

This is a Prime Minister who is incapable of making a decision of his own and who does not have the united support of his MPs; a Prime Minister who not only has turned his back on every value he purported to stand for in the past, but is finally showing his true self—showing that all that matters to him was becoming Prime Minister and that he would do or say whatever it took for him to become the Australian Prime Minister.

Anyone who had pinned their hopes on Malcolm Turnbull would by now be bitterly disappointed. But they should not be surprised. This is the person who, prior to being Prime Minister, as communications minister was the architect of the coalition's worst failure—the NBN rollout. The current Prime Minister was personally responsible for a revised NBN rollout that has left Australia with an outdated, second-rate system dependent on copper wire, with a rollout timetable that has blown out to 2020 and a cost blow-out of $26.5 billion—$26.5 billion is the cost blow-out, not the cost. The cost has gone out from $29 billion to almost $56 billion—nearly doubled. I cannot think of any other government program that cost $26.5 billion, let alone that has blown out by $26.5 billion.

For the government to have the audacity to criticise the Australian Submarine Corporation over the cost overrun of the Air Warfare Destroyer project, which was only a fraction of the cost overrun of the project led by this Prime Minister, is an absolute joke. It could be even worse, but the government is refusing to be transparent about the rollout, and we do not have all of the details. When the Prime Minister said this week that he had turned the NBN around, he was absolutely right—he turned it backwards.

Contrast that with Labor's position. We have focused on presenting and preparing policies in the lead-up to the next election—policies which are sensible and reasonable and which will go a long way to getting the budget back into order. Labor has announced superannuation savings of about $14 billion over the next 10 years by targeting very high income earners with respect to the current concessions they get on their superannuation savings. That is not mainstream Australians—it is the very high income earners. Labor has absolutely committed to building, maintaining and sustaining Australia's next submarine fleet of 12 submarines. We have committed to a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030 and we are consulting on an emissions reduction target of 45 per cent on 2005 figures by 2030. We have also made...
absolute commitments to TAFE to ensure that TAFE remains the central provider of vocational education and training in this country.

Importantly, we have reinstated much of the funding that the government cut from the Gonski funding package, and there will be an additional $37.3 billion put back into education by Labor if we are elected. We have targeted the multinationals with a plan that will add $7.2 billion to the budget bottom line.

The contrast between the government and the opposition is clear. The government is in chaos. It does not have a plan, it does not have a vision and it is jumping from one issue to another trying to put out bushfires. By contrast, Labor has put together a very carefully structured set of policies—and there will be more to come—which show that we are not only capable of getting the budget back into order, we are also capable of getting the economy of this country back into order, securing people's jobs and ensuring that they have jobs with fair wages and conditions. Just as importantly, we are not about to decimate the welfare system of this country.

Debate adjourned.

Social Services Legislation Amendment (Family Measures) Bill 2015
Consideration of Senate Message
Bill returned from the Senate with an amendment.
Ordered that the amendment be considered at the next sitting.

Tax Laws Amendment (Implementation of the Common Reporting Standard) Bill 2015
Consideration of Senate Message
Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.
Ordered that the amendments be considered at the next sitting.

Omnibus Repeal Day (Autumn 2015) Bill 2015
Consideration of Senate Message
Bill returned from the Senate with amendments.
Ordered that the amendments be considered at the next sitting.

BUSINESS
Rearrangement
Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government) (12:58): I move:

That business intervening before government business order of the day No. 9, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.
BILLS

Communications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation and Other Measures)
Bill 2015

Consideration of Senate Message

Debate resumed.

Senate's amendment—

(1) Schedule 1A—NBN Co Reporting

National Broadband Network Companies Act 2011

1 After section 98A

Insert:

98AA Financial and deployment forecasts report

(1) The Board must prepare a report setting out NBN Co's financial and deployment forecasts for the period beginning on 1 July 2015 and ending on 30 June 2022.

(2) The report must include:

(a) forecasts for each financial year during the period of the following:

(i) number of premises ready for service for each access technology;

(ii) number of premises activated for each access technology;

(iii) total revenue;

(iv) total operating expenditure;

(v) earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation;

(vi) earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation margin;

(vii) operating profit before deduction of interest and income taxes;

(viii) net cash interest (funding costs);

(ix) earnings before taxes;

(x) total capital expenditure;

(xi) movement in working capital;

(xii) cash tax;

(xiii) levered free cash flow;

(xiv) government funding;

(xv) debt funding;

(xvi) total funding; and

(b) totals for the whole of the period for each forecast mentioned in paragraph (a).

(3) The Board must, within 60 days of the day on which this item commences:

(a) give the Minister the report; and

(b) publish the report on NBN Co's website.

(4) The Minister must cause a copy of the report to be tabled in each House of the Parliament within 5 sitting days of receiving it.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government) (12:59): I move:
That the amendment be disagreed to.

The amendment made by the Senate proposes to insert a new section 98AA into the National Broadband Network Companies Act 2011. The proposed section would require the board of nbn co, within 60 days, to prepare, provide to the minister and publish on its website a report setting out nbn co's financial and deployment forecasts for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2022. The minister would be required to table the report in each house of the parliament within five sitting days of receipt.

The amendment proposed is not related to the matters dealt with by the Communications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation and Other Measures) Bill 2015. That bill, as introduced, does not seek to amend the NBN Companies Act. The amendment proposed to the bill in fact is inconsistent with the underlying purpose of the Communications Legislation Amendment (Deregulation and Other Measures) Bill 2015, that underlying purpose being to streamline regulatory processes and to reduce the compliance burden faced by the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors.

For these reasons, I put to the House that it ought to disagree with the amendment proposed by the Senate.

Mr CLARE (Blaxland) (13:00): I have to ask the question: what does this government have to hide? Seriously—what does the government have to hide? What is it worried about here that it is willing to take this bill back to the House in trying to remove these provisions from the bill?

Just so that honourable members understand what we are talking about here: what the government is trying to do right now is to amend legislation so that nbn co does not have to release information that it used to release—basic, simple information, like total capex, total opex, total revenue and the amount of interest that nbn co will pay. All of this is information that nbn co used to release in corporate plans when we were in government. So this argument that the government is now using, that this is somehow commercial-in-confidence information, is arrant nonsense. It is arrant nonsense by a desperate government, willing to do whatever it takes to try to hide information about the mess they have made of the NBN.

It is evidence, again, of the hypocrisy of this Prime Minister, because when he was the shadow minister for communications he would come into this chamber on a regular basis and scold us about the lack of transparency with the NBN. I will give just a couple of examples. On 24 September 2013, Malcolm Turnbull said:

… our commitment is, our focus is, to have a much greater level of transparency and openness.

On 11 February 2014, he said:

Maximum transparency is going to be given to this project.

On the same day, he said:

The bottom line is that as far as the NBN project is concerned, the government's commitment is to be completely transparent …

On 8 April 2014, he said:

The Government requires a high degree of transparency from NBN Co in its communication with the public and Parliament.

And, as recently as this week, in a courtyard press conference the Prime Minister said:
… we believe fervently, passionately, in a transparent democracy.

But, typically of this Prime Minister, they are just words. They are not actions. It is just waffle. He says one thing and does another because, as Prime Minister, he has not been transparent with the NBN project.

Information on rollout has been taken down from the website and nbn co executives turning up to parliamentary committees are now refusing to answer even basic questions, like the value of contracts that nbn co has signed up to on behalf of taxpayers. Questions on notice are coming back with non-answers, or outright evasion to simple questions. It took a Senate order in 2014 to get the now Prime Minister to release the nbn co corporate plan, and when it was released it was threadbare and disclosed little. And now this: an attempt by the government to try to overturn this Senate amendment, to refuse access to information that was released when we were in government—despite the fact that it has been asked for by the Senate in Senate hearings and through two orders of the Senate for the production of documents in June last year and in September. On every occasion this government has refused to provide this information, and is still refusing to do it.

Why? The only reason I can think of for why the government is refusing to release information which was released by a previous government is that they do not want to reveal information about what a mess they have made of this project. I have said it before and I will say it again: they have doubled the cost of this project—

**Mr Fletcher:** You are living in an alternative universe!

**Mr CLARE:** I will take the interjection. The minister doubts my comment when I say they have made a mess of this project. This Prime Minister promised that it would cost $29½ billion. Does the minister refute the allegation that it has now gone up to $56 billion? That is double the cost, and they have doubled the time it will take to build.

Everyone in Australia was told this project would be built this year. That has blown out to 2020. The cost of fibre to the node—the second-rate version of the NBN—has tripled, from $600 a premise to about $1,600 a premise. And the cost of fixing the copper to make this second-rate network work has blown out by 1,000 per cent. Even in places where they are switching it on—in the Hunter, the Central Coast and Bundaberg—when they do switch it on it is not working properly. It is a mess. So I am not surprised that the government scurries back into the House of Representatives and desperately tries to cover that up by moving amendments here to refuse access by the Australian people to basic information about the mess they have made of the NBN.

**Mr FLETCHER** (Bradfield—Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government) (13:05): What the shadow minister has just put to the House cannot be left uncorrected. The nbn co cooperates in a transparent fashion, and considerably more transparently than it did under the previous government.

Let me remind people that every week, nbn co publishes on its website an update of the rollout numbers—how the company is performing. And it is a very good story—1.775 million premises are now able to connect to the NBN, should they choose to do so. That is after some 2½ years in government. Labor was in government for six years, and they got to barely 300,000 premises.
So the transparency is there to report on how the rollout is going, and the rollout is going well. Under the previous communications minister, now the Prime Minister, a philosophy was put in place requiring nbn co to report in essentially the same way as a listed public company. Listed public companies in the telecommunications sector and every other sector regularly provide briefings to equity analysts, journalists and other stakeholders at which the CEO and other senior executives present, and that has been the practice of nbn co—introduced when the current Prime Minister was the communications minister. Nbn co is providing regular information to its stakeholders as it should. The amendment that was moved in the Senate sought a one-time forecast out to the period 2022. I make the point that in fact detailed projections have been released out to September 2018. The company is getting on with the job of building out the network to meet those projections.

Ms MacTIERNAN (Perth) (13:07): I want to make a few comments. Firstly, the comparison of nbn co with a standard, publicly listed company is completely inappropriate. This is an entity that is fundamentally a government funded body that is using very substantial amounts of taxpayers' money to roll out essential infrastructure.

Mr Fletcher: It's a political stunt.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is not a political stunt. We actually—

Mr Fletcher: You should be grateful that we are digging you out of the unbelievable mess—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): Order! The member for Perth has the call.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I do not accept that at all. We actually had to devise a scheme.

Mr Fletcher interjecting—

Ms MacTIERNAN: We actually had to go out there and persuade the community—

Mr Fletcher interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, Minister! The member for Perth has the call.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I do not mind a few interjections. I am happy to have a few intelligent interjections, not just a long stream of consciousness from Turnbullistan!

You talk about transparency. We have been seeking from nbn co information about the state of the copper wire in my electorate, which previously had parts of the fibre-to-the-premises rollout that were taken off and later put back in. But now we are going to be subject to fibre to the node, the 20th-century technology rather than 21st-century technology. We know, anecdotally and from what we have seen of the copper pits when they have been opened, that we are going to have a major problem with that copper, so we ask nbn co over and over again what they can tell us about this copper wire that they are proposing to utilise. What can they tell us about its status, its standing and its reliability? They refuse to disclose any information. Either they have not got that information and have not required Telstra to hand over that information, which is completely unacceptable, or they are acting completely in the dark and are proposing to spend $56 billion rolling out infrastructure without any
understanding of the nature of the copper wire over which they are proposing to deliver these services. This is a completely unacceptable situation.

The minister has been saying much about how they have got this project underway and have been able to turn it out so rapidly. Be reasonable. In six years we devised the project. We did the work to show why in fact we needed an NBN. You might recall that the Leader of the Opposition at the time actually opposed the whole notion of an NBN and that we would have a systematic rollout of 21st-century telecommunications infrastructure across the country. He actually opposed that. It did take time to get that project up and running. It did take time to begin the rollout and to develop the economic models. But then, of course, once you start rolling it out, the speed at which it would—

Honourable members interjecting—

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will leave my comments there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the amendment be disagreed to.

The House divided. [13:16]

(The Deputy Speaker—Mr Craig Kelly)

Ayes ......................78
Noes ......................49
Majority .................29

AYES
Abbott, AJ
Andrews, KJ
Baldwin, RC
Bishop, BK
Briggs, JE
Broadbent, RE
Buchholz, S
Christensen, GR
Coleman, DB
Dutton, PC
Fletcher, PW
Gillespie, DA
Griggs, NL
Hastie, AW
Hendy, PW
Howarth, LR
Irons, SJ
Joyce, BT
Laming, A
Laundy, C
Macfarlane, IE
Markus, LE
McCormack, MF
Nikolic, AA
O'Dwyer, KM
Pitt, KJ
Prentice, J
Pyne, CM
Robert, SR
Ruddock, PM

Alexander, JG
Andrews, KL
Billson, BF
Bishop, JI
Broad, AJ
Brough, MT
Chester, D
Cobb, JK
Coulton, M (teller)
Entsch, WG
Garbaro, T
Goodenough, IR
Hartseyker, L
Henderson, SM
Hogan, KJ
Hutchinson, ER
Jones, ET
Keenan, M
Landry, ML
Ley, SP
Marino, NB
Matheson, RG
McNamara, KJ
O'Dowd, KD
Pasin, A
Porter, CC
Price, ML
Ramsey, RE
Roy, WB
Scott, BC
AYES

Scott, FM
Southcott, AJ
Sudmalis, AE
Taylor, AJ
Truss, WE
Varvaris, N
Wicks, LE
Wilson, RJ
Wyatt, KG

Simpkins, LXL
Stone, SN
Sukkar, MS
Tehan, DT
Van Manen, AJ
Whiteley, BD (teller)
Williams, MP
Wood, JP
Zimmerman, T

NOES

Albanese, AN
Bowen, CE
Burke, AS
Byrne, AM
Champion, ND
Clare, JD
Collins, JM
Danby, M
Elliot, MJ
Ferguson, LDT
Giles, AJ
Hall, JG (teller)
Husic, EN
King, CF
MacTiernan, AJGC
McGowan, C
Neumann, SK
O'Neil, CE
Perrett, GD
Ripoll, BF
Rowland, MA
Swan, WM
Thomson, KJ
Watts, TG
Zappia, A

Bandt, AP
Burke, AE
Butler, TM
Chalmers, JE
Chesters, LM
Claydon, SC
Conroy, PM
Dreyfus, MA
Ellis, KM
Fitzgibbon, JA
Gray, G
Hayes, CP
Jones, SP
Leigh, AK
Marles, RD
Mitchell, RG
O'Connor, BPJ
Owens, J
Plibersek, TJ
Rishworth, AL
Ryan, JC (teller)
Thistlethwaite, MJ
Vamvakinou, M
Wilkie, AD

Question agreed to.

Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government) (13:21): I present the reasons for the House disagreeing to the Senate amendment and I move:
That the reasons be adopted.
Question agreed to.
Appropriation Bill (No. 3) 2015-2016
Appropriation Bill (No. 4) 2015-2016

Second Reading

Cognate debate.

Debate resumed on the motion:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr BILLSON (Dunkley) (13:22): Who would have thought that there would be such excitement in this chamber to hear about the Riviera of Melbourne, down at Dunkley, the Mornington Peninsula. This is why people are there, they know it is the place to be. There is a reason every season to be a part of the Greater Frankston-Mornington Peninsula community. That is why people are there. That is why so many are wanting to be part of the community that I have really enjoyed representing for so many years. We are on the cusp, though, of a chance to do something quite catalytic, quite transformational.

Colleagues in this House and my community would know, as I have spoken before, about the $63 million that the state government is putting in to renovate the Frankston railway station. There is a need to renovate the station, but we are at a pivotal point where we either tart up the railway station or we seize the opportunity for transformational change in our city. I have made the case time and time again that we should do the latter. Let us not miss this opportunity where there is capital investment happening, where there is a Commonwealth program that can be a great ally for transformational projects, where the Chisholm TAFE campus is also having funding injected into it and where the Frankston Hospital—as it continues to expand and meet growing population demand and a growing complexity of cases—is looking for its next instalment in its capital works program.

We know that we also have a vision for our city as the Fremantle of the east coast, a learning hub where we have academic resources. I mentioned Chisholm TAFE but there is also Monash University's Peninsula campus. The campus was on the cusp of closing until, with the support of the then education minister, now the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Julie Bishop, and me, we were able to bring new course offerings to the campus: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy. That was a celebration 10 years ago that we remembered last week as we realised what a transformational change that had made for our community.

But now is a chance to take it to the next step. Why would you miss the opportunity when there are all of these moving parts, a real, genuine prospect for a catalytic transformation in our city and say simply, 'No, we are going to miss that opportunity because it is just a transport project.' Sadly, that is what the state Labor government has decided. I have gone to them and mapped out the many opportunities we have to synchronise effort, innovation and investment in our city, to really set it up for its future. Instead the answer I got back was: 'Bruce, don’t you know anything? It's just a project.' That is my point; it should not be just a project. It is too significant an opportunity simply to say it is a one-off tart-up renovation of Frankston railway station, when we can do something much more meaningful for our community.

It is not like we have not addressed this issue before. I looked at some of the historical material and saw that when Mr Meagher was the state member for Frankston in 1971 he...
announced that there would be a transformation of the Frankston railway station to bring commercial investment, new opportunities, life and vitality to this important precinct of the commercial centre of our city. It did not materialise. In the eighties there was a Reading Cinema project where they were going to build cinemas over the railway station and integrate it with other retail opportunities and have more car parking available for those who were choosing the Frankston line to commute to Melbourne. Well, that did not materialise either.

Here we are and I would like to think it will be third time lucky, but instead we have this state government not wanting to realise that it can lift its ambitions and see greater possibilities for our city. That is what the Frankston City Council want. That is what the Frankston business network wants. Even in this building as people come to see me about other things, they make the point: 'Bruce, you understand about sustainable cities, you did some good policy work in that space many years ago and I know you are trying to do this in Frankston but what is going on with the state government?' Well, the state government have said, 'No, it is just a tart up of the railway station.' They are not looking at the opportunity to extend the electrification down to Baxter and put a timetable in place for that to happen. They are not looking at additional railway stations that would open up access to the health precinct and to the university campus. They are not contemplating that the Monash School of Medicine, which now does a lot of its clinical practice in Frankston, could actually be supported by academic and educational infrastructure to take that learning and that vitality in our community to another level. No, they are not interested in that. It is just a project.

I say to the state government again: 'It should not be just a project. There are tens of millions of dollars going into doing something at Frankston railway station. Do something strategic. Do something catalytic. Understand the great possibilities and potential of our city and take a step in line and advancing that strategic vision for our community.' But no, it is just a project. I say to the state ministers again, 'It is not just a project, and with the trajectory that it is on it will be a missed opportunity.' It has all the hallmarks of the East West Link project in Melbourne, of a new state Labor government with a few novice and rookie MPs—particularly the member for Frankston, who has obviously got the Labor Kool-Aid that if something is not right you just blame the feds. That seems to be his pro-forma response to everything rather than being prepared to collaborate and be constructive, to be adult and a statesman. No, he hasn't got that. He has gone to Labor Advocacy 101 and just blame someone else campaign. He needs to lift above that. I know he is new. I have been happy to work with him. I am happy to bring together people that can contribute something to this important project, but he does not want to talk about it. That is what we saw with the East West Link, where we heard the state Labor government saying, 'It's our way or it's the highway.' It is not even that: it is their way and it is no highway.

Now they have turned up with some new projects and asked for federal money. Do you know how they asked for the federal money? To quote the opposition leader in Victoria, 'They've wrapped a note around a brick and thrown it through the window of the feds.' That is an interesting modality of consultation and collaboration. But that is what we see from the state Labor government: all politics, nothing strategic and nothing planned; just a hunt for a headline in the Herald Sun for the next day that they hope will mask the dysfunction of the state Labor government and the missed opportunities for our city.
We need to do better than that as a state, and the state Labor government needs to realise that there are others around that can help. There is the private sector, who they seem not want to talk to. In the Frankston project they do not even want to engage the private sector. Yet there is the private sector ready to play a role. There is an opportunity to engage their health network. It is in the state government domain and they will not engage there either. There are the university, the TAFE campus and the local council. There is the fact that we lease police infrastructure and the idea of improving the rail links to the city to have a Frankston flyer. What is going to happen to the port at Western Port? There are so many moving parts. It needs a strategic approach, and that is why the Metropolitan Planning Authority needs to deal with this. But instead what do we get? 'Oh, it's just a project. Don't worry about it, Bruce. It's just a project.' Well, it is our city's future. We deserve more than that and we deserve a state government that understands that these are the moving parts that we can synchronise. I will add to my remarks at a later time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. BC Scott): Order! The debate is interrupted in accordance with standing order 43. The debate may be resumed at a later hour, and the member will have leave to continue his remarks at that time.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Turnbull Government

Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (13:30): The great sage Yogi Berra once said, 'When you come to a fork in the road, take it.' He might have been anticipating the Abbott-Turnbull government's approach to economic leadership. In the nearly six months since we were promised better economic leadership, we have seen the government countenance an increase to the GST, scoffing at a so-called not-very-scary scare campaign before running away with their tails between their legs. We have seen them moot retrospective changes to negative gearing and a proposal to tax the superannuation of all Australians. They have suggested that they might deal with bracket creep, without making clear how they would deal with the fact that 80 per cent of their return to surplus relies on bracket creep. And they have attacked Labor's negative gearing and capital gains tax policy, saying it will cause house prices to go up or down or flatline. It is like being attacked by a yo-yo!

Instead of economic leadership, we have got wage growth falling, capital expenditure tanking, the share market down, living standards down and confidence down. At the same time, we have got debt up, deficits up and unemployment up. Their lines should be going up when they are coming down, while the economic numbers in Australia that should be coming down are going up and the ones that should be going up are coming down. Frankly, Australians are beginning to ask themselves: have they just got Tony Abbott in a silver wig, and is Sco-Mo just on a go-slow?

Gough, Dr William J (Bill)

Mr ALEXANDER (Bennelong) (13:31): I rise to advise the House of the passing of one of our nation's great legal minds. Dr William J Gough, known to all as Bill, will be a name familiar to any corporations law student as the revered author of the legal tome Company Charges. Based on his PhD thesis from the University of Cambridge, for which he was awarded the prestigious Yorke Prize, Company Charges was described by the Modern Law Review in England as 'one of a handful of texts on company law that could genuinely be
regarded as a classic'. In later years Bill was a partner at Allen Allen & Hemsley and Coudert Brothers International. He authored the Thomson Reuters online legal precedents system, *Australian Commercial Precedents*, and contributed to the *Journal of Banking and Finance Law and Practice*.

Bill was also a good friend. Bill had recently been ill and unable to work, but friends—in particular, Paul Kellahan—helped Bill's recovery and re-engagement in the work he loved, using his enormous intellect. Opposites attract! Bill was modest to the extreme and therefore suffered the height of embarrassment when the notorious and flamboyant barrister Stephen Archer described Bill, in esteemed legal company, as 'the greatest legal mind in the English-speaking world'. A great legal mind, a great friend, may you rest in peace.

**Turnbull Government**

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (13:33): I understand that the Liberal Party are currently negotiating with the US rock singer Katy Perry to use her song *Hot N Cold* as their theme song for this year's election. You know the one, Deputy Speaker. It goes:

You're hot then you're cold  
You're yes then you're no  
You're in then you're out  
You're up then you're down

First of all, the member for Warringah, former Prime Minister Abbott, was hot. The next minute he was cold. The GST was in. Then the GST was out. According to the Assistant Treasurer, house prices are going up. According to the Prime Minister, they are going down. The song is a perfect description of this government's approach to economic policy.

It would be a laughing matter if it were not so serious. Today the Australian Bureau of Statistics announced their latest figures on business investment, and they are quite shocking. They indicate an 18 per cent fall in business investment in this country over the last 12 months and a 16 per cent decline in housing construction. Unemployment has jumped up to six per cent once again. Real wage growth in this country is at a record low. The deficit has doubled and the level of government debt has increased astronomically under the leadership of this government. There is a lack of leadership. There is no economic narrative. There is no economic plan for this country. The Treasurer had his big opportunity last week at the Press Club. It was 46 minutes of nothing—not one single policy on economics from this government. No wonder the economy is in such a mess.

**Menzies Electorate: Community Groups**

Mr ANDREWS (Menzies) (13:34): One of the privileges of a member of parliament is to participate in so many events in their electorate. Last week I was delighted to be welcomed by Brahmachari Gautam to the Chinmaya Mission Melbourne in Templestowe. Also there was Deputy Mayor Dot Haynes. I had the privilege of addressing over 200 faithful at the ashram, relaying a message of peace and harmony and reflecting on what a wonderful country Australia is. The mission began in 1981, and, from humble beginnings, the centre has now grown into a vibrant activity area. Several classes for young and old are held there on a weekly basis, covering such topics as Hindu culture, yoga, meditation, Sanskrit and Vedanta.
I was also honoured, that evening, to attend the annual dinner and receive life membership of the Malaysia Singapore Association of Australia for helping to foster warm relations with the Malaysian and Singaporean communities in Australia. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the association, and it was amazing to see all the active members present.

The next day, a Sunday, I joined some 2,000 people for the 19th annual celebration of the Festa di San Gabriele at Templestowe. It was a beautiful day at the Holy Cross Centre for this important celebration for people from the Abruzzo region of Italy who have made Australia home.

Each in their own way, these events reflected the great achievement of Australia, and that is the balance of diversity from so many countries around the world with integration into one community for the peace, welfare and happiness of the people of this nation.

Indi Electorate: Telecommunications

Ms McGOWAN (Indi) (13:36): It has been a summer of bushfires in north-east Victoria, and telecommunications is presenting as a major issue. The captain of the Carboor Rural Fire Brigade, MF Holmes, wrote to me in December 2015 about the importance of relaying messages to people early so they can act and make a decision whether to stay or go. Carboor only has one sealed road in and out of the valley. There is no mobile coverage and poor to non-existent internet coverage, so people rely totally on landlines. When power to landlines fails, the community uses two-way radios. This is not the most efficient and effective way to communicate during fires as there is huge traffic on these radios, and the radio signal is also prone to black spots. Mr Holmes reports that communicating the location of a fire during these conditions can take up to 20 minutes and, by that time, the fire can well and truly have moved on. He writes: ‘CFA incident controllers at fires have been told they need to pass information from the fire ground to headquarters quickly and efficiently. This is next to impossible with fire ground traffic on CFA channels receiving and getting instructions, black spots with CFA radio repeaters, no mobile phone coverage and no internet available.’

This situation is not unique to Carboor, which is to the east of Wangaratta; it is also the case in Corryong—I have been contacted by the Corryong CFA—and in my own valley, the Indigo Valley, during the fires before Christmas, and mobile phone coverage was a major issue. We need to pay attention to it.

Paterson Electorate: Stronger Communities Program

Mr BALDWIN (Paterson) (13:37): In last year's budget the coalition government announced the Stronger Communities Program to fund small capital projects in local communities across the country, with each electorate having $150,000 funding to allocate in each round. The aim of the fund is to work with small communities on projects that will deliver a social benefit and help contribute to a more vibrant and viable community.

In round 1 of this program my office received 49 expressions of interests for funding totalling almost half a million dollars. The Paterson Independent Community Consultation Committee had the unenviable task of narrowing down so many worthwhile applications to $150,000. I commend them for their outstanding work. Now the work of that committee has just got a little bit harder. With round 2 expressions of interest closing last Friday, my office received 59 expressions of interest totalling almost $600,000. The committee has their work
cut out for them as they examine these expressions of interest and determine the priority projects of most merit.

My office will then make contact with those groups deemed to have the priority projects and invite them to make the formal grant application. Of course, my office will help them with those submissions. I would remind all local government, and incorporated not-for-profit organisations, that they are eligible to apply for grants between $5,000 and up to a maximum of $20,000 in the future. Applicants are required to confirm matched funding in cash or in kind at least on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

**Turnbull Government**

*Ms CLAYDON* (Newcastle) (13:39): When Malcolm Turnbull announced his leadership challenge, he said, 'Australia needs a style of leadership that respects the peoples' intelligence.' He said that he would 'explain these complex issues', and then set out a course of action that we believed should taken and make a case for it. Well, that did not last very long. Indeed, it would appear that, whilst a lot of people had hoped Malcolm Turnbull might in fact be able to change the Liberal Party, it is in fact the Liberal Party that has changed Malcolm Turnbull.

We now have a Prime Minister who is unable to articulate a vision for this nation. There is no plan on the table. All we have now is this ridiculously confused economic message coming from the government. Just this week we had the Prime Minister ruling out any capital gains tax discount whatsoever. He absolutely ruled it out only to find his own office putting it back on the table a few hours later. Some leaked talking points also confirmed that the PM was wrong.

Then we had the Assistant Treasurer saying that Labor's negative gearing reforms would mean housing prices would go up for all Australians, after the Prime Minister had been out insisting throughout his not-so-scary scare campaign that in fact the reverse was true. This is a government that is absolutely failing to convince the nation it has any economic plan whatsoever.

**Broadband**

*Mr BILLSON* (Dunkley) (13:41): It is day of some excitement for the Dunkley electorate. Almost 12 years ago I stood in this chamber and outlined a vision for broadband availability in our community. This was long before NBN, this was long before Labor's on-the-back-of-a-coaster plan for technology future; this was when we were dealing with the reality on the outer metropolitan areas of our city of a range of different technologies and infrastructure that was not homogenous. How do we get broadband services to those areas?

My research led me to understand that in the United Kingdom the voice distortion tolerance levels for telephone calls is higher than it is here in Australia. If you have tones like Dennis Walter or John Alexander it might not be silky smooth, but you can still understand what is happening. And because of that greater tolerance for voice distortion, those little packets of data that you use for DSL broadband could be thrown further across the traditional phone network than the 3½ kilometres.

I put this to Telstra. I said, 'Let's road-test this. Try it in my electorate.' They did and guess what? It worked! But nothing changed. The voice distortion limits were not changed, but they are about to change. For those areas in my electorate that are awaiting the NBN, as our
government has the herculean task of turning it around to focus on areas of underservice or unmet needs—and that is an important change in focus for nbn co—there is greater prospect for DSL based services to reach well beyond 3½ kays, as has been the limit in the past. That is a great day for everyone. It is a good day for my city.

**Turnbull Government**

*Ms RYAN* (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (13:42): When the member for Warringah was unceremoniously dumped as Prime Minister, we got a new Prime Minister—one who was going to deliver new economic leadership. We were going to have a new political paradigm in here. He was going to be all things to all people—a Messiah who would change the Liberal Party. After months of a national conversation about tax reform—that our Prime Minister talked about a lot but failed to actually engage in—he ruled out the GST. Well, he ruled out the GST before the election; after the election, who knows?

Under this new Prime Minister in question time, one minute we are in an investment seminar and the next minute we are back to the old Abbott-style smear campaign. We are swinging from one to the other. But at least the member for Warringah could run a smear campaign. This week has reminded us that this Prime Minister has serious limitations—most importantly in economic leadership. We have had the negative gearing attacks. 'Prices going up, prices going down,' says the Assistant Treasurer, and the Treasurer has absolutely nothing to say. This Prime Minister needs to find his centre. What we need from this government is a little less conversation and a little more action.

**Veterans**

*Mrs BRONWYN BISHOP* (Mackellar) (13:44): I have previously spoken on the outstanding work of the Veterans' Centre Sydney Northern Beaches located at the Dee Why RSL Club in my electorate and I am delighted to do so again. On Monday last week I attended and addressed a forum on the future of assisting veterans and their dependants, which was attended by representatives of over 32 ex-service organisations, all with a commitment to working collaboratively with better support for our veterans.

Since the centre's opening in October last year, it has continued its work in providing support to veterans and their families with an expansion in their operations and a focus on improving service delivery capacity. The purpose of the forum was to provide a presentation by Ben Webb, the centre manager, on the case management software implemented by the centre. He was joined by a representative from the contracted provider of the software. This presentation focused on the benefits of a shared database between ex-service organisations and pension and welfare officers in order to deliver streamlined services to the veterans community. The presentation showcased the capabilities of the software package which will enable better tracking of cases across different organisations.

With so many organisations operating in this space, veterans can too often be overwhelmed and the establishment of a centralised model for service delivery is most welcome. Congratulations again to Commodore Graham Sloper AM RAN (Rtd) and his team; and Ben Webb, the Centre Manager, a veteran himself, and Dee Why RSL Club for such splendid collaborative work.
Taxation

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (13:45): I thought the member for Kingsford Smith was a bit kind to suggest that perhaps the Liberal Party was in negotiations with Katy Perry about her song 'you're hot, you're cold', because that is a bit modern for this mob. I think it is more like the hokey-pokey. I think they have got one foot in and one foot out. They have one foot in when it comes to tax reform and then they have one foot out—ruling things in, ruling things out.

This is a government where the person who became Prime Minister said, loudly and clearly, that he wanted a mature conversation on tax. But standing up and pointing your glasses, and waffling on, is not a mature conversation. Doing this at people is Malsplaining; it is not a mature conversation with the Australian people or with the Australian parliament about concrete tax ideas. In the past week this government was actually serious about introducing a GST across the board and increasing it to 15 per cent. They had already budgeted for that money in their budget, and they were going to spend it on various things. The reason why they are in absolute chaos is because the Prime Minister backed down on it without informing the rest of his colleagues. It was the right call because Australians do not want a GST. But instead, after this decision all we have had is absolute chaos. You know this government is in trouble when The Sydney Morning Herald says the Turnbull government has abandoned serious tax reform. It is time this government got serious on tax.

Taxation

Mr BROAD (Mallee) (13:47): As someone who built their first property with hard work in a shearing shed when I was 22, I understand something about property markets. I think the Australian people will wake up to the perverse effects of the Labor negative gearing policy on our country towns. One of the reasons we do not see investment in country towns is because there is not the capital growth. This policy essentially says that you will only build new premises and be able to negative gear it if you are an investor. The consequence for a country town is that no-one will build new premises in a country town because it does not have the capital growth and, when you go to sell that property, there will be no investors to repurchase it. The impact this has on renters, particularly the poorest in our society—and my electorate has the poorest in our society—is that mum and dad investors will not buy a tin-and-weatherboard house in those country towns because they will not be able to negative gear it. The renter who, because of their circumstances, is not able to get a deposit, will not be able to have a place to rent.

By favouring new premises over old premises, this policy will have diabolical effects on regional Australia and has not been thought out at all by the opposition. They criticise us for not thinking things through, but they have not thought this through. Winston Churchill said, 'A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to put its pants on.' The Australian people are very smart. They will do the maths on their household budget and they will realise how shallow this policy and its impacts are.

Taxation

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (13:48): I am happy to follow the member for Mallee. He has obviously forgotten about the op-ed piece he wrote last year dealing with negative gearing and the fact that it seemed to be detrimental to areas of our communities.
The Sydney Morning Herald has really belled the cat with a headline saying that the Turnbull government has abandoned serious tax reform. We are put in this place for one reason: to make sure that we provide for our communities. In taking $80 billion off health and education, this government needed to find revenue from somewhere. They had the idea of raising the GST until they were persuaded by what they say was a scare campaign but the truth is that they were persuaded by the community that this was a bad way to go. They then wanted to talk about negative gearing.

They want to come out and criticise Labor's policies. They have the Prime Minister come out and say they are going to drive house prices down. They have the Assistant Treasurer come out the very next day and say that they are going to drive house prices up for everybody. This is a government in confusion. It is a government that has lost its way and that has a Treasurer who has not got a clue, and they are preparing to go for another budget. We saw what their budget efforts were in 2014. We saw how they wanted to slug pensioners, how they wanted to slug schoolkids, how they took money out of health and education—(Time expired)

Defence White Paper

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (13:50): The release of the defence white paper today will shape the future of our defence industries and South Australia stands to benefit. The submarine force will be increased from six to 12 submarines, and with nine frigates to be built in Adelaide 2,500 jobs will be delivered to South Australia. As Tory Shepherd said in today's The Advertiser: 'One of the top people involved in the production of the defence white paper says South Australians will be very happy with it.'

This is not just a white paper for South Australia; Australia's first sustainable naval shipbuilding industry is good news for all of Australia. The defence white paper provides for a continuous build in Australia of frigates—brought forward to be built in Adelaide from 2020—and offshore patrol vessels. Moreover, it will provide certainty for hundreds of companies in the defence sector giving them more work, jobs and incentives to innovate.

We all know that defence has been an area of contention over the past few years, as defence is almost the only area of spending that the Rudd-Gillard governments failed to boost. Defence spending dropped under Labor from 1.9 per cent of GDP to 1.6 per cent of GDP—the lowest level since before World War II. Labor left us exposed by not commissioning a single naval vessel to be built in Australia and now we have Labor's 'valley of death' and jobs losses in defence shipbuilding—not just in South Australia but right around Australia.

I have been fighting for more jobs in the naval shipbuilding industry since I was elected and I want to see the submarines built in Adelaide. I am going to keep fighting for more defence jobs, and the white paper today is an important step forward.

Turnbull Government

Mr ZAPPIA (Makin) (13:51): The member for Hindmarsh just talked about jobs in South Australia, yet he would not sign the pledge to build more naval vessels in South Australia when he was asked to. That shows the level of his commitment to building naval vessels in South Australia.

What we have is a government that is in absolute chaos, just like the member for Hindmarsh. One minute it is going to build 12 subs in South Australia, the next minute it is
not sure about that. One minute it is going to build offshore patrol vessels in South Australia, the next moment they could be built somewhere else in Australia. One minute it is shafting the auto industry, costing thousands of jobs across Australia, the next minute it is talking to the auto industry about doing something about the GMH plant in South Australia. One minute it talks about climate policy, science and innovation, the next minute it is tearing down our science institutions, stripping away all the climate science jobs in this country and walking away from the expertise we need to put together good climate science policy for this country. One minute it is talking about a GST increase of 15 per cent, the next minute it walks away from it. I might add, it only said, 'We will not take a GST increase to this election.' It did not say what it would do after the election. Then we have one minister saying that Labor's negative gearing policy will drive the prices of houses up and the Prime Minister saying the opposite, that they will go down. This is a government in absolute chaos.

**Petrie Electorate: Moreton Bay Symphony Orchestra**

**Mr HOWARTH** (Petrie) (13:53): The people of Petrie would agree with me when I say that you can never get enough good music. They say that music helps people relax, it motivates people and can lift your spirits and ease sickness. And it can get you fired up and make you really competitive. In my electorate of Petrie, we are very blessed with the great music and talents of the Moreton Bay Symphony Orchestra. It was my pleasure this week to call the group and let them know their application to the Stronger Communities Program has been successful. The Moreton Bay Symphony Orchestra will receive $5,043 through the program to fund a new French horn, oboe and photocopier.

The Stronger Communities Program was announced in our budget last year and is a program that aims to improve local community participation and cohesion. Congratulations to everyone involved in the Moreton Bay Symphony Orchestra. I look forward to catching up with you soon, listening to some great music and catching up with all the individuals who are part of this wonderful group.

**Turnbull Government**

**Mr STEPHEN JONES** (Throsby) (13:54): It is six months since the Prime Minister stood 150 metres from this place in a press conference and promised Australia new politics, and condemned his predecessor because he said he could not tell an economic story for this country. Well, Australians are still waiting for a genuine economic story. If the answer to the nation's problems that this Prime Minister thinks he has the solution to is marching Australians off Australian flagged ships and replacing them with foreign workers, and replacing Australian flagged ships with a flag of a foreign nation, then this Prime Minister has got a big surprise coming his way when he pulls the bell and we have a double dissolution election. Australians will answer him with a big no.

We have a Treasurer who invites every senior economics writer to the National Press Club, promising a big thing only to have nothing to announce. Is it any wonder there is nothing to announce, because they have no policies, no economic story. We have an industry minister that cannot find his way to the biggest steelworks in this country. We have the poor old National Party on the other side who, in a few months time, are going to have to stick their hand up for more cuts to education, more cuts to public hospitals, more cuts to all of the essential services, and the Australian people will hold them accountable.
Australian Defence Force

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (13:56): I remind the honourable member to take his medication after that enthusiastic address! Today, the government released its defence white paper. It is an exciting time not only for me for my electorate of Wright but for every member who has a defence facility in their electorate.

Kokoda Barracks were established in 1942 as an Army warfare training centre, where we sent our soldiers to train before they went off to Papua New Guinea—thus the name Kokoda. It was also utilised in the sixties and seventies, before we sent our troops off to Vietnam, because of its similar landscape. Kokoda Barracks also host the Defence Intelligence Training Centre. Kokoda Barracks are an integral part of the Canungra community. The community of Canungra has a very tight relationship with the defence facility and once a year the Canungra Chamber of Commerce paint the town pink with every business participating.

Labor left defence spending at a record low of 1.5 per cent of GDP, the lowest record since 1938. Today's announcement reinstates the Australian government's commitment to bring defence spending to two per cent by 2020. The Prime Minister is on track to reinstate this spending and I am fighting hard for my community of Canungra, in particular Kokoda Barracks. (Time expired)

Turnbull Government

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (13:57): I point out for the member for Wright that the spending on defence was actually the same as what it was under Howard. So what you are actually saying is the Howard government was the worst on record. Just to clarify, there seems to be a misconception around. When they leak their talking points every day, they go out there and they read them and they think that, if they say it for long enough, it is true. We have seen that with this government. Each and every day we have seen a change.

We can see the Prime Minister in his bright yellow tie over there. He has been very agile. Everything he said he stood for he has backflipped on immediately. He stood for marriage equality, he stood for climate change and he stood for the republic and he backed away. Now, today, we find out that the man who was going to have the big economic platform, the man who was going to bring through change after knifing Tony Abbott, has backed away from his tax reform agenda.

The SPEAKER: The member for McEwen will refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr MITCHELL: The former Prime Minister, the now member for Warringah, with the knife in the back. They have backed away from the economic platform and they are backing away from tax cuts. The one thing that has been consistent with the gelatinous Prime Minister is the fact that he will back away every time. As soon as there is a headline on, bang, the eyes light up and he backs away and hides back in the corner. But he has some company back there because this week they have backed away from their Treasurer. The poor Treasurer has been put in witness protection and is in hiding. The poor bloke. Fair dinkum, his age is higher than his IQ and he cannot count that high. It is a government that is non-stop backing away because they have no plans—(Time expired)
Queensland Government

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (13:59): The Liberal-National government has committed a billion dollars to two major job-creating projects in North Queensland, an area that is desperate for jobs. The Mackay Ring Road and the replacement of the Haughton River bridge are being held up right now by the state Labor government that shows no sense of urgency about jobs or road safety. That ring road will create 600 jobs. It has been in the planning and design phase since contracts were awarded on 11 March last year, almost a year ago.

Premier Palaszczuk has refused to fast-track those projects and construction is expected next year. To the Premier, I have circulated a petition and we want her to pull her finger out and get going on these projects. *(Time expired)*

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:00): I inform the House that the Treasurer will be away from question time today as he is attending the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting in Shanghai along with a series of meetings in Hong Kong with Australian fintech providers. The Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer will answer questions on his behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Economy

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister justified replacing the former Prime Minister because he had 'not been capable of providing the economic leadership that our nation needs'.

Mr Christensen interjecting—

Mr SHORTEN: Given it was revealed in Fairfax media today that the Prime Minister has abandoned reform, hasn't the Prime Minister shown that he is not capable of providing the economic leadership that our nation needs?

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Prime Minister, the member for Dawson will reflect on my statements of yesterday and will not interject throughout question time, particularly when there is a question that I am trying to hear. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:01): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and I do commend him on the even-handed way he is working through the Press Gallery. He went to the *Guardian* yesterday, then he moved on to *The Australian* and now he has moved on to *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. I well understand the limited resources available to leaders of the opposition, but generally there are more reliable sources of information than newspaper columnists. The honourable member is sitting here today as the alternative Prime Minister and he presents himself as the alternative Prime Minister of Australia.

Today the Minister for Defence and I unveiled, released, the defence white paper. It involves a commitment to securing Australia's safety, promoting our regional security, massive investments right across our armed forces, the revitalisation of the Navy, and making investments in naval shipbuilding, which the Labor Party had completely and utterly
abandoned for years. The Labor Party left the naval construction industry in a valley of death. They neglected our Defence Force budget—they slashed it.

Mr Champion interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: They rendered Australia less safe. Yet on this day when such an important announcement is made, the opposition have no questions on the defence white paper.

Ms King interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Ballarat will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: It all passes beyond them. They have no concern about Australia’s national security. The best they can do is quote a newspaper columnist. The government is focused on the security of this nation.

An opposition member interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister will resume his seat.

Mr TURNBULL: I have concluded my answer.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wakefield has already been warned. The members for Hotham and Griffith will cease interjecting. They have been warned numerous times, and I have made very clear my intention to take action if persistent interjectors continue.

Defence White Paper

Mr NIKOLIC (Bass) (14:04): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister update the House about the government’s ongoing commitment to Australia’s security, with more substantial investment in our nation’s defence effort as outlined today in the defence white paper?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:04): I thank the honourable member, the former brigadier, for his question and I acknowledge his many decades of service in defending Australia both in uniform and as a senior defence department official.

The security of Australia and its people is this government’s highest priority. It is our paramount responsibility. The defence white paper released today is a plan that will deliver a more potent, agile and engaged Australian Defence Force that is ready to respond whenever our interests are threatened or whenever our help is needed. It is a program to become more powerful on land and in the skies and more commanding both on the seas and underneath them. It involves undertaking an historic modernisation of our Navy, including building a new force of 12 regionally superior submarines. This will enable us to boost our capacity, independently to deter and defeat threats to our country, continue to be a constructive and influential player in our region, and make more effective contributions to international coalitions that support our interests in maintaining the rules-based global order.

We will, as a result of the plan we have set out and its implementation—fully costed and externally verified—be more resilient, more capable in cyberspace and more innovative in technology. Significantly, Mr Speaker, the plan will ensure that much more of our defence dollars are spent here in Australia and much more of the development behind our defence
technologies is done here in Australia. To achieve those goals we have to adequately fund our defence effort, and we commit in this plan to grow defence spending to two per cent of GDP by 2020-21. For the first time, the investments in a white paper have been fully funded and externally cost assured. There is a funding certainty that the Australian Defence Force has needed for a very long time.

During Labor's time in government, by way of contrast, they delayed 119 Defence capability projects and cancelled another eight, slashed $16 billion from Defence and reduced spending to the lowest level of funding, according to the work from ASPI, since 1938.

Mr Perrett: That was John Howard!

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton!

Mr Turnbull: Our economy, our prosperity depends on maintaining stability and peace in our region. This is an investment in stability in our region. It is an investment in peace and it is an investment in the environment that underpins our prosperity.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Sydney, the member for Moreton is warned. I refer him to my earlier statements. I call the member for Sydney.

Turnbull Government

Ms Plibersek (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Prime Minister. Three months ago, this very day, the Prime Minister said: 'My government is undertaking a significant reform agenda.' Given that we now know the Prime Minister has abandoned reform and resorted to Abbott-style scare campaigns, isn't it the case that the—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will resume her seat. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows—

Ms Plibersek interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will not interject when I am making a ruling, and she is warned. And that will be her final warning. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition needs to refer to members by their proper titles. I have made this point over and over again, and I made it to her, in fact, on the matter of public importance earlier in the week. The Manager of Opposition Business, on a point of order?

Mr Burke: On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Just to confirm the ruling, if I may—

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr Burke: because I want to make sure that the rest of the questions are viewed as in order. References previously to 'Turnbull government' or 'Abbott government' have been accepted. I am just checking that is still the case.

Mrs McNamara: She didn't say that.

Mr Burke: I know she didn't. I am asking for the purposes of the rest of question time.

The SPEAKER: The member for Solomon and the member for Corangamite are warned. Obviously, members can refer to previous governments and current governments—of course they can. But that was not what was said. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will start her question again, and we will start the clock again. We will not pause it unless we have a Groundhog Day moment.
Ms PLIBERSEK: My question is to the Prime Minister. Three months ago, this very day, the Prime Minister said: 'My government is undertaking a significant reform agenda.' Given that we now know the Prime Minister has abandoned reform and resorted to Abbott government style scare campaigns, isn't it the case that the Prime Minister has now taken on every characteristic he criticised the former Prime Minister for?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:09): I think we can say, without any doubt, that the member for Sydney has abandoned every characteristic of a shadow foreign minister. Here we have, today, the defence white paper covering some of the biggest strategic issues of our time, canvassing the issues and challenges of regional stability—the South China Sea foremost in everybody's mind.

Mr Danby interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Melbourne Ports is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: No questions from the shadow minister for foreign affairs on that; no questions from her on the cyclone in Fiji and our response to that. Simply, one cheap shot—the first cheap shot from the Leader of the Opposition and then a cheap shot from his deputy. On a day when the Australian people are concerned, legitimately, about their defence, their security, and they are focused on the defence white paper—the massive investment that is being undertaken to secure our safety and our safety for decades to come—does the opposition have any interest in that? Apparently not. They are simply complaining about what they describe as a 'scare campaign'.

Mr Dreyfus: Your cheap shots.

The SPEAKER: The member for Isaacs will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL: On the question of scare campaigns, let me simply remind honourable members of these very simple facts. Housing is the largest single asset class in Australia. It represents most of each Australian family's net worth. Under the Labor Party's plan, from 1 July 2017 investors will not be able to offset their rental losses against wage and salary and, presumably, other personal professional income. So that will remove for residential housing, we estimate, based on the percentage of loans made in December, something in excess of a third of the buyers. That can only have the effect of reducing housing prices. Reduce the number of buyers and prices will come down. That is not a scare campaign. That is economics 101.

Defence White Paper

Mr WILLIAMS (Hindmarsh) (14:13): My question is to the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister outline to the House how this government's increased investment in Australia's defence industries will bring benefits right across the economy? How will the government's plan help generate highly skilled jobs of the future, including the leading edge defence industries in my home state of South Australia?

Ms Rishworth interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has the call. The member for Kingston will cease interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:13): I thank the honourable member for his question. I note his very keen interest in, and understanding of, the importance of the
defence industries. He understands how critically important defence communities are to the social and economic fabric of Australia and, in particular, in his city of Adelaide.

This white paper will deliver for all Australians, it will deliver for South Australia, it will deliver for defence communities and defence industry right across the country. It includes new shipbuilding programs, upgrades to bases and airfields, and new investment in innovation and technology right across the board in our defence sector. Our priority is to ensure that many more of our defence dollars are spent here in Australia. This increased commitment generates jobs, growth, innovation right across the Australian economy. And it is especially true of regional communities, where so many of our Defence Force and defence industry contractors live and work. As defence grows, communities grow; businesses flourish and jobs are created. Critically, this defence white paper, because of the detailed preparation and work that has gone into it, because of the investment plan that it lays out, means that our defence industries will be able to invest and plan with greater certainty.

My government's commitment to the continuous onshore build strategy for naval surface vessels fundamentally transforms our naval shipbuilding industry, ensuring its long-term sustainability. Our shipbuilding workforce will be building the Navy's frigates, offshore patrol vessels, and major and minor war vessels for decades to come. We will ensure that the Australian submarine industry involvement is sustainable over the longer term by building a new force of 12 regionally superior submarines. An island nation girt by sea, as our anthem says, must have a strong Navy.

Other industries will be able to leverage off the advances in technology and innovation, skills and know-how flowing from a stronger defence sector. It is important to remember that some of the most significant technologies of the 20th and 21st centuries originated as military inventions. Famously, DARPA, the US defence agency tasked with developing emerging military technologies, created the precursor of the internet as well as GPS. Here in Canberra, the Defence Science and Technology Group devised the black box flight recorder. This is a commitment to innovation and prosperity—(Time expired)

**Taxation**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahons) (14:16): My question is to the Prime Minister. Yesterday, when speaking about Labor's negative gearing reforms, the Prime Minister claimed:

They are proposing to remove … from the market for established dwellings one third of demand. All investors would be gone.

Is the Prime Minister aware that in the United States, where negative gearing is not allowed, more than 30 per cent of the housing stock is owned by investors?

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:17): I am indebted to the honourable member for raising the matter of his policy because there are some issues associated with it that I will raise that he may be able to clarify for us. The Labor Party's policy proposes to eliminate the ability to deduct or offset any net rental losses against wage or salary income. The honourable member might clarify this: I assume he includes professional income because otherwise it would mean, for example, that someone who was working, an employee of a company, would not be able to offset a net rental loss but perhaps a barrister who had a large professional income—

*Mr Husic interjecting—*
The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: as some honourable members have had in the past—would be able to offset it.

Mr Husic interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Chifley will leave the chamber under 94(a).
The member for Chifley then left the chamber.

Mr TURNBULL: So the member for McMahon can clarify that point. I assume that he means all personal or professional income. But what he has unquestionably allowed net rental losses to be offset against is of course other investment income. Now from a champion of Australians—unionists and workers—

Mr Bowen: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order: direct relevance. The Prime Minister was asked if he was aware of evidence—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon will not stay at the dispatch box and bellow across the chamber when I have asked him to resume his seat. The Prime Minister is in order. There is no possible way he is not being relevant to the question that was asked.

Mr TURNBULL: Under the shadow minister's policy, somebody on a wage of a quarter of million dollars who had net rental losses of $50,000 but also had $50,000 worth of, for example, unfranked share dividends, could offset that net rental loss against his or her share income, against their investment income. They would be able to do that. But a middle-income family with a net rental loss of only $10,000 would not be able to deduct those losses against an income of $90,000 in salary and wages. So that is Labor.

What the Labor Party's policy is designed to do is to allow negative gearing to be available to that very small number of Australians who have substantial investment income, very wealthy Australians. They will be able to use negative gearing but people on wages and salaries and middle incomes will be excluded. It may be that was their intention. It may be that they were setting out to disadvantage the very people they claim to represent or it may be that, as is always the case, they did not think this through. They did not understand the consequences of what they were proposing. As their policy is examined, pieces start to fall off and it underlines the fact you cannot trust Labor with the economy.

Prime Minister

Mr PALMER (Fairfax) (14:21): My question is to the Prime Minister. As Australia's third-oldest Prime Minister, if you are still Prime Minister after the election, will you serve a full term in parliament or will you retire to your unit in New York and do a switcheroo with the member for Warringah, sustaining yourself with innovation and growth opportunities your investments have provided for the people of the Cayman Islands? It has never been a more exciting time to be a Cayman Islander! Are you a seat warmer?

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister can address any part of the question.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:29): I thank the honourable member for his question. If he had not found it so amusing as to be laughing right through it, we might
have been able to hear most of it. Nonetheless, I gather the honourable member is inquiring about my health. I thank him for his interest and I can assure him I am in the very best of form.

**Defence White Paper**

**Mrs SUDMALIS** (Gilmore) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Will the minister outline how the 2016 Defence white paper will contribute to Australia’s security, including our regional and global stability?

**Ms JULIE BISHOP** (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (14:22): I thank the member for Gilmore for her question. I note that her electorate of Gilmore hosts over 1,600 members of the Royal Australian Navy at HMAS Albatross, with the associated defence industries. I know she has a deep interest in defence matters.

Under our 2016 Defence white paper, Australia will be positioned to meet the challenges that could threaten peace and stability, particularly in our region, in the decades to come. We must safeguard regional security. That will safeguard trade and investment and will continue to support economic growth. Peace and stability are the precursors to prosperity.

We live in a time of more complex global challenges. During a recent meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, he told me that he believes the world is facing the greatest period of instability since the Second World War. I note that President Obama has noted recently that UN peacekeeping operations are experiencing unprecedented strains. The conflict in Syria has triggered a massive humanitarian crisis. Brutal terrorists like Daesh continue to occupy territory in Syria and Iraq, while exporting globally their violent ideology and terrorist methods. The security situation in Afghanistan remains volatile. There is conflict and instability in many African countries. There are rising tensions in our region, with competing territorial claims in the east and south China seas. North Korea continues to threaten regional peace with its nuclear and ballistic missile tests. Natural disasters will also continue to regularly afflict our region, with our defence forces increasingly being amongst the first responders.

Through the white paper, the government will increase the ability of our defence forces to work in even deeper partnership with the United States and other key countries to address common threats and security challenges. The government will strengthen Australia’s defence presence and cooperation in South-East Asia, the South Pacific and North-East Asia in areas such as counter-terrorism, shared maritime security, science and technology, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. We will enhance global partnerships in defence to contribute to the maintenance of the international rules-based order.

The resources the government commits to defence today will deliver the most capable Australian Defence Force Australia has ever had. The defence white paper sends a clear message that Australia is a significant and active contributor to regional and global security. We are committed to keeping our people and our nation safe. That is our highest priority.

**Taxation**

**Mr BOWEN** (McMahon) (14:25): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to the Prime Minister's claim that all investors would leave the property market under Labor's negative gearing reforms. What is the Prime Minister's response to Treasury evidence before a parliamentary committee in relation to negative gearing? I quote:
I do not see investor behaviour as being solely driven by tax treatment … it is just one factor inside all of the decision-making processes.

Mr Dutton interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Immigration will cease interjecting.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Grayndler will not begin interjecting.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:26): I thank the honourable member for his question. It is another opportunity to examine Labor's very ill thought out and dangerous policy on negative gearing. This is a very important point to understand—

Mr Bowen interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for McMahon will not interject.

Mr TURNBULL: The Labor Party's policy would preclude or prevent a taxpayer from deducting from their wage, salary and, I assume, although the document does not say so, professional income—the personal income, you might say—any net rental losses; that is to say, any losses on a rental property. Those losses are very often—perhaps most often—the result of the interest expense being higher than the rent. But, of course, in some cases the loan has been paid down, the rent has grown or it was not highly geared to begin with, and the property is returning a profit.

However, things do go wrong. Sometimes tenants leave. Sometimes buildings are damaged and repairs have to be made. Sometimes tenants go broke or abscond and it is hard to get a new one. What the Labor Party's policy means is that even an investor who had no gearing at all, who is debt free, if they suffered a net rental loss—that is to say, their outgoings on the property such as rates, repairs and utilities were greater than the rent—would not be able to offset that loss against their personal income. That would mean that any investor in a property runs the risk that they would not be able to offset any loss on that property at all, ever, against their personal income. That is a massive disincentive. It goes far further than discouraging people from borrowing lots of money to buy investment properties, even though, obviously, the vast bulk of them are leveraged.

So again, just as I was able to show the House in the earlier answer, this is an example of Labor not thinking it through. You have a policy which is calculated to discourage investment in residential property. The only investors in residential property who can offset their net rental losses are those wealthy Australians who have substantial investment income. These are apparently the beneficiaries of the shadow minister's economic policy. How confused has the Labor Party become!

Defence White Paper

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (14:29): My question is to the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science. Will the minister advise the House how the government's defence white paper will ensure that Australian manufacturers like Marand can contribute to Australia's future prosperity and create jobs and growth? How does the defence white paper complement the government's innovation agenda?

Mr PYNE (Sturt—Leader of the House, Minister for Industry and Innovation and Science) (14:29): I thank the member for Corangamite for her question. Today is a red-letter day for
the defence industry in Australia. The defence white paper and the Defence Industry Policy Statement are, quite frankly, transformative for defence industry in our country, and totally complement the policy that we announced in December last year of the National Innovation and Science Agenda. Both of these policies are now working hand in glove to maximise high-tech and advanced manufacturing in this country, delivering jobs and growth to the economy right across the nation.

For the first time, the government is formally recognising in the defence white paper that defence industry is a pillar of our national security capability. This puts defence industry very much at the centre of defence and security policy. To give an example: we have announced today that we will invest $1.6 billion in building capacity in defence industry through three mechanisms. There is $230 million for a Centre for Defence Industry Capability, which will be a defence and industry growth centre modelled on the other growth centres in my portfolio. There is $730 million for a next-generation technology fund and $640 million for a virtual defence innovation hub. Through those three mechanisms we will continue to build defence industry capability so that our workers, our managers and our owners in the defence industry sector can thrive into the future.

What all this demonstrates is that we are absolutely committed to using our defence industry procurement dollar to drive high-tech and advanced manufacturing in this country, because that is the future of manufacturing industry in Australia. These kinds of projects—large projects, like the 12 submarines that we have committed to today, the Future Frigate program and the offshore patrol vessels—are very high-technology pieces of equipment. For six years Labor sat on their hands in government and did nothing to promote defence industry in Australia. They created the 'valley of death' and raided defence to prop up their budget—reducing spending to the lowest levels since 1938. Today, the government is putting that money back. Over the course of the next 10 years, we will be delivering submarines, we will be delivering future frigates and we will be delivering offshore patrol vessels. We are fixing the problem that Labor created. We are investing another $30 billion in defence industry over the next 10 years. It is a great day for Australia and for South Australia. (Time expired)

**Taxation**

**Mr Bowen** (McMahon) (14:33): My question is to the Prime Minister. I refer to his claim that all investors will leave the property market under Labor's negative gearing reforms. So why, when speaking about negative gearing, did a Treasury official give this evidence to a parliamentary hearing, 'Investor behaviour is not driven by tax treatment.'?

**Mr Turnbull** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:33): I note the honourable member's question, and I just refer him to his own policy document, which states that the combination of the capital gains discount and negative gearing—so it asserts—has led to overinvestment in loss-making investments on existing property.

**Ms MacTiernan interjecting**—

**Mr Turnbull:** So I am intrigued that he has taken an interest in the quote from the Treasury official. It is entirely at odds with his own policy document. He knows that his policy will drive down housing values. It will put at risk the most important asset—

**Ms MacTiernan interjecting**—

**The Speaker:** The member for Perth will cease interjecting!
Mr Turnbull: of most Australian families. The honourable member knows that, and he knows that the only investors favoured by his policy are not the fitters or the steelmakers, or the teachers or the nurses, who he talked about yesterday. The only ones he favours are people with large investment incomes. He really is not the workers' friend—

Ms MacTiernan: Tony's tradies!

The Speaker: The member for Perth is now warned!

Mr Turnbull: He is setting up as the workers' foe and, whether deliberately or ignorantly, he has served to give a privileged position to those with substantial investment incomes. I do not believe that the homeowners of Australia could feel safe with their major asset put at risk by this would-be Treasurer.

Australian Defence Force

Mr Ewen Jones (Herbert—Government Whip) (14:35): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister update the House on the vital role that the Australian Defence Force plays in creating jobs and growth in Northern Australia? How will the government's defence white paper secure that role in years to come for areas such as mine in Townsville?

Mr Joyce (New England—Deputy Prime Minister) (14:36): I thank the honourable member for Herbert for his question. The honourable member for Herbert, more than most, understands the importance of the Defence Force, especially with that great garrison city, Townsville, at the heart of his electorate. The great City of Townsville is home to the 3rd and the 11th brigades, and to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd battalions. It is the garrison city which has also had the experience, unfortunately, of not just talking about the theory of war but actually living the experience. Our nation remembers that on 29 July 1942 one of the bombing raids that happened in Townsville—and there were several—actually hit the agricultural station there.

We also note the RAAF's involvement there through the No. 383, No. 452, No. 27 and No. 38 squadrons; the Combat Survival Training School; the Army's 5th Aviation Regiment; the No. 1 Expeditionary Health Squadron Detachment; No. 2 security squadron; and Lavarack Barracks and so much more. It just goes to show how involved this part of the world is.

That the north of Australia does not deal with the theoretical but with the actual is and has been absolutely apparent. We must make sure that the north of our nation is defended if we want to protect the south. It is absolutely apparent and it has been a historical fact that the north of our nation is the point of embarkation. We remember around 7,000 service personnel who were killed during the Second World War in the engagements in New Guinea and Papua New Guinea especially. I am sure we all pay that the due respect that it is worth. It is also the embarkation point to other places such as Guadalcanal and the Solomons.

What is so important about the history of it, of course, is that it focuses our minds on the future, what we need to do and why this defence white paper is so vitally important. This defence white paper has been brought forward by the coalition because we understand quite clearly that it is in the development of the north and the protection of the north that our nation is protected. This works very well with the other programs that the coalition brings forward such as to develop the dams and to make sure we assure the biosecurity of the north. This is all vitally important. It is vitally important because we know that, if we populate the north
with a vibrant economic base, we have the capacity more abundantly to make sure that the rest of our nation is well and truly protected from harm which comes our way.

We know that in part this white paper is to make sure. We obviously do not want a war. Who would want a war? From a family where many members have been in the Defence Force, it is absolutely apparent to me that the best way to protect yourself from conflict is to prepare yourself for conflict. The admirable people in the north—not just in Townsville but in Darwin and everywhere else—will be looking forward to us making sure that this is the very best white paper for the very best nation.

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Moreton has already been warned. That is his final—

Mr Perrett interjecting—

The SPEAKER: And he will not interject when I am addressing the House. That is his final warning.

Taxation

Ms PLIBERSEK (Sydney—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:39): My question is to the Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister think that it is fair that under government policy surgeons get 100 times the tax benefits from negative gearing that hospital orderlies do?

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

Mr Pyne interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The foreign minister and the Leader of the House will cease interjecting.

Ms Julie Bishop interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Foreign Affairs will cease interjecting. The Prime Minister has the call.

Ms O'Dwyer interjecting—

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: I am not sure how long those on my left wish to delay question time.

Mr Bowen: What could go wrong now?

The SPEAKER: What could go wrong? The member for McMahon could be ejected. That's what could go wrong. The Prime Minister has the call.

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:40): I thank the honourable member for her question, but the honourable member should understand that, as I said yesterday, negative gearing or claiming net rental losses against salary wage and salary income is found among all occupations. Indeed, 58,000 teachers claim as negatively geared tax filers. Thirty-nine thousand nurses and midwives and 38,000 retail employees claim. The truth of the matter is that Australians at all levels of income from all occupations seek to deduct net rental losses. The notion that this is a deduction that is only claimed by people with very high incomes is simply wrong.

What the honourable member should reflect upon is this: the surgeons—I notice the honourable members on their front bench are complaining bitterly about surgeons—are more likely to have a substantial investment portfolio than a schoolteacher. That investment
portfolio in shares and bonds will give them investment income, and under Labor's brave new world it will be the schoolteacher and the nurse, who have very little or no investment income, who will not be able to deduct a net rental loss against their wage or salaries. But the well-heeled surgeon will be able to offset the net rental loss against the income from his investments.

The reality is this: Labor's policy is so inequitable, not only does it cut away at the value of every home in Australia, not only does it take a third of the buyers out of the ring, but the only buyers that would be left who could claim a net rental loss are those who are so wealthy that they have investment income which can offset the losses. This is a negative gearing policy for the very rich. That is the consequence of the Labor Party's policy. That is the net result of Labor's ineptitude.

Opposition members interjecting—

Ms Rowland: Stop digging!

The SPEAKER: The member for Greenway will cease interjecting.

Ms Rowland: Extension!

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

The member for Greenway then left the chamber.

The SPEAKER: I am not going to ask members to cease interjecting for them to reply with an interjection.

**Defence White Paper**

Mr WOOD (La Trobe) (14:43): My question is for the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Materiel. Will the minister advise the House how the government's defence white paper will invest in innovative industries and create jobs for Australians?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Minister for Defence Materiel) (14:44): I would like to thank the member for La Trobe for his questions and I would like to congratulate him on his appointment this morning to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. I am sure he will do an absolutely outstanding job on that committee.

Prime Minister, it is an absolute honour to stand here today to answer my first question as the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and for Defence Materiel, especially on a day when you and the Minister for Defence have launched the defence white paper, a $30 billion investment in our nation's security. It also includes a $1.6 billion investment in Australian industry, to support Australian industry. And that is very, very important because that will lead to jobs in Australia.

I want to give an example of this. It is a company called Marand, which builds trailers that jet engines sit on. This is sophisticated technology, it is innovative technology and it is built in Melbourne. And because of the investment we are seeing in the white paper—that future investment—this company, which already employs 250 people, is confident that it will be employing more people. That is real people earning real income as a result of the government's investment. And we are going to see more of that, because what this white paper does is provide investment certainty for Australian defence companies, so they can get on and plan. They can plan the research and development. They can plan commercialisation.
That means we will get future job growth, and it will be for Australians. And they will help us keep our nation secure, and, as we know, keeping our nation secure is the No. 1 responsibility of government.

What we have done through this defence white paper is not only provide investment certainty for these companies; we have also got a plan, a real plan, which means it will be properly funded. It will not be like the defence white papers of those opposite, which were not worth the paper they were written on. This has real costings. It has independent costings to it. That means that we will deliver it, unlike the others—unlike those who bring unicorns into this place and think this is a joke, we are about delivering for Australians and Australian business. To those opposite, I commend the defence white paper to you.

Federal Election

Mr BOWEN (McMahon) (14:47): My question is to the Prime Minister. Given the Prime Minister has taken tax reform off the table, will the Prime Minister rule out calling an election before delivering the budget?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:47): As my friends behind me said, 'Nice tie, silly question'—that is the best comment one can make to the shadow minister. I can see the honourable member has now retreated from his ill-conceived efforts to undermine the property market and is now moving onto other matters.

As far as the government are concerned today, we are focused on the big issue of the day: the defence of Australia; the defence white paper. That underpins all of our economic plans—every single element of our future prosperity. Yes, it depends on innovation. It depends on competition. It depends on greater participation. It depends on kids learning STEM subjects at school and coding. It depends on greater productivity. It depends on the reforms that we have been introducing—

Ms Owens interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Parramatta is warned.

Mr TURNBULL: responding to the Harper review. It will depend on important reforms to this place, including the reforms to the Senate voting system, which Labor used to support but now apparently opposes. All of these reforms are vitally important.

But underpinning all of that is security and stability in our region. That is the absolute, necessary element for our future prosperity. And that is why our investment in the defence plan, set out in the defence white paper, underpins the security of Australia and—

Mr Burke: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Has the Prime Minister concluded his answer?

Mr Turnbull: I have.

The SPEAKER: The Prime Minister has concluded his answer.

Mr Albanese: It's a serious question.

Mr Pyne: It was a stupid question.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House and the member for Grayndler are delaying question time.
Defence White Paper

Ms PRICE (Durack) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the minister update the House on how the government's defence white paper will reinforce the vital role that the defence forces play in the communities and economies of rural and regional Australia, and especially in electorates like Durack?

Mr CHESTER (Gippsland—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport) (14:49): I thank the member for Durack and I thank her for her interest in defence matters. I know this is a very exciting day for her community—for the communities of Derby and Exmouth, where there will be great benefits from the defence white paper. I know she has already spoken to a couple of her local mayors, who are very excited by today's announcement and how it will play out in her community.

Ms MacTiernan: Are we getting the OPVs in WA?

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth has been warned.

Ms MacTiernan interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The member for Perth will cease interjecting!

Mr CHESTER: I am sure members opposite, like members on this side, appreciate the extraordinary long and proud history that regional Australia has with the Australian Defence Force. If you travel anywhere in regional Australia, you will find avenues of honour. If you travel to our small country towns, you will see the memorial boards in our halls. You will see active RSL clubs. The regions right throughout Australia have played an extraordinarily important role and have paid a very heavy price in the defence of our nation.

As much as our regional communities remember that service of the past, they are also looking to the future and are very proud to play a role in meeting our nation's future security needs. And the Turnbull-Joyce government is delivering a real plan for our nation's security, and it is backed by real funding. As the Prime Minister himself has indicated here today, although it is not the primary purpose of the Australian Defence Force to be a major driver of economic prosperity and jobs growth, it certainly is. Our communities are very proud to host the men and women in uniform, and we look forward to further social and economic benefits which will flow from the defence white paper announced today.

Regarding some of the key announcements included in the white paper, if you look around New South Wales and some of the regional areas, I know the member for Gilmore is very proud of the role that her community plays with the MRH90 troop-lift helicopters based at Nowra. They will be supported by new facilities, including new training platforms for Navy and Army aircrew. The member for Paterson is also a very strong advocate for the Defence Force, and he is also going to be pleased with RAAF Base Williamtown being upgraded with a new regional operations centre.

In the Northern Territory, the member for Solomon is an outspoken advocate for defence resources in her community. In the decade to 2025-26, around $8 billion will be spent upgrading defence facilities in the Northern Territory. In South Australia, in the member for Grey's electorate, there will be upgrades to the Cultana Training Area and the Woomera Range Complex. In Tasmania, from now until 2025-26, around $300 million will be invested in upgrading defence facilities. In Queensland, we are very pleased with upgrades to Air Force bases in Townsville in the member for Herbert's electorate and at RAAF Scherger in
the member for Leichhardt's electorate. Regional development is a critical element in Cairns, in Townsville and right throughout regional Australia.

Mr Albanese interjecting—

Mr CHESTER: I am sure the member for Grayndler would appreciate it, if he took the time to travel out to regional Australia and appreciate the job growth prospects. The member for Capricornia will be very pleased that the Shoalwater Bay Training Area is being upgraded. Of course, in Victoria, with the Hawkei program, the RAAF Base East Sale will be upgraded. I am very proud and pleased to say that regional Australia will continue to play a vital role in the defence of our nation.

Taxation

Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:53): My question is to the Prime Minister. Labor has ruled out retrospective changes to negative gearing. Will the Prime Minister now also rule out retrospective changes to negative gearing?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:53): There are 16 minutes left in question time and there is still time for the Labor Party to ask a question on the defence white paper. There is still time for the Labor Party to ask a question about national security. There is still time for the Labor Party to ask about the revitalisation and the modernisation of the Australian Navy. There is time for all of those things, but the sand is running out of the glass and we have one cheap political question—stunt questions—after another. The honourable member knows very well the consequence of making up policy on the run. His own negative-gearing policy has been exposed to be damaging, undermining and threatening to the single most important asset of most Australian families by proposing to take investors out of the residential property market. Currently, 34.7 per cent of new loans for housing are to investors. No-one is going to be borrowing money to invest in housing under a Labor government.

Mr Shorten: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order on relevance. It is a very clear question: is the government contemplating retrospective changes or not? Yes or no.

The SPEAKER: I have heard the Leader of the Opposition. The Prime Minister is being relevant to the question. He is speaking on the topic of negative gearing and tax and as much as some members would like to demand yes/no answers, the standing orders and the practice do not provide for them.

Mr TURNBULL: The Labor Party asks the homeowners of Australia to believe that you can take one-third or more of the market out of residential property—take all of those investors out—and nothing will happen to prices. They have a policy document that says that negative gearing influences people to buy properties and causes prices to go up, and now they say that removing it will have no effect on prices. If there is no behavioural response, why would you do it? The Labor Party is a threat to the home values of Australia. Their policy is reckless, it is ill thought out and it is inconsistent. The government's policies are developed carefully, methodically and through traditional, careful processes that are appropriate. Labor is proof positive of the dangers of making it up as you go along. They have demonstrated their ineptitude in economic management.

Defence White Paper

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection. Will the minister please inform the House how the investment outlined in
the defence white paper will contribute to border security and continue to put people smugglers out of business?

**Mr DUTTON** (Dickson—Minister for Immigration and Border Protection) (14:57): I sincerely thank the honourable member for her question. She is a great champion for Defence families and for the industry in the Northern Territory and in Darwin in particular. She works very hard to make sure that there is further investment in the Northern Territory.

I am very pleased and very proud to be part of a government that has today announced $30 billion to defence over the next decade. Last week I was in Washington with the Attorney-General where we met with our counterparts to talk about national security issues and also in relation to immigration and border protection issues. It is, as my colleagues have pointed out earlier in question time, absolutely the first responsibility of any government to make sure that we can protect our nation, our people and our borders. The success that we have had under Operation Sovereign Borders, the fact that we have been able to turn Labor's policy of 1,200 people drowning at sea into not one drowning at sea and the fact that we have been able to turn 800 boats arriving under Labor's time to no boats, effectively, under our time means we have been able to remove people from detention. I can say to the House that we would not have been able to achieve this success without the support of the Australian Defence Force.

In the white paper there is an announcement of 12 new offshore patrol vessels that will be home ported in Darwin, in the member for Solomon's electorate. In fact, over the decade, there will be $8.2 billion spent upgrading defence facilities in the Northern Territory. People in the Northern Territory know that that will only be delivered under this government. When they go to the next election and they are voting for the member for Solomon they will know that they are voting for somebody who is going to deliver $8 billion of investment into their local economy as opposed to nothing from the Labor Party.

In my home state of Queensland, in this white paper we have been able to promise $3.5 billion in defence facility upgrades over the decade to 2025-26. It includes additional facilities in Cairns and elsewhere, but it also includes new offshore patrol vessels, as I mentioned before, which are going to be a great boost to the Northern Australia. The member for Leichhardt has championed this cause for a long period of time. The member for Herbert will be very proud of the fact that we invest more money into Gallipoli Barracks, and the member for Capricornia will be very proud of the fact that we put more money into Shoalwater Bay.

This government takes the security of this nation very seriously. Labor promised a lot when it came to all sorts of policy areas, including defence and border protection. In the end, they delivered nothing. This government has promised a funded policy out to 2025-26 which will secure our borders and which will deliver safety to the Australian people.

**Taxation**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:00): My question is to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister, there are Australians who have invested under current taxation laws with regard to negative gearing who seek certainty. Labor's negative gearing reforms—

*Government members interjecting—*
The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. Members on my right will not interject. I cannot hear the question. The Leader of the Opposition will begin again and the clock will be reset.

Mr SHORTEN: Prime Minister, there are Australians who have invested under current taxation laws with regard to negative gearing. Labor's negative gearing reforms have guaranteed no retrospectivity. These investors want to know, so I ask again: will the Prime Minister now rule out his government making any retrospective changes to negative gearing?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:01): The government I lead will consider the economic challenges we face and the tax reforms required and will do so in a way that will avoid administering the massive shock that the Labor Party is proposing. The Labor Party's proposed changes to negative gearing, and indeed to capital gains tax, are absolutely calculated to undermine the value of every Australian family's single most important asset. They are absolutely calculated to discourage investment in innovation, in technology, in businesses large and small. They would give Australia the highest capital gains tax of any comparable country, with the possible exception—further research has revealed—of Denmark. Apart from that, 37 per cent, in effect, capital gains tax is the highest of any comparable country, and this at a time when we want people to invest, we want them to take risks, we want them to have a go. Labor's answer to that is: 'We'll tax you even more.'

Labor's policies are ill thought out. They will result in home values declining. How can they not? They will discourage investment. They will undermine employment. They are the absolutely worst prescription for the growth and jobs and innovation we need in 2016. By contrast, every element of our policy, including the defence white paper today, is focused on innovation, on growth and on jobs. Labor does not want to talk about defence. It is too ashamed of its neglect over so many years, or perhaps it does not care about national security. Perhaps it is so far away from relevant—national security is not relevant. Well, we believe national security is very relevant to 24 million Australians, and we stand determined to protect Australia, to ensure our security, because it is that security which underlines the prosperity we seek to build for our children and grandchildren in the years ahead.

Defence White Paper

Mrs MARKUS (Macquarie) (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Minister for Defence Materiel. The Macquarie electorate has two important Defence facilities, one in Glenbrook in the Blue Mountains and the other at RAAF Base Richmond. How will the defence white paper deliver jobs and growth for the industries that support these vital bases?

Mr TEHAN (Wannon—Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Centenary of ANZAC and Minister for Defence Materiel) (15:04): I would like to thank the member for Macquarie for her question, and I note her strong advocacy for Defence personnel and for defence companies in her electorate. Long may that advocacy continue. She is an outstanding local member.

As you know, Prime Minister, the white paper announces—and I am pleased to inform the member for Macquarie—that Defence will commit to a $300 million to $400 million investment at RAAF Richmond between 2021 and 2026. This is important as RAAF Richmond is a key part of our capability infrastructure. Indeed, RAAF Richmond is currently
welcoming the 10 C27J Spartans—heavy capacity aircraft—which will allow a significant tactical lift and support for the defence forces in conflict or crisis. These aircraft replace the Caribou planes that were retired in 2009. Of course, we cannot forget the important role that RAAF Richmond plays as the home to our trusted C130 Hercules planes, which provide crisis support around the globe.

Procurement for our defence forces requires forward planning and investment. Australia's defence forces need to work closely with industry to determine needs like the C27J Spartans. I can inform the member for Macquarie that the announcement today of the government's defence white paper will allow closer collaboration between industry and defence than ever before. Defence needs industry, and industry needs to know how and what it should be doing to support our defence forces. Most importantly, industries that support our defence forces need the certainty to invest in projects and Australian jobs. This government's white paper gives them this certainty.

The government will establish the Centre for Defence Industry Capability, the CDIC, which will be the cornerstone of the relationship between industry and defence. We will invest $240 million to establish and embed the CDIC over the next 10 years in order to solidify the relationship between industry and defence. What this means, Member for Macquarie, most importantly, is that, when it comes to real Australians and real jobs in your electorate, and in other electorates around the nation, we are securing our defence industry and we are securing our defence for the nation.

**Taxation**

**Mr SHORTEN** (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (15:07): My question is to the Prime Minister. In question time today the Prime Minister said, 'Labor's policy is so inequitable.' But on Monday the Prime Minister described Labor's negative gearing reforms as 'soak the rich, politics of envy' policy. Prime Minister, who is right—Monday Malcolm or Thursday Malcolm?

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition knows he should refer to members by their correct titles.

**Mr TURNBULL** (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (15:08): The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, the last thing they want is for anybody to actually read their policy document. It is a rather confusing one. If one took it literally it would mean, for example, that net rental loses after 2017 on existing property could not be offset against a taxpayer's wages and salary, but it is silent on, for example, a barrister's income or a surgeon's income—that is not mentioned. My assumption has been that that was an oversight. I have not sought to make a big point out of that because I assume the honourable member, the shadow minister, meant to include all income from personal exertion, but perhaps he can clarify that.

What his policy is very clear about is that net rental losses can be offset against investment income. The only people with very large levels of investment income are, obviously, wealthier Australians. The consequence would be, as I said earlier, that a person with, say, an income of $90,000 under Labor's plan would not be able to claim a net rental loss of $10,000, but somebody on a much higher income with, say, $50,000 of income from dividends or interest on bonds—investment income—would be able to offset a much higher net rental loss against that.
It is up to the Labor Party to explain why that is good policy or why that is equitable, but on the face of it I think most Australians would perceive that as being extremely discriminatory and disadvantaging the hundreds of thousands of people on middle incomes who are deducting net rental losses—disadvantaging them while leaving the deduction available to those on very high investment incomes.

Those are the contradictions that the Leader of the Opposition has to explain. It is his policy. He has presented it and Australians, and indeed the government, are entitled to examine it and point out its contradictions, its consequences, its dangers and its incredible uncertainty that it introduces into the single most important asset of every Australian family.

**Australian Defence Force**

Mr BUCHHOLZ (Wright) (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs representing the Minister for Defence. I represent Kokoda Barracks at Canungra. Canungra barracks is the world-leading army warfare training centre and also houses the Defence facility training centre—

*Honourable members interjecting—*

**The SPEAKER:** There is far too much noise in the chamber. I cannot hear the member for Wright. We are going to start again.

Mr BUCHHOLZ: I represent Kokoda Barracks at Canungra, the home of the world-leading land warfare training centre and the Defence Intelligence Training Centre. The Defence facility is located at the Gold Coast and has been part of the community for over 70 years. Given the government's commitment to increase the defence spending by two per cent of GDP, can the foreign minister give an oversight as to what that means for Kokoda Barracks and for my community of Canungra?

Ms JULIE BISHOP (Curtin—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (15:12): I thank the member for Wright for his question. I acknowledge his strong interest in the welfare of the Defence men and women based in his electorate. He will be pleased to know that, pursuant to the government's 2016 Defence white paper, defence spending will be increased by almost $30 billion over the next decade to protect Australia's security. This is a momentous announcement. I note that not one question was asked by the Labor Party today on the defence white paper. Not one question asked today by the shadow foreign minister or by anybody representing defence interests on the part of the Labor Party.

This commitment is about safeguarding our interests around the world. It will increase our commitment to driving jobs, driving innovation, building industry skills and promoting competitiveness in Australia for decades to come. It will benefit the member's electorate in Wright. As the member knows, there are 600 Defence personnel currently located there. What we will be investing in is critical infrastructure across the country in bases, training ranges, wharves, airfields, information and communications technology, and science.

Specifically, this means that for the first time all elements of the government's investment in defence are outlined in an integrated investment program. This program is going to deliver substantial benefits for electorates like Wright, including upgraded facilities at Kokoda Barracks to support our Defence Force's training capability. There is planned investment for the Kokoda Barracks of around $20 million out to 2025; an additional $200 million in the decade between 2025 and 2035. And, as the member for Wright well knows, this means more
jobs, more services and a boost to the local economy. And this is a story that will roll out over Australia in towns and cities and electorates like Wright.

The Kokoda Barracks at Canungra is a leading training facility, as the member said. It specialises in intelligence and preoperational deployment training. It is an integral service to maintain, especially as Australia looks to bolster its cybersecurity and we develop more innovative and agile technological capabilities to meet the 21st century challenges.

The member for Wright will be very pleased to know that this investment will ensure that the Kokoda Barracks in his electorate are sustainable and that they are well funded for the next two decades. He will be particularly pleased to hear, as will members on our side of the House—because the Labor Party asked not one question about this—that Australia has a defence force prepared for future challenges. We are ensuring that our Defence Force protects the people of Australia by investing in greater security in our region. *(Time expired)*

**Mr Turnbull:** After an hour and a quarter and not one question from the Labor Party on the defence white paper, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS**

Report No. 23 of 2015-16


Ordered that the report be made a parliamentary paper.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Education**

The SPEAKER (15:16): I have received a letter from the honourable member for Adelaide proposing that a definite matter of public importance be submitted to the House for discussion, namely:

The Government promising innovation and cutting education.

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—*

Ms KATE ELLIS (Adelaide) (15:16): This week we have seen something that is long overdue and quite unusual. This week we have actually seen a couple of members opposite express that they care about what happens in our classrooms and that they have some concerns about the challenges that are facing our schools. Unfortunately, the members opposite have failed to identify what is the biggest challenge that is facing the Australian school system—that is, this government's policies. If those members opposite really cared about the education that Australian children are receiving, we would hear them speaking up, we would hear them speaking up more often, and we would hear them speaking up about the fact that their own government intends to rip $30 billion out of Australia's school education system. We know that they are cuts that will have a savage impact on every school's ability to improve literacy and numeracy in the classroom. We know that the greatest challenge to Australia's education system is improving to become world class in spite of the fact that this
government is intent on delivering the biggest cuts to school government funding in Australia's history.

The simple fact is that the Prime Minister can talk as much as he likes about innovation. He can talk as much as he likes about how important innovation is for Australia's future. But the simple reality is: we cannot be an innovative nation of the future without investing in ensuring that we have a world-class school education system. Whilst the Prime Minister likes to talk, when we actually look at his actions when it comes to innovation, they are all actions which will have a negative impact on Australia's ability to be the innovative nation that we want for the future. This is a Prime Minister who promised an ideas boom but has delivered an education bust. The Prime Minister says that he supports innovation but his cuts to education will rip $30 billion out of our schools. Every school and every student will be affected.

The Prime Minister says that he supports innovation but he is still committed to $100,000 degrees, to university funding cuts and deregulation. The Prime Minister says that he supports innovation but his government is sacking hundreds of world-class researchers at the CSIRO. This Prime Minister can talk as much as he likes—and we all know that he does like to talk—but he is a Prime Minister who ultimately will be judged on his actions, and his actions undermine Australia's innovation on every single occasion. You cannot have innovation without investment in education.

On this side of the House we know that you cannot talk about innovation without talking about education. Whilst the Liberal Party have no vision for the future of our education system, we have a comprehensive plan to invest in our children's future. Our plan for education is about schools but it is not just about schools. Ours is a plan that is about jobs, it is about economic growth, and it is about Australia's future. Our schools policy will start by undoing the damage that has been caused by the Turnbull government's policies, but it will go beyond that. We will honour the six-year needs based school funding agreements that were signed with the states and territories and that this government went to the last election promising that they would honour—before walking away from them. And we will go beyond that. We will provide long-term certainty for schools by reversing the government's school cuts across the next decade.

This is a policy that will invest targeted resources in the students of today so that we can have the growth, the jobs, the strong economy and the innovation that we need for the future. This is about a permanent change in our education system. Needs based funding will make sure that it reaches the students who will need it the most. This includes making sure that students from low-SES backgrounds are adequately supported: Indigenous students, students with disability, students with limited English and students in small schools or in regional, rural and remote areas whom the National Party have gone absolutely silent on and have
stopped fighting for. For every single child it will mean a strong focus on that child's needs. It will mean more individual attention for students. It will mean better-trained teachers. It will mean more targeted resources, better-equipped classrooms and more support for students with disability and special learning needs.

There are important reasons why we believe that this is so important for Australia's future. If you actually have a look at the facts you can see that we are a country that cannot afford to stick with the Turnbull government's school education policies. We know that, worldwide, our national performance is slipping. We need to front up about this. In the year 2000, only one country outperformed Australia in reading and maths. In 2006, only two countries outperformed us in science. Today, 16 countries outperform Australia in maths, nine countries outperform us in reading and seven countries outperform us in science. Right now, students with disability in Australia are missing out on opportunities that are taken for granted by students overseas which they deserve and must be granted. Students in country schools, on average, are up to 1½ years behind their city peers in science and two years behind in maths. And we know that every challenge faced by students from the bush is magnified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The OECD has found that, if Australia can equip all our secondary school graduates with the basic skills needed for the global economy by 2030, that is the equivalent of adding 2.8 per cent to our GDP. In today's dollars, that would add $44 billion to our economy. So, perhaps if those opposite do belatedly want to stand up and talk about problems in our schools, if they want to stand up and express some interest in ensuring that Australian students get a great education, these are the issues that they should be focused on and they should start by telling their Prime Minister and Treasurer to reverse their $30 billion in cuts.

Labor's 'Your Child. Our Future' policy will provide certainty for schools. It will meet the needs of individual students so they can achieve their best. It includes clear goals. It will ensure that all STEM teachers are tertiary qualified by 2020. It will ensure that digital technologies and computer science—coding—are taught in every school by 2020, because we know how important it is to our future. It sets a target of 95 per cent year 12 completion by 2020, because young Australians need to finish school to have the greatest opportunity to succeed in life. It also sets the target of returning Australia to being in the top five countries in reading, maths and science by 2025. This will mean targeted investment to improve teaching and the students results.

Unless we can make sure every student in every school gets a great education, we simply will not be able to improve our international scores, and our economy and our country will be held back. We need to prepare our workforce for the challenges of the future. We need to prepare our children for the jobs of the future. We need to prepare our economy for the challenges of the future. If we do not build a strong education system, our children and our country will be left behind and we will not achieve what we deserve. We cannot sit by and wait for the future to come to us. We need a positive plan for the jobs and skills of the future.

Labor has put forward that plan. Labor has put forward a fully costed, fully funded plan to reverse the cuts, to undo the damage that this government has done after they betrayed everything they promised the Australian public. They went to the last election promising a unity ticket and holding up banners saying you can vote Liberal or Labor and you will get
exactly the same amount of funding for your school. We have seen that that was blatantly untrue.

Senator Bernardi said: 'I think our schools should be talking about reading, writing and arithmetic. Literacy and numeracy numbers are declining right across the board.' Perhaps he should focus on the biggest challenge to literacy and numeracy in our schools, and that is his own government, his own Prime Minister's cuts, and the fact that they are completely silent in the party room when it comes to standing up for students. I am not surprised that the Prime Minister sold out students this week when he rolled over to the right wing of the Liberal Party—because he has done it every day of his prime ministership. (Time expired)

Mr McCORMACK (Riverina—Assistant Minister for Defence) (15:26): Labor cannot be believed when it comes to education. Labor cannot be trusted when it comes to much at all. I will take the shadow minister up on a couple of things. She talked about Labor's funding policy. This parliament governs for a nation, this parliament governs for the Commonwealth. But, when Labor left office, its half-baked education funding policy did not take into account Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory—

Ms Kate Ellis interjecting—

Mr McCORMACK: You've had your go, so just be quiet. Over the next four years, this government is putting almost $70 billion into schools. This government is putting $54 billion into higher education and $13 billion into skills. Each and every year, this government spends more than $9 billion on science and research—record investment. In government, Labor cut $1.35 billion from its own policy designed to encourage students to take up mathematics and science. In government, Labor promised 2,650 trade training centres but delivered just over 300. In government, Labor cut $1,000 million from apprenticeships. In government, Labor cut $6.6 billion worth of cuts to higher education and research funding and left significant research infrastructure with absolutely no funding whatsoever. Shame on Labor!

But today is an exciting day. When we talk about innovation—and that is what the shadow minister's matter of public importance debate was about—we talk about the defence white paper. I listened very carefully in question time today and I noticed that question after question from our side was about the defence white paper. But what did we see from the other side? Not one question was asked about the defence white paper, the most significant defence white paper that we have had—and the first to be fully costed, I might add. But what did we see? The only thing Labor was interested in about Defence today was to question, shamefully, the appointment of the member for Bass as chair of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security. The member for Isaacs said:

Bipartisanship is put at risk by Mr Nikolic, who has made his political career out of being a highly partisan, highly aggressive battler for extreme right wing views.

And he continued:

What we see here is Mr Turnbull again, regrettably, pandering to the extreme right of his party; and if it be the case that Mr Nikolic becomes the chair of this very important committee, what we will be seeing is in fact turning a national security matter into a political plaything of internal machination.
'Political plaything'—that is disgraceful! The member for Bass has done more for national security, more for the Australian Army, more for the Australian Defence Force than the member for Isaacs could ever hope to. Shame on the member for Isaacs! I cannot believe that he would even call into question the member for Bass's credentials for this important committee.

The member for Bass once headed the Australian Army Recruit Training Centre at Kapooka. He was the first to come through the ranks in 1979 as a soldier recruit to then reach that high elevation to command that important base—that important base, I might add, which is going to receive significant funding under the Australian defence white paper announced by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, this morning. The member for Bass has every credential. As a member of the Army he completed three postings to the Middle East, as UN team leader in Israel, Syria and South Lebanon; chief of staff and deputy commander of Australia's first contribution to Afghanistan; and the first Australian national commander in southern Iraq—and I could go on.

For the member for Isaacs to question his credentials to head up that important committee, I find disgraceful. But that showed typical form by the member for Isaacs. The member for Isaacs should come into this chamber and he should apologise. If anybody treated national security as a plaything it was Labor. When it came to defence, Labor did not give a ship—did not give a ship about defence.

Opposition members interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr McCormack: Not one ship did they order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Assistant Minister for Defence will not use such language and he should withdraw that word. I do not intend to repeat it for him; he knows what it is.

A government member: He said S-H-I-P.

Mr McCormack: They did not build one ship.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry; I misheard. I thought you were using another word. I apologise.

Mr McCormack: Labor did not build one ship. On its watch, under six years, Labor did not build a ship. Labor put defence spending as a proportion of gross domestic product down to its lowest level since 1938—and we all know what happened in 1939. I listened carefully in question time today, and we did not hear too many questions about defence from those opposite. But I listened carefully to the Minister for Veterans' Affairs.

Ms Chesters interjecting—

Mr McCormack: The member for Bendigo should be quiet. I acknowledge that the Bushmaster, that wonderful Australian invention, comes out of her electorate, but there is so much more in the Australian defence white paper and there is so much more for the regions.

Mr Ewen Jones: Hear, hear!

Mr McCormack: I heard 'hear, hear' from the member for Herbert. He knows how important the Australian defence white paper is going to be for the regions. The member for
Bendigo should be quiet and listen to just how important the defence white paper is going to be.

We heard the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs talk about Melbourne based Marand trailers and how they are going to be able to put jet engines on those Australian invented trailers. That is significant. That company is going to grow from 250 jobs to goodness knows how many. We heard the Prime Minister talk about the $16 billion cut from defence by those opposite. We heard the Minister for Foreign Affairs talk about what the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said about the greatest threat to stability and peace that we face as a globe. That is why the defence white paper is so significant. That is why the defence paper is so important. But do those opposite care? All they did in question time today was mock and knock. You could see it. When the member for Wright stood to ask his question, they just laughed disgracefully. They do not care one iota about the defence white paper—but they should, because we are in troubled times. We are in times where our national security, unfortunately, is at risk. That is why the defence white paper is so important.

We heard the minister for immigration talk about the 12 new offshore vessels which will be ported in Darwin, in the member for Solomon’s electorate—so important. Those opposite just think that the Navy was there to help them stop the boats. But, unfortunately, that did not stop the boats, and 800 of them came here unauthorised during their watch. The Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science talked about the high-tech manufacturing which will come as a result of the defence white paper. He said that ‘defence industry is a pillar’ of our defence capability—our defence capability which is so very important.

There is an additional $29.9 thousand million going to be put into defence over the next 10 years—a fully-costed 10-year integrated investment program; $196 billion to be invested in defence capability over the next decade; $26 billion to upgrade defence bases—almost a billion of which will go to RAAF Wagga at Forest Hill and the Army Recruit Training Centre at Kapooka, which the member for Bass so capably and so honourably led from 2003 to 2004; $19 billion to operate and maintain the defence estate—taking in many, many areas throughout the regions that the National Party and the regional Liberals so proudly represent; and $5 billion in enhancing defence's critical ICT—which, at this morning’s announcement, brought a rousing cheer from those wonderful ADFA cadets present, those wonderful young people who are the future. When we talk about defence capability we are not just talking about machines and weaponry; we are also talking about the people who will drive innovation. There will be more of them under an Australian Defence Force funded by the coalition—funded by this government, which recognises the defence white paper and the importance of it. It is time Labor got on board.

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (15:36): I think the Assistant Minister for Defence missed the talking points. We all got the talking points this week. You are meant to be talking up the ‘innovative Australian economy’. You are meant to be talking up the ‘innovative Australian economy’. You are meant to be talking up the ‘agile nation that we live in’. We know that the Prime Minister loves to talk about innovation. 'Innovation' is his new buzz word.

Unfortunately, while he talks a lot, he does not walk the walk when it comes to innovation. Anyone serious about an innovative future for this country would not exclude education from that conversation. We know that education is the building block for an innovative future. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has missed that important point in his talk about
innovation. If he did understand it, if he did pay attention to it, he would not be cutting $30 billion from our schools and billions of dollars from our higher education system. In fact, what we have on the books, in the budget, is a 20 per cent cut to our universities. The only thing standing in the way of that 20 per cent cut is Labor in the Senate. If those on the other side had their way, they would have pushed through a 20 per cent cut to our universities—not very innovative thinking.

The Prime Minister thinks he talks about education when he says, 'I'm friends with David Gonski.' That is the extent of his statement about education—'I am friends with the guy that wrote the education policy.' It is now time that the Prime Minister actually becomes more than friends and listens to Mr Gonski, and funds years 5 and 6 of the Gonski agreements. That is the only way we will ensure that we can lift our standards in our schools so that we are globally competitive and continue to grow our economy through an innovative future. The clear evidence that the Prime Minister does not understand the importance of education is that he moved the 'minister for cuts to education' into the position of minister for innovation. If you do not understand the link to education and innovation, of course that sums it up, I think.

To be honest, it would be good if the Prime Minister actually got out to some schools. Often we hear the Prime Minister say that resources do not make a difference to schools and that resources do not improve school attainment. He should get out to be member for Bendigo's electorate. I was out there with the member for Bendigo, and the message was loud and clear: resources make a difference. Our classrooms do need that investment. Our classrooms need different support, different investment. Schools know what they need on the ground. It is time to support those schools. The Prime Minister should get out to some schools and actually start talking to teachers, students and parents on the ground.

While he is at it, it is O Week this week. Perhaps the Prime Minister could go onto campuses and explain how his plan for $100,000 degrees is going to improve innovation in this country. All of the evidence indicates that attaining a higher education degree is so critically important to the future of this country. In fact, two-thirds of jobs in the future are going to need a bachelor degree level of education. If the Prime Minister were serious about innovation and serious about an innovative agenda, then he would reverse cuts to universities, reverse cuts to our schools and, while he is there, reverse the billions of dollars of cuts to research.

It is an election year. It would be remiss of me not to say that there is an alternative out there. The clear alternative is Labor's plan for education. We have plan for all levels of education—investing in our schools, investing in our TAFEs and investing in our universities. It is costed. It is a plan that has been endorsed by the education sector. It is one that will drive an innovative future not just for today but for the future. This is what the Prime Minister fails to understand. If we are going to have long-term success and prosper in this country, we need to invest in the people of tomorrow—the citizens of tomorrow. They are our young people. It is time that the Prime Minister actually paid attention to that. He should get out a little more. This week is O Week. He should get onto campuses and go out to schools. The message that we hear on this side of the House is that our plan is the one that actually invests in the future and delivers for our economy. Those on the other side are completely ignoring our education system.
Ms PRICE (Durack) (15:41): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on this matter of public importance, especially on the day of the unveiling of the Turnbull government's defence white paper. This is, indeed, a hallmark day in Australia's defence history. We know that the defence white paper is more than just the Turnbull government delivering on an election promise. Indeed, it is much more than that. It will set out Australia's long-term plan to keep the country safe and secure. Needless to say, this is something which those opposite will never understand. They had many years to deliver, many years to understand what was needed and they never did it. So that is probably the reason why they are very quiet today.

I am in a good mood today and I do not want to get off to a bad start. I want to tell you why I am excited. My electorate is going to have a raft of improvements to infrastructure. To my constituents, you need to know that you will be better looked after following the release of this defence white paper and that the north-west of Australia will never be better resourced. This is why I am excited. The Royal Australian Air Force's Curtin air base in Derby and the Learmonth air base in Exmouth will be upgraded to support the RAAF's new strike and air combat capabilities, such as the new F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter and the KC-30A air-to-air refuelling aircraft. The upgrades to these investments are around $190 million to the RAAF Curtin airbase by 2025, with an additional $30 million in the decade between 2025 and 2035. There will also be an investment of around $190 million in improving the RAAF Learmonth air base—which is at Exmouth, for those who are interested—up to 2025 and an additional $200 million in the decade between 2026 and 2035. This is fantastic news for the communities of Derby and Exmouth, as these towns have been waiting for increased defence spending for longer than I care to recall. It is a fantastic investment. Derby Shire President Elsia Archer and Exmouth Shire President Turk Shales are both, as you would imagine, over the moon. They warmly welcomed the news that I could personally share with them earlier today.

The additional funding does not end there for Exmouth. The Harold E Holt communication facility in the town will be upgraded to support very important enhanced space situational awareness and communication capabilities, involving about $200 million in planned investment out to 2025 and a further $30 million by 2035. As they say, wait and there is just a little bit more good news. North of Derby, there is a plan to undergo redevelopment of the Yampi Sound Training Area facility in the decade up to 2025, representing an investment of around $60 million, with a further planned reinvestment costing around $20 million in the decade from 2025 to 2035. This government's defence white paper will drive jobs and innovation in our country for many decades to come, just the same as the Industry Skills Fund is doing through the four grants allocated through my vast electorate of Durack. Science and innovation are the future of Australia and Australian jobs, and this is why I am very proud of the Turnbull government's record $9 billion investment in science and research.

We have heard a lot about what Labor would do, but what did they do when they were running the show? We know that when Labor were in office they cut a massive $1.35 billion from their own policy, which was encouraging students to take up maths and science—shame on you. That is right; Labor cut over $1.3 billion from their own maths and science education policy.
Talking more about education, this government is increasing funding to Western Australian schools by $619 million over the next four years, which is a massive 42 per cent increase.

**Opposition members interjecting—**

**Ms PRICE:** I am not quite sure what the other side are bleating on about. With the youth allowance reform legislation passed late last year we will see more regional, rural and remote students able to further their education at a tertiary level. We are also providing a record $16 billion for universities, which has led to a record number of enrolments. This government is committed to science and innovation. We know this because there will be an additional $1.1 billion over four years to support research collaboration, incentivise innovation and entrepreneurship, and reward risk-taking. This government is backing hard-working Australians, creating a sustainable economy, and funding at record levels science, research and education together with building a world-class defence force.

**Mr PERRETT** (Moreton) (15:46): I rise to speak on this matter of public importance because it is something very close to my heart: education. I started teaching about 30 years ago.

**Mr McCormack interjecting—**

**Mr PERRETT:** I will take that interjection. I was not 15; I had just turned 20. In fact, back then, there were Gestetners, chalk and the teacher was the holder of all the knowledge; effectively they were a sage on the stage. You taught geography by drawing maps on the board. There has been something called the information revolution since then. Now if I talk about geography or a place in the world, my seven-year-old can take me on his iPad to that spot and show me a Google streetscape of Keppel Bay, so things have changed. We are no longer the sage on the stage because, in this age of technology, the teacher is more of a guide on the side, helping people through.

If we look at technology, the digital revolution is the greatest potential boost to productivity since Gutenberg developed the printing press, I would suggest. Putting aside cat videos and some of those other things, the digital revolution will change and transform so many of our occupations and how we approach knowledge including education.

**Ms Butler interjecting—**

**Mr PERRETT:** I have nothing against cat videos, member for Griffith. However, productivity is the most important judge as to whether or not an economy is humming along.

When Labor came to office on 24 November 2007, productivity was measured at zero. In fact, when you look at productivity—I know it is a little bit volatile as a figure—there has not been the heavy lifting needed for about 20 or 30 years. Sure, if you want to sell off assets and if you have got money pouring into Treasury coffers because of the high cost of coking coal and iron ore, you can use that money to give tax cuts—tax cuts that Labor copied which, as a marginal seat holder at the time, I was not against—but in hindsight those tax cuts were perhaps not the wisest thing for boosting productivity and looking after the country's future. Middle-class welfare like the baby bonus showed that the Howard government was the most profligate government in the history of Australia—the IMF said that. Those opposite did not boost productive infrastructure; instead, they wasted that money.

What did Labor do? We understood that technology would be the productivity boost for the future. We invested in the NBN. Those opposite said they agreed with this. The shadow
communications minister at the time, Mr Turnbull, the member for Wentworth, said, 'Yes we agree; productivity will be boosted by the NBN.' But what have we seen under him? Since the Prime Minister was instructed by the former Prime Minister—before he was knifed—we have seen the cost of the NBN double. They have doubled the rollout time and they have halved the internet speed. This is under the former communications minister and now Prime Minister, who I think actually invented the internet.

Labor has a fair dinkum policy. We believe in a fair dinkum NBN because that would be not only a boost for education but also a boost for productivity on the farms, in schools, in defence, in all sorts of areas. I saw that the white paper today talked about the boost that will flow from investing in technology and manufacturing.

Also, we believe in Gonski education funding. So Labor's 'Your Child. Our Future' plan, like Gonski the banker recommended, will focus on every child's needs. It will be great for the country and for the National Party. People like New South Wales education minister Piccoli got it. He got it up front. I notice the minister opposite, the Assistant Minister for Defence, is quiet on this because he gets the bush. As the Nationals have always understood—going back to Black Jack McEwen and a few other people—Labor's education policies are great for the bush. And coming from the bush myself, I know that Australia's best and brightest—be they Indigenous, be they from rural and remote areas—need to have a chance. That is the best investment. So we have gone from Gonski unity before the election to now, where we do not have unity. We just have unicorns and nothing else. It is disgraceful.

Mrs GRIGGS (Solomon) (15:51): I rise to speak on this matter of public importance. I think that it is absolutely ridiculous that the opposition is so out of touch and so out of sync with the Australian community and the issues that are facing the country that it has nothing to offer except for distractions like this so-called MPI. They are trying to give themselves some relevance.

I agree with the Assistant Minister for Defence. He says that you cannot trust Labor, and I agree with him. You cannot trust Labor. Labor do not give a 'ship' about defence. Labor did not give one ship in six years. It is absolutely disgraceful. Meanwhile, the coalition continues to do its best to turn around the mess of six years of Labor. Every single day the Turnbull government is out there growing the economy, developing the foundations of the country for the future, crafting the building blocks that will drive growth and prosperity for every Australian man, woman and child for the generations to come. More than $1 billion into innovation; about $70 billion into schools; $54 billion into higher education; $13 billion into skills; $9 billion into science and research. That is the story of this government, which is committed to getting the country back on track and stabilising the future.

We saw another example of that today with the release of the 2016 Defence white paper. While the members opposite sat there whingeing and carping, this government has released a generational plan, a comprehensive and responsible long-term blueprint that will safeguard Australia's national security and will bring with it considerable economic, educational and innovative spin-offs that will drive growth, prosperity and jobs as well.

Mr McCormack interjecting—

Mrs GRIGGS: That is exactly right, Assistant Minister. For my electorate of Solomon, the white paper is a mighty document. This represents decades of government expenditure—
billions of dollars in the area of defence alone. It will mean education and training opportunities for kids in Darwin and Palmerston and indeed the rest of the Northern Territory. It will be a bulwark for small business and, as they plan for the future, it will be jobs for mums and dads.

With a time limit of only five minutes, I will not be able to outline all the benefits that the Northern Territory will receive, but I would like to put on record a few. We are going to get around $70 million of additional investment which will be spent updating facilities at Robertson Barracks near my home town of Palmerston in the next 10 years. In the decade of 2025 to 2036, additional investment of up to $800 million will be made for facilities at Robertson Barracks. Around $1.2 billion will be invested in infrastructure upgrades at HMAS Coonawarru and Larrakeyah Barracks in the decade 2025 to 2036, with an additional investment of around $2.1 billion towards future long-term facilities and requirements in the decade between 2025 and 2036. There will be investments of around $200 million for airfields and facilities at RAAF Base Darwin over the decade 2025 to 2036. There will be around $5.6 billion invested in the decade between 2025 and 2036 to enhance air base capacity in the Northern Territory. There will be significant investments in new infrastructure and facilities over the next 10 years to support the ADF's strike and air combat capabilities. This includes upgrades to RAAF Base Tindal to support the introduction of the Joint Strike Fighter. Bradshaw Field Training Area will be upgraded to support our land force capabilities, representing an investment of around $20 million in the next 10 years and a further $350 million in the following decade.

Defence information networks will be upgraded to provide the capability to store, manage and process large amounts of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data. Intelligence capability enhancements will support existing intelligence capabilities based in the territory. This government will also upgrade and enhance the Jindalee Operational Radar Network over the next two decades, including facilities near Alice Springs.

This is just a snapshot of how the Northern Territory will benefit from the defence white paper plan that we announced today. It is small to medium enterprises like RGM in Holtze, just out of Palmerston and only 15 minutes out of Darwin's CBD, that will stand to benefit from Australia's defence security plan. This is how the Turnbull Government is going to continue to build the Australian economy, despite the efforts of those opposite.

Mr Danby (Melbourne Ports) (15:56): Dr Johnson had some good advice for the members for Durack and Solomon. That was that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel. The member for Durack undermined herself in her speech, beating her chest with patriotism, when she mentioned Curtin air base, named after a certain Prime Minister on our side of politics. You should realise, member for Durack, that there is a sincere support for the security of Australia on all sides of parliament, and it ill behoves any member to question the support for national security on this side.

Let us stick to education. Promising innovation but cutting education is not an example of the Prime Minister putting the cart before the horse; it is an example of him taking away the horse. Promising innovation but cutting education is like giving someone a fancy car, but not before removing the steering wheel. It is like giving a kid a whizzbang computer—one with all the apps and all the speed and bells and whistles—but not handing over the password. In
short, promising innovation but cutting education is disingenuous. It is sneaky. And do you know what? It is not an election winning strategy.

This Prime Minister, with his affected, debonair air, thought the power of sophistry would fool the Australian people. He thought that by speaking about innovation and exciting times he would pull the wool over our eyes. He thought he could sell us a new show bag while offering the same old Liberal contents as last year.

Let me tell you something. In spite of the member for Wentworth's affected bonhomie, it has never been a more exciting time to be in opposition—never. Here we are, a few months out from an election, with polls at fifty-fifty and improving, a government at sea on tax policy and an Australian people increasingly aware that absolutely nothing has changed since the Abbott days. There is no policy difference. New show bag; same contents. Instead of economic leadership we get scare campaigns. Nobody, he said during question time, would invest because of our negative gearing proposals. What a laughable argument by exaggeration! On top of that, we get these education cuts—$30 billion, as the shadow minister for education, the member for Adelaide, explained in her remarks.

Contrast that with the Leader of the Opposition's support, and the opposition's support, for the agreed plan that the government went to the last election with: six years of needs based funding, also agreed with all the states. I repeat: the government took to the last election that there would not be a cigarette paper of difference between us and them.

How does the Prime Minister expect our next generation to innovate without the foundation that can be provided by an excellent education system? In my view and in the view of the opposition, the challenges that Australia faces—challenges made worse by the environmental policies of those opposite—can only be surmounted by a well-educated Australian public. Unlike those opposite, all on this side of the House believe that every Australian has the right to, and should have the benefit of, a properly funded quality education system. But while the Prime Minister tells us that he thinks innovation is of vital importance, he pulls the rug from under the education system that will produce the next generation of innovators.

The Prime Minister has supported, and now leads, a government which has effectively removed $30 billion from the education system. This is short-sighted. This so-called saving for the budget bottom line leaves an education budget that will fail even to keep up with the historical trend in education costs, much less produce a crop of innovators. Education is not a cost; it is an investment. The country will reap what it sows with regard to investment in education. As the shadow minister pointed out, if we stick to the proposed education reforms and fund them it will be a $44 billion net benefit in added value to the Australian economy.

That is why Labor will provide for coding to be taught in Australian schools—providing kids with the tools they need to innovate. That is why Labor will fund and implement the agreed educational reforms which we call 'Your child. Our Future'. These reforms drive opportunity, innovation and economy through education. They will help Australian kids, no matter what their background is, to get a better start in life and to leave school with the tools needed to succeed in our rapidly-changing economy and changing world.

Of course these changes are expensive, but they should not be seen merely as a cost. The cost for the $160 million plebiscite on marriage equality, the outcome of which is already
known and which will have no legislative impact, is simply a cost. It is not an investment that will bring future prosperity. Surely this government of merchant bankers can tell the difference between a cost and an investment? *(Time expired)*

**Mr Ewen Jones** (Herbert—Government Whip) (16:01): I welcome the MPI today, because my city is the embodiment of innovation and education. It is the embodiment of those because we are a forward-looking people, we are positive people and we want to be involved in this space.

Just last week—on Monday—I had the Prime Minister in Townsville. He spoke to kids at Kirwan State High School and we went to Calvary Christian College and also to the Combat Training Centre. The Combat Training Centre is the place where we challenge our soldiers' best. It is where we get them continually to adapt and we get them continually to overcome, and it is where we are never satisfied with the status quo. We look continually for ways to improve performance.

The beauty of moving in this space at the CTC is that it opens the idea of what we do and how private enterprise works with government. There is Cubic, coming in with their laser equipment with which they can track people. They can do all this training stuff there. They can alter the scenarios around which they have to operate and can continually challenge, because your enemy is always challenging.

The ADF is using university education to further make sure that we are getting the best possible officers coming through—making sure that they are the best trained so that we can make sure we have the smartest, most adapted and most agile Defence Force we can possibly have in this space. This is just so hugely important.

Damian Hill is the colonel in command at CTC. I asked him about how to keep it fresh—how to make it fresh. He said that you have to challenge yourself continually. That is what you have to do in innovation and that is what you have to do in education.

The problem we have with those opposite is that they think it can all just be quantified with money. It cannot be just quantified with money; it has to be quantified with attitude. The defence white paper that we have released today is a case in point. This morning there were a number of people walking around this place saying, 'What's in it for my electorate? What's in it for my city?' I see the member for Bendigo sitting over there, saying that if we do not do this there will be all hell to pay, demanding answers and that sort of thing. What is my city doing? My city is looking at the things that came out of the white paper and asking, 'Where are the opportunities for our city?'

I was talking to the head of the computer centre at James Cook University this morning. He said, 'We need to be in this space. How do we get into this space? This is an exciting document; this is an exciting time to be in this space. My university wants to be in this space.' So we are talking to those sorts of guys.

Central Queensland University in my City of Townsville is talking about how they model with VET and how they can make sure that they segue into VET that leads onto diploma and degree courses. They are so hugely important in my area.

When it comes to the defence white paper, we are talking about the Indo-Pacific area of the world. We are moving into making sure that we are helping other nations to develop their capacities. That is what is important here—developing capabilities and being able to be more
self-reliant in places like Papua New Guinea and all around the Melanesian world, all the way around to Fiji. They should be able to come through to Townsville, get their training and then go back better educated and as better officers—better people in the PNGDF. For all the armies and all the defence forces in that region to be able to work in that space is hugely exciting.

It is about being in that space and being able to assist people all the way from Indonesia, India, China and Japan to work on innovation and improvement. How do we make the best of those things? That is what my city is doing today and that is what my city should be doing. Too many people here are walking around this place with their begging bowls and saying, 'Give us the money and away we go. That is what we have to do.'

When it comes to defence we must also be very cognisant of what those opposite have always done with defence. Those opposite always speak of the game when it comes to defence but they never actually deliver. Their last budget had defence spending at the lowest percentage of GDP since 1938. Since 1938! They did not alter anything and had two failed white papers. Our white paper is fully funded and fully costed. It is a 20-year plan, with Defence actually on side! We have in our government a Minister for Defence who actually cares about defence. Their last ministers for defence—how many did they have? Nine hundred of them? Not one of them cared about defence.

What we are doing in this space is to make sure that it is innovative, that it is agile and that it is adaptive. We are making sure that education is at the forefront of this debate, because that is where we have to be. It is vitally important in my region to make sure that we are making the best of it—not just in here but all around the Asia-Pacific—making sure that we are pushing forward. (Time expired)

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (16:07): I have to ask: are this mob opposite serious? They have spent this entire MPI, which is about the government promising innovation but cutting education, talking about their defence paper. Here is a newsflash for those opposite: if you want to build a sub, you need an engineer. If you want to build a sub, you need a few tradespeople. Nobody in this country is born an engineer. Nobody in this country is born as a tradesperson. You actually need skills. Unless the government wants to import workers through a 457 visa system, you need to train people.

I know this because in my electorate we build the Bushmaster. In my electorate we build the Hawkei. That contract that the minister was so proud to promote today was built by Australian men and women in Bendigo who have skills. They are people who went to La Trobe University, based in Bendigo, but guess what has happened to that university? This government has cut its funding. People who helped build the Bushmaster and the Hawkei went to the Bendigo TAFE to help get their apprenticeship, but what has this government done? It has cut funding to the Bendigo TAFE. In fact, it has cut $1 billion from skills, so it is a bit hard and a bit rich for them to stand up here and rant about how great their white paper is when they have got no capacity to ensure they have people with the skills to do those jobs. If they are that serious about all the innovation going on in the white paper then they had better start turbocharging their investment in education, not cutting it.

That is all we have seen from this government. They have cut vital funding from schools, and schools in the regions will be the hardest hit. Our schools in the regions, our small schools, our schools with low-SES communities and our schools with high proportions of
children from non-English-speaking backgrounds or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds would have been the biggest winners, yet this government has cut the critical years—years 5 and 6—from that plan. This government has cut the resources that they need to ensure that their schools have the tools and the resources to ensure those kids have a future. This government today in this parliament is simply ignoring the fact that, to have defence capability, you need people who have the skills and the education. This government has cut those critical steps and pillars that ensure that Australians will get those job opportunities.

We want to make sure that we have a world-class education system where every student, regardless of postcode, gets a good education so they can choose a career in a number of areas. Maybe someone wants to go into defence. Good on them. But maybe somebody wants to become a scientist working for the CSIRO. Maybe they want to get actively involved in climate change. Maybe they want to help our farmers understand climate change so that they can have crop rotation that suits our climate. Under this government their chances of doing that have been diminished because of the savage cuts the government has made to institutions like the CSIRO and critical areas of research.

If you watched this parliament today, you would think there was only one responsibility of federal government: defence. It is important but it is not the only role of federal government. We are not currently in a situation where we only have defence as an opportunity in this country. We have an amazing community with a lot of opportunity out there, and in our communities we need to make sure that our schools have the resources that they need to do a good job.

We have schools in the Bendigo electorate that are making the tough choice between a teacher aide and watering their oval. That is what has happened because of the cuts from this government. We have students right now choosing which university they will go to and working out where they will stay. O-week is this week. They are struggling to find the resources and enough money to enrol and invest in education like they want. There is a question about whether the next generation of university students will actually be able to qualify and have the skills they need in our universities.

This government's plan is failing schools. They will stand up here and rant day in, day out about how great they are at defence but will not have an honest conversation with the Australian people about how their children could get those opportunities. This government needs to reverse its funding cuts to schools and higher education. It needs to get serious about skills and invest in the next generation. (Time expired)

Mr HASTIE (Canning) (16:12): It has been a long afternoon and, true to form, those opposite have come at us with red herrings. We have heard about unicorns and John Curtin—who, by the way, I think did a pretty good job during World War II. We have had quotations from Dr Johnson, obfuscation and distraction. I thought this MPI was about education, but, seeing as they have raised same-sex education and defence, I will continue and go for the free-for-all like those opposite.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. As the Prime Minister noted in question time, not one question was asked about the 2016 Defence white paper, which is a very sound document that has left this government well placed to deal with the challenges of the 21st century. As you know, innovation is at the heart of the defence white paper. I suggest there are two types of innovation. One is intellectual innovation as expressed in our strategic and
defence outlook. This government is positioned to continue to build the US alliance, maintaining peace and order in the Indo-Pacific region. We are also well positioned to continue our fight against Daesh, or Islamic State, in the Middle East. We are going to continue to disrupt, degrade and defeat Islamic State.

Contrast that with Labor’s six years in government. I will take your minds back to 2011, when the then Minister for Defence, the member for Perth, midway through the war decided to launch a book called *An Unwinnable War: Australia in Afghanistan*. In the middle of a war, that was the extent of his intellectual innovation when it came to policy for Afghanistan.

We are also innovating in industry—our defence industry particularly. The government has announced $1.6 billion towards innovation over 10 years. We have a centre for industry capability which is being funded to the tune of $230 million, we have a next-generation technology fund for $730 million and we have a new virtual defence innovation hub for $640 million.

The government has, of course, allocated funding for all of this, unlike Labor, which is yet to fund any of their promises. We are looking at $29.9 billion over 10 years, amounting to a total expenditure of $447 billion, which takes Defence spending back up to two per cent of GDP. My colleagues have reminded everyone today, but I will do so again, that under Labor Defence spending was taken to its lowest point since 1938—pre-World War II expenditure, which is unacceptable.

Another important element when it comes to defence strategy is having the right leadership in place. Under the Prime Minister, we have a sensible, measured, considered, calm, clear-eyed leader—someone used to making decisions, managing risk and balancing priorities; and someone who, incidentally, is also engaged with the history of the region and strategic policy. The question the Australian people will have to ask this year is: who do they want at the helm guiding this country? I suggest that the Prime Minister is the man for that job.

Contrast that with the current Leader of the Opposition, who, on 20 January 2016, could not make up his mind whether or not to support freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. In fact, he refused to back his own defence spokesman. When asked whether he would like to see a unilateral exercise by Australia, the Leader of the Opposition said he was not going to start running the Navy. ‘I’ll leave that question to the Navy,’ he said. Rather than quibbling, Australians prefer a bit of leadership. It appears the Leader of the Opposition could not even make up his mind on that subject, but, more importantly, it hints at a deeper problem, which is that it is the role of political leaders to make decisions on behalf of the Australian people and the Defence Force. In fact, it is absolutely critical—it is part of your job. I say to those opposite: welcome to the big league. This is where the decisions are made about the defence of our country. If the Leader of the Opposition cannot man up, I hope that the election is called sooner rather than later so that we can just get on with governing this country. I should remind him of a book worth reading, *Supreme Command*, by Eliot Cohen, which goes into detail about this. One of you opposite should buy it for him. It will help him out.

Finally, from the point of view of the state of Western Australia, I am proud to see that there is going to be a lot of investment—significant investment, in fact—including a $200 million redevelopment of Campbell Barracks. In addition to that, we are going to see HMAS...
Stirling invested in and an upgrade of the wharf facilities, which will make it a better fit to receive US ships.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Craig Kelly): The time for this discussion has concluded.

COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Approval of Work

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Finance) (16:17): 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 located in Northbridge, Western Australia.

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 45 Francis Street, Northbridge, Western Australia. The ATO has substantially reduced the amount of space it will retain in Perth, in line with the agency's accommodation reduction strategy. The reduction in space equates to a saving of $59 million, excluding GST, over seven years, representing an excellent outcome for the Commonwealth. The new fit-out will provide the ATO with considerable advantages in terms of design and operating efficiencies. The proposed works include new workstations, offices and meeting areas, a new security system, conference rooms, training and videoconferencing facilities, a new computer room, and new first-aid rooms and amenity areas.

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 early 2016 with staged practical completion scheduled from mid-2017. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Approval of Work

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Finance) (16:19): 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: Land 121—Unit Sustainment Facilities Project.

As the former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance 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 eight locations across Australia for the acquisition of new vehicles for the Australian Army, Royal Australian Air Force and Joint Logistics Command units across Australia. The proposed works include new maintenance
workshops and associated repair parts stores, weighbridges, loading and inspection ramps, wash points, fuel points, vehicle shelters and associated hardstand. The main works will be delivered in the Townsville and Brisbane regions, with minor works being delivered near Sydney, Puckapunyal, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin. This capital investment in facilities will create economic stimulus, with expected opportunities for local subcontractors over the next three years.

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. In its report, the committee has recommended that Defence provide a report to the committee on its consultation strategies with the community groups around Gallipoli Barracks and be kept advised of the development of the construction environmental management plans and any increases in environmental risks. Defence accepts and will implement the recommendations of the committee.

On behalf of the government, I would like to thank the committee for, once again, undertaking a timely inquiry. Subject to the approval of the project by the parliament, construction is expected to commence in early 2016, with practical completion by the end of 2018. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Reference

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Finance) (16:23): 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: Puckapunyal military area high voltage power supply upgrade, Puckapunyal, Victoria.

The Department of Defence is proposing to upgrade the high-voltage power supply at the Puckapunyal military Area in Puckapunyal in Victoria. The Puckapunyal Military Area has been an army base and training facility since World War II. It has undergone various changes to meet the rigours of training and specialised skills of the Australia Defence Force and is in desperate need of an upgrade. An upgrade is vital for the sustainability of current and emerging Australia Defence Force capabilities.

This year, the external high-voltage power supply network is predicted to operate beyond its current design capacity. The upgrade will minimise power failures and the impact on the Army's power-dependent training modules that are tightly aligned with scheduled activities. The proposed works include underground cabling, reconfiguration and extensions of existing electrical networks throughout the PMA, replacing pillars inside their substations, and a new precast concrete and steel building to allow for the required upgrades to comply with electrical standards and enable ease of works.

The project will improve the reliability of external high-voltage power supply to Puckapunyal Military Area, provide redundancy in external high-voltage power supply to the Puckapunyal Military Area and upgrade the internal high-voltage power reticulation within the area. The government approved budget for the area power supply upgrade is $32.7 million, excluding GST. This includes management and design fees, construction, equipment, contingencies and allowance for escalation. The project will provide opportunities for jobs
and growth throughout the construction period. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, construction is expected to commence in late 2016 and be completed by late 2017. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Reference

Dr HENDY (Eden-Monaro—Assistant Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Finance) (16:24): 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: Fit-out of the new Australian Embassy, Doha, Qatar.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade proposes to undertake a fit-out of a leased premises to establish a new Australian embassy in Doha, Qatar. On 20 May 2015, the government announced that it would open a new embassy in Doha. Doha is a key growth area in the Middle East and the establishment of an embassy will facilitate Australia’s commercial links with Qatar.

The establishment of an embassy builds on the increased presence of Australian nationals and businesses in Qatar at a time of major infrastructure development in the country, including in preparation for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The project is valued at an estimated $7 million and includes all costs associated with the fit-out, such as builders’ costs, consultant fees, furniture, fittings and equipment, contingencies and escalation allowance. The proposed works will also provide efficient, modern and functional accommodation that meets the needs of the diplomatic representation in the country. Subject to parliamentary approval of the project, the fit-out is expected to commence in mid-2016 and with best endeavours be completed by late 2016. I am confident the committee will undertake a timely inquiry into these works and I look forward to its report. I commend the motion to the House.

Question agreed to.

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Report


Report made a parliamentary paper in accordance with standing order 39(e).

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON: by leave—The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights’ 35th report of the 44th Parliament examines the compatibility of bills and legislative instruments with Australia's human rights obligations. It considers bills introduced into the parliament from 22 February to 24 February 2016 and legislative instruments received between 22 January and 4 February 2016. The report also includes the committee's consideration of three responses to matters raised in previous reports.

Four new bills are assessed as not raising human rights concerns and the committee will seek a further response from the legislation proponent in relation to one bill. The committee has also concluded its examination of one bill and one regulation.
As members would be aware, the committee's reports generally only include matters that raise human rights concerns and the committee is typically silent on bills and instruments that are compatible with, or even promote, human rights. This means that the frequent good work of ministers in ensuring the compatibility of legislation with human rights goes unnoticed.

In this context, I draw members' attention to the Territories Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. This bill seeks to address concerns raised by the committee regarding the Norfolk Island Amendment Act 2015, as reported in the committee's twenty-second report of the 44th Parliament. That report noted that certain amendments to the act had a discriminatory effect by excluding some categories of Australian permanent residents from access to social security. The current bill will make amendments to allow New Zealand citizens who hold an Australian permanent visa and reside on Norfolk Island access to social security payments, consistent with the arrangements for other Australian permanent visa holders. Accordingly, these bills promote human rights.

On behalf of the committee I wish to thank the minister for this positive engagement with the committee and the substantive human rights issues engaged by these bills.

The report also includes the committee's final consideration of the Family Law Amendment (Financial Agreements and Other Measures) Bill 2015. This bill amends the Family Law Act 1975 so that binding financial agreements entered into at the time of, or after, a relationship breakdown may be set aside by a court only in 'circumstances that are of an exceptional nature'. While this will clearly narrow the court's power to set aside a financial agreement on the grounds that a child of the relationship will suffer hardship, the statement of compatibility did not address the obligation to consider the best interests of the child.

The Attorney-General provided an expeditious and helpful response to the committee's inquiries explaining that the bill would empower families to take responsibility for their own affairs without resorting to the family law system, and that important safeguards exist to protect individuals who may be unaware of their rights. On the basis of this analysis, the committee considers that the bill may be compatible with international human rights law.

I 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 35th report of the 44th Parliament to the chamber.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*The SPEAKER* (16:29): It being nearly 4.30 pm, I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Parliamentary Friends of Democratic Renewal**

*Ms MacTIERNAN* (Perth) (16:30): Today I want to give a shout out for the Parliamentary Friends of Democratic Renewal and the fabulous event that we have lined up for next Monday. We have coming to speak to a cross-section of parliamentarians, Councillor Stephen Mayne, from the City of Melbourne, and Nicholas Reece, from the University of Melbourne. They will be joining Craig Laundy and me, the co-hosts and co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Democratic Renewal, and hopefully dozens of other parliamentarians, to talk about their experience in the new ways of deliberative democracy.
Deliberative democracy, for those who perhaps are not aware, is a process of bringing together forums of citizens chosen randomly from across the demographic spectrum to come and deliberate on a problem and to give guidance to government on how we might take our community forward. Sometimes they are very large issues, very conceptual issues, that are dealt with and sometimes they can be small, localised issues that need to be resolved.

The fundamental idea of this is to try to revitalise our representative democracy. We all know the virtues and the challenges of representative democracy, but it is true that its very adversarial nature, where we spend a lot of time getting stuck into each other, has, and always has had, the propensity to create a degree of cynicism within the community. So we need to look at ways in which we can get the citizens and get the community actively involved in decision making, and there has been amazing work that has been going on around the world in this regard, and real science and strategy have developed.

What we are trying to do through the Parliamentary Friends of Democratic Renewal is showcase some of the really good things that have been happening. So we are very pleased that Luca Belgiorno-Nettis and Iain Walker of the newDemocracy Foundation are sponsoring this event and we are able to bring Stephen and Nick up to talk about the practical experience of the City of Melbourne, where they got 43 randomly selected residents and business proprietors to come in and be involved in developing their budget strategy.

They found that some members started off somewhat cynically, but they were amazed at the enthusiasm of the people that were selected and the common sense that, overwhelmingly, was demonstrated. The set of formulas that they developed perhaps would have been very difficult for a local government, or indeed any government, to implement had they not been able to refer to the process that got ordinary people involved and gave the community some assurance that this was not a political solution but one that was grounded in common sense and common sensibility.

So we are really looking forward to seeing Councillor Mayne and Nicholas Reece. The Lord Mayor, Robert Doyle, was very enthusiastic to be involved as well, but unfortunately he is overseas. This is going to be a great night, and it is very important for us to keep that enthusiasm for democracy going.

Calare Electorate: Forbes and Parkes

Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (16:34): I rise in the House this evening not to farewell Forbes and Parkes following the federal redistribution—because, in the normal course of events, for the next six months or more I will still be their representative—but I acknowledge that today, 25 February, is the legal day after which, if an election is called, the redistributions in New South Wales and Western Australia are what we would go to an election under.

Forbes and Parkes are the two LGAs that, despite three redistributions in my time in parliament—or maybe four; I forget—I have always had in my electorate. They are absolutely fantastic areas. I would be very upset if anyone in the Forbes and Parkes local government areas were ever able to say that I treated anyone differently because they were of a different political party or anything else. I would hope they think I have been loyal to them, because, by heaven, they have been extraordinarily loyal to me.

I was born in Bathurst but I grew up out west of Condo, between Cobar and Hillston, and we always went through both Forbes and Parkes on our way to Orange or Bathurst or Sydney.
So I have known them my whole life. It is rather shattering to me that, after all this time, after the next election they will not still be in the electorate of Calare—I started off with the electorate of Parkes, but that is what redistributions do.

I think about the couple of decades—or getting on that way—that I have been involved with them at a personal and political level. The thing that stands out that had such an effect on all our lives in that part of the world was the almost decade-long drought that went from about 2001 to 2008 or 2009 and the effect that it had on everybody. I think about most of western New South Wales, but I think about these two areas in particular, as they are the only parts that were in my original electorate, which included Broken Hill and Tibooburra and the far west.

I think John Howard came out to my electorate four times in that time just because of drought—and John Anderson and Mark Vaile probably most of those times—and he was extraordinarily sympathetic too. The last one was between Forbes and Parkes. I recall a couple I had known who wanted to talk to John Howard about mental health. He spoke to them about mental health. He gave the time to understand the issues and afterwards made special provision in the drought program, as it then was, to help deal with it. It was such a huge thing on all our lives. Dealing with the drought was probably the biggest thing I personally have had to do in politics and certainly the biggest thing western New South Wales had to do.

Quite apart from the normal part of drought, there was the irrigation situation, which certainly went through most of Forbes. It went into Condobolin and out to Hillston on the Lachlan River. Seven years without an ability to irrigate on the Lachlan River had an incredible affect. Whether you are from Forbes or Parkes or Tibooburra or Broken Hill, or wherever it was in western New South Wales, we all became close in that time because it affected all our lives so much. I thank them for backing me as I believe I have backed them in that time.

The other couple of issues that stand out include what was happening with communications in that time. I remember the Parkes Christian School was just starting off—

The SPEAKER: Unfortunately the member's time has expired—

Mr JOHN COBB: I would just like to say I thank them for their time. (Time expired)

Tropical Cyclone Winston

Ms OWENS (Parramatta) (16:39): My heart and thoughts are with the people of Fiji, and their friends and relatives in Australia who have been so worried about their welfare. On 14 February, the Fiji Metrological Service began issuing tropical cyclone warnings for the southern Lau Islands of Fiji. Tropical Cyclone Winston was expected to be the first recorded category 5 storm to make landfall in Fiji. The cyclone moved away on 16 February and we all breathed a sigh of relief, but it doubled back on 18 February and struck with devastating force on 20 February. Hurricane-force winds levelled villages, cut power to 900,000 people, took out telephone services and forty-two lives were lost—maybe more as contact is still being made with very remote islands.

The efforts of the Fijian people to band together at this incredibly difficult time, even when isolated from the rest of the world, is quite extraordinary. Thanks to the relief organisations
and volunteers who have delivered emergency aid to some very remote islands. Thanks too to the Australian Defence Force helicopters that will fly to hard-hit areas from today.

The rebuild will be difficult, not only because of the loss of life and homes but also because the two main ports on Taveuni were severely damaged and largely rendered unusable. Southern areas of the island became isolated when a bridge was destroyed. Early estimates indicate damage to schools to be in excess of over US$1 million in the Western Division alone. The sugar industry sustained nearly US$40 million in losses. The Fiji Electricity Authority estimates that it will take three weeks to restore service to most of the Western Division and, similarly, phone services will take up to three weeks.

The tourism industry has also been hit. In recent years, growth in Fiji has been largely driven by a strong tourism industry. Fiji’s gross earnings from tourism in 2011 totalled over US$1 billion, more than the combined revenues of the country’s top five exports: fish, water, garments, timber and gold. Due to cyclone Winston, Fiji’s primary income from the tourism industry has been severely disrupted and will be for some time.

Cyclone Winston took no hostages. It impacted Tonga twice in the span of a few days. The first passage resulted mostly in crop damage and the second took down structures.

My electorate of Parramatta is home to many Pacific Islanders, and a large majority of them call both Fiji and Australia home. Like all our expat communities when their first country is faced with these sorts of crises, they leapt into action. An emergency community meeting was called on Monday, 22 February by Tia Roko from Fijians in New South Wales and CEO of Auburn Diversity Services to create the Sydney Fijian Disaster Relief Committee, which unites non-profit organisations and Fijian expats to raise funds and deliver aid to Fiji. The group is currently sending monetary relief to Fiji as well as organising care packages and a containership of basic goods to help recover from the disaster. Our expat Fijian community is one of Fiji’s best assets.

Organisations from the Sydney Fijian Disaster Relief Committee are also holding independent fundraising activities and, as a whole, are currently in discussions with Parramatta Park to hold a huge fundraising concert on 20 March. It is in my diary. I hope others put it in theirs.
It is amazing to see how the community has united to assist the islands of Fiji. Their spirits are as beautiful as the islands from which they come. I acknowledge this very special Pacific community of Fiji at this very difficult time. Bula vinaka.

**Taxation**

Mr COLEMAN (Banks) (16:44): I want to speak about something that is very important in my electorate and that is the security of the housing market. Housing is the most important asset held in my community, by far, and no doubt in most communities around Australia. It is really, really important to understand what those opposite are proposing. I want to go through it very slowly and very clearly, because it is a very important thing to understand.

Those opposite propose that in the future, from the middle of next year, people who invest in an existing home cannot deduct the cost of interest from that investment. Basically, whereas previously they could reduce their tax based on the cost of interest, in the future they will not be able to do that. That is a tax increase for people who would otherwise be seeking to invest in housing. We know that that is about one-third of all investment in housing, based on ABS data which is very clear on this point.

It is not possible to assert that you can increase a tax and have no impact on investor behaviour. That is just an absurd proposition. To say that you can take away a fundamental principle of Australian taxation law that has been in place for 100 years and it will have absolutely no impact on investor behaviour is plainly absurd. It must have an impact on investor behaviour. So investors will, as investors do, look elsewhere to invest where they are able to deduct those costs of investment—basically in any other category of investment other than existing residential housing. The problem is that every single house in Australia that exists today is, by definition, an existing home. It cannot be a new home if it exists today. So, from the middle of next year, every single home in Australia today would be captured by this rule for any new investment.

Investors will say, 'I don't want to invest in an existing home, because I can't claim interest deductions, but I will look at areas where I can claim interest in other elements of the market.' Obviously that reduces investor demand, and that must result in a reduction in prices. You cannot go from a situation where you have three people showing up to participate in an auction to a situation where you have only two and say that it will not have a negative impact on prices. That is just not possible economically. This is not some small issue. This is not some small asset class that affects a few wealthy investors, as those opposite seem to assert in a sort of fuzzy logic from time to time. This is something that affects anyone in Australia who owns a house—which is about two-thirds of all Australian households.

If you look at the ABS data on the wealth of Australian households, it is incredibly powerful in demonstrating how important this issue is. If you look at the 40th to 60th percentile wealth bracket—the middle 20 per cent of Australian homes—and you look at what the ABS says is their average net wealth, and then you look at the proportion of that that is housing, it is 92 per cent. It is 92 per cent for the middle two deciles of Australian households' wealth. Let us be clear: this is a policy that will have a clear negative impact on an asset class which represents 92 per cent of the net wealth of middle wealth Australians. That is an extraordinary proposition. If you live in Panania in my electorate, where the median house price is $901,000, that is a very significant issue. If you live in Mortdale, where it is just over...
$1 million, that is a very significant issue, as it is in Revesby at $900,000 or Riverwood at just over $920,000. This is a very significant problem.

It is not possible for those opposite to assert, on the one hand, 'There is a problem with the existing tax system and distortions, therefore we propose to change it', and then on the other hand say, 'and it will have no impact whatsoever on the market.' Those two statements are entirely inconsistent. This is a very dangerous proposal which would have a very significant impact on our most valuable assets, and it is very important that it is well understood and rejected.

Animal Welfare

Mr KELVIN THOMSON (Wills) (16:49): Cosmetic testing on animals might sound harmless enough. People might imagine someone in a lab coat applying lipstick to a pig; but in fact it is a bit less benign than that. The tests used to ascertain the safety of cosmetic ingredients often subject animals to pain and distress, without pain relief, due to potential interference with test results.

Testing includes testing for skin irritation, dripping ingredients into the eyes of animals, testing for allergies and so on. Animal testing is carried out on rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, rats and other animals. The RSPCA estimates that tens of thousands of animals are tested each year. Animals Australia says animal experimentation and the invasive use of animals for teaching is inherently wrong. The use of animals in research and teaching is more about tradition and history than it is about science. Australia and the world should be investing in the research and development of innovative and cruelty-free testing procedures. There is now the ability to print 3D prosthetic limbs and organs on chips. Animal testing is completely outdated.

Approximately 95 per cent of drugs tested 'successfully' on animals fail when they are translated to humans. Research and teaching using animals cover wide areas of activity. The public perception that animal based research primarily takes place in the field of medicine is false. Animal based research is widely used in agriculture and basic scientific research, in relation to which the argument that 'animal research saves human lives' does not apply. Many, though not all, of those animals are subjected to some degree of pain or stress during the experimental procedure or as a result of the environment in which they are kept prior to or after the procedures.

Animals should not be viewed as mere tools for research and education. A commitment by governments, research and educational institutions and the community is required to bring about a radical change in methodology in research and teaching to reduce and subsequently eliminate the use of animals in these areas.

The European Union has introduced a ban on cosmetics tested on animals which came fully into effect in 2013. The ban applies to both the testing of substances on animals and the marketing of substances that have been the subject of animal testing elsewhere. Israel has introduced a similar ban.

During the 2013 federal election campaign, Labor committed to undertake a national consultation on the manufacture, importation, sale and marketing of cosmetics which have been tested on animals. This consultation was conducted in 2014. Over 13,000 public submissions were received, indicating a very high level of public interest in this issue, and
over 90 per cent of those submissions favoured a ban on animal testing, stating that the practice is unnecessary and inhuman. Labor acknowledged this public concern by inserting words to this effect in its national platform last year. The member for Throsby, who is in the House, and the member for Hotham have developed a private member's bill to give effect to this position, and I congratulate them on this work.

At present, animal testing of cosmetic products is legal in Australia, but in practice it is rarely conducted here. However, the large majority of cosmetics that sit on our shelves contain an ingredient, or ingredients, that at some point have been tested on animals. Mostly, these ingredients have been tested overseas. Often, results from animal tests are used to verify products so they can be brought into the Australian market.

The Labor bill creates offences for importing into Australia any new cosmetics, or existing cosmetics featuring new ingredients, that have been tested on animals. It also creates offences for testing cosmetics on animals within Australia. The bill will phase in prevention of animal testing, as was done in Europe. Animal testing that has already occurred is not subject to the bill, and cosmetics that are already available in Australia will continue to be available.

The registration process for new chemicals will be amended so that, in the case of a new cosmetic ingredient, the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme must be notified of a substance's animal testing history during the application process. If animal testing has occurred it cannot be registered. This will be phased in over three years.

This is a very reasonable and measured approach to an important issue. I cannot see any reason why members of the House and the Senate would not support it. I urge the government to support this bill. If they want to take it over and introduce it as government legislation, I dare say that my Labor colleagues would not be too upset by that. We just want to see action to put into effect an idea whose time has come.

**Education Funding**

Mr CHRISTENSEN (Dawson—The Nationals Deputy Whip) (16:54): I rise as a voice for the thousands of parents who have been shocked when they discovered how the ironically named Safe Schools program is indoctrinating their children. When those parents consider just how unsafe this program is, they will wonder why the federal government is allowing it to be implemented in schools, much less spending $8 million of taxpayer money to fund it.

The things that the Safe Schools Coalition Australia are recommending to school students include pornographic web content, sex shops, adult online communities and sex clubs. The Safe Schools 'All of Us' teaching resource directs students to the LGBT organisation Twenty10. On 19 January this year, Twenty10 hosted a hands-on workshop for youth on sex toys and sadomasochistic practices. All of Us also directs students to the website of the LGBT youth organisation Minus18, which produced most of the Safe Schools resources. Minus18 advised the students on chest binding, penis tucking, sex toys and sex advice such as 'penis-in-vagina sex is not the only sex and certainly not the ultimate sex'.

Minus18 links to The Tool Shed—an online pornographic sex shop offering a range of sex toys, sadomasochistic items and pornography. Minus18 recommends Scarleteen—a teen sex advice site that promotes group sex, sex toys and sadomasochism. Minus18 is an event partner with Melbourne gay bar the GH Hotel, which features erotic homosexual entertainment.
Safe Schools recommends the transgender organisation Seahorse Club Victoria, which in turn recommends the Abode fetish club. Abode is located at the same address as The Parlour Lounge sex club, which provides sadomasochistic entertainment and rooms for sex.

Safe Schools is funded via the Foundation for Young Australians, whose partner agencies implement the Safe Schools program. New South Wales partner Family Planning NSW offers detailed information on oral sex. Tasmanian partner Working It Out recommends YouTube channels featuring such things as ‘Gay guy sees first transgender vagina’ and ‘Anal for FTMs’.

These links to sexually explicit web content and external organisations of an adult or erotic nature raise serious concerns about child safety. Further, Safe Schools provides instructions to children on how to hide their internet browsing history. It advises them to ask for restricted websites that are blocked at school—and would be blocked at home—to be unblocked by their teachers without parental knowledge.

If parents knew their children were being exposed to this type of material, they would probably not let them go to school. If someone proposed exposing a child to this material, the parents would probably call the police because it sounds a lot like the grooming work that a sexual predator might undertake. Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Counselling Incorporated is a New South Wales peak body for child sexual assault counselling. This is how that body describes the process of grooming:

Sexualisation of the relationship through conversation and exposure of the child to sexual material such as images; taking undue interest in the child's sexual development; assuring the child of the rightness of what they are doing; telling the child the acts will not hurt them; alienating the child from their parents and family so that they do not feel close to them; and shaping the child's sexual preferences and manipulating what the child finds exciting.

That all sounds very familiar. The Safe Schools program focuses heavily on child and teenage sexual activity and sexual attractions; justifies almost any sexual activity; diminishes possible risks and harms; encourages young people to hide their activities from their parents; and provides links to adult sex clubs, adult online communities and sex shops. What is more, the program portrays all of this as normal and wraps it up in a taxpayer funded package and calls it an anti-bullying campaign. The Safe Schools program is in fact an unsafe schools program and it leaves students open to being groomed on websites advertising adult sex venues.

I commend the government for undertaking a review of this program and I call on schools using this program to immediately suspend it pending the outcome of that review. I urge all members of this House, particularly those with young children, to take a close look at what Safe Schools is delivering. I seek leave to table two documents—a diagram and an explanatory sheet illustrating the external links of the Safe Schools campaign.

Leave granted.

The SPEAKER: It being 5 pm, the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 17:00
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry) took the chair at 09:30.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Rethink the Link

Human Rights: Western Australia

Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (09:30): Rethink the Link is a grassroots collective of community groups from across the Fremantle electorate which is fighting the state and federal Liberal governments' imposition of the ill-conceived Perth Freight Link truck freeway on our communities. Rethink the Link is a legitimate, persistent, coordinated and peaceful campaign supported by a diverse range of people. So far it has succeeded in having the shoddy state environmental approval thrown out by the Supreme Court. For its efforts in standing up for the community, Rethink the Link was last month, in a beautifully poignant twist, awarded the Premier's Australia Day Active Citizenship Award for a community group.

I am among many who have pledged to peacefully protest the construction of the Perth Freight Link, including Roe Highway stage 8 through the precious Beeliar Wetlands in Bibra Lake, by blocking the path of bulldozers if that is what is required to express the level of community dissatisfaction with this project. But now the same state government which applauded and awarded Rethink the Link's activism is pushing through broad and draconian antiprotest laws which carry penalties of up to two years jail and $24,000 fines for physically 'preventing lawful activity'. This law, which the Premier states is intended to prevent people from locking themselves to equipment in protest, is so generally worded that it makes it illegal for a person to 'knowingly possess a thing' when planning to protest. This law marks the first time that the onus of proof will lie with those accused to demonstrate that a 'thing' is not intended for use in a protest.

On Tuesday hundreds of people from a broad cross-section of the community, including religious leaders, unions, environmentalists, Aboriginal elders, lawyers and members of the public, gathered in front of the WA parliament to protest this proposed law. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights last week slammed as 'chilling' this legislation, which will criminalise lawful protests and silence environmentalists and human rights defenders. The UN report states:

The proposed legislation will have the chilling effect of silencing dissenters and punishing expression protected by international human rights law. Instead of having a necessary legitimate aim, the Bill's offense provisions disproportionately criminalize legitimate protest actions … the passage of the Bill would grant police disproportionate and unnecessary powers to restrict lawful protests, primarily against environmental activists trying to raise awareness of key environmental issues. "It discourages legitimate protest activity and instead, prioritizes business and government resource interests over the democratic rights of individuals," … "Human rights defenders have a legitimate right to promote and protect all human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, regardless of whether their peaceful activities are seen by some as frustrating development projects or are costlier for the police to address."

In its report Safeguarding democracy, released this week, the Human Rights Law Centre pointed to the corrosion of our democracy. In the words of the centre's executive director, Hugh de Kretser:
Open government, a free press, a strong and diverse civil society and the rule of law are some of the vital foundations of our democracy. Yet we are witnessing an unmistakeable trend in Australia of governments eroding these foundations with new laws and practices that entrench secrecy and stifle criticism and accountability.

In my view, this legislation may contravene the implied constitutional freedom of political communication. The ignorance and obstinacy of the WA government will likely force the community to take another legal action, this time to the High Court. *(Time expired)*

**Hume Electorate: Infrastructure**

Mr TAYLOR (Hume—Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Cities and Digital Transformation) *(09:33)*: As this government knows, one of the biggest drivers of jobs and growth is investment in infrastructure. In my electorate of Hume, there is a strong case in point. The federal government has committed over $100 million into Hume infrastructure projects in the past two years.

I am going to read out a bit of a list here. Forty-four million dollars has been invested in Roads to Recovery, supporting local council road projects in Hume, and we are seeing the real impacts from a number of those projects. Just under $20 million from the National Stronger Regions Fund last year has gone to projects at Goulburn, Murrumbateman and Harden. Eleven million has been spent on the Barton Highway through safety works projects, and a further $12 million has been committed. Thirteen million has been invested through the bridges renewal and road black spot programs up to the end of 2015. We heralded this year another $3.7 million from round 2 of the Bridges Renewal Program. We received $2 million under the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program up to October last year, and a further $3 million has been invested by the Commonwealth in 18 mobile phone black spot towers in Hume—and the first of those are starting to go up now.

Importantly, we have also secured funding from the New South Wales government and telecommunications companies for these towers, costing a total of $10 million across the electorate. There is enormous investment—it is hard to quantify in dollar terms—in Hume’s NBN rollout. This includes the laying of fibre in many major town centres and the building of more than 50 fixed wireless towers across the electorate. A good portion of those are up and running now.

The government is coming good on infrastructure investment for regional Australia and the jobs are flowing. I have heard from the Department of Employment that 1,150 new job placements were made in Hume since the federal government’s jobactive program started in July last year. We are seeing confidence in investment converting into real jobs and real opportunities. What also makes the Hume story great is the extraordinary response we have received to government grant programs that are building real community spirit. The Green Army, the Safer Streets Program, the Stronger Communities Program and the Anzac Centenary Local Grants Program have all had a wonderful response in my electorate. It is a real privilege to be able to help little groups like the Frogmore Hall and Recreation Reserve Trust near Boorowa, who have been successful in securing $1,300 for a plaque and flagpole, or work with the Tahmoor Soccer Club to win $5,000 for new goalposts. This government is investing in infrastructure, big and small, and communities across my electorate are seeing the benefits.
Holt Electorate: Community Spirit and Leadership Awards

Mr BYRNE (Holt) (09:36): On 14 December 2015, I was delighted to host the Holt Community Spirit and Leadership Awards and award 41 students from 39 schools. This was an event that was held at the Cranbourne Community Theatre and was attended by over 200 people. This is the 14th year that we have run the Holt Community Spirit and Leadership Awards. There is always a very good attitude, particularly when we are talking about the good that our young people are doing, not what people often read about in our local papers, which is some of the challenges that our young people face.

I wish I had time in the two minutes and 26 seconds remaining to talk about each of the incredible contributions that the recipients have made to the life of their school and the community, but unfortunately I will not be able to. All I can do for the parents, teachers and others who will be listening is to read their names into the record. I spoke on the night itself. I gave a citation of each of the amazing contributions that these young people have made. I just want to follow up on that and read their names into the record so that the parents and teachers will know their efforts have been acknowledged in this place. They are: Nathanael Brindas, Tanysha Hogan, Amber O'Donnell, Kaelen MacKinnon, Naomi Huynh, Layla Hargreaves, Rhys Bryant, Anna Sorensen, Joel Miller, Koro Sofaa, Paige Sutherland, Hayley Kelly, Chelsey Dodos, Judith Te'O, Ataylia Melkic, Charlotte Mager, Georgia Kristalyn, Nikitha Ramkumar, Angelo Leaupepe, Jasmin Crutchley, Rebecca Wilson, Kaelan Lazaro, Teodora Bingula, Claudia Berke, Ben Tawharu, Michael Stapleton, Daniel Woods, Alyssa Breeden, Shakelea Ringdahl, Adam Williams, Sitarah Rahmani, Madeline Spooner, Kayla Patrick, James Fisher, Safaa Rahmani, Alana Manoj, Keane Noronha, Taylah Harvey, Ben Abraham, Joshua Jenkins and Paris Dunfield. I read the names, but I wish I could read the citations.

I would like to thank Village Cinemas. As part of the awards ceremony, a couple of weeks ago we hosted a special screening of Star Wars: The Force Awakens for parents and students. That was donated by Village Cinemas, so I would like to thank them for their efforts in acknowledging the contribution of our young people.

I would like to close with this. Too often in my area we read about the challenges young people face and when they do something wrong. Not often enough do we read about the great work that our young people do in surmounting those challenges and the great contribution that they make to the life of our community. I hope that, in some small way, this community spirit award rightfully recognises the incredible role that our young people play. They are our future. I am very proud of the young people whose names I read out. Our future is in good hands with those young people.

Macarthur Electorate: Campbelltown Public School

Mr MATHESON (Macarthur) (09:39): Today I would like to congratulate the staff, students and parents at Campbelltown Public School on its 140th anniversary. Campbelltown Public School is a fantastic school in my electorate, made up of 300 very clever and intelligent students and their dedicated teachers and parents. It was the very first school to be built in Campbelltown and it is still a very important part of the community today. Students and staff at the school are seen each year taking part in community events like the Festival of Fisher's Ghost street parade, Anzac Day commemorations and Macarthur's 24-hour fight against cancer.
The school opened on 11 January 1876 with 90 students. The community had to raise 1,000 pounds to contribute to the 4,000 pounds of building costs as well as help build the school. When the school first opened up, there was no water, no electricity and no sewer. The first school principal would walk to Hurley Park reservoir and bring two buckets of water back each morning—one for drinking and one for handwashing. The principal lived on site in a building located where the current school library is today. The school received electricity in 1923 and water around the same time. School uniforms were introduced in 1962, but, before then, students all wore their Sunday best. Boys and girls were taught separately. The boys learnt geometry and Latin, and the girls were taught sewing and home economics. Things have changed today. In total, the school has had 23 principals. The longest-serving staff member, Margaret Chrystal, has been with the school for 28 years. Margaret, along with Joy Miller, Hazel Cockcroft, Debbie Gilroy and Julie-Ann Cowan have been tirelessly collating Campbelltown Public School's rich history. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to their work.

That is just a brief look into the rich history of this wonderful school in my electorate. There have been many students from Campbelltown Public School who have gone on to achieve great things, including Nine News presenter Robert Penfold; Lisa Wilkinson from the Today show; Chief of the Defence Force, Mark Binskin; and children's novelist Geoffrey McSkimming, who wrote the popular Cairo Jim chronicles. Students at the school are still doing amazing things today. Just last year, year 6 student Sarah Al-Nakeeb was the recipient of a Fred Hollows Humanity Award. Sarah received her award from the Premier at a special awards ceremony at Parliament House in Sydney. She was nominated by her teachers for being a humble and quiet leader, who always assisted others without complaint or the need for recognition. I am sure that, like those before her, Sarah will go on to achieve great things and make her school, community and family very proud.

Another former student of the school making a difference in his community is Ronald Flockhart. Ronald was one of the bellringers of the school in 1957. He is now an engineer. Whilst at the school's 140th celebration, Ronald noticed that the school bell was in a poor state and offered to restore it as a gift to the school. It was a lovely gesture from a former student and shows the unique relationship the school has with its students and community members.

Through its long and rich history in my electorate, Campbelltown Public School has many things to be proud of. But, most of all, it can be proud of producing thousands of fine young men and women who have grown into fantastic people living in the Macarthur region today.

**Franklin Electorate: Centrelink and Medicare**

Ms COLLINS (Franklin) (09:42): I want to start with a big congratulations to members of my community. Since earlier this year, the residents of the Kingborough and Huon Valley communities have been lobbying to overturn the government's very callous decision and very nasty decision to close the local Centrelink and Medicare office in Kingston. The residents alerted me to this in January of this year. We had a petition, and we also called a public meeting. I was very pleased that, on Friday of last week, we heard that the new Minister for Human Services had done a backflip on the appalling decision made by the former minister. The former minister, of course, made a decision before Christmas to shut this Centrelink office and kept it quiet. I have spoken about this issue in this place up since 11 January, when
we found out. We then started a community campaign. So the residents deserve a big
congratulations for standing up against this government's proposal to close their Centrelink
office. It is a big win for the local community.

But the residents at the public meeting that we had on Sunday, which still went ahead
despite the government's backflip and which was attended by over 300 community members,
still expressed concern that they do not believe the government will continue to deliver the
services that the local community needs. They also expressed concern that they want better
services, not less services, from the current government. They have asked me to write to the
new minister and get an appointment to raise their local issues, which, of course, I have now
done.

But they have also been raising with me, over the weekend and this week, their concerns
about some of the misleading claims that appear on Senator Eric Abetz's Facebook page. In
particular, Senator Abetz says that the Liberal government have decided not to proceed with
Labor's scheduled closure of the Kingston Centrelink office—Labor's scheduled closure!
Labor opened the Kingston office in 2011 and 2013—

An honourable member: Old Eric!

Ms COLLINS: It was Eric's government—this Liberal government—that made the
decision before Christmas to shut this office and it is his government that have done a
backflip, only due to community pressure. I congratulate the local residents for standing up
against this government. The people of southern Tasmania are, quite frankly, getting sick of
the government ignoring them and not doing anything to better service the local communities
there. The issues that they want me to raise with the new minister about the services they want
in their local communities are quite extensive. They want to ensure that the privacy issues
associated with the co-location that is going to occur from June onwards with Service
Tasmania are dealt with. People are dealing with sensitive private matters when they go to
Centrelink and Medicare and they want to ensure their privacy is protected when dealing with
government.

Broadband

Ms GAMBARO (Brisbane) (09:45): Superfast broadband is coming to more than 88,000
homes and businesses in my electorate of Brisbane under an accelerated three-year rollout of
the NBN. Across Australia, the NBN is powering ahead with the release of an updated and
comprehensive construction plan to network 9.5 million premises nationwide. This year,
many of those projects in Brisbane will finally get underway. With the release of the NBN's
full construction schedule, we can see how well Brisbane is to benefit from the rollout. Not
only will tens of thousands of Brisbane locals enjoy high-speed connections but they will get
those connections at a cheaper and faster rate than under Labor's failed attempt at this policy.

Rollout progress under Labor was slow and costly. The nbn co only managed to connect
51,000 premises to its networks during the term of the previous government. An editorial in
the Australian Financial Review on 15 October said that Labor had no credibility in this area.
It described Labor's plan for the NBN as 'an expensive joke'. The coalition government
recognises that consumers want fast broadband as soon as possible. The services available
over the NBN will allow families to stream movies, surf the net and complete schoolwork
online—and all at the one time. Businesses will also benefit from the vastly greater bandwidth available.

Much of the rollout in my electorate will see the exciting use of hybrid fibre coaxial, or HFC, technology. HFC technology will serve around four million premises connected to the NBN. This is absolutely fantastic news for thousands of homes in Albion, Alderley, Clayfield, Gordon Park, Grange, Kedron, Lutwyche, Newmarket, Stafford, Wilston, Windsor and Woolloowin. They will be connected, with many more suburbs to come. The nbn co's three-year plan for Brisbane outlines that an estimated 19,600 premises in the CBD from Red Hill to Bardon and Herston will be started this year. An extra 1,400 premises in New Farm and surrounding suburbs will also see projects start this year—and a whopping 30,700 premises in Albion, Alderley, Clayfield, Gordon Park, Grange, Kedron, Lutwyche, Newmarket, Stafford, Wilston, Windsor and Woolloowin will also start this year. This is absolutely fantastic news. That is why I am so proud of this government's management of the NBN—because by 2018 the majority of my electorate is going to be connected to this incredible and amazing network.

**Education Funding**

*Ms HALL* (Shortland—Opposition Whip) (09:48): Member for Brisbane, your problems will start the moment they turn the NBN on. It has been rolled out across the Shortland electorate, with a lot of houses being connected to the NBN. I have to tell you: you are going to need extra electorate staff because of the problems associated with it—the fact that you cannot get the speeds that have been promised. The problems have been absolutely incredible. You will not believe the problems you will have.

But that is not what I wanted to speak about this morning.

*Ms Gambaro interjecting—*

*Ms HALL:* I wish you the best of luck, because it has been an absolute nightmare in the Shortland electorate. Hopefully, for your sake, they do not turn it on until after the election. If they do it before, you are going to have so many people who are dissatisfied. I wanted to put on record my support for Labor's plan for education. Like every member of this House, I visited my schools at the end of the year when school presentations were taking place, and I have also visited them subsequently. The one message I have been getting is how important the Gonski reforms have been to those schools, particularly schools that were really disadvantaged, in getting extra money and targeted programs. There were students whose literacy levels had increased by about two or three years in a six-month period simply because of these reforms—because of the extra money put into targeted programs to help children.

It is really upsetting that over 10 years the government will be taking money out of our schools—ripping what I think comes to something like $731 million out of schools in the Newcastle region, and in Shortland electorate that accounts for $164 million—as opposed to Labor's strong focus on every child's need. It is really important to focus on every child's needs, providing individual attention for students, better trained teachers and more of them, targeted resources and better equipped classrooms, and more support for students with special learning difficulties. Australia needs to embrace the technology and the needs of the future. We need to work hard to make sure that our students are prepared for that future and to make sure that they get the knowledge and the education they need and deserve. *(Time expired)*
Mr HARTSUYKER (Cowper—Minister for Vocational Education and Skills and Deputy Leader of the House) (09:51): The new electorate boundaries in New South Wales will be gazetted today. This means that Port Macquarie is officially part of Cowper for any election called from today onwards. I know there are a few jealous MPs in the House, because having Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour—two of the most beautiful cities in the country—in the same electorate I guess is just not fair to other electorates around the country. But I am pleased to have that prospect going forward.

On 12 February I joined the member for Lyne at two schools in Port Macquarie that are set to benefit from significant Commonwealth government investment. Newman Senior Technical College is building new classrooms and learning areas which will particularly benefit hospitality students. The Commonwealth is investing $1.58 million into the project and the school community is investing a further $1.4 million. We also visited St Columba Anglican School, which is undertaking an impressive $8.3 million upgrade. Dr Gillespie and I were pleased to announce $950,000 in Commonwealth funding to assist with this project. Later in the day the member for Lyne and I spoke with local business owners about the boundary changes at a lunch put on by the Mid North Coast NSW Business Chamber. The feedback provided by the business chamber was very helpful, as I worked to build a deeper understanding of the issues that are critical to the Hastings region.

Port Macquarie is a city on the move. The city's educational infrastructure is absolutely first class, and the number of students studying in Port Macquarie will grow strongly in the coming years. The business community is innovative and vibrant, and Commonwealth investment is giving the local economy a boost. To maximise the opportunities for Port Macquarie to grow, prosper and maintain business confidence we need the cooperation of all levels of government, and I would particularly like to commend the great work of state member Leslie Williams, who is a tireless advocate for Port Macquarie at a state level. We need the cooperation of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and business leaders such as the New South Wales Business Chamber manager, Kellon Beard, and the Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce, whose president is Haydn Oriti.

My immediate focus is getting out and about in the Port Macquarie community, meeting as many business owners, community groups, council members and constituents as possible to hear their opinions and insights. I believe it is important that we hear from the community about their vision for the future of their community. I know some people are concerned about the challenges of representing two major regional centres such as Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie in the one electorate, but many local members face the challenge of representing diverse electorates with competing needs. I think it is important that we have a strong voice for the electorate of Cowper in the next coming election. I will be putting myself forward for election as member. It would be my sixth term as member, and I would certainly look forward to the opportunity to represent the good people of Port Macquarie going forward.

Marriage

Mr ALBANESE (Grayndler) (09:54): Last Sunday I joined my fellow Labor representatives Tanya Plibersek, Jo Haylen, Penny Sharpe and Linda Scott at Fair Day in Victoria Park. Like many years before, we took the opportunity to plant our messages of support for marriage equality in the Sea of Hearts, organised by the NSW Gay and Lesbian
Rights Lobby. I also look forward to marching alongside many tens of thousands who will participate at the Mardi Gras parade, as I have done nearly every year since 1983. Fair Day and Mardi Gras are important celebrations for the gay and lesbian community in Sydney. It is a celebration of the diversity which makes Sydney a great global city. But it is also a time to recognise the ongoing discrimination that continues to occur against the gay and lesbian community in a range of areas, including the recognition of their relationships.

I have always believed that equal rights for all people, regardless of sexuality, race or gender, are fundamental rights. Through Labor governments we have seen significant advancement in this area. In every election since 1996 Labor has committed to removing important areas of legal discrimination against same-sex couples. This has included taxation, superannuation, social security, health, aged care, veterans entitlements, workers compensation and employment entitlements. Most recently we have successfully extended Labor's Paid Parental Leave scheme to include same-sex couples.

These are important steps forward, but we must recognise that there is still some way to go. That is why it is important that in schools we promote tolerance and support for diversity, and why the position of Simon Birmingham, the education minister, is correct in supporting that process, which is now under review because of the views of a very small minority within the coalition. I am proud to be part of the ALP, whose support through our platform for marriage equality is now entrenched. I believe that Australia will join the nations that have recognised that people should be allowed to marry the person that they love. That is because institutions, just like society's values, evolve over time.

It is significant that today the New South Wales Parliament will apologise to the 78ers for the discrimination and suffering they endured at the first Mardi Gras march. The reaction of media outlets, many political leaders and the police to the first Mardi Gras was a disgraceful show of discrimination and an abuse of power. I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the 78ers to the ongoing fight for equality in Australia, as they played an important role in forging the path for law reform.

Lyons Electorate: Norske Skog Boyer Mill

Mr HUTCHINSON (Lyons) (09:57): I am looking forward very much to attending on Saturday a family fun day at the Norske Skog Boyer Mill to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The Norske Skog mill, as it is known today, has been a part of the community in the Derwent Valley since 1941, when construction was completed and paper production began. The story of the mill began in 1915, when the Tasmanian government at the time commissioned a report to examine the potential for a paper-making industry based upon the state's vast stands of eucalypt. Indeed, that was undertaken and then the decision for the mill was made between 1939 and 1941. Deputy Speaker, you could appreciate the challenges that would have occurred at that time in our history. Production was not finally really ramped up until the 1950s, when after the Second World War there was a consolidation of the site and a decision to expand production. The business has gone on from strength to strength. Between 1967 and 1992 the mill capacity expanded to near 200,000 tonnes per annum with the commissioning of the No. 3 machine in 1968. The 1970s brought more world firsts. There was a move out of eucalypts towards radiata plantation softwood, and that continues today.

The last 25 years and indeed the last 10 years have been a story of innovation. They have decommissioned one of those paper lines due to a reduction in demand globally and increased
competition, of course, from other parts of the world. But they have innovated in the sense that they are Australia's only manufacturer of lightweight coated paper. The $80 million investment that was made by Boyer and the engineering done internally are an absolute tribute to everybody concerned, not least of all the general manager, Rod Bender.

I will be very pleased to join with the community and the many generations of residents of the Derwent Valley who have worked at the Boyer mill at New Norfolk. It will be a time for celebration. It will be a time for renewal, and, indeed, it will be about the future, because I think the future is bright with the capacity that they have with their management, the great working relationship they have with their unions and the commission, and the capacity of the people involved.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry): If no member present objects, three-minute constituency statements may continue for a total of 60 minutes.

Chifley Electorate: Bidwill Shopping Centre

Mr HUSIC (Chifley) (10:01): Today I want to speak up for frustrated Bidwill residents. For years, their shopping plaza stood empty, with one lonely food outlet left standing at the centre after it initially closed its doors. In February 2014, the community spoke up and called on investors to move into Bidwill and revive the shopping plaza, which had been long neglected. At the time it was concerning to comprehend how families had to travel considerable distance or had to use a local drive-through liquor outlet to buy basics such as milk and bread.

Fortunately, a year later and after a $5 million refurbishment, the community was jumping for joy with the reopening of the plaza and hosting the anchor tenant, supermarket chain FoodWorks. I was pleased to stand up here and congratulate FoodWorks and the investors for this effort. This did not just mean access to fresh and affordable food; it also provided the prospect of new services in the area. The decision by FoodWorks to open became the catalyst for at least five other small retailers to think about establishing businesses inside the plaza.

I was incredibly disappointed to learn that these businesses never made it to Bidwill because the shopping centre developer decided to cash in on the interest in the plaza, jack up the rents and squeeze out those potential retailers. As a result, FoodWorks could not sustain themselves without the supporting businesses around them and the traffic they would have brought, and this was responsible for them closing their doors in December.

I am calling on the stakeholders to see the true potential and benefit of this community by bringing business back to Bidwill. The shopping centre owners deserve to be treated in the same way they are treating Bidwill—with utter contempt. Their greed and lack of concern for Bidwill residents is scandalous, and I vow to pursue this issue on behalf of residents.

It is my firm belief that our families and residents in Chifley deserve healthcare services as good as anywhere else in Sydney. This belief drove me to launch a campaign to secure an MRI for Mount Druitt hospital. After securing thousands of signatures for that MRI, the former federal Labor government delivered the necessary funding in 2013—only to have it cut by the Liberal government on winning office. They have broken a commitment to the community, which desperately needs this equipment. The Liberal government, following their
federal counterparts, have cut health care in our area, shut down the cardiac ward and shut down funding to vital services in need.

We then saw, in the last state election, a sudden commitment by the Baird government to fund an MRI for Mount Druitt hospital. We have been asking for ages where it is at. It has not been delivered. If it is good enough to make the promise, it is good enough to deliver on it, and I urge the Baird government to get on with it and deliver the MRI to Mount Druitt hospital.

**Page Electorate: Surf-Lifesaving**

**Grafton Jacaranda Festival**

Mr HOGAN (Page) (10:04): Every summer many people visit, and obviously many of our locals enjoy, the great beauty of the beaches on the North Coast. Every year our volunteer lifesavers save the lives of many people using our beaches. It takes a special type of person to be a surf-lifesaver, and this was proved last week by surf-lifesaving members Aidan Yourell, Rachael Redman and Jacob Harcourt. Last September I gave a young sporting champion award to 16-year-old Aidan. He and the two 15-year-olds, Rachael and Jacob, all from the Evans Head-Casino Surf-Lifesaving Club, were recently called to rescue two occupants of a boat that had rolled on the bar. The young trio jumped into the inflatable rescue boat and brought the people to shore. The couple of days later the local newspaper, the Northern Star, was taking a photo of them on the beach for a story about their rescue efforts when they were called out again, this time to rescue a man who had been surfing at nearby Shark Bay and was washed up onto nearby rocks. Aidan told the paper, 'It's giving back to the community, really, and making sure everyone stays safe around the beach.' This was a tremendous effort by all three, not only because they risked their lives to help and save others but also because all three are teenagers. Well done and thank you.

The iconic Grafton Jacaranda Festival is in its 82nd year and is about to enter a new era. The committee have had several recommendations put to them recently and these were discussed at the recent AGM. At the AGM a new committee was elected, and I would like to thank the outgoing members for their tireless efforts: President Trevor Green, Senior Vice-President Helen Weatherstone and committee member Scott Baker. The incoming executive for this year are President Kirsten Smith, First Vice-President Steve Cansdell, Second Vice-President Kelle Murphy, Treasurer Peg James, Honorary Secretary Helen Templeton and executive members Karen Hackett, Gordon Smith and Jeff Smith. Donna Hunt has been retained in her role as festival coordinator. I know this will be a great event again. The jacaranda festival is always one of the highlights of the Clarence Valley calendar and I look forward to the events later this year.

**Throsby Electorate: National Broadband Network**

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (10:06): I want to bring to the attention of parliament the results of the Throsby broadband report, which has been informed by responses to over 1,000 surveys in my local electorate. It concludes that there is a clear and urgent economic and social need for an upgrade of telecommunications infrastructure across the Illawarra and Southern Highlands. It also finds that small business and job creation are being hampered by existing services—or, should I say, the lack of existing services—and that the last mile of
copper is not an option for a network so badly degraded that connectivity is affected by the rain.

Weekly, I get dozens of phone calls, emails and letters from people about their poor copper connections. It gets damp; their phone lines go down. I asked people to tell me about their experience of their current connections. Sara from Oak Flats told me: 'We run two home businesses and it interferes greatly with our income. We also experience frequent dropouts.' Paul from Albion Park told me: 'I run a small business from home … I'm considering a move to where the NBN is connected just so I can work at a decent speed.' Shannon from Mittagong told me the internet is affecting his productivity, meaning more time commuting to and from work instead of working from home when he can. He said: 'We cannot obtain a fast internet connection. I work from home and commute to Sydney and require fast speeds to work.' Tony from Albion Park told me, 'People in Sydney laugh about the connection speeds we have here in Albion Park.' And Tassa from Barrack Heights said, 'Our telephone exchange in Warilla is one of the oldest in the country and we have ongoing issues with the phone lines after rain.' Morgan from Tullimbar said her connection is slow, making my work as a bookkeeper near impossible. It's very frustrating knowing that houses five metres away have the NBN!' Tullimbar is a relatively new development where some houses are connected to the fibre; however, other houses next door or across the road will never get a fibre connection because of Malcolm Turnbull and this government.

Broadband is absolutely critical to the future economic development of the Illawarra and Southern Highlands. Many members in this place would know that the region is going through an economic transformation, with jobs being lost and businesses struggling in the manufacturing sector. Fast, reliable, affordable broadband is absolutely critical to the future economic prosperity of the region. It is absolutely critical that we get a proper broadband connection, not the broadband that is on offer. There is some good news in Dapto, where they are getting fibre-to-the-home and it is making an absolute difference to their lifestyle and their businesses.

I seek leave to table a copy of the Throsby broadband report.

Leave granted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry): The member's time has expired. I call the member for Petrie.

Petrie Electorate: Small Business

Mr HOWARTH (Petrie) (10:09): The coalition government is a government for small business—very much so. Just last year we announced possibly the best small business package Australia has ever seen. You would be well aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, of the coalition government's instant asset write-off for up to $20,000 for pieces of equipment that individual businesses may need.

I want to remind small businesses that this is ongoing. They can purchase new equipment for their business right now. Perhaps they need new solar panels to reduce electricity costs. They may need a new computer. They may need a water tank or a new vehicle. This is a great opportunity for businesses to go out and spend, stimulate the economy, buy the extra equipment they need and get an instant asset write-off. The previous threshold was $1,000, so $20,000 is a big jump and it will help businesses.
We have also reduced company tax rates. The company tax rate was 30 per cent and now it has come down to 28.5 per cent for businesses with less than $2 million in turnover. And we have also helped unincorporated businesses with a five per cent tax discount worth some $1.8 billion over the next four years of the forward estimates.

Since I was elected I have been visiting small businesses throughout the seat of Petrie on a regular basis to meet the owners and staff. I find it a great way not just to connect with business owners and to see what businesses are out there locally in my seat but also to connect with the staff and encourage them to do their best and keep working hard.

I have visited a number of businesses recently, including Performax International last Friday. They opened their first showroom at North Lakes. Performax International is Australia's biggest independent importer of American vehicles—Chevys and so forth. The headquarters are in Gympie, where they also have a factory to modify the vehicles from left-hand drive to right-hand drive, and they now employ a lot of local staff in my electorate of Petrie.

I also had the opportunity to pop over and talk to Adam, from Civic Media, which is a large printer in the area. He is doing great things and he has seen massive growth in his business. We spoke about some of the challenges there.

And just last week the Prime Minister came up to Beefy's Pies, which has two sites in my electorate. Beefy's are using a new, innovative software program developed by four uni students who have a company called Tanda. They have a great product; it is a payroll product. I would encourage people to go out and get that product. It is a fantastic product, and it shows that young people with an innovative product can make a big difference. (Time expired)

Tran Minh Nhat

Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (10:13): Recently I spoke in this place about the treatment of human rights activist Tran Minh Nhat at the hands of the Vietnamese authorities. Last week I received an email from him, and I would like to share it with the House. He wrote:

During the Lunar New Year, Lam Ha police harassed and threatened my family for the seventh time in just over a month. The Lam Ha police set fire to dry coffee plants adjacent to my house around midnight on February 10. The arson attack was only 10 metres away from my home. The fire was so large it took eight people over four hours to contain it.

My family and I have faced several acts of harassment prior to this incident. On the evening of the Lunar New Year our house was stoned. Just two days before this incident the Lam Ha police swerved into my father's motorcycle and threatened to beat my brother, Tran Khac Duong, to death.

My family has received ongoing threats for my peaceful advocacy for religious freedom, human rights and democracy. On February 7, three officers from Lam Ha police threatened us. They said: 'You dogs will pay for your actions. We hope you die.'

These threats and these acts of harassment by the Vietnamese authorities have been ongoing since I was released from prison in August last year. During the Christmas and New Year season my family's crops were destroyed, irrigation equipment was damaged, there were property break-ins and there was the stoning of our home.

My family and friends have been continually harassed by local police. Activists who visited me after I was released from prison were ambushed by police and physically beaten. My nieces and nephews
who come over to my home to study have been threatened and barred from studying at my home by the school.

This is the account of one man—a human rights activist, yes. He is a person whose human rights have certainly been offended, but his crime was that he stood up for the human rights of others. Wherever human rights abuse occurs—and particularly where it involves a valued trading partner—it should be a concern for all of us. In this case it involves a partner who is a signatory to the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It is not acceptable for Vietnam to hide behind the actions of local authorities such as the police force at Lam Ha, particularly when they are all subject to the same authority under the same communist regime. To ignore is to excuse, which in turn leads to acceptance. We need to stand up for individuals who are brave enough to stand up for the rights of others. *(Time expired)*

**Solomon Electorate**

**Mrs GRIGGS** (Solomon) (10:16): I rise this morning to talk about the Council on the Ageing in the Northern Territory. COTA does great work advocating for a just, inclusive and equitable society for senior Territorians. That is what they state is one of their core functions. They do a great job. They are in an old building that needs some serious renovation but they do fantastic work. As we know, seniors are defined as people over 50. They have a great network of people that they visit. They are involved in round-table discussions. They hold regular meetings. They have spoken to be on a number of occasions about the great need to have their office facilities upgraded.

With that, we invited them to apply for funding under the Stronger Communities Program, an initiative of this government to give electorates $150,000 grants for small capital projects. In my electorate we have a great committee that is well represented from within the community, and I am pleased to say that funding of $5,207, which will be matched by COTA, will enable them to upgrade some of their facilities. They wanted to get some new kitchen equipment and replace some lounges and bookshelves. This is going to help them do that. We are very pleased that we were able to help this wonderful not-for-profit organisation continue to do the great work that they do for seniors in Darwin and Palmerston in my electorate.

I would also like to talk about a lovely young lady I met when I was at MacKillop Catholic College in Darwin a couple of weeks ago. Claire Forsyth is a young middle school student who approached me to get some advice on how she could best equip herself to stand for a leadership role in the school. I received a couple of emails from Claire. I am really delighted with the email received last night, in which she advised me that she has been elected as the middle school captain at MacKillop college. I wish her all the best. She is an outstanding young lady and I think she will do a fantastic job as the middle school captain at MacKillop college. Well done, Claire, and well done to your fellow students for electing you. *(Time expired)*

**Griffith Electorate: Australia Day Awards**

**Ms BUTLER** (Griffith) (10:19): I was honoured this January to present 26 locals with Griffith Australia Day awards at a ceremony held at the Queensland Cricket Club venue at the Gabba. The Griffith Australia Day awards, established by my predecessor the former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, recognise outstanding volunteers in a community. Local residents, members of the many hardworking community groups and my colleagues from state and local
government attended this year's ceremony. Each year we ask locals to nominate outstanding volunteers in the local area, and the 2016 Griffith Australia Day awards recipients came from diverse backgrounds and are working in our community in groups as diverse as sporting clubs, Meals on Wheels, multicultural organisations and veterans groups.

It is important that we come together to recognise volunteers. I do not say that because they seek recognition or because they want accolades; their work would continue without any fanfare at all. But, although they do not ask for recognition, they certainly deserve it. By shining a light on their good work, we might encourage others to follow their example, to say to themselves, 'I can do that' or 'I can make a difference'.

Modern life is very full. That makes volunteers all the more precious and worthy of our recognition and thanks. To Brian Laing, Cam Nisbet-Smith, Christina Carswell, Damien Madden, David Floyd, Dorothea Schafer, Emma Simpson, Dr Erin Evans, Kerrod Trot, Norma Morgan, Pat Powell, Steve Pidcock, Brian Menhinitt, Elijah Buol, Tom Robertson, Gabrielle Chisholm, Mal Causer, Kay Johnston, Jonny Ruddy, Mardi and Morgan Jenkins, Robert and Jill Stanton, Jim Tunstall, and Robert and Russell Turner: on behalf of the southside, I would therefore like to place on the record of this parliament our sincere appreciation of all you do in the local community.

Each one of those people I have just mentioned had a remarkable story. Whether it was volunteering in the same organisation for 46 years; whether it was establishing a local festival to bring southsiders together around the G20 and to have continued that on; or whether it was establishing a veterans support group—Emma Simpson was 16 when she did this—to connect young people with veterans in our community, the stories of these volunteers were just deeply inspirational. It was wonderful to celebrate them together.

I would also like to thank the Griffith Australia Day Awards committee—the chair, Mary Maher; Jim McClelland; Reverend Linda Hanson; Marie Dwyer; and Brian Daley. I am so grateful to all of you for everything you did. You did an admirable job in following in the footsteps of the committee that Steve Rowan had chaired the year before. I also want to thank the Queensland Cricketers' Club. They were kind enough to support the event—and that helped us to host it in the spectacular surroundings of the Gabba, which is of course an iconic southside location in my electorate. I congratulate all those who won awards and all those who received nominations. *(Time expired)*

**Capricornia Electorate: Infrastructure**

**Ms LANDRY** (Capricornia) (10:22): I am pleased to inform the House of progress that the coalition government and I have made in delivering serious and tangible infrastructure projects to my electorate of Capricornia. Such projects are designed to stimulate economic activity and employment.

Recently, $20 million in new federal funding was announced for three key projects under the federal government's National Stronger Regions program. This includes $2.34 million for the Capricorn Rescue Helicopter Service to construct a new hangar and medical aviation centre in Rockhampton. The project involves a two-bay hangar with engineering facilities and much-needed space for doctors and medical teams to be on stand-by. We are providing $7 million towards the revamp and upgrade of the Rockhampton riverbank development on the Fitzroy in the city's CBD. The funding will support the Rockhampton Regional Council's
project for better facilities and the opportunity for greater economic activity in the area. We are providing $10 million towards stages 4 and 5 of the Yeppoon beach foreshore redevelopment on the Capricorn Coast as part of a major economic, job creation and tourist drawcard.

These funds come on top of $9.9 million in joint federal-state funding under the category D Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements to aid in the continued recovery from Cyclone Marcia. The funds, which relate to rebuilding damaged infrastructure to a more resilient level, will be spread across six projects, including $2 million to top up a fund in Livingstone Shire—joint government funding now totals nearly $12 million for this project—to rebuild the Scenic Highway, or Statue Bay Road; $3 million to continue further rebuilding of Kershaw Gardens in Rockhampton; and $4.9 million towards strengthening the rebuild of Pilbeam Drive, Glenmore Water Treatment Plant, Dean Street, Capricorn Street and Elphinstone Street in Rockhampton.

It is recognised that due to the current mining downturn the local economy in Capricornia is doing it tough. The $30 million of investments in infrastructure I have just outlined will go a long way towards stimulating economic activity and job potential in these areas.

Our federal coalition government has already been investing heavily in road-building projects to provide jobs to help offset the mining sector downturn. This includes $166 million to fix up the Eton Range section of the notorious Peak Downs Highway west of Mackay; $38.26 million to replace seven old bridges in the Isaac and Rockhampton shires under the federal Bridges Renewal Program; $8.5 million on overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway; $15.5 million to construct three new overtaking lanes and to extend a fourth along the Bruce Highway from Rockhampton to Gladstone; $29.4 million in Roads to Recovery grants over five years to fix up council roads and streets; and $136 million to complete stage 2 of the Yeppen South project plan.

Defence White Paper

Ms CHESTERS (Bendigo) (10:25): In a few hours, if not in a couple of minutes, this government will release its defence white paper, which yesterday was touted in the media as being an extra $30 billion to be spent in defence over the next decade. What I want to see, and regional MPs want to see, is a commitment to defence manufacturing here in this country. Last year, after a long campaign, this government finally signed the Hawkei contract, a $1.3 billion contract to secure jobs in my home town of Bendigo—a vehicle that was developed and produced in Bendigo for the Australian Defence Force. At the time, it secured 170 jobs, but what it also secured was a number of jobs in the supply chain—local small to medium businesses supplying parts into the Bendigo-built Hawkei.

I am sure that today's white paper will confirm the ongoing funding for that project, but what we also want to see announced today is a prioritisation of local build for other defence projects. Take, for example, the LAND 400, another project that Bendigo Thales is tendering for in a consortium of other Australian-based businesses. That LAND 400 project should be built in Australia. It is also known as the tanks contract. That is another project that helps secure high-skilled advanced manufacturing jobs here in Australia.

With the subs contract, there is no excuse for those 12 new subs not being built in Australia. There is an exciting opportunity here for the government. In Bendigo, Keech 3D
printing has been asked to be part of a bid: the TKMS bid. The German-based manufacturer who wants to build here in Australia has invited Keech in Bendigo to be part of that bid. It is an exciting opportunity that will create extra work in my part of the world. Keech Australia are an amazing advanced manufacturer, and they have been asked to help produce and supply parts to go into a local build.

When we talk about defence manufacturing, we are not just talking about the direct jobs for the company like at Bendigo Thales, down in the shipyards in South Australia or in the shipyards in Williamstown. We are also talking about regional manufacturing jobs, the supply chain jobs that feed into the actual build. This is the opportunity that the government has today in this white paper: to commit to local manufacturing, commit to those supply chain jobs and commit to the builds being here. Australian taxpayers want to see their tax dollars spent on local defence manufacturing jobs. It is a good call. The government should do it.

**Taxation**

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (10:28): I rise on the issue of housing affordability. We do have a problem with housing affordability in this country, especially in our major cities. But a bigger problem than housing affordability would be a housing price crash, and that is what I am very concerned about for the people of my electorate, from the policies of the Labor government and the threat that they would pose to their housing prices.

The Labor Party's policies of removing the ability of people to negatively gear, and also reducing the so-called 50 per cent capital gains tax discount to 25 per cent, would absolutely smash property prices and destroy the wealth of many of my constituents. Take what a 10 per cent reduction in property prices could do. Someone in my electorate might have a mortgage which equates to 60 per cent of the value of the house. Their equity is 40 per cent. A 10 per cent reduction in the price of their property results in a 25 per cent destruction of their wealth. A quarter of their wealth could be destroyed overnight by the policies of the Labor Party.

What is truly frightening is the economic illiteracy of senior members of the Labor Party. We heard the alternative prime minister, the Leader of the Opposition, get up and talk about the so-called 50 per cent capital gains tax discount as somehow being a subsidy. This just shows how wrong they could be. It is not a subsidy. If we go back to 1999, the previous way capital gains tax was calculated was that an allowance was made for inflation in the value of the asset. That is quite sensible, because there is no capital gain unless there has been a gain over and above the rate of inflation. We know since the year 2000 that inflation has been about 55 per cent until today. An asset that was worth $1 million, if it has increased to $1.55 million, all it has done is maintain its value with inflation. There has been no capital gain. But under the current system, you pay your tax on that, and you pay it at your full rate with a 50 per cent discount. The reason we do that is to allow what is a fair discount for the inflationary effects of that asset. The 50 per cent is not a subsidy, and reducing it to 25 per cent will smash property values and destroy the value of the housing of my constituents in southern Sydney.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Landry): In accordance with standing order 193 the time for constituency statements has concluded.

**BUSINESS**

**Rearrangement**

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (10:32): by leave—I move:
That order of the day No. 1, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.
Question agreed to.

Rearrangement

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (10:32): by leave—I move:
That orders of the day Nos 1 and 2, committee and delegation reports, be postponed until a later hour this day.
Question agreed to.

COMMITTEES

Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia

Report

Debate resumed on the motion:
That the House take note of the report.

Mr EWEN JONES (Herbert—Government Whip) (10:33): I would like to speak on the *Scaling-Up: Inquiry into the Opportunities for Expanding Aquaculture in Northern Australia* report of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia. I open with the first paragraph in foreword by the chair, the Hon. Warren Entsch, my friend and neighbour in Cairns, where he says:

> With an ever increasing global population, seafood has become a more popular source of protein. Consumption has been largely serviced by the aquaculture industry, which has increased its share of the total global food fish supply from nine per cent in 1980 to 48 per cent in 2011.

That is the essence of what this report is trying to achieve. This report talks about the opportunities that we have in Northern Australia to develop these industries. Coming from a city like Townsville I share, with the member for Leichhardt coming from Cairns, some of the most beautiful waters in the country, in the world. All around the North, if you look through the Torres Strait and around Darwin, there are pristine waters there. It is ripe to do this. But we must get the science right. We must ensure that we do the science correctly. We must ensure that we stop the diseases which can be endemic, we get the run-off right and that sort of thing. In Townsville, my university—James Cook University—is partnering with Seafarms in tiger prawn farming along the North Queensland coast. With the restrictions placed on them to protect the Great Barrier Reef, we can, if we get the science right and if we make sure it is affordable, create a model which can go anywhere in Australia—because there is no area of greater environmental sensitivity and importance than the Great Barrier Reef.

The Marine and Aquaculture Research Facilities Unit, or MARFU, at James Cook University in Townsville works in conjunction with organisations such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Australian Institute of Marine Science to make sure we get the basics of our science right. It is key to making sure that what we do in this space does not impact unduly on our environment. Everything we do in this world impacts on our environment. It is how we manage those impacts that is important, and that is why getting the science right is so vitally important.

Those of us who are lucky enough to live in North Queensland and have friends who go out fishing know what it is like to taste wild-caught barramundi, wild-caught mangrove jack and reef fish. We know the difference between the taste and texture of those fish and the taste
and texture of fish you get from a farm. The science that MARFU and Seafarms are doing—with their prawn farms on the coast near Cardwell—can improve the texture and taste of farmed prawns and fish. If we get the science right here then we can move on to help other places where aquaculture is being done, places like Vietnam and the Philippines. We can help make sure that they are improving their practices and managing their environmental impacts as well.

The MARFU in Townsville is quite a run-down facility—the science is fantastic, but the actual facility is quite run-down. What we are trying to do in Townsville is look at how we can expand into new premises and play in the space of educational tourism. We are seeing more and more cruise ships—last night we saw the cruise liners come here with the Friends of Tourism. Families are now taking to cruising; families are now going on cruises as a unit. When they come to a place like Townsville, they are looking for that unique Townsville experience—the same as when they go to Hamilton or any of our regional ports around Australia. If we can develop our MARFU into an interactive exchange so that parents and kids can come in from cruises, it will add another string to our bow. The pure science that these people are doing is fantastic, but to open it up to those other commercial angles around tourism and around interactivity with our greater community will also play into further development—when we have those kids coming through and seeing that this is what you can do when you are good at science, technology, engineering and maths. It is about how we move in that space and making sure that we are doing those things correctly. That is the most important thing we will do here.

I would like to congratulate the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia for the fine work they have done on this report. It is a very good report and something that we should be able to act on. I thank the House.

Debate adjourned.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (10:38): I move:

That the Federation Chamber do now adjourn.

**Education Funding**

Ms O'NEIL (Hotham) (10:38): On Tuesday this week the coalition had its party room meeting and, instead of spending the time—time that they so desperately need to spend—talking about the critical issues that confront this country and the government's total lack of economic and political leadership, the party room spent most of that meeting time debating the Safe Schools Coalition Australia. Believe it or not, this is a mental health program aimed at helping young people who identify as LGBTI to be more accepted in their school communities. I want Australians to understand what the Safe Schools Coalition does and why it is such a necessary part of the life of young people in Australia today. As members of parliament, one of the most important things that we need to do is understand the people who live in our community who might be at risk. One of the things that are very clear when we look at all the evidence we have is that one of the most at-risk groups of people in our community for mental illness and serious mental health problems is young people who identify as LGBTI. These young people are six times more likely to attempt suicide than other
young people, and one of the most gut-wrenching things that you can hear about this is that the average age of the first suicide attempt for these young people is 16.

When you read about the type of treatment that some of these young people are subjected to in their school environments, it is absolutely stomach churning. I do not want to upset anyone in the House, but we are talking here about things like ‘faggot’ being written on people’s lockers, people being spat on in the schoolyards and young people being told that they have to leave their football team, all because of their sexual orientation or their gender. I do not think there is anyone in this country who understands this who could not see that there is a need here for us to help schools manage these problems.

The Safe Schools Coalition, unlike what has been reported by the Cory Bernardis of this world, is not some sort of Marxist political agenda. It is teachers and principals that came to government saying: ‘We need help with this problem. We need help talking to our students about how we can create a safe environment for young people who are LGBTI.’ The Safe Schools Coalition is a program where the Foundation for Young Australians, one of the most highly regarded young people's organisations in this country, helps to create materials. Schools can opt in to the program, so there are only about 500 schools in this country who participate in the program, and they get access to materials they can use to talk to their students about gender and sexuality issues.

I am really lucky because I have a really active Safe Schools Coalition school, Bentleigh Secondary College, in my electorate. I want to say hello to everyone who is on the Respect Committee at Bentleigh Secondary College. Thank you so much for having me to visit last year and talking to me about some of the things that you guys are doing. I am really proud of the work that you do and I am really impressed by the leadership that you are showing. What these young people do is have a lunchtime meeting, which initially had to be held in secret. But over time it has become a really core part of the activism of these really intelligent young people. They do leadership training together. They do a radio show on Joy FM and they facilitate conversation with people in the classroom. They have talked to me about the difference that has made to the sort of casual homophobia that they were seeing in the schoolyard, which has become really unacceptable in the schoolyard now. I think most Australians would agree that that is a really good thing.

Some might say ‘What’s the big fuss?’ The Prime Minister has said, after what sounds to have been a terribly robust discussion in the party room, that there will be a review of the Safe Schools Coalition. What is wrong with having a review? One thing is that I am really worried about these young people, and I do not want anything about this program, which is working for them, to have to change. Also, it is just so disappointing, because the coalition is always going to have its fringe elements and will always have people in its ranks who come from the religious right. That is fine, because this parliament is a broad church, and lots of different voices should be heard. But it is incumbent on the Prime Minister, as the leader of that party and the leader of this country, to rein these behaviours in and not to legitimise them by saying that this is now going to be the view of that party room.

One of the things I am most concerned about and most disappointed by is the failure of leadership shown by our Prime Minister, who should have said, ‘Enough is enough; this is a serious issue.’ Instead of calling into question what these young people are doing, let’s give them the respect and admiration that they deserve, because they are doing something no
generation of Australians has been able to do before, and that is acknowledge the complexity of these issues and seriously tackle them. (Time expired)

**Capricornia Electorate: Cyclone Marcia**

Ms LANDRY (Capricornia) (10:43): On Saturday, February 20, people in the Byfield, Yeppoon, Capricorn Coast and Rockhampton regions in my electorate of Capricornia paused to mark one year since Cyclone Marcia. The category 5 cyclone wreaked terrible destruction along the Capricorn Coast. The one-year anniversary was a time to reflect on how far we have moved forward as a community.

Accordingly, last week I hosted the Prime Minister in Capricornia to specifically mark the anniversary. The Prime Minister attended a morning tea for SES volunteers from the Livingstone and Rockhampton shires, as well as rescue crews from the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service. They were also joined at this morning tea by the Deputy Prime Minister. It was an exciting opportunity for SES volunteers to spend some time with the PM in a relaxed atmosphere so that he could genuinely chat to them and thank them for their contribution to our local community. These groups were among countless volunteers from many organisations that put in a sterling effort to help during last year's cyclone recovery.

Volunteers sharing a cuppa with the Prime Minister included: from Yeppoon, Chrissy Matchoss, Russell Sait, Lyn Porter, Adam Murrell, Cindel Richardson, Geoff Hanes, Eric Taylor, Peter Holmes, Mel Newberry and Dean Gibson; from Emu Park, Warren Spreadborough, Leon Burt and John Tait; and from Rockhampton shire, Jenny Harrison, Richard Winter, Cathy Barry, Louis Magnussen, Rockhampton-Livingstone SES controller Eddie Cowie, Bev Daniels, Chris Bartz, Sam Bertling, Niesha Simmonds, Gary Osmond and Neil Percival—just to name a few. The Prime Minister paid special tribute to these and many other volunteers who played a big role in cyclone recovery, and he took the time to snap many selfies with them.

I want to acknowledge the work of Ergon Energy's crews, who worked tirelessly around the clock for weeks after the cyclone to restore power to the region. I thank you for your work.

Since the cyclone the federal government and the state governments contributed jointly towards categories A, B, C and D of the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements program. The Commonwealth contributed to help qualifying individuals, families, councils, businesses, farmers and householders that were immediately impacted in the most serious way by Cyclone Marcia. In some cases, this included $25,000 grants for businesses and farmers. Joint cooperation between all levels of government—local, state and federal—is the key to helping communities recover: cooperation such as we have seen in the recent NDRRA category D assistance, worth $9.9 million. Federal Minister for Justice Michael Keenan announced the funding with Queensland's Minister for Infrastructure under the joint Commonwealth-Queensland $27.75 million category D Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.

In a further joint NDRRA contribution, both governments are jointly contributing towards the cost of rebuilding the Scenic Highway, also known as Statue Bay Road, to make it better and even more resilient after it partially collapsed during the cyclone. Yesterday I announced a further $300,000 to help fix Rockhampton's Pilbeam Drive, York Street and Frenchville.
Road areas. This takes the total betterment funding for Rockhampton Regional Council to more than $5.2 million. Since the cyclone, $5.1 million has been provided for counselling and support for residents severely traumatised by the subsequent events surrounding Cyclone Marcia. More recently, under the $200 million National Stronger Regions Fund, the federal government announced a $10 million contribution towards the development of Yeppoon’s beach foreshore as part of a major economic job creation and tourist drawcard following the cyclone. Also, $7 million has gone to Rockhampton to develop its riverbank precinct, and $2.3 million has gone to the Capricorn rescue helicopter for a new emergency hangar.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of Livingstone shire Mayor Bill Ludwig and his team, who have worked very hard to lead the city of Yeppoon and the Livingstone shire back to a better place after the cyclone.

McEwen Electorate: Mobile Phone Services

Mr MITCHELL (McEwen—Second Deputy Speaker) (10:48): Last Friday, the Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, and Lisa Neville, the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water, joined the member for Macedon and me out at Lancefield to have a discussion with the community in relation to life post bushfire. I think it was a really great opportunity for members of the community to be able to sit around and talk to the Premier directly and to the ministers, as well as the departmental secretaries and the leaders in emergency management.

An honourable member: What about yourself?

Mr MITCHELL: I think I was just there to hand out the sandwiches, to be honest! One of the key points that were raised was the issue in relation to mobile phone communication and broadband. The government runs a program—the black spot program—which is supposed to rely on three area criteria to be met to actually make sure that you are getting the best opportunity for mobile phone black spot funding. They are rural and regional areas, major transport routes and areas highly prone to natural disaster.

We found that although the seat of McEwan excessively exceeds all of those criteria, we were unable to get the government to commit to putting mobile phone black spot towers into the area. This is an area of high risk for bushfire and natural disaster. The problems that arose through the bushfires were the inability to get the emergency management SMSs and to keep updated on what was going on in the bushfire area.

As we know, bushfires move extremely fast. In some cases, some of the fires in my electorate burned at 200 kilometres an hour. Think about that: if you are an hour away from where the bushfire is at that moment, suddenly it is on your doorstep very, very quickly. The concerns that were raised by the community related to access to government services and emergency notifications on the digital networks. The community felt they had not been listened to, including one landowner who had offered to give land to put a tower on. The shire offered to support this and to fund and expedite the planning approvals and processes, but the government turned its back on it. So we have areas where people are left homeless, without support and without vital communications.

We hear constantly from the government claims that Labor did not put money into mobile phone towers, and you may sit there and say, 'That's a bad thing,' but it is not actually the
truth. The truth of the matter is that we invested in what used to be called the National Broadband Network. Each of the mobile broadband towers that were put up have access and the ability to carry telecommunications. The only difference with the black spot funding that has been made available is that the government is tipping in a lot of money to give to telcos to fund what should be their core business. That is why we have seen such a failure in this. It has been mismanaged and we have seen pork-barrelling, but we have not seen the results that are needed to get the best coverage in areas of need. I think we need to have a look at that and that the government needs to go back and do the right thing to make sure that areas that do need mobile communications get them as a first priority.

I would also like to mention and thank Terry and Elaine Mountney, who started the Whittlesea Cruise Night. It is on the first Friday of each month. Last month they celebrated their first anniversary. This is a fantastic local achievement. It brings a lot of people to town, with roughly 100 cars of different vintages at every meeting. I still have not won a prize, so I will have to talk to Terry about that when I take my cars down there! It is a sensational way for a small community to get together. The restaurants are full, as it brings people into the town to shop, to eat, to have a good time and to sit back and relax. The joy of it is that most of the people who do turn up are either grey headed or bald, so you have, I guess, the 'intelligent' part of the custom-car scene together because it has a zero tolerance to bad behaviour.

I think that is the most important thing. If you turn up to these events and you do want to play up, straightaway your photo is taken and the police are notified. The police, the community and everyone work together to have an absolute ball on a Friday night. People get out, celebrate, chat and have a good time, and it is a lot of fun. Terry and Elaine started this by themselves. At the first cruise night, there were not a lot of people there. As it has grown in momentum, it is damn near impossible to find a car park in the main street. There are cars coming from all over Melbourne, bringing people into our region, eating in our restaurants, shopping in our shops and bringing great economic activity, and it is a fun way to spend a Friday night.

SydWest Multicultural Services

Ms SCOTT (Lindsay) (10:53): Last week, I had the opportunity to visit a wonderful organisation that is opening its doors on Henry Street, Penrith—that is, SydWest. SydWest does some brilliant work in the space of providing settlement services to those people who are new to Australia. Their particular space in helping refugees who have come from war-torn countries to get to their feet in our country and to help their kids get to school is really second to none. This new facility that we opened on Henry Street in Penrith comes with $1.1 million of funding from the federal government. It was wonderful to see brilliant ladies there, like Chandrika Subramaniyan and Elfa Moraitakis, who are heading up this wonderful organisation. It was also great to be there with Penrith mayor, Karen McKeown. The SydWest organisation is now 30 years old.

One of my favourite stories about some of the challenges that people have when they come to Australia was about a Sudanese family—a lovely lady who had worked really hard, and her English skills were very good. She was visited by a PhD student, and she was doing this research on how we can better provide settlement services. While the student was sitting there, she noticed that the Sudanese lady's baby was coughing quite badly. The researcher said, 'What's wrong with your baby?' and the woman said, 'My baby's got a cold.' So the
researcher went and got the mother a bottle of benadryl and said, 'Here you go; use the benadryl.' The Sudanese mother had quite good English skills and her reading skills were quite good. When the researcher came back a week later, the baby was still coughing. She said, 'Your baby's coughing. Did you give your baby the benadryl?' and she said, 'I couldn't understand the directions.' Providing skills and settlement services for new Australians goes far beyond just teaching English. It is helping people, caring for people and understanding all sorts of different aspects that is needed.

I would really like to pay tribute to some wonderful people, like the Angels of Mercy at Mamre House, who for many years have helped so many families; Om Dhungel, who has done a great amount of work with the Bhutanese and Nepalese communities; and Laura Sardo, from Nepean Migrant Access. These programs are brilliant.

Western Sydney is becoming more and more culturally diverse. How we work together and become this melting pot of so many cultures from right around the world is really crucial. I look at brilliant organisations, people like the Western Sydney Wanderers. Many years ago, we saw all these soccer clubs that had all these different types of wars. But now you see the Western Sydney Wanderers play and you see every culture, every language and every religion under the sun filling Pirtek Stadium, all singing for the Wanderers.

That is what settlement services provide. That is what culturally diverse services provide. We are one Australia, and I think that is what is really important. I really thank all of these people for their work and for the work that they will be doing into the future. I congratulate them on their vision—how they are undertaking their tasks. To all new Australians: I welcome you to Penrith and I look forward to seeing you also being wonderful success stories in our region.

**Nuclear Energy**

*Ms PARKE (Fremantle) (10:57)*: Last year, 2015, was a year in which security concerns were a prominent part of the national discussion. Yet at the end of that year the government made a decision that received little attention, even though its security implications far outweigh many of the shadows the government chose to jump at.

In November 2015, the government signed off the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of India on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. It did so by ignoring the very sensible and reasonable preconditions of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, which reported on the proposed agreement in October. As Dave Sweeney from the ACF has written, JSCOT recommendations that have been ignored by the government include the following requirements:

… the full separation of military and civil nuclear facilities, the establishment of an independent nuclear regulatory authority, a review of the adequacy and independence of the regulatory framework, IAEA verification that inspections of nuclear facilities are of best practice standard, improved decommissioning and radioactive waste planning and more.

In setting those requirements, the committee noted that Australia should only export uranium in circumstances where we can be certain that it will be used safely but at the same time recognised that India's nuclear safety framework is considered weak by international experts. The committee report stated:
Recent examinations by a number of reputable institutions indicate that safety standards are not as high as they should be, particularly in the areas of the independence of the nuclear regulator, and the quality and quantity of safety inspections.

On that basis, the committee recommended that Australian uranium should not be sold to India until an independent nuclear regulator could be established and the safety inspections of Indian nuclear facilities meet best practice standards. The committee's recommendations were informed by evidence from top nuclear safety experts, including the former head of ASNO, John Carlson; and Ron Walker.

I believe the pursuit of a stronger and more supportive relationship with India is the right thing to do and it is critical to our future in the Asia- and Indo-Pacific.

India is an important friend to Australia. For too long, it has been under-represented in our conversation about the Asian century, especially when you consider its great successes as a democracy and a federal republic of enormous diversity. The relatively recent awakening to the importance of China, which is welcome in itself, has meant that the importance of India—economically, culturally and geopolitically—continues to be under-regarded in Australia. But the export of uranium and its ultimate use are matters of the utmost significance. The idea that there can be a neat and reliable separation of the civilian and military uses of uranium is a furphy. Former US Vice President Al Gore tellingly stated, 'In the eight years I served in the White House, every weapons proliferation issue we faced was linked with a civilian reactor program.'

At the very least, the supply of Australian uranium to any nuclear weapons state opens the possibility that existing reserves can be redirected for military purposes. India has openly developed reserves to serve their massive projected growth in nuclear power capacity. In addition to the fact that selling uranium to India is clearly inconsistent with our long-held position to withhold the supply of uranium to countries who have not signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the committee also noted that it would appear to breach the treaty of Rarotonga, which obliges Australia not to provide sources of or special fissionable materials or equipment to any non-nuclear weapons state or to any nuclear weapons state unless it is subject to safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Late last year, the Minerals Council of Australia misrepresented the JSCOT process and the approach taken by Labor parliamentarians when it issued a statement that said:

The uranium industry congratulates the government, the opposition and the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office … in developing these agreements with their vitally important safeguards.

This is an astoundingly superficial gloss on an outcome that has been rushed forward in wilful blindness to good process and the precautionary principle. Whatever economic benefits lie in supplying uranium to India, the safety and security considerations should be paramount. I note that the aftermath and full consequences of the Fukushima disaster are still unfolding and that Japan operates its nuclear power capacity within a much stronger regulatory oversight and infrastructure maintenance framework than India is capable of implementing at this stage.

We have heard so often in this parliament that the core responsibility of the Australian government is to consider the safety of the Australian people. Yet in making this decision the government may well have increased the likelihood of a nuclear event, military or civilian, that could have profound security and health implications for everyone in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. There can be no doubt that in rushing to sell uranium to India the safeguards remain
insufficient and the risks remain acute. Most concerning of all, the government has blithely put aside both international commitments and the well-established principles that were designed to provide some reasonable modicum of nuclear safety.

**Swan Electorate: Infrastructure Projects**

Mr IRONS (Swan) (11:02): It is always a pleasure to follow the member for Fremantle. I wish her all the best in the future, after her long and excellent service to the parliament of Australia.

It is an exciting time to be the federal member for Swan, because a new suburb has been added to the electorate as part of the January 2016 redistribution in Western Australia conducted by the AEC. Swan has gained the new suburb of High Wycombe from the electorate of Hasluck. I am certainly looking forward to welcoming those residents into the electorate of Swan over the coming months. The people of High Wycombe are joining one of the most dynamic electorates in the country. I do not think there would be any other electorate in Australia with the number of major projects that are underway in Swan, but I welcome being corrected by the member for Gellibrand if he so wishes.

I will mention a few of the projects that are underway. There is the $1 billion Gateway WA project, without a mining tax. There is the $1.27 billion Perth stadium precinct, including the rail and the bridge. There is the new $68 million Lathlain Park development for the West Coast Eagles. As to the NBN, High Wycombe is scheduled to be among the first electorates to be completed in Western Australia. The construction commences in High Wycombe in the fourth quarter of 2016. The $6 million Belmont business park project is also in the works at the moment. There is the $640 million six-star hotel at Burswood, which I recently visited and toured. Other projects include: development in the Canning city centre and the town of Curtin; the potential whitewater rafting centre at Ascot; 4,000 apartments at Belmont Park, the Civic Heart development in South Perth—many residents oppose this, but there are some going ahead—and the proposed $450 million third runway at Perth Airport.

The addition of High Wycombe and the part of Forrestfield to the west of the Roe Highway to my electorate is particularly exciting, as it will mean the majority of the Forrestfield-Airport Link rail project will be in the electorate of Swan, including all three new train stations. This is a $2 billion new passenger rail line that will connect the airport and the suburbs of High Wycombe and Forrestfield to the Perth CBD. Following the federal approval of the on-airport elements in December, this project will commence construction in 2016, with the first trains running on the line in 2020. I dare say this will put Perth a big step ahead of even Melbourne, which does not have rail out to its airport. As it stands, the state government is funding the majority of this project. It will be interesting to see if the federal government will provide assistance to this rail project at some stage.

What is particularly good is that the majority of the 8.5-kilometre new rail line will be underground in twin bored tunnels, which will minimise the impact of the rail line construction and operation on the ground. I seem to remember that when this project was being discussed at the 2013 state election Labor said it should be above ground. I can say that the last thing that people in my electorate would want to see is more level crossings slowing traffic on surface roads through the electorate. Some of the worst black spots in the electorate of Swan are the level crossings over the Armadale line, particularly Wharf Street, and I think the local people just could not believe it when the Labor Party was proposing an above-
ground option. Some of the other benefits of tunnelling are reduced ongoing maintenance costs, greater safety through improved emergency access in the event of an incident, and better environmental outcomes, including less drawdown on the water table. It will actually be the first tunnel built underneath the Swan River, which is a milestone for Perth.

As I mentioned, there will be three new train stations, all in the electorate of Swan: Airport West station in Redcliffe; Consolidated Airport station at the current international, Virgin domestic and Terminal WA site; and the Forrestfield Station, adjacent to High Wycombe. From 2020, the people of High Wycombe will have access to a service that connects to the CBD in just over 20 minutes. For comparison, the current journey from Forrestfield to the CBD can take up to 45 minutes by car in peak-hour traffic. I think it will be an attractive option to the commuters in High Wycombe and Forrestfield and will make quite a difference to their daily lives. The new line will also bring economic opportunities to the eastern suburbs by promoting growth at new and existing centres.

I recently requested a full briefing on this project and was surprised to be advised that the local council in Kalamunda is looking to downsize plans for the car park at the new Forrestfield station. This seems crazy given that the experience of most train stations across Perth is chronic car parking shortages, causing parking problems on the surrounding residential streets. I will be writing to the local council to seek some further advice on this matter.

I conclude by, once again, welcoming the people of High Wycombe to the electorate of Swan and the exciting future infrastructure projects that are going ahead in the electorate. Thank you.

Asylum Seekers

Mr WATTS (Gellibrand) (11:07): A number of constituents have met with me in recent weeks as part of the #LetThemStay campaign that has emerged in response to recent High Court proceedings regarding the fate of 267 asylum seekers. I always welcome engagement on this complex and difficult issue from people in my community who are motivated by a sense of compassion. I thank the people who have contacted me about this issue, even those who disagree with me strongly about it. This is a complex issue on which reasonable people of good faith can disagree. Given the stakes, we are literally making life-and-death decisions here. We should expect these disagreements to be passionate at times; however, there are some fundamental principles around which there should not be disagreement.

Firstly, the recent High Court proceedings are one part of a much larger global issue. The number of people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes around the globe is the highest it has been since the Second World War. There were 15.1 million refugees worldwide under the mandate of the UNHCR at the close of 2015. Approximately 2.6 million of these people are children under the age of four.

In this context, we should all be able to agree that Australia has an obligation to do more to help to address this unprecedented global refugee crisis. That is why a future Labor government will almost double Australia's annual humanitarian resettlement intake and increase our funding to the UNHCR to $450 million, making us one of the top five global contributors to the agency. It will mean dramatically more refugee children coming to Australia and a better life for refugee children waiting for permanent resettlement in camps.
like Dadaab and Zaatari. We should be able to agree that, in a world of modern communications technologies and cheap international travel, we need to think about the consequences of our actions in Australia within this global context. As much as we want to, we cannot resettle all 15 million refugees who are in desperate need of help around the world in Australia alone. We can reasonably disagree on how many we are capable of assisting—and, as I said, the Labor Party says we can help many more than we are currently assisting—but there is a limit somewhere. In the global context, we simply cannot have an unconstrained intake of asylum seekers. This is a horrible thing to say, given the stakes, but it is a reality.

How we choose whom to help and how we say no to those we cannot help is an extremely troubling question. We must always be conscious of the ‘what happens then’ question here. For a global issue of this kind, there are flow-on consequences of each decision we make. Should we decide whom we can help by geographic or financial serendipity, by simply accepting whoever is able to make a journey to Australia? What are the flow-on consequences of this for the millions of refugee children in places like Dadaab who, because of geographic or financial circumstance, are not able to make this journey? What are the flow-on consequences of a policy that encourages refugees to make risky boat journeys, journeys that we know have caused an enormous loss of life in the seas to our north? Judging these consequences and weighing the moral questions is very difficult. As I say, people of good faith can disagree here. The Labor Party has weighed these issues and judged that the greatest moral good can be achieved through a policy that increases the number of refugees in Australia that Australia helps through formal channels and implements offshore processing and resettlement to ensure that people are not encouraged to take risky boat journeys to Australia outside these processes.

This judgement does not, however, imply support for the way the current government is administering offshore processing and resettlement. It should be a fundamental principle that nobody could disagree with that men, women and children in Australian funded facilities must be treated in a dignified, humane manner and housed in a safe environment. However, the current environment that has been created by the Abbott-Turnbull government gives us good cause to doubt this. The near complete lack of transparency, independent oversight and hence accountability within offshore processing facilities makes it extremely difficult to judge whether people are being treated in a dignified, humane way and housed in a safe environment—even for me as a member of parliament. I honestly cannot understand how the Prime Minister can abide a situation in which the Australian people are unable to have confidence in such a basic expectation.

Even absent this transparency, it is clear that the average length of time it takes to process asylum applications has exploded under this government—from around 150 days under the previous Labor government to around 450 days at present. This is completely unacceptable and leaves people awaiting processing in a state of limbo that is driving them to despair. Labor would take a different approach. A Labor government would ensure that people in offshore processing, particularly children, should be afforded the best available healthcare, education, and social support services. We would also implement the independent oversight and transparency necessary for the Australian people to be confident this is happening. We would appoint an advocate independent of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and backed by the resources and statutory powers necessary to pursue the best
interests of those children, including the power to bring court proceedings on a child's behalf. We would require the mandatory reporting of abuse. We would implement a 90-day asylum application processing period.

This is a complex area where reasonable people tend to disagree, but surely we can agree on the fundamental proposition that the Australian public needs to have confidence in what is going on in Australian funded facilities.

Migrant Communities

Mr SIMPKINS (Cowan) (11:12): It is good to have an opportunity to speak about something which has concerned me for a while—and that is the opportunities for members of migrant communities around the country. On Saturday night, I had the great pleasure of going to a Congolese event—people who had come from the Democratic Republic of Congo. They had a ceremony to celebrate education. They presented certificates to those who had graduated from primary school, from high school and with higher degrees. It was quite something to see so many people who had come from DRC. They wore mortar boards and academic gowns. It was really good, a real celebration of the opportunities this country holds out to people and that they have taken advantage of. I said to them on the night that they are not just great examples within their own community but great examples to the broader Australian community as well. French is the first language, the main language, in the Congo. In addition, many of them have come from very difficult refugee backgrounds. So they are a great example.

What worries me a little bit is that there are some people in our community who have migrant backgrounds and who have been in the country for many years—and yet they do not speak English. It could be just me, that they do not want to speak to me—so they may make these things up. But I was speaking to the president of the Vietnamese community, the highly regarded Dr Hien Van Nguyen. I asked him, 'Why do so many people in the community seem not to speak English—because I am worried about how they are going in society?'

He said, 'The way to fix that is to make them pay for the interpreter service.'

Already we know that the Department of Human Services provides, for most migrants, 510 hours of English language training, so the opportunity is certainly there. I am not saying that it is easy to learn English by any means, but the opportunity is certainly there. The trouble is that there are some places in society where people can avoid having to speak English. They can live in their house—the kids go off to school, that is true; they learn English—and go down to the local shops, where people speak the same language they did in the old country. And if they ever need to interact with government services the department pays for that interpreter service itself.

What I worry about is whether people are being isolated in society, whether they are having access to opportunities that have even a reasonable command of the English language holds out to people. Employment, their rights and obligations: these things are best known when you can speak English and do not have to rely on someone else telling you what those rights and obligations are.

We need to be careful—whether it is for ease or whether it is through suppression of some people within those communities—that a parallel society does not exist; that the negative parts of culture that people have brought from other countries—like forced marriage or
female genital mutilation, for instance—are not being perpetuated because someone is being held back from knowing that these things are not right. They are not reasonable parts of culture; they are absolutely wrong. The lack of either wanting to do English language training or being allowed to do English language training is holding people back. I really do worry about the parallel society problems that not only pose a threat to the security of this nation but also pose a great threat to those people who are being held back from opportunities. The potential of these people is not being realised because they have trouble with the English language. We should put a bit more pressure on people to participate to make sure they have all the opportunities that this country holds open to people.

Local Government

Mr THISTLETHWAITE (Kingsford Smith) (11:17): The New South Wales Liberal government is forcing the amalgamation of councils in our community, which will see rates increase, services cut and our community worse off. The community that I represent is very fortunate to be represented by two local councils that do a great job: Randwick and Botany councils. Both are debt free—no borrowings whatsoever. Both run first-class public facilities for residents and the local community. Both run excellent services for the elderly, child care, sporting clubs, charities and residents, and both run exceptionally good events that bring our community together. There is a wonderful sense of community in our area that revolves around Randwick City Council and Botany City Council.

Randwick City Council was the second declared local government area in New South Wales when it was declared in the 18th century. It has fostered a great sense of community; in fact, the motto for Randwick City Council is ‘a sense of community’. I believe that our area will lose its identity, will lose that sense of community, if these forced amalgamations go ahead.

The New South Wales government is forcing the Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra councils to merge. Rockdale and Botany councils will also be forced to merge. In respect of Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra there is absolutely no community of interest whatsoever between the people of La Perouse, Maroubra and Matraville and the people living in Vaucluse and Potts Point. There is no community of interest whatsoever. The Woollahra council area is full of parking meters. Wherever you go you have to pay to park. The Waverley council area is full of parking meters. The people of Maroubra, La Perouse and Matraville can bet their life that if these councils are merged they are going to see parking meters all over the Randwick City Council area. That will be one of the first moves that the amalgamated council will make.

Council administration will move to the north. Council administration services are currently in Randwick and they service the people in the south of my electorate. They will no doubt move north to somewhere like Bondi or Woollahra, so people in our area will have to go further to access council services. The mayor will no doubt be from the north, from somewhere like Woollahra, so you will have a mayor that represents La Perouse, Maroubra and Randwick coming from the north in Woollahra. Services will no doubt be cut.

In respect of the Botany and Rockdale amalgamation, there is absolutely no community of interest whatsoever between these two local government areas. In fact, they are separated by the largest body of water in Sydney—Botany Bay. So you are going to amalgamate two councils—one from one side of the bay and one from the other side of the bay. They do not
even connect. There is no common border. There is no community of interest whatsoever. Rockdale has the larger population so guess where all the council administration services are going to move? They are going to move to the Rockdale side and people in my community will miss out.

When it comes to those councils, the City of Botany Bay has been debt free since 1995 and Rockdale has borrowings of over $7.2 million. It is projected that average residential rates will increase by 25 per cent. Costs associated with the merger range between $11 million and $13 million. Council's assets are at risk of being sold to pay off some of Rockdale's debt. This is what is going to happen with these amalgamated councils.

The New South Wales state government put on community consultations about the proposed council amalgamations or mergers. Guess where the New South Wales government put the consultations on for the Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick merger? They put them on in Woollahra, in the north, so the people of the community that I represent could not even go to a local area to express their opposition. The same occurred with Rockdale and Botany. That occurred in Sans Souci, so yet again there was no consultation in the area that I represent.

These forced amalgamations are a joke. They will increase rates and they will see services cut, and the people of our community will be worse off. Randwick council is meeting this Saturday. I urge them to reject this proposal for a merger.

**Mallee Electorate**

**Mr BROAD (Mallee) (11:23):** One thing people ask me now that I am 2½ years into the job and coming up to a major performance review is: are you still loving it? Do you like the job? People do not always know what it is to be a member of parliament. I have to say that one very unique thing about being a member of the House of Representatives is the honour to represent people. I know we have different philosophical views in different parties across the chamber—of course the Greens have different views to the Labor Party, to the Liberal Party and to the National Party—but it is an honour to represent people, to go in there and fight and to be people's last line of defence if the system has failed them. I always say to schoolchildren when I talk to them that there is something unique about the Australian political system and that is there is one degree of separation between you, the citizen, and the person who is the Prime Minister—you can talk to your representative. Of course if your representative is lazy or corrupt and you think you can do a better job, you can run against them and kick them out.

The thing I have enjoyed most about being the member for Mallee is that the people who live in the Wimmera, Mallee and Mildura region are straight-talking, decent Australian people. We have been reasonably successful in getting some of the government infrastructure to help them achieve some of their hopes and dreams. Farmers who plant crops need to be able to transport their crops on decent roads and on decent rail. I have been working very hard to try and deliver additional money for the Murray Basin Rail Project, the great dream to finally standardise most of the rail across Australia and standardise the rail in north-west Victoria. Duplicating the Western Highway will make people who drive on a busy road feel somewhat safer. We will be doing the sod-turning in the future of the overtaking lane on the Calder Highway between Ouyen and Red Cliffs—an area that has seen multiple fatalities. Tomorrow, I am opening the Donald Children's Centre—a little country town sees the need for having access to good child care. Last week, I opened the Horsham Town Hall and an arts
centre that has great opportunities for people to come and enjoy the arts, even in country towns. We will continue to advocate for a Bureau of Meteorology weather radar tower so that we can have better forecasting for our farmers.

The other thing that I think is unique about the people I represent is they are people who roll up their sleeves and try to participate to get things done. The Stronger Communities Program, which is an initiative of our government—I hope it is one of those programs that is taken up so well that even when governments change to different administrations they keep this program—has been very special. It has allowed $150,000 in round 1 and $150,000 in round 2 to partner with small communities to do some very important things. I just rang up a guy to tell him that we are going to build some barbeque facilities at a recreational lake in the Mallee. People who have come to the Mallee realise that people are resilient, but it is hot. They do have a very dry time at times, and to be able to go to a recreational lake and somewhere where you can go with your family—in fact, the guy said to me, 'You could be anywhere in the world, you can forget about where you are, forget about your problems and enjoy some family time.' I announced an upgrade for some kitchen facilities at a football-netball club, some fencing for some tennis courts, some air conditioning for the local agricultural show society, a safety fence around a playground at the Wooroonook Lakes, and some heating for the Warracknabeal Golf Club.

When I was a candidate, a guy called Peter Fisher, who was the member for Mallee from 1973, said to me, 'You'll find the people you represent, if you get the job, are some of the most fair-minded, hardworking people in Australia.' He was talking to a city MP once, and the city MP was talking about swimming pools. The city MP was reflecting about how they had got 85 per cent of the funding for a swimming pool, but the town had decided not to go ahead with it, because they had not got 100 per cent. Whereas across the electorate of Mallee, they had got 15 per cent of the funding for their swimming pool, and the community had rolled up their sleeves, pitched in and built the damn thing. That is something special about the people I represent. With a little bit of encouragement and a lot of country ingenuity, they are going to make the Wimmera, Mallee and Mildura region a great place to live. It has been an honour to represent you for 2½ years, and I have got a performance review coming up, so it is up to you whether I get another crack. (Time expired)

**Education Funding**

**Mr Bandt** (Melbourne) (11:28): Right now, there is a young boy in a country town somewhere who is working out who he is attracted to. I want to talk to him. There is a girl at a high school who wants to take her girlfriend to the school formal. I want to talk to her. I want to say that every young person has a place here. Every young person belongs. If you are attracted to someone of the same gender as you, that is fine. If you do not feel like the sex you are born as matches your gender, that is okay—you are okay. There are people here in parliament and people in the community who feel the same way as you. There are people who understand. There are people—in fact, the majority of people—who accept you for who you are. There are people who can help, people like the Safe Schools Coalition. It is just a pity that our Prime Minister does not agree.

Our Prime Minister has been prepared to sell out to the conservative brotherhood that still runs the Liberal-National Party and the coalition. Our Prime Minister's commitment to same-sex-attracted people turns out to be only skin deep, because he has been prepared to place the
Safe Schools program under review, not because the program was not doing its job, not because the program was running over budget but solely because the hard-right grubs in his government asked him to do so. He has sold out when he did not have to do so. And if you want to mark one of the many days when this Prime Minister has been prepared to give up on so-called progressive beliefs to keep the hard right of his party happy, you need look no further than to the day when he was willing to potentially put the welfare of young people at risk for cheap political advantage.

Now, school is tough for everyone. People know that; parents know that; anyone who has been to school knows that. But when you understand that same-sex-attracted people are 14 times as likely as other people to commit suicide when they are young, then you understand that there is a need to provide them with support during that particularly tough time. That is what the Safe Schools program does. Cory Bernardi, Eric Abetz, George Christensen, Andrew Nikolic, Andrew Hastie and Luke Simpkins—who came out today and said that somehow the Safe Schools program is bullying heterosexual people—you should all be ashamed of yourselves. How dare you use your platform as elected representatives to tell young people who are not like you that somehow they are not okay, that they do not belong and that they deserve to have abuse hurled at them?

And if you want in indication as to why we do not need a plebiscite on marriage equality and what is going to come down the line if it happens, look no further than at what we have seen so far. That is just a taste of what is to come and the message that is going to be sent to young people who need our support. All young people have a hard time working out who they are. All young people have a hard time working out what they want. So, when we know that there is a group of young people who are 14 times as likely as other young people to commit suicide because of who they are attracted to, we should be extending a helping hand and offering extra help. We should not be showing them a closed fist from this parliament, but that is what we are seeing from the hard right that still seems to run this party.

One of the worst things is that this Prime Minister did not have to do this but chose to. What kind of message is this Prime Minister sending when he chooses to single out a program that has widespread community support and has been doing its job? We have seen young person after young person come out over the past few days and say, 'Because of the Safe Schools program I felt like I belonged, at a time when I felt alone, at a time when I was considering whether I should take my own life.' And what does the government do? The government says, 'Well, that's the kind of program we think we should put under review'—for no other reason than that some homophobes in their party have said, 'We don't like the message that is being sent.' I want people to know that you have support, that you are loved.

Corangamite Electorate: Employment

Ms HENDERSON (Corangamite) (11:33): Before I speak about some wonderful opportunities in the Corangamite electorate around the job creation initiatives and policies that we are rolling out, I want to briefly reflect on the contribution by the member for Melbourne. While I respect his position and his right to have a view, it is important that he does not denigrate any members, and it is a pity that he cannot make an argument without making a personal denigration.

Mr Bandt interjecting—
Ms HENDERSON: Your name-calling is inappropriate. Could you please not interject when I am simply saying that the denigration of members will not advance your cause.

Mr Bandt interjecting—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Wicks): The member is entitled to be heard in silence. Member for Melbourne, I would just ask that the member for Corangamite be heard in silence. Thank you.

Ms HENDERSON: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is my great pleasure to rise and speak about some wonderful initiatives that we are creating in the Corangamite electorate, driving jobs and opportunity for young people and for old people. Tomorrow I will be visiting the new centre of excellence for the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This is one of the wonderful initiatives of our government. Some 300 jobs will be based in Geelong. A government agency is coming to Geelong, bringing with it jobs, innovation and new opportunities. The ABS centre of excellence will be very advanced in the sorts of technology it will be providing. It will give staff working there wonderful opportunities to work with Deakin University. I think it is a fantastic example of how our government is moving out into the regions and bringing those vital jobs into places like Corangamite and Geelong. This is part of a $250 million government grant to transform ABS infrastructure. It is a national data acquisition centre, compiling all ABS survey activity, which is currently spread among five offices around the country.

So this is a very exciting time, and it builds upon the other investments that we are making in the Corangamite electorate and in the Geelong region. At the moment there is a tender underway to build a $100-million-plus building in Geelong to house the new National Disability Insurance Agency headquarters. That will also house hundreds of new jobs. The NDIS is being rolled out across our region as part of the Barwon trial and dramatically transforming the lives of so many people with a disability and their families. It is wonderful to see this level of investment. We have also announced that some 400 jobs from the Department of Human Services will be moved into this particular building. So this is going to be an enormous investment activity in our city, with hundreds of construction jobs and massive investment, and this is going to help transform the landscape of the Geelong CBD, driven, of course, by our government's commitment to our great city of Geelong.

This builds on many of the other initiatives that we have announced for our region—wonderful job creation initiatives like our $14 million Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre, a national hub to drive advanced manufacturing jobs, the jobs of the future. That is why our innovation package, announced by the industry minister and the Prime Minister at the end of last year, has been so important: a $1.1 billion investment and a whole range of initiatives to support start-ups, the CSIRO, advanced manufacturing and innovation. We have our $2.6 million Geelong Region Job Connections program, which is delivering a range of wonderful grassroots job creation programs. Our Geelong Region Innovation and Investment Fund has delivered around 840 new jobs, with $15 million from the Commonwealth, about $4½ million from the state and $5 million from both Ford and Alcoa. It is a great example of the community working together to drive those jobs of the future.

In particular, we have seen very significant job creation in agriculture—of course, agriculture is so important in Corangamite—and in advanced manufacturing. It has supported some wonderful businesses, and a great example is Carbon Revolution, an incredible business
which is producing carbon fibre wheels for the global auto market and really showing how capable we are. Of course, the white paper is being released today, and there is a lot of anticipation that part of the LAND 400 Defence project can be based in our great city of Geelong, where we have so much defence capability. The regions will have such an important job in defence industries and in driving the jobs of the future.

Question agreed to.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 11:39
QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Brand Electorate: Instant Asset Write-Off
(Question No. 734)

Mr Gray asked the Minister for Small Business, in writing, on 26 February 2015:
(1) Between 1 July 2012 and 31 December 2013, how many people in the electoral division of Brand claimed the instant asset write-off of up to $6,500 for small businesses.
(2) In that period, what was the dollar benefit to those small businesses.

Ms O'Dwyer: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
Electorate information is not collected as part of income tax returns by the Australian Taxation Office. Approximate estimates can be derived using postcodes.
(1) Between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013, Treasury estimates that around 1,200 taxpayers in the Brand electoral division reported a deduction amount of at least $1 in the Deduction for certain assets (costing less than $6,500) label in the 2012-13 company, individual, trust and partnership tax returns. The Deduction for certain assets (costing less than $6,500) label does not exist for the income year 2013-14. Consequently, there are no statistics relating to 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2013.
(2) Between 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013, Treasury estimates that the aggregate deduction amount was around $6 million. This amount is identified from the Deduction for certain assets (costing less than $6,500) label in the 2013 company, individual, trust and partnership tax returns.

Instant Asset Write-Off
(Question No. 824)

Dr Leigh asked the Minister for Small Business, in writing, on 23 June 2015:
(1) How did the Government set the amount of the new instant asset write-off measure at $20,000.
(2) Was this decision based on any modelling or data; if so, what was the source of this modelling or data.
(3) Did the Government do any modelling on take-up rates for the $6,500 instant asset write-off measure under the previous Government, and was this data used to inform the new rate of $20,000.
(4) Did the Government do any modelling on expected small business take-up rates of the $20,000 instant asset write-off measure; if so, can he provide this modelling.

Ms O'Dwyer: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
(1) The $20,000 threshold was determined to be an appropriate threshold based on what was affordable within the budget, based on what would provide an appropriate incentive for small businesses and based on consultation with small business.
(2, 3, 4) The measure was costed using tax data from the Australian Taxation Office and included an assessment of the likely behavioural impacts within the costing model. There was no economy-wide modelling of this proposal.

Register of Environmental Organisations
(Question No. 1749)

Mr Zappa asked the Assistant Treasurer, in writing, on 9 November 2015:
Has any instruction been given to the Australian Taxation Office to review the Deductible Gift Recipient or charitable status of any environmental organisation listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations.
Ms O’Dwyer: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is an independent agency. The Government has not instructed the ATO to review the deductible gift recipient (DGR) status or charitable status of any environmental organisation listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations.

Attorney-General’s Department: Australian National Maritime Museum Tender
(Question No. 1984)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the $11,808.50 tender to the Australian National Maritime Museum (CN3300149) for provision of venue hire, (a) what was the purpose of hire, and (b) who attended the event, (c) what outcomes were achieved, and (d) can the department provide an itemised budget for (i) meals, (ii) travel, and (iii) other allowances.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) The AFP holds the presidency of the Asset Recovery Interagency Network – Asia Pacific (ARIN-AP) for 2015. ARIN-AP is new regional network of legal and law enforcement officials with expertise in asset tracing, freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime. ARIN-AP facilitates effective informal cooperation, in advance of, and in support of, formal cooperation, through mutual legal assistance. The AFP was responsible for hosting the ARIN-AP Steering Group Meeting (SGM) and Annual General Meeting (AGM) over four days in Sydney.

(b) Members of law enforcement agencies and legal experts from over 30 countries attended the ARIN-AP meetings, primarily the Asia-Pacific region. Other attendees included law enforcement officials and legal experts from Europe and the USA. Twelve AFP delegates and approximately 66 delegates from other Australian and international agencies attended.

(c) The ARIN-AP meetings focused on a number of key themes including enhancing regional cooperation, sustainability and emerging regional issues in criminal asset investigations and litigation; and the on-going development of the ARIN-AP Action Plan. The ARIN-AP significantly contributes to enhancing the knowledge and capacity of legal and law enforcement officials in the region to effectively utilise asset tracing, freezing and confiscation to tackle serious and organised crime in the region.

(d) In addition to the $11,808.50 venue hire, the budget for the ARIN-AP Annual Conference included the following allocations (expenditure includes meals, travel and other allowances for all 12 AFP delegates and 66 delegates from other Australian and international agencies):

i.) Meals: $34,700

ii.) Travel: $51,300 (includes transfers)

iii.) Other Allowances: $55,000 (including accommodation, travel allowances)

Australian Federal Police: Samuel Smith & Son Pty Ltd Tender
(Question No. 1985)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police’s $14,000.00 tender to Samuel Smith & Son Pty Ltd (CN3298840) for supply of beverages—estimated spend, for what purpose was this purchase.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The
AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

**Australian Federal Police: Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd Tender**
*(Question No. 1986)*

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's $10,000.00 tender to Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd (CN3298838) for supply of beverages—estimated spend, for what purpose was this purchase.

**Mr Keenan:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

**Australian Federal Police: Carlton & United Breweries Pty Ltd Tender**
*(Question No. 1987)*

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's $11,000.00 tender to Carlton & United Breweries Pty Ltd (CN3298828) for supply of beverages—estimated spend, for what purpose was this purchase.

**Mr Keenan:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

**Australian Federal Police: McWilliam's Wines Pty Ltd Tender**
*(Question No. 1988)*

**Mr Conroy** asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's $10,000.00 tender to McWilliam's Wines Pty Ltd (CN3298826) for supply of beverages—estimated spend, for what purpose was this purchase.

**Mr Keenan:** The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:
The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

**Australian Federal Police: Foster's Australia Limited Tender**
*(Question No. 1989)*

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's $11,000.00 tender to Foster's Australia Limited (CN2377332) for supply of beverages—estimated spend, for what purpose is this purchase.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

**Australian Federal Police: Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd Tender**
*(Question No. 1990)*

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's (AFP's) $10,000.00 tender to Tyrrell's Vineyards Pty Ltd (CN2324551) for supply of alcoholic beverages for conferences, which conference(s) is this for, and of these, (a) how many delegates attended, including (i) Ministerial staff, (ii) departmental staff, and (iii) AFP staff, and (b) what further sum was spent on (i) accommodation, (ii) meals, and (iii) other allowances.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

This tender does not relate to a specific conference of the AIPM, it is for the supply of beverages to the AIPM for a variety of purposes (programs and events). In addition, the AIPM provides conference facilities to law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations, and as part of that
provides full hospitality services, including breakfast, lunch and dinner, and the provision of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages at the request of the client. The numbers of participants on programs varies as does the number of guests per conference or event facilitated by the AIPM.

**Australian Federal Police: McWilliam's Wines Pty Ltd Tender**

(Question No. 1991)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's (AFP's) $10,000.00 tender to McWilliam's Wines Pty Ltd (CN2324491) for supply of alcoholic beverages for conferences, which conference(s) is this for, and of these, (a) how many delegates attended, including (i) Ministerial staff, (ii) departmental staff, and (iii) AFP staff, and (b) what further sum was spent on (i) accommodation, (ii) meals, and (iii) other allowances.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.

This tender does not relate to a specific conference of the AIPM, it is for the supply of beverages to the AIPM for a variety of purposes (programs and events). In addition, the AIPM provides conference facilities to law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations, and as part of that provides full hospitality services, including breakfast, lunch and dinner, and the provision of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages at the request of the client. The numbers of participants on programs varies as does the number of guests per conference or event facilitated by the AIPM.

**Australian Federal Police: Samuel Smith & Sons Pty Ltd Tender**

(Question No. 1992)

Mr Conroy asked the Minister for Justice, in writing, on 10 November 2015:

In respect of the Australian Federal Police's (AFP's) $14,000.00 tender to Samuel Smith & Sons Pty Ltd (CN2324301) for supply of alcoholic beverages for conferences, which conference(s) is this for, and of these, (a) how many delegates attended, including (i) Ministerial staff, (ii) departmental staff, and (iii) AFP staff, and (b) what further sum was spent on (i) accommodation, (ii) meals, and (iii) other allowances.

Mr Keenan: The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Australian Institute of Police Management (AIPM) operates programmes for police and emergency services personnel from every state and territory of Australia and New Zealand. They also now include senior personnel from our neighbouring nations in the Pacific and South East Asia. The AIPM manages a fully licenced 54 bed conference and leadership development training facility located in Manly.

Beverages are available for sale (under licence) to participants on an individual basis, or are included in the cost of programs. Beverages are generally available for purchase with dinner meals. These programs are delivered to a variety of law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations and those industries which support those agencies.
This tender does not relate to a specific conference of the AIPM, it is for the supply of beverages to the AIPM for a variety of purposes (programs and events). In addition, the AIPM provides conference facilities to law enforcement, public safety and emergency service organisations, and as part of that provides full hospitality services, including breakfast, lunch and dinner, and the provision of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages at the request of the client. The numbers of participants on programs varies as does the number of guests per conference or event facilitated by the AIPM.