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SITTING DAYS—2005

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- **Canberra**: 1440 AM
- **Sydney**: 630 AM
- **Newcastle**: 1458 AM
- **Gosford**: 98.1 FM
- **Brisbane**: 936 AM
- **Gold Coast**: 95.7 FM
- **Melbourne**: 1026 AM
- **Adelaide**: 972 AM
- **Perth**: 585 AM
- **Hobart**: 747 AM
- **Northern Tasmania**: 92.5 FM
- **Darwin**: 102.5 FM
FORTY-FIRST PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION—SECOND PERIOD

Governor-General
His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffery, Companion in the Order of Australia, Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Military Cross

House of Representatives Officeholders
Speaker—The Hon. David Peter Maxwell Hawker MP
Deputy Speaker—The Hon. Ian Raymond Causley MP
Second Deputy Speaker—Mr Harry Alfred Jenkins MP

Members of the Speaker’s Panel—The Hon. Dick Godfrey Harry Adams, Mr Robert Charles Baldwin, the Hon. Bronwyn Kathleen Bishop, Mr Michael John Hatton, Mr Peter John Lindsay, Mr Robert Francis McMullan, Mr Harry Vernon Quick, the Hon. Bruce Craig Scott, the Hon. Alexander Michael Somlyay, Mr Kimberley William Wilkie

Leader of the House—The Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
Deputy Leader of the House—The Hon. Peter John McGauran MP
Manager of Opposition Business—Ms Julia Eileen Gillard MP
Deputy Manager of Opposition Business—Mr Anthony Norman Albanese MP

Party Leaders and Whips
Liberal Party of Australia
Leader—The Hon. John Winston Howard MP
Deputy Leader—The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP
Chief Government Whip—Mr Kerry Joseph Bartlett MP
Government Whips—Mrs Joanna Gash MP and Mr Fergus Stewart McArthur MP

The Nationals
Leader—The Hon. John Duncan Anderson MP
Deputy Leader—The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP
Whip—Mr John Alexander Forrest MP
Assistant Whip—Mr Paul Christopher Neville MP

Australian Labor Party
Leader—The Hon. Kim Christian Beazley MP
Deputy Leader—Ms Jennifer Louise Macklin MP
Chief Opposition Whip—The Hon. Leo Roger Spurway Price MP
Opposition Whips—Mr Michael Danby MP and Ms Jill Griffiths Hall MP

Printed by authority of the House of Representatives
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<td>La Trobe, Vic</td>
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**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**
ALP—Australian Labor Party; LP—Liberal Party of Australia; Nats—The Nationals; Ind—Independent; CLP—Country Liberal Party; AG—Australian Greens

**Heads of Parliamentary Departments**
Clerk of the Senate—H. Evans
Clerk of the House of Representatives—I.C. Harris
Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services—H.R. Penfold QC
HOWARD MINISTRY

Prime Minister
Minister for Transport and Regional Services and Deputy Prime Minister
Treasurer
Minister for Trade
Minister for Defence and Leader of the Government in the Senate
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Health and Ageing and Leader of the House
Attorney-General
Minister for Finance and Administration, Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate and Vice-President of the Executive Council
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Indigenous Affairs
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Minister for Family and Community Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women’s Issues
Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Minister for the Environment and Heritage

The Hon. John Winston Howard MP
The Hon. John Duncan Anderson MP
The Hon. Peter Howard Costello MP
The Hon. Mark Anthony James Vaile MP
Senator the Hon. Robert Murray Hill
The Hon. Alexander John Gosse Downer MP
The Hon. Anthony John Abbott MP
The Hon. Philip Maxwell Ruddock MP
Senator the Hon. Nicholas Hugh Minchin
The Hon. Warren Errol Truss MP
Senator the Hon. Amanda Eloise Vanstone
The Hon. Dr Brendan John Nelson MP
Senator the Hon. Kay Christine Lesley Patterson
The Hon. Ian Elgin Macfarlane MP
The Hon. Kevin James Andrews MP
Senator the Hon. Helen Lloyd Coonan
Senator the Hon. Ian Gordon Campbell

(The above ministers constitute the cabinet)
HOWARD MINISTRY—continued

Minister for Justice and Customs and Manager of Government Business in the Senate
Senator the Hon. Christopher Martin Ellison

Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation
Senator the Hon. Ian Douglas Macdonald

Minister for the Arts and Sport
Senator the Hon. Charles Roderick Kemp

Minister for Human Services
The Hon. Joseph Benedict Hockey MP

Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and Deputy Leader of the House
The Hon. Peter John McGauran MP

Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer
The Hon. Malcolm Thomas Brough MP

Special Minister of State
Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz

Minister for Vocational and Technical Education and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister
The Hon. Gary Douglas Hardgrave MP

Minister for Ageing
The Hon. Julie Isabel Bishop MP

Minister for Small Business and Tourism
The Hon. Frances Esther Bailey MP

Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads
The Hon. James Eric Lloyd MP

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence
The Hon. De-Anne Margaret Kelly MP

Minister for Workforce Participation
The Hon. Peter Craig Dutton MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance and Administration
The Hon. Dr Sharman Nancy Stone MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources
The Hon. Warren George Entsch MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing
The Hon. Christopher Maurice Pyne MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence
The Hon. Teresa Gambaro MP

Parliamentary Secretary (Foreign Affairs and Trade)
The Hon. Bruce Fredrick Billson MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister
The Hon. Gary Roy Nairn MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer
The Hon. Christopher John Pearce MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services
The Hon. John Kenneth Cobb MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
The Hon. Gregory Andrew Hunt MP

Parliamentary Secretary (Children and Youth Affairs)
The Hon. Sussan Penelope Ley MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training
The Hon. Patrick Francis Farmer MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Senator the Hon. Richard Mansell Colbeck
SHADOW MINISTRY

Leader of the Opposition
Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education, Training, Science and Research
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Social Security
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate and Shadow Minister for Communications and Information Technology
Shadow Minister for Health and Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Treasurer
Shadow Minister for Industry, Infrastructure and Industrial Relations
Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Security
Shadow Minister for Defence and Homeland Security
Shadow Minister for Trade
Shadow Minister for Primary Industries, Resources and Tourism
Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage and Deputy Manager of Opposition Business in the House
Shadow Minister for Public Administration and Open Government, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation and Shadow Minister for the Arts
Shadow Minister for Regional Development and Roads and Shadow Minister for Housing and Urban Development
Shadow Minister for Finance and Superannuation
Shadow Minister for Work, Family and Community, Shadow Minister for Youth and Early Childhood Education and Shadow Minister Assisting the Leader on the Status of Women
Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Participation and Shadow Minister for Corporate Governance and Responsibility

(The above are shadow cabinet ministers)
SHADOW MINISTRY—continued

Shadow Minister for Immigration
Laurence Donald Thomas Ferguson MP

Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Gavan Michael O’Connor MP

Shadow Assistant Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Revenue and Shadow Minister for Banking and Financial Services
Joel Andrew Fitzgibbon MP

Shadow Attorney-General
Nicola Louise Roxon MP

Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Local Government and Territories
Senator Kerry Williams Kelso O’Brien

Shadow Minister for Manufacturing and Shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs
Senator Kate Alexandra Lundy

Shadow Minister for Defence Planning, Procurement and Personnel and Shadow Minister Assisting the Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations
The Hon. Archibald Ronald Bevis MP

Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation
Alan Peter Griffin MP

Shadow Minister for Veterans’ Affairs
Senator Thomas Mark Bishop

Shadow Minister for Small Business
Tony Burke MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing, Disabilities and Carers
Senator Jan Elizabeth McLucas

Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs, Shadow Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs and Manager of Opposition Business in the Senate
Senator Joseph William Ludwig

Shadow Minister for Pacific Islands
Robert Charles Grant Sercombe MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Opposition
John Paul Murphy MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence
The Hon. Graham John Edwards MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Education
Kirsten Fiona Livermore MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Heritage
Jennie George MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure
Bernard Fernando Ripoll MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Health
Ann Kathleen Corcoran MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development (House)
Catherine Fiona King MP

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development (Senate)
Senator Ursula Mary Stephens

Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern Australia and Indigenous Affairs
The Hon. Warren Edward Snowdon MP
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TUESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY

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The SPEAKER (Mr David Hawker) took the chair at 2.00 p.m., and read prayers.

CONDOLENCES

Mr Noel Lawrence Beaton

The SPEAKER (2.01 p.m.)—I inform the House of the death on Saturday, 18 December 2004 of Noel Lawrence Beaton, a member of this House for the division of Bendigo from 1960 to 1969. As a mark of respect to the memory of Noel Beaton, I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The SPEAKER—I thank the House.

MEMBER FOR WERRIWA: RESIGNATION

The SPEAKER (2.02 p.m.)—I inform the House that on Friday, 21 January 2005 I received a letter from Mark William Latham resigning his seat as the member for the electoral division of Werriwa.

WERRIWA ELECTORATE: ISSUE OF WRIT

The SPEAKER (2.02 p.m.)—It is my intention to issue a writ on Monday, 14 February 2005 for the election of a member to serve for the electoral division of Werriwa to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Latham. The dates in connection with the by-election will be fixed as follows: close of rolls—21 February 2005; nomination—24 February 2005; polling day—Saturday, 19 March 2005; return of writ—on or before 25 May 2005.

SHADOW MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Mr Beazley (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (2.03 p.m.)—I inform the House that on 28 January 2005, following the tragic and untimely resignation of the former member for Werriwa and Leader of the Opposition, Mark Latham, for reasons of ill health, I was elected as Leader of the Opposition. There have been no other changes to the opposition frontbench and I table a full list of the shadow ministry and parliamentary secretaries for inclusion in Hansard.

The document read as follows—

SHADOW CABINET & MINISTRY

28th January 2005

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<td>Senator Chris Evans</td>
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<td>Jenny Macklin</td>
<td>Senator Kim Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leader in the Senate Social Security</td>
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<td>Tanya Plibersek</td>
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Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (2.03 a.m.)—I take the opportunity, on behalf of the government, to congratulate the member for Brand on his election as Leader of the Opposition. He is a person who has served his own party with a great deal of commitment and energy over a long period. I have said on other occasions, when giving a similar speech, that to be elected leader of any political party in Australia is a great honour. To be elected the leader of one of the major political parties in Australia is a particular honour and in that spirit I congratulate the member for Brand.

Mr BEAZLEY (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (2.04 p.m.)—Mr Speaker, by way of indulgence on the same matter, I thank the Prime Minister very much for his kindly remarks. I extend publicly what I extended to him privately—congratulations on his becoming the second longest serving Prime Minister. Naturally speaking, if I had my druthers, I would rather have his record than mine, but we want to do something about changing that.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: BUSHFIRES

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT PAUL PARDOEL

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (2.05 p.m.)—Mr Speaker, by way of indulgence—I understand the Leader of the Opposition is aware of this—I would like to comment briefly on three matters: firstly, the very tragic loss of life in the South Australian bushfires. The House will be aware of last month’s fires, which claimed the lives of some nine Australians, and of the considerable devastation to property and communities that occurred as a result. Once again, the emergency services of our country responded
magnificently and I pay tribute to the fire authorities of South Australia, the police and all others associated with the tragedy. I spoke to the South Australian Premier immediately after the disaster and offered the cooperation and assistance of the Commonwealth. I understand that the normal disaster relief arrangements and other personal assistance that has occurred on similar occasions have been made available.

I also refer to the tragic death of Australian Protective Service officer Adam Dunning, who was murdered in the Solomon Islands in December last year. He was murdered in the course of carrying out his duties. It is the first death of an Australian in the Solomon Islands operation. He was a policeman who had served in the ADF in East Timor. He strongly shared the goals and the aspirations of the Protective Service and the Australian Federal Police. On behalf of the House I know I extend again my sympathy to his family. Senator Ellison, the Minister for Justice and Customs, the Federal Police Commissioner and the member for Barton travelled to the Solomon Islands after officer Dunning’s death to assist personnel to deal with this incident. I was able, along with the member for Barton, Senator Ellison and the Federal Police Commissioner, to attend Adam Dunning’s funeral in Canberra. He received a very dignified and, I know, heartfelt send-off not only from his Federal Police and Defence Force colleagues but also from the Canberra community.

Finally, I would like to express my great sorrow, on behalf of all Australians, to the family of Flight Lieutenant Paul Pardoel, who was killed in Iraq in the crash of an RAF C130 while serving with the Royal Air Force. He was born and educated in Victoria. He had served in the RAAF before taking up a contract with the Royal Air Force early in 2002.

The deaths of Paul Pardoel and Adam Dunning, both of whom, in their different ways, were on active service, remind us of the dangers that face service personnel and police and the debt we owe them for their willingness to place their lives on the line in the performance of duties on behalf of decisions taken by governments. In the case of Adam Dunning, it was the commitment of the Australian government to the intervention in Solomon Islands. In the case of Paul Pardoel, a serving officer of the Royal Air Force although an Australian citizen, it was pursuant to the decision of the British government to serve in Iraq—a decision which, of course, we fully endorsed and participated in. Again, I express my profound sorrow to his family and to the family of Adam Dunning.

**Mr BEAZLEY** (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (2.08 p.m.)—Mr Speaker, on indulgence on the same matter: over the summer, we have been reminded of the fragility of our lives not only by the devastating tsunami, which we will discuss in the House later today, but also by the ravaging bushfires which swept through the Eyre Peninsula on 11 January, killing nine people and causing $50 million in damage to property and stock. I think the citizens of the city of Canberra would recollect their terrible experiences two years ago and completely empathise with the horrors inflicted on the people of the Eyre Peninsula on that day. It is the second largest loss of life we have had since the Ash Wednesday bushfire tragedy of 1983. I had an opportunity to visit the site some time after those events, and I have nothing but praise for the work of our SES volunteers, volunteer fire fighters, professional fire fighters and those in the community who are now seeking to counsel and assist in bringing folk back together again. I would particularly like to thank John Cook and Rod Proude, two farmers from the Eyre Peninsula who hosted me and briefed me on their experi-
ences, which were truly horrifying. There was a marvellous bloke at Rod Proude’s place—I have forgotten his name—who for years had bred kelpie sheepdogs which were purchased by farmers on the peninsula, and he was training them and giving them away free. It was an interesting juxtaposition to the misery and horror to see new life in action as those sheepdogs were put through their paces.

There are a few problems associated with the character of Commonwealth-state cooperation which have emerged from this, and I have written a letter to the Prime Minister about them. I do not want to make any political points about it. The government responds to these things as generously as it sees fit—and there is, of course, a tradition of an appropriate Commonwealth response after each of these tragedies occurs—but I think it would be a good thing to contemplate not charging the South Australian government for the use of the armed services. It would be a good thing to get in place a better indemnity arrangement associated with the deployment of reserves so that there does not have to be argy-bargy between the Commonwealth and states whenever there is a deployment of reserves. And I have mentioned in my letter some taxation matters, which I will not go into now, which perhaps the Prime Minister might take a look at.

I join the Prime Minister in offering condolences to the family of Adam Dunning. As a 26-year-old officer in the Australian Federal Police, he was serving his country and the people of Solomon Islands on 22 December, when he was shot and killed during a regular patrol. He had previously served in Timor as an air defence guard in 1999. He was a member of a unit there which was one of three which had received a unit citation. Adam served his country with enormous bravery. We have been blessedly lucky in the many peacekeeping operations and some war-fighting operations in which we have engaged over the last 10 to 15 years to have so few casualties. But every now and then there is one, and it reminds us of the considerable dangers into which our police and armed services personnel go. Adam paid a terrible penalty for his generosity of heart and his commitment to serving his country’s interests and the interests of the nations where he was deployed. He was essentially a pacific man. He had, only a few days prior to his murder, disarmed a person who was threatening him with a weapon, when the rules of engagement would have permitted him to shoot that person; he did not do so—he talked himself out of it—and that person lives as a result of his restraint. Adam, unfortunately, does not live as a result of murderous activity by a thug in the Solomons. His family and friends have spoken of him as a man who was both tough and sensitive. He served his country with distinction, and we honour his dedication and his sacrifice in the service of his country.

We also extend our condolences to the family of Flight Lieutenant Paul Pardoel, who for most of his life was in the armed services and, for most of that period, in the service of this country. He was married and he leaves three children aged seven, five and two. He was planning to return to his family home in Canberra in July, after three years serving with the RAF at its Lyneham base in Wiltshire. Paul’s family have also spoken lovingly of his gentleness, his respectfulness, his personality and his sense of fun. We recognise and honour his service to this country for 10 years in the RAAF, and his service in the RAF for a further three years, and we extend our condolences to his friends and family.
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ms Cornelia Rau

Mr BEAZLEY (2.13 p.m.)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Given the substantial failings of the Commonwealth’s immigration processes, which left Cornelia Rau, a seriously mentally-ill Australian resident, locked up and deprived of treatment for months, will the Prime Minister now ensure that the inquiry to be conducted by former Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Palmer will be public and will be given all the necessary judicial powers to fully investigate the matter? Further, can the Prime Minister give a guarantee that there is no other Australian resident or citizen caught up in the immigration detention system in a similar way.

Mr HOWARD—If I can start with the second part of the question: I cannot give that guarantee. I think the Leader of the Opposition knows that I cannot give that guarantee. It is not possible for anybody in my position to give an absolute guarantee. I can only express the hope that there are no others. Also, I express my confidence in the arrangements that we have put in place, which do not involve an inquiry in precisely the terms requested by the Leader of the Opposition, but the inquiry will be conducted by somebody who is very experienced. I think it is fair to say that Mick Palmer enjoyed the confidence of both sides of politics in the roles that he carried out in the Australian Federal Police. He has ample terms of reference. The results of the inquiry will be made public. I can only repeat what I said on Sunday—that this is a very sad and regrettable situation—but until the full circumstances are known I do not want to say anything further.

Iraq

Mrs GASH (2.15 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Minister, could you advise the House of the government’s reaction to the election in Iraq on 30 January?

Mr DOWNER—I thank the honourable member for Gilmore for her question. Not all members of the House know that she was an observer of the elections, based in Amman in Jordan. I got a note from her today saying that it was a great experience. Of course, the elections in Iraq on 30 January were an enormous event. The government congratulates the simply extraordinary courage and also the very great determination of the Iraqi people to go out and vote in the face of enormous intimidation from insurgents, al-Zarqawi terrorists and the followers of Saddam Hussein’s regime, the Baathists.

At this stage we are not entirely sure what the level of turnout was. Our ambassador told me a week or so ago that his estimate was that the turnout would have been around 65 per cent. That may or may not be a little high, but in any case I think we can satisfactorily judge that the turnout would have been somewhere in the vicinity of 60 per cent. The ambassador made the point to me that the turnout had been surprisingly high in Baghdad and I also understand that in Sunni areas in Mosul the turnout was much better than expected. Obviously the turnout of the Sunni community was substantially lower than other communities in Iraq because the Sunni community was subjected to the greatest intimidation. In spite of that, many of them did vote. Honourable members will be pleased to know, I am sure, that of the 12,000 or so Iraqis registered to vote in Australia, 95 per cent actually went and voted—and they were the first Iraqis in 50 years to vote in an Iraqi election. So that is a good sign.

There is no question that this election makes a lie of the argument that Iraqis do not want democracy and the almost racist argument that you used to get from some com-
mentators that Arabs do not really take to democracy. Some people have argued that Muslims do not take to democracy—Australia’s next door neighbour is the world’s third largest democracy. This makes a lie of those arguments. The enthusiasm that the people of Iraq showed, and the courage of those people to go out and vote, were simply extraordinary and demonstrated the fundamental love of democracy that you find all around the world. I thought it was impressive the way the Iraqi security forces—the police and the soldiers—provided security on that polling day, 30 January, in the teeth of suicide bombers, threats and intimidation. We look forward to the results of the election being released. We expect that the final results will be announced during the course of this week.

In conclusion, let me say that I think Australia can be proud of the role it played in making that vote possible. Australia provided some direct support for the Iraqi Electoral Commission. The Iraqi interim government has expressed its appreciation through a letter from the Iraqi ambassador here in Canberra to officers in my department. We will continue to work with the international community—with the Americans and the British, the European Union, the Japanese and other countries in our region—to help the Iraqis secure the democracy that has now fallen within their grasp. I think that the great responsibilities that we have as a country are to make sure that democracy works, that the insurgents are defeated and not able to destroy democracy, and that the insurgents are not able successfully to foment civil war in Iraq. So we will play our part. We will do what we can to make sure that all of the millions of Iraqis who went out and voted are rewarded by the support of the international community.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.20 p.m.)—I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon Al-Saadi Gaddafi, son of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. Also we have present the ex-Premier of Tasmania, the honourable Tony Rundle. On behalf of the House I extend to both our visitors a very warm welcome.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ms Cornelia Rau

Mr BEAZLEY (2.20 p.m.)—My question is to the Prime Minister and follows the one that I asked him previously. Has the Prime Minister seen this morning’s comments on the situation of Cornelia Rau, from radio commentator Alan Jones, when he said:
I just think, no matter what, there should be an apology. You can’t treat people like this in Australia in 2005.

Does the Prime Minister agree that Cornelia Rau is entitled to an apology for her detention without proper assessment and without treatment for her serious mental illness?

Mr HOWARD—Mr Speaker, I have not seen those remarks by Mr Jones. It will come as no surprise to the House if I say that Mr Jones and I do not always agree. But I will say that this is a profoundly distressing case for the reasons I outlined a few days ago. I do not intend at this stage to issue an apology. I want to know more about the circumstances, and that is why we have established the inquiry.

Economy: Performance

Mr BAIRD (2.21 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Would the Treasurer outline to the House the results of business surveys released today? What has driven these outcomes, and is the Treasurer aware of policies necessary to sustain Australia’s continued economic strength?
Mr COSTELLO—I thank the honourable member for Cook for his question. The National Australia Bank monthly business survey released today showed that current business conditions moderated in January, although they were coming from very robust levels. It also showed that business confidence, in original terms, surged to the highest level since October 2003, and that was backed up by the Dun and Bradstreet business expectations survey also released, which expects the June quarter to be one of the best for 12 months.

Why is business optimistic and confident at the moment? One of the reasons is that the economy is growing and profitability is strong. I can inform the House that, since the House last met, we have had the December labour force figures, which showed that in December 29,000 new jobs were created in Australia and unemployment fell to 5.1 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years.

In this strong employment, low unemployment, strong confidence environment what we have to do is ensure that we can sustain the capacity. We have to lift the barriers and the speed limits on the Australian economy and ensure that we do not get a build-up of wage pressure or a build-up of cost pressure. This requires strong economic reform. This government believes that strong economic reform is the key to taking Australia further. In particular, I want to name industrial relations reform as the key area of reform for the Australian economy in the future.

Those political parties that want to join in economic reform will be supporting the government’s program in the Senate in relation to changes on unfair dismissal, in relation to bargaining, in relation to ballots and in relation to enhancing the productive capacity of this economy. Australia needs another round of vigorous, real industrial relations reform to take us into the future and to ensure that we lift the productive capacity of this country.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER (2.24 p.m.)—Before I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, I inform the House that we have present in the gallery this afternoon members of a parliamentary delegation from the European Parliament. On behalf of the House I extend a very warm welcome.

Honourable members—Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Economy: Performance

Mr BEAZLEY (2.24 p.m.)—I ask a question of the Treasurer which follows the question he just answered. Isn’t it the case that the Reserve Bank of Australia in its monetary policy statement released yesterday identified that inflationary pressures were being generated in the domestic sector by ‘higher labour costs, due to skill shortages’ and that ‘sharp increases in wages have also been reported in localised parts of the business services sector where skill shortages are particularly acute’? Given the substantial reduction in training of Australians in the traditional trades—

Dr Nelson—That’s not true!

Mr BEAZLEY—It is. Don’t these comments show it is the failure of the government to address skill shortages that is now putting upward pressure on inflation and interest rates?

Mr COSTELLO—As I said earlier, Australia has the lowest unemployment rate for 30 years. It is absolutely true to say that 10 years ago Australia did not have skill shortages. Why? Because we had mass unemployment. The fact of the matter is that, as you get more people to work and as unemployment falls, the position of people who
are bargaining for wages in an economy rises. That is one of the good downsides of a strong employment economy. I can tell the House that the government certainly has no plan, in order to contain wage costs, to drive Australia back into mass unemployment. That will not be the approach that we take.

What you can do with a 30-year low unemployment rate is you can keep the economy going if you base wage increases on enhancement in productive capacity. How do you get an increase in productive capacity? You get it by a better industrial relations system, which this side of the House stands for.

Let me just pick up the Leader of the Opposition on one allegation he made—that the government has somehow cut money for training. That is false. This government is now putting record amounts into technical and further education and record amounts into trade training. This is the government that introduced the New Apprenticeships scheme. This is the government that introduced a modern apprenticeship and training scheme. This is the government which announced during the course of the election the introduction of new Australian technical colleges to enhance the productive capacity of Australia. And this is the government which, on the back of that policy and other policies, received a mandate at the election and will carry through on the delivery of the policy.

**Transport: Infrastructure**

Mr **CAMERON THOMPSON**

(2.28 p.m.)—My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Would the Deputy Prime Minister advise the House how the government is developing vital transport infrastructure in Australia? How is this benefiting the economy and consumers?

Mr **ANDERSON**—I thank the honourable member for his question and note his real interest in infrastructure, particularly in his electorate in that south-east corner of Queensland. Australia needs a national transport plan and we need the resources to back it up. While the states are the primary providers of infrastructure in Australia, the Commonwealth has a very important role to play in terms of leadership to ensure we have the national connectivity that we need and, in particular, we have the capacity to manage exports, because they are so important for jobs across the economy.

We have a national transport plan—it is called AusLink—and I want to say this: it is terribly important that the states now step up to the mark and match the planning process and the increase in resources that we are providing at a national level. We are indeed providing a lot of resources over the next five years—the equivalent in today’s money of two Snowy Mountain schemes. It ought to be noted that every one per cent increase in the efficiency of transport delivers something like a $500 million increase in Australia’s gross domestic product.

As part of this investment, we are going spend $2 billion on rail. We need to. It is worth noting that in the hands of the states we have got to the point in eastern Australia—and remember rail is your main vehicle for export performance, and there has been some focus on that in recent times with bulk commodities—where the system is essentially clogged with rail having just 17 per cent of the freight task. It is operating at capacity at that level. We will invest in the order of $2 billion over the next five years, including, for example, $260 million just in the Hunter Valley, to lift very considerably the amount of coal and commodities that can be carried to and put through the port of Newcastle. There is $150 million for rail and port links in Melbourne—Port Dynon and so forth—$110 million for links to Port Botany and the northern rail line, and there are substantial investments in Fremantle.
I want to emphasise again that, whilst it is acknowledged that for economic growth, for exports, for jobs, for environmental outcomes and, indeed, for people’s amenity we need a comprehensive, carefully thought through national transport plan, it is important that we plan it wisely and that we fund it wisely. That is why we have been keen to engage the states. They found a bit of this challenging, because we want to do it objectively in the future. We also want to ensure that resourcing is done properly. So we have said that the states must sign up to the national construction code. I am delighted to be able to record in here that South Australia has agreed and that, this morning, Victoria agreed. They announced that they would be agreeing to the Australian government’s industrial relations reforms in relation to the construction code as it applies to road and rail construction. Good on them. We look forward to the other states rapidly following suit.

Economy: Interest Rates

Mr BEAZLEY (2.31 p.m.)—My question is to the Prime Minister. Given the community was led to believe during the last election that interest rates would not rise under the coalition, can the Prime Minister now assure households that are currently paying a record 9.3 per cent of their income to service interest on their mortgage and other debts that interest rates will not rise over the coming months?

Mr HOWARD—I know, according to the Chinese culture, that this is the Year of the Rooster, but methinks the Leader of the Opposition has been listening a little too closely to the member for Lilley. I saw the member for Lilley last night out there like a shot out of a gun when the Reserve Bank report came out. The opposition are saying the government promised there would be no upward movements in interest rates after the election. Let me nail that for the lie that it is immediately. I can do no better than to quote a question I received—it was a very succinct question—and the answer. The question was from Neil Mitchell in an interview I had on 3AW on 23 September 2004. It reads:

Mitchell: So you wouldn’t be embarrassed to win the election and then have an interest rate rise?
Prime Minister: Well, I don’t give guarantees judgments about individual movements.

That is what I said on 23 September, which was before the election. My argument—and this is the basis on which the government was re-elected; and I have no doubt that the very adverse judgment made about the opposition in relation to interest rates was material in the government’s return—is that they will always be lower under our policies. That argument is supported by the last time Labor was in government and the impact of its industrial relations policy. The Leader of the Opposition, having been a self-confessed senior and self-proclaimed influential member of the Hawke and Keating governments, will well remember, as the Australian community does, the stratospheric heights of 17 per cent for housing interest rates, 20 per cent for small business rates and 21 per cent for farm bill rates when he last had his hands on the treasury bench.

Health: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Mr LAMING (2.35 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Is the government committed to a 12.5 per cent mandatory price cut for new generic drugs and what benefits will this provide to consumers?

Mr ABBOTT—I thank the member for Bowman for his question and I acknowledge his lifetime spent in caring for people in the health system up until his entry into this parliament. I can assure the member for Bowman and all members of this House that the government is committed to a 12.5 per cent
mandatory price cut for new generic drugs on the PBS. We are committed to this because we want better prices for patients and we want a better deal for the taxpayer. Yesterday the government decided that this price cut would take place once within any reference pricing group. This should avoid the repeated price cuts that were feared by some in the industry, and it should still deliver the savings that were forecast by the government as part of the Charter of Budget Honesty.

Importantly, this measure means that nine common types of drugs, including antidepressants, cholesterol lowering drugs and blood pressure lowering drugs, will for the first time come below the copayment, and that should mean lower prices for consumers. Some 1,500 of the 2,600 items on the PBS are currently below copayment, and many of these drugs should have lower prices for patients as a result of this measure. This government believes in the PBS as one of the important pillars of Medicare, and this measure should ensure its sustainability in the long term.

Economy: Current Account Deficit

Mr SWAN (2.37 p.m.)—My question is directed to the Treasurer. Treasurer, did the RBA in its quarterly statement indicate that the current account deficit in the December quarter is likely to rise to ‘close to 6 ¾ per cent of GDP’? Does the Treasurer recall saying in 1995:

Look, if you’re running a current account deficit of 6 per cent of GDP, it’s not sustainable. It’s an obvious point; it’s not sustainable.

Treasurer, if six per cent is not sustainable, why has the government allowed the current account deficit to reach 6¼ per cent?

Mr COSTELLO—Can I say that this government is running a budget surplus—that is, it is adding to savings, whereas in 1995 the government was detracting from savings. I think people recall that in 1996 the budget was $10 billion in deficit. We recall that because we remember the finance minister at the time. But in 1995 I would venture a guess that it was larger than $10 billion; I think from memory it was around $12 or $13 billion. So not only was the government not contributing to savings but the government was dissaving by an additional $12 to $13 billion over the then current account—adding significantly, I would think, to the overall deficit. In addition to that, members will recall that back in 1995 inflation was higher than it is today. So the macro fundamental environment is far stronger today than it was in 1995.

But, having said that—and I will say, as I have said over and over again—we do not think that Australia should get complacent in relation to its trading position. We believe that Australia should make all efforts to increase its exports and we do have an opportunity to do so at the moment, particularly when demand for mineral commodities is strong. It appears to the government that there is demand overseas which could be met by Australian companies but which is not being met by Australian companies because of bottlenecks in Australia’s export industry—in particular, bottlenecks in coal-loading ports in northern New South Wales and in Queensland.

Members of the House will have heard stories or seen pictures of ships offshore waiting to pick up loads which could be earning export dollars for Australia, but they cannot get into the ports because the facilities are not great. These ports are not owned by the Commonwealth; they are not regulated by the Commonwealth. But, as far as the Commonwealth is concerned, we want to remove obstacles—such as are within the Commonwealth’s power to remove—that could be holding back Australia’s export industries. We are looking very, very closely at the structure in relation to these ports, and
we will be engaging in discussions with the regulatory authorities and state governments to see whether or not improvements can be put in place.

We do not want to be complacent about Australia’s export performance or in relation to its current account. This country has to make every post a winner in economic reform if we are to stay where we are now, as one of the leading economies in the developed world.

**Trade: United States**

Mr TUCKEY (2.41 p.m.)—I address my question to the Minister for Trade. Would the minister inform the House of the government’s response to the proposed cuts to United States farm subsidies?

Mr VAILE—I thank the honourable member for O’Connor for his question. Of course, coming from Western Australia, he represents a state that does disproportionately more for the Australian economy in terms of exports than most other states. Members would be aware that, in the last couple of days, the Bush administration has announced a proposal to cut $587 million from farm subsidies annually in the United States. This is good news for Australian farmers—there is no question about that. This is a very positive indication that the Bush administration is going to deliver on the commitments already made in the Doha Round of global trade talks.

As the events of the recent tsunami highlighted, developed countries need to do more for the world’s poorest nations. This can be done through the provision of aid, but it can also be done by helping them improve their economic circumstances. The best structural way to alleviate global poverty is to eliminate barriers to trade and allow greater access to the wealthier markets of the world. I might add that this is a point that the Prime Minister made on a number of occasions to different people, world leaders and NGOs at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos. It is also an issue that has been commented upon by Nelson Mandela, a great advocate for the developing world, when he said:

The steps that are needed from the developed nations are clear. The first is ensuring trade justice.

Therefore, we welcome the news coming from the United States that the Bush administration is to impose greater disciplines on farm subsidies in the upcoming budget. We will obviously continue to urge them to get those passed through the congress and implemented. They will help deliver the US commitments in the Doha Round of negotiations; they will help deliver greater access to their markets for the developing world and for Australian farmers but they will also help deliver a better budgetary circumstance in the United States, which will be good for the global economy.

I might add that in Australia we also lead by example. We have liberalised our markets over a number of years; we have given the 49 least developed countries of the world tariff-free and quota-free access into our market and we have continued to run budget surpluses over almost the life of our government to ensure a strong economy here in Australia. I finish by saying to the member for O’Connor that this is good news coming from the United States. We will support the Bush administration in implementing their commitments in the World Trade Organisation discussions.

**Economy: Interest Rates**

Mr BEAZLEY (2.44 p.m.)—My question is to the Prime Minister. It follows from an answer he gave a couple of questions ago when he quoted from his performance on Neil Mitchell’s show during the election campaign. Does the Prime Minister recollect his remarks at the opening of the campaign
office in Gladesville, Sydney, when he said, ‘Well, we’re certainly, first and foremost, we’re offering a continuation of the low interest rates of the last 8½ years.’ In the light of that undertaking, will you guarantee the people of this country that their interest rates will not rise?

Mr Howard—There is no inconsistency between that statement and the statement I made on Neil Mitchell’s show. Neither of them undermines the simple proposition that interest rates will always be lower under the coalition than under Labor.

Workplace Relations: Industrial Action

Mr Johnson (2.45 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Would the minister inform the House of the current levels of industrial disputes in the Australian economy?

Mr Andrews—I thank the honourable member for Ryan for his question. I can indicate that, because of the workplace relations reforms that this government has put in place, we have given Australia more jobs, higher wages and the lowest unemployment in a generation. We have also produced more productive and more harmonious workplaces in the country. Indeed, under the Howard government, the level of industrial disputes has fallen to the lowest level since records were kept, and that goes back to the time of Gallipoli.

However, there are exceptions to this good news, most notably in Western Australia. The rate of working days lost to industrial disputes in Western Australia has trebled since 2001. The rate of disputes in 2001 was 32 days lost per 1,000 employees. By June 2004 that had almost trebled to 121 days lost per 1,000 employees. In Western Australia in 2003 one of the worst performing industries was the construction industry, at 567 working days lost per 1,000 employees. The national all industries average is just 53. So compared to 53 for all industries across the nation, in the construction industry in Western Australia we have a disastrous situation of 567 working days lost per 1,000 employees. This is more than double what it is nationally for the construction industry throughout Australia.

In Western Australia the rate has increased year by year since 2001. In 2001 it was 226, which was bad enough, but by 2003 it had blown out to 567 working days lost. No wonder I found when I was in Perth last week meeting with major resource companies which are considering billions of dollars of investment in Western Australia which would lead to increased exports for Australia and more jobs for Australians, particularly those in Western Australia, that the companies remain concerned about the militancy, particularly in the building construction union in Western Australia. This has partly come about because of a weak state government that reversed the flexible workplace relations system that the Court government had previously put in place in Western Australia and that will not stand up to the likes of those who run the CFMEU in Western Australia. It is why this government will continue to reform workplace relations in Australia so that we can have more jobs and higher wages for all Australians.

Trade: Deficit

Mr Crean (2.48 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister for Trade and it relates to Australia’s trade performance. Minister, hasn’t Australia just recorded the largest ever trade deficit in Australia’s history: a massive $26 billion? Hasn’t the government also generated an unprecedented run of merchandise trade deficits now for seven years in a row? Minister, why has the government presided over the worst trade performance in Australia’s history?
Mr VAILE—Mr Speaker, I read with interest the press release the member for Hotham put out. As you would expect, you should not believe everything that is in it. One of the things that he said in his press release was that our exports last year were equal to the worst on record. In fact, the exports last year, in 2004, were $152.5 billion. When we took over office in 1996 that figure was $100 billion. Last year it was $152.5 billion. This is the second highest figure in recorded history in Australia, the highest being in 2000-01 which was $153.5 billion. During the course of the last couple of years Australia has confronted some challenging circumstances in terms of international trade.

Mr Gavan O’Connor interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for Corio is warned.

Mr VAILE—There has been the drought that was one of the worst in 100 years of Australia’s history. And we confronted the Asian economic recession and the outbreak of SARS in East Asia, all at the same time. There was an increasing exchange rate that challenged Australia’s exporters and provided a basis for stronger imports. But if you look at the economic circumstances within Australia they are the strongest that they have been for a long time. Of course, a strong, growing economy is going to draw in imports. You are going to see businesses investing in capital items and in intermediate goods that are used in re-export, so of course you are going to see a change in these figures. The member for Hotham would be well advised to look at the figures over a full 12-month period, not just over a short period of time. But the most important figures that he should compare are the export figure from 2004 of $152.5 billion and the export figure from 1996, when we first came to office, of $100 billion.

Drought: Assistance

Mrs HULL (2.51 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Would the minister advise the House what assistance the government is providing to farmers still in the grip of the devastating drought in my electorates of Riverina and in other areas across the nation? Have the state governments been assisting the efforts of the Commonwealth?

Mr TRUSS—I thank the honourable member for Riverina for the question. Hers is one of the areas in Australia where the drought has been particularly severe. For well over two years now the federal government has been providing assistance to thousands of Australian farm families by way of income support and business support payments. Well over $600 million has been paid out now in direct payments to Australian farmers as we face this perhaps worst drought in our history. In some areas the drought has eased over recent times, and that is welcome. But in other places the grip of drought has anything but eased, and prior to Christmas I announced that the federal government would be extending exceptional circumstances for a third year in 23 areas across Australia—an unprecedented level of government support for farmers facing difficult times. Last week that list was added to for New South Wales, with assistance being extended for a third year to farmers in the Wagga area, Narrandera and Nyngan. These are areas where the drought has simply not broken and there is a need for ongoing support and assistance.

The federal government has also announced new exceptional circumstances declarations in the Gundagai region and to some farmers in South Australia’s upper north and is in the process of assessing an application for rice growers in the Murray Valley in New South Wales and they are receiving interim
support. So the federal government has paid out significant amounts of money. Close to half of that money is for New South Wales, where the drought is perhaps the most severe. Unfortunately, though, the states are not carrying their share of the load. Indeed, in many states the state governments have walked away from their responsibilities entirely. The Victorian government now offer no assistance to drought affected farmers in their state, and there is very little provided in quite a number of the other states. They spend all their time criticising the federal government, yet we are carrying the load and helping farmers through these difficult times.

It is important that the state governments commit to drought reform and work constructively to developing seamlessly with the Commonwealth a system that will provide meaningful assistance, and on time.

Iraq: Australian Embassy

Mr RUDD (2.54 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I refer the minister to the 31 January statement of his colleague the defence minister where he referred to the Australian Defence Force security detachment at the Australian Embassy precinct in Baghdad. He said:

It will for the time being remain in its current premises, which is a very secure building, and it will guard and protect Australian assets.

Minister, why was the security detachment still there as of 31 January—and we assume today as well—given that there are no longer diplomatic personnel in the embassy to protect and given that you have already told the Australian public that all our diplomats have been moved to Camp Victory for their safety?

Mr DOWNER—From recollection. I think there are within Iraq at the moment three Australian diplomats. There are others who are attached to the embassy but are not necessarily in Iraq. I think the figure at the moment is that there are three. Those three diplomats are for the time being in Camp Victory, and we are intending to transfer them into the green zone, into the international zone, where they will be safer—there is no question of that. This decision was made as a result of attacks that were made against the Australian Embassy, so we are keeping the security detachment in Iraq for the time being.

Ms Gillard—Where is it?

Mr DOWNER—But the question of how long we will keep the security detachment there and questions about the location of the security detachment will be questions considered first and foremost by the defence minister and further by the government. But, as far as the embassy is concerned, our objective is to ensure that it is moved into the green zone. I had discussions last week in Britain about possible locations, and we hope that something can be sorted out pretty soon.

Education: Vocational and Technical Education

Mr NEVILLE (2.56 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education. Would the minister update the House on progress being made in the establishment of Australian technical colleges?

Mr HARDGRAVE—I thank the member for his commitment to the Australian technical colleges. Last Friday I was pleased to be in Hinkler, as part of my ongoing community consultations, and to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the people of the community of Gladstone. The community partnerships they have forged between business, training and education and local government put them in a very good position to take full advantage of the framework that is offered under the Australian technical college initiative. There are 24 of these being established around the country, which is a commitment of $289 mil-
lion to this initiative. It is part of the government’s multifaceted strategy to address skills shortages in regional and metropolitan areas of Australia and to help young people feel very well satisfied that a genuine career path can be made by choosing the traditional trades.

Last November we launched an expression of interest process that matures on the 18th of this month. Last month I launched a discussion paper to inform interested organisations and individuals. The response from local communities around Australia shows that what the government are saying—that is, that we can trust local communities to understand their local skills shortage needs best of all—is the right way to go. What we are seeing from the community meetings I have attended in Townsville, Ulverstone, Launceston, Darwin, the Gold Coast, Gladstone and Queanbeyan—and there are more to come—is the enthusiasm of local industry and community representatives to work together in ways they have never done before, to take on the commitment of up to 300 school based new apprentices in each of those areas and to make a difference.

Members on both sides of this House are also assisting their local communities to generate that influence and enthusiasm, and I want to thank those members who see an Australian technical college, not only in their area but also in the broad around their particular part of Australia, as being a worthwhile initiative. I say to local communities and local businesses: ‘Maintain the enthusiasm. Don’t let the only two groups of people in the entire world who are against the Australian technical colleges stop you.’ There are a few of them in the leadership of the Australian Labor Party here in this place and in the Australian Education Union—although I note the latest edition of Vanguard newspaper says the communists are also against it.

Iraq: Australian Embassy

Mr McCLELLAND (2.59 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister for Foreign Affairs representing the Minister for Defence. Can the minister confirm that the defence minister on his December visit to Baghdad last year chose not to visit the Australian Embassy because travel to and from it had become too dangerous? Can the minister confirm that the defence minister instead stayed at Camp Victory, where our diplomats have now been relocated? Minister, how does the government justify members of the Australian Defence Force security detachment, even though they are not guarding any diplomats, still being required to daily make the same journey the defence minister himself was not prepared to make?

Mr DOWNER—The security detachment obviously makes assessments on a day-by-day basis in Baghdad and also in consultation with the Chief of the Defence Force and the Chief of the Army on the best security arrangements that they can and should make. I think we should take this opportunity of saying that the security detachment has shown great professionalism and great courage in the undertaking of their duties. There have been occasions when they have been attacked and, mercifully, whilst there have been injuries there have so far been no casualties. We very much hope and pray that that will continue to be the case. All of the decisions about the location of the security detachment and the movements of the security detachment must be made by the people on the ground in consultation with the Chief of the Defence Force. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs, I do not think that it would be appropriate for me to even endeavour to give instructions to the security detachment on what is the best location for them to be in. I do think it is appropriate that those judgments be made on the ground in the context of the environment within which they are
operating. That is by far the best way to approach this question.

**Small Business: Employment**

**Dr WASHER** (3.02 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Small Business and Tourism. Would the minister update the House on how this government can encourage small business to take on additional employees?

**FRAN BAILEY**—I would like to thank the member for Moore for his question and for being prepared to stand up for the 126,000 small businesses that he has in his home state of Western Australia. I would like to reassure him that this government is providing every encouragement for small business to employ more people by, firstly, maintaining very strong economic management and, secondly and most importantly, tackling the issues that small business are concerned with. These include reducing tax—and the 25 per cent entrepreneur’s tax discount will be introduced soon. They include making the tax system more flexible and reducing red tape and tackling that area of government, being local government, that most people go to first if they want to start or expand a business. There is $50 million in a fund to provide incentives for local government to reduce that amount of red tape. Importantly, it will provide a much more flexible workplace.

Critically, it is only this government that is really serious about listening to the concerns of small business about unfair dismissals. The Sensis survey last year showed that 28 per cent of small businesses would not put on any more people because of their concerns about unfair dismissal. A lot of the people on the opposition front bench are laughing; they obviously are not concerned about small business. The time has come for those opposite who are laughing to stop talking about their support for small business and actually do something. Once again I invite them to join the government in supporting the legislation on unfair dismissal to actually encourage small businesses to employ more people.

**Regional Services: Program Funding**

**Mr KELVIN THOMSON** (3.05 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs and it relates to her answers last year. Isn’t it a fact that just prior to her appointment of Mr Ken Crooke to her staff, the minister met with Mr Crooke, who was acting for A2 Dairy Marketers, and with two directors of A2 Dairy Marketers in Brisbane? Isn’t it also a fact that during that meeting the minister spoke to departmental officers by phone about how funding might be provided to A2 Milk? Following that meeting, did the minister ask Mr Crooke to remain behind to discuss his appointment to her staff? Minister, wasn’t employing Mr Crooke obviously going to create a conflict of interest?

**Mrs DE-ANNE KELLY**—So we are back to the past—same front bench, same policy, same view and same approach. I made it quite clear in the statement I made last year that when I spoke with Mr Crooke about the position I required him to dispense with all potential conflicts of interest including A2 Milk. So I had to have known about A2 Milk. I knew about A2 Milk because they, like many others—scores and scores and scores of potential proponents for projects—often made representations through my office.

**Mr Martin Ferguson**—You met them all, did you?

**Mrs DE-ANNE KELLY**—We would advise them to contact the appropriate departmental official and, if they wished, to go forward and put in an application, which would be assessed thoroughly by the department on its merits.
Ms Gillard—You rang the department at this meeting.

Mrs DE-ANNE KELLY—The reality is that you would seek departmental advice. Whenever we met with proponents, we would ask the department to join in the meeting either in my office here or, if it was at another location, by phone—as we did that day. A2 Milk, like scores of other proponents, were seeking advice on whether they should apply through the department of agriculture, through Regional Partnerships or through some other program, and the department gave them the appropriate advice.

Superannuation: Contributions

Mrs MAY (3.08 p.m.)—My question is addressed to the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer. Would the minister advise the House of the success of measures to help Australians build their retirement savings?

Mr BROUGH—I thank the member for McPherson for her question. I am pleased to inform the House that some $244 million has been paid to Australians who have made a contribution to their own superannuation this year. That has been extended to some 450,000 Australians who have incomes under $40,000 and who have made a direct contribution on their own behalf into their superannuation fund. The Howard government co-contribution is incentivising these people to go out and make these contributions and in doing so—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr BROUGH—Easily excitable, aren’t we? The really good news is that 63 per cent of those who have received the incentive payment—the co-contribution of, on average, $570—have been women. That is a very positive thing for Australian women because the more females who make a contribution for their superannuation, their retirement income, and who are supported by this government, the stronger incomes they are going to have into the future and the less likely there is going to be a drag on the budget in the years to come—as the Treasurer’s demographic papers in the past have shown how we are an ageing population. So there will be less of a drag in the future. This is happening because the federal coalition government has given people an incentive to go out there and save for their own retirements, and some 450,000 Australians are doing just that—that is, 450,000 payments that have already been made by the Taxation Office.

To put this into context, it means a 35-year-old woman today on a $25,000 annual income who continues to contribute $570 towards her savings in superannuation will increase her real income in retirement by $60,000—a 48 per cent real increase. This is good news for Australian low-income earners. The better news is that this year lower to middle income earners will not get a dollar for dollar contribution; they will get $1.50 for every dollar that they contribute. The challenge for the member for Brand, the Leader of the Opposition, is to repudiate the policy that the Labor Party took to the last campaign where they were going to remove this incentive and restate this as good government policy that should be supported by all parties.

Mr Howard—Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Notice Paper.

INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (3.11 p.m.)—by leave—I move:

That the House:

(1) extends to all Australians who suffered personal losses during the tragic 26 December Indian Ocean tsunami disaster its profound sympathy in their bereavement and wishes a speedy recovery to the injured;
(2) expresses its deepest condolences at the tragic loss of life and property suffered by Australia’s neighbours in the tsunami;

(3) expresses its gratitude and admiration to those Australians who have so generously contributed time, effort, and money to relieve the suffering of those affected; and

(4) commits itself to work closely with the countries involved in the crisis to maintain the swift and effective response to this disaster.

The earthquake in the Indian Ocean on 26 December last, off the coast of north-western Sumatra, was the world’s most severe in the last 40 years. The tsunamis caused by this earthquake resulted in a humanitarian disaster of proportions unprecedented in our lifetimes. The estimated death toll from the disaster is truly appalling and it continues to grow. It is now put at more than 280,000 souls. An exact death toll will never be known. The latest estimates indicate that Indonesia has lost more than 160,000 citizens—120,000 deaths have already been confirmed; Sri Lanka has lost over 31,000 citizens; India, over 15,000; and Thailand, over 5,000. Other countries including the Maldives, Malaysia, Somalia and the Seychelles were also heavily affected.

The United Nations estimates that the tragedy displaced more than one million people and deprived five million people of basic services. The breadth and the enormity of the tragedy were brought home to me personally when I visited Banda Aceh on 2 February. I am sure the member for Griffith, who also visited that area, would have experienced similar emotions. To see first-hand the manner in which the wave had simply obliterated whole communities was profoundly moving.

I was also greatly moved by the unflagging humanitarian work being undertaken by the men and women of the Australian Defence Force and the civilian personnel from Australia who have been engaged in relief operations in Aceh. In the face of such appalling destruction and despair, their cooperation with their Indonesian colleagues, particularly those in the TNI, has been outstanding. Eighteen people from Australia, 12 citizens and six permanent residents, have been confirmed to have lost their lives. We continue to hold grave concerns for nine more Australians. At this difficult time our thoughts are very much with the families and friends of those who were lost.

The Australian government moved quickly in its efforts to ease the suffering of grieving Australian families. The intensive efforts by people from many agencies—particularly the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade—and their colleagues from the Australian Federal Police and the state police forces helped confirm the safety of over 14,300 Australians in the days and weeks after the disaster. Staff from a number of government agencies also came together to assist in dealing with over 84,000 phone calls from Australians eager to ascertain the safety of their loved ones. Around 60 Australian consular and other officials have been deployed to the affected areas. Our posts in Thailand, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka have provided, and go on providing, extensive and valued assistance to affected Australians.

The National Day of Mourning and Reflection that Australia observed on 16 January provided an important outlet for us to grieve for those lost in the disaster. The national day was commemorated throughout our nation, with several hundred events held around the country. I personally had the opportunity to attend services marking the occasion by three different faiths: Christian, Muslim and Hindu. What was striking to me—and I am sure I was not alone in this reaction—during these gatherings and through the extraordinary response by Australian citizens to this terrible disaster was
the incredible way in which our common humanity shines through in times of adversity. Differences of race, nationality and religion pale beside loss and suffering of such magnitude. I am intensely proud of the compassion, enthusiasm and remarkable generosity with which Australians have gone about mobilising funds and efforts to assist those affected by the disaster. Today, donations by Australian citizens and corporations stand at the magnificent sum—and there is no other word to describe it—of approximately $235 million from a nation of 20 million people.

Following the disaster, the Australian government immediately announced assistance of $10 million in the aid effort. When the scale of the disaster became apparent we increased our contribution to $60 million. The Australian government has now committed more than $1 billion and considerable in-kind assistance to relief efforts.

Australia’s response to the disaster, both in public and private contributions, has been one of the most, if not the most, generous in the world. Following a meeting of the Paris Club of international creditors on 12 January, the government has also agreed to join other creditor countries in offering an immediate postponement of debt repayments for the governments of countries affected by the disaster. Thanks to the efforts both of the government and of Australian citizens, we as a nation stand at the forefront of international efforts to respond to the crisis.

I want to pay special tribute to the untiring efforts of the Australian Defence Force, in particular its medical teams but also the civilian medical personnel from both the Commonwealth and the states. I want to record my appreciation for the total cooperation of all state governments and relevant state agencies—it was a magnificent federal effort. I also pay special tribute to federal and state police officers who continue to grapple with the trying and distressing task of victim identification, particularly in Thailand, and all others—both those working for the government and employees of and volunteers with welfare organisations—who have contributed to the swift and compassionate response of the Australian nation and its people to this disaster.

The emergency high-level task force, established by the government on Boxing Day, worked tirelessly throughout the days that followed. Their work—and that of others such as the ambassador, Bill Paterson, and staff of the Australian Embassy in Thailand—exemplified the Australian Public Service working at its dedicated and professional best.

The focus of Australia’s assistance has of course been Indonesia. The scale of the disaster, particularly in Aceh, and our determination to help a friend and neighbour in dire need required a major and unprecedented response. In Jakarta on 5 January, President Yudhoyono of Indonesia and I agreed to form an Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development, committing $1 billion over five years. This will consist of $500 million in grants for short- to medium-term restorative projects and activities and $500 million in concessional loans for the reconstruction of major infrastructure. Through a joint commission established under the partnership, President Yudhoyono and I, together with our ministers, will determine a series of priority projects and activities to rebuild devastated infrastructure and services, including in health and sanitation, and to develop measures which might help Indonesia respond to such terrible disasters in the future.

This commitment, which will bring our total aid to Indonesia to $1.8 billion over five years, is in addition to the $33 million that Australia has already committed towards the
relief effort there, including $18 million for key United Nations agencies as well as funding through Australian, international and local non-government organisations. To date about 800 tonnes of emergency aid has been provided to Aceh and north Sumatra provinces, including food, water, medical supplies and shelter equipment, principally with the assistance of the ADF and UN joint operation centre partners. As the House knows, Australia’s relationship with Indonesia is very important, and this new partnership will assist Indonesia in its recovery and is the largest single commitment of overseas aid in Australia’s history.

In discussions with President Yudhoyono, who called me last week while I was visiting Aceh, he again expressed his gratitude for Australia’s help, and together we reaffirmed our determination to work together not only in relation to the tsunami but also more generally. That reaffirmation took place during a telephone conversation in one of the devastated areas of Banda Aceh in the full view and hearing of not only the Australian and Indonesian media but also members of the Australian Defence Force, members of TNI, two senior ministers of the Indonesian government and the local acting governor. The experience of that reaffirmation in those circumstances symbolised to me the profound significance of this event in the history of the relations between our two nations. The government knows, as we all know, that Australia and Indonesia share a common future, and it is our resolve to build on the spirit of cooperation born of this tragedy to improve our relationship.

The government has also committed $10 million for relief in Sri Lanka, focusing on food aid, shelter, public health and delivering water and sanitation. Australia’s rapid commitment of a medical team with expertise in infectious diseases and public health helped to mitigate the devastating impacts of the tragedy, as did our early commitment of over 12 tonnes of medical equipment and supplies. Direct aid program grants by the Australian High Commission in Colombo have also helped families affected by the disaster.

Australia’s assistance to the Maldives includes the commitment of teams of Australian marine experts to help assess the damage to the coral reef structure, primary and secondary teachers, engineers, who will work with authorities in repairing schools damaged or destroyed, and medical personnel, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. For the Seychelles, Australia will contribute $500,000 to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs flash appeal to provide shelter for families and to also be used to rebuild infrastructure and help with general economic recovery. Australia has also been proud to work with the governments of other affected countries to respond to the disaster, including Thailand and Malaysia. I might indicate that, in the telephone conversations I had with the Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of Thailand on 27 December, each of them indicated that, although specialist assistance would be welcome, they did not require any overseas monetary assistance. The cooperation between Australia and local authorities on highly sensitive issues such as victim identification has been quite outstanding.

In seeking to ensure a prompt and appropriate international response to the disaster, I attended an ASEAN special leaders summit on the tsunami that was hosted in Jakarta by President Yudhoyono on 5 and 6 January, and in Singapore last week I was able to congratulate Prime Minister Lee of that country on proposing that initiative. It was a most timely, constructive and appropriate step to coordinate the disaster response between donors and affected countries. Participants in this meeting agreed to mobilise ur-
gently further resources to meet the emergency relief needs of victims. Agreement was also reached to establish a regional early warning system, such as a regional tsunami early warning centre in the Indian Ocean and the South-East Asian region. At a ministerial meeting on tsunami early warning arrangements held in Phuket on 28 and 29 January, a target of mid-2006 was set for the implementation of core elements of the system. In the lead-up to this date, Australia will continue to play a leading role in international efforts to develop an early warning system.

In extending my gratitude to various people, I wish to particularly include my colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, along with the Federal Commissioner of Police, paid a very early visit to affected areas in Thailand and met many of the relatives of Australians who had died or were missing; the Minister for Defence; and also the fairly newly appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the honourable member for Dunkley. I also want to extend my thanks for the remarks and expressed support coming from the opposition, particularly from—the member for Griffith and also the Leader of the Opposition and others.

This has been a tragedy that has touched all Australians irrespective of their politics, where they live, their religion or their attitude to the government or the opposition or indeed anything else. It is one of those dreadful tragedies that we hope will never be repeated in our lifetime or at all. The Australian government and the Australian people have demonstrated in recent weeks in a most real and tangible way—through their actions, through their sincere sympathy and through their active support—a generosity and a commitment to helping out our neighbours that is truly outstanding. This is a marvellous reflection of who we are as a people. It is the true spirit of Australia and Australians. In mourning with the families of those Australians lost in the disaster, Australia grieves together with our friends and neighbours in the region in the wake of this terrible tragedy. We are committed to doing what we can to help those affected by this unprecedented disaster and we will not cease our efforts until the rebuilding and healing is complete. I thank the House.

Mr BEAZLEY (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (3.30 p.m.)—I am very pleased to rise in support of the motion moved by the Prime Minister and to note that, because it has been moved, we will be in a position to withdraw the matter of public importance that is on the Notice Paper. The debate on this matter will obviously suffice. I point out at the outset how appreciative the opposition is of the government’s efforts in this matter. This is an issue above politics. It could be said that this is a bipartisan issue. This is not a bipartisan issue; this issue is above politics. On this occasion, as in no other period in his prime ministership, the Prime Minister has spoken for the whole nation—and that includes all of us.

There has been a generous hearted response from the Australian government and from the Australian people. I have had a long life in politics and I have never seen the Australian people respond to any human tragedy like this—and there have been many. We can cast our minds back, in the experience of most of us, to tragedies which have occurred onshore and offshore which have affected Australians—tragedies which have seen the death of far more Australians than has this one. But not even the terrible events in Bali that we reflect on have so deeply moved the hearts of the Australian people as has this event.

The generosity just rolls on and on and does not seem to stop and I do not have an explanation as to why this should be so. As
members of parliament, we are still speaking to fundraisers all around the country who are now making very generous provision for the budgets of our various aid organisations that are deeply engaged in this process. I spoke at a gathering of the Italian community in the western suburbs of Sydney last week where $1 million was raised. A constant surge of generosity, far more gargantuan than anything the tidal wave could produce, is going through the hearts of the Australian people.

None of us can really comprehend the scale of destruction wrought by the tidal wave. It began with a massive earthquake off the west coast of northern Sumatra, registering nine on the Richter scale. As the Prime Minister says, estimates of the number of people killed have reached almost 290,000—239,000 in Indonesia alone. Of course there are hundreds of thousands beyond that whose lives have been devastated. A town has been ripped off the coast of northern Aceh and there is absolutely nothing left. When a natural disaster occurs, you anticipate seeing some people wandering around in the wreckage waiting to be assisted, but the number of people who have been wandering around in the wreckage on the coast of Aceh has been very small. This has been a total annihilation of community after community, leaving devastated relatives from further afield to grieve. A few pockets of survivors have been left to wander alone and stunned probably for the rest of their lives.

The tidal wave wreaked its havoc in Indonesia but also had a devastating impact in India, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Its impact spread to many other nations, including Bangladesh, Burma, Kenya, Malaysia, the Maldives, Madagascar, the Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania. It touched others across the world, particularly those in Thailand, because of where it struck. A nation like Sweden, for example, which has not experienced mass grief for centuries, has suddenly confronted the massive destruction of a large number of its citizens. There are others too from China, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, the US and, as the Prime Minister has mentioned, our own beloved citizens.

As members will know, the vast coastline of my home state borders the Indian Ocean. Many of us back home have had sober reflection in recent weeks that if the earthquake had occurred a couple of hundred kilometres further east and a little further south along the Sunda Arc the tidal wave would have engulfed our own Western Australian coastline. As it was, the waters adjacent to my constituency rose by one to two metres. We nearly had casualties in my electorate when the normally safe passage across the waterways from Safety Bay to Penguin Island produced a situation where a little family was suddenly caught in the surge and was deluged.Fortunately on the shore at that time was a chap with a boat who was able to go out and pick them up; otherwise there would have been four casualties in Australia. Right up the coastline of Western Australia there were similar tidal movements which threw around the local boats. Fortunately no lives were lost.

I recommend to everyone an extraordinary study by Phil Cummins, who is now assisting the government, on the development of an early warning system. He wrote an article in AusGeo in September 2004, speculating on a tsunami in the Indian Ocean like the one that occurred in 1833. He said that if the tsunami had occurred in exactly the same spot as the one in 1833, it would have a devastating effect on the Western Australian coast. I am told that the same Phil Cummins has also suggested that the likelihood of an event further along the fault line has been substantially increased as a result of the events which occurred in Sumatra, which gives us a very special interest in an urgent response to the need to develop an effective early warn-
ing system. But I set that to one side—that is me speaking as a Western Australian.

Our response as Australians has been one of massive generosity—$239 million. That is the sort of money that generous governments, drawing from all available taxpayer dollars, give when a disaster occurs. There are plenty of countries around this world which have made absolutely nowhere near that level of contribution but nevertheless feel deeply touched, as the Australian people do. In all the events that have been put on to intrigue and interest our community, we have seen that generosity repeated time and time again. I am thinking of the tsunami cricket match, which raised $14 million; the Reach Out to Asia telethon, which raised $20 million; and the Wave Aid concert, which raised in excess of $2 million. I congratulate the honourable member for Kingsford Smith for the leading role he played in getting that concert together. As a result of that concert, one thing we now know is that if we can be promised, one concert after another, that it was not the last Midnight Oil performance more funds will be raised. That was just an example of the exceptional generosity of Australians.

I note the $3 million pledged by the Packer family and PBL; the $1 million donations pledged by the Commonwealth Bank, National Australia Bank, Fosters, Westpac, Telstra, News Corporation, the Fairfax Group, Holden, Boral, IBM Australia and many others; the donations from individuals such as Frank Lowy, Richard Pratt and Dick Smith; and the initiative led by Brett Godfrey, CEO of Virgin Blue, for CEOs to donate one per cent of their salaries to tsunami relief charities. It has been an act of generosity so great that the charities charged with receiving these funds are, in one or two instances, saying: ‘No more! We can’t handle it!’ In other instances, though, they are deeply alarmed to the fact that they need to keep a level of accountability which will ensure that Australians never feel that their contribution has been misused in any way.

I would now like to say a thing or two about the official response, the $1 billion. As I said earlier, we congratulate the Prime Minister for speaking for all Australians in this matter. We have the opportunity of a new day in our relationship with Indonesia—one we would never have wanted, given the circumstances which created it, but one which has nevertheless occurred. There has not been a moment’s hesitation in reaching an arm around the shoulders of our neighbour in what is an extraordinarily generous package. It is so important that over the next few years this is managed well and dispassionately—and I am sure that it will be. It is so important that, in the minds of our neighbours, underlying this package is no agenda but a reflection of the generosity of the heart and spirit of the Australian people. If it has that feeling permanently laid within the hearts of our neighbours, it will in time transform the relationship between our two peoples. That is something to look forward to, just as the circumstances which have created it are for all of us to mourn absolutely and forever.

I join with the Prime Minister in thanking our Australian defence forces, which were first in and probably will be last out. The defence forces provided the first supplies of freshwater in Aceh, as all other systems had broken down. I thank the police services, who have continued in the terrible task of the identification of victims. I thank our civilian and defence medical personnel, who are still in many places the only real health option available for the folk concerned. They have had long experience in rebuilding the shattered lives of people but never on this scale. This will hold a special place in their own family memories, just as their activity holds a special place in our hearts for the honour they have done their country and themselves.
I thank too the public servants who, though often berated, often inspected in a minute fashion by all of us here in parliament, and sometimes despised, have nevertheless contributed greatly, in their professions, to the ease with which aid has moved into the countries which have been affected and who have coordinated things so effectively from Australia.

In that spirit, given that there is a massively increased sense of generosity among our nation, I commend to the Prime Minister that he take a bit of a look, as Tony Blair is, at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to make progress in the global war on poverty—a challenge to eliminate extreme poverty, which affects a billion people and causes unnecessary loss of life in Africa and other countries around the world. Could this extraordinary gesture of generosity which we have started to participate in—and to which the government has responded so well on behalf of all Australians—be the beginning of a different era of international collaboration to handle these problems to ensure that we are a global people among which there is, at least, an understanding that everybody is struggling together to give everybody a better life.

Finally, I move to the question of early warning systems associated with this. The government has participated in a conference on this matter and has indicated a willingness to be a participant. Tidal and seismological measurement systems are expensive. The tidal measurement systems that read tsunamis cost about $200,000 each. We need them to be effectively placed in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island. If there is a quake further around the arc, as I mentioned a bit earlier, it will be Western Australia that is more heavily affected and, at least in those locations, those systems will give us four or five hours warning of what will occur. Similarly, the placement around the rest of the Indian Ocean of systems which we can well afford to support, and concentrating Australia’s great seismological expertise on that, could very rapidly put in place this early warning system at what, for most of the Indian Ocean countries, will be a sum beyond their comprehension but which, in the context of the generosity of government and private contributions in this country, will be a mere bagatelle compared with what we have already been prepared to put into this. We Australians have a direct interest in this because of the potential effect on us, but we also have a direct interest in making sure that the citizens of the region around us are protected.

As the article that I referred to by Dr Cummins points out, there have been events like this in recent times. It is just that we are so recently settled and so young a country that there is no written record by witnesses that would establish this. Probably, that earthquake in 1833 produced a similar effect on the Western Australian coastline to that which we have seen produced on the coastlines of Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The fact of an increase in the likelihood of another event, which would be a product of this event having occurred, makes this an all that much more urgent consideration for us.

Thanks again to all those who have contributed to the Australian effort. Thanks again to the government. We as an opposition are proud to join with all our fellow Australians in this motion of condolence and to provide that assistance. I know the member for Griffith was deeply moved by the experiences he had when he was in Aceh and he will have an opportunity to relate them. But this is one of those occasions, as I said, that is above politics, and we are all in this together.

Mr Anderson (Gwydir—Minister for Transport and Regional Services)
(3.46 p.m.)—I rise to support wholeheartedly the Prime Minister’s motion on the Boxing Day tsunami. As we now know, it began as a great earthquake off the west coast of Sumatra. It caused the sea floor to snap upward by an amazing 18 metres, pushing out a series of waves that raced across the deep water of the Indian Ocean at 600 kilometres an hour. Tsunamis slow down as they reach the coast because their speed is related to the depth of the water, but their energy remains constant—so their height increases to become great waves such as those that swept over the coasts of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and a host of other countries.

As we now know, the tsunami killed some 280,000 people. It has made a million people homeless and has caused extensive poverty, with more to come in the future. The luxury resorts that featured so heavily on television were insured, but the millions who lost their small farms, fishing boats or homes face destitution.

We now know that 18 Australians lost their lives. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has grave concerns for another nine. It is amazing that the department’s consular staff have handled 84,000 phone calls since the disaster and have confirmed the safety of more than 14,300 Australians. Initially, there was uncertainty surrounding a very large number of Australians indeed. These remarkable figures highlight the extent of our engagement with Asia and the work done by many officials, including those in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade during the Christmas-New Year period. It was a superlative effort, as was the work of the Australian Defence Force on the ground.

The Australian government’s $1 billion aid commitment to Indonesia reflects the scale of the disaster. It is the response of a good friend and a good neighbour. I, as the deputy leader of the government, would like to say that I think the Prime Minister’s leadership here deserves recognition. His was a world-class act of leadership and it has been recognised as such around the world. The Prime Minister was alert, in a way that perhaps not many people around the world were, to the tragedy unfolding before our eyes. There was a horrible sense in which the tragedy rolled slowly on and we became aware over several days that our initial understanding would be dwarfed by the enormity of the problem. I salute, too, the work of Alexander Downer and Robert Hill. I acknowledge that many people, as a result of this, have had their Christmas breaks curtailed. So I will certainly be sympathetic when the time comes for them to try and make that up in some way.

Prime Minister, whilst of course in these circumstances my view was that the government should speak as one, we in the Nationals were absolutely at one with the government in this. You extended the courtesy of giving me an opportunity to have an input. The sort of figure that you had in mind was precisely the figure that I had in mind, on behalf of my party. The figure was a powerful symbol of the need to respond in both humanitarian and strategic terms to this very great problem. As the Prime Minister will recall, I felt strongly that the other thing we had to try to do was to facilitate Australian volunteers, wherever we could, to go and do their bit. I said that not only because I felt that they would make a material difference on the ground but because I thought that the opportunity for building understanding, trust and cooperation—particularly between young people across our various cultural groups—should not be missed.

The result of our commitment will be best represented not as some sort of brass plaque or cold statue but, I hope, as a tale of new hope, new infrastructure and a better, more
secure future. As has been recorded here, Australians—both individually and in their corporate lives—have responded to the tragedy with great generosity. The figures are quite outstanding. Let me very briefly single out one example: Austcare’s Farming for Aceh Fund, the brainchild of a farmer from my own electorate, Philip Bornholt. He wants to help farmers rebuild in those affected areas of the globe, and he is looking for donations. He certainly has my support in that. It is the sort of long-term aid that he is proposing that the areas affected by the tsunami will need, and it ought to be recorded as such.

Of course, in these circumstances all of us ask why. The question is all the more important for those of us who say we believe in a higher power. In the case of a tsunami, I suppose the questions become: why did God allow this to happen; what did He do about it? Those are the sorts of questions that have troubled theologians, philosophers and mere mortals right throughout history. They have put forward many contradictory answers. In the great human induced tragedies—the wars, revolutions and so forth—perhaps we can legitimately ask where man is; it is different in the case of natural disasters. Our intricate machines and sciences can tell us how this disaster happened. They can even predict the speed of a tsunami for any given depth of water, but the truth about why it happened, it seems to me, is unknowable—at least in this world.

We can only, I would proffer to the House, be humbled by the powerful—indeed, the quite awful—reminder that we are not ultimately in control. I think every farmer knows that when confronting seasonal circumstances, but we as humanity perhaps need to occasionally be reminded as well that all of us, sooner or later, will face our limitations and, ultimately, our end.

Can I say, out of that, that I think we have been reminded powerfully of the need to ensure that, wherever possible, we ought to seek to be part of the solution. I know ‘not part of the problem’ is a glib saying, but we ought to recognise our shared humanity and we ought to seek to do unto others as we would like them to do unto us. In this case Australians have, of course, done so magnificently. I would like to proffer one further view: the more of us who are powerfully and permanently moved to do what we can for others whenever the opportunity and the need arises, the higher are the chances of a more peaceful, stable and equitable world with better outcomes for people, particularly in less fortunate parts of the world, and at the same time the lower is the chance that all of those people who so tragically lost their lives in this disaster will have died in vain, without a legacy.

Ms MACKLIN (Jagajaga) (3.53 p.m.)—‘A sandy bowl of bitter tears’ is how James Joyce described the Atlantic, but I think it is an apt description of how many people affected by the Tsunami must view the Indian Ocean. That quotation resonates through the first-hand accounts of Caritas International aid worker Louise Crowe, who wrote in her diary from Aceh on 5 January:

‘Indonesia menangis’ or “Indonesia cries” is a slogan that dominates much of the media here in Indonesia. It captures the general feeling of sadness and helplessness of Indonesian people for what has happened to the people of Aceh. Each day there are stories that give very human insights into the tragedy – people who have lost family members and homes, battling injuries, images of the destruction. Yet, as many people are saying, it is not enough to weep. Practical commitment to provide relief, healing and rebuilding of communities is vital.

And there are many stories too of humanity and hope. The dedicated efforts of volunteers, emergency and relief workers, army and police, medi-
cos and so many others are examples of how big our hearts can be.

As we rightly congratulate the Australian and international communities for their generous response to the tsunami disaster, we cannot of course become complacent about the recovery effort. But we can derive hope from so many things surrounding the tsunami recovery efforts—from Sri Lankan railway workers manhandling twisted railway tracks back into straight lines, to international cricket matches and rock concerts to raise money; from the food markets reopening in Banda Aceh to Thai tourist operators calling on their customers to return to Phuket and children in Banda Aceh getting back to school.

There is also the hope that, in having to work together to restore their shattered communities, some of the people who are on opposite sides of ongoing conflicts in Sri Lanka and Indonesia might find it easier to talk about peace. A letter from Father Saveris, who ran a centre for performing arts in Sri Lanka and who lost relatives and many of his students in the disaster, talks about that hope:

Some youths of our centre are already visiting some camps and consoling the people who need mental help. They are also involved in helping out in some camps. Our centre is indeed proud that our Singhalese, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher youths have risen to the occasion and are involved in the work of first aid and rehabilitation. Perhaps this disaster could unite us all and bring about ethnic harmony and peace with justice. Of course we have to work hard in order to achieve it, but we will try to highlight this grand opportunity.

You have to wonder how someone who has suffered so much could talk about the disaster as a ‘grand opportunity’. It is a testament to his nobility in the face of tragedy that he does.

We also know that many Australian families have suffered a loss from the tragedy. In my own electorate, I want to mention a young man whose life was cut short: Paul Giardina, who was taken by the tsunami. My thoughts are particularly with his family. Australians and people from around the world can be justifiably proud of what they have done for the victims of the tsunami. The whole world community, as we have heard from both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, have responded to the disaster on an unimaginable scale and shown that we are all prepared to help without hope of reward. But all of us must now ensure that the millions of tsunami survivors can face ‘the sandy bowl of bitter tears’ again with optimism and with confidence.

I want to take the opportunity on this occasion to also contribute some remarks about the South Australian bushfires. I visited there just after those devastating fires affected the communities on the Eyre Peninsula. In visiting North Shields, Port Lincoln, Wanilla and Cummins, I must say I felt the full weight of the disaster. Some of you, I am sure, have done the drive from Port Lincoln along the Cummins road and before the fire I am sure it would have been a very pleasant drive. But after the fire it was a landscape of trees burnt by the fire and blown down by the force of that terrible wind. With stumps still smouldering and dozens upon dozens of burnt-out buildings, it was a devastation. This was particularly so in Wanilla and North Shields.

Amid the burnt terrain is a little town called Cummins, which was not actually damaged in the fire but the local people wasted no time at all in setting up their community hall. By the time I got there just four days after the fire, this hall was already filled to the rafters with blankets, clothes, kitchen equipment and toys, all donated by local people. Just parked down the way were huge trucks with hay for the farmers to feed
their stock. One family that was in the hall on the day I was there had lost everything in the fire, and it was a very sorry sight to see them picking out cutlery from one of the tables while others were still coming to terms with what had happened to them, still unable to start choosing some things for their homes.

I was also able to visit the disaster recovery centre in Port Lincoln, which was set up by the state government and staffed by public servants and volunteers from groups like Red Cross. I met an amazing farmer who had just come off his farm to sign up for the financial assistance available to assist in his recovery. He described the fire reaching his house and setting alight the curtains. Once he had put that fire out, he had to rush out to try and save his stock. The hardest thing he was confronting was that there was absolutely nothing for his stock to eat. Although he was clearly shattered by such devastation, he was able to draw much comfort from being surrounded by the wonderful volunteers there.

The work of the local residents, who are taking many of the homeless into their homes in Port Lincoln, and the Red Cross and community fire service volunteers that I met on the Eyre Peninsula set yet another example—a magnificent example—of the community service that I hope all of the survivors of those fires have been able to make use of.

At the airport, on leaving Port Lincoln, I met the head of the South Australian Country Fire Service. He was leaving the Eyre Peninsula after what must have been one of the toughest days that I can imagine for anyone. He had been visiting the families of two CFS volunteers who had died fighting the fires. One of the saddest things was that one of the volunteers who had died had recently become a father. The CFS have shown enormous courage in the face of a deadly fire; they have contained it and stopped destruction and loss of life.

I also want to add my condolences to other people who have suffered from tragedies which, unfortunately, have marred this past summer. I was pleased to go with the Prime Minister and others to the funeral of Adam Dunning. Adam Dunning was killed in the Solomon Islands, and his death is yet another terrible reminder of the price some families have to pay for the efforts one of their sons and brothers has made to help others.

More recently, we have had the military casualty in the Iraq conflict where Flight Lieutenant Paul Pardoel died when a British Royal Air Force transport plane crashed. In recognising his tragic death and his contribution, I add my condolences to his family. It is also an opportunity, I think, for us to remember the thousands of people of Iraq and other nations who are still dying in this terrible conflict in the Middle East. I know that my colleagues who will follow me will have more to say about these tragic deaths. It has truly been a terrible summer—one in which the Australian people have not only suffered but shown their extraordinarily generous hearts.

Mr Downer (Mayo—Minister for Foreign Affairs) (4.03 p.m.)—I rise to support the motion. I first heard about the tsunami in the middle of the day, on Boxing Day, when I was out playing golf with my son. A message came through to me that there had been an earthquake in Aceh, that a tidal wave had resulted and that there may have been some deaths and injuries in Phuket. Nobody knew at that time the sheer dimensions of the tsunami. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade immediately established a crisis centre. As time went on, we learned how utterly catastrophic the tsunami turned out to be.
It is worth starting by reflecting on the sheer scale of the human tragedy—280,000 people killed. This figure includes 18 Australians confirmed dead and nine still to be confirmed; over 120,000 dead in Indonesia; 30,000 dead in Sri Lanka; thousands dead in India, Thailand and Maldives; as well as victims in countries such as Malaysia, Burma and even countries on the coast of Africa—Somalia and Kenya.

They are statistics. What is particularly dramatic—as the member for Griffith, the Prime Minister, Senator Hill and others have said to—is to visit the tsunami affected areas. No pictures can describe for you how forceful the tsunami was, nor how terrible was the damage it did.

I think many of us have had the experience of meeting with the families involved. There were two families from my electorate, of whom the Broadbridge family was one. Members will know of Troy Broadbridge, the Melbourne footballer who was killed. His parents live just up the road from me. Visiting those people was pretty tough, but it is not as tough for us as it is for them ultimately. They showed tremendous courage, as did a lot of the other families. It has been a difficult period for all Australians to go through this experience.

The response of Australians, which others have spoken about, has been simply extraordinary since the tsunami and since our relief efforts. When I was in Los Angeles the other day, I was amazed by how many people came up to me and said how impressed they were with the response of the Australians. It was the same in Europe. They felt that Australia had very much led the way—and I do not mean the Australian government. It was not just the Australian government; it was very much something driven by the Australian people themselves. The figure of $235 million is just an estimate of what has been raised so far. I am sure more will be raised, but that is an extraordinary figure.

I think I am right in saying that $14 million was raised at the ‘Asia versus the rest of the world’ cricket game at the MCG. It is unbelievable that so much money could be raised. Australians have shown enormous compassion and a great sense of national unity through all of this, which is tremendously impressive.

I would like to pay tribute to the officials in my department and right across the Public Service for the extraordinary job they have done and for the way the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade established a crisis centre immediately. Three hundred people in DFAT helped right through what is supposed to be the holiday period; 150 of them came back from leave. I think about 50 people in AusAID came back from leave as well. I hope they can make it up some time in the future. The dedication of these people is quite extraordinary.

The Leader of the Opposition made the point about public servants getting grilled by Senate estimates committees and so on. I deal with public servants all around the world, and I think we can be enormously proud in this country of our public servants. It is true that they are not perfect—but then who is?

Mr Beazley—They also get beaten up by ministers from time to time.

Mr Downer—No, in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade they are very well treated by their very kind minister. I speak for my department, as I have been their minister for nearly nine years. Call me biased, but I think they did a fantastic job. I hope that not just the parliament but the public understand what our public servants—PM&C and Defence—and the Australian Defence Force have done. I do not think we should underestimate for a moment the fan-
tastic job the Australian Federal Police did. I went to one of the mortuaries in Phuket. I think others have done that. It was one of the most horrific experiences I have had in my life—and there were these officers from the Australian Federal Police and the disaster victim identification team, working day in and day out in this mortuary. One of the things that struck me was the Australians who came up to me in the mortuary who were just volunteers. Some of them had been on holiday in Phuket. They saw the disaster, they knew help was needed and they did not come home: they continued their holidays, and for their holidays they went and did work in places like the mortuary. I do not need to describe it to the House. You cannot imagine quite what it was like unless you have been to such a place, I can assure you, but you can imagine that it was very bad. I think the response of so many Australians—the volunteers, the public servants, everybody—was simply incredible.

Just about every issue here has been covered by others who have spoken before me, but let me say something about the aid component of what we have done. The Prime Minister and I, talking this through, really felt that Australia just had to take the lead with the medium-term reconstruction. We are an Indian Ocean country, and we are the only developed country in the Indian Ocean littoral. We really had to take a lead here. I think all Australians expected us to as well. So we decided that we would put together a very generous package for Indonesia. We decided that we could do more for Indonesia—and we could do it bilaterally—than we could for the other countries. We have provided support to Sri Lanka, the Maldives and so on. Some countries, like Thailand and India, did not want aid. But I think we were right to focus on Indonesia, and I think the country agrees with us.

We charged the public servants with putting together some proposals, and we eventually came up with the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development. We made a formal decision in cabinet yesterday that the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development would be administered through AusAID and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We have established a joint commission, the first meeting of which will be at the time of the Australia-Indonesia ministerial meeting held in Canberra next month. The joint commission will be co-chaired by the Indonesian foreign minister and me, as well as one economic minister from Indonesia, yet to be nominated, and one from Australia. This is going to be a program that we will have significant control over—of course, it is our money—but it must be done in partnership with the Indonesians. I had the pleasurable task of going to Jakarta and seeing if I could persuade the Indonesians to accept this $1 billion package. You can imagine going to someone and offering them a billion dollars—they readily accepted that.

Some have said that debt forgiveness would be a better way to go; I think this is the best way to go. I think it is better, instead of just giving them some short-term budgetary assistance by postponing the period of debt for some period of time, to give them direct grants and work together with them in trying to help with the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. It is going to be a big job. There is an enormous amount to do. Schools, police stations and the water and sewerage systems have to be rebuilt; communities and villages have to be re-established and rebuilt. I am glad that Australia is playing a leading role in doing all of that.

I want to end by saying that we did not do this because we thought for some international political reason—so the Indonesians
would be forever grateful to us—that we should do it. Speaking here on behalf of all Australians—I do not mean just John Howard, me, Robert Hill and so on, and the Public Service—we did this because we thought we had a humanitarian responsibility as a rich country to be very supportive, as supportive as we could possibly be. We have got the money and we have got the capacity to do it, so we should spend the money in a situation like this. I am sure from my meetings with the Indonesians—and the Prime Minister has had the same experience—that they will be enormously grateful for what we have done. When I spoke to President Yudhoyono about it, he had tears of gratitude and emotion in his eyes. But it is not really about building our relationship with Indonesia; it is making the point that, as a country which is part of a region, we are a prosperous country and a humane people. I think all 20 million of us have demonstrated that in spades as a result of this terrible tsunami.

In conclusion, I am obviously happy to support the motion and to say again what an extraordinary response there has been from the Australian people. It is from everybody we know; you do not come across people who have not been out there donating, helping and wanting to give things. It is just amazing. It really gives you heart in our country. Some people are Liberal and some are Labor, and some are South Australian and some are Victorians—some are former South Australians who became Victorians. There are all sorts of differences we have as a country but the sense of national unity that came out of this and the sense of common values that we have as a country, whatever our politics or whatever our provenance within our own country, was unbelievable. It was wonderful. It made me think that we can be proud of our fantastic country.

Mr RUDD (Griffith) (4.14 p.m.)—There is nothing on God’s earth that prepares human beings for a natural disaster such as this. The impact on our common human family has been beyond comprehension. But, equally, our response as a human family has moved our hearts in a way we have not seen before. It speaks well of the better angels of our human nature which have not yet entirely been extinguished when we see the response of the world to our friends and neighbours in need. Such has been the impact of this great tsunami of 26 December 2004.

We have almost become numb to the statistics. The earthquake and resultant tsunamis which struck the countries of the Indian Ocean littoral on 26 December were among the greatest natural disasters in modern times and the third greatest in the last century. The exact death toll is not known and never will be, but it is probably at least 300,000 and may be more. This is exceeded only by the Yellow River floods in China in 1931 which killed over one million people and the great cyclone and floods in Bangladesh in 1970 which killed 500,000 people. The Tangshan earthquake in China in 1976 killed about 255,000 people while the great Kanto earthquake which struck Tokyo in 1923 killed 143,000.

This has been a disaster of truly epic dimensions. Its grim toll has been borne by many countries across the wider region—Burma; the Seychelles; the Maldives; Somalia; Malaysia; Thailand, where we saw 5,000 killed; southern India, 11,000; Sri Lanka, 30,000, where the toll has been particularly great—quite apart from the thousands of Western tourists who died in these countries, including members of our own Australian family. But no country has been greater affected than Indonesia, where the death toll has reportedly risen to 220,000. The sheer size of the numbers can sometimes prevent us from seeing that each of these is a very individual death, the loss of the precious soul, and in some cases families shattered,
families lost altogether, and with them their entire communities.

In Banda Aceh a couple of weeks ago I saw just some of this at a hospital staffed in part by a medical team from Brisbane. They were good blokes, getting down, doing the job. They introduced me to a little boy of 11 sitting silently on a bed and staring ahead, rendered mute by the tsunami which had taken every member of his family three to four weeks before. He was staring ahead saying nothing. He is one of 11,000 orphans registered so far by UNICEF. In Jakarta, UNICEF told me that they expected that figure to rise soon to 35,000. The little boy’s story and UNICEF’s story are part of the greater tragedy of that province, the greater tragedy of the city of Banda Aceh, which once boasted a population of 350,000—I think the population of this city of Canberra.

If you travel across Banda Aceh by helicopter, as the Prime Minister did and as the Royal Australian Navy made possible for me, what you see is the impact on the city where for the first kilometre or two the surface of the city is rendered purely as asphalt. It has been rendered flat; there is nothing left. It is as though you are looking down on an archaeological site of some millennia ago. There is nothing left but the imprint of the foundations. That is why most people died, not by drowning but by being crushed by the sheer force of the wave. The locals said when the wave hit it was the height of two coconut palms—20 to 25 metres. For those of us who go to the beach often in this country that is beyond even our imagination. You go beyond the first kilometre or two, where there is nothing but asphalt and cleared surfaces, and then you see the odd building remaining for the following kilometre or so. There they all died largely from the impact of the wave and some by drowning. But, beyond that again, everything had been picked up by water and pushed into the remaining kilometre or so of the affected area. That is where people were injured badly by the impact of moving objects. Then there was simple flooding and inundation beyond that. The look of this from the air was like stepping back in history and looking at black-and-white film—a combination of Hiroshima and Dresden. I could think of nothing else, and it was something I had never seen in my life.

Such is the human cost. With the economic cost, the numbers become equally mind numbing. I spoke to the Indonesian minister for national planning in Jakarta about this. This was about three to four weeks after the disaster hit. Bear in mind that this is a very poor area. The initial up-front cost for reconstruction was $US6 billion and the figures continue to roll in.

What of the response? For me, our country’s response and the international community’s response to the disaster has rekindled my faith in the bonds of our common humanity. In Banda Aceh the first foreign aircraft on the ground were from the Royal Australian Air Force. The first fresh water to flow in that city was made to flow by engineers from the Australian Army who got off the plane, found the water main—which had been ruptured in many places by the earthquake, not destroyed by the tsunami itself—and then quickly applied a mobile filtration plant and began providing bottled water to the remaining 200,000 residents of the city on day 2. And Australians were among the first to begin delivering emergency medical services to a traumatised people.

When I saw these Australian Defence Force personnel doing their job, still doing their job, still on duty, several weeks later I felt nothing but pride in being Australian and doing what we as a nation are best at—that is, helping our neighbours and our mates when they need it. I want to place on record my personal appreciation and the apprecia-
tion of the opposition for the leadership of Brigadier Dave Chalmers and the 1,000-plus Australian Defence Force personnel from all three services who have committed with absolute professionalism to the task they have been allotted. We appreciate their personal commitment and their professionalism. As one digger from Robertson Barracks in Darwin, with whom I stood briefly in line handing out plastic bottled water to what seemed to be an endless line of folk from what was left of the city of Banda Aceh, said to me: ‘It feels good, mate, to do something practical and to see a smile on the locals’ faces when, mate, there’s not much to bloody smile about is there?’

The Australian effort has not just been whole of government; it has been whole of nation. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID, the Australian Federal Police and many other government agencies are all doing a first-class job for their country. But, beyond government, there are our great Australian non-government aid agencies: Oxfam, Red Cross, World Vision, Caritas, Care and the others. Then we have the magnificent Australian people themselves: corporate Australia and the communities of Australia pitching in $230 million.

When I met Hassan Wirajuda, the Indonesian foreign minister—a good friend of this country, a good friend of the government, a good friend of us in the opposition—I asked him if he had heard of a town in Queensland called Coolum. He had not. I do not suppose many people here have heard of Coolum, either. Population: 500; on the Sunshine Coast, near to where I come from. When I was buying bread at Coolum on the day before I flew to Indonesia to meet up with Hassan and embark upon my tour of the affected areas, I saw on the baker’s counter a notice calling together the community of Coolum—population 500—to the local community benefit for the tsunami that Saturday evening. It was one such community benefit, of which there have been literally thousands across our country, and it has been a remarkable community effort. Hassan Wirajuda, the foreign minister of the Republic of Indonesia, asked me in the parliament to convey to all Australians who have participated in these local community fundraising efforts his thanks and those of the Indonesian government and people.

This has not just been an Australian effort. We sometimes perhaps think so. But I saw on the ground in Banda Aceh and, more broadly, in Medan and elsewhere that it was a truly international effort. First and foremost, it was an Indonesian effort. Let us not forget that the brunt of the reconstruction task and the immediate humanitarian assistance task was borne by the Indonesian armed forces themselves. The brave men of TNI, under the leadership of General Bam-bang Darwono, were faced with the extraordinary task of physically burying 120,000 corpses. This is something for which armed forces are not really prepared or trained. It was a task still under way when I was there. Then there is the United Nations. There has been criticism of the United Nations, but I have to say that what I encountered on the ground was praise for organisations like UNICEF and the World Food Program, who have borne the brunt of the emergency effort in providing food and water to many isolated communities, and they should be thanked.

Then there is the rest of the international community as well: Germans, Brits, the French—all, it seems, from ‘old Europe’, but all doing their bit. Then there are the Americans, who have also been unfairly criticised. Were it not for the immediate deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln to the region with its heavy lift capabilities there would have been no ability to deliver emergency food and water assistance to isolated communities in the 100-kilometre stretch to the south of
Banda Aceh which could not be reached by other means. The road had been washed away by the tsunami. There was no other means of getting in. There was limitation on the supply of large-scale helicopters; these were supplied by the USS Abraham Lincoln. The single reason why thousands of those villagers are alive today is the swift action of the United States armed forces, and they should be thanked.

We have focused in this debate on Indonesia. Let us not forget Sri Lanka, where the burden has also been great: 31,000 dead. There has been concern in this country about whether aid had reached all the communities on the island, a concern brought to my attention by various members of our House—the members for Lowe, Bruce, Holt, Chisholm, and others. I would like to thank and place on record my appreciation for the work of the Sri Lankan High Commissioner here in Canberra, who at that stage was in Sri Lanka himself, for the assistance he provided to the Treasurer’s brother, the head of World Vision, in unblocking bureaucratic blockages in Sri Lanka to ensure that aid flowed to the relevant communities immediately. His contribution should be acknowledged. I hope soon to be able to visit Sri Lanka.

So what of the future? Once the television coverage has passed—and it has—and once the international community has forgotten what has happened in this tsunami, there are those of us who are close to this place, who are close to Indonesia and who see our future as lying in this region, who have an enduring responsibility to be there for the long haul. I place on record the opposition’s whole-hearted support for the five-year billion-dollar reconstruction package which has been offered to the Indonesian government. This is a good basis, framework and amount of money to work with, and it indicates that we are not there for the short-term fix but for the long haul. May we in this place constantly come back and ask ourselves each year, ‘What has happened to those communities affected by the tsunami?’ Let us not forget them.

The second thing I would say as we look to the future is this—and the Leader of the Opposition has already touched on this: out of adversity springs opportunity. We on this side of the House, and I particularly from this dispatch box, have had a lot of very negative things to say about this government’s handling of the Indonesia relationship. We would argue that that criticism has been well founded. What we see, however, is a remarkable opportunity which now presents itself, an opportunity which I think the Prime Minister so far has given positive indication that he wishes to respond to, and that is to use this event and our response to it to rebuild the Australia-Indonesia relationship. That is a remarkable opportunity which the government now have, and I urge and implore them to take it with both hands, because our country’s future and our security in this region depend on the strength of our relationship with Jakarta and the 230 million people of the Indonesian republic. Please, get it right.

The last thing I would say is, again, something that was touched upon by my colleague the Leader of the Opposition. The foreign minister said before—and he spoke well and with emotion in his speech on this motion before the House—that the government acted in the way in which it acted on the tsunami because it had a sense of humanitarian responsibility. I think he is right in describing what the government and the Australian community felt. I say this in addition, however: when we take that compassionate response and our sense, therefore, of humanitarian obligation, let us also apply it to the silent, non-telegenic, non-dramatic poverty that today afflicts 1.4 billion people across the world—members also of our human fami-
ily. These are folk who are not often on television but for whom we have a universal human responsibility. The Millennium Development Goals, as noted before, provide a vehicle for us to do that. The review conference is up this year, five years into the millennium goals to which this government and this country are committed. Let us commit to them afresh, and to their concrete objectives concerning the elimination of poverty from our planet. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr COSTELLO (Higgins—Treasurer) (4.29 p.m.)—I want to join with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and all the members that have spoken in this debate to record the way in which our lives have been touched by this disaster and to record the way in which our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones, to those who have suffered loss of property and to those whose lives will never be the same as a result of this disaster. What is it that has touched us so much about the tsunami? Obviously, the scale. With more than a quarter of a million people killed, this is a natural disaster in our lifetime which is unprecedented. It is a natural disaster that reminds us again of the ferocity of nature. No-one caused it. No-one is held responsible for it. It is hard to pin blame on anybody, and we know that it could have happened to any of us. We know that when the plates of the earth’s crust move or when a volcano happens in the sea the fallout means that all of us as human beings are fragile. Any of us living by the coast could have been affected by this tsunami. But it was the poor people of Indonesia and Sri Lanka and Thailand and India that were affected.

It reminds us again of the fragility of life. Just when we may have thought that technology had made us safe, that technology had overcome life threatening events, nature reminds us again that essentially it is untamed. Technology may be able to give warning in the future—and let us redouble our efforts to work on those warning systems—but it will never solve or overcome the possibility of the shifting of the plates, the underground volcano or the tsunami that can be produced. There is no technology that will stop that. We are all together here at the mercy of nature. Our hearts go out to our fellow human beings who happened to be in the line through no fault of their own and no decision of their own and who lost their lives as a result.

But just when we were reminded of the ferocity of nature we also got reminded of the generosity of the human spirit. I have never seen a response like it in Australia. I am not talking here of the government response; I am talking of the individual response—the people who rang in on telethons; the kids who donated their savings; the cricketers who played cricket matches; the people who came out to concerts, not just the well-known ones but also the concerts being conducted in communities all over Australia. People want to donate their time and their skills and they want to help.

It is not just help in monetary terms. Doctors volunteered to leave their practices to go and devote their skills. Many thousands of Australians registered with Volunteers International—2,000 had registered by 6 January—wanting to go overseas to donate their skills. They have come out of all walks of life. Some are administrators, some are clerical people, some are food handlers—all wanted to go. Not all of them can be accommodated in the logistics effort. But the extraordinary response reminds you again of the generosity of the human spirit, particularly the generosity that we have seen here in Australia. The way in which the aid agencies were able to receive donations and to get to the front line so quickly reminds us of the wonderful work that they do and that all of the aid agencies have done in relation to this.
Reuters has tried to do an international comparison, in US dollars, of funds raised in relation to this tsunami disaster. Australia’s official contribution is about $US815 million and in private donations, $US177 million. It means that Australia’s response in monetary terms is about the highest in the world, along with Germany. But, of course, in per capita terms it is significantly in excess of any other country in the world. The response in per capita terms by Australians is something like $US50 per head. In Germany—and I am not being at all critical—it is $US13. That will give you some idea of the Australian response compared to that of other countries.

There are reasons for that, obviously. It is our area; they are our neighbours; and we are more focused on the Indian Ocean and Asia. European and North American countries are focused on countries in their region and they see their responsibility in their region. I am not the slightest bit critical of other countries. In providing aid in other areas they would much exceed Australia. But per capita the Australian response is the greatest in the world, and significantly the greatest in the world.

The great challenge I believe is to ensure, now that the funds have been made available, that they all get to the people in need. This is not going to be an easy business. It is going to take a great deal of administration. There are always people who will be quite prepared to use aid for ulterior purposes. It is going to take a lot of work not just by the Australian government—and I think the Australian government is well placed—but by the aid agencies as well to ensure that all of the aid reaches those that genuinely and legitimately need it.

Can I say, because it has been remarked upon, that this response will draw Australia and Indonesia closer together. Of course it will, and that will be a wonderful by-product, but this is not the first time that Australia has come to the assistance of Indonesia. During the Asian financial crisis, we made a billion dollars available to help Indonesia with its economic problems, and that was very significant in drawing the two countries together. We have an ongoing annual aid budget to Indonesia and this aid, the billion dollar package, is over and above that ongoing aid package. In addition to that, we are part of the Paris Club, which has now given a moratorium on all Indonesian debt. The international financing agencies of the World Bank and the IMF are looking at a program which could in fact put in place arrangements which would continue that. The Paris Club debt waiver is a very significant contribution, which Australia has also offered to Indonesia. In my discussions yesterday with the Indonesian finance minister we discussed how that Paris Club debt relief might actually work.

Again I make the point that giving debt relief does not necessarily work out in assistance in Banda Aceh. You have to have programs in place which ensure that these financing packages actually work out in assistance to those who really do need it and those whom we really do want to help in the countries that have been affected. There is no doubt from my discussions with the Indonesian finance minister, both after the tsunami hit and more recently during his visit to Australia, that the Indonesian government recognises the contribution that has been made by our government—but I think importantly not just by our government but by our people. This is the point: the people of Australia have been reaching out and saying to the people of Indonesia, ‘You are our friends, you are our neighbours, and we want to help.’

The shadow minister for foreign affairs when speaking earlier echoed something that I have heard over and over and over again,
that it is a matter of pride that Australia has been able to help—pride that the spirit of generosity was strong but also pride that our economy was strong enough to maintain that assistance. I think that is an important thing to bear in mind: from an economic perspective keeping Australia strong is also part of being able to fulfil our generous role in the region and a leadership role for those that need financial and economic assistance. That is the spirit of Australians. That is the spirit of the Australian government. It is one of the social dividends and returns of economic policy. There will be stronger diplomatic relations as a consequence of this. Out of adversity will come positive benefits. That does not make the adversity worth it, but it salvages some of the wanton suffering and it gives us the ability to bring good out of evil in this situation in the relationship between our two countries.

Mr McCLELLAND (Barton) (4.40 p.m.)—I also join in support of the Prime Minister’s motion on the Indian Ocean tsunami. On the point raised by the Treasurer, on Australia Day when speaking to a gathering of new Australians at a commemoration of their citizenship I mentioned that never before had I personally been more proud to be an Australian or more proud of Australian citizens than I was in response to the relief effort by the Australian government and the Australian people to the victims of the tsunami. My words were met with simultaneous applause, the loudest of which came from the newest of Australians. It was not my words that were applauded but rather the effort of the Australian people and their government, which must be recognised. There is no doubt that we were more quickly on the ground than any other nation and we gave more per head of population than any other nation in the world. That indeed is something that we can be tremendously proud of.

The shadow minister for foreign affairs mentioned the work of our Defence men and women, our police—not only Federal Police but state police forces—our volunteer agencies and our public servants. Since taking on the position of shadow minister for defence, I must say I gain every day in my appreciation and respect for the work of our service men and women. In parliament, if we do something that we think is half meritorious, we tend to issue a press release seeking plaudits from all and sundry. They undertake acts which are truly heroic and truly life saving without any of those plaudits. If we lived in the conditions they lived in, let alone undertook the tasks they undertake, we would need counselling.

In that respect the police officers attached to the Disaster Victim Identification Unit—as I mentioned, not only Federal Police officers but also those provided by the states as well as supporting medical personnel—really must be recognised. The pressure and trials of that work are such that the workers are rotated over a matter of weeks as opposed to months. I understand that, tragically, so many of the victims they are required to identify are children, who bore the disproportionate brunt of casualties given their reduced ability to get to safety. It must be really demanding work, and our appreciation goes out to them. What they do and the trauma that they suffer assists so many families to obtain closure and to know that their family member or loved one has been treated with dignity. We cannot underestimate the tremendous work that they are undertaking.

So much has been said on the tsunami, and I can only join with those words, but I seek to make some brief comments about Australian Protective Service officer Adam Dunning and Flight Lieutenant Paul Martin Pardoel. I join with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in their comments earlier. Three days before Christmas I
was invited by the Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Ellison, to join him in travelling to the Solomon Islands. I place on the record of the Australian parliament that we can be proud of the way he fulfilled his responsibilities in leading that delegation. We ultimately brought back Adam Dunning’s body. Senator Ellison conducted himself with dignity and was very warm in expressing his compassion and that of the Australian people to Adam Dunning’s family. I can only congratulate him on that.

Senator Ellison generously invited me to address a funeral service held for Adam in the Solomon Islands. We paid our respects and recognised the tremendous work not only of our policemen and policewomen, our Defence Force representatives and Australian Protective Service officers but also of supporting nations, who joined us in expressing their grief. I think it was reported in some papers that the choir of the island representatives, RAMSI, the regional assistance mission, was truly moving.

Comments have been made about the fact that Adam was awarded a commendation for his bravery in disarming a young man with a replica pistol in circumstances where Adam would have been justified, for his own safety, in discharging his firearm. The fact that he did not is one of the reasons that we as a mission have so much respect from the Solomon Islands government and the people of the Solomon Islands for the way Australian servicemen and servicewomen and Federal Police and Protective Service officers have conducted themselves. This really was a courageous act. We were advised that Adam was an expert kickboxer and, again going beyond the call of duty, he himself conducted voluntary martial arts classes for the youth of the Solomon Islands to try to give them that sense of dignity and self-respect that he had.

In expressing our condolences to Adam’s family and his fiancee, I also voice our tremendous respect for them. When Adam’s body was both being delivered to the aircraft and being removed from it by his colleagues and his workmates, they were very moved by the occasions. The Dunning family made a point, despite their grief, of personally thanking those officers for what they did. To his mum, Christine, his dad, Mike, his two sisters, Sarah and Emma, and his fiancee, Elise Wiscombe, we express our appreciation for Adam’s life and our sorrow.

I obviously did not have personal involvement with Flight Lieutenant Paul Martin Pardoel, but he was a dedicated member of not only the Royal Australian Air Force but also the Royal Air Force. He fulfilled his professional duties with great distinction and was noted for his generosity, his patience and his general Australian attitude of being respectful in his role as a trainer of navigators coming through the Air Force. Again, the opposition wishes to join in expressing to his father, John, his mother, Margaret, his wife, Kellie, and their children, Jordan, Jackson and India, our great sorrow. We recognise his contribution as well as the contribution of family members and the contribution of the families of our defence forces, who have to put up with great sacrifices so that the tremendous work of our Defence Force men and women, our police officers and our Protective Service personnel can be undertaken.

Mrs MOYLAN (Pearce) (4.50 p.m.)—I greatly appreciate the opportunity to add my voice in support of the Prime Minister’s motion and also of the expressions of sympathy for the terrible losses inflicted on so many in the wake of the Indian Ocean tsunami. This unprecedented disaster had a profound effect on the lives of those living in the immediately affected areas, on the many Australians who work, live and holiday in these areas and on their families, friends and work col-
leagues who also perhaps work, live or holiday there. May I add my voice in praise of the many Australian people who have contributed in a variety of ways to alleviating the suffering of those who must now face the heartache and challenges ahead.

The member for Brand expressed surprise at the generous outpouring from the Australian people—and I think all of us were caught a little by surprise at just how big this has been. It is truly remarkable. I also think that over the past decade there has been a very personal engagement between the people living in the area of the Indian Ocean and many Australians. Australian people have travelled a lot and begun to work and holiday in this area. They have begun to make friends one on one with people of the various countries of the Indian Ocean. It is a very important region, and in many ways our relationship with the region has not been developed as fully as some of us may have hoped. One would hope that this will lead to a greater development of informal and formal relations with countries in the Indian Ocean.

I do feel that a real bond of affection has developed between our people and those of many Indian Ocean countries, and the response has been both a practical one and one whereby people have genuinely wept with their friends. As the member for Jagajaga said, it is not enough to weep—and I agree—but there has been this heartfelt emotion, as well as a very practical response that has been truly wonderful, which has touched all of us. This amazing outpouring from the heart, along with the practical offers of help, has touched many. Certainly people in my electorate of Pearce have been touched and have given generously. As I travelled around the many different country towns, hamlets and suburbs in my electorate, I saw fundraisers for the tsunami victims going on everywhere. That in itself was very touching. Everyone was contributing in some way.

It is at times like these that we all reflect on the professionalism and the compassion of those in the Public Service, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian defence services and those in all of the non-government agencies who have sprung into action very quickly and generously shared their talents and abilities to assist in any way they could. It has also been very moving to see young Australians engaging in this and offering their time to contribute in whatever way they felt was useful. For example, some of the young medical students have done an amazing job helping to identify victims. As Minister Downer has said, this is a very unpleasant and a very difficult task, yet they have been enormously generous with their time and their ability.

Rebuilding the many communities who lost so many people and, in some cases, almost all of the built infrastructure will be a long and arduous process, and it does require an ongoing commitment. It is like any bereavement: often a lot of sympathy is offered at the time and then in the months after that people are left to their own devices. I appreciate the comments of the Treasurer today: it is true that Australia is now in a good position economically to make a contribution not just for now but for the long term. Our countries are interdependent. As John Donne, the famous poet, said, no man is an island. Our country may be an island, but no country is an island when it comes to living in a region. We are all part of the main and we need to engage as partners and understand the interdependence that goes with that partnership.

I want to personally thank the Prime Minister and our ministers for their very quick response and the generous commitment on behalf of all Australians. We welcome the ongoing nature of that assistance that has been offered. Indeed, I fully support the further leadership shown recently by the Prime Minister.
Minister in calling for leaders of all wealthy nations to assist those nations who are constantly mired in poverty. It is a noble cause, and I think the Prime Minister has shown considerable leadership in this respect. Once again, my heartfelt sympathy goes to all of those who have suffered and to those still waiting to hear from loved ones who are unaccounted for. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you.

Mr Garrett (Kingsford Smith) (4.56 p.m.)—I join with members on both sides of the House as we support the motion before us and record our sympathy for those affected by the Boxing Day tsunami and our appreciation of—as is the phrase that has been used in this House—the great generosity of spirit that has been shown by Australians following this event.

The Indonesian Consulate is located in Kingsford Smith and on Australia Day I had the opportunity personally to express my condolences to the Indonesian Consul General, Mr Wardana Wardana. Additionally, a number of worthy fundraising initiatives sprang up almost as if by magic in that seat, with the local council, schools and the community coming together with the consulate to raise money for people affected in Indonesia. I am pleased to say those activities are still taking place.

As the House would know, it was my great privilege, along with other members of Midnight Oil, to be invited to perform at a major fundraising concert, WaveAid, held at the Sydney Cricket Ground on January 28. I will take a few moments of the House’s time to explore this. The concert featured a number of Australia’s best known performing artists: Kasey Chambers, Nick Cave, Powderfinger, Missy Higgins, the Finn Brothers, John Butler, Silverchair and, by invitation, the Oils. This complex and huge event was an initiative of a number of bands and their management companies who, after seeing the chaos and destruction, felt, as many did, that something simply had to be done. It was put together in a breathtakingly short period of time with artists, staff, service suppliers, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust—indeed, everyone associated with the concert—donating their time, giving their skills and working together for a common cause. The result: 48,600 people at the cricket ground plus millions of viewers at home generating at least $2.2 million, with more fundraising to come. The aim: to rebuild schools and villages in some of the worst affected communities in the region by working closely with the Australian non-government organisations in that area.

As the Treasurer noted, WaveAid was just one of countless responses to the tsunami as fundraising events of all kinds emerged spontaneously across Australia. It was a tidal wave of generosity to counter the loss suffered by our neighbours who experienced nature’s tidal wave. In many places people simply wanted to chip in, to the extent that in Kingsford Smith—in fact, in Coogee—on New Year’s Eve tens of thousands of dollars was spontaneously raised by the sale of flowers and candles and donations from the public. Another $10,000 was raised at the local pub on the same night as patrons just simply dug deep. These examples—and there are many others around Australia, and members would know them well—have been replicated in schools, businesses and shopping centres. Put simply, wherever Australians gathered there was a basic decent impulse shared amongst many from all backgrounds to help others out in the face of an overwhelming tragedy.

Like every other person who has spoken today, I commend those who have shown that generosity at this time. The impulse that was felt and acted upon and the impulse that we commend is a great one. It is the impulse
of generosity, the impulse of sharing and the impulse to do something practical and constructive when you see that loss is suffered by your neighbours. Our hope is that that impulse will continue and make itself felt not only when there are natural disasters but also in the case of the poverty that afflicts many of our neighbours, poverty that is not necessarily caused by natural events. May the energy, the example and the support shown by Australians who faced up to the tsunami now reach those in need right around the world.

Mr GEORGIOU (Kooyong) (5.01 p.m.) —I wish to support the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Treasurer and other previous speakers. We all have our own recollection of the moment when we heard about the tsunami. I first heard of it when I was unstacking the dishwasher and the news came across in a flash on Channel 10. Even during those early moments, it was clear that something quite catastrophic had happened. However, it was only in the following days that the magnitude of the disaster unfolded, although it has to be said that the immensity of the devastation is even now impossible to grasp.

Like others of my generation, I can recall nothing in my lifetime that approaches the destruction, the devastation, the loss of life and the sheer mayhem of the Asian tsunami. It was a chilling reminder of the power and the ferocity that nature is capable of unleashing and the shocking loss of life, property and livelihood that can follow. Day after day, we have all watched numbing media coverage and have simply shaken our heads in disbelief at the vision before us. Yet those on the ground—journalists, politicians, aid workers and others—tell us, and once again it has been reflected in this debate, that the pictures simply do not convey the reality of the devastation. We mourn for Australian citizens and almost 300,000 of our Asian neighbours who lost their lives and we pray for the literally millions of people, including family members, who were devastated by the loss afflicted by the tsunami.

At the same time—and this is again a common theme—I am filled with a sense of pride in our country and our people. Australia has always been very generous and caring in supporting literally hundreds of fundraising causes and campaigns every year. But the tsunami and what followed have seen Australia and Australians respond in a way never before contemplated. It is simply staggering that $235 million in money or kind has been given in a few short weeks, and there is more coming. People of all backgrounds, interests, professions and persuasions have contributed in myriad ways, throwing coins in collection boxes at supermarkets and performing in nationally televised concerts, international cricket matches, fun runs and garage sales. And corporate Australia has made a major effort, both directly and by matching the contributions of employees.

There is an ongoing debate about whether or not there is an Australian national character. We are always going to be arguing about that, but to my mind there are some fundamental components of our character that are reflected in the tsunami relief effort—generosity, spontaneity and a capacity for combining voluntary efforts. We all have our stories to tell. In my electorate of Kooyong, a young man named Jason Thomas decided to take matters into his own hands and mount the Boroondara tsunami relief effort. He created an army of volunteers virtually overnight. He linked into the local Rotary Club group, sought staff support and warehouse accommodation from the local council and set out to seek donations of basic medical supplies—bandages, aspirin, Dettol and the like. He has been fantastically supported by individual donors, by virtually every pharmacist in the electorate and by medical supply companies. Within a few short weeks,
something like five tonnes of desperately needed medical aid has been gathered. Last Sunday, Jason Thomas flew from Melbourne to Sri Lanka together with a team of 14 Melbourne doctors, and next week these desperately needed medical supplies will be distributed throughout Sri Lanka by the Rotary Club.

That coming together of individuals and organisations has been repeated thousands of times all over Australia. The government has been part of this. Governments are not perfect, and they are not always generous, but the immediacy, the magnitude and the generosity of the Australian government’s response—a response supported fully by the opposition, a response that was beyond politics—has made all of us proud. The response has been not just in financial contributions but also in expertise, skills and the dedication of our armed forces, police, public servants and civilian workers who have been very appropriately complimented in the course of this debate.

We extend our condolences, our sense of sorrow and our overwhelming sense of support to the Australians who suffered personal loss and to the hundreds of thousands of Asian neighbours who have been devastated by the events of 26 December. As a nation and as individuals, we can be proud of how we have responded and what we have been able to achieve. My hope is that this capacity for compassion, this concern for people who have suffered so much and this sense of community will be maintained and that we will work closely with the countries involved in the crisis to maintain an effective response. The Treasurer’s comments on the imperative nature of following up are well made. I commend the motion to the House.

Mrs ELLIOT (Richmond) (5.06 p.m.)—It is with immense sorrow that I rise to speak in relation to the devastation of the tsunami. As many previous speakers have noted, the vast loss of life, the injuries and the property loss have been overwhelming. But I also rise to speak with pride, because, following the tragedy of the tsunami, I saw firsthand the generosity of the families of Richmond. Shortly after the tsunami struck, I joined the Australian Medical Association’s appeal for medical supplies to help treat the sick and injured. But local families wanted to do much more. At their request, the community appeal was extended to include clothes, towels, bedding and soap. The result was overwhelming. The office was literally inundated with boxes and bags—thousands of goods that people brought in day after day, from early in the morning until late at night.

And for many days following this, so many volunteers were in my office sorting and packaging clothes and giving their time to help families devastated by this tragedy. People from all walks of life, all across the electorate, came day after day to spend so many hours sorting out these goods. Literally thousands of items filled 80 large packing boxes and these have been sent to Sri Lanka from the families of the North Coast. Even though our appeal has now finished, people are still coming to the office wanting to donate goods. So I would like to thank each and every person who gave so generously to this appeal and the volunteers who helped us pack and sort the clothes.

Our community has also been digging deep and supporting a number of fundraising events held across Richmond. Many successful appeals have been held by communities from Byron Bay to Tweed Heads, from the auctions of surfboards to community concerts—one featuring our local orchestra, the Northern Rivers Symphony Orchestra. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised from these community events. One appeal I was very pleased to attend was held at the Oasis Pools at Banora Point, which
approximately 200 local families attended. Recognition must go to Julie Anthony for donating her time to perform for the crowd on the night. It was there that I also had the honour of meeting Jit Chairap, a Thai surf lifesaver who was trained at a local surf club. Jit was one of the real heroes of the tsunami, saving many lives at great risk to his own after the wave had hit in Phuket. On behalf of the families of Tweed Heads I would like to congratulate Jit and the terrific surf lifesavers who did such a wonderful job in training him.

I was also very honoured to attend services in Murwillumbah and Byron Bay on the national day of mourning. It was at the Byron Bay ceremony that I heard the moving story of Moi Vogel, as told by her mum, Joy. The Vogels are a very close-knit family from Mullumbimby, who tragically lost their daughter Moi and their son-in-law in this tragedy. Speaking to Moi’s mother brought home to me the true nature of this disaster. It seems that no corner of the globe was left untouched by the tsunami’s devastation. I know the thoughts and prayers of our community are with the Vogel family and the millions of other families devastated and affected by this tragedy. My hope is that those who have suffered will not be forgotten and that this tragedy can mark the start of a new age of tolerance, forgiveness and kindness in our society.

Question agreed to, honourable members standing in their places.

Mr PEARCE (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (5.11 p.m.)—To enable further debate to take place in the Main Committee on the Indian Ocean tsunami, I present a copy of the motion moved by the Prime Minister which was agreed to by the House earlier today. I move:

That the House take note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by Ms Gillard) adjourned.

MAIN COMMITTEE
Indian Ocean Tsunami
Reference

Mr BARTLETT (Macquarie) (5.11 p.m.)—by leave—I move:

That the following orders of the day be referred to the Main Committee for debate: Address in reply to the Governor-General’s speech—Resumption of debate; and Indian Ocean tsunami—Motion to take note of paper: Resumption of debate.

Question agreed to.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORTS
Report Nos 16 to 25 of 2004-05
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—On behalf of the Speaker, I present the Auditor-General’s Audit reports Nos 16 to 25 of 2004-05 entitled No. 16-Performance audit-Container Examination Facilities: Australian Customs Service; No. 17-Performance audit-The administration of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality-Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Department of the Environment and Heritage; No. 18-Performance audit-Regulation of non-prescription medicinal products: Department of Health and Ageing-Therapeutic Goods Administration; No. 19-Performance audit-Taxpayers’ Charter: Australian Taxation Office; No. 20-Performance audit-The Australian Taxation Office’s management of the Energy Grants (Credits) Scheme; No. 21-Financial statement audit-Audits of the financial statements of Australian Government entities for the period ended 30 June 2004; No. 22-Performance audit-Investment of public funds; No. 23-Performance audit-Audit Activity Reports: July to December 2004-Summary of outcomes; No. 24-Performance audit-Integrity of Medicare enrolment data: Health Insurance Commis-
sion, and No. 25-Performance audit-Army capability assurance processes-Department of Defence.

Ordered that the reports be made parliamentary papers.

**DOCUMENTS**

Mr Pearce (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (5.12 p.m.)—Documents are presented as listed in the schedule circulated to honourable members. Details of the documents will be recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and I move:

That the House take note of the following documents:

- Civil Aviation Safety Authority—Report for 2003-04
- Foreign Investment Review board—Report for 2003-04
- Industry Research and Development board—Report for 2003-04

Debate (on motion by Ms Gillard) adjourned.

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

Withdrawal

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Jenkins)—Order! In view of the comments earlier today by the Leader of the Opposition withdrawing the MPI, I do not propose to read the proposed matter of public importance to the House.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Mr Beazley (Brand—Leader of the Opposition) (5.13 p.m.)—by leave—I move:

That leave of absence from 8 February to 17 March 2005 be given to the honourable Member for Sydney for maternity purposes, and leave of absence from 8 to 17 February 2005 be given to the honourable Member for Prospect for paternity purposes.

Question agreed to.

**CUSTOMS AMENDMENT BILL 2004**

**TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (SMALL BUSINESS MEASURES) BILL 2004**

**SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE (LEARNING TOGETHER—ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY) BILL 2004**

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2004**

**STATES GRANTS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSISTANCE) LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2004**

**HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (100% MEDICARE REBATE AND OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2004**

**AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2) 2004**

**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION (TARGETED ASSISTANCE) AMENDMENT BILL 2004**

**TEXTILE, CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT (POST-2005 SCHEME) BILL 2004**

**CUSTOMS TARIFF AMENDMENT (TEXTILE, CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR POST-2005 ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2004**

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS (INTERCEPTION) AMENDMENT (STORED COMMUNICATIONS) BILL 2004**

**AVIATION SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2004**

**NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) BILL 2004**
NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) (CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2004
CLASSIFICATION (PUBLICATIONS, FILMS AND COMPUTER GAMES) AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2) 2004
AUSTRALIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE ORGANISATION AMENDMENT BILL 2004
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION REPORTING) BILL 2004
TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (RETIREMENT VILLAGES) BILL 2004
JAMES HARDIE (INVESTIGATIONS AND PROCEEDINGS) BILL 2004
SURVEILLANCE DEVICES BILL 2004
FAMILY LAW AMENDMENT (ANNUITIES) BILL 2004
COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2004
WORKPLACE RELATIONS AMENDMENT (AGREEMENT VALIDATION) BILL 2004
FISHERIES (VALIDATION OF PLANS OF MANAGEMENT) BILL 2004
NATIONAL WATER COMMISSION BILL 2004
HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 3) 2004

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

SPEAKER’S PANEL
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Pursuant to standing order 17, on behalf of the Speaker I lay on the table the Speaker’s warrant revoking the nomination of the honourable Member for Brand and nominating the honourable Member for Fraser to be a member of the Speaker’s panel to assist the Chair when requested to do so by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker.

MAIN COMMITTEE
The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I advise the House that I have fixed Wednesday, 9 February 2005, at 9.40 a.m., as the time for the next meeting of the Main Committee, unless an alternative day or hour is fixed.

ELECTION PETITION
Court of Disputed Returns
The Clerk—I present a copy of a petition Wheele v the Australian Electoral Commissioner and others filed in the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, disputing the House of Representatives election for the Division of Moreton in the State of Queensland held on Saturday, 9 October 2004.

COMMITTEES
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Membership
The DEPUTY SPEAKER—The Speaker has received advice from the Chief Opposition Whip that he has nominated Mr Hatton to be a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in place of Mr Beazley.

Mr PEARCE (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (5.16 p.m.)—by leave—I move:
That Mr Beazley be discharged from the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade and that, in his place, Mr Hatton be appointed a member of the committee.

Question agreed to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS
Mr CADMAN (Mitchell) (5.17 p.m.)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I wish to make a personal explanation.
The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Jenkins)—Does the honourable member claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr CADMAN—Yes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—Please proceed.

Mr CADMAN—On 4 February the Australian published a report which I refute. The report said I had described older women who became pregnant as ‘dumb’. I do not think like that, I do not speak like that and I do not believe that I said words that any way resemble those comments. Sensitivity and compassion are needed in these issues. Had I ever used words like that I would have instantly apologised. I reject the assertions of the report.

BUSINESS

Rearrangement

Mr PEARCE (Aston—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (5.17 p.m.)—I move:

That orders of the day Nos 1 and 2, government business, be postponed until a later hour this day.

Question agreed to.

SUPERANNUATION SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Cognate bills:

AUTHORISED DEPOSIT-TAKING INSTITUTIONS SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

LIFE INSURANCE SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

GENERAL INSURANCE SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT PROVIDERS SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUPERVISORY LEVIES COLLECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

AUTHORISED NON-OPERATING HOLDING COMPANIES SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 8 December 2004, on motion by Mr Brough:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (5.18 p.m.)—The seven bills we are considering today constitute a meaningful package of changes to the cost recovery and other levy arrangements for regulatory financial agencies. The bills make changes to the current system of determining how the funding burden is to be distributed between those financial entities that are subject to regulation by government authorities. The levies paid by financial entities fund the majority of costs incurred by sector regulators including the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and of course the Australian Taxation Office. Currently these levies are imposed on financial institutions to support the operational costs of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and certain consumer protection and market integrity functions of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Taxation Office.

In 2002-03, financial sector levies raised $75 million. At present, a levy rate per dollar of assets is subject to minimum and maximum amounts for institutions in each of the industry sectors. Levy rates are set to take into account the amount of time spent on the supervision of the various sectors. Superannuation funds contribute around 40 per cent of levy revenue, authorised deposit taking institutions contribute 30 per cent and insur-
ers and retirement savings account providers contribute the remainder. For some time, smaller financial institutions have argued that they bear a disproportionate share of the burden under the current arrangements. They have argued that the cap on the maximum amount payable means that, for example, large banks involved in complex transactions pay only a little more than smaller authorised deposit takers with relatively straightforward operations.

In October 2002, the government established a review of the levy arrangements. The review and the government’s response were released in May 2004. The most significant recommendation arising from the review was the separation of the levy into two components—the first based on the cost of supervision, subject to a cap of $1.5 million; and the second based on ‘system impact and vertical equity’ considerations, with no cap. It was recommended that the second element should make up 10 to 30 per cent of APRA’s funding requirement. The government has accepted this proposal and these bills make the necessary legislative changes.

The bills propose two elements of financial sector levies. One element is based on the cost of supervision and is calculated on a percentage levy rate on assets set on minimum and maximum amounts. This is similar to current arrangements but involves greater equity through these maxima and minima amounts. The second element relates to the potential financial sector impact of a financial institution. It is a low percentage levy rate on assets. This also addresses vertical equity concerns with smaller institutions paying a proportionately lower amount as their stake in the total financial system is much smaller. Labor has consulted with the sector, in particular the Credit Union Services Corporation (Australia) Ltd, which has indicated broad support in principle for the bills before the House. However, it should be noted that these bills simply create a regulatory framework by which the relevant minister is able to set the fees. Labor will be closely monitoring the process by which these levies are set, to ensure that it preserves the policy intent of the bills and provides for appropriate consultation with the sector.

I note that these bills will lead to a new charging regime and potentially a series of new taxes. Every time the government approaches an election it promises that in office it will not increase or introduce any new taxes. However, the Clerk of the Senate has provided me with a list of all the new taxes and charges that the Howard government has introduced since coming to office in 1996. The current total number of new or increased taxes is now around 170. That is, of course, 170 broken promises by this—now, officially—the highest taxing government in Australia’s history. These bills add to this list of broken promises.

The Productivity Commission in a report in 2001 indicated that in the case of some of these agencies the charges exceeded the cost of the service. In the case of ASIC, for example, the revenue was $201 million in 1999-2000 while total expenses were only $139 million. Labor remains concerned that charges by financial regulators do not become a hidden form of taxation which will eventually inevitably be passed on to consumers. In fact, the Treasury has indicated that the new framework should result in a substantial increase in levies for the largest financial institutions. The opposition will continue to hold the government to account for the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of collecting levies to fund financial regulators. We will seek to ensure that consumers’ interests are protected and that charges are kept as low as is possibly practical.
Mr CADMAN (Mitchell) (5.24 p.m.)—In 1997 the financial system of Australia was examined by the Wallis committee. One of the recommendations was that a new process of raising levies to pay the costs of some of the financial regulators be instigated. The government established an inquiry into that process to examine how that should be done. As APRA is funded primarily from levies collected from the financial institutions that it prudentially supervises, it was important that this examination be done carefully. The terms of reference for the 2002 review specified that the review was required to examine the arrangements for determining how financial sector levies should be imposed on the financial services sector. The 2002 review therefore considered issues such as industry cross-subsidisation, the merits of placing caps on the amount of levy an institution is required to pay and reporting on the cost of supervision—all of which were finalised by the review which was chaired by the Department of the Treasury, resulting in the bills before the House today.

This is an important measure, because it covers a wide range of organisations. The levy is imposed on various organisations broadly described as financial services institutions: authorised deposit-taking institutions, foreign bank branches, superannuation funds, life insurers, friendly societies, general insurers, retirement savings account providers and non-operating holding companies. The levy is to be reviewed on an annual basis, overcoming some of the criticisms that were enunciated by the spokesman for the opposition—that is, that the levy ought to be able to be geared in such a way that there is not an oversupply of funds to the institutions supported by the levy. For example, in the 2004-05 financial year the levy rate for superannuation funds was 4.2 per cent, while in the 2003-04 financial year the levy rate for superannuation funds was 3.5 per cent. So there is a variation from year to year.

The levy amount paid by each institution is determined by multiplying the assets of the institution by the sector’s levy rate. Therefore, we have a variation in the way in which organisations subscribe to this process. Maximum and minimum amounts are prescribed so that each sector cannot be overcharged or pay too little. For example, the maximum amount payable by a superannuation fund in 2004-05 is $99,000. An institution cannot pay less than the minimum amount. For example, the minimum amount for a superannuation fund in 2004-05 is $600. The processes are in place and the estimate is that in 2003-04 approximately $85 million was raised. For the current financial year finishing on 30 June it is forecast that $96 million will be raised by these levies.

It is interesting that the House is required to consider a large number of amendments in seven bills: the Financial Institutions Supervisory Levies Collection Amendment Bill 2004—these are great titles!—the Authorised Non-operating Holding Companies Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004; the Superannuation Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004; the Retirement Savings Account Providers Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004; the General Insurance Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004; the Life Insurance Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004; and the Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004. These bills cover all those various financial institutions.

These are costs, of course, that everybody realises will eventually be paid by those who insure, superannuate or carry out some of the other financial processes. It does require the passing on of these costs. Regulated financial sector entities will continue to pay financial
sector levies, which, in turn, will be used essentially to fund the operations of APRA—the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority—as well as certain related activities undertaken by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission—ASIC—and the Australian Taxation Office. So these various levies get passed on generally to APRA, with some finances passing on to ASIC and the ATO.

The minister, in introducing this legislation, said:

These arrangements recognise the particular importance of regulating the largest institutions in our financial system as the larger the financial institution the greater the likely impact on the financial system and the economy in the event of it facing financial difficulties or failing.

We have seen that, and we understand why there is a need for supervisory processes to be put in place that are transparent, rigorous but fair, and not over-costly or expensive.

I would suggest that we need to watch these costs factors in the financial sector. It seems to me that the financial regulatory process in Australia is a very rigorous one, and it is one where often the providers have gone over the top in requiring professional indemnity and insurance against anything that might happen, from tsunamis to failed marriages, ill health and all sorts of impossible things that may occur. The 150-page documents that are required in many of the financial advisings indicate that the lawyers have been rigorous in seeking to protect every possible aspect of a financial transaction. This is onerous and unbelievably extensive, in my view—too extensive and impractical in many cases. I know, Mr Deputy Speaker Adams, that you would be shocked and absolutely flabbergasted to learn that such a simple thing as changing a name on an insurance policy would require documents of 150 pages. I know that, with your care for detail, you would carefully read every page, every line and every letter of that 150-page document requiring you to change your name on an insurance policy. Why is this so? It is because of the over-enthusiasm of the legal institutions to protect everything that moves. I believe that it is time we revisited this area and looked for a simpler approach, one where we could gain the supervisory rigour that is required. Nobody wants to encourage a recurrence of an HIA failure. One wants to have adequate resources for APRA, ASIC and, indeed, for the ATO. They need to have the resources to supervise, because one of the failures in the past process was that there was a 10-year record for HIH that was identified by the forerunner of APRA, the insurance commission, and action was not taken.

So these bills seek to provide strong supervision and adequate resources. However, in so doing, costs are lifted, complexity is increased and, therefore, the paperwork is the major problem. The problem is that it is an irony that the people who need the most assistance in terms of financial advice are going to be in a position where they just cannot jolly well afford to buy it, because financial advisers, acting on the processes that we have set in place, are charging fees that are going to preclude the people most needing advice from gaining that advice. This is a problem we need to deal with. It is something that I believe that advice providers are aware of, but the finance provider, the person standing behind the individual, giving advice, is protected lock, stock and barrel in such a way that I do not believe the intentions of the government are being fulfilled for those who are most in need of getting the advice they richly deserve. It is a daunting process to unravel this but we need to tackle it. The financial services reform that has gone on, of which this levy setting is a part, needs an examination for us to really be able to claim that we are in the forefront of finan-

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cial management and that we are going to become the financial headquarters of Asia.

People with the greatest financial assets can most easily pay for advice on financial services, so the point I am making is that those with the largest assets and the greatest capacity are the ones who are going to get the best advice because of the cost factors built into advice provisions. There will be a greater barrier for people to gain advice than there was previously, particularly for those people who really need it. As I understand it, for people setting aside only a small amount in a superannuation fund, a life fund or general assurance, the advice is just as rigorous and just as extensive as for people making a large investment, so the people making large transactions are the ones who will most readily be able to pay.

Some interesting statistics were reported in *Money Management* on 20 May 2004 in an article by Jim Minto, Chief Executive of Tower Australia, who said:

Statistics from one area of study indicated that the average Australian has term life insurance of $143,000. This is 26 per cent of the required amount calculated. Further studies reported that the average Australian’s income is under-insured by an annual benefit amount of $26,000. That means that an average Australian is probably insured at a rate of about $8,000 or $9,000, which is not a significant amount. But the cost of servicing that and the fees involved for the financial advice required to service that are just as much as if people were fully covered and insured to the full amount, which is some hundreds of thousands of dollars—roughly half a million dollars. So the process of advice giving and the cost of doing it is something that I believe the parliament needs to give attention to. In the article, Jim Minto said:

> ... the under-insurance epidemic currently plaguing average Australians will undoubtedly continue.

He is saying that we will continue the under-insurance. We will continue the low contribution factors which average a benefit of something like $8,000 or $9,000 per annum and for which there will be advice costs from time to time. He continues:

This means advisers, who need to earn a reasonable living, might naturally gravitate to service those clients who have larger balances or premiums.

There is the industry saying that this is a natural thing if you are going to earn an income by advice giving. What does that leave for the average person to do? It means they are stuck with the banks or other financial institutions, which may or may not want to give advice. I think that the government needs to look at this. My own view is that there needs to be government support for this process, which is not my personal inclination. Alternatively, the banks ought to take up some sort of social and corporate responsibility in society and provide a service for those low contributors, those small fund holders, so that they can at reasonable cost—which is below the cost applied to the larger fund holders—provide advice to the average person. I think that is a change that is needed.

With the introduction of choice in superannuation, this becomes an even more significant thing. A person seeking to consolidate their superannuation funds, for instance, may have six, seven or eight funds with small amounts. I cannot imagine any of those fruit-pickers, builders’ labourers or people who have worked for a series of bosses—people who have small amounts here, there and everywhere under various insurers or with various providers—wanting to pay a fee to have the process consolidated. There must be a way of consolidation in choice that we can find which will be cost-effective both for the providers and for the individuals concerned, otherwise they will not do it. It is
very much to their advantage that the initiative of choice—implemented by this government and rejected time and again by the Senate, and a critical factor in allowing people to have a worthwhile retirement benefit—be pushed on with and provided at a reasonable cost.

The fact of the matter is that those who most need advice about the consolidation of their accounts into one superannuation fund of their choice will be the least likely to be able to afford the advice they need about how to go about it. Most providers cannot afford the time required under the present processes to do a 150-page document, carefully prepared, to which personal and professional competence pertains, which means that that provider of information and advice is liable at all times to be sued for incorrect advice given. Those factors have to be covered, and the fees must cover that process. But the requirements to achieve that end are too onerous. Therefore, as we move into choice in super, I believe that we need to be more careful in the way we are doing things and think through the process and the outcome.

Finally, I would like to draw to the attention of the House an article in *Money Management* on 3 February this year where Craig Phillips interviewed a person formerly involved in actively looking at financial services reform and providing advice within the Australian government. Pauline Vamos is a former Australian Securities and Investments Commission director of FSR licensing. She is now consulting with overseas governments about financial services in Australia. On her return from Asia, she made some interesting comments. In this article in *Money Management*, she said that she was:

“... shocked by the ferocity of what some of our neighbours are saying, with some saying ‘we don’t want anything like Australia’,” Vamos told *Money Management*.

She was saying that Asian entities are saying that they do not want to go into the complexity and cost that Australia has imposed on its financial services industry. That is something of a warning. It may be only a small voice and only a single voice at this point, but my knowledge of the industry and my impression of the industry indicate to me that it is a voice worth listening to and taking note of.

**Mr BROUGH** (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer) (5.44 p.m.)—The Superannuation Supervisory Levy Imposition Amendment Bill 2004 and related bills implement the legislative elements of the government’s response to *The review of financial sector levies*. In undertaking certain consumer protection and market integrity functions relating to prudential regulatory entities, the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, as the prudential supervisor, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and the Australian Taxation Office perform vital tasks in Australia’s financial system. The government is committed to ensuring that the three regulators are properly resourced to undertake these tasks effectively and efficiently. It is therefore important that the financial sector levies, which fund the regulatory activities, are able to meet the evolving needs of prudential supervision and raise the funds from financial institutions in an equitable manner.

The existing levy determination arrangements were established following the 1997 financial systems inquiry, and acceptance of the general principles of the cost of financial regulation should be borne by those who benefit from it. The arrangements are evaluated regularly, every few years, to ensure that they remain appropriate. A requirement of the most recent review was that it balance accountability, efficiency, transparency and equity with simplicity of administration and collection to ensure that the recommended options have the capacity to provide stable...
and effective funding for the regulators on a sustainable basis. Fundamentally, the review’s task was to consider how the burden of funding the relevant regulatory activities might best be distributed amongst the prudential regulated industries and institutions. The government has accepted the review’s recommendations subject to their not causing increases in levies paid by the smallest financial sector entities.

While some key features of the current levy determination framework remain appropriate and are being retained, a number of important adjustments to the framework are being introduced through this package of bills. The amendments generally allow for increased flexibility in the way the levies are determined for 2005-06 and subsequent years. The intent is to ensure that the levies meet the objectives set for the review. The legislative package restructures the levies into two components. The first component reflects the cost of supervising an institution and retains the structure of the existing levy arrangements: a flat proportion of assets subject to minimum and maximum levy amounts for individual institutions. The second new component reflects system impact and vertical equity considerations and is calculated as a proportion of assets. There is an overall cap on the amount that may be raised through this component by no minimum or maximum amount applying to individual institutions. The statutory upper limit on the maximum amount of the first levy component is being increased to $1.5 million for the 2005-06 year, with an increased indexation factor applying in later years. This overcomes an inequity that has prevented the largest banks from being levied significantly more than smaller and less complex banks.

Small APRA funds are being recognised as a separate class of superannuation fund, with the intention that the SAFs be levied at a lower rate than other funds. This recognises that a single approved trust commonly manages a large number of SAFs and that the primary focus of the prudential attention is on the trustee rather than on each of the individual funds. In addition, authorised non-operating holding companies in the general insurance sector are also being made subject to the levies for the first time. This brings them into line with the arrangements for the authorised deposit-taking institutions sector.

I thank the member for Mitchell and the member for Hunter for their contributions and for supporting the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer)

(5.47 p.m.)—by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.
LIFE INSURANCE SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading
Debate resumed from 8 December 2004, on motion by Mr Brough:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer)
(5.50 p.m.)—by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

GENERAL INSURANCE SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading
Debate resumed from 8 December 2004, on motion by Mr Brough:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer)
(5.50 p.m.)—by leave—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUPERVISORY LEVIES COLLECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading
Debate resumed from 8 December 2004, on motion by Mr Brough:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer)
(5.52 p.m.)—I move:
That this bill be now read a third time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a third time.

AUTHORISED NON-OPERATING HOLDING COMPANIES SUPERVISORY LEVY IMPOSITION AMENDMENT BILL 2004

Second Reading
Debate resumed from 8 December 2004, on motion by Mr Brough:
That this bill be now read a second time.
Question agreed to.
Bill read a second time.

Third Reading
Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer)
(5.53 p.m.)—I move:
Mr Kelvin Thomson (Wills) (5.56 p.m.)—Mr Deputy Speaker, I will put an end to this little game of pass the parcel by hogging the floor for a while, so settle in. The AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 before the House today is the latest instalment in a sorry tale of the transformation of the nation’s infrastructure expenditure into a series of National Party slush funds. We are told that AusLink will be a new approach to planning and funding an integrated land transport system of national importance. What a great pity that, behind the rhetoric and the potential of this new approach, the government is building in critical flaws that undermine AusLink’s promise before it has even begun.

Labor has long advocated a more strategic, integrated approach to planning, investing and managing our national land transport infrastructure. We took a proposal for a national land transport plan to the 2001 election. We, on this side of the House, believe in not only a national responsibility to drive the strategic planning of our future road and rail needs but also a national responsibility to adequately fund and maintain infrastructure of national importance.

The government is talking the talk but it is endangering our future by not committing to future responsibility for funding and maintaining nationally important land transport infrastructure of the kind recognised in this legislation. Labor supports a more integrated, strategic approach to investing in this country’s land transport infrastructure. Infrastructure spending is critically important to this nation’s future.

Just today, we received a warning from the Reserve Bank of Australia about the prospect that interest rates may go up. I note in passing what a joke this makes of the Prime Minister’s whole election campaign pitch to the voters about interest rates. Just
where is the podium that he stood behind every single day of the election campaign, which boldly stated ‘Keeping Interest Rates Low’? It is probably stored in the same garage as the debt truck that he travelled around Australia in prior to the 1996 election to highlight what he said was the problem of foreign debt. This was at a time when foreign debt was half of what it is now and personal debt and household debt were a fraction of what they are now. It looks like we will have to send out a search party for that debt truck and that podium. If interest rates do go up, it will have a great deal to do with skills shortages and infrastructure blockages.

This government’s performance on infrastructure has been just lamentable. It has been sitting on its hands these past nine years and what it proposes in these bills simply will not address the problem—quite the contrary. The government plans to walk away from its commitment to responsibility for the construction and maintenance of Australia’s national highway network. Up until now the Commonwealth has had responsibility for that, but this government intends to cap its maintenance commitment at $300 million per annum for each of the next five years. It proposes that the states pick up the slack. What is likely to happen is that the condition of the national highway network will deteriorate in the years ahead. It is ironic that when the government hit us all with a GST it boasted that the GST would mean an end to Commonwealth-state financial squabbles because the states would get the GST money. It is ironic because, ever since, they have been creating financial squabbles with the states, picking fights by seeking to transfer financial responsibility in area after area to the states. And so it is with responsibility for construction and maintenance of the national highway network, which up until now has been a 100 per cent Commonwealth government responsibility.

Just what is it that they propose to do with the money they save? This legislation sets up a new National Party slush fund, the $150 million AusLink strategic regional projects fund. It provides—surprise, surprise—wide discretion for the minister to decide how to allocate funds under the AusLink strategic regional projects program. And the minister has, and will continue to have, wide discretion over the AusLink Roads to Recovery program.

Labor will not be blocking these bills but we will be referring them to a Senate committee so that this and other issues arising from these bills can be properly examined. I now move a second reading amendment:

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

“whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House calls upon the Government to:

(1) maintain funding responsibility for construction and maintenance of infrastructure on what was formerly defined as the National Highway Network;

(2) establish a National Infrastructure Advisory Council; and

(3) extend the criteria for Roads to Recovery projects to include public transport, cycling, walking infrastructure and regional airport runways”.

Labor’s policy to have the Commonwealth maintain the national highway network recognises the fundamental importance of the network to our national infrastructure. It stands in stark contrast to this government’s indifference to maintaining our national infrastructure. Labor’s policy to establish a national infrastructure advisory council recognises the need for independent and expert input into decisions about infrastructure funding and infrastructure priorities. It stands in stark contrast to the National Party’s view that the public purse exists only to be raided for the benefit of its friends and supporters.
We have seen the systematic rorting of each and every infrastructure program by the National Party. We have seen what happened to the environmental infrastructure program, the Natural Heritage Trust. We have seen what happened to the communications infrastructure program, Networking the Nation. We have seen what happened to the roads program, Roads of National Importance, which became publicly known as ‘roads of National Party importance’. Finally, and most outrageously, we have seen what has happened to Regional Partnerships: tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money handed out by National Party ministers Anderson and Kelly to projects which had not even applied for funding, to projects which did not have the support of the local area consultative committee, to companies which went bankrupt, to projects for which the minister’s staffer had been paid as a lobbyist and to projects in the heart of Sydney and Melbourne. What did all these projects and grants have in common? The one thing they had in common was that they served the political interests of the government in general and the National Party in particular.

No wonder Minister Anderson turned purple when he heard of the involvement of the Independent member for New England, Mr Windsor, in Regional Partnerships projects in his electorate. The whole purpose of the program, as far as the National Party was concerned, was to advantage the National Party. How dare an Independent MP, particularly one who had won a previously National Party seat, get involved in this program! Never mind his duty to represent his constituents and get the best deal he could for them.

We will send these bills to a Senate committee and we will do everything we can to hold this government to account. But we will do more than that. We on this side of the House continue to have a burning passion for ensuring that we are investing as a nation in the future. For too long this government has neglected the opportunity to better invest in infrastructure to build this nation and its potential. Under this government, Australia has neglected to address constraints on our capacity to get freight to ports and to move people efficiently in our major transport corridors. There has been a lack of a national approach to integrating the planning for our road networks and our rail networks, and there has been a lack of a national approach to setting priorities for investment across the country between the Australian government and the states and territories.

Most people recognise the contribution made to our current economic strength by the groundbreaking reforms of the Hawke and Keating governments. During those years Australia opened up its economy to the world, built a more competitive business environment and invested in a more productive work force. This government, one which inherited a fundamentally stronger and more resilient economy as a result of the Hawke and Keating government reforms, has so far squandered the opportunity to build on those reforms. This government, despite continued strong growth and record tax revenue, has failed to invest in infrastructure to make the most of Australia’s improved competitive potential. This government has been more interested in squandering its surpluses on election pork-barrelling, rather than strategically investing in infrastructure to address the capacity constraints on our export industries, the record trade deficits running under this government and the urgent needs of a growing domestic economy to more efficiently transport goods and people through our major transport corridors.

We believe in a national, integrated plan to better harness our potential through strategic investment in our roads and rail. Labor believe in linking road and rail planning, the
The development of integrated corridor strategies and a more strategic approach to setting priorities and investment in the construction and maintenance of a new national land transport network. If we are to plan properly, fund and administer an integrated network of nationally significant road and rail infrastructure, we firstly have to have objective advice from a national infrastructure advisory council, comprising industry, consumer and expert representatives, set up to advise on priority projects in a fair and equitable manner based on transparent social, economic and environmental criteria. Secondly, the planning of such a network should be carried out in partnership with state and territory governments, rather than seeking to play each of them off against the other.

If AusLink is about strategic national investments, well informed and well planned, then the Howard government should have no fear of negotiating an intergovernmental agreement to govern the priority setting and cost sharing for each five-year national land transport plan under AusLink, rather than secretly negotiating bilateral deals with the states on a take it or leave it, gun-to-the-head basis. There is a structure through which properly informed discussions between the Australian government and the governments of the states and territories can take place: the Australian Transport Council. That is the structure through which a cooperative approach could be taken to achieve intergovernmental agreement on priorities and appropriate sharing of costs. Under the COAG umbrella there are numerous ministerial councils, comprising the relevant minister from the Australian government and the relevant ministers from the states and territories, charged with responsibility to provide the forum for intergovernmental negotiation and cooperation on nationally important issues.

The Howard government has arrogantly treated ministerial councils with contempt, with federal ministers famously refusing to attend meetings, such as the Deputy Prime Minister’s refusal to participate in regional development ministerial council meetings since July 2003. We had the refusal by the former failed health minister, Senator Patterson, to attend health ministers conferences while the Treasurer was putting the razor through Medicare during the last term of the Howard government.

Labor would take a different approach. We would take a partnership approach—it would not matter which party is in office in the states and territories—seeking to deliver a more strategic and integrated planning process for nationally important land transport. We would utilise the Australian Transport Council as the proper mechanism for agreeing on the big issues that require intergovernmental cooperation. We would not shy away from an intergovernmental agreement to govern the way forward in investing in our road and rail systems of national importance. We would take seriously our responsibility to provide adequate funding for the national highway network. We do not intend to stand by while a structure is put in place that leaves the door wide open for this government to unilaterally determine priorities for the national land transport network, to force them on the states and territories by putting a gun to their heads, with that familiar potential for the Liberal and National parties to pork-barrel in marginal electorates. We want to ensure that there is a transparent, expert process for establishing and reviewing the social, economic and environmental criteria for investments in the network, and the best way to do that is to establish a national infrastructure advisory council.

There is a new bucket of money created in this legislation to fund projects described as being of strategic regional importance. After
our experience with regional pork rorts this is a provision that rings alarm bells. It will need careful scrutiny. The $93 million of election promises made by the coalition in 2004 are now to be funded, it turns out, from this discretionary bucket of money. The provisions of this legislation are very broad and potentially allow the funding of a whole range of projects not on the national transport network. We are told that the total that is envisaged to be allocated to strategic regional projects is $150 million over five years. You can expect a lot of the balance to be held over until a few months out from the next election. What we need to do is ensure that that money meets real rather than political needs.

There has also been a missed opportunity in the development of AusLink to address a national focus on encouraging alternative transport modes for passengers. In our major cities congestion is a social, economic and environmental problem that needs to be addressed. We think that the Commonwealth government, the Australian government, can and should contribute to a solution. We think that the criteria under Roads to Recovery funding for local government ought to be wide enough to support innovative solutions to congestion, including public transport, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. At the last election we took to the electorate a policy for an integrated national land transport plan and a commitment to funding construction and maintenance of the national highway network, a partnership approach with state, territory and local government, commitment to extending the Roads to Recovery and black spots programs and a proposal to widen the funding criteria under Roads to Recovery to include public transport, cycling and walking facilities. Had Labor been elected we would now have been implementing that plan. I want to spend some time talking about some of its components so the parliament and the people of this country can get a better understanding of our vision for this country.

Let me start in Brisbane. In June last year the Courier-Mail commissioned a report on road transport issues in south-east Queensland. It was triggered by widespread community concern about the capacity of road infrastructure in south-east Queensland to adequately meet the increasing demands being placed on it. South-east Queensland is the fastest growing region in Australia. One of the triggers for the report was extensive delays for traffic on the Ipswich Motorway. The report said that, unfortunately, the urgent need for funding of key south-east Queensland road infrastructure has not been sufficiently recognised by AusLink, with very limited additional funding in the first two years of the program.

The report covered such important issues as accident costs on the Bruce Highway over the last five years, the growth in traffic volumes in key arterials and the impact of increasing traffic congestion. It found that peak hour travel time in Brisbane had slowed dramatically in recent years, so much so that during the a.m. peak period, cars moved more quickly in Sydney and Melbourne than they did in Brisbane. The report contained estimates of additional daily commuting time in Brisbane from 1993 to 2004, concluding that an average daily two-way car commuter could now be taking almost 19 minutes more than they did 10 years ago. This is effectively 73 hours of extra commuting travelled each year, or the equivalent of an extra two weeks of work each year. The report suggests that extra costs in lost time and additional fuel for the average Brisbane motorist are in the order of $1,660 each year compared with 10 years ago. I notice that the Courier-Mail again raised this issue yesterday, with state correspondent Malcolm Cole providing in-
formation about the ageing and congested state of many roads across Queensland.

Labor acknowledge the challenge for Queensland roads in general and south-east Queensland roads in particular set out by the *Courier-Mail*. If we were in government now, we would be working on spending some of the $700 million which we undertook to spend to fix the problem of the Ipswich Motorway—something which I know the member for Oxley is very enthusiastic about and works very hard in this parliament in support of. We would not be going around in circles. We would not be avoiding action on the problem; we would be seeking to solve it. The fact is that there have been more than 1,000 accidents on the Ipswich Motorway in the last five years. On one interpretation, this means that commuters on the Ipswich Motorway have something like a 50-50 chance of striking an accident or experiencing resultant delays while travelling to or from work on any given workday. That is an outrageous situation, and that is why Labor put forward a commitment of some $700 million to genuinely bring about a solution to that problem.

We also put forward commitments in relation to the Brisbane and south-east Queensland areas. We indicated a commitment of $25 million to the construction of a grade separated rail overpass at Acacia Ridge, matching the Queensland government’s $25 million for the construction of an overpass at the rail crossing on Beaudesert Road. Around 30,000 vehicles use the Acacia Ridge level crossing each day and many are caught up in lengthy delays during peak periods. We also gave a commitment to upgrade the intersection of Kessels and Main roads in Macgregor in Brisbane’s southern suburbs. Kessels Road carries in the order of 50,000 vehicles per day. The intersection with Mains Road is a major bottleneck in the system. The Howard government have made no commitment to fix this intersection. The initial estimates indicate that the project will cost in the order of $60 million, the final cost being dependent on planning and design considerations. If we were in government, we would be getting on with the planning stage. It could be completed by 2006 and construction on the upgrade could commence as early as 2007. That is the kind of thing we hope this government will do, and we urge them to do, because if they are not prepared to take action like this then the problems of south-east Queensland—the problem of congestion, problems for traffic and problems of infrastructure—will only become more serious with every passing day.

Of course there are traffic problems in other areas of Queensland, particularly in northern Queensland along the Bruce Highway. Another of the commitments we made was for $80 million to flood proof the Bruce Highway south of Tully. This involves flood work between Corduroy Creek and Banyan Creek. I went to Tully and other parts of North Queensland in January and I spoke with Councillor Joe Galeano, the Mayor of Cardwell Shire Council, and other councillors and business people in Tully. They are, rightly, extremely agitated and distressed about the prospect of their highway being cut by flooding for days on end and people being stuck in their vehicles. The complete breakdown of freight and passenger movements which happens when that flooding occurs is a very unsatisfactory situation. Labor are committed to finding a solution to it. The Bruce Highway is part of the national highway network and it needs to be in proper working order.

We made commitments to the Townsville Ring Road. We indicated that we would be putting forward $40 million to fund the Townsville Ring Road, which is an important project for the local community. It would remove through traffic and allow heavy ve-
vehicles using the Bruce Highway to bypass the city, reducing congestion in the suburbs of Vincent, Heatley, Cranbrook, Aitkenvale and Mount Louisa. We also indicated a commitment of $8 million for the Townsville port access road. That is a very important thing in terms of access to the port of Townsville to ensure its growth as a key regional transport hub and to reduce the impact of port traffic through the inner city. The Queensland government, local development groups and the Townsville Council have all identified the port road access as a priority infrastructure project in the region.

Further south again, we made a commitment to Gladstone roads involving $5 million—$2 million to go for urgent safety works on the Bruce Highway near Miriam Vale and a further $3 million allocated to the construction of the Callemondah overpass. The Bruce Highway near the turnoff to Agnes Water and 1770 south of Gladstone has been identified as a serious black spot. The upgrade would improve safety and help reduce the risk of accidents. These are important things that we believe the federal government ought to commit to and ought to make happen under AusLink.

I turn now to New South Wales. I have been talking a lot about road projects, but clearly rail is an important part of this nation’s infrastructure. We indicated that we would assist the New South Wales government to re-open rail services between Casino and Murwillumbah. This is something that the member for Richmond, Justine Elliott, campaigned very strongly on. She took the view that it should be part of an integrated transport package for this area which gives people access to goods, services and recreational opportunities and that it was important that this rail service be reinstated. We committed to that. In the southern area of New South Wales we committed $5 million to the construction of the Pambula bridge, ensuring that bridge closures at Pambula due to flooding would become a thing of the past. We recognise that the New South Wales government, the Southern Councils Group—and Bega council in particular—and local business groups had identified this upgrade as a priority infrastructure project in the region and a strategic economic link in southern New South Wales.

In Victoria one of our very important commitments was to the Deer Park bypass of the Western Highway. We committed $294 million. The Deer Park area is used by a great number of freight trucks. It is important for General Motors Holden. The establishment of the bypass is an important part of meeting this nation’s infrastructure needs and facilitating our export potential. We urge the federal government to provide the funding for this project. We further urge them to provide funding to complete full duplication of the Calder Highway. We indicated a willingness to allocate $193 million over five years to do that. We further indicated a willingness to fund half the Pakenham bypass, an important area of infrastructure in Melbourne’s south-eastern corridor. We also indicated we would contribute $10 million to the upgrade of Pakenham Railway Station—once again recognising that land transport is about road and rail.

The federal government has chosen to withhold money from Victoria for these and other road projects and says, ‘Our money is allocated for the Scoresby Freeway’—now known as the Mitcham-Frankston project—‘but we are not going to allocate it unless the Victorian government reverses the imposition of tolls on the Mitcham-Frankston Freeway.’ The fact is that the Mitcham-Frankston project is going ahead and Victorians are now missing out because John Howard and Peter Costello will not hand over the money. The federal government should stop hiding behind this excuse. It should not seek
to rob Victorians of their legitimate roads entitlements, and road projects like the Geelong bypass, the Deer Park bypass and the Pakenham bypass should proceed and that money should be spent on those projects.

Before I leave the subject of Victoria, I should mention a little project called the Dartmoor truck bypass. Local residents have been asking me to pursue the possibility of an alternative route to the one proposed, which would go very close to many local residents and diminish their amenity. On their behalf, I wrote to the roads minister, the Hon. Jim Lloyd, and received a reply from him recently indicating that funds for the Dartmoor deviation have already been provided to the council. So it is clear that the council does not have to get on with this project by 30 June 2005. The minister expressly says:

... there is no requirement for all funds from the current ... programme to be spent by that date.

So, contrary to the impression that the council might have or might not have given some people, it is not subject to a time constraint and it should use the time which it has to ensure that it comes up with a route which genuinely meets the needs of all Dartmoor residents.

Time does not permit me to talk about some of the infrastructure projects which we proposed for South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, but we did put forward a very extensive range of projects because we saw them as essential to a proper Commonwealth national investment in infrastructure. When I have the opportunity at another time, I will certainly outline to the House these other infrastructure projects. But I hope that this government picks up these projects. I urge this government to pick up these projects and not to waste the next three years in the same way that they have wasted the last years in terms of building genuine national land transport infrastructure for this country.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. D.G.H. Adams)—Is the amendment seconded?

Mr Ripoll—I second the amendment.

Mr TUCKEY (O'Connor) (6.26 p.m.)—The member for Wills commenced his speech with an attack on the National Party, referring to their identification within the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and the second reading speech of the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Mr Anderson, of a variety of very large projects to advance the government's national infrastructure, and then spent the last 10 minutes putting forward the Labor Party's slush fund expenditure. Neither really warrant that criticism, but to say that the member for Wills's little list was not politically motivated would be ridiculous.

It is a fact that governments will make decisions about what they should do. In referring to the second reading amendment that the member for Wills has proposed, which I naturally oppose, let me say that the idea of a national infrastructure advisory council is just another form of government by committee. I have always opposed it. We come to this place, we put our proposals before the people and they vote and make a choice. At the recent election they voted very substantially for the coalition to remain in government and they expect us to get on with it. I find it outrageous that every way we turn we have to have government by some form of committee. We do not need them.

Suddenly the opposition have discovered the Roads to Recovery program—R2R, as it has become known. Of course, at the time the program was announced, their just-reincarnated leader called it a ‘boondoggle’, a terrible thing—another National Party slush fund that now seems to be part of the culture of road transport infrastructure. They
are now trying to see if they cannot slip a bit of the money into public transport and a few other projects, when it was designed—and distributed by formula, I might add, not by any other means and not on any political basis—to try and address the huge shortfall that existed in local road maintenance and construction, estimated at $600 million per annum. The amount of $1.45 billion has been provided for the Roads to Recovery program for the period up to 2008-09 and $180 million has been provided for the black spots roads program. The $1.45 billion of R2R moneys will be of great assistance to local government in meeting their particular commitments, and it does not need to be hived off into public transport and other areas like cycling and walking infrastructure. This is a bill about roads, and so it should remain.

The member for Wills talked about Queensland and the difficulties of south-east Queensland—about the Brisbane traffic congestion and how bad it is. Who took the initiative to fix it? The new Liberal mayor of Brisbane. He was the one who stood up and said, ‘We need some tunnels.’ When one mentions tunnels, one must always look at New South Wales. When Neville Wran was their premier, he sold off all the reserves that previous governments of both political persuasions had accumulated to give Sydney a proper freeway system. He sold them off, as is being attempted in Western Australia at this moment by the Gallop government, which I call the McGinty-McTiernan government. What is happening now? People are tunnelling under just about every part of Sydney. One must wonder when it is all going to fall into the tunnels.

The reality is that that form of good planning was overturned by the Wran government, and the same thing is applying in Western Australia. The member for Wills talked about having agreements with state governments. The Australian government had an agreement with the Western Australian government for a very important road—set down and designed in the fifties and allocated so that we were not resuming people’s property—called the Roe Highway. It was an agreement for a RONI. That highway, including an area of land already resumed east of Fremantle, was to get all of the traffic off the existing suburban roads and onto a highway to get to the port of Fremantle.

The McGinty-McTiernan government, with their front man, Gallop, have rezoned that piece of land in an attempt to do a Neville Wran and sell it off for housing. Presumably, at some time in the future, we will have to build a tunnel under it. They are into tunnels already, with a railway line of 30 miles distance, whatever that is in kilometres. It is going to cost $2 billion the way they are doing it, because, amongst other things, they have chosen to go up another well designed freeway, which will take two road traffic lanes away from that freeway in the future. That is deliberate. Their attitude is that, if you make driving on roads so difficult, people might get on public transport. But, as New South Wales has demonstrated, public transport has fallen apart.

I am interested to see the member for Perth enter the chamber and sit in the advisers’ box. That is where he started. He campaigned bitterly against a piece of road infrastructure now called the Farmer freeway. He said it was a dreadful investment of road infrastructure moneys. I believe that the freeway carries 80,000 or so vehicles a day. I would like to see him go over there, stand for premier and try to close it down. He would be run out of town on a rail.

It is nice for the spokesmen for the Labor opposition to stand up in this place and lecture this government on an initiative that is badly needed. It is mostly badly needed because, notwithstanding agreements made
with states—which they break at the drop of a hat, as I have just explained with the Roe Highway—we have been putting in 50 per cent of the money and suddenly the road is not going where it is supposed to. It is no longer a road of national importance. It just runs out; it stops. It is never to be completed while the McGinty-McTiernan government is in power. Let us hope that that is not for much longer.

The reality is that the whole background of this legislation and the new arrangements with the states is to guarantee that the Australian taxpayers’ money actually materialises in transport infrastructure. The old deals are well known. Yes, the Australian government funded national highways. But who picked the bit of road they wanted to upgrade, develop or extend? The state road authorities. After telling us that, they would tell us how much it was going to cost. The government of the day would send the money, and the Treasury of the state would take 20 per cent out for administration. The Australian taxpayers never got 100 per cent of the moneys that were allocated in the form of a road—or, we can say now, in the form of a railway line.

We know the circumstances that exist in New South Wales. New South Wales Labor governments have attacked road transport in every way. They tried to retain uneconomic units; they put up their licensing fees to ridiculous levels so that all the owners went down and obtained licences in South Australia. Those things were done to try and protect their railways. The trouble was that, shortly after that, the railways had no capacity to handle the freight, and they still do not. I hear that the latest idea is that every container seen on a truck will be taxed $50. You cannot get them on the trains anyway. What do you do? Leave them stacked up at the port? The ports are unable to meet these demands.

The big whinge as far as Queensland’s infrastructure is concerned overlooks the fact that the state that most benefited from the GST is Queensland. The money that was promised when we went and proposed a new and more efficient tax has been stacked away somewhere; it has certainly not been spent on infrastructure. Now it is more or less suggested that states should double-dip, having got that money well in advance of the amount expected, and that Australian taxpayers should put their hands in their pockets again to build road infrastructure or transport infrastructure that the Constitution says is the responsibility of state governments.

I applaud this legislation, because it does all the right things. There is $1.45 billion for Roads to Recovery. There is $8 billion for the total program. There is $180 million for the black spot program. The second reading speech informs us that road crashes cost $15 billion a year.

And what is the state government response? What is the Labor opposition’s response? They cancelled the black spot program. All they want to do is put speed cameras on the road and collect huge amounts of revenue when, in fact, the only or most efficient way to save lives is to improve roads and remove the areas where people are statistically most likely to be involved in a crash. It is an issue of educating the very young. Victoria have the toughest penal provisions in their road transport or driver laws yet I note that each major holiday period they usually feature very highly in the number of deaths on the road. There are better ways to do it than just fining people and punishing them and using it as a revenue stream. If you spend the money on black spots and make better roads and better infrastructure you will at least reduce that tragic situation. So that is all planned. I am pleased to see that a major amount of the moneys identified will go to the Peel deviation south of Perth to clear
some extremely congested parts of our highway system. The member for Canning, Don Randall, should be congratulated for the campaign he ran on behalf of his constituents to see that that road system formed part of this funding.

All in all, this is good legislation. Its main purpose, as I have already said, is to ensure that when the Australian taxpayer identifies a dollar for transport infrastructure there will be a dollar of road or rail works done for it—not 80c in the dollar but 100c in the dollar. Today, we do utilise private contractors on a design and supply basis so why should a state be able to rip off 20 per cent of the cost when it literally just signs the contract? Everything else is built into the price. These are the sorts of problems that successive Commonwealth governments have had in the past.

It was notable that the member for Wills took a moment or two to laud the Hawke government for a lot of reform initiatives that occurred across the board in that time. I think the Prime Minister has been at pains to say that a few times. What he forgets is that in that period when the coalition was in opposition we supported good initiatives—some that they would have battled to get through their own party room. The reality in recent times is that whatever we say is wrong and no good; they oppose it or send it off to a Senate committee, delaying the initiatives that will do good for the community. I am waiting for the new Leader of the Opposition to tell us what good they will do for the Australian community. They are spending all their time saying, ‘We will win the next election.’ This is not a football game; this is an area of great responsibility.

In the time left available to me I want to talk about the future of road transport or, in fact, the turning of wheels. People have heard me before. The new fuel of mobility in Australia will be hydrogen. Due to an initiative of the last Court government, the only three hydrogen fuel cell buses operating in the Southern Hemisphere are now operating in Perth. I have looked at them in their depot and, in fact, I followed one yesterday as it drove along the road. It has a sign on the back that says, ‘The only thing you will see coming out of this bus is steam,’ and you do. It is quite remarkable to watch it accelerate and see a puff of steam. The only emission from those buses is water. Their fuel is hydrogen, presently supplied as a by-product from the Kwinana refinery. They produce 300 kW and they are big enough and powerful enough to be a truck, a tractor or any of the other heavy pieces of equipment. Similarly, you can have an electric train without wires because the motive power is electricity. Hydrogen is passed through a fuel cell, which separates the electrons from the protons. The electrons get lost and go rushing off through an electric motor. In there, they try to get back with their protons. In the process they make water because they have used oxygen from the atmosphere, and we have electricity. The fuel cell was invented in 1839, and I was delighted to see that a fuel cell car was available for journalists to drive at the Sydney motor show—and they did. A recent article appearing in the Australian newspaper highlighted the enthusiasm the General Motors company have for fuel cell cars. The article quotes their chief executive in that category saying, ‘We will be producing these vehicles in 2010.’

When we start to get to large use of these vehicles it will clean up the atmosphere and give us a guaranteed fuel in perpetuity. Hydrogen is the most frequently occurring element, I think, in the world. We must start, as a parliament—and I say as a parliament, not as a government—making plans to produce that hydrogen in the most economical and the most environmentally sensitive way. It is
no good burning coal to electrolyse water with electricity—you are not making any gains. There are options available for renewable energy. The most significant is the tides of the Kimberleys in Western Australia, which have the energy potential to replace all the sorts of energy used in Australia today. That will not happen because of its locality but they could be using those tides up there to make liquefied hydrogen; that is, produce the hydrogen, liquefy it and ship it to the great cities of Australia or the world. That is where we will first start operating these vehicles. It will be done. It is a case of getting it done. I trust that we will be making progress as a nation in that regard very soon.

I have said to my own farmers that I anticipate that they might in the future be using solar photovoltaic cells to make electricity sufficient to electrolyse water that, at this stage of the game, is on their farms causing problems with waterlogging and salinity, and to make and store hydrogen on their properties so that they can use that as a fuel to drive their farm implements in the future—a self-contained operation.

We do need more technology. We have some excellent technology. Australia leads the world in capacitor technology, essential in this particular area. I am saying to people that it is time now not only to think about the roads and the railway lines but to think of the new form of motivation. We do not need to be knuckling our foreheads to overseas suppliers of hydrocarbons. We have a renewable energy capacity to provide all the fuel within our borders forever, as long as the moon keeps circumnavigating the earth. We should be doing that and we should be planning for it now. I urge the government to get more positive on that and give up on these silly ideas of trying to clean up coal. Nobody knows how to do that properly, although they talk of it. You are better just to use the coal as it is, because 50 per cent of the energy consumed in Australia is in turning wheels. That should be a sufficient contribution to world reduction in greenhouse gases.

Our financial institutions and the union super funds should all be looking at this as a great investment, because the long-term revenue will be nearly 90 per cent profit. In fact, people would be filling their cars with hydrogen and contributing to their own superannuation. This is the future for transport, and I plead with everybody in this House to start to talk about it. It would have been much better if the member for Wills had given it one mention, given that he used to be the environment spokesman, rather than just trying to put forward an alternative wish list for where the money might be spent to the one the government has selected.

Mr STEPHEN SMITH (Perth) (6.46 p.m.)—I welcome the opportunity to speak on the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and the AusLink (National Land Transport—Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2004, to associate myself with the remarks of the member for Wills and shadow minister for roads, and to associate myself with the second reading amendment. I draw particular attention firstly to the suggestion that the Commonwealth should maintain a funding responsibility for construction and maintenance of infrastructure in what was formerly defined as the national highway network, and secondly to the notion of establishing a national infrastructure advisory council.

There is also an opportunity in the course of debate on these bills to talk about infrastructure in the wider context and to draw attention to the complacent position that the Howard government has maintained on infrastructure in Australia, in particular the complacent position of the Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the National Party and Minister for Transport and Regional Ser-
vices, who has consistently until now adopted a position of effectively no national interest in national infrastructure, a matter that in his eyes ought to be left entirely for the states.

In recent months and weeks we have had the ACCC and the OECD, and this week the Reserve Bank of Australia, sending warnings to the government that it can no longer sit back and take for granted the benefit of the 14 years of economic growth caused by the reforms of the Hawke and Keating governments, and that it has to move to the next level of productivity reforms and the next step of seeking to maintain international competitiveness. The ACCC, the OECD and the Reserve Bank have all drawn attention to infrastructure bottlenecks and capacity constraints. We have not seen the Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the National Party and Minister for Transport and Regional Services move in response to that. The government may well now be in a state of catch-up, because in recent days we have seen the Treasurer belatedly acknowledge difficulties and concerns over the trade deficit, capacity constraints and infrastructure bottlenecks. We have also seen that from the Minister for Trade. As is often the case with these matters of national interest and infrastructure, the Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the National Party and Minister for Transport and Regional Services is deafening by his silence.

Labor have always been on the front foot when it comes to national investment in Australia’s infrastructure, whether that is the land transport network or other forms of infrastructure. We have always understood the need for national leadership that is required under our federal system. Frankly, we have never needed the advice of the ACCC, the OECD or the Reserve Bank to know that in order to have a growing economy, to remain internationally competitive and to have a productive work force, the Commonwealth has to take a leadership role in a national strategy for national infrastructure to give us ongoing economic growth. One of the linchpins of our economic prosperity is our infrastructure. We therefore support the notion of a national integrated plan that better harnesses our potential through strategic investment in our roads and railways and we support the long overdue attempt in this legislation to link road and rail planning, the development of integrated corridor strategies and a more strategic approach to setting priorities and investment in the construction and maintenance of national land transport infrastructure.

Some might think that the strategic approach in this legislation is motivated by the national interest. Some may have discerned that. But as is always the case with this government, particularly with the National Party, we know on this side of the House that there is always a catch, and that catch generally reflects the true nature of the government and the National Party influence on it. The government, in particular the Leader of the National Party and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, has a well established practice of not making investments in important national infrastructure based on nationally agreed priorities. That actually requires national leadership and an interest in the national interest. This government does not embark on such things without first calculating the political advantage it can gain, particularly if it has to do with the National Party or regional Liberal Party seats.

Equally, as we see in the implementation of this legislation, the government is not actually interested in focusing on national leadership and taking the nation or the Commonwealth generally with it. More often than not it likes to play the states and the territories off against each other and off against the Commonwealth. So in this legis-
lation we see the Howard government insisting that the states enter into bilateral negotiations. There is no attempt to try to maximise the benefits of a nationally coordinated scheme but there is an attempt to play one state off another and the Commonwealth off the states and territories and to shift responsibility and cost for crucial national infrastructure away from the Commonwealth to the states and to local government. We also see in this legislation, as reflected by the second reading amendment, the Howard government relinquishing a national responsibility to what we formerly referred to as the national highway network.

Under AusLink the Howard government makes no commitment to the Commonwealth or the federal government discharging a national responsibility to the maintenance of the national highway network. On the contrary, we see the catch in this legislation, reflecting the influence of the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Party, that there is plenty of discretion here, found particularly in the strategic regional projects element of the legislation. Anyone who followed the proceedings of last week’s Senate inquiry into the regional partnership schemes will understand that something that is referred to as a strategic regional project is generally code for a National Party pork-barrelling effort.

Under the provisions of the legislation the strategic regional projects are very broad. They give the minister, in this case the leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister, great discretion in influencing funding of a whole range of projects that are not on the national transport network—not a means by which you can necessarily be assured that the national interest and a national view of infrastructure will predominate. That is where the government’s approach in this particular legislation is flawed. Again, it is the government simply not being able to help itself, and again the National Party not being able to help itself, squandering another opportunity to show leadership in implementing a nationally coordinated approach to infrastructure—squandering that opportunity because it cannot help itself in seeking to pursue its own local or regional political interest rather than the national interest and a national economic and social outcome.

If you are to have an integrated network for road and rail infrastructure, as the second reading amendment moved by the member for Wills indicates, there is a better approach. Firstly, we should have objective advice from a national infrastructure advisory council which comprises industry, consumers and expert representatives to advise on priority projects and to allocate funds in a fair and equitable manner transparently, and based on the national interest and based on the best social and economic outcomes. That is the best way of ensuring that the national interest is properly reflected. Secondly, any such planning should carry with it, in partnership, the states, the territories and local government and not play one off against the other, which we find redolent in this legislative framework.

So there are some direct aspects of this legislation which reflect the government’s ongoing complacency in taking a national approach to national infrastructure. We have seen over recent months a number of warning signs about the Howard government’s complacency over our national infrastructure and its capacity needs—warning signs which have been missed or ignored by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services. Firstly, we had the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission report in November last year which warned of capacity constraints at Australian ports and suggested they were having a serious adverse impact on productivity. That report, which was the ACCC’s most
recent Container stevedoring monitoring report, suggested that the average rate of return to stevedore companies had increased nearly threefold from an annual rate of 10.5 per cent in 1998-99 to over 27 per cent in 2003-04. That was nearly double the rate of return available to international stevedore firms in Singapore and New Zealand, two of our international competitors.

On 17 November I asked the Deputy Prime Minister whether he was concerned about this and whether he believed that this was justified. The response of the Deputy Prime Minister on that occasion, as it was on other occasions at the end of the parliamentary sittings last year, was that this was not a matter to do with the Commonwealth but was a matter for the states—that national infrastructure was not a matter for the Commonwealth; it was a matter for the states and any bottlenecks or capacity constraints should be directed there. That was not the first occasion or the last occasion that that sign was put up by the Deputy Prime Minister.

As a consequence of that ACCC Container stevedoring monitoring report there was a bit of a public conversation between Graeme Samuel, the chairman of the commission and the CEO of Patricks, Mr Chris Corrigan, with Mr Samuel arguing that, as he put it at the time, the benefits of productivity improvements in the stevedoring sector:

... may be in danger of being exhausted leaving Patrick and P & O with a cosy duopoly and much higher rates of return than the average Australian company.

Mr Samuel went on to suggest that Mr Corrigan’s opposition to further competition in the stevedoring sector was:

... akin to arguing that Australia should return to an era of ‘orderly marketing’... Such a retrograde step would come at great cost to Australian consumers, exporters, importers and ... the Australian economy ...

On 18 November I drew that to the Deputy Prime Minister’s attention at question time and again the signpost was up that that was a matter for the states and nothing to do with the Commonwealth.

More recently we saw a comprehensive report in the Australian Financial Review on 31 January. It revealed that Australian businesses regarded infrastructure constraints along with the continuing adverse impact of skills shortages as among our nation’s greatest economic challenges. That report reflected the strong view of industry that the double adverse impact of skills shortages and infrastructure capacity constraints was hurting Australian industry and could lead to a slip in minerals and petroleum resources exports to China, one of the mainstays of our current economic strength and economic growth.

So we go from ACCC to an industry report in the Australian Financial Review. If the ACCC and the Financial Review are not enough for some or all, we then find on Thursday of last week one of our peak international economic institutions, the OECD, releasing a report into the state of Australia’s economy. That report showed the Howard government’s lack of leadership and interest in building Australia’s national infrastructure. The OECD report noted substantial unfinished business in the infrastructure area and that areas where reforms were yet to be completed included infrastructure services. That OECD report, crucially, recognised that a nationally coordinated approach was needed to address the range of bottlenecks and capacity constraints arising from our clogged infrastructure. The OECD report stated:

... economic efficiency is most likely to be achieved if the analysis is undertaken at a national level, and decisions coordinated across levels of government.
That is precisely the contrary approach which the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party has been prosecuting and precisely the contrary approach to what you find in those areas of the AusLink program that I have drawn attention to. So we have the ACCC, the Financial Review and the OECD, but the tour de force was this week with the Reserve Bank’s monetary statement published on 7 February—and I will come to that in a moment.

Despite the clarion calls from the ACCC, industry and the OECD that the Commonwealth, the federal government, had to be involved in setting a national framework to analyse how to alleviate capacity constraints on our infrastructure to improve our economic performance, the government continued to fail the nation in providing any sense of leadership. By not addressing those capacity constraints, the Howard government has put us at risk of slipping behind as far as international competitiveness is concerned.

The government has been very complacent in this area. The government and the nation have had the benefit of 14 years of economic growth, and that is a terrific thing for the nation. That economic growth has been set up by the framework changes, the structural changes, that were made by the Hawke and Keating governments changing the nature of Australia as a trading nation, floating the dollar, bringing down tariff walls and removing quota restrictions—these things opened up our economy to see the economic growth that we now have. But you cannot live off those dividends forever, and while those reforms were centrally important in establishing Australia as a modern economy, they are not now by themselves sufficient to ensure that our economy continues to grow and continues to be prosperous and that we continue to be internationally competitive. We have to build on those reforms and take the nation to the next level of productivity improvements, and that is not, as Mr Howard and Mr Costello would have you believe, by simply whipping workers in an unfair way. It is about removing capacity constraints; it is about improving the efficient use of our infrastructure; it is about addressing the skills shortage and investing our work force with the education and skills that it needs to be internationally competitive; and it is about making better use of information technology and information technology platforms. So to build our economy, to continue to create wealth, to continue to be prosperous—these are the things that we now need to do to ensure our continuing international competitiveness.

Turning to the Reserve Bank’s Statement on Monetary Policy of 7 February, I would like to include for the Hansard record some reasonably lengthy quotes which I think are very pertinent. In the summary of its statement, at page 2, the Reserve Bank says:

The general performance of the economy in 2004 when production was unable to keep up with the strength of global and domestic demand, is suggestive that capacity constraints may be becoming more important.

Additionally, there are a number of areas in the mining sector where supply bottlenecks have held back export growth recently, though there are indications that capacity expansions in that area are now in train.

That is obviously a reflection on some of the additional capacity being brought on board in the north-west of Western Australia for liquefied natural gas purposes, for iron ore in the north-west of Western Australia and for coal in Queensland and New South Wales.
There is a searing indictment here of ongoing complacency by the government insofar as capacity constraints are putting pressure on production in the economy, on exports, on our record trade deficit and on the current account, which we see in Treasury's most recent analysis is forecast to be 6¾ for the December quarter, which would be a record and an adverse one at that.

Continuing with the summary, at page 3, the Reserve Bank said:

At this stage, the Board’s judgement is still that this pick-up in inflation will be quite gradual, with inflation reaching 2½ per cent this year and 3 per cent next year. Nonetheless, continued pressure on raw materials prices, evidence of capacity constraints in some sectors and reports of higher employment costs— notwithstanding the steadiness to date of aggregate series for wages— constitute a risk that this forecast could prove to be too low. On balance, the Board decided at its February meeting to leave interest rates unchanged, while noting that the likelihood of further monetary tightening being required in the months ahead had increased. The Board will continue to monitor developments over coming months and will respond as necessary to ensure that rising inflation does not jeopardise the sustainable expansion of the Australian economy.

Clearly it is drawing attention to evidence of capacity constraints as being one of the things putting pressure on inflation and the Reserve has made it crystal clear that it sees pressure on inflation as the most serious issue that it contemplates when it comes to interest rate increases.

In the body of the report, at pages 48 and 49 in a chapter on the domestic economy under the subheading ‘Transport infrastructure’, the Reserve Bank says:

The ability to expand exports will depend not only on production capacity, but also on the capacity of rail and port infrastructure. Over the past year, concerns have emerged that a lack of capacity in transport infrastructure is constraining the ability of the resources industry to expand export supply. Transport infrastructure constraints are primarily an issue for bulk commodities such as coal and metal ores; the volume of these commodities transported is large compared with processed minerals, and strong growth in recent years has stretched existing transport capacity.

On page 49 it goes on to say:

To examine transport infrastructure developments more closely, a detailed survey of the infrastructure associated with major coal and iron ore ports was undertaken.

That is something that the government should have done. So there we have the Reserve crying out in its monetary statement and drawing attention to the pressure of inflation which puts pressure on interest rates as a result of capacity constraints. It is the Howard government who should have done the infrastructure analysis that the Reserve Bank draws attention to. It is the Howard government who in this area have been completely complacent. It is the Howard government who now need to try to play catch-up to ensure that the federal government, the Commonwealth, takes a national interest in infrastructure issues. This is vitally important to ongoing prosperity, vitally important to the continued creation of wealth and vitally important to our international competitiveness.

Mr WAKELIN (Grey) (7.07 p.m.)—The AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 is well known to the parliament and well known to the community. In my preliminary statements in the few minutes I will spend speaking on the bill tonight, I think it is worth reiterating that Australia, with its significant landmass, relies hugely on the way that we manage our transport infrastructure. That is fairly self-evident, no doubt, but we have not always got it right in the past couple of hundred years. There are some pretty notable examples, if not of failures, then certainly showing a lot of room for im-
provement to optimise what we can do, and that still remains the case today.

There are those who debate the merits of Federation, what we inherited from our founding fathers within our Constitution and the relationship between the Australian government, as we now call ourselves—the Australian parliament—and the states and territories. No doubt from time to time they will ponder worthwhile questions about how well we cooperate in partnerships to give ourselves, as the people of Australia, the best outcome. Be that as it may, as a South Australian I unashamedly welcomed the decision by the cabinet to build the Adelaide to Darwin railway line. The critics were always bound to be critics and find a reason why it should not happen—and to misrepresent the actual cash involved. Only time will tell the merits of that decision, but there is no doubt that it has got off to a reasonable start. It demonstrates the courage and the vision that this government is prepared to put before the Australian people in projects such as the Adelaide to Darwin railway line.

I thought it would be worth while to go through and remind the House of the second reading speech given by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Mr Anderson, and to pick out a few key points. In terms of the key features of the bill, it is worth reminding ourselves of the six categories of funding: the AusLink national projects, the AusLink transport development innovation projects, land transport research organisations, AusLink strategic regional projects, AusLink black spot projects and the AusLink Roads to Recovery program. On the subject of the Roads to Recovery program, there was a time when our political opponents were very keen to remind us that it was a boondoggle, that it was simply a political exercise, but, in terms of that $1.2 billion or $1.3 billion in the first tranche of Roads to Recovery, the improvement in our infrastructure in the export industries of Australia particularly is very evident and a very welcome boost to the local governments of Australia.

In terms of the national land transport network, the ability to direct investment to strategic transport linkages of highest national importance will be a great challenge, and it will always be that way. We will endeavour to move beyond the separately planned and funded national rail and road networks and the ad hoc rail-road intermodal developments to a single integrated network. The challenges of the increased transport task are very evident to all of us, and this bill lays down the framework to 2009 to allow us to maximise opportunities. Eight billion dollars is a significant amount of money, but certainly when you put it alongside the states—who, as I understand it, are the biggest spenders in terms of the total road infrastructure within Australia, and that does not include the private sector—the important thing is that it is a partnership. This legislation endeavours to lay down how that partnership will work and how the Commonwealth is prepared to add value to the existing structure.

I will now talk about the issue of road crashes, particularly in relation to the National Road Safety Black Spot Program. It is estimated that road crashes cost Australia about $15 billion a year. The projections suggest that we would hope to reduce fatal accidents on our roads by about 40 per cent. It is interesting to note that those who study these things estimate—remembering the drink-driving issues and the effort that has gone in, over the last 20 or 30 years at least, on speed restrictions et cetera—that the driver behaviour component of that reduction in fatal accidents will be in the minority; that is, it will be by far the smaller component of a reduction in fatal accidents on our roads. Therefore, the infrastructure and of course the de-
sign of our motor vehicles are going to be key factors in that.

I will also talk about excise. We collect about $15 billion in fuel excise every year. Whilst there were always those who hoped that much more of that would go back into the roads, it has become, of course, a funder of a whole lot of general programs. If I were to have a criticism of government policy, it would be that we still have not addressed, in a sufficiently vigorous way, the way that this excise component falls on our export industries—that is, this excise is still a cost on our export industries. It is kind of ironic—totally unrelated, but ironic—that road crashes cost us $15 billion a year, and we collect about $15 billion in excise from fuel taxes in Australia.

I move to funding disciplines. I am interested in these because I have had some experience of them in the unincorporated areas in my electorate. The sum of $3.5 million was allocated in the first tranche of the Roads to Recovery program to assist with the improvement of the roads in those unincorporated areas outside local government control, but within a matter of weeks—maybe a few months—the state government had withdrawn $3 million. One section of the bill caught my attention. Clause 94, ‘Annual report on operation of act’, says:

As soon as practicable after the end of each financial year that ends after the commencement of Parts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, the Minister must cause a report to be tabled in each House of the Parliament on the operation of this Act during the financial year.

That means that the annual report will indicate what has happened to this funding. That may not mean very much at the end of the day, but it is important that there be discipline within the various projects and that we know what the states, the territories and the Commonwealth—and, where appropriate, the private sector—have put in and that these funds have been spent in the manner intended.

AusLink is landmark legislation, and it has been well received by the community. A lot of politics was played in South Australia before the last election—you would expect that in an election year—but we went through all the figures and, after all the nonsense that was put out there in August-September last year, there was a 43 per cent increase in federal funding for roads in South Australia in the Roads to Recovery period. Forty-three per cent is a lot of money by anyone’s calculation. It is a great challenge to resist the temptation to get into the politics, but there is a great responsibility to maximise the expenditure on our roads and to be accountable for how that money is spent. The vision that is in this program, matched by the vision that is in the Adelaide-Darwin railway, is typical of this government. I wish this bill every success.

Mr MARTIN FERGUSON (Batman) (7.17 p.m.)—It is with some pleasure that I speak to the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 this evening, having been the former shadow minister for transport and having argued in the lead-up to the 2001 election that Australia needs a national land transport plan. Unfortunately, the long-awaited AusLink white paper was a major disappointment to me and to many in the community and especially in the transport sector. That is not to say that the department’s endeavours to get it right were not without merit but in the end it came back to ministerial leadership, which the government was lacking.

The plan fell well short of the Commonwealth accepting its full responsibility for Australia’s transport network. That is not to say that I do not have some criticism of state and territory governments with respect to their responsibilities, but the key failing of
the paper was that it created more uncertainty than ever before about how transport infrastructure is to be built and maintained. Under AusLink, responsibility for the construction and maintenance of Australia’s key freight and passenger network, the national highway system, will no longer rest with the Commonwealth. I think that is a backward move. Instead, the government plans to impose projects from Canberra that are only partly funded and with a scattergun approach. The states and territories will be left to pick up the tab for the remainder.

In the context of that decision, it is about time the minister drove more on the national highway. I drove, yet again, from Melbourne to Canberra last Sunday—Australia’s main national road freight corridor in Australia. The national highway, the Hume Highway, is a national disgrace from Albury-Wodonga through to Gundagai. It is a distance of 123 kilometres, and work on huge parts of it remains outstanding. However, we do not have an ongoing commitment from this government to construct and fully maintain the upgrade of that transport network. That holds Australia back in its economic growth and development. This is about national leadership, and that is why I fully support the second reading amendment before the House on the national highway commitment, which was moved by the member for Wills, the shadow minister for roads.

I am concerned, as are many in the transport industry, that the AusLink endeavours of the government will at most result in the cherry-picking of projects to maximise the electoral gains of the coalition government. That takes me to the government’s attitude towards the states. The Howard government, under the Minister for Transport and Regional Services and Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson—who, interestingly, is the Leader of the National Party—has basically said to the state and territory governments, ‘Take it or leave it.’ That is the government’s approach to Commonwealth-state relations on the infrastructure front.

The state and territory governments appreciate that the plan, as conveyed not only to the opposition but to many in the transport sector, is clearly driven by electoral priorities rather than by sound policy outcomes. The decision on the national highway clearly reflects that.

It takes me to the issue of imposing a program from Canberra. It simply will not work. A national integrated land transport plan can only be developed in an open, transparent and accountable way with all stakeholders working together rather than in spite of one another. The opposition believe in genuine integrated transport planning. We believe that elements of the transport system cannot be planned and/or managed in isolation from others. The government’s obsession with extracting freight network planning and management from the passenger systems simply will not work. They are not separable, especially in major cities and towns where passenger and freight systems operate using the same infrastructure. The sooner the dedicated freight rail line into Sydney is built, the better. It is long overdue because it is a major infrastructure problem confronting the whole of Australia.

That takes me to the requirement for us as a nation to have a real integrated land transport plan. The government should be showing strong leadership and a capacity to work with state, territory and local government representatives, in association with the private sector, to improve transport systems to plan and deliver, firstly, efficient freight systems and, secondly, equally efficient passenger systems. I say that because the cost of congestion to the Australian economy is no longer acceptable. It is a major barrier to economic growth and job development in
Australia, a cost to industry and there is a role for the Commonwealth in working with the states on the issue of public transport. Thirdly, it is about the best use of existing infrastructure to keep cost burdens to taxpayers and environmental and the social impacts on communities to a minimum. Fourthly, it is about a safe, environmentally friendly and healthy transport system. Finally, infrastructure and services that meet the needs of future users should be one of the challenges in developing a national integrated land transport plan.

The opposition proposed a real integrated transport plan both at the last election and in the lead-up to the 2001 election when we argued, despite ridicule by the then government, that yet again in terms of transport such a plan was required by the current minister. We also argued that it should include all modes of transport and should recognise the needs of all transport users. Labor’s approach would have recognised how the different elements of the system relate to each other and would have brought about coordinated transport solutions focused on allowing people to access goods and services easily and efficiently. An integrated national transport plan, I contend, must identify corridors of significance to the nation’s wellbeing while also developing efficient intermodal connections at ports and airports. I note recent comments with respect to the export of our resources of blockages that currently exist at some of our ports. But I, unlike some others, point the finger at Commonwealth, state and territory governments with respect to the operation of ports. It is a responsibility of all of them to put their heads together and work out how to overcome those blockages.

Historically the operation of ports has been the responsibility of state and territory governments. However, clearly the blockages which currently exist require all state and territory governments, in association with the Commonwealth, to move together jointly and cooperatively to overcome those blockages of potential export earnings as a matter of urgency. Rather than having a blame game, progress should be made in overcoming these infrastructure blockages as suggested by recent reports, including the latest report by the Reserve Bank on the economic standing of Australia. But I also believe that any land transport plan must provide certainty. An integrated national transport plan must be based on clearly articulated responsibilities between all levels of government. The Labor model is to plan a system based on the principles of interconnectivity between the modes and how this impacts on the movement of both people and of freight. Labor’s model is about working in partnership with the other tiers of government and the private sector and defining roles and responsibilities. I also argue that this is not only important in making the right decisions but also about bringing to a head some of the games that have been pursued by state and territory governments of all political persuasions with respect to who has responsibility for which project.

Since the Roads of National Importance program was introduced it has basically represented a game of blame between state, territory and Commonwealth governments about which side gives in first in terms of political outcomes to gain the upper hand at a local political level. That is not the way we should be making decisions as to how Australian taxpayers’ dollars are best spent on infrastructure. The games that have existed with respect to decisions as to whether or not a road is called and defined as a RONI—a Road of National Importance—must end as a result of our endeavours to develop a national land transport plan. Fault on that front has rested with political parties of all persuasions at state and territory level. Surely, as a result of us trying to put in a national land...
transport plan with defined responsibilities, we can end those political games. That is why I say we must guarantee and pursue an AusLink plan which is not based on cost-shifting and buck-passing between state and territory and Commonwealth government representatives.

I also believe, unlike the Commonwealth government, that it is about time that the Commonwealth accepted that there is a role for the private sector in infrastructure planning and development. The private sector, unlike the current AusLink plan, should not be an afterthought in a national transport plan. It should be up front. Labor recognises that the private sector is a player with a key role in helping to address Australia’s looming infrastructure backlog. I therefore commend state and territory governments as they have been engaging the private sector to assist in delivering projects for some years. The resistance has come from the Commonwealth government and it is a national disgrace. It is because of their resistance that we currently have some of the backlogs which exist on the infrastructure front, especially with land transport which is now a huge economic concern to Australia in the way we develop in the immediate future.

That takes me to the AusLink white paper, which implies that there may be a role for the private sector in providing transport infrastructure projects. But you then have to go to the fine print. Such a role for the Commonwealth will be on a ‘no responsibility basis’—that is, the states will have to engage the private sector, determine their capacity for involvement and bear the risks associated with the projects—not only the economic and costs risks but also political risk with respect to the possible development of infrastructure on the basis of which there is a higher user-pays component, as is the Commonwealth involvement with the Western Sydney Orbital, which is a long overdue project.

At the end of the day the Commonwealth will benefit financially from the states’ hard work and I believe that they should be more intimately involved in engaging the private sector in the provision of infrastructure and overcoming the infrastructure land transport backlog which exists in Australia today. I wonder, and I suggest this to the House, whether such an arrangement would be put in place if the states were held by coalition governments. This is clearly a ridiculous stand-off approach by the Commonwealth government to transport infrastructure development that begs the question: what is the current government afraid of in terms of engagement of private sector in bringing forward infrastructure projects long due at a national, state and territory level by governments in association with the private sector?

If you want an example of success and how it should be done, then I compliment the current government on the agreement it entered with the New South Wales government for the construction of the Western Sydney Orbital or, as it is known, the Westlink M7 project. That is a prime example of how the Commonwealth and a state government—in this case, the New South Wales Labor government—should engage the private sector in a partnership with state and federal government to actually get work done.

The Western Sydney Orbital is a project of national importance. It is about further improving our national highway network on the east coast. It is being done by the private sector. Yes, it is a toll road, but the economic benefits will soon flow from the development and completion of that road. Transport will benefit and so will private citizens. It is interesting to note that this project was brought about by the New South Wales government but the federal government will also
reap the benefits, even though the New South Wales government has had to bear the odium of actually fronting up to the difficult decisions with respect to encouraging the private sector to bring forward this project. As we all appreciate, the orbital is part of the national highway network. So, if it can be done in Western Sydney, in Labor Party heartland, then it can be done in other areas of Australia. The states have led the way in the private sector debate, and it is now up to the Commonwealth to step up to the plate and be a genuine partner in these ventures.

The necessary debate about how we harness the private sector to get funds into infrastructure provision has also been raised this evening. The Commonwealth government has run away from this debate. I therefore call on the government to adopt a policy position endorsed by the Labor Party’s national conference of January 2004—that is, to conduct a broad based inquiry into Australia’s physical and social infrastructure needs and how best to finance them. This inquiry should harness the ideas of Australia’s leading minds and business leaders. It should consider, amongst other things, the scope and conditions of private sector involvement in the provision of infrastructure through appropriate partnerships; the most equitable, cost-effective and fair methods of finance; ways to improve accountability and transparency in infrastructure finance; and the most effective way of reducing financial risk to government and minimising fees and charges. Such an inquiry and the outcomes should be linked into a decision to establish a national infrastructure advisory council so as to assist in removing the politics from the planning decisions which must be made in terms of infrastructure priorities.

If I had any doubts about the importance of that, I need only go to the recent election campaign. We saw the government announce on the run a $150 million fund for what is now included in this bill as ‘strategic regional projects’. This amount was supposed to be over a period of five years, but we find that over the short election period of six weeks the government committed $150 million over five years as a mere slush fund. Evidence of this comes from the fact that nearly $100 million of the $150 million was committed during the election campaign. In essence, about two-thirds of a five-year program was committed in the election period of just six weeks.

On that basis, Labor calls on the government to adopt its proposal, supported by the private sector in many instances, to establish a national infrastructure advisory council so as to guarantee that we not only create opportunities to bring the private sector into the provision of infrastructure but also create a process at arm’s length from politicians to make sure that, when we select an infrastructure project, it is selected on the basis of objective criteria which guarantee that the right decisions are made in terms of the expenditure of taxpayers’ money. This in turn would guarantee the best possible economic return for the Australian economy. A council would bring together a strategic approach to infrastructure development, something that Australia needs on an ongoing basis. A council would ensure that infrastructure projects stack up for the right reasons, both financially and in the context of national priorities. It would be about rigorous analysis of who should build the infrastructure, how it should be funded and who should own it.

Finally, I would like to touch on the Roads to Recovery program, the extension of which is also included in this legislation and is something which the opposition support. It is an invaluable source of funding for local councils, many of which are doing it tough because of decisions by state and federal governments to impose more services at a local government level. Not only do we sup-
port the project but we believe it should be based on an integrated approach to transport planning. The opposition therefore call on the government to adopt another one of the proposals we put forward at the last election, a proposal which was very much supported by many representatives of local government. That proposal is to extend the guidelines for the program to allow local councils to allocate their funding to a broad range of transport infrastructure outcomes. The extended criteria could include infrastructure at a local and council level such as off-road cycling and walking tracks—and it is interesting to note that cycling tracks are already provided for by the Roads to Recovery criteria—public transport infrastructure and regional airport runways.

At a local council level, especially among inner city councils, some councils would like to do more on the public transport front. The Roads to Recovery money could be used for those purposes. Alternatively, in some of the rural, remote and regional council areas they are having difficulties maintaining their local runways. We could give them a capacity to make decisions at a local level which best suit their transport needs. This would not be about direction from Canberra; it would be about saying to councils: ‘If you’ve got more urgent transport infrastructure requirements, as long as your Roads to Recovery money is properly accounted for and the decisions are made for the right reasons, then we would be prepared to allow you to spend your local taxpayers’ money, delivered through the Roads to Recovery program, on infrastructure that is important to your local community.’ This is exceptionally important to some of those councils because they have differing priorities, in terms of transport infrastructure, from other councils. This Roads to Recovery proposal is about local governments taking responsibility for integrated transport planning and provision in local areas. It would allow them to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of their local areas.

In conclusion, I indicate that I support the second reading amendment but in doing so emphasise: firstly, the Commonwealth should keep responsibility for the national highways in terms of construction and maintenance; secondly, we should establish a national infrastructure advisory council to make the right decisions on objective criteria in the future; and, thirdly, surely the Commonwealth is equal to the debate about how we include the private sector in the future, as have state and territory governments, in attracting private sector money to do infrastructure work now rather than merely drawing on public revenue through taxpayers’ contributions to the tax system to produce that infrastructure in the future. Let us explore every available avenue, because currently there are blockages in transport which are holding back exports and reducing job opportunities in Australia. I commend the land transport bill to the House and hope that the other place refers this bill to a committee for further consideration and public input. (Time expired)

Mr PROSSER (Forrest) (7.38 p.m.)—I rise today in support of the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004, which will assist national and regional economic and social development and will reform the framework for Commonwealth government funding aimed at improving the performance of land transport infrastructure. This bill gives effect to the Australian government’s national land transport policy set out in the white paper AusLink: building our national transport future. This bill provides for the replacement over time of those arrangements contained in the Australian Land Transport Development Act 1988 and the Roads to Recovery Act 2000.
It is well recorded that Australia’s land transport infrastructure will face major challenges over the next 20 years and beyond. International competitive pressures will demand continuing improvements in the productivity and reliability of logistic chains as domestic freight and passenger volumes will continue to rise. The pattern of land transport use over the last few decades reflects that user requirements will become ultimately more varied and complex. Therefore in order to meet these challenges this government considers fundamental changes are needed in the way that land transport infrastructure is planned and funded in this country.

This bill will assist a change of investment focus to nationally significant roads and rail links and to finding the best solution to transport requirements irrespective of transport mode. This bill also provides a mechanism for approval of projects and funding and for the attachment of conditions to funding under each category. Critical to the funding of AusLink’s national projects will be the national land transport network, which will be the focus of the government’s drive to direct its investment to strategic transport linkages of highest national importance.

The national land transport network will move beyond the separately planned and funded national rail and road networks and ad hoc rail/road developments to a single integrated network. The national land transport network, which this government proposes to establish under this bill, will encompass the former national highway system including its connections through urban areas, the major interstate rail network and other nationally important interstate and interregional transport links as well as links to ports and airports.

This bill establishes arrangements to provide funding for six categories of projects or activities: AusLink national projects that are projects on the national land transport network; AusLink transport development and innovation projects that are also related to the national land transport network; land transport research entities; AusLink strategic regional projects; AusLink black spot projects; and, the AusLink Roads to Recovery program. The bill sets outs eligibility criteria for the different categories of assistance and matters which may be considered in deciding whether projects or activities are to be approved or funding provided. The bill also provides for conditions to be applied to funding.

The government has set out a comprehensive program for addressing Australia’s highest priority national land transport needs. The government will support the program with an unprecedented level of investment. In the five-year period 2008-09 some $8 billion will be provided for investment on national roads and railways on a broad range of strategic priority projects. Some $1.6 billion will be provided to meet transport needs at the regional and local level and $180 million is being provided for the highly efficient Federal Road Safety Black Spot Program, which has saved and continues to save many Australian lives.

The bill will enable the government to build on the substantial support already being provided for local roads under the Roads to Recovery program over the four-year period from 2001 to 2005 and will provide for the extension of the Roads to Recovery program for a further four-year period from 1 July 2005. The provisions in the bill will closely mirror the provisions of the Roads to Recovery Act 2000. Payments under the act will cease on 30 June 2005. Future funding will be governed by the terms of this bill. In all, the government is allocating some $1.45 billion for Roads to Recovery over the five-year period up to 2008-09.
All councils will receive funding allocations for expenditure on the construction and maintenance of local roads on much the same basis as the current program’s formula approach. The funds will be paid directly to each local council, as they are under the current program, and under similar guidelines. This will provide funding certainty and will help all councils to sustain service levels across their local road systems. Local councils will also be the direct beneficiaries of the arrangements which the bill will establish for funding AusLink regional strategic projects.

An appropriation for the purposes covered by this bill for the balance of the 2004 year is included in the AusLink (National Land Transport—Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2004. From 2005-06 funding will be provided through annual budget appropriations.

The $8 billion to be provided over five years to 2009 will enable approval to be given to a broad range of strategic priority projects. As announced by the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon. John Anderson, when he introduced this bill in the House, these include projects on the Pacific Highway, the Hume Highway, the Sydney to Brisbane and Sydney to Melbourne interstate railways, the Bruce Highway and Brisbane urban road links in Queensland, the Geelong bypass, the Calder Highway in Victoria, the Port River Expressway in South Australia, the Bridgewater Bridge in Tasmania, the Great Northern Highway in Western Australia and, of more importance to the residents of my electorate of Forrest in Western Australia or, as it is more commonly known, the Mandurah bypass.

The Australian government will also contribute to the cost of maintaining road links on the national network. While the national transport network will be the focus of the government’s planning and funding responsibility, this does not mean that it has full financial responsibility for all projects on the network. The network includes links that were previously jointly funded or fully funded by the states. The government has indicated its intention to invest in those projects that are of national priority and have substantial national benefits. The government has a clear expectation that the states and territories will invest in those projects on the national network which provide benefits at the state or territory level. This means that, in many cases, project costs will be shared with state and territory governments.

In June 2004, Senator the Hon. Ian Campbell, the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, announced a significant project relevant to my electorate of Forrest—that being $126 million to complete the dual carriageway effectively from Perth all the way through to Bunbury. That will bypass Mandurah. I have been pushing for this project for many years for my constituents of Forrest. I carried out numerous surveys over the years asking for feedback from south-west residents as to what they considered to be of high priority in the region. At the top of the list was the Busselton bypass road—which, I am happy to inform the House, has been completed. There was also unanimous support for the Peel deviation. I am delighted to report that the Peel deviation, or Mandurah bypass, will commence in 2006. It brings the south-west closer to the capital centre of Perth and will shorten the drive time by some 20 to 30 minutes, providing an opportunity for expansion of all industries—be it mining, agriculture, commerce or tourism—by providing a more direct link to the main metropolitan centres.

The development of this high-performing national land transport system cannot be achieved without well-focused research and the encouragement of the application of innovative technology and practices. It will be
necessary to identify deficiencies on the national network, formulate corridor strategies, and devise and demonstrate innovative transport solutions. The bill therefore provides for the funding of transport development and innovation projects that would potentially improve the efficiency and safety of transport operations on the AusLink national network. Projects eligible for funding under this category include planning and research and the development of new technology or practices. This bill also includes provisions to enable funding to be directed to organisations whose activities are connected with land transport planning and research. This particularly includes organisations which are jointly funded by the Australian, state and territory governments.

The bill will provide for the continuation of another significant program: the AusLink Federal Road Safety Black Spot Program. This is a critically important part of the government’s road safety strategy. The government has committed $180 million to continue the black spot program in the period up to 2008-09. In many cases, state, territory and local governments and local business organisations contribute to black spot projects. I am fully supportive of this government providing funding directly to local councils and shires so they can implement such road repairs and maintenance. The black spot program has proven highly cost-effective in targeting those road locations where crashes are occurring. Road crashes cost the Australian economy some $15 billion each year. Black spot projects save the community many times the cost of the relatively minor road improvements that are undertaken. The raw figures say nothing of the human trauma involved in serious road accidents.

Increased tourism activity within my electorate has resulted in an increased number of visitors driving to the region who expect the same type of road conditions as back home in the city—roads which are well maintained and enhance traffic flow. This is not the case in rural and regional areas, where the increase in tourist traffic has outpaced the carrying capacity of many local roads. Who better to know local road black spots than constituents who travel them every day and have experienced the increased traffic on local roads. Once again I asked my constituents for feedback to identify what they considered to be black spots on local roads. From meeting with constituents, we were able to identify stretches of roads, intersections and other hot spots that required remedial attention to enhance safety. In this regard I was able to support the community’s voice by reporting my findings to the local shires in identifying road black spots.

In fact last month a constituent called my office to thank me for providing residents with the opportunity of identifying local black spots. He rang to let me know that the local shire was completing the widening and sealing of Metricup Road in Margaret River. He and his family live on Metricup Road and use the road every day for school and work. Due to the increased number of tourist destinations in the area as well as an increased residential population, traffic flow had increased to an extent that he believed the road was no longer safe because it was narrow and in most parts only a single lane with very soft edges. It may have only taken a visitor to take a corner incorrectly for a collision to occur.

The bill proposes that to be eligible for approval as an AusLink black spot project the project must improve the road safety characteristics of a site where serious motor vehicle crashes, involving death or personal injury, have occurred or are likely to occur. The site can be a particular location or a considerable length of road. The considerations include: the accident history of the site; an
assessment of the safety benefits and the costs of the project; the results of any safety audit of the site; and the extent of funding contributions to the project from sources other than the Commonwealth. The funding recipient will also be required to maintain records relating to crashes involving death or personal injury at the site of the funded project for a period of five years so the effectiveness of measures taken at black spots can be assessed and various types of measures compared.

I should also like to see an expansion of these considerations to include black spot areas that have been identified as accidents likely to occur, before any accidents do occur. I know of a school bus driver in the Manjimup area who drives every day along a narrow road in that area—the same road that is being used by logging trucks. It would take only one accident in this area to accrue the quota of injury or death statistics to make the area a priority. However, the main thrust should not be to wait until a death has occurred before identifying such black spots, and here the emphasis on the safety audit and benefits of a proposed site for remedial work should take priority before a death occurs.

Under the arrangements for which this bill provides, we will do the following: drive the development of our key road and rail links and ensure they are forged into a single high-performing and safe national network; move beyond the entrenched arrangements for separate road and rail funding; recognise the critical importance of links to our ports and airports in supporting a globally competitive transport system; and maintain support for the maintenance and upgrade of local roads networks and the development of key regional links. This bill proposes to deliver a much better outcome for taxpayers, transport users and indeed all of us who are dependent one way or another on an efficient transport network in this country. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (7.54 p.m.)—Can I say that I am pleased that the member for Forrest has so much good news to report to this House about road spending in his electorate, because he is about to hear how little good news I have to report to this House about road spending in my electorate. Indeed, earlier during debate on AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004, when addressing Labor’s proposal for a national infrastructure advisory council, the member for O’Connor commented that he did not see the need for government by committee. I would suggest to him and to my colleagues opposite that the story about to unfold about my electorate might show exactly why we could need government by committee under this sort of proposal.

I rise today to support Labor’s amendments to the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and its referral to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee. I will comment on the nature of Labor’s amendments later, but first I would like to express some serious concerns about the expenditure program under AusLink. Over the next five years, the government will spend $12.5 billion on road and rail transport under this program, with almost $8 billion of that to be spent on the new AusLink national network. Yet, while the government includes the Wollongong to Sydney corridor as part of its new national network, it fails to spend one cent on this vital economic link for the next five years.

The Wollongong to Sydney link is an essential part of Wollongong’s economy and, over the coming years, will be an essential part of the freight distribution network in New South Wales. In October 2003, the New South Wales Labor government outlined a new plan to manage New South Wales’s
share of the doubling of growth expected in freight handling in Australia. A key regional asset in Wollongong—Port Kembla—would be expanded, sending in a further 250 ship visits, 50,000 containers and one million tonnes of bulk cargo, including building materials and machinery.

Already the New South Wales Labor government is spending $14 million to expand the current multipurpose berth, which, I might add, was an initiative undertaken over two decades ago by the Wran government’s Deputy Premier, the late Jack Ferguson. How did this plan for the expanded use of Port Kembla come about? Through a desire to share the growth that will come from a doubling of Australia’s freight handling task.

New South Wales has three main ports along its coast: Newcastle, Port Botany and Port Kembla. Good public policy and a desire to share the growth of this freight handling ensured that these three ports would be playing a leading role in the movement of freight.

The New South Wales Labor government established the Port Kembla container terminal task force, which included, among others, shipping industry leaders, community representatives and trade unions. All of these groups worked together to examine intensively the growth in cargo, the advantages of Port Kembla and the opportunities presented from being so closely located to Western Sydney. The task force presented a substantial report to the New South Wales government and the ports growth strategy was developed and announced in October 2003. A fortnight ago a further study was released showing clearly that the expanded use of Port Kembla would create jobs and expand opportunities for Wollongong businesses.

So, on the one hand, we have a New South Wales Labor government willing to invest in the development of new infrastructure to support the inevitable expansion of Wollongong’s deep-harbour port while, on the other hand, we have a Commonwealth government releasing a white paper on integrated transport which mouths platitudes but does not deliver a red cent to Wollongong’s infrastructure development for the next five years. And the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, Mr Anderson, claims in his second reading speech that the government will:

... recognise the critical importance of links to our ports and airports in supporting a globally competitive transport system ... 

It seems, particularly to the people of the Illawarra, that the Commonwealth recognises the importance of these links only in National Party electorates, not in the rest of Australia—and most certainly and obviously not in Wollongong. But a lack of commitment to infrastructure is nothing new for this government. I have real and well-founded concerns about this government’s treatment of infrastructure investment during its time in office. As most anyone would be aware, essential to long-term economic, wage and export growth is a competitive and efficient economy with well-connected cities, regions, towns and communities. Central to well-connected cities and communities is a plan for infrastructure.

The government claims that, for road and rail, AusLink is the plan. The minister in his second reading speech claimed that it is the intention of the government to ‘invest in those projects that are of national priority and have substantial national benefit’. Yet the largest commuter corridor in the country has been ignored in this plan. Research indicates that the Wollongong-Sydney transport corridor moves at least 20,000 people each day. I used to be one of them. I well know the trials of that process. I know people’s experience. They are spending what amounts to almost an entire day each week travelling to Sydney from Wollongong and further
south. That is time spent away from family and local communities. It means getting up at the crack of dawn and settling in for the long, windy trip to Sydney. The views, I might say, are spectacular, but I suggest that every one of those commuters would give the view up for a little extra time with their families. Surely we can ensure the faster, safe, reliable transport of commuters to Sydney from Wollongong each and every day.

Some of my colleagues opposite will claim that this is a state government responsibility. But those nearly 20,000 commuters could not care less about which level of government is responsible. AusLink should be a plan to create cooperation between all levels of government, not another excuse to delve into finger pointing and buck-passing. A faster, safer and more reliable daily commuter feed along the Sydney-Wollongong corridor would benefit not only my constituents in the seat of Cunningham but also the constituents of my regional colleagues, the honourable members for Throsby and Gilmore. Quite clearly, many of those 20,000 daily commuters are travelling from centres such as Kiama. Indeed, I know of individuals who travel to Sydney from Nowra every day. In anybody’s language, one cannot ignore a corridor of 20,000 daily commuters. But AusLink does just that. It says nothing, and offers them nothing.

Yet again, infrastructure planning is non-existent under this government, except if you happen to live in a coalition electorate, as reflected in the pleasure of the member for Forrest. Ignoring infrastructure investment will only result in lower economic growth in the medium to long term. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development recently warned about the problems that can occur when there is no serious commitment to infrastructure investment. In a word, there is a bottleneck.

Yesterday the Reserve Bank advised in a cautious tone that inflation is on the way up. The Treasurer did his best to hijack and distort the message by focusing on other issues, but he cannot escape the warning that, with inflation on the way up, interest rates will go up too. We remember the words of the great economic managers opposite during the last election. Who told Australians that they would keep interest rates from rising? The Prime Minister and the Treasurer.

A modern economy focused on trade will ultimately be choked by bottlenecks brought about through a lack of investment in infrastructure. Alarm bells should be ringing very loudly. The criticisms of the so-called great economic managers opposite are starting to come thick and fast. The OECD criticised the government over its lack of interest in infrastructure. It recognises that a nationally coordinated approach to infrastructure investment to address and deal with bottlenecks and capacity constraints is needed before they reach crisis point.

Yesterday the government received yet another warning on economic complacency. The Reserve Bank of Australia reported that ‘supply constraints, including much-published capacity constraints in rail and port infrastructure have begun to hamper export growth’. The Reserve Bank’s comments have forced the Treasurer to admit that capacity constraints are a problem in some of Australia’s major ports and that the government needs to look at ways of improving capacity.

As I said earlier, we need look no further than the expansion of the port of Kembla. It is staggering that the OECD and the Reserve Bank both see what is around the corner for the Australian economy but that it seems to have escaped the attention of the government. The New South Wales government has a plan to get freight moving and increase...
I note with particular interest the $150 million dedicated to strategic regional projects. I have one regional project for the government to consider—the Princes Highway. Over the last two years in the Illawarra a debate has raged over which level of government should upgrade the Princes Highway. There have been consistent calls for the Princes Highway to be declared a road of national importance. The member for Forrest talked about death rates on roads. In the last 12 months the record on the Princes Highway has been a great tragedy. There have been many lives lost over this time—many broken families in our communities.

I support the component in AusLink for strategic regional projects. In my view, this particular program, if used wisely and strategically, has the potential to leverage significant funding from the Commonwealth to upgrade the Princes Highway. The New South Wales government has already allocated over $380 million to the upgrade task. The Commonwealth has made a contribution through recent funding under the Black Spot Program. But still finger pointing goes on while families suffer the misery of losing loved ones.

If—and I say ‘if’—we are serious about upgrading the Princes Highway, not only to make it safer for motorists but also to continue to contribute to the growth of the tourism industry, we should be able to come together and propose a significant funding amount under the strategic regional project program. Already the five local government areas in the Illawarra have agreed to make the upgrade of the Princes Highway their priority. Wollongong and Shellharbour councils already enjoy some degree of upgrading of the highway, and Shellharbour and Kiama are benefiting from continued works. However, there continue to be major danger spots in areas of the Princes Highway, particularly in the electorate of Gilmore. These need to be upgraded, and all levels of government need to contribute, as does the private sector.

If the strategic regional projects program is what it is supposed to be, I can see an opportunity to settle the upgrade of the Princes Highway once and for all. We could end the finger pointing and blame shifting once and for all. We could make the Princes Highway safer, save lives—especially young lives—and continue to efficiently move goods and services up and down the coast.

If the strategic regional projects program is what the government is saying it will be, I can see federal, state and local government in the Illawarra come together, along with industry, business and community groups, to put together a very good funding submission and have that important stretch of road upgraded. But will the program be used for that purpose? Will the program actually be about strategic regional economic and community projects or will it be another political football to kick around? There is no place for the minister to use discretion in this program. Projects should be funded and approved on merit, cost analysis and rational decision making. Labor has long supported the need for the development of an integrated national transport plan and I am pleased to see that the government has reached the conclusion that at some stage real spending is needed.

When good businesses experience good times they use it to invest in the future—they improve practices, update technologies and streamline production. They reinvest in their business. The government needs to adopt the same approach. The Australian economy has experienced and continues to experience good economic conditions that are—it is no
surprise, I would argue—the result of Labor’s program of reforms that started in the 1980s. Yet infrastructure investment has lagged significantly behind. Labor is concerned this bill is nothing but another opportunity to pork-barrel. This could easily turn into the road and rail transport version of the Regional Partnerships program. This is why the provisions of the bill that give the minister considerable discretion need to be carefully and thoroughly examined by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee.

Labor recognises that a new scheme has to be in place by June and that is why the Senate committee needs to report back promptly. Labor also recognises that there are a number of problems with this bill and some significant areas that should be subject to greater scrutiny. The plan to have the bill reviewed by the committee does not stem simply from concern over the lack of transparency in some sections and the considerable discretion granted to the minister. The Senate committee also needs to consider whether or not this road transport plan is good enough. At the last election, Labor’s transport commitments went beyond road and rail. It had a plan to get expert and consumer advice on national priorities—not just to let the minister decide—and to extend projects to include public transport, cycling, walking and regional airport runways. Indeed, in the greater area of the Illawarra there is a significant regional airport that could also do with some federal attention.

Labor’s amendments are sound and the concerns that have prompted its recommendation to have this bill reviewed by a Senate committee are well founded. An expenditure program with a total funding commitment of $12.5 billion over the next five years cannot be allowed to become another taxpayer funded re-election program. I was very disappointed that AusLink has ignored Wollongong and the wider Illawarra area for a full five years. I am disappointed that all we get—nearly 400,000 people—is a cheap paragraph in a $12.5 billion white paper on transport. But this five-year period out in the cold also places a challenge on my region. We have a growing population to cater for. We need to provide and create jobs, particularly for our young people. We have to protect and maintain our living standards. We know what infrastructure upgrades and improvements we need. We do not need to survey anyone; the information is all there. This government may not know these things, but we certainly do.

The challenge for the next round of AusLink funding is for the people of Wollongong and the wider Illawarra area to start putting together the hard work of submissions and documents to make sure we get a fair share of future AusLink funds. In our area we have to stop focusing on one infrastructure project or upgrade at a time. We need to stop a cargo cult mentality. We need to apply our hard work, hard thinking and leverage to promote an integrated approach to our region’s sustainability and growth. Wollongong and the Illawarra region are not going to stop growing and the Commonwealth is failing in its responsibilities to our communities over the next five years. I am confident that a Beazley Labor government will be committed to ensuring that we get our fair share and will recognise that Wollongong and the greater Illawarra area are a critical part of Australia’s transport future.

I am pleased that the state Labor government has recognised the significant importance of transport upgrades for our region to ensure our ongoing viability economically and socially. Beyond the $380 million upgrade the state government have made to the Princes Highway, they have recently commenced construction of a $47 million upgrade to Lawrence Hargrave Drive; made a
$55 million commitment to the Bondi Junction train turnback, which will ensure more reliable and regular provision of train services to many of those 20,000 commuters I referred to earlier; and, as I have already mentioned, begun the $14 million first stage expansion of the multipurpose berth at Port Kembla.

The AusLink program has potential but I am sure people in this House and in my community will understand the level of concern, and perhaps the touch of cynicism, that our side brings to this. As I said when I commenced, I sat here and listened to the great pleasure that the member for Forrest took in announcing all the successful things funded in his area. The amount of black spot funding in my electorate, whilst it is welcome, is very small when you look at the wider region of the Illawarra and the failure of the government to give any commitment in the past to our transport needs. Clearly, a paragraph in this white paper commenting on what our transport needs are and providing not a cent for those needs across three, potentially four, federal seats is a pretty poor showing.

Mr BRUCE SCOTT (Maranoa) (8.14 p.m.)—I take much pleasure tonight in rising to speak on the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and the AusLink (National Land Transport—Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2004. These are important bills. The reforms that have been brought forward by this government are some of the most wide ranging and significant in recent history. I commend our Minister for Transport and Regional Services on the work that he has done in these very forward thinking and wide ranging reforms of the transport system that we have in this nation today. They are long overdue. I know that the minister and members of the government have a deep commitment to the reform of the way we fund our responsibilities as a Commonwealth government so that we can also work with state, territory and local governments to make sure that the money we spend—which at the end of the day is taxpayers’ funds—addresses those long-term problems we face in the transport task of the future.

Transport is vital to the prosperity of all Australians. Australia is a large land mass, which makes our challenge even greater. We have a small population and a large geographic area, with people and industry spread right across the nation. Getting the produce out—whatever it may be: minerals, agriculture or the tourism trade, which is increasing all the time—and the ability to make the most of the opportunities ahead of us are the great challenges in this very large country of ours.

I always admire the great pioneers of Australia. In so many areas they went out into the unknown. One of the wonderful books from my very early childhood that I often look back on—I actually won it at school as a prize for running—is about the Overland Telegraph Line that was built across Australia. When I read about those pioneers who pioneered that path connecting north and south for the telegraph, as it was in those days, I have nothing but admiration for what they did and where they went, and for the benefits the improved access to communications in those days brought to the nation. They laid the foundation for our prosperity in the nation we know today. But there was one element that they got so wrong. Prior to federation there were six colonies across Australia and they were all very independently minded as to the rail gauge they would have in each state. As a consequence we ended up with three rail gauges in Australia. Rail was not only the most popular method of transport but also the one that opened up so much of Australia because a rolling stock could
move so much bulk, whether it was people or goods, at one time.

When the founding fathers of our country in those days decided on the rail gauges in each state, I think they used them in many ways as a form of tariff barrier to restrict trade between the states. That is a legacy we have to deal with in this country today. We are overcoming those barriers, but they have always restricted the development of the full potential that rail can offer the freight task in this country. In my state of Queensland the gauge was three feet six inches. If only it were four feet $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. A standard gauge would have been much better, but that was the decision made more than 100 years ago. We have to live with it and we have to make sure we can develop it in the future. We cannot turn the clock back. That is why I commend the minister on the work he has done in relation to AusLink and for the $2 billion we are investing in rail infrastructure over the next five years.

In today’s terms that $2 billion is the equivalent of building two Snowy Mountains schemes. I remember growing up in the era in Australia when the Snowy Mountains hydro scheme was developed. For years and years after—even today—people referred to the Snowy Mountains scheme as a great development of infrastructure in this country, which still brings benefits to us today. It was an investment by previous generations that was probably very difficult to fund at the time, but one which continues to bring this country a benefit. The $2 billion that we will be spending on rail infrastructure over the next five years is going to make an important contribution to the way we use rail in dealing with the freight tasks we will have in the future.

I would like to highlight a couple of potential rail projects in Queensland. I know we will be able to see in my lifetime—I hope it will be in the very near future—some Commonwealth and state cooperation and private investment to see these rail projects up and running. I refer firstly to the rail project that is being promoted by Everald Compton and his group in Queensland to link Wandoan through Theodore into the port of Gladstone. There is a missing link between Wandoan and Theodore. I think it is about 120 kilometres. The corridor was planned and is still there, although I am not quite sure that is the corridor they would like to use. However, there is a missing link between Wandoan and Theodore that would allow rail to be the preferred way that freight is moved from that part of Queensland to the port of Gladstone.

Quite apart from the agricultural industries in that region, the resource that remains virtually untapped today is the Surat coal basin. It is a major challenge to get coal trains to the port of Brisbane. While we have the bottlenecks going into the port of Brisbane and the Toowoomba range, the Surat coal basin—from Wandoan, down through Miles and through to the Darling Downs—will remain a reserve that sits there waiting until they are able to economically move that resource into international markets. I suggest to the House tonight that the way that will be done is through the port of Gladstone. As the federal member, I will obviously be working with this government and with proponents in the private sector who want to invest in this rail line because, if we are to be able to develop these mines, we will need to have that rail link up and running.

The second link in rail infrastructure in Australia that is going to be so important to us in the future is the inland rail link between Queensland and New South Wales. If you look at the Murray-Darling Basin and its great agricultural resources, representing 50 per cent of Australia’s food production and with so much of it exported, we still do not
have a link between the four foot 8½ inch gauge and the three foot six inch gauge between New South Wales and Queensland. That is a link that we must be able to achieve. I will certainly be working with those potential investors, with the Commonwealth government and with the minister, to see if we can get a viable proposition so that we can support as a government, together with private investment, the establishment of that inland rail link between Queensland and New South Wales—a vital link for the future prosperity of this nation, I might add.

The third link is the one between Mount Isa through to the Northern Territory joining up with the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line. That link is essential because of the potential of the beef industry in that part of Australia and the increasing focus on exports of beef through the Top End through the port of Darwin, particularly the live exports—and of course, in future, there will be more and more processed beef going out through the port of Darwin. I would like the link to be a priority for this government, as well as for the Northern Territory government and the state of Queensland and private investment. It is essential for the future because the untapped, undeveloped mineral resources of north-west Queensland have an enormous potential to create wealth and jobs for Australians.

Currently the rail link is between Mount Isa and Townsville. With the completion of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line, the obvious link now is between Mount Isa and Tennant Creek. That would be a vital part of our national rail infrastructure which would see Queensland, through the rail network, linked to the Northern Territory and north to the port of Darwin. I know that the member for Lingiari, an opposition member, who is at the table at the moment, would have to concur that the port of Darwin in the years ahead is going to be an important and strategic port for exports of mineral wealth from the resources sector and other products for the markets to our north.

I want to touch on the issue of roads and a particular road link that is a state responsibility and which is holding back transport linkages in western Queensland. The Premier of Queensland is travelling out to Charleville this weekend for his first cabinet meeting of the year. He is going out into the country—into Charleville in my electorate. I welcome him coming out into western Queensland. There are many issues I would like to take up with him, quite apart from the issue of the vegetation management laws that he has brought forward in the state of Queensland.

I want to refer to the roads in western Queensland that are the responsibility of the state government of Queensland. Right now the road between Charleville and Morven is a state main road. It is a road that the state government have failed to adequately invest in to meet the growing demand from transport usage as well as tourism traffic along that road. It is the vital link between roads west of Charleville and south of Charleville that would, if it were upgraded—and it must be upgraded—allow type 2 road trains to travel the 80 kilometres between Charleville and Morven where it meets the national highway and then all the way through to Roma, where type 2 road trains very shortly will be able to travel in that road train corridor.

Currently, type 2 road trains that come into Charleville from the west have to decouple the third trailer, go the 80 kilometres on a state main road, return with a prime mover and pull that single trailer up to Morven and couple it up again and go on their way. That is the sort of investment a state government is responsible for, to ensure that we are not holding back the development of inland Queensland. The products
that travel along that road, utilising type 2 road trains to Charleville and then the missing link between Charleville and Morven, are from the beef industry, the oil and gas industry in western Queensland from the Cooper Basin and of course all the supplies from the west.

It is an important road. Given that Queensland is the state most benefitting from the reform of the tax system in this country and from GST revenue, the challenge for Mr Beattie, the Premier of Queensland, when he is out in Charleville this weekend, is to announce that he is going to accelerate the expenditure in his forward estimates and put them into the road. He must do this if he has any commitment to rural Queensland at all. He talks a lot about the south-east corner of Queensland, but we want to see some serious money from the Premier going out into the rural communities. This is the challenge for the Premier this weekend.

The other road I want to touch on is one where type 2 road trains travel on a state main road. There is a bridge west of Charleville on the Ward River. Tragically, last year, there were fatalities on that bridge. It was a tragic event which could have been avoided had that bridge and the approaches to it been safer—certainly the width of the bridge is not in keeping with what should be there. So the challenge for the Premier when he is out there this weekend is to announce that he is going to address that very serious and dangerous crossing over the Ward River, bearing in mind that families lost loved ones only last year in a tragic accident at that bridge site. If he has any commitment to governing for all Queenslanders, not just for a few select ones that he chooses to look after in the south-east corner, he will commit, whilst he is in Charleville this weekend, to having that bridge widened and to the removal of the dangerous section of road between Charleville and Quilpie.

There is one other road I would like to touch on quickly that is certainly on my own radar, and that is a link between the northern north-western national highway, between Townsville and Mount Isa, and the link that comes onto the national highway at Barcaldine and then travels all the way south through to Melbourne. I refer to the road between Torrens Creek just west of Charters Towers and Aramac. It is an unsealed road at the moment. The local government, the Aramac shire, are putting their Roads to Recovery money, and will continue to put their Roads to Recovery money, into the road to seal parts of that link, but as a very small rural shire they do not have the financial resources to complete that road in the near future. I am working with the minister on this issue, and Minister Lloyd has also received representations from me and from the Aramac shire. I will be bringing them down again shortly to highlight the Torrens Creek to Aramac road.

Why does an important road link remain unsealed at the moment? If you look at the road between Cairns and Melbourne, travelling the coastal route via Brisbane, there is a much shorter alternative. It is the one between Cairns, Charters Towers, out through Torrens Creek to Aramac and down to the national highway, joining it at Barcaldine. The distance between Cairns and Melbourne via Aramac is 1,100 kilometres shorter than going via Brisbane, so if about 120 kilometres—I think it is 120 kilometres if my memory serves me correctly—of unsealed road were made up to a sealed road, working with the local government who are already committed to putting some Roads to Recovery money into that road, the distance for transport operators bringing fresh fruit and vegetables and other produce from Northern Australia down not only to the Melbourne markets but also to Sydney could be 1,100 kilometres shorter. Mr Deputy Speaker Wilkie, I
am sure you can appreciate the savings that would accrue to the costs of those goods because of the shorter track that those transport operators, if they were able to utilise that road, could take.

That link would also remove some of the freight task that is now travelling down the east coast through the Bruce Highway and Brisbane and ultimately ending up on the Hume Highway. It removes it inland and takes pressure off the coastal routes. That is the sort of reform and the sort of investment we need if we are to spread the weight of the transport task across other roads across the nation. So I commend that to our minister. I have spoken to him. As I said a moment ago, I will be bringing these people down again very shortly, because it is one of those very important road linkages which falls under that AusLink proposal of linking national highways with ports, and trying to address the issue between road and rail and sharing the freight task. I just want to say in conclusion that I support these reforms. They are certainly long overdue, but I am proud to be part of a government that is bringing forward such wide ranging reforms that are going to address the transport task here and in the future. (Time expired)

Mr Snowdon (Lingiari) (8.34 p.m.)—I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate this evening. In doing so, I want to say with some sadness that the issues that I want to identify in the course of my contribution will be about roads. For the Northern Territory, which is of course my seat, a key issue has been the construction of roads across the Territory over a period of time—and I will come to the issue of funding shortly. However, whilst the honourable member for Eden-Monaro is at the table, I want to make some observations about some of the people who have made road building, and civil construction generally, so important to the Northern Territory community and the Northern Territory economy. I want to refer to a person who was really at the forefront of establishing land transport infrastructure and the civil construction industry generally across the Northern Territory but who died tragically only yesterday. In a previous life, the honourable member opposite was a surveyor in the Northern Territory and he did work associated with this man—Neville Walker. Neville Walker and his partner Frazer Henry were the co-founders of a company initially called Henry and Walker, later to become Henry Walker Eltin. Of course, that company, unfortunately, has its own problems at the moment.

But it is important, I think, to understand that Neville Walker made a very important contribution to the Northern Territory community and to land transport in Australia. He was not an economist, a lawyer or a surveyor; he drove machines. His job with his partner when they first met was basically running road crews. They saw the need to, as they say, come to terms with the fact that the bosses were not that smart, so they determined to form a partnership and that partnership became fundamental to the civil construction industry in the Northern Territory, particularly in the eighties, and was crucial to the development of road infrastructure, in particular, in all areas of the Northern Territory.

I think it is worth while noting that here was an ordinary person—as I say, not someone who in other circumstances might have been seen as a high flyer but someone who ultimately, through the period of his working life, demonstrated that he truly was a high flyer. I do not know of his family background prior to his coming to the Northern Territory, but I knew he was a common man, an ordinary person, someone who understood the meaning of hard work, sweat and sacrifice. And to see that he has met a very untimely death is a shock to many people in
the Northern Territory and indeed across Australia. I know that Neville Walker was a very close personal friend of former Prime Minister Bob Hawke, and I know that he and his wife, like me and like many in the Northern Territory, are very saddened by Neville Walker’s passing.

I know that the honourable member for Eden-Monaro, opposite, had very many dealings with Mr Walker. As we spoke across the table previously, he commented on what a gentleman Mr Walker was and how important, and what very good businessmen he and his partner were. The work they did for the Northern Territory cannot be undervalued. Whilst, as I say, he was a man of the tools, he showed himself to be a very astute businessman in his commercial dealings. He will be sadly missed by the people of the Northern Territory. I note that the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Clare Martin, said today that the passing of Neville Walker is a great loss for the Territory. She said:

Neville Walker was just so much part of who we are and how far we have come as a Territory. To hear today that he has been killed in a car accident is just a tragedy for all of us. My heartfelt condolences to Joanne ...

I am sure I can speak for the honourable member opposite: we would like to extend our condolences to his wife, Joanne, and his children, family and friends. Ms Martin said in her press release:

When you hear the story of Neville Walker, you hear the story of building the Territory. More than 40 years ago, Neville Walker and Frazer Henry bought their first grader, started building our roads and ended up creating a Territory business legend.

That is true. They have built so much of the Territory, and you could not find anyone who believed more in our future or who better represented the Territory spirit than Neville Walker. I am saddened about his passing, but I am pleased that I was able to use this opportunity in the House to mention him and say how important he was to the Northern Territory community.

But the purpose of this debate tonight, as we know, is to discuss the AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill. Land transport is a vitally important issue in my electorate of Lingiari. It is vital for the Northern Territory’s many remote and isolated communities, particularly those in the northern monsoon areas—but not only those, I have to say. It is vital for the cattle, transport, mining and tourism industries, which together comprise the bulk of the private sector economy in the Northern Territory. Despite its importance, I am sad to say that this government has consistently ignored the transport needs of these remote communities and these industries in the Northern Territory. This AusLink package—both the Roads to Recovery program and that dealing with the national highway system—sadly does not address the needs of the Northern Territory community.

As I have tried to explain in this place on a number of occasions, my words seemingly falling on deaf ears, the Northern Territory has a uniquely different road system. This difference lies in the fact that much of the Territory’s road network cannot be managed by local councils because 40 per cent of the Territory roads lie outside town council boundaries. For years now, as a result of decisions taken by this government, these roads have been ineligible for Roads to Recovery funding, which is distributed only to local councils. The roads in the unincorporated areas of the Territory are crucial to this economy. Without federal funding, they have been left to deteriorate, so much so that less than 35 per cent of the NT road network is sealed with bitumen.

You do not have to be Einstein, Mr Deputy Speaker Somlyay, to work out that the bad condition of these roads adds literally
thousands if not millions of dollars to the costs of running businesses and the cost of living for many people who live in remote Australia. And, of course, it adds additional costs to those industry sectors that I talked about: the pastoral industry, the mining industry, the horticultural and agricultural industries and the tourism industry. That seems to be forgotten. These externalities, the costs involved, are an impediment to business development and an impediment to community development in Northern Australia, yet they seem to have bypassed the mind of this government absolutely and totally.

I have raised this issue many times in this place and elsewhere, and I know that the Northern Territory Cattlemen’s Association, to take one example, has lobbied the Prime Minister and the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, as has the Martin Labor government in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory’s Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment backed their efforts last year by producing evidence which shows that the Roads to Recovery funding flaw has caused the Territory to be underfunded in that area alone by in excess of $5 million a year.

We know that there have been discussions between the cattlemen and the Leader of the National Party, the Deputy Prime Minister. As a result of the efforts of the Territory community, the Cattlemen’s Association and the pressure put upon the government, there was a possibility—and indeed it was mooted—of additional funds. The Deputy Prime Minister at one meeting promised the Cattlemen’s Association an additional $40 million to tackle neglected bush roads—those roads on unincorporated land. Later, the then Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Senator Ian Campbell, promised an additional $20 million. It is nowhere to be seen—absolutely nowhere to be seen.

The *Northern Territory News* editorialised on this subject on 23 July last year, saying:

... unincorporated roads are not dirt tracks going from nowhere to nowhere. Many are the only access to rural communities. Others are ‘beef roads’, crucial for transporting cattle to market. The Territory government is forced to fund the roads.

Prime Minister John Howard acknowledged that there was a problem and promised to fix it in the AusLink white paper. But the federal government chipped in a mere $5 million—to be shared with New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and the Indian Ocean territories.

The Territory’s transport department says it needs $5 million a year for itself to do the job.

Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson has told cattlemen that beef roads will get a further $40 million. He is yet to deliver on that promise. Almost a year after these promises were made, we are still waiting.

There is nothing in this package which addresses that road need. I read a very good document from the Parliamentary Library on this bill but nowhere does it even mention the issue of roads and unincorporated land. I am most concerned that this seems again to have fallen off the radar. I have put out press release after press release on the issue of road funding in the Northern Territory. I have spoken in this place on a number of occasions about the deficiencies in the government’s approach to road funding. It is worth noting that there is no evidence in the Hansard record that I can see of the CLP member for Solomon, the coalition’s Northern Territory representative in this place, or the good CLP Senator Scullion speaking on this issue in parliament. Neither of those gentlemen, to my knowledge, has bothered to talk in this place about roads. It begs the question: what happens when these representatives come to Canberra to supposedly represent in the government the interests of the Northern Territory? Not much.
The AusLink legislation is, in that respect, a scandal. The poorest Australians, those people who live in these unincorporated areas—small Aboriginal communities, pastoral lessees—are not being contemplated in this legislation. You have to ask why. Why is it that the government cannot come to terms with the issue of unincorporated lands in the Northern Territory? Why is it that there are 8½ thousand kilometres of roads on these lands which are not being funded through this package? It is all very well for the Commonwealth to say that this is a Northern Territory government problem, but it is plainly not.

I note that the AusLink documentation says that the roads in the Northern Territory that are being addressed in the network are the national highway system; the Stuart, Victoria River and Barkly highways; the interstate railway connecting Darwin and Adelaide; and Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road for access to Darwin Port. What does the rest of the Northern Territory do? What happens about the Tanami Track? These are very important roads to the infrastructure and the economy of the Northern Territory and to community life in the Northern Territory, yet they are being totally ignored by this legislation.

The other area that I want to briefly touch upon is the national highway. We know that the government proposes to absorb the national highway funding within this piece of legislation, and it expects state and territory governments to make a contribution to that funding. I am very concerned because I drive a lot on very bad dirt roads such as the Plenty and Tanami highways. I also drive on small bush roads and pastoral lease roads. I drive on the Stuart Highway, the Barkly Highway and the Victoria River Highway. I know how important the government’s undertakings are with respect to funding. I have learned something very important from a research document from the Library. It says:

Critics argue that the National Highway is under-funded, pointing out that funding has fallen short of the expenditure that the Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics estimated is needed for the non-urban sections.

It continues:

The Bureau of Transport and Communications Economics (BTCE) estimated annual expenditure needs for the non-urban sections of the National Highway over the 22 year period to 2020 at $772 million (in 1997-98 prices).

Earlier in the paper another table is provided and you are asked to compare the two. The papers show that, over the last three years, the actual funding for the national highway system was more than $1.1 billion less than is required for the national highway system. You can bet your bottom dollar that I am worried about this, because I know the importance of these roads to the Northern Territory. It is no coincidence that the issue of safety is one which is a cause for concern across the community. There is no question in my mind about the importance of this national highway funding for the national highway system in the Northern Territory just crudely on the issue of safety. Leave aside the economic issues, the need for the national highway system and the road trains...
that traverse the Northern Territory, the safety issue alone ought to be a major cause for concern to the government and a reason for them to address the issue of funding for the national highway. But that is also a reason why the government should address the issue of roads on unincorporated land.

The Northern Territory has the highest number of road fatalities per capita in Australia—19 out of every 100,000 people in the Territory are killed each year on the roads, a rate that is more than double the national average. That is largely because of the situation on the roads, which incur a tremendous social and economic cost. But the government again blithely goes on about what it is doing for national road and transport infrastructure in this country but leaves aside the human cost of not fixing the roads and the social and economic costs of not properly addressing the needs of roads on unincorporated lands. Ultimately we will see, as a result of this program, the rundown of stock and the rundown of the national highway system because of the decision which will now be made by this government.

There is a lot to be commended in this package in terms of having a national framework, but there are some major flaws. I commend to the House the amendment that has been moved by the opposition, which states:

“whilst not declining to give the bill a second reading, the House calls upon the Government to:

(1) maintain funding responsibility for construction and maintenance of infrastructure on what was formerly defined as the National Highway Network;

(2) establish a National Infrastructure Advisory Council; and

(3) extend the criteria for Roads to Recovery projects to include public transport, cycling, walking infrastructure and regional airport runways”.

Debate (on motion by Mr Brough) adjourned.

WATER EFFICIENCY LABELLING AND STANDARDS BILL 2004

Returned from the Senate

Message received from the Senate returning the bill without amendment or request.

TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (LONG-TERM NON-REVIEWABLE CONTRACTS) BILL 2004

Consideration of Senate Message

Consideration resumed.

Senate amendment—

(1) Schedule 1, item 14, page 14 (line 4), after “must”, insert “be made within 28 days of the end of the offer period and “.

Mr Fitzgibbon—Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise for the delay. I thought that the minister might take the opportunity to speak first.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. I.R. Causley)—I apologise for the confusion and call the Minister for Revenue.

Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer) (8.54 p.m.)—I move:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The amendment that has come back from the Senate basically inserts a statutory period of 28 days for the arbitration, or the negotiations if you like, to take place in regard to non-reviewable leases when applying the GST. When the GST was introduced those long-term non-reviewable contracts were given a five-year period in which to be fulfilled until this amendment was put in place. The reason this particular amendment has been passed by the Senate—the government will support it tonight here in the House—is that, unfortunately, we were unable to fulfil our wish and that was to get this measure through the House and the Senate before
Christmas. That would have negated the need for this particular amendment. The Property Council of Australia has requested this amendment. Having spoken to those that will utilise this particular measure, the government have some reservations, but we hope that it will meet the market’s needs and that those that need to make these negotiations will be able to do so in a timely fashion so that it will be in place by 30 June. I thank the opposition for their constructive assistance in this matter today.

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (8.56 p.m.) —First of all, for the record, the Minister for Revenue did not confuse me at all. It is standard for the minister to speak first to a Senate message, one which amends the government’s own bill, so it was appropriate for me to wait a little while to give the minister a chance to do so. True to form, the minister has chosen to inflame this situation. I was prepared to do what I have done on a number of other occasions, and that is to speak very briefly to this Senate message. I was very suspicious about the timing of this Senate message at some four minutes to nine, just before the adjournment. I am sure the minister had in mind the limited opportunity that would then give me to speak to the Senate message.

The minister has just blatantly attempted to rewrite history. Let me give you the real account of what happened with the Tax Laws Amendment (Long-term Non-reviewable Contracts) Bill 2004. Some time during December of last year the government decided to dump on the opposition these complex issues as they relate to long-term non-reviewable contracts and the GST. They were dumped on us in one day and the government’s expectation—almost five years after the introduction of the GST—was that the opposition would give passage to that bill in a complex area of the law through both houses of this parliament in one or two days.

We indicated at that time that we understood that there was an important time constraint—time is of the essence—but we were not prepared to have a bill lumped on us one day and then passed through both houses of parliament within the next couple of days.

The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, who is at the table, criticised us at that time for doing so but, alas, we have been vindicated because, as it turns out, after the opportunity to consult with various industry players over the course of the intervening period we find that this is by no means a perfect bill. The industry representative bodies highlighted three problems in particular: firstly, the lack of a time cap on the period for arbitration; secondly, any definition of a qualification for the arbitrators in these arrangements; and, thirdly, who would bear the cost of such an arbitration period.

I will just recap what the minister has said. This bill deals with long-term non-reviewable contracts that predate the GST but continue to have legal force. The government appropriately on the introduction of the GST decided to put in place a transitional period to allow the parties to these contracts to determine amongst themselves how the GST should apply to those contracts. As we approach 30 June 2005 when that transitional period expires, the government has seen fit to force the hands of those players, particularly those recalcitrant parties to the contracts who might be seeking to benefit financially from the opportunities the end of the transitional period presents.

We support this bill in principle, but we are absolutely vindicated in our approach of last year. We were absolutely right to not accept this bill at face value but to take the appropriate amount of time to test it properly, to consult with the key stakeholders and to consult with the industry representative groups to see whether it was a good bill or
whether it was lacking in any areas. We have identified three of them. I give credit to the government for acknowledging that they had the bill wrong and accepting our amendment, at least in one area. They have left two aside—

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The SPEAKER**—Order! It being 9.00 p.m., I propose the question:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr Brough—Mr Speaker, I require that the question be put immediately without debate.

Question negatived.

**TAX LAWS AMENDMENT (LONG-TERM NON-REVIEWABLE CONTRACTS) BILL 2004**

**Consideration of Senate Message**

Mr FITZGIBBON (Hunter) (9.00 p.m.)—I want to say in conclusion that I do give some credit to the government for accepting the opposition’s very reasonable and responsible amendment. As a consequence, I look forward to the passage of a bill with much greater efficacy than the one presented to parliament in its original form.

Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer) (9.00 p.m.)—To finalise the debate, let me say we differ in our recollection of last December. But I will leave it at that because there is no point in eating up more of the time of the parliament. I have already moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question agreed to.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr BROUGH (Longman—Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer) (9.01 p.m.)—I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

**Indian Ocean Tsunami**

Ms ROXON (Gellibrand) (9.01 p.m.)—Mr Speaker, this is the first opportunity I have had to congratulate you on your election to office. I am delighted to be able to speak today when so many other members in the House have also expressed their views and condolences regarding the tsunami that occurred over the Christmas break. I would like to associate myself with the comments that have been made by many of the other speakers, and I do not intend to go in great detail over the ground they have already covered. But I would like to deal with a number of local issues and examples of how our community responded to this tragic news.

In my electorate of Gellibrand, like in many other members’ electorates, people were absolutely overwhelmed by the vision they saw on TV and by the fact that every day the numbers of people who had been killed by this natural disaster seemed to grow by the thousands. We know now that hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives as a result of this tsunami. I think in Australia we particularly responded to the many holiday-makers who were travelling to parts of the world that Australians are great and regular travellers to. They were obviously affected as well. In my electorate I think it struck a chord as such a terrible disaster because so many people have come from other parts of the world to Gellibrand to make their homes in Australia, many from South-East Asia and many from the countries that were affected. Of course, they immediately thought of their family and friends who still lived in the countries that were most affected, and they were worried not just because of the vast numbers of people who lost their lives but because of the many extra millions of people who lost family members, who lost their businesses and who lost their incomes and livelihoods. I would like to as-
associate myself with the comments made by many other members of this House in recording our concerns on behalf of our communities and in expressing condolences to all of those who have been affected.

I want to talk a bit about the impact in my electorate and the response because I think it is typical of what happened across the country and should be recorded here as a great credit to the people of Gellibrand. As across the rest of Australia, people responded immediately to something that they saw as such a decisive act of nature, so outside the will of man and unlike many other crises where there is a debate about whether they have been caused by politics or by all sorts of other things that we have at least some sense of control over. But the generosity locally was overwhelming, and as we know across Australia people have given well beyond the call of duty and set aside money that they may have used for themselves. Even those who do not have very much money to spare have done this.

I want to name a couple of examples, although there are many in my electorate. On the National Day of Mourning and Reflection I went to two different services. I went to Our Lady’s Catholic Church in Maidstone, a church that has a healthy congregation—but still of only a few hundred people—and that is in a part of Melbourne where not everyone has a lot to offer or to give. That church in one short week had raised $8,000 to donate to Caritas, the Catholic organisation that they were supporting, for the work that they were going to do in rebuilding the lives and homes of people in various countries that had been affected by the tsunami. That is an extraordinary amount of money to be able to raise so quickly, and I think it is a credit to the organisation and the congregation that they were able to do that. But that is just one example of many in the electorate.

Similarly, at the Newport mosque the very large Lebanese community felt very strongly and raised large amounts of money quickly. They also conducted a joint service with the Anglican Church and other churches to point out that this was something that crossed all religions and all communities.

My office was a Red Cross collection point, like I think all Labor members’ offices were. In a short time we collected $1,000. This was well after most people had already made their donations, and I think it is again a credit to our community that people felt so strongly that they gave what little they had for people who had even less than them as a result of this great disaster. I want to encourage people to continue with that generosity as much as they can. Obviously there is still going to be a lot of work to be done in the future in communities that will need to rebuild over many years. I think we can be proud that in our community of Gellibrand so many people took the time and care to donate, even from their often meagre incomes, to make a difference in this area. I hope that other members will continue to encourage their communities to do so as well. (Time expired)

Australia Day

Ms PANOPoulos (Indi) (9.06 p.m.)—It is one of the curious intellectual battles of our modern era that when Australia Day comes along each year there is always debate in the opinion pages of newspapers about the appropriateness or otherwise of 26 January being proclaimed as Australia’s national day. Of course, this year was no exception. On Australia Day this year the Age editorialised that 26 January would ‘never be a day of celebration’ for Aboriginals and that the date commemorated the ‘subjugation’ of the population, whilst then going on to quote Indigenous activist Michael Mansell, who derided Australia Day as a ‘race-based’
event—akin to ‘celebrating the coming to power of the Nazis at the expense of the Jews’.

This type of criticism is not surprising. It is upsetting, but it is more or less expected these days. But the endless seminar on Australian identity and Australia Day hit a new low when the chief executive officer of the Australian Football League came out of the harbour esplanade bunker to launch an extraordinary attack on Australia in this year’s John Batman oration. Andrew Demetriou’s speech has attracted both criticism and praise in the mainstream media. The speech was biased and negative from the beginning: a fusillade of rhetoric and misguided idealism. Demetriou lamented an Australia that had become a ‘conservative country in recent years’, whose people were ‘more inclined to self-interest than sharing’. This banter might be more credible if it came from a welfare organisation or an aid group, but coming from the CEO of a corporate entity masked as a sporting organisation, it is a bit rich and a bit much to accept.

The AFL has a track record of selling the game to the highest bidder. The acrimonious TV rights stoush in 2000 still has Channel 7 reeling—so much so, the debate is set to be played out in the Federal Court, with the AFL budgeting $7.5 million to defend their case. The Herald Sun recently reported that 72 per cent of respondents to a community survey thought that the AFL bosses are not in touch with what the fans really want. This is hardly surprising. This is the bloke who heads the organisation that has raised ticket prices to home and away matches eight times in the last decades. This year’s home and away ticket prices are rising by more than 6 per cent, well above the rate of CPI. Demetriou even attended an Andrea Bocelli concert at Rod Laver Arena whilst Geelong and Essendon thrashed it out at the MCG in a semifinal last year. With a salary about three times as much as the Prime Minister’s and an impressive package of perks to go with it, Mr Demetriou is perhaps not in the best position to condemn an Australia that he says is ‘more interested in surpluses than what we do with them’ and ‘more interested in stock-market outcomes than the state of education, and equality of opportunity’.

No attack on the Howard government is complete without the mention of that hardy perennial, ‘the Tampa incident’, to illustrate our perceived racism and evil in the eyes of the person making the attack. However, Demetriou goes further than most. He yearns for an Australia with ‘open borders’, with the quaint notion that ‘embracing the people on board’ will keep us safe. It is not un-Australian to want to protect our sovereignty and our borders and it is not un-Australian to decide who will come to this country, who really is a refugee under our generous legal interpretations and who we will assist. In fact, these things go very much to the core of my understanding and my interpretation of patriotic duty. But those adhering to the viewpoints held by the cultural elite—a label Demetriou can now wear as a badge of honour—just cannot understand the strength and support that this government received at the ballot box at the recent election.

History is riddled with unfortunate instances of the politicisation of sport. Unless Mr Demetriou sees an ALP preselection coming his way, I suggest that he steers clear from moralising and sticks to football administration. Heaven knows there is enough on his plate: the twin costly embarrassments of the AFL Hall of Fame and AFL Sensation, a new sexual misconduct tribunal, salary cap breaches, a tougher approach on recreational drugs and reversing the disconnect that many loyal, dyed-in-the-wool footy fans feel between the game they love and the official edicts from the AFL power brokers in their ivory towers. (Time expired)
Flight Lieutenant Paul Martin Pardoel

Ms KING (Ballarat) (9.11 p.m.)—I rise on this adjournment to recognise the death of former St Pat’s boy and Clunes resident, Flight Lieutenant Paul Martin Pardoel. Paul was killed on Sunday, 30 January 2005 when the British C130 Hercules aircraft transporting him crashed 40 kilometres north-west of Baghdad. Flight Lieutenant Paul Pardoel has become Australia’s first, and hopefully our last, military casualty in the Iraq conflict.

Paul grew up in Clunes in my electorate where his mum and dad, John and Margaret, owned and ran the Clunes Hotel. Although Paul moved from Clunes some time ago, he is still fondly remember and sorely missed by the whole community. Paul attended St Patrick’s Catholic College between 1982 and 1987. St Pat’s boys are a pretty tight-knit community. At the request of Paul’s dad, mass was held in the chapel where Paul would have spent time and the school community offered their prayers. As Paul’s old boarding master fondly recalled:

... a naturally gifted sportsman, Mr Pardoel was a member of the rowing team and also the St Patrick’s First XV rugby union team, which produced one of the most successful seasons in the school’s history ... Not the kind of person you forget.

Often in remembering a person’s life we list their achievements, the work they have done and the things that they have been involved in. In Paul’s life there were many. He led a distinguished career as a Hercules navigator. On retirement from the RAAF after 14 years service he enlisted with the Royal Air Force, where he was posted to No. 47 squadron based at RAF Lyneham, west of London. Somehow in just listing a person’s achievements in their life we miss some of the essential elements of who they were as people, their spirit, their heart—reducing them to a series of dates and events. I did not know Paul or his family; they moved before I became the member for Ballarat. But I know many of the boys, now men, who went to school with him, because they are everywhere throughout the Ballarat community. The words of one of them deserve to be read into Hansard to create a permanent record of who Paul actually was. Philip Crain, a former classmate of Paul, says:

I can’t find words to pay a decent enough tribute to our great friend Pards ... He was one of a kind. He wasn’t just bright, he was brilliant. He wasn’t just funny, he was hilarious. And it was always an adventure to be in his company. He always appreciated the value of the education we received at St Pat’s and he had great regard for the brothers and teachers and his mates at the college. When we joined the RAAF he had the gift of making the tough times fun, something for which his class-mates will always remember him. He was just great to be around. The tragic event has taken away one of the most original people I have ever known.

After completing his contract with the RAF in July this year, Paul and his young family were expecting to return to Australia. They intended to start a new life here in Canberra, having recently purchased their home and with Paul having nearly completed a business degree via correspondence. It is a life tragically cut far too short. I wish to pass on my condolences, and the condolences of the Clunes and Ballarat communities and the community of St Patricks college, to Paul’s family: to his father, John; to his mother, Margaret; to his wife, Kelly, who he met at a RAAF summer ball and married in November 1995; to Jordan, his daughter, who is only seven; to Jackson, who is five; and to India, who is two. Paul was a talented airman and a devout family man. Paul encapsulates everything that is good about Australia. My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Middle East: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Mr BARRESI (Deakin) (9.15 p.m.)—This very night Israel and Palestine are hope-
fully on the cusp of a new era of peace with each other. The world wholeheartedly welcomes the meeting in Cairo between Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The two leaders are gathering to hopefully announce a cease-fire, and bring to a halt the four years of violence that have followed the declaration of the second intifada. Very few moments in modern history have had greater impact than the years in which a lasting peace, or a resolution to an ongoing conflict, is found—1919 and 1945 come to mind. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signalled the beginning of the end for communism in eastern Europe. This year offers a golden opportunity for the Middle Eastern region to embrace democracy and work towards a lasting peace. For many years experts of the political landscape in the region have lamented the lack of internal transparency and democratic values within Middle Eastern governments. It is interesting to observe commentators express a sense of defeat when they assess the chances of democracy taking hold and flourishing in the Arab-Islamic world. Over the preceding months, the world has witnessed and assisted fair and democratic elections in countries that have endured decades of either oppressive regimes or spiralling violence. I for one was fortunate enough to witness the Palestinian presidential election of 9 January as head of Australia’s international observers mission.

Much is made of the strong bond between Israel and its Western allies such as Australia. For many years this special bond has included sharing democratic ideals and principles. Western countries such as Australia and the United States have long envisaged that the creation of a second democratic nation would be a breakthrough in the Middle East. Strong, fair and transparent democracies within the Arab world would create a perfect buffer to either the constitutionally manipulated or non-secularly controlled governments throughout the region. The need for progress in Palestine is pressing. Economically the territory is in a bleak state. DFAT figures show that since 1999 GDP per capita has declined 36.3 per cent and average Palestinian incomes have declined by more than a third. Unemployment is rife with a quarter of the work force out of work, while youth unemployment is at a staggering 40 per cent. Hard-fought yet fair election campaigns are necessary to continue sowing the seeds of real democracy in the Middle East. Some argue that the social and political make-up of the region stifles the chances for democracy to take hold. The last month, however, has proved that there is hope and that democracy is an institution that the Palestinian and Iraqi people are only too willing to strive towards.

Democracy and the Islamic world are not mutually exclusive. Modern Turkey has provided its people with a healthy parliamentary democracy for over 75 years. More recently, the Indonesian people elected a new President in a hotly contested ballot. The fact that this democratic enthusiasm is now being embraced in the Middle East is encouraging. The average Palestinian in Gaza and the West Bank will judge the success of the 9 January election according to two factors: self-determination and peace. While moving through the streets of East Jerusalem, Jericho, Ramallah and notorious hot spots such as Nablus and Qalqilya, I witnessed first-hand the zeal amongst many of the 1.1 million registered Palestinians as they cast their vote.

President Abbas has two conflicts to manage in Palestine. The first is one largely imposed by the international community, which is to progress the roadmap for peace and ensure that this watershed moment in Palestinian politics can transcend into a turning point towards a lasting peace in the Middle East.
The second conflict for the new President is a more internal one: how to create economic prosperity—how to provide jobs, education and health services to a people who see the hundreds of Israeli checkpoints as barriers to having a meaningful and prosperous future.

Recent calls by the President for the Palestinian broadcasting authority to tone down their broadcasts of hatred and the celebration of martyrdom are welcome, as is his move to place Palestinian police in control of notorious hot spots. I cannot stress enough the enormity of what I witnessed during the Palestinian election period. I am proud of our democratic electoral system, and observing the events of 9 January is a reminder that what we take for granted every year somewhere in Australia is a precious right elsewhere in the world. I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the unique opportunity to witness a moment in the world’s democratic history.

Mr Adam Dunning

Ms ANNETTE ELLIS (Canberra) (9.21 p.m.)—As the federal member for Canberra, I would like to join with the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and other members in expressing my deep sadness at the death of Mr Adam Dunning, a resident of the electorate of Canberra. Adam was a member of the Australian Protective Service serving in Honiara when he was shot and killed on 22 December 2004. I had the privilege of attending his funeral, at which Adam received full police and military honours. All in attendance were deeply touched as each speaker expressed great respect and affection for their friend, relative and colleague.

Throughout his life Adam demonstrated a maturity beyond his years and a strong desire to serve this country. I recently had the opportunity of speaking with Adam’s mother, who described her son’s attitude and temperament through the following telling anecdote. At the age of 17 Adam began attending kickboxing lessons at the Tuggeranong Police and Citizens Youth Club. As his skills developed, Adam became an instructor and mentor to many of the young people who trained there. While it would have been easy for a fit 17-year-old to simply show off his abilities, Adam impressed on his young friends the value and the benefit of always seeking non-violent solutions to confrontations—something that showed great meaning later in his life.

Having been a member of the Air Force Cadets since 1995, Adam joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1998 as an airfield defence guard and graduated dux of his recruit course. Serving in East Timor as a member of the Australian contingent, his unit was tasked with securing Dili airport. Adam’s mature attitude and commitment to the task at hand were recognised when he was made 2IC—second-in-command—of his section. The Australian service men and women in East Timor provide an invaluable contribution to the United Nations’ rebuilding effort, and Adam’s unit received a meritorious unit citation.

Adam remained a member of the 28 Squadron Reserve Unit when he joined the Australian Protective Service, and in May 2003 he was posted to Parliament House in Canberra. Members of the AFP Protective Service, formerly known as the APS, who are assigned to Parliament House are required to work 12-hour shifts inside and outside the building in all weather while watching for possible security breaches. Adam performed his duties here diligently and efficiently and is held in high regard by his peers.

In October 2004 he became a member of RAMSI—the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands. RAMSI staff come
from 11 different police forces from the Pacific region and the joint mission is known by the pidgin title of ‘Helpem Fren’. As a member of RAMSI, Adam was in constant contact with the people of the Solomon Islands and from all reports quickly made friends with many of the locals. It is obvious that his mature attitude and desire to help others, demonstrated during his time at the Tuggeranong PCYC, had not diminished in the slightest.

On 18 November 2004, Adam was confronted by a man carrying a pistol near the local magistrates court. Faced with the same situation another person may well have responded with deadly force. Instead, Adam calmly talked the man into disarming. His measured response to such an explosive situation speaks volumes about his character. He was awarded a commendation and there is at least one person who might not otherwise be alive if Adam had reacted differently.

Although the pistol wielded in the incident of 18 November turned out to be a replica, all members of RAMSI were and still are constantly under a very real threat of attack. Adam and his colleagues were assigned to protect the residences of government officials as well as senior members of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and RAMSI staff. This meant regular patrols around what are known as high-risk premises. Patrolling on the morning of 22 December 2004, Adam was shot in the back and killed in a senseless and cowardly attack. Speakers at Adam’s funeral included friends, family, dignitaries and colleagues and, while their backgrounds varied, the level of love and respect expressed for Adam Dunning did not.

Adam was a kid from Tuggeranong whose desire to serve took him from Tuggeranong to East Timor and the Solomon Islands. His mature attitude and willingness to put the needs of others before his own impressed all who knew him. His untimely death reminded us all of the risks faced by so many Australians who put their lives on the line for the greater good. As the funeral procession left the Anzac Memorial Chapel at Duntroon, hundreds of Canberra residents lined Anzac Parade and Limestone Avenue in a tribute to Adam and his family.

It seems that Adam’s death has touched the entire nation. We all mourn the loss of such a young and promising life and we will all be eternally grateful to him for providing such an amazing example of how a person should behave. I would like once again to express on behalf of the people of Canberra my deep sympathy to the Dunning family—his mother and father Christine and Mike and his sisters Sarah and Emma—to his girlfriend, Elise, to Adam’s colleagues in the APS, Air Force and RAMSI, and to his friends. (Time expired)

Bass Electorate: Flagpole

Mr MICHAEL FERGUSON (Bass) (9.26 p.m.)—I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the House an unfortunate and, I think, unexpected anomaly in Australian law, so far as it seems to extend to a local resident of northern Tasmania. I am referring to Mr Ian Garwood, a 72-year-old returned serviceman who lives in Batten Street, Launceston. He lives in a heritage-listed property in an area listed as a heritage precinct by the Launceston City Council in its planning scheme and also, it seems, under state planning and heritage laws.

There is an interesting story to tell here. To summarise it, this gentleman renovated his house, which was built in the late 19th century. At the end of those renovations, he erected a three-metre flagpole and flew the Australian flag each morning. After a complaint from a neighbouring resident, the council took the action that they were required to take under their own planning
schemes and state heritage laws. The council advised Mr Garwood that his flagpole was illegal as a structure and required him to apply for permission in the usual manner. They also advised him that there would ultimately be action taken if he did not comply which could be as high as a $50,000 fine and potentially even jail.

Why is this? As I have said, this problem has its origins with the local planning act and the state heritage laws—the Tasmanian Historic Cultural Heritage Act in particular. The council is required by these state planning laws to require planning approval for building extensions and outside structures and, so it seems, even surprisingly, a flagpole. The usual fee to apply is $160 which, because of the embarrassment being caused to the council by Mr Garwood’s refusal to pay, the council offered to waive. Ordinarily these requests would be channelled through the council and sent to the Tasmanian Heritage Council for final advice and approval. Mr Garwood is refusing to submit the necessary documentation, as he says, on principle, because he believes that he has a right to fly the Australian flag.

I ask the House to consider what better heritage does an Australian have than the heritage of being able to fly the Australian flag on their own property? I would suggest also that the Tasmanian Heritage Council’s later statement that they would exempt Mr Garwood from planning approval requirements makes a mockery of the very laws which caused this problem to occur at all. A few days later, after the Heritage Council’s statement, Ken Bacon, Tasmania’s heritage minister, backed that up and said that Mr Garwood would not be required under the laws to submit a planning application—and he has exempted Mr Garwood. Yet other people in the same street would find themselves in the same position were they also to erect a flagpole.

This is clearly not good enough. The exemption for Mr Garwood does nothing for anyone else in the same situation. Tonight I call on the Launceston City Council as well as the Tasmanian state government to enact the necessary amendments to their planning schemes and heritage and planning laws to ensure that, in future, all Tasmanians have the right to fly the Australian flag on their own property, whether their property is heritage listed or not.

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 9.30 p.m., the debate is interrupted.

House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.

NOTICES

The following notices were given:

Mr Ruddock to present a bill for an act to amend the National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Act 2004, and for related purposes. (National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Amendment (Application) Bill 2005)

Mr Andrews to present a bill for an act to amend laws relating to workplace relations, and for related purposes. (Workplace Relations Amendment (Extended Prohibition of Compulsory Union Fees) Bill 2005)

Dr Stone to 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: Proposed refurbishment of Australia House in London.

Dr Stone to 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: Ordnance Breakdown Facility, Proof and Experimental Establishment site, Port Wakefield, SA.

Dr Stone to 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: Development of on-base housing for Defence at Puckapunyal, Vic.

Mr Albanese to present a bill for an act to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol Ratification) Bill 2005)

Ms George to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that global warming is one of the greatest threats to the health of the planet, requiring international action to safeguard the environment for future generations;
(2) recognises that Australia is exposed to a range of negative social, economic and environmental impacts due to climate change;
(3) notes the Government’s claim that Australia is on track to achieving its target of limiting greenhouse emissions;
(4) recognises the Kyoto Protocol provides Australia with future economic opportunities through carbon trading schemes and new markets for ‘green’ technologies; and
(5) urges the Government, on both environmental and economic grounds, to ratify the Kyoto Protocol which comes into force on 16 February 2005.

Mr Martin Ferguson to move:
That this House:
(1) recognises that many Australian couples want to offer their home to orphaned children from overseas countries and notes that in 2003-04 there were 370 inter-country adoption placements in Australia;
(2) understands that whilst adoptive couples are passionate to secure an overseas adoption, in general the main motivation is to give a secure and loving home to child in need;
(3) affirms that state governments and the Federal Government have a duty to ensure that adoptive children are placed in responsible and loving homes;
(4) recognises the enormous financial costs and emotional strain placed on adoptive couples in the course of applying for overseas adoption, receiving a child into their home, and the associated overseas travel;
(5) urges the Australian Government to examine ways that it can better support families with children who have been adopted, whether through local or overseas adoptions; and
(6) calls on the state governments to immediately review the excessive financial charges imposed on adoptive parents with a view to dramatically reducing them. (Notice given 8 February 2005.)
QUESTIONS IN WRITING

Family Court: Powers
(Question No. 19)

Mr Murphy asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 November 2004:
In respect of the ruling on 4 November 2003 by Justice Stephen O’Ryan indicating that there was prima facie evidence supporting the Australian Securities and Investments Commission’s claim that an agreement to shift assets, including the family home, to the wife of Mr Jodee Rich, Mrs Maxine Rich, was entered into because of a concern about claims on her husband’s property by third parties as a result of the collapse of OneTel, when will the Government amend the Family Law Act to allow the Court to examine and overturn agreements made by parties to put assets out of reach of creditors.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
On 11 February 2004 I tabled a response to a question in the same terms (Question on Notice No. 2763), which had been asked on 6 November 2003. There is no further information to provide. For ease of reference, a copy of my response to Question on Notice No. 2763 of 2003 is attached to this response (Attachment A).

ATTACHMENT A
House of Representatives
Attorney-General
(Question No. 2763)
Mr Murphy asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 6 November 2003:
In respect of the ruling on 4 November 2003 by Justice Stephen O’Ryan indicating that there was prima facie evidence supporting the Australian Securities and Investments Commission’s claim that an agreement to shift assets, including the family home, to the wife of Mr Jodee Rich, Mrs Maxine Rich, was entered into because of a concern about claims on her husband’s property by third parties as a result of the collapse of OneTel, when will the Government amend the Family Law Act to allow the Court to examine and overturn agreements made by parties to put assets out of reach of creditors.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
On 5 December 2003 the Government introduced amendments to the Family Law Act 1975 to overcome the issues identified by the Family Court in the Australian Securities and Investments Commission and Rich and Rich (No. SY 5067 of 2002) case. These amendments provide the Family Court with the power to set aside a binding financial agreement on the application of certain third parties in circumstances where either party to the agreement has entered into the agreement for the purpose, or for purposes that included the purpose, of defrauding or defeating the interests of, or with reckless disregard for the interests of a creditor or creditors of the party. These amendments passed the Parliament in the Family Law Amendment Bill 2003 on 5 December 2003 and commenced on the Act receiving the Royal Assent on 17 December 2003.

Aviation: Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport
(Question No. 30)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:
(1) Can he explain why the proportion of air traffic movements to the North of Sydney Airport is still approximately twice the 17% of movements promised under the Long Term Operating Plan for Sydney Airport; if not, why not.
(2) What initiatives is he taking to reduce air traffic movements to the North of the airport.

(3) Will the proportion of air traffic movements to the North of Sydney Airport be reduced to 17% by 31 March 2005; if not, why not.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) to (3) I have dealt with these matters exhaustively in response to questions previously asked by the Honourable Member.

Aviation: Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport
(Question No. 31)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Can he confirm that on 4 June 2004 Mr Tom Grant, General Manager, Organisation and Development and Corporate Strategy, AirServices Australia, wrote to Mr Philip Lingard, Secretary, Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF), to acknowledge receipt of the SACF’s report on the implementation of the Long Term Operating Plan (LTOP) for Sydney Airport; if not, why not.

(2) Why did Mr Grant’s letter of 4 June 2004 not explain to Mr Lingard why AirServices Australia does not concur with the SACF’s analysis of the implementation of the LTOP.

(3) Will he explain why AirServices Australia does not concur with the SACF’s analysis of the implementation of the LTOP; if not, why not.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Airservices Australia has advised that—

(1) On 4 June 2004, Mr Grant wrote to Mr Philip Lingard, Secretary, Sydney Airport Community Forum Incorporated (SACF Inc). This company is not related to the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF) which was established by the Minister for Transport and was chaired by Senator Marise Payne. Mr Grant acknowledged receipt of a copy of SACF Inc’s submission on the implementation of the Long Term Operating Plan (LTOP). This report should not be confused with the study commissioned by SACF itself.

(2) At the time Mr Grant wrote the aforementioned letter to SACF Inc, a consultant was undertaking an independent review and analysis of Airservices’ implementation of the LTOP on behalf of the SACF; and Mr Lingard’s report was but one submission to that review.

(3) Airservices Australia maintains that operations at Sydney Airport are safe and that noise sharing principles have been adhered to in Airservices’ safe and efficient management of air traffic at Sydney Airport. Airservices has not expressed any public views on SACF’s review of the implementation of LTOP as this report has not yet been finalised.

Aviation: Projected Aircraft Movements
(Question No. 32)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Has he received data on the projected aircraft movements for Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports following the publication of their respective Preliminary Draft Master Plans; if so, where can those projections be found and what are the data for the periods covered by the projections in each Preliminary Draft Master Plan.

(2) Has an analysis of the likely aircraft movement interphase between the four Sydney metropolitan airports being Sydney, Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports been undertaken; if so, will he provide a copy; if not, why not.
(3) What is the estimated aircraft movement impact of the Master Plans for Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports on the current Final Master Plan for Sydney Airport.

(4) What is the estimated risk of (a) mid-air collisions, and (b) aircraft diversions from the combined impacts of projected increased aircraft movements for Sydney, Bankstown, Hoxton Park and Camden Airports.

(5) In respect of part (4), has an analysis of this kind been undertaken; if so, is it available; if it has not been undertaken, why not.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) I am advised that data on the projected aircraft movements was provided in the Preliminary Draft Master Plans (PDMPs) made available for public comment. I am advised that those SACF members who requested a CD copy of the PDMPs were supplied with them shortly after the PDMPs were advertised for public comment. Members were also advised that copies were available on the Airports’ websites.

Bankstown Airport Limited (BAL), Camden Airport Limited (CAL) and Hoxton Park Airport Limited (HPAL) submitted Draft Master Plans (DMPs) for my consideration in accordance with the Airports Act 1996 on 14 December 2004. My decision on the DMPs is due by 14 March 2005.

(2) (3), (4), (5) I am advised that BAL, CAL and HPAL have not provided explicit analysis in the DMPs on the issues raised in (2), (3) and (4). Should it prove necessary, any significant operational implications raised by the DMPs, including safety considerations, will be assessed in detail by the Department in conjunction with Airservices Australia and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in the course of assessing the plans for my consideration prior to 14 March.

Research and Development: Funding
(Question No. 33)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Is he aware that research in the humanities, arts and social sciences is repeatedly overlooked under existing research funding parameters which favor the sciences and research that has an obvious economic outcome?

(2) Can he explain how researchers in the humanities, arts and social sciences can present their research proposals to meet the Government’s national research priority areas that focus solely on: An Environmentally Sustainable Australia; Promoting and Maintaining Good Health; Frontier Technologies for Building and Transforming Australian Industries; and Safeguarding Australia?

(3) Will he ensure that the humanities, arts and social sciences become national research priority areas; if so when; if not, why not?

(4) Can he explain how researchers in the humanities, arts and social sciences can obtain funding to undertake research that is vital to the cultural well-being of Australia?

(5) Can he explain why researchers in the humanities, arts and social sciences have to spend so much time fitting their research proposals to the Government’s scientific parameters at the expense of time spent on their research; if not, why not?

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) which is administered by the Australian Research Council, the Australian Government provides funding support for all research disciplines (excluding clinical medicine and dentistry). In the most recent funding round I announced under the NCGP (for funding commencing in 2005), 33.8 per cent of funds under the Linkage Projects scheme and 27.4 per cent of funds under the Discovery Projects scheme went to research pro-
jects in the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences and the Humanities and Creative Arts. Under Linkage Projects, the largest amount of funding for new grants was accounted for by the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences ($12,909,189) followed by Engineering and Environmental Sciences ($12,141,684), and Biological Sciences and Biotechnology ($11,059,443).

(2) The originally framed National Research Priorities were supplemented in late 2003 by goals that addressed the contribution that research in the social sciences and humanities can make to the identified areas of priority.

Under the National Competitive Grants Program which is administered by the Australian Research Council (ARC), one of the criteria applied in assessment of the quality of proposals for funding is the potential for delivering outcomes of national benefit (particularly in the areas of identified national priority). Researchers, including those working within the social sciences and humanities, who apply to the ARC for funding are invited to identify in their proposals how their research will address considerations of national benefit, including in the areas of national priority, and this is taken into account in the assessment process.

(3) As noted in part (2) above, the National Research Priorities were enhanced in late 2003 to take greater account of the contributions of social sciences and humanities research. The framework was developed following extensive consultation with the social sciences and humanities research communities.

To ensure that research agencies and funding bodies, including the Australian Research Council, are provided with a degree of certainty to implement meaningful strategies to deliver on the priorities, it is not envisaged that the National Research Priorities will be reviewed until around 2006–07. As part of this process the issue of whether the existing priorities and goals should be amended or enhanced will be considered.

(4) Researchers in the humanities, arts and social sciences are able to apply for, and as noted under part (1) above, have been successful in applying for funding under the National Competitive Grants Program administered by the Australian Research Council.

(5) All applicants for funding support under the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) administered by the Australian Research Council have to comply with funding rules which specify the content and format of applications. The extent to which an application falls within one of the National Research Priorities is just one element of the assessment criteria, and as noted under Part (2) above, these priorities have been enhanced to address the contribution that research in the social sciences and humanities can make to the priority area. Research projects do not have to fall within a National Research Priority in order to be funded under the NCGP.

**Health: Substance Abuse**

(Question No. 38)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 November 2004:

(1) Can he say when he will respond to the report on the inquiry into substance abuse in Australian Communities by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs titled *Road to Recovery*; if not, why not.

(2) Which of the 128 recommendations made in the report have been implemented and how have they been implemented.

(3) Which of the 128 recommendations made in the report have not been implemented and why have they not been implemented.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) The Australian Government will respond to the Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee’s Inquiry into Substance Abuse in Australian Communities titled ‘Road to Recovery’ following finalisation of its response, anticipated to be in the Autumn Sittings of 2005.

(2) This Australian Government’s final response will address each of the 128 recommendations made in the Report.

(3) Response (2) above refers.

Abortion
(Question No. 39)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answers to question Nos 1441 (Hansard, 6 September 2000, page 20370) and 2252 (Hansard, 20 August 2001, page 29797), can he confirm that Medicare still does not record the reasons for the termination of pregnancy, the stage of pregnancy at termination nor the method of abortion and that Medicare statistics do not include information that would allow the calculation of the proportion of services provided under items 16525 and 35643 for termination of pregnancy; if so, will he now require medical practitioners performing medical procedures under items 16525 and 35643 to clearly distinguish between those procedures that are abortions and those that are not; if he will not require medical practitioners to clearly distinguish between those procedures, why not.

(2) Can he confirm that it is still not possible to estimate the number of late term pregnancy abortions that occur in Australia each year; if so, will he now require medical practitioners to record which abortions are late term abortions; if he will not require medical practitioners to record which abortions are late term abortions, why not.

(3) What is the definition of a late-term abortion.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Medicare data do not record the reason for the termination of pregnancy, the stage of pregnancy at termination nor the method of abortion. The item descriptors used in the Medicare Benefits Schedule are developed in close consultation with the medical profession through the Medicare Benefits Consultative Committee (MBCC). There are no plans at the present time to amend the descriptors for these items.

(2) I am advised by my Department that based on South Australian data, 91.9% of terminations are performed within the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. It is not possible to report on the number nationally of late term (after 26 weeks gestation) abortions from Medicare data. Medicare benefits are not payable for late term abortions.

(3) An abortion performed in the third trimester (after six months or 26 weeks gestation) is considered a late term abortion.

Foreign Affairs: East Timor
(Question No. 42)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Can he confirm the report in the Sydney Morning Herald on 28 October 2004 titled ‘Talks on Timor Gap reserves collapse’ which states that the Greater Sunrise oil and gas project is in jeopardy after negotiations between Australia and East Timor broke down in acrimonious circumstances.

(2) What are the points of contention between Australia and East Timor over the Greater Sunrise oil and gas project.
(3) What is the Government’s estimate of the revenues that will be generated by the Greater Sunrise oil and gas project.

(4) What steps is he taking to ensure that East Timor receives a just share of the Greater Sunrise oil and gas revenues.

(5) What is the Government’s estimate of the revenue East Timor will receive under (a) Australia’s proposal, and (b) East Timor’s proposal.

(6) What is the Government’s estimate of the revenue East Timor requires annually to be economically self-sufficient and on what basis or reports has this estimate been made.

(7) When will the sea boundary between Australia and East Timor be ratified.

(8) Is there a policy relationship between the issues of the sea boundary and the revenues from the Greater Sunrise oil and gas fields; if so, what is that relationship.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
The first round of formal maritime delimitation negotiations between Australia and East Timor was held in Dili on 19 to 22 April 2004. The talks were broad-ranging and both countries exchanged views in relation to permanent maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea. A second round of formal talks, aimed primarily at achieving a ‘creative solution’ to outstanding Timor Sea issues, was held over a month from late September to late October, in Canberra, Darwin and Dili. No agreement has yet been reached on maritime boundaries and the process is ongoing.

Trade: Free Trade Agreement
(Question No. 43)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 17 November 2004:
Further to the answer to question No. 3586 (Hansard, 3 August 2004, page 31945), is he aware that the Australian Medical Association (AMA) issued a media release titled ‘AMA Supports ALP FTA PBS Conditions’ on 3 August 2004 stating that “the right of generic pharmaceuticals to be marketed as soon as the originator patent expires must be guaranteed” and “these safeguards must be in place before Australia signs off on the FTA”.

Mr Vaile—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Yes.

Lowe Electorate: Migrant Settlement Services
(Question No. 44)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:
What sum was provided to migrant settlement services in the electoral division of Lowe for (a) 2000-2001, (b) 2001-2002, (c) 2002-2003, (d) 2003-2004, and (e) 2004-2005.

Mr McGauran—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
Australian Government funding for settlement services is provided under the following programs:
- Community Settlement Services Scheme (CSSS);
- Living in Harmony (LiH);
- Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS);
- Migrant Resource Centre/Migrant Service Agency (MRC/MSA);
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP);
- Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS);
• Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Scheme (IAAAS); and
• Asylum Seekers Assistance (ASA) scheme.

Funding for settlement services under CSSS and LiH for the specified periods is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>LiH</th>
<th>CSSS</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
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<td>2001-2002</td>
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<td>$131,027</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CSSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>$158,351</td>
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<td>CSSS</td>
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<td>$35,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>CSSS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Total $467,388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the specified period, no funding was provided in the electorate of Lowe under IHSS or for MRCs/MSAs.

Funding data for AMEP, TIS, IAAAS and the ASA scheme are not available at the electorate level.

Immigration: Special Assistance Visas

(Question No. 46)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

Is the Minister considering a special assistance visa category for persons affected by the recent attacks by the Sudanese Government-backed militia in the Dharfur and Southern Sudan regions; if not, why not; if so, when will it become available.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

No. Refugees and people in humanitarian need from Southern Sudan are already resettled in Australia under our Humanitarian Program. Australia has granted 14,442 humanitarian program visas to Sudanese in the last 10 years (1994-95 to 2003-04); 9996 of these have been granted in the last two years (2002-03 to 2003-04). The majority of these visas have been granted to people from Southern Sudan.

The Humanitarian Program is global and non discriminatory. In 2004-05 the program increased from 12,000 new places a year to 13,000 new places a year. These places are managed to ensure that no places are lost and to give the Government the flexibility to respond to emerging humanitarian crises. All Humanitarian Program places are fully utilised.

The Government discontinued the Special Assistance Category (SAC) programs between 1996 and 2001 after deciding that those in humanitarian need were adequately covered by the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program categories.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (the international organisation mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems) and the international community do not currently regard resettlement as the appropriate response to internally displaced persons within Darfur or refugees who have crossed the border into neighbouring Chad. Current humanitarian efforts are focused on providing immediate humanitarian assistance to the region.
Eden-Monaro Electorate: Majura Valley
(Question No. 65)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) In respect of the offer by the Member for Eden-Monaro on 30 June 2004 of Commonwealth land in the Majura Valley to the ACT Government for a prison, (a) who authorised the Member for Eden-Monaro to offer the land, and (b) what are the conditions of the sale of the land to the ACT Government.

(2) What is the date of the Minister’s or the Department’s letter to the ACT Chief Minister offering the land and can a copy of the letter be made available.

(3) In respect of the report referred to by the Member for Eden-Monaro justifying the offer of Commonwealth land, (a) what is the basis of the report, (b) who conducted the inquiry which led to the report, (c) who was consulted, and (d) what are the itemised costs of preparing the report.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) (a) The Member for Eden-Monaro’s media release of 30 June 2004 states that the Minister for Transport, the Hon John Anderson MP, had determined that there was land available. (b) The sale of the land to the ACT Government is to be in accordance with Commonwealth Property Disposals Policy.

(2) 30 July 2004. A copy of the letter has been forwarded separately to your office.

(3) (a) (b) (c) and (d) The Member for Eden-Monaro’s media release of 30 June 2004 does not refer to a report, it states that appropriate investigations were carried out.

Australian Government Actuary: Judges’ Pensions
(Question No. 68)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 2172 (Hansard, 3 November 2003, page 21847), what is the estimated unfunded liability in respect of Judge’s pensions at 30 June 2004.

(2) What (a) salary increases have been awarded to Judges, and (b) what was the increase in the Consumer Price Index, since the 9 per cent increase for Judges’ salaries was awarded in 2003-2004.

(3) What (a) salary increases have been awarded to Judges, (b) what was the increase in the Consumer Price Index, and (c) what was the increase in average weekly earnings since November 2002.

(4) In respect of the most recent increase granted by the Remuneration Tribunal for Judges, did the Commonwealth make a submission to the Tribunal; if so, did the submission support an increase in judicial salaries and, if it did, what increase did the Commonwealth support.

(5) What is (a) the Australian Government Actuary’s estimate of the Commonwealth’s notional contribution to Judge’s pensions at 30 June 2004, and (b) the estimated total remuneration, including superannuation, for (i) High Court Justices, including the Chief Justice, (ii) Federal and Family Court Justices, including the Chief Justices of these Courts, and (iii) the judicial members of the Workplace Relations Commission.

(6) Was the Australian Government Actuary’s estimate of a notional pension contribution considered by the Remuneration Tribunal when it made its determination on the most recent salary increases for judicial officers; if not, why not.

(7) What personal contributions do judicial officers make to their judicial pensions.
(8) What are the domestic and international travel entitlements for judicial officers and their partners and, in respect of international travel, are judicial officers required to seek approval for international travel and required to report to him or some other office on the nature and purpose of the travel.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows: 1

(1) The estimate of unfunded liability in respect of federal judges’ pensions as at 30 June 2004 is $359.2 million.

(2) (a) On 22 June 2004 the Remuneration Tribunal made a determination (No 2004/17) granting federal judges a salary increase from 1 July 2004. The increase comprised a 5% increase foreshadowed by the Tribunal following its major review of judicial and related offices in 2002 and 3.9% granted following its 2004 annual review of these offices.

(b) The Consumer Price Index (all groups, weighted average of eight capital cities) increased from 141.3 at the end of the June Quarter 2003 to 145.4 at the end of the September Quarter 2004. This represents an increase of 2.9%. [Source: ABS Catalogue 6401.0, Consumer Price Index, Australia]

(3) (a) The Remuneration Tribunal conducted a major review of federal judicial offices’ remuneration in 2002. The Tribunal decided on a 17% increase in remuneration, to be awarded in three instalments between 2002 and 2004.

The first instalment consisted of a 7% increase in 2002-03. The Tribunal foreshadowed that the residual would be awarded as a 5% increase from 1 July 2003 and a 5% increase from 1 July 2004. Additionally, the Tribunal reserved its capacity to award ordinary annual increases in 2003 and 2004.

In the 2003 annual review, the Tribunal awarded a further 4% increase for 2003-04, in addition to the 5% foreshadowed. Following the Tribunal’s 2004 annual review, it granted a further salary increase of 3.9% for 2004-05, in addition to the 5% foreshadowed.

(b) The Consumer Price Index (all groups, weighted average of eight capital cities) increased from 139.5 at the end of the December Quarter 2002 to 145.4 at the end of the September Quarter 2004. This represents an increase of 4.2%. [Source: ABS Catalogue 6401.0, Consumer Price Index, Australia]

(c) Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time earnings, trend estimates) increased from $889.60 per week in November 2002 to $960.00 in August 2004. This represents an increase of 7.9%. [Source: ABS Catalogue 6302.0, Average Weekly Earnings, Australia]

(4) The Government made a submission to the Remuneration Tribunal’s 2004 annual review. As with previous submissions to the Tribunal, the Government expressed the view that pay increases for federal judges should be based on overall higher productivity and performance, consistent with maintaining low inflation. The Government did not express a view regarding an appropriate quantum of salary increase.

(5) (a) The Australian Government Actuary has not provided an estimate of the Commonwealth’s notional contribution to judges’ pensions as at 30 June 2004. The Actuary conducts an actuarial review of the long term costs of the Judges’ Pension Scheme every three years. The last review was conducted using data as at 30 June 2002 and the next review will use data as at 30 June 2005.

(b) (i) If a notional Commonwealth contribution to judges’ pensions of 55.3% of salaries (as last estimated by the Australian Government Actuary as at 30 June 2002) is added to judicial salaries, then the total for High Court Justices would be $517,304 per annum and the total for the Chief Justice of the High Court would be $570,044 pa.
(ii) This calculation results in a figure of $438,676 pa for judges of the Federal Court and the Family Court and of $482,719 pa for the Chief Justices of these courts.

(iii) The Australian Industrial Relations Commission falls within the portfolio responsibilities of my colleague, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Honourable Kevin Andrews MP.

(6) The most recent estimate of the Commonwealth’s notional contributions to judges’ pensions, that provided by the Australian Government Actuary in July 2003 using data as at 30 June 2002, was 55.3% of salaries. The Actuary’s report was provided to the Remuneration Tribunal Secretariat in August 2003, well before the Tribunal made its latest judicial and related offices’ determination in June 2004.

(7) The Judges’ Pensions Act 1968 does not require judges to make personal contributions to their judicial pensions.

(8) Approval of Travel

High Court Justices

Approval of travel by High Court Justices is a matter for the Court itself. The High Court is established under the Constitution at the apex of the independent judicial branch of government. Under the High Court of Australia Act 1979, the Court is responsible for administering its own affairs, which includes approving Justices’ travel domestically and internationally.

Consistent with its independent standing, the High Court has developed its own official travel policy over many years. Domestic travel for official business is undertaken at the discretion of each Justice. For overseas travel, the Court’s travel policy provides that Justices must consult the Chief Justice on all overseas travel they propose to undertake and that the cost of overseas travel will be met by the Court provided that:

- the Attorney-General is notified in advance of all proposed travel,
- the travel is for a purpose directly related to a Justice’s role as a member of the High Court, and
- from a public perspective, the travel is justifiable and beyond reasonable criticism.

The practice is for the Chief Justice of the High Court to advise the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General of proposed travel by him. For other Justices of the High Court, the practice is for the Chief Justice to advise the Attorney-General that the Justice proposes to travel and that the Chief Justice has given his concurrence.

Federal and Family Court Judges

Approval of travel by Federal Court judges is a matter for the Court itself. Under the Federal Court of Australia Act 1976, the Chief Justice is responsible for managing the administrative affairs of the Court, which includes approving judges’ travel. The Chief Justice of the Family Court has a similar administrative responsibility under the Family Law Act 1975.

In the case of Federal and Family Court judges, the Government issued guidelines for overseas travel in 1990. Under the guidelines the relevant Chief Justice is the approving authority for judges’ overseas travel. In approving overseas travel, the Chief Justice must be satisfied that the travel is for purposes directly related to the judge’s functions and directly relevant to the Court.

Under the guidelines, the Chief Justices of the Federal Court and the Family Court must consult the Attorney-General about their own overseas travel plans, and notify the Attorney-General of any approval of proposed travel for other judges.

 Federal Magistrates

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
As with the federal superior courts, approval of travel by federal magistrates is a matter for the Court itself. The Federal Magistrates Act 1999 provides that the Court is to administer its own affairs. Under a determination of certain terms and conditions of office made by the Governor-General under the Federal Magistrates Act 1999, federal magistrates who travel out of Australia at Commonwealth expense must have the travel approved in advance by the Chief Federal Magistrate. The Chief Federal Magistrate’s travel overseas must be approved by the Attorney-General.

**Overview of Travel Entitlements**

The Remuneration Tribunal has set travel entitlements for federal judicial officers, including class of travel, travel expenses payable and provisions related to accompanied travel where a judicial officer is required to travel within Australia or overseas for official business.

The Remuneration Tribunal’s determination (2004/14) for judicial and related offices, which incorporates the official travel determination 2004/03, sets a base level of entitlements for judicial office holders. It provides that other authorities may prescribe additional benefits. Accordingly, other travel entitlements also apply.

**Remuneration Tribunal Travel Entitlements**

Under the Tribunal’s official travel entitlements determination (2004/03), all federal judges and magistrates are entitled to the highest available class of travel within Australia and are entitled to First Class when travelling overseas.

For travel within Australia, daily travelling allowance rates depend upon the destination. The Tribunal’s judicial and related offices’ determination (2004/14) provides that Justices of the High Court who do not establish their place of residence in Canberra are entitled to be paid $20,000 pa in lieu of the travelling allowance that would otherwise be payable.

When travelling overseas, the official travel entitlements determination provides that a judicial officer’s accommodation should be at a standard reasonably equivalent to that provided for the officer within Australia. Meals and incidentals for overseas travel are payable by reference to the meals and incidentals rates for the destination contained in the Australian Taxation Ruling dealing with reasonable travelling allowances amounts.

The official travel entitlements determination also provides that a judicial officer may be accompanied at Commonwealth expense on domestic or international travel by a spouse or partner only where this is certified by the officer’s employer as being demonstrably in the interests of the Commonwealth given the purpose of the travel. The determination provides that, where the officer’s spouse or partner accompanies him or her, the spouse or partner may travel at the same class of travel as the officer. It also provides that, where the Commonwealth meets the travel costs of the officer’s spouse or partner, an additional accommodation component is paid.

**Other Travel Entitlements**

*High Court Justices*

Under the High Court’s travel policy, accompanied travel for official business is undertaken at the discretion of each Justice.

The High Court draws authority for its policy regarding accompanied travel from various pieces of correspondence between former Attorneys-General and former Chief Justices indicating that this is a matter for the discretion of Justices.

*Federal and Family Court Judges*

Under the Government issued guidelines for overseas travel applying to Federal and Family Court judges, the spouse of a judge may accompany the judge on international visits at official expense once in any 12 month period. On such occasions, the Commonwealth meets the cost of airfares, accommodation and meals.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
In this answer the term ‘judge’ does not include a federal magistrate.

Immigration: Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme
(Question No. 69)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

In respect of the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, for each financial year since its introduction, (a) what was the total number of visas granted (i) onshore, and (ii) offshore, (b) what was the total number granted for each region, and (c) what monitoring is done to determine whether migrants have (i) remained in the area for the two year contract of employment with the sponsoring employer, and (ii) have remained in the area at the expiration of the two year contract of employment.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(a) The table below shows the total number of Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) visas granted onshore and offshore, since the scheme was established in 1996 to the year 2003-04.

Migration Program Outcomes
Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme by Client Location and Program Year

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</table>

(b) The table below shows the breakdown by State or Territory of intended residence at the time of RSMS visa grant, including both onshore and offshore grants. Data on which particular region of a state or territory migrants settled in is not currently available.

Migration Program Outcomes
Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme by Intended Residence and Program Year

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<td>41</td>
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<td>QLD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>VIC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>271</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>2,183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Data from a new research survey of RSMS is being used to monitor the effectiveness of the RSMS. The survey covers more than 500 migrants who were granted permanent residence between 1 July 1999 and 31 December 2003. Skilled migrants were interviewed about their satisfaction with the RSMS, movement intentions and location within regions. Of all those surveyed, 71 per cent were still with their sponsoring employer. Of these, 76 per cent had been with their employer for more than two years. Of the 29 per cent who were not with their sponsoring employer, 64 per cent were still in the same region. Fifty three per cent of those who were in the same region but who were not
with their sponsoring employer had been in the region for more than two years. In total, 90 per cent of those surveyed remained in their region. The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs maintains a close relationship with its network of Regional Certifying Bodies (RCBs), whose members certify employer nominations for the RSMS and who are in direct contact with regional employers using this scheme. The RCBs monitor employer satisfaction with the RSMS on an informal, ongoing basis and reports of employer complaints are very low.

Since 2001, visa cancellation provisions have applied where the employee has not started their job within a certain time or remained in the position for the duration of their two year contract. This provides a form of self regulation, as employees are fully aware of this condition. The low rate of visa cancellations under these provisions suggests that RMSM employees have a high rate of compliance with their visa conditions.

**Immigration: Migration Agents**

(Question No. 70)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

1. In respect of the obligations of Migration Agents to inform their clients of the probability of a successful outcome with their case, can the Minister explain the responsibilities of the Migration Agents under the Migration Agents Code of Conduct in relation to unsubstantiated or unjustified prospects of success when advising clients.

2. For the financial year 2003-2004, (a) how many requests did the Minister receive to exercise her Ministerial discretion, and (b) how many of these requests were lodged by each Migration Agent.

3. Are procedures in place in respect of cases where Immigration Agents lodge multiple requests for intervention in the same case; if so, what are they.

4. What is the penalty for Immigration Agents who have misled clients about the prospects of the success of their case and what recourse is available to the client in such cases.

5. Are Migration Agents required to be frank about prospects of success when they assess a client’s request for assistance in preparing a case.

6. Have sections of the Migration Agents Code of Conduct been revised since 1998; if so, what are the details.

7. Is the Government considering toughening the Migration Agents Code of Conduct; if so, what issues have been considered.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

1. The Migration Agents Code of Conduct imposes a responsibility on registered migration agents to be frank and candid about the prospects of success when asked by a client about the probability of a successful outcome for the client’s application. They must not hold out unsubstantiated or unjustified prospects of success when advising clients on applications under the Migration Act or Migration Regulations.

Registered migration agents must also not encourage the lodgement of any application that is vexatious or grossly unfounded (for example, an application that has no prospect of success) and must advise the client of their opinion that the application would be vexatious or grossly unfounded. Further, if the client still wishes the registered migration agent to lodge the application, the agent must obtain written acknowledgement from the client that s/he has been advised of the agent’s opinion that the application is vexatious or grossly unfounded.
(2) (a) For the financial year 2003-04, some 5,400 requests were received asking for Ministerial discretion to consider the exercise of public interest powers under ss345, 351, 391, 417, 454 or 501J of the Migration Act 1958. (b) Departmental systems do not, at this stage, capture this information in a form that can be reported.

(3) Guidelines are in place for departmental officers in respect of cases where multiple requests for intervention are made in the same case. These are contained in section 6.5 of Migration Series Instruction 387 – “Minister’s Public Interest Powers”. A copy of that section is attached for information. The guidelines do not distinguish between requests lodged by Migration Agents and requests lodged by other persons, including persons requesting intervention on their own behalf.

The guidelines have been made publicly available. They indicate that repeat requests for intervention should not be brought to the Minister’s attention unless the request contains additional information that potentially brings the case within the ambit of the Guidelines.

Extract from Migration Series Instruction 387 – “Minister’s Public Interest Powers”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.5 Repeat requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1 The Act does not impose limitations as to time and number of requests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.2 Repeat requests for the Minister to exercise his public interest powers are those that are received after the Minister has previously had the case brought to his attention under the same public interest power (in either the submission or schedule format):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- where the Minister has decided not to consider the exercise of his power in the case; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the Minister has considered the case and has decided not to exercise his power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.3 If the Minister can exercise his power under more than one public interest power, then a request under one public interest power will not make a request for the other public interest power a repeat request. For example, a subsequent request under s 351, after a request under s 417 has been considered by the Minister will be considered a ‘first time request’ but will be processed with priority if there is no new information that brings the case within the Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.4 PARMS [Parliamentary and Ministerial Services Section] coordinates the initial receipt of repeat requests for redirection to the relevant MIU [Ministerial Intervention Support Unit] along with the acknowledgment replies for letters of support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.5 Repeat requests do not receive an interim reply as they are given priority processing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.6 The Minister has directed that repeat requests should not be brought to his attention unless they contain additional information that potentially brings the case within the ambit of the Guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.7 If, on assessment of the repeat request, additional information is provided and the case now appears to fall within the Guidelines a submission is to be prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.8 In some cases it may be appropriate to expedite the Minister’s personal consideration. This could be done by sending via facsimile a summary of the facts of the case to the Minister’s office (see section 8). The fax is then followed by either a Submission or a Schedule to the Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.9 The submissions should always make it clear that the case has previously been brought to the Minister’s attention and should identify the changes in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the information that suggest that the case may now fall within the ambit of the Guidelines.

6.5.10 If the relevant person is engaged in litigation, the Minister considers this case ‘inappropriate to consider’ and the person should be advised accordingly and may submit another request once the litigation is concluded.

6.5.11 If, on assessment of the repeat request, it is found that no additional information is provided and that the case remains outside the ambit of the Guidelines, a file note should be made to that effect and a Departmental reply sent from the MIU to the person making the request. This reply should be signed by Departmental Staff. This procedure applies irrespective of whether or not the person is involved in litigation.

6.5.12 The Minister will reply to requests from his constituents and Members of Parliament. The Minister’s reply does not delay finalisation of the repeat requests.

6.5.13 If the person has no other basis for remaining lawfully in Australia, Border Control and Compliance Division is then notified by the MIU of the need to consider the person for removal action.

(4) Clients who have been misled about the prospects of success with an application can lodge a complaint with the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA). The MARA investigates all complaints and has the power to impose an administrative sanction upon any agent who has breached the Migration Agents Code of Conduct. The sanctions imposed by the MARA on registered migration agents depend on the nature and severity of the breach and involve either a caution, a suspension of registration or cancellation of registration.

The MARA may refer a registered migration agent (or a person who was a registered migration agent) and a complainant to mediation in an effort to resolve a client’s complaint. In addition to approaching the MARA, clients may be able to seek redress through state/territory consumer protection bodies and through civil action in the Courts.

The Minister also has the power to refer a migration agent to the MARA if the agent has a high visa refusal rate in relation to a visa of a particular class. If the Minister refers an agent, the MARA must consider whether to sanction the agent.

(5) Yes.

(6) Yes. Numerous sections of the Code have been revised since 1998:

1 July 1999

An agent must not represent that he or she can procure a particular decision for a client under the Migration Act or Migration Regulations; and

If an application is vexatious or grossly unfounded (for example with no hope of success),
- the agent must not encourage the client to lodge the application; and
- the agent must inform the client of his/her opinion that the application is vexatious or grossly unfounded; and
- if the client still wishes to lodge the application the agent must obtain written acknowledgement from the client that the client has been advised of the agent’s opinion.

1 March 2003

Agents are required to provide their clients with a booklet entitled “Information on the Regulation of the Migration Advice Profession” and make a record that the copy has been provided;
Clarification of situations in which a migration agent must not accept a person as a client due to the possibility of a conflict of interest arising and provide guidance to agents about their responsibilities if they become aware that such a conflict exists, following acceptance of a client;

Clarification that agents are required to keep separate operating and client accounts with a financial institution; and

Agents able to satisfy the Code of Conduct requirement that they maintain a professional library, if their employer provides the requisite materials.

1 July 2004

Ensuring that the provisions of the Code of Conduct are consistent with the new vexatious activity sanction scheme; and

Various technical amendments were also made to the Schedule 2 of the Migration Agents Regulations 1998 (ie the Code of Conduct) for 1 July 2004.

(7) Yes. The Government is considering amendments to the Migration Agents Regulations that would further tighten the Code of Conduct. Issues currently under consideration include:

- specifying a minimum period that agents are required to keep client records.
- expanding provisions about advertising in the Code to require basic information be included in Internet and other advertising.
- including reference to the Criminal Code.
- specifying what a professional library should contain.
- tightening an agent’s obligations to their clients when the agent leaves their current employer.

Parliamentarians’ Entitlements: Printing
(Question No. 71)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

How many Members used their printing entitlement to print their how to vote cards for the House of Representatives elections held in (a) 1996, (b) 1998 and (c) 2001 and which political parties did those Members represent at each election.

Mr Abbott—The Special Minister of State has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

For the period of time in question, Finance did not request, nor did they receive as a matter of course, copies of all material printed under the printing entitlement. It is, therefore, not possible to provide an accurate total of Members of the House of Representatives, if any, who used their printing entitlement to produce how-to-vote cards between 1996 and 2001.

Parliament: Personalised Stationery and Newsletters
(Question No. 72)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) What was the average sum spent by Members of the House of Representatives on personalized stationery and newsletters during the (a) 2003-2004 financial year, and (b) 2003 calendar year.

(2) What was the average sum spent by (a) government, (b) opposition, and (c) independent and minority party Members for the (i) 2003-2004 financial year, and (ii) 2003 calendar year.
Mr Abbott—The Special Minister of State has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

The average sum spent by Members on personalised stationery and newsletters was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003-2004</th>
<th>Calendar year 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>$86,838.60</td>
<td>$73,475.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>$100,227.04</td>
<td>$83,397.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>$72,414.96</td>
<td>$62,681.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>$43,153.95</td>
<td>$42,779.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parliament: Personalised Stationery and Newsletters

(Question No. 73)

Mr Martin Ferguson asked the Minister representing the Special Minister of State, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

1. What was the average sum spent by Members of the House of Representatives on personalized stationery and newsletters for (a) the six months to 30 June 2004, and (b) the financial year 2004-2005 to date.
2. What was the average sum spent by (a) government Members, (b) opposition Members, and (c) independent and minority party Members for (i) the six months to 30 June 2004, and (ii) the financial year 2004-2005 to date.

Mr Abbott—The Special Minister of State has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6 months to 30 June 2004</th>
<th>2004-2005 as at 17 November 2004*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>$53,002.16</td>
<td>$55,140.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>$63,024.20</td>
<td>$61,143.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>$42,052.84</td>
<td>$47,774.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>$22,739.54</td>
<td>$44,948.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Relates to accounts relating to the period to 17 November 2004 received and processed by the Department of Finance and Administration as at 22 November 2004

Health: Magnetic Resonance Imaging Machines

(Question No. 75)

Ms George asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 November 2004:

1. Further to the answer to question No. 3667 (Hansard, 21 August 2004, page 32410) and in respect of the Invitation to Apply issued in July 2004 for approximately 20 new licences for MRI machines, how many applications were received (a) in total, (b) from private providers, and (c) from public hospitals.
2. Who are the members of the Advisory Panel assessing the applications and what are their qualifications.
3. Is it possible for a member of the Advisory Panel also to be involved with any of the bids being considered; if so, will he make a commitment that all tenders which involve a member of the Panel will be ruled out of consideration.
4. Who made the assessment that Wollongong was not identified as a priority area and on what basis was it made.
5. What are the priority areas and what are the criteria used for their determination.
(6) What priority is given to the granting of licences for public hospitals where there are obvious difficulties in accessing public MRI services and, if no such priority exists, can he explain why not.

(7) Will Wollongong Hospital be granted a Medicare funded MRI service; if not, why not.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) (b) and (c) Probity advice is that it is not appropriate to provide information regarding individual applicants or groups of applicants for the MRI Invitation to Apply process in advance of that process being completed.

(2) Applications are currently being assessed by the MRI Evaluation Panel, specifically formed for this Invitation to Apply (ITA) process. The panel is comprised of senior public servants from the Department of Health and Ageing and the Health Insurance Commission. They have had access to technical and professional advice as necessary.

(3) No members of the MRI Evaluation Panel were involved in any of the applications being considered.

(4) Recommendations on priority areas were provided by an MRI Advisory Group which met and provided advice to me before the ITA was announced. Wollongong already has an MBS eligible MRI unit, and was therefore excluded on the basis that its population and specialist base did not justify another eligible unit.

(5) The metropolitan priority areas are Adelaide North, Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Sydney Southwest, Sydney Central (inner west), Melbourne Southeast, Melbourne West, Melbourne North and Melbourne East.

- The metropolitan areas were selected on the basis that they were identified as areas with high population density, significant population catchments and at least five kilometres from an MBS eligible MRI unit.

- The regional priority areas for the purposes of this ITA are Bendigo, Lismore, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Mackay, Darwin and Bunbury.

- The regional priority areas were selected on the basis that:

  - Bendigo, Lismore and Toowoomba are regional towns without MBS eligible services, with significant population catchments and a significant number of specialists.

  - Mackay, Darwin and Rockhampton are geographically isolated sites. The MRI Advisory Group recommended that areas with a critical population mass, the majority of whom were more than three and a half hours drive from an MBS eligible unit, should be considered geographically isolated.

  - Bunbury and surrounds has a significant non-metropolitan population. There are no eligible services in Western Australia outside the Perth metropolitan area.

(6) The Australian Government already provides significant funding to States for public hospitals and public patients under the Australian Health Care Agreements. Earlier this year I granted MBS eligibility to MRI units in three public children’s hospitals. Public hospitals were also eligible to apply under the ITA process.

In general, the Australian Government’s role in relation to hospitals is to support access to private rather than public in-patient services. The Australian Government is fulfilling its role in this regard by extending access to MBS eligible MRI services in hospitals with significant acute private in-patient activity.

(7) I am unable to say whether Wollongong Hospital will be granted MBS eligibility for a MRI unit. If Wollongong Hospital applied to the ITA process, the application will be considered against the criteria included in the ITA documentation.
### Throsby Electorate: Child-Care Centres

**Ms George** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

1. How many, (a) community-based, and (b) private childcare centres are located in the electoral division of Throsby and what is the name and address of each centre.
2. In respect of each centre, what sum did the Commonwealth provide during (a) 2000-2001, (b) 2001-2002, (c) 2002-2003, and (d) 2003-2004 and from which programs was the funding provided.
3. How many children in the electoral division of Throsby were catered for in (a) community-based, and (b) private childcare centres.
4. How many children in the electoral division of Throsby are (a) under two years of age, and (b) under two years of age and enrolled in (i) community-based, and (ii) private child care centres.
5. How many Commonwealth funded places for (a) Before School Care, (b) After School Care, and (c) Vacation Care are there in the (i) electoral division of Throsby, and the post code area (ii) 2502, (iii) 2505, (iv) 2506, (v) 2526, (vi) 2527, (vii) 2528, (viii) 2529, and (ix) 2530.
6. Which organisations in the electoral division of Throsby coordinate the provision of these services.

**Mr Hockey**—The Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

1. (a) (b) In September 2004, there were 68 Australian Government funded child care services in the electoral division of Throsby. Of these, 33 were community services and 35 were private services. The name and address of each service is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTENARY HILL PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>104 CHURCH ST</td>
<td>ALBION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARNARDOS CHILDRENS COMMUNITY PROGRAM BERKELEY SERVICE</td>
<td>GEORGE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARNARDOS WARRAWONG 2</td>
<td>13 GREENE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARNARDOS WARRAWONG 2</td>
<td>GEORGE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARNARDOS CHILDRENS COMMUNITY PROGRAM BERKELEY SERVICE - BEFORE SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>GEORGE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BARNARDOS CHILDRENS COMMUNITY PROGRAM BERKELEY SERVICE - AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>GEORGE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNBEAMS PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>135 KANAHOOKA RD</td>
<td>KANAHOOKA</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILBUR WHALE CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
<td>2 KANGAROO DR</td>
<td>BLACKBUTT</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKE ILLAWARRA PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>83 ADDISON AVE</td>
<td>LAKE</td>
<td>2528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKELANDS OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE</td>
<td>LAKELANDS DR</td>
<td>DAPTO</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUNT TERRY PRE SCHOOL SHELL COVE PRE SCHOOL MULLIGRUBBS LONG DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>20 ASHBURTON DR</td>
<td>ABLION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELL COVE PRE SCHOOL MULLIGRUBBS LONG DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>32 SOUTHERN CROSS BVD</td>
<td>SHELL COVE</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELL COVE PRE SCHOOL MULLIGRUBBS LONG DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>66-70 HABEDA AVE</td>
<td>DAPTO</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILBUR PLATYPUS CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>21 TONGARRA RD</td>
<td>ABLION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKEVIEW PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>22 GOVERNMENT RD</td>
<td>PRIMBEE</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOUCESTER CIRCUIT PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>22 GLOUCESTER CCT</td>
<td>ABLION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>Postcode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERKELEY LAKE HEIGHTS LITTLE PEOPLES CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
<td>GEORGE ST</td>
<td>BERKELEY</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLUE COVE PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>CNR BRIBIE AVE &amp; STRADBROKE AVE</td>
<td>SHELL COVE</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARMBOROUGH PRESCHOOL &amp; KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>6 FARMBOROUGH RD</td>
<td>UNANDERRA</td>
<td>2526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROG HILL PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>30 PIONEER DR</td>
<td>OAK FLATS</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAPTO OOSH-ASC</td>
<td>SIERRA DR</td>
<td>DAPTO</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLINDERS PRESCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRE</td>
<td>36 WILLINGA RD</td>
<td>FLINDERS</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILBUR TURTLE CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>103 RICKARD RD</td>
<td>UNANDERRA</td>
<td>2526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING - WOLLONGONG SOUTH</td>
<td>1 STANTHORPE DR</td>
<td>KANAHOOKA</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRANDMA ROSIE’S CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
<td>52 ILOWARA CRES</td>
<td>PRIMBEE</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELLHARBOUR CITY CHILDRENS CENTRE</td>
<td>2-4 KOWARI CRES</td>
<td>BLACKBUTT</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HILLSIDE DRIVE PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>1 MACLEAY PLACE</td>
<td>ALBION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIERRA VILLAGE PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>97 BONG BONG RD</td>
<td>DAPTO</td>
<td>2530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARILLA CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>CNR KING &amp; HARVEY ST</td>
<td>WARILLA</td>
<td>2528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELLHARBOUR KIAMA FDC INC.</td>
<td>2 WILGA CLOSE</td>
<td>ALBION PARK</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACHWOOD KIDS LONG DAY CARE</td>
<td>35 TAMARIND DR</td>
<td>UNANDERRA</td>
<td>2526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODDLERS PALACE</td>
<td>LOT 3 EYRE PLACE</td>
<td>WARRAWONG</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2-14 BELFAST AVE</td>
<td>WARRILLA</td>
<td>2528</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARILLA OCCASIONAL CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>CNR CARRINTON ST &amp; TAMARIND PL</td>
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<td>ILLAWARRA FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME SOUTH-NO1</td>
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<td>PELICAN PRE-SCHOOL AND LONG DAY CARE</td>
<td>30-32 CHILLAWONG CIRCUIT</td>
<td>BLACKBUTT</td>
<td>2529</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERRY STREET KIDS CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>80 TERRY ST</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARRAWONG CHILDRENS HOUSE</td>
<td>99 SHELLHARBOUR RD</td>
<td>PORT KEMBLA</td>
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<td>103-105 PRINCES HWY</td>
<td>DAPTO</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2528</td>
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<td>KEMBLAWARRA CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE</td>
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<td>KEMBLAWARRA</td>
<td>2505</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9A KURRAWA CRES</td>
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<td>80 JANE AVE</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALLAROO CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>GLIDER AVE &amp; WALLAROO DRIVE</td>
<td>BLACKBUTT</td>
<td>2529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(2) (a) (b) (c) (d) The amount of Australian Government funding received by child care services in the electoral division of Throsby is listed in the table below. The sum of funding includes funding paid as Operational Subsidy, Special Needs Subsidy, JET payments, Establishment Grants and Block Grant Assistance (transitional assistance). These amounts do not include Child Care Benefit or Childcare Assistance as these amounts are notionally paid to families rather than to services although aggregated amounts are paid to services. Each service must apply for the noted subsidies and grants, and meet specific eligibility criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING - WOLLONGONG SOUTH</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALBION PARK COMBINED OSHC</td>
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<td>$1,131</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALBION PARK VACATION CARE</td>
<td>$2,851</td>
<td>$1,248</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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</table>

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data as at 27/09/04, FaCS NSW State Office data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALUNGA CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$21,613</td>
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<td>AVONDALE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRE</td>
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<td>$576</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALARANG COMBINED OSHC</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SERVICE - AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
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<td>BARNARDS CHILDRENS COMMUNITY PROGRAM BERKELEY</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE</td>
<td>$20,270</td>
<td>$7,920</td>
<td>$6,188</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>BARNARDS WARRAWONG 2</td>
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<td>$1,538</td>
<td>$15,502</td>
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<tr>
<td>BARNARDO’S ILLAWARRA CHILDRENS FAMILY CENTRE</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(AFTER SCHOOL CARE)</td>
<td>$23,393</td>
<td>$25,010</td>
<td>$28,243</td>
<td>$19,564</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(BEFORE SCHOOL CARE)</td>
<td>$14,340</td>
<td>$14,641</td>
<td>$15,168</td>
<td>$15,502</td>
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<tr>
<td>BARNARDO’S ILLAWARRA CHILDRENS FAMILY CENTRE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VACATION CARE)</td>
<td>$20,270</td>
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<td>$22,778</td>
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<td>BARRACK HEIGHTS CHILD CARE CENTRE (OCCASIONAL CARE)</td>
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<td>BARRACK HEIGHTS CHILDRENS CENTRE</td>
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<td>BERKELEY LAKE HEIGHTS LITTLE PEOPLES CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
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<td>$2,925</td>
<td>$3,965</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLACKBUTT CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLUE COVE PRESCHOOL</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>CENTENARY HILL PRE-SCHOOL CHILWAWONG CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>COACHWOOD KIDS LONG DAY CARE</td>
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<td>CRINGILGA NEIGHBOURHOOD CHILDRENS HOUSE</td>
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<td>$7,781</td>
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<td>$598</td>
<td>$1,852</td>
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<td>DAINTREE DRIVE PRE SCHOOL</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAPTO CHILDRENS CENTRE</td>
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<td>$2,571</td>
<td>$44,085</td>
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<td>DAPTO OOSH-ASC</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>FARMBOROUGH PRESCHOOL &amp; KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLINDERS PRESCHOOL EDUCATION CENTRE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FROG HILL PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOUCESTER CIRCUIT PRESCHOOL</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRANDMA ROSIE’S CHILDCARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>HILLSDIDE DRIVE PRE-SCHOOL</td>
<td>$6,111</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>HILLVIEW CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILLAWARRA FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME SOUTH-N01</td>
<td>$177,007</td>
<td>$193,274</td>
<td>$218,613</td>
<td>$220,574</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEMBLAWARRA CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE</td>
<td>$5,596</td>
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<td>$33,032</td>
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<td>KEMBLAWARRA VACATION CARE KONAWARRA CHILDREN’S CENTRE</td>
<td>$3,211</td>
<td>$4,992</td>
<td>$4,264</td>
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<td>KONAWARRA KRAFTY KIDS A S C</td>
<td>$14,463</td>
<td>$5,623</td>
<td>$12,330</td>
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<td>$2,178</td>
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<td>$3,820</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>LAKE ILLAWARRA PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN</td>
<td>$144</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAKELANDS OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$4,121</td>
<td>$4,612</td>
<td>$2,574</td>
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<td>LAKEVIEW PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>$5,008</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>LITTLE SEASHELL PRE SCHOOL LONG DAY CENTRE</td>
<td>$5,527</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$173</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOUNT TERRY PRE SCHOOL</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,755</td>
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<td>MULLIGRUBBS LONG DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$1,717</td>
<td>$2,015</td>
<td>$1,528</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>OLLITOTS PRESCHOOL AND LONG DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$11,481</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>PELICAN PRE-SCHOOL AND LONG DAY CARE</td>
<td>$4,376</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$3,380</td>
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<td>SHELL COVE PRE SCHOOL SHELHARBOUR AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHELLHARBOUR CITY CHILDRENS CENTRE</td>
<td>$15,959</td>
<td>$17,186</td>
<td>$12,259</td>
<td>$9,867</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHELLHARBOUR KiAMA FDC INC. SHELLHARBOUR TAFE CHILDRENS CENTRE</td>
<td>$115,624</td>
<td>$126,605</td>
<td>$128,960</td>
<td>$121,228</td>
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<td>$834</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>$4,156</td>
<td>$8,528</td>
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<td>$6,260</td>
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<td>SUNBEAMS PRE-SCHOOL</td>
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<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERRY STREET KIDS CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE GARDNERS PATCH PRESCHOOL</td>
<td>$5,656</td>
<td>$8,125</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TODDLERS PALACE</td>
<td>$8,661</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,118</td>
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<tr>
<td>KINDERGARTEN PTY LTD</td>
<td>$3,831</td>
<td>$10,270</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$1,963</td>
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<tr>
<td>WALLAROO CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$14,177</td>
<td>$6,240</td>
<td>$7,085</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARILLA CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>$1,704</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$188</td>
<td>$8,093</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARILLA OCCASIONAL CARE</td>
<td>$35,965</td>
<td>$29,286</td>
<td>$29,309</td>
<td>$30,030</td>
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</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(3) (a) The number of children using services approved for Child Care Benefit in the electorate of Throsby during the 2003-04 financial year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Children (all ages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY</td>
<td>3,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>3,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (a)</td>
<td>6,333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The sum of components may not add to total as children may have used services in more than one sector.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data as at 01-10-04.

Notes:
1. Includes Long Day Care, Family Day Care, In-Home Care, Outside School Hours Care, Occasional Care, Vacation Care and Multifunctional Children’s services approved for Child Care Benefit.
2. State and service type weighted data

(4) (a) It is estimated that at 30 June 2003, 3,389 children aged under 2 years resided in the electorate of Throsby.

(b) (i)(ii) The number of children aged under two years of age using services approved for Child Care Benefit in the electorate of Throsby during the 2003-04 financial year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Children (less 2 years)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (a)</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The sum of components may not add to total as children may have used services in more than one sector.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data as at 01-10-04.

Notes:
1. State and service type weighted data
2. Child aged under two years at any time during the quarter
3. Includes Long Day Care, Family Day Care, In-Home Care, Outside School Hours Care, Occasional Care, Vacation Care and Multifunctional Children’s services approved for Child Care Benefit.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(5) Since 2001, Centrelink has been combining co-located and co-managed After School and Before School Hours Care services as a single administered Outside School Hours Care service. Data are not separately available for After School Hours Care and Before School Hours Care.

(a)(b)(c)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)(vi)(vii)(viii)(ix) The number of approved places for Outside School Hours Care and Vacation Care in the electorate of Throsby as at September 2004 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Outside School Hours Care</th>
<th>Vacation Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Throsby</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2502</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2505</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2506</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2526</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2527</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2528</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2529</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2530</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Includes After School Hours Care and Before School Hours Care services.

Source: Centrelink Administrative Data as at 27-09-04.

(6) In September 2004, the organisations which operated child care services which were approved for the purposes of Child Care Benefit within the electorate of Throsby were as follows:

ABC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTRES PTY LTD
BARNARDOS AUSTRALIA
BERYL ANNE OLIVER
BLACKBUTT CHILD CARE CENTRE
BLUERAINBOW PTY LTD
C.S. & V.R. LOVATT
CHANTER DEVELOPMENTS PTY LIMITED
CHILLAWONG CHILD CARE CENTRE
COACHWOOD KIDS LONG DAY CARE KINDERGARTEN
CRINGILA CHILDREN’S HOUSE INCORPORATED
DONNA LEE CRITTENDEN AND IAN JESSE MOON
HILLSIDE DRIVE PRE-SCHOOL
HINDSON & CARBERRY PTY LTD
HINDSON PRESCHOOLS PTY LTD
ILLAWARRA AREA CHILD CARE LTD
ILLAWARRA AREA HEALTH SERVICE
ILLAWARRA CHILDRENS SERVICES LTD
ILLAWARRA FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME INCORPORATED
ILLAWARRA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SHELLHARBOUR COLLEGE
ILLAWARRA WOMENS HEALTH CENTRE
KEMBLAWARRA CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE INCORPORATED
KOONAWARRA AREA RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
LIL’S LITTLE TOTS PTY LTD
LITTLE SEASHELL PRESCHOOL LONG DAY CARE
MARSH GROUP PTY LTD
MT TERRY PRESCHOOL PTY LTD
MULLIGRUBBS LONG DAY CARE CENTRE
NIMACL PTY LIMITED
PARTNERSHIP OF DAVID PETER JENSEN, SANDRA JANE JENSEN, KATHLEEN JAN
JENSEN, AND PETER THOMAS JENSEN
PAUL & BRONWYN STERRY
PELICAN PRE-SCHOOL AND LONG DAY CARE
RAYLEIGH GARDENS PRE SCHOOL EDUCATION
REBECCA HINDSON T/A WILBUR PLATYPUS CHILDCARE CENTRE
ROSALIND SULTAN
SHARON AND PATRICK SMITHERS
SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL
SIERRA VILLAGE PRESCHOOL
SOUGHT AFTER INVESTMENTS PTY LTD
TERRY STREET KIDS CHILDCARE CENTRE
THE GARDNERS PATCH PRESCHOOL
TODDLERS PALACE KINDERGARTEN PTY LTD
WORK CHILDCARE MANAGEMENT PTY LTD
ZAMOENCE P/L TRUSTEE FOR GRANDMA ROSIE’S TRUST

Throsby Electorate: Illicit Drug Abuse
(Question No. 84)

Ms George asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 16 November 2004:

(1) What are the names and addresses of the services currently operating to assist in the prevention and treatment of illicit drug abuse in the (a) electoral division of Throsby and (b) Illawarra Region.

(2) What sum does the Commonwealth provide for each service and under which program are funds made available.

(3) What sum does the Commonwealth provide to assist in the prevention and treatment of illicit drug abuse in the (a) electoral division of Throsby and (b) Illawarra Region.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) and (b) The provision of drug and alcohol treatment and prevention services is a shared responsibility between the Australian Government and the states and territories. The Australian Government currently funds the following treatment and prevention services under the National Illicit Drug Strategy in the Illawarra Region (which includes the electorates of Throsby and Cunningham):

- Illawarra Area Health Service
- Port Kembla Hospital
- Cowper Street
- WARRAWONG NSW 2502
- Kedesh Rehabilitation Services Limited
- 303 Flagstaff Road
- BERKELEY NSW 2506
- Wollongong Crisis Centre
- 26 Illawon Street
- BERKELEY NSW 2506

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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
The following table outlines the Australian Government funding allocated under the National Illicit Drug Strategy for each service and the program under which the funds are provided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Australian Government Funding</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra Area Health Service Kedesh Limited</td>
<td>Funding is provided to these services on a fee-for-service basis. The NSW Government administers the funding through a Funding Agreement with the Australian Government.</td>
<td>Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Crisis Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kedesh Rehabilitation Services Limited</td>
<td>$867,774</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong Crisis Centre</td>
<td>(for two projects)</td>
<td>Treatment Grants Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre</td>
<td>$40,137</td>
<td>Community Partnerships Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) and (b) Refer to 1 and 2 above.

Transport and Regional Services: Program Funding

(Ms George) asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1610 (Hansard, 2 June 2003, page 15717), has the Shellharbour City Council reapplied for funding under the Regional Partnerships Program for the reconstruction of the main runway at Illawarra Regional Airport.

(2) Is he now aware of the Shellharbour City Council’s request for a review of its application for Regional Solutions Program funding in a letter dated 20 November 2002 on the basis that the Department’s reason for its decision was inconsistent with its decision to approve the Temora Shire Council’s project; if not, why not.

(3) Has a review of that decision taken place; if so, what are the details; if not, why not.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Shellharbour City Council has not reapplied for funding under the Regional Partnerships Program for the reconstruction of the main runway at Illawarra Regional Airport.

(2) The Department is unaware of a letter from the Shellharbour City Council requesting a review of the decision.

(3) No review of the decision has taken place.

Citizenship

(Mr Brendan O’Connor) asked the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) In respect of the speech to the Sydney Institute on 8 July 2004 by the previous Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs announcing the Government’s intention to redraft the citizenship resumption requirements for Maltese citizens who were born in Australia, who spent the greater part of their childhood in Australia and who were compelled to renounce their Australian Citizenship under Maltese law, will the Government honour the proposals for reform announced by the previous Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.
(2) When does the Government intend to present the proposed changes to the Parliament in the form of draft legislation.

Mr McGauran—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) & (2) Draft legislation to give effect to the amendments announced by my predecessor is expected to be available for introduction in the Parliament in 2005. The precise timing of the introduction of the legislation has not yet been determined but will of course need to take account of other Government priorities.

Scullin Electorate: Child-Care Centres
(Question No. 104)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) How many community based child care centres were located in the electoral division of Scullin in (a) 2002-2003, (b) 2003-2004, and (c) 2004-2005.

(2) What was the (a) name and address of each centre, and (b) the sum of Commonwealth funding it received.

(3) In respect of each centre, what sum was paid as (a) an operational subsidy, (b) a special needs subsidy, (c) an establishment grant, and (d) block grant assistance (transitional assistance).

(4) Which Commonwealth funded child centres located in the electoral division of Scullin have been overpaid and what sum will each centre be asked to repay.

Mr Hockey—The Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The number of community based child care centres were located in the electoral division of Scullin in:

(a) 2002-2003—46
(b) 2003-2004—53
(c) 2004-2005—53

(2) (a) (b) The name, address and funding of each centre is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE NAME</th>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>COMMONWEALTH FUNDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2002-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREENSBOROUGH CAMPUS CHILD CARE</td>
<td>CIVIC DR GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LALOR CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>415 HIGH ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$3,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK HEIGHTS CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>31 MORANG DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$11,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMDAJI KWEI CHILDREN’S CENTRE</td>
<td>McKIMMIES RD BUNDOORA 3083</td>
<td>$15,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMASTOWN CHILD CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>129 EDGAR’S RD THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$16,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APOLLO PARKWAYS PRIMARY AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>CIVIC DVE GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINDON PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>CUTHBERT DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREENSBOROUGH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>130 GRIMSHAW ST GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LALOR EAST PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>CLEVELAND ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LALOR PRIMARY COMBINED</td>
<td>MAXWELL ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE NAME</td>
<td>ADDRESS</td>
<td>COMMONWEALTH FUNDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK HEIGHTS COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>PINDARI AVENUE MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0 $0 $77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>BLAMEY AVE MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$296 $1,347 $247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORRIS SOUTH PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>77 GORGE RD SOUTH MORANG 3752</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORRIS BANK PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>SETTLEMENT RD BUNDOORA 3083</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLENTY PARKLANDS PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>48 BLOSSOM PARK DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST DAMIAN’S COMBINED OSHC PROGRAM</td>
<td>1 SETTLEMENT RD BUNDOORA 3083</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI (MILL PARK) AFTER CARE</td>
<td>312 CHILDS RD MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$54 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST JOHN’S PRIMARY (THOMASTOWN) AFTER CARE</td>
<td>REGAL AVE THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$295 $117 $92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST LUKE’S PRIMARY (LALOR) AFTER CARE</td>
<td>1A DAVID ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST PETERS (EPPING) AFTER CARE</td>
<td>32 WEDGE ST EPPING 3076</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE (GREENSBOROUGH) COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>251 DIAMOND CREEK RD GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$240 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMASTOWN MEADOWS AFTER SCHOOL SERVICE</td>
<td>ENDEAVOUR AVE THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$427 $229 $202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMASTOWN WEST PRIMARY AFTER CARE</td>
<td>MAIN ST THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$9,174 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATSONIA NORTH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>SHARPS RD WATSONIA 3087</td>
<td>$0 $15 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APOLLO PARKWAYS PRIMARY BEFORE SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>CNR BRENTWICK &amp; CIVIC DR GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINDON PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>CUTHBERT DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREENSBOROUGH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>130 GRIMSHAW ST GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LALOR EAST PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>CLEVELAND ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$256 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LALOR PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>MAXWELL ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NILLUMBIK FAMILY DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>CIVIC DRV GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$101,372 $70,899 $82,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITTLESEA FAMILY DAY CARE CENTRE</td>
<td>CIVIC CENTRE FERRES DRV SOUTH MORANG</td>
<td>$207,660 $200,234 $196,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK HEIGHTS COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>PINDARI AVEMILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>BLAMEY AVE MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0 $0 $71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORRIS SOUTH PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>77 GORGE RD SOUTH MORANG 3752</td>
<td>$0 $0 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORRIS BANK PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>SETTLEMENT RD BUNDOORA 3083</td>
<td>$0 $25 $0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE NAME</td>
<td>ADDRESS</td>
<td>COMMONWEALTH FUNDING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2002-03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLENTY PARKLANDS PRIMARY BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>48 BLOSSOM PARK DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST DAMIAN’S COMBINED OSHC PROGRAM</td>
<td>1 SETTLEMENT RD BUNDOORA 3083</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI (MILL PARK) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>312 CHILDS RD MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST JOHNS PRIMARY (THOMASTOWN) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>REGAL AVE THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST LUKE’S PRIMARY (LALOR) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>1A DAVID ST LALOR 3075</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST MARY’S CATHOLIC SCHOOL (GREENSBOROUGH) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>210 GRIMSHAW ST GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST PETER’S (EPPING) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>32 WEDGE ST EPPING 3076</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE (GREENSBOROUGH) BEFORE CARE</td>
<td>251 DIAMOND CREEK RD GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST CLARE’S COMBINED OSHC - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>3 HARBARD ST THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST CLARE’S VACATION CARE - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>3 HARBARD ST THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATSONIA NORTH PRIMARY COMBINED OSHC</td>
<td>SHARPE'S RD WATSONIA 3087</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAMOND VALLEY SPORTS &amp; FITNESS YMCA (VC)</td>
<td>CIVIC DR GREENSBOROUGH 3088</td>
<td>$2,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILL PARK LEISURE CENTRE (YMCA) VACATION CARE</td>
<td>MORANG DR MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$8,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOSHCARE EPPING VACATION CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td>41-53 MILLER ST EPPING 3076</td>
<td>$24,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE VC</td>
<td>8 DOREEN ROGEN WAY SOUTH MORANG 3752</td>
<td>$8,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI (MILL PARK) VACATION CARE</td>
<td>312 CHILD’S RD MILL PARK 3082</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITTLESEA YMCA (EPPING) VACATION CARE</td>
<td>MCDONALDS RD EPPING 3076</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST CLARE’S COMBINED OSHC - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>3 HARBARD ST THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST CLARE’S VACATION CARE - CAMP AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>3 HARBARD ST THOMASTOWN 3074</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) (a) The sum paid as operational subsidy to services in the electorate of Scullin is listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE NAME</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NILLUMBIK FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME</td>
<td>$97,759</td>
<td>$69,443</td>
<td>$82,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITTLESEA FAMILY DAY CARE SCHEME</td>
<td>$202,800</td>
<td>$198,855</td>
<td>$196,851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b), (c) The sum paid as Special Needs Subsidy Scheme and Establishment Grant to services in the electorate of Scullin is listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE NAME</th>
<th>SPECIAL NEEDS SUBSIDY SCHEME</th>
<th>ESTABLISHMENT GRANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APOLLO PARKWAYS PRIMARY AFTER SCHOOL CARE</td>
<td>$339</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(d) No services located in the electorate of Scullin received block grant assistance (transitional assistance).

(4) Child Care Benefit (CCB) is paid in advance to services on behalf of eligible families to enable services to reduce the child care fees of those families. CCB is paid on an ongoing advance/acquit basis. No debts or overpayments are raised as part of this ongoing process.

Family and Community Services: Child Care

(Question No. 105)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister representing the Minister for Family and Community Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) What sum in child care assistance per child per annum was allocated to (a) family, (b) private long, and (c) community long day care in (i) Australia, and (ii) Victoria.

(2) What sum in child care assistance per child per annum was allocated to (a) family, (b) private long, and (c) community long day care in the postcode area (i) 3074, (ii) 3075, (iii) 3076, (iv) 3082, (v) 3083, (vi) 3087, (vii) 3088, (viii) 3089, (ix) 3090, (x) 3091 and (xi) 3752.

Mr Hockey—The Minister for Family and Community Services has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) (a) (b) (c) (i) (ii) The average amount of Child Care Benefit paid per child for the 2003-04 financial year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>FDC</th>
<th>Private LDC</th>
<th>Community LDC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia (i)</td>
<td>1504.78</td>
<td>1762.50</td>
<td>1455.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria (ii)</td>
<td>1415.49</td>
<td>1812.08</td>
<td>1537.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FDC: Family Day Care (includes In-Home Care), LDC: Long Day Care.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
Notes:
1. Excludes Child Care Benefit received as a lump sum payment.
2. The information in this table is based on pre-reconciliation amounts paid to families during the financial year.
3. Data has been weighted up to adjust for services that have not lodged Child Care Benefit usage statements. National weights for each service type have been used for the Australian data, the Victorian state weights for each service type have been used for the Victorian data.

Source: Centrelink administrative data as at 01/10/04.

(2) (a) (b) (c) (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii) (viii) (ix) (x) (xi) The average amount of Child Care Benefit paid per child for the 2003-04 financial year is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Child Care Benefit ($) per child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3074 (i)</td>
<td>1720.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3075 (ii)</td>
<td>1693.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3076 (iii)</td>
<td>1498.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3082 (iv)</td>
<td>1234.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3083 (v)</td>
<td>1592.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3087 (vi)</td>
<td>1711.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3088 (vii)</td>
<td>1644.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3089 (viii)</td>
<td>933.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3090 (ix)</td>
<td>2033.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3091 (x)</td>
<td>1172.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3752 (xi)</td>
<td>1188.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Within this postcode, the average Child Care Benefit per child may be unreliable due to the low count of children using these services.

FDC: Family Day Care (includes In-Home Care), LDC: Long Day Care.

Notes:
1. Excludes Child Care Benefit received as a lump sum payment.
2. The information in this table is based on pre-reconciliation amounts paid to families during the financial year.
3. Data has been weighted up to adjust for services that have not lodged Child Care Benefit usage statements Victorian state weights for each service type have been used for the data by postcode.

Source: Centrelink administrative data as at 01/10/04.

Roads: Funding
(Question No. 108)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

What projects were funded during (a) 2001, (b) 2002, (c) 2003, and (d) 2004 in the electoral division of Scullin under the (i) Roads to Recovery, (ii) Roads of National Importance, and (iii) Blackspot Program.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a)-(d) (i) Under the Roads to Recovery Program, councils enter works directly into a work schedule on a secure website.

These work schedules are regularly updated by councils and are available from the Department of Transport and Regional Services website at http://dynamic.dotars.gov.au/landr2r/state_selector.cfm

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
As at 13 December 2004, the work schedules of the councils whose local government area, in full or in part, is within the electoral division of Scullin are as follows:

### Banyule City Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Estimated Cost ($)</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ayr Ct - throughout</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>30-Nov-01</td>
<td>7,809</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alandale Rd - The Erie to Wilmington</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>30-Nov-01</td>
<td>23,442</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins Av - Ashe to Daphne</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Oct-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-03</td>
<td>26,196</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian St - Ford to Bond</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>30-Nov-01</td>
<td>84,675</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathallan Rd - G’boro Hwy to Sydney St</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>30-Nov-01</td>
<td>9,586</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballanda Ct - Throughout</td>
<td>Pavement resheet</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>30-Nov-01</td>
<td>5,857</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Ct - Throughout Elphin St - east of Waterdale</td>
<td>Pavement resheet Pavement reconstruction</td>
<td>01-Aug-01 01-Jan-02</td>
<td>30-Nov-01 30-Jun-02</td>
<td>5,496 47,367</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collins Street - Banfield to Swanston Jellicoe St - Oriel to Liberty</td>
<td>Pavement Resheet Pavement reconstruction</td>
<td>01-May-02 01-Jan-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-02 30-Jun-02</td>
<td>26,465 109,852</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para Rd - Alma to Maskell Lower Plenty Road - Crew to Yallambie Thompson Dr - Devlin to Finlayson Bolton Street - Sackville to Kirwana</td>
<td>New Footpath New Footpath New Footpath</td>
<td>01-Oct-01 01-Oct-01 01-Oct-01</td>
<td>31-Mar-02 31-Mar-02 31-Mar-02</td>
<td>7,226 34,198 16,455</td>
<td>Yes Yes Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galery Gate Caledonia Drive &amp; Liddesdale Dr Panorama Avenue - Old Eltham Rd to Main Rd</td>
<td>New Footpath Inadequate parking - intersection imps Excessive speed - slow points</td>
<td>01-Oct-01 15-Dec-03 01-Apr-02</td>
<td>31-Mar-02 30-Apr-04 30-Jun-02</td>
<td>5,651 25,000 43,828</td>
<td>Yes Yes Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martins Lane - Rosemar Circuit to Castleton Rd Old Eltham Road - East of Panorama Reichelt Avenue - South of Grand Boulevard Nepean Street &amp; Sainsbury Avenue</td>
<td>Speed - intersection improvements Excessive speed - slow points Pedestrian safety - slow points</td>
<td>01-Apr-02 01-May-02 01-Apr-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-02 30-Jun-03 30-Jun-02</td>
<td>29,827 9,052 306</td>
<td>Yes Yes Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accidents - Roundabout</td>
<td>01-Jan-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-02</td>
<td>23,112</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Estimated Cost ($)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Place</td>
<td>Pavement Resheet From Judith St to Grimshaw St (Road Only)</td>
<td>01-Aug-02</td>
<td>31-Oct-02</td>
<td>20,902</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hailes Street/Kalparrin Ave - Greensborough</td>
<td>Speed - Intersection Improvements</td>
<td>01-Feb-03</td>
<td>30-Jun-03</td>
<td>43,714</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binns Street - Opposite ROW to Mountain View Road Park Lane</td>
<td>Footpath Widening</td>
<td>01-Feb-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-03</td>
<td>24,441</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Helena Rd - Opposite Tallow Wood Drive to Bus Stop Nepean Street/McKenzie Court-Greensborough</td>
<td>New Footpath</td>
<td>01-Feb-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-03</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Av and Henty Rd Sheehan Rd Heidelberg West - No 46 to No 61</td>
<td>Intersection Treatment</td>
<td>05-Jan-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>35,994</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warralong Av - Lyn to Glengala Cameron Pd - Oxford to Bent</td>
<td>Pavement Resheet</td>
<td>01-May-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-02</td>
<td>17,470</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland Av and Henty Rd Sheehan Rd Heidelberg West - No 46 to No 61</td>
<td>Pavement Resheet</td>
<td>01-May-02</td>
<td>30-Jun-02</td>
<td>42,326</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland Av and Henty Rd Sheehan Rd Heidelberg West - No 46 to No 61</td>
<td>Pavement Resurfacing</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rd, Heidelberg West - Kylia Rd to Waterdale Rd Aqueduct Rd, Eltham North</td>
<td>Pavement Resurfacing</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rd, Heidelberg West - Kylia Rd to Waterdale Rd Aqueduct Rd, Eltham North</td>
<td>Pavement Resurfacing</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnham Av, Rosanna Frensham Rd, Watsonia Int of Gabonia Av And Webster Cr</td>
<td>Pavement Resurfacing</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEwan Rd, Heidelberg West McArthur Rd, Ivanhoe Burgundy St, Heidelberg Invermay Gr, Rosanna _ Grandview Gv to Waiora Rd</td>
<td>Traffic Treatment</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>31-Mar-05</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEwan Rd, Heidelberg West McArthur Rd, Ivanhoe Burgundy St, Heidelberg Invermay Gr, Rosanna _ Grandview Gv to Waiora Rd</td>
<td>Bicycle Lane</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>22,094</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEwan Rd, Heidelberg West McArthur Rd, Ivanhoe Burgundy St, Heidelberg Invermay Gr, Rosanna _ Grandview Gv to Waiora Rd</td>
<td>Pedestrian Improvement</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEwan Rd, Heidelberg West McArthur Rd, Ivanhoe Burgundy St, Heidelberg Invermay Gr, Rosanna _ Grandview Gv to Waiora Rd</td>
<td>Pedestrian Improvement</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McEwan Rd, Heidelberg West McArthur Rd, Ivanhoe Burgundy St, Heidelberg Invermay Gr, Rosanna _ Grandview Gv to Waiora Rd</td>
<td>Pedestrian Improvement</td>
<td>01-Nov-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>No</td>
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### Questions in Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doidge St, Bundoora - Grimshaw St to Morwell Av</td>
<td>Pavement Reconstruction</td>
<td>01-Oct-04</td>
<td>31-Mar-05</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape St, Heidelberg - Castle St to Banksia St</td>
<td>Pavement Reconstruction</td>
<td>01-Sep-04</td>
<td>31-Mar-05</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banksia St, Ivanhoe - Wadham Rd to Oriel Rd</td>
<td>Pavement Reconstruction</td>
<td>01-Oct-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-05</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterdale Rd-Ivanhoe</td>
<td>Upgrade Traffic Signals</td>
<td>20-Oct-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>30,042</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F18 Bike Path - Lower Plenty Rd to Banyule Rd</td>
<td>Share Bike Path</td>
<td>19-Jan-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>91,895</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nell Street West</td>
<td>Intersection Treatment</td>
<td>15-Dec-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Road-Bundoora</td>
<td>Pavement Resheet</td>
<td>01-Dec-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>22,266</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Street-Nell St to Safeway Greensborough</td>
<td>Road Reconstruction</td>
<td>15-Dec-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darvell Street Rosanna</td>
<td>Road Reconstruction - Join funding with Council</td>
<td>20-Oct-03</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>223,776</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nillumbik City Council</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstbridge-Arthurs Creek Road, Nutfield, School Road, St Andrews Reynolds Road, Nyora Road Intersection</td>
<td>Final seal following earlier works.</td>
<td>01-Oct-01</td>
<td>22-Feb-02</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Road Bridge, Wattle Glen (crossing the Diamond Creek)</td>
<td>Existing bridge is flooded frequently. Design and construct new bridge at a higher level.</td>
<td>01-Aug-01</td>
<td>29-Nov-02</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstbridge-Arthurs Creek Road, Nutfield - Patulous Road to Mines Road</td>
<td>Surface is unsealed, rough and narrow in sections. Road to be widened where required and sealed.</td>
<td>19-Mar-01</td>
<td>27-Apr-01</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Bridge adjacent to road Bridge on Diamond Street, Eltham, 200m South of Stanhope Street</td>
<td>Bridge rails and deck rotted and is unsafe to walk on. Existing bridge to be removed and replaced</td>
<td>18-Jan-01</td>
<td>02-Sep-01</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Road, St Andrews - Heidelberg-Kinglake Road to 200m north</td>
<td>Narrow unsealed road. Relocate electricity pole, cut back embankment and seal road</td>
<td>26-Mar-01</td>
<td>20-Apr-01</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds Road, Research - Intersection of Nyora Road</td>
<td>Sight distance for cars turning in or out of Nyora Road is extremely poor. Cut down road side embankment, install islands, improve lighting and improve existing road surface.</td>
<td>05-Jul-01</td>
<td>25-Jul-01</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Bridge adjacent to Research-Warrandyte Road, Research, 200m east of CFA Building Nathan Road, Eltham</td>
<td>Existing deck and beams rotted. Remove existing structure and replace.</td>
<td>26-Feb-01</td>
<td>03-Sep-01</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan Road, Eltham</td>
<td>Resurface existing surface with anti-skid surfacing due to the steepness of the road</td>
<td>17-Sep-01</td>
<td>17-Sep-01</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eltham North Traffic Improvements - Ryan Road, Progress Road, highpoint Crescent Eltham Grid Traffic Improvements - Stanley Street, Batman Avenue, Sheffield Avenue</td>
<td>Installation of various traffic devices to slow traffic in local streets</td>
<td>15-Apr-02</td>
<td>28-Jun-02</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Rehabilitation, Henly Rd, Gosfield Rd and Arthurs Creek Rd</td>
<td>Sections of road badly breaking up. Stabilise and seal affected sections.</td>
<td>11-Mar-03</td>
<td>30-May-03</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Hut Road, Arthurs Creek</td>
<td>Existing bridge has a load limit which stops the CFA from crossing. Replace existing bridge to allow trucks to cross.</td>
<td>02-Sep-02</td>
<td>27-Sep-02</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Kerb and Channel, Main Road, Eltham</td>
<td>Section of Kerb and Channel is missing. Construct kerb and channel to improve drainage and damage to edge of road. Replace existing bridge.</td>
<td>22-Sep-03</td>
<td>03-Oct-03</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of Existing Table Drain, Kilby Lane, Kangaroo Ground</td>
<td>Existing table drain badly eroded and damaging edge of road. Reform and reinforce drain to stop erosion.</td>
<td>02-Feb-04</td>
<td>05-Mar-04</td>
<td>69,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction of Beale Avenue Bridge - Strathewen</td>
<td>Existing bridge badly deteriorated. Replace existing bridge.</td>
<td>17-Nov-03</td>
<td>19-Dec-03</td>
<td>64,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction of Capple Lane Bridge, Arthurs Creek</td>
<td>Existing deck badly deteriorated. Replace deck and reinforce sub-structure.</td>
<td>17-Nov-03</td>
<td>19-Dec-03</td>
<td>64,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aqueduct Road - Underground Existing Open Drain</td>
<td>Existing open drain badly eroded. Install kerb and channel and underground drainage.</td>
<td>05-Apr-04</td>
<td>30-Apr-04</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Whittlesea City Council**

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beech Street between Alexander Ave and Cedar St, Thomastown, VIC</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures and some kerb and channel disjointed. Patch, regulate, kerb repairs and asphalt overlay.</td>
<td>01-Feb-02</td>
<td>18-May-02</td>
<td>32,677</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurel Street between Church Street and Plenty Road, Whittlesea, VIC</td>
<td>Pavement failures in localised areas and cracking. Patch and Rubber Reseal</td>
<td>15-Mar-01</td>
<td>31-Mar-01</td>
<td>10,746</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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QUESTIONS IN WRITING
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elm Street between The Boulevard and Scott Street, Thomastown, VIC</td>
<td>Pavement failures in localised areas. Kerb and channel disjointed and holding water. Patch, kerb repairs and ultra Thin Resheet.</td>
<td>15-Mar-01</td>
<td>31-May-01</td>
<td>21,546</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra waters Boulevard between Mill Park Lakes and Findon Road. Mill Parks VIC.</td>
<td>No footpath currently exists. Pedestrians walk on road. Shared Path.</td>
<td>15-Apr-01</td>
<td>01-Jun-01</td>
<td>33,857</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coulstock Street between High Street and the end. Epping, VIC.</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Rehabilitation</td>
<td>01-Apr-01</td>
<td>01-May-01</td>
<td>38,762</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street between Mountview Street and Edgars Rd Thomastown. VIC.</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Rehabilitation</td>
<td>01-Apr-01</td>
<td>01-May-01</td>
<td>106,447</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church street between Beech Street and Laurel Street, Whittlesea. VIC.</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures and some kerb and channel disjointed. Patch, kerb repairs and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>01-Apr-01</td>
<td>01-Jun-01</td>
<td>76,907</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Avenue between Melton Cr and Huskisson Av. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures. Patch, and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>18-Feb-02</td>
<td>22-Feb-02</td>
<td>10,740</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookes Road, full length. Mernda, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Patch, regulate, and resal.</td>
<td>18-Feb-02</td>
<td>22-Mar-02</td>
<td>15,366</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmondson Street between Mackey St and Burton St. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Patch Regulation and Resheet.</td>
<td>01-Mar-02</td>
<td>29-Apr-02</td>
<td>30,555</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Street, full length. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures. Patch, and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>18-Feb-02</td>
<td>01-Mar-02</td>
<td>9,041</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Street, full length. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures. Patch, and resheet.</td>
<td>18-Feb-02</td>
<td>01-Mar-02</td>
<td>43,132</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Street Service Road between Robert St and Duncan St. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised kerb and channel, and pavement failures. Partial kerb renewal, patch, and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>11-Feb-02</td>
<td>22-Feb-02</td>
<td>7,032</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street Service Road between Duncan St and Kingsway Dr. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised kerb and channel, and pavement failures. Partial kerb renewal, patch, and asphalt resheet.</td>
<td>11-Feb-02</td>
<td>22-Feb-02</td>
<td>32,473</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Street between Forest St and Church St. Whittlesea, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Regulation and asphalt resheet.</td>
<td>18-Feb-02</td>
<td>22-Feb-02</td>
<td>19,207</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schotters Road from North end to Plenty Rd. Mernda, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Patch, regulate, and reseal.</td>
<td>25-Feb-02</td>
<td>11-Jan-03</td>
<td>11,235</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Street, full length. Thomastown, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Replace failed kerb and channel, patch, regulate and asphalt resheet.</td>
<td>01-Jun-02</td>
<td>29-Nov-02</td>
<td>159,396</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Street, full length, Thomastown, VIC</td>
<td>Pavement failures in localised areas. Kerb and channel disjointed and holding water. Patch, kerb repairs and asphalt resheet.</td>
<td>01-Feb-02</td>
<td>21-Mar-02</td>
<td>47,730</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Street between High St and Frank St. Lalor, VIC</td>
<td>Localised pavement failures. Replace Kerb and channel, patch, and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>01-Apr-02</td>
<td>24-May-02</td>
<td>43,451</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waratah Street between Boronia St and Dalton Rd. Thomastown, VIC</td>
<td>Major pavement failures, cars scraping when entering properties. Kerb and channel disjointed and holding water. Kerb renewal, alter pavement crossfall, patch, and ultra thin resheet.</td>
<td>25-Feb-03</td>
<td>22-Mar-03</td>
<td>73,028</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beveridge Road Bridge over Merri Creek, Merriang Bruses Creek Road over Plenty River, Whittlesea, Vic</td>
<td>Replace existing timber bridge with concrete structure Replace bridge</td>
<td>01-Sep-02</td>
<td>27-Feb-04</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darebin Drive, McKimmies Rd to Donald St, Lalor, Vic</td>
<td>Pavement rehabilitation</td>
<td>03-Dec-03</td>
<td>20-Feb-04</td>
<td>117,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramoo Street, High Street to Mountview Street, Lalor, Vic</td>
<td>Localised kerb and channel, and pavement failures. Partial kerb renewal, patch, and resheet.</td>
<td>01-Jul-03</td>
<td>31-Dec-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findon Road, Glen- dale Ave to Pommel Crs, Epping, VIC</td>
<td>Premature pavement failure caused by large volumes of heavy vehicles servicing developing subdivisions. Rehabilitate by deep lift ashfield. Joint funded project with Council</td>
<td>19-May-03</td>
<td>30-May-03</td>
<td>220,000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Street, Gorge Road to Stanley Jones Drive, South Morang, Vic</td>
<td>Reconstruct kerbs and asphalt overlay</td>
<td>01-Jan-04</td>
<td>01-Jan-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street Service Road, Memorial Avenue to Park Street, Epping, Vic</td>
<td>Rehabilitation of kerb and pavement</td>
<td>14-Jan-04</td>
<td>28-Feb-04</td>
<td>188,017</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbard St, Full Length. Lalor Vic.</td>
<td>Major pavement failures. Patch, regulate and asphalt resheet</td>
<td>17-Feb-03</td>
<td>01-Mar-03</td>
<td>22,628</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackey Street, between Sydney Cres &amp; Prince Andrew Ave, Lalor</td>
<td>Pavement rehabilitation</td>
<td>01-May-04</td>
<td>31-Jul-04</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a)-(d) (ii) There were no Roads of National Importance projects within the electoral division of Scullin for the period 2001 – 2004.

(a)-(d) (iii) The following National Black Spot Programme projects within the electoral division of Scullin were approved for the programme years 2000-01 to 2004-05.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Ref No.</th>
<th>Location/Treatment</th>
<th>Approved Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V03001</td>
<td>Edgars Road</td>
<td>$68,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria Drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RED RIGHT TURN AND U-TURN ARROWS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V03031</td>
<td>Plenty Road</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greenhills Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAST ARM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01608</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>$312,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heyington Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NEW SIGNAL / FULLY CONTROLLED RIGHT TURN/ CENTRAL ISLAND/ RELOCATE BUS BAY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01627</td>
<td>Edgars Road</td>
<td>$196,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FULLY CONTROLLED RIGHT TURN / EXTEND RIGHT TURN LANES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01629</td>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>$81,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lantana Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01632</td>
<td>Dalton Road</td>
<td>$284,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Childs Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PEDESTRIAN OPERATED SIGNALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MODIFY ROUNDABOUT approaches &amp; SLIP LANES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyule City Council</td>
<td>V01401</td>
<td>Plenty Road</td>
<td>$44,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Childs Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANTI SKID SURFACING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyule City Council</td>
<td>V01402</td>
<td>Plenty Road</td>
<td>$88,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Metropolitan Ring Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ANTI SKID SURFACING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01385</td>
<td>Station Street</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paschke Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ROUNDABOUT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>V01391</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memorial Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FULLY CONTROLLED RIGHT TURN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nillumbik Shire Council</td>
<td>V01424</td>
<td>Yan Yuan Road</td>
<td>$94,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kurrack Road &amp; Heard Avenue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SHOULDER SEAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crime: Victoria  
(Question No. 109)  

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister representing the Minister for Justice and Customs, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

What is the incidence of reported crime by type in (a) Victoria, and (b) the postcode areas (i) 3074, (ii) 3075, (iii) 3076, (iv) 3082, (v) 3083, (vi) 3087, (vii) 3088, (viii) 3089, (ix) 3090, (x) 3091, and (xi) 3752.

Mr Ruddock—The Minister for Justice and Customs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(a) I am advised that according to the most recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of victims by offence category, for offences recorded by Police, in Victoria for 2003 was as follows:

Homicide and related offences – 171 Victims. These can be broken down as follows:

i. Murder – 71.
ii. Attempted Murder – 51.
iii. Manslaughter – 5.
iv. Driving causing death – 44.

Assault – 17,140 victims.

Sexual Assault – 2,565 victims.

Kidnapping/abduction – 93 victims.

Robbery – 2,875 victims. These can be broken down as follows:

i. Armed robbery – 1,404 victims.
ii. Unarmed robbery – 1,471 victims.

Blackmail/extortion – 108 victims.

Unlawful entry with intent – 60,612 victims. These can be broken down as follows:

i. Involving taking of property – 45,848 victims.
ii. Other – 14,764 victims.

Motor vehicle theft – 23,823 victims.

Other theft – 136,417 victims.


(b) I am advised that the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not produce data on the incidence of recorded crime by local area in Victoria, including by postcode. However, I am advised that such information may be available from the Victorian Police.

Local Government, Territories and Roads: Program Funding  
(Question No. 110)  

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

What sum was allocated in local government financial assistance grants during (a) 2003-2004, and (b) 2004-2005, to the (i) City of Whittlesea, (ii) City of Banyule, (iii) Shire of Nillumbik, and (iv) City of Darebin.
Mr Lloyd—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Each year the Federal Government provides financial assistance grants to Local Government paid through the States under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995. The financial assistance grants have two components – general purpose grants and identified local roads grants – and both components are untied in the hands of the receiving council. This means that councils are able to spend the grant (including the local road grant) according to the priorities of their communities.

The Act specifies how the quantum of the grant is determined and how it is distributed between States. Within States, the grant is distributed to councils according to the recommendation of the respective Local Government Grants Commission established by each State as a condition of receiving funding under the Act. Further details are provided in the Report on the Operation of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 (commonly known as the National Report) tabled in Parliament as soon as practicable after 30 June each year.

In the following table, financial assistance grants for 2004-05 are estimates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Name</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea (C)</td>
<td>$6,578,514</td>
<td>$7,025,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyule (C)</td>
<td>$4,475,280</td>
<td>$4,562,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nillumbik (S)</td>
<td>$3,085,614</td>
<td>$2,930,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darebin (C)</td>
<td>$5,977,660</td>
<td>$5,610,742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 16 November 2004:

(1) How many companies in the electoral division of Scullin received export assistance in (a) 2003, and (b) 2004.

(2) In each case, what was the (a) name of the company, (b) sum received, and (c) purpose of each grant.

Mr Vaile—the answer to the honourable member’s questions is as follows:

(1) (a) In 2003, 11 businesses in the electorate of Scullin received a total of $292,974 in grants under the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme.

(b) At 18 November 2004, 7 businesses in the electorate of Scullin had received a total of $173,386 in grants under the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme.

(2) The attached table provides:

(a) the names of the recipient companies within the electorate of Scullin in 2003 and 2004; and

(b) details of those grants paid.

(c) The purpose of EMDG grants is to assist small and medium sized Australian businesses to enter into export and develop sustainable export markets.

Export Market Development Grants paid to businesses in the electorate of Scullin*: 2003 and 2004 (at 18 November 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipient Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARIAZONE INTERNATIONAL PTY LTD</td>
<td>55 Northgate Drive</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Industrial Machinery and Equipment Manufacturing</td>
<td>$19,010</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tuesday, 8 February 2005

### QUESTIONS IN WRITING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipient Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Grant Payment</th>
<th>Year Paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAT DESIGN AUSTRALIA PTY LTD</td>
<td>17/350 Settlement Road</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Cosmetic and Toiletry Preparation Manufacturing</td>
<td>$37,960</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEXIDUCT INDUSTRIES PTY LTD</td>
<td>3 Wentworth Court</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Manufacturer of Flexible Duct Making Machine</td>
<td>$54,556</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEXIDUCT INDUSTRIES PTY LTD</td>
<td>3 Wentworth Court</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Commercial Space Heating and Cooling Equipment Manufacturing</td>
<td>$24,625</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM FACILITY MANAGEMENT GROUP PTY LTD</td>
<td>326 Settlement Road</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Clothing Wholesaling</td>
<td>$37,281</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM FACILITY MANAGEMENT GROUP PTY LTD</td>
<td>326 Settlement Road</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Clothing Wholesaling</td>
<td>$32,769</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUEL TREAT AUSTRALIA PTY LTD</td>
<td>30 Temple Drive</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Inorganic Industrial Chemical Manufacturing</td>
<td>$10,801</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENEVIEVE YARN DYERS (AUSTRALIA) PTY LTD</td>
<td>75 Heyington Avenue</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Yarn Dyeing Services</td>
<td>$8,094</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBRIGGS PTY LTD</td>
<td>6 Mercedes Drive</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Drape, Shade and Blind Manufacturer</td>
<td>$57,017</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBRIGGS PTY LTD</td>
<td>6 Mercedes Drive</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Drape, Shade and Blind Manufacturer</td>
<td>$58,924</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCHIBECI ROAD SERVICES PTY LTD</td>
<td>1 Tuscan Court</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Mining and Construction Machinery Manufacturing</td>
<td>$42,453</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTRIX INDUSTRIES PTY LTD</td>
<td>2 Merchant Avenue</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Supplier of Hardware Locking Components and Railway Signalling Products</td>
<td>$13,814</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTRIX INDUSTRIES PTY LTD</td>
<td>2 Merchant Avenue</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Supplier of Hardware Locking Components and Railway Signalling Products</td>
<td>$12,794</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIELDS STAMPS &amp; COINS PTY LTD</td>
<td>83 Main Street</td>
<td>GREENSBOROUGH</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3088</td>
<td>Stamp and Coin Retailing</td>
<td>$9,621</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURE LEVEL PTY LTD</td>
<td>12 Northgate Drive</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Cement and Lime Manufacturing</td>
<td>$3,655</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIPOLYMER PTY LTD</td>
<td>18 Centofanti Place</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Swimming Pool Cleaning Product Manufacturer</td>
<td>$6,806</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIPOLYMER PTY LTD</td>
<td>18 Centofanti Place</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Swimming Pool Cleaning Product Manufacturer</td>
<td>$6,507</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDENT PTY LTD</td>
<td>274 Settlement Road</td>
<td>THOMASTOWN</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3074</td>
<td>Dental Product Manufacturing</td>
<td>$29,673</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total grants paid: 18          $466,360

*based on electoral boundaries current prior to the October 2004 Federal election

Notes:
1. “Year paid” is the calendar year in which the payment was made.
2. The electorate that each business is located in has been determined using Australian Electoral Commission information, and where necessary, advice from relevant electorate offices.


**Defence: Medical Officers**

*(Question No. 127)*

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1674 (*Hansard*, 14 May 2003, page 14599), what was the advice that the Fleet Medical Officer provided on the suitability of Dr McKenzie to serve on HMAS *Kanimbla* whilst under investigation for professional misconduct by the WA Medical Board of Inquiry and why was the advice provided orally and not in writing.

(2) Was the Fleet Medical Officer aware of the particulars of the notice issued to Dr McKenzie by the WA Medical Board of Inquiry; if not, on what basis was the Fleet Medical Officer in a position to tender any advice to the Directorate of Naval Officer Postings.

(3) Did the Fleet Medical Officer appear before the WA Medical Board of Inquiry; if so, how did the inquiry characterise his evidence.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Fleet Medical Officer provided advice to the Directorate of Naval Officers Postings that Commander McKenzie was available and had the necessary qualifications and experience. There is no requirement for the Fleet Medical Officer to provide written advice regarding the availability of medical officers being posted to fleet units.

(2) No. The Fleet Medical Officer provided his advice on the basis that Commander McKenzie was a qualified and registered medical practitioner with the relevant skills and experience for the deployment.

(3) No.

**Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry**

*(Question No. 128)*

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1674 (*Hansard*, 14 May 2003, page 14599), did “A”, the plaintiff in the WA Medical Board of Inquiry investigation of Dr McKenzie, seek to use Navy internal procedures to redress the grievance; if so, (a) what type of redress was sought, (b) when was it initiated, (c) who considered the matter, (d) when was it finalised, and (e) what was the outcome.

(2) Can the Minister explain how and why these internal procedures failed.

(3) What actions has the Minister, the Chief of the Defence Force and the Chief of Navy taken to review the case and strengthen the internal procedures.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes.

   (a) In the interests of ‘A’s privacy, and obligations under the Privacy Act 1988, it is inappropriate to comment.

(b) and (c) This matter is yet to be finalised and due to privacy considerations, no details can be released at this stage.
(d) and (e) This matter is yet to be finalised and, therefore, it would be inappropriate to comment at this time.

(2) These internal procedures have not failed. This matter is yet to be finalised.

(3) It would be inappropriate to comment at this time regarding any future action on behalf of the Minister, the Chief of the Defence Force or the Chief of Navy because this matter is yet to be finalised. The Chief of the Defence Force and the Defence Force Ombudsman have agreed that to strengthen the internal process the redress of grievance system requires further review, with particular emphasis on the responsiveness of the system. Consequently, an interdepartmental steering committee and a review team have been established to examine the Australian Defence Force redress of grievance system.

Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry
(Question No. 129)

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1674 (Hansard, 14 May 2003, page 14599), now that the findings of the WA Medical Board of Inquiry investigation are available, was Dr McKenzie an appropriate doctor to be posted to HMAS Kanimbla.

(2) In respect of the controversy of the administration of anthrax vaccine to the personnel posted to HMAS Kanimbla, can she provide an assurance that (a) no personnel were disadvantaged as a result of Dr McKenzie administering anthrax vaccine, (b) no patient/doctor confidentiality has been breached, (c) no adverse medical reports have been placed on medical files, and (d) no person has suffered adverse promotional reports or disciplinary hearings.

(3) How many personnel posted to HMAS Kanimbla have subsequently left the service.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes. At the time Commander McKenzie was posted to HMAS Kanimbla, he was a qualified and registered medical officer with the relevant skills and experience.

(2) (a) Yes.

(b) Yes. Neither Maritime Headquarters nor the Joint Health Support Agency is aware of any breach.

(c) Yes. Neither Maritime Headquarters nor Joint Health Support Agency is aware of any adverse medical reports being placed on members’ medical files.

(d) Yes. None of the eight Navy personnel who refused the anthrax inoculation have received adverse promotion reports, or been the subject of disciplinary action as a result of their decision.

(3) From the crew of HMAS Kanimbla who entered the Middle East Area of Operations at the commencement of Operation Catalyst, 31 members have since discharged from the Navy and one other member died in service.

Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry
(Question No. 130)

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1675 (Hansard, 11 August 2003, page 18079), was a substituted Notice of Inquiry (No. 2) dated 9 January 2003 the final notice issued by the WA Medical Board of Inquiry.
(2) Now that the WA Medical Board of Inquiry has made its findings, what were the particulars considered by the Board and what were the findings.

(3) Did the Minister, the Australian Defence Force or the Department of Defence seek from Dr McKenzie details of the particulars of the notice issued to Dr McKenzie; if so, when and when were they provided.

(4) If the particulars were not provided, what were the guidelines and criteria used to determine whether or not the Department of Defence would meet Dr McKenzie’s legal costs.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) No.

(2) This information comprises approximately 13 pages and is contained in the Reasons for Decision published by the Board for case No.1501-7 on 20 July 2004, available from the Board.

(3) No.

(4) The Legal Services Directions made by the Attorney-General in accordance with section 55 ZF Judiciary Act 1903.

**Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry**

(Question No. 131)

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 1676 (Hansard, 11 August 2003, page 18080), was a summons issued by those assisting the WA Medical Board of Inquiry addressed to the Commanding Officer of HMAS Stirling requesting the production of certain documents; if so, (a) why were the documents not produced, (b) was legal advice sought to resist the summons, and (c) can she explain how her predecessor could claim that all documents, files, records and information requested by the WA Medical Board of Inquiry were produced when the Department of Defence has resisted a summons.

(2) Has she instituted an investigation into the failure to comply with the summons; if so, (a) who is conducting it, (b) when will it be completed, and (c) will its findings be made public.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes.

(a) and (c) Although some of the documents requested had been previously produced to the Board, owing to an administrative error, the remainder of the materials requested were not produced.

(b) No.

(2) No.

**Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry**

(Question No. 132)

Mr Price asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 2220 (Hansard, 11 September 2003, page 19971), now that the WA Medical Board of Inquiry has found Dr McKenzie guilty of professional misconduct, is the Department of Defence continuing to meet the legal costs of Dr McKenzie at sentencing hearings of the WA Medical Board of Inquiry.
(2) Is the WA Medical Board of Inquiry to determine costs; if so, will the Department of Defence meet any costs awarded against Dr McKenzie; if so, why.

**Mrs De-Anne Kelly**—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Department of Defence did continue to meet Commander McKenzie’s legal costs beyond the date of the Western Australia Medical Board finding him guilty of professional misconduct.

(2) The Board ordered Commander McKenzie to pay 75 per cent of the Board’s legal costs of the inquiry, and the Commonwealth met part of those costs within the terms of the grant of legal assistance at Commonwealth expense made to Commander McKenzie.

**Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry**

*(Question No. 133)*

**Mr Price** asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 2220 (*Hansard*, 11 September 2003, page 19971), how many days has the WA Medical Board of Inquiry sat to hear evidence in its investigation of Dr McKenzie.

(2) How many hours has Phillip Fox billed the Department of Defence for its services defending Dr McKenzie.

(3) How long is the hearing to consider the appropriate penalty against Dr McKenzie expected to last.

**Mrs De-Anne Kelly**—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) According to the report of the Board, 8 days.

(2) 1178.5 hours.

(3) The Board sat for 2 days on this aspect.

**Defence: Medical Board of Inquiry**

*(Question No. 134)*

**Mr Price** asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) Did the WA Medical Board of Inquiry considering matters relating to Dr McKenzie consider the actions of the Commanding Officer of HMAS *Stirling*; if so, what conclusions or observations did the inquiry make.

(2) Did the inquiry identify that the Commanding Officer had difficulty working with female officers; if so, is this the subject of an inquiry or investigation and, if it is, who is conducting the inquiry and when did it convene; if it is not, why not.

**Mrs De-Anne Kelly**—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The WA Medical Board received evidence from or relating to the Commanding Officer of HMAS *Stirling* on several aspects of the matters before it, but no findings were made by the Board regarding the Commanding Officer. The Board made observations regarding the probative value of aspects of his evidence. These appear at pages 22, 91, 116, 117, 133, 138, 143, 146 of the Reasons for Decision published by the Board for case No.1501-7 on 20 July 2004, available from the Board.

(2) No.
Education and Training: Traineeships and Apprenticeships
(Question No. 136)

Mr Price asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 17 November 2004:

(1) For the calendar year 2004, how many school based Traineeships and Apprenticeships were granted in each State and Territory.

(2) For the calendar year 2004, how many school based Traineeships and Apprenticeships were granted in the electoral division of (a) Lindsay, (b) Prospect, (c) Greenway, (d) Mitchell, (e) Parramatta, (f) Fowler, (g) Hughes, (h) Reid, (i) Macquarie, (j) Macarthur, (k) Werriwa, and (l) Chifley.

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The honourable member has asked for School Based New Apprenticeships data for the 2004 calendar year. The most current data available from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) regarding the number of young people undertaking school based New Apprenticeships is for the period until 30 June 2004.

For the 12 months to 30 June 2004 the number of School Based New Apprenticeships commencements in each State and Territory is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>5,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the 12 months to June 2004 the number of School Based New Apprenticeships commencements in the 12 nominated electorates is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospect</td>
<td>(a)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenway</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>(a)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>(a)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fowler</td>
<td>(a)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reid</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarthur</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werriwa</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chifley</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(a) Numbers of New Apprentices under 10 are not separately listed as individuals may be able to be identified.
**Roads: Peel Division**

*(Question No. 166)*

Mr Beazley asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 18 November 2004:

(1) What conditions has the Government placed on the funds it has committed to the Peel Deviation which is planned to relieve traffic pressure in the city of Mandurah and ease communication between the Perth metropolitan area and the south-west?

(2) Is it the case that the funds will not be released unless the Government of Western Australia complies with Commonwealth industrial relations laws; if so, what are the details of the requirement and when was the State government informed?

(3) Were the conditions announced at the time the Commonwealth Government released its offer during the recent election campaign?

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Funding for this project is conditional on the Western Australian Government matching the Australian Government contribution which is capped at $170 million.

(2) Since 1 January 2004, application of the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and its associated Guidelines has been a condition of funding for all indirectly funded Australian Government projects that either cost more than $5 million and represent at least 50 per cent of project cost, or $10 million or more irrespective of the proportion of Australian Government funding. Details of the Code’s requirements are set out in the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry documents published by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. On 30 September 2003, I wrote to all State and Territory Transport Ministers advising of the National Code requirements, and on 19 December 2003 I sent a follow up letter containing updated sections of the ALTD Notes on Administration that deal with the National Code.

(3) The States and Territories were advised of the National Code requirements when I wrote to them in September and December 2003.

**Defence: Pine Gap**

*(Question No. 175)*

Mr Melham asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

(1) How many personnel currently work at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap.

(2) How many Joint Defence Facility personnel are (a) Australian Government employees, (b) US Government employees, (c) employees of Australian contractors, and (d) US contractors.

(3) Are any of the personnel employed at the Joint Defence Facility members of the (a) Australian Defence Force, and (b) the US armed services; if so, (i) how many are there in total, and how many belong to the (ii) Army, (iii) Navy, (iv) Air Force, and (v) Marines.

(4) Which US Department of Defense agencies are involved in the operation of the Joint Defence Facility.

(5) Which Australian and US private contractors provide personnel at the Joint Defence Facility.

(6) What is the current annual cost to the Australian Government of running the Joint Defence Facility.

(7) Since May 2002, have any Federal and State Members of Parliament (a) visited the Joint Defence Facility, and (b) received classified briefings on the functions of the facility; if so, which Members, and when did the visits and briefings take place.
(8) Since May 2002, have Members of the US Congress or congressional staff visited the Joint Defence Facility; if so, which Members and staff and when did the visits take place.

(9) Who is the current (a) Chief of the Joint Defence Facility, and (b) senior Australian officer at the Joint Defence Facility and when did these officers commence duty in their current roles.

(10) How many radomes and satellite antenna are located at the Joint Defence Facility.

(11) How many radomes and antenna located at the Joint Defence Facility are associated with the Satellite Relay Ground Station which relays data received from the US Defense Support Program satellites.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Approximately 900 personnel are employed at the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap (the Facility).

(2) Of the employees, approximately 10 per cent are Australian Government employees, 20 per cent are United States (US) Government employees, 40 per cent Australian contractors, and 30 per cent US contractors. A more precise breakdown of the workforce structure is classified.

(3) Members of both the Australian Defence Force and US armed forces are integrated into operational aspects of the Facility. Specific details are classified.


(5) Raytheon, Boeing Constructors Inc, Northrop Grumman and Hewlett-Packard are the prime contractors at the Facility.

(6) In 2003-04, the annual cost to the Australian Government was approximately $8 million.

(7) (a) and (b) Since May 2002, the following Australian Federal Members of Parliament visited and received classified briefings at the Facility:
- Senator the Hon Robert Hill on 16 August 2002;
- Mr Mark Latham MP, Leader of the Opposition, on 23 February 2004;
- Senator Kevin Rudd, Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesman, on 23 February 2004; and
- Senator Chris Evans, Opposition Defence spokesman, on 28 July 2003.

Members of the Defence Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, on 21 July 2004:
- the Hon Bruce Scott MP;
- Hon Roger Price MP;
- Hon Kim Beazley MP;
- Hon Laurie Brereton MP;
- Hon Graham Edwards MP;
- Hon Warren Snowdon MP;
- Senator Steve Hutchins; and
- Senator Alan Ferguson.

Mr Stewart McArthur MP of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, Australian Secret Intelligence Service, and Defence Signals Directorate also visited the Facility on 21 July 2004

No State Members of Parliament visited the Facility.

(8) Four separate US Congressional visits took place since May 2002:
Seven Members of the US House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, on 3 July 2002:
- Jim Hensler;
- Chris Ford;
- Linda Taylor;
- Chris Jackson;
- Pete Dorn;
- Randy Bookout; and
- Matt Pollard.

Senator Barbara Mikulski, Member of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and staff member Ken Johnson, on 8 August 2002.

Eight members of the US House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, on 16 August 2003:
- Rep Porter Goss, Chairman;
- Rep Douglas Bereuter;
- Rep Richard Burr;
- Rep Jane Harman;
- Rep Alice Hastings;
- Rep Sylvester Reyes; and
- Rep Rush Holt.

They were accompanied by ten staff:
- Merrell Moorehead;
- Patrick Kelly;
- John Stopher;
- Mike Ennis;
- Barbara Bennett;
- Beth Larson;
- Wyndee Parker;
- Ilene Romack;
- Margaret Peterline; and
- Michael Kostiw.

Lindsay Fair, staff member of the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, on 28 to 29 June 2004.

(9) (a) Mr David Shields, commenced duty on 14 July 2002. (b) Ms Elizabeth Milne, commenced duty on 20 January 2003.

(10) There are 26 satellite antennas at the Facility. 14 have environmental radome covers.

(11) The Defence Support Program Relay Ground Station has four satellite antennas.

**National Security: Warrants**

**(Question No. 176)**

**Mr Melham** asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

In respect of each warrant issued under the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 during 2003-2004 for questioning of a person for the purposes of investigating terrorism, (a) what was the
office held by the issuing authority (i.e. Federal Magistrate or Judge), (b) what was the duration of the warrant, (c) what was the office held by the prescribed authority who presided over the questioning, and (d) how many hours did each person appear before a prescribed authority for questioning under the warrant, including any questioning carried out since 30 June 2004.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(a) Federal Magistrate
(b) Each warrant was to be in force for 28 days
(c) A former judge
(d) Three persons were the subject of questioning warrants in 2003-2004. Person 1 appeared before a prescribed authority for questioning under the warrant for 15 hours 57 minutes; Person 2 for 10 hours 32 minutes; Person 3 for 42 hours 36 minutes.

Statistics for 2004-05 will be published in ASIO’s Annual Report for that year.

National Security: Warrants
(Question No. 177)

Mr Melham asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

(1) How many requests have been made under section 34C of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979 to issuing authorities since 30 June 2004 for the issue of warrants under section 34D of the Act.
(2) How may warrants have been issued under section 34D of the Act since 30 June 2004.
(3) In respect of each warrant issued under section 34D of the Act since 30 June 2004, (a) what was the office held by the issuing authority (i.e. Federal Magistrate or Judge), (b) what was the duration of the warrant, (c) what was the office held by the prescribed authority who presided over the questioning, and (d) how many hours did each person appear before a prescribed authority for questioning under the warrant, including any questioning carried out since 30 June 2004.
(4) How many warrants have been issued since 30 June 2004 that meet the requirement in section 34D(2)(b) of the Act (about authorising a person to be taken into custody, brought before a prescribed authority and detained).
(5) In respect of each warrant issued since 30 June 2004 that provided for a person to be taken into custody under section 34D(2)(b) of the Act, how many (a) hours was or has the person been held in custody, and (b) hours has the person appeared before a prescribed authority for questioning under the warrant.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) to (5) Detailed information on questioning warrants issued during 2004-05 will be published in ASIO’s Annual Report for that year, as required by subsection 94(1A) of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act 1979.

Defence: Malacca Straits
(Question No. 179)

Mr Beazley asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

(1) Has the Minister seen reports that Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have commenced naval patrols in the Malacca Straits.
(2) Does the agreement between these three nations extend to patrolling other waterways in the South-east Asian archipelago.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(3) Has Australia sought involvement with these patrols.

(4) Has Australia been consulted by the three nations or any one of them on providing intelligence, training or assets to assist the patrols.

(5) How many attacks on shipping have been identified in the Southeast Asian archipelago in each of the last five years.

(6) Where in the archipelago have the attacks taken place.

(7) Which of the attacks have been linked to political groups with a terrorist background such as Abu Sayaf.

(8) Has the United States of America sought Australia’s participation in counter-piracy patrolling or support for local efforts; if so, in what way.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) Yes.

(2) The Trilateral Co-ordinated Patrols Malacca Straits agreement between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore has not been released.

(3) No.

(4) No.

(5) (6) and (7) Information relating to these questions can be found on the International Maritime Organisation website at: http://www.imo.org/home.asp and the International Maritime Bureau website at: http://www.icc-ccs.org/imb/overview.php.

(8) No.

Employment and Workplace Relations: General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme

(Question No. 182)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

(1) On how many occasions has his department applied the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy (GEER) scheme.

(2) On how many occasions has his department rejected requests to apply the GEER scheme.

(3) In how many cases is the provision of workers entitlements under the GEER scheme being frustrated by legal action.

(4) Does the Government intend to introduce legislation to support the GEER scheme.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Since the introduction of the General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme (GEERS) the department has finalised 35,259 claims which relate to 4,117 GEERS cases.

(2) In respect of the finalised claims in (1) above 7,481 of these claims were not eligible for GEERS assistance.

(3) There is one claim in relation to the provision of GEERS assistance, currently the subject of legal action. This action was filed by a claimant on 1 December, 2004.

(4) No.
Treasury: Home Mortgages
(Question No. 183)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 29 November 2004:
(1) Has his department undertaken any research on home mortgage lending during 2004.
(2) What information does his department have on the average size of home mortgages.
(3) What information does his department have about the projected growth of average home mortgages over the next 2 years.

Mr Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) The department routinely monitors developments in home mortgage lending, for example changes in the average size of home mortgages, as part of its macroeconomic policy function.
(2) The department uses a variety of publicly available sources to calculate average home mortgages. These are the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication Housing Finance, Australia (ABS Cat. No. 5309.0) and the quarterly Reserve Bank Bulletin.
(3) The Treasury department does not forecast average home mortgages.

Military Detention: Mr David Hicks
(Question No. 189)

Mr Kelvin Thomson asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 29 November 2004:
(1) What concessions have been offered by the Government of the United States of America in response to representations by the Australian Government in respect of the trial of Mr David Hicks.
(2) Were there any concessions sought by the Australian Government in respect of the trial of Mr Hicks that were not granted; if so, what are the details of the concessions sought.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) As a result of the Government’s previous efforts, the United States assured Australia that:
- the death penalty will not be sought in either Mr Hicks’ or Mr Habib’s case
- conversations between Mr Hicks and his lawyers will not be monitored by the United States
- the prosecution in Mr Hicks’ case does not intend to rely on evidence in its case-in-chief requiring closed proceedings from which the accused could be excluded
- subject to any necessary security restrictions, Mr Hicks’ trial will be open, the media will be present and Australian officials may observe the proceedings
- the Government may make submissions to the Review Panel which would review either man’s military commission trial
- should Mr Hicks or Mr Habib choose to retain an Australian lawyer with appropriate security clearances as a consultant to his legal team, that person may have direct face-to-face communications with their client
- Mr Hicks may talk to his family via telephone, and two family members would be able to attend his trial, and
- an independent legal expert sanctioned by the Australian Government may observe a trial of Mr Hicks or Mr Habib.
- It was also agreed that Australia and the United States would work towards putting arrangements in place to transfer Mr Hicks to Australia, if convicted, to serve any penal sentence in Australia in accordance with Australian and United States laws.

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
(2) Matters relating to the military commission trial of Mr Hicks and Mr Habib were the subject of extensive Government to Government discussions. While recognising that military commissions are a part of United States law, we have sought to ensure that the fundamental principles of a fair trial are incorporated into the military commission process. As Mr Hicks’ trial progresses, the Government continues to raise matters of process and procedure with the United States authorities. At this time, it would be inappropriate to go further into the detail of those ongoing discussions or the previous discussions with the United States.

**Telstra: Privatisation**

(Question No. 191)

Ms Hoare asked the Minister representing the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

(1) Can the Minister confirm that it is the Government’s intention to fully privatise Telstra.

(2) Can the Minister guarantee that existing pensioner rebates provided by Telstra will be retained after it is privatised.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) Yes. It has been the Government’s long standing policy to fully privatise Telstra, believing it to be in the best long term interests of consumers, of the telecommunications industry and of Telstra itself.

(2) Telstra is required, as a condition of its carrier licence, to have in place a package of products for low-income customers that has been endorsed by low-income consumer advocacy groups. The low-income package was approved by the Low-Income Measures Assessment Committee (LIMAC) in June 2002. The LIMAC comprises representatives from welfare organisations and is responsible for reporting to the Government on the effectiveness of the low-income package and Telstra’s marketing of the package. Telstra must seek and consider the views of the LIMAC before making any significant change to the low-income package.

The low-income package has included rebates for pensioners since its commencement. Telstra has advised that it will continue, post privatisation, to provide concessionary measures for its low-income customers, including pensioners. Further, the Pensioner Concession Scheme component of the low-income package includes an ‘average pensioner CPI pricing policy guarantee’ for fixed line services, which guarantees that a pensioner’s average bill for fixed line services will not increase by more than the consumer price index. That is, any line rental increase would be balanced by reduced call charges.

The low-income package that has been developed by Telstra in consultation with the welfare groups comprises initiatives that address a wide range of low-income consumer needs. In a submission to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s (ACCC’s) review of Telstra price controls in August 2004, Telstra re-iterated its commitment to continue delivering the programs it has devised through and with the LIMAC, noting that it has nine separate programs aimed at meeting the specific needs of seven distinct low-income groups.

Further, the LIMAC is required to report annually to the Government on the effectiveness of the low-income package. Should Telstra take steps to reduce the pensioner rebates, the LIMAC could seek their re-establishment in its annual report to the Government.

The appropriateness of the current price control arrangements, and possible future price control arrangements, for the protection of potentially disadvantaged customers in both metropolitan and rural areas, is currently being reviewed by the ACCC. It is expected that the ACCC will make recommendations in relation to various aspects of the low-income package, including pensioner con-
cessions. The Government will respond to these recommendations in developing the new price controls which will commence on 1 July 2005.

Finally, Australian consumers are protected by a comprehensive suite of consumer safeguards, which will continue to apply regardless of the ownership structure of Telstra. These safeguards aim to protect consumers, and ensure that all Australians have reasonable access to reliable and affordable telephone services. The safeguards are set out in legislation, and Telstra is obliged by law to comply with them irrespective of its ownership.

**Treasury: Australian Workplace Agreements**  
(Question No. 196)

Mr Bevis asked the Treasurer, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr Costello—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

The numbers of people who had their conditions of employment set by an AWA are:

(a) (i) 30 June 2001 - 70
(ii) 30 June 2002 - 78
(iii) 30 June 2003 - 396
(iv) 30 June 2004 - 481
(b) 17 December 2004 - 494

**Foreign Affairs and Trade: Australian Workplace Agreements**  
(Question Nos 197 and 199)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 19 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(a) (i) 197
(ii) 224
(iii) 220
(iv) 214
(b) 215

**Defence: Australian Workplace Agreements**  
(Question No. 198)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002 (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.
Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The following answer has been provided to the honourable member’s question:

(a) (i) 102.
(ii) 123.
(iii) 116.
(iv) 109.
(b) 126.

Health and Ageing: Australian Workplace Agreements
(Question No. 200)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Enter the answer to the question

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>539*</td>
<td>585*</td>
<td>445**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes employees employed by the Department of Health and Ageing & Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) who had an approved AWA.

**Includes employees employed by the Department of Health and Ageing only as CRS are no longer in the portfolio following the 22 October 2004 cabinet reshuffle.

Finance and Administration: Australian Workplace Agreements
(Question No. 202)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(a) (i) 424
(ii) 535
(iii) 674
(iv) 900
(b) 1085

Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Australian Workplace Agreements
(Question No. 204)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

QUESTIONS IN WRITING
How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(i) 64
(ii) 169
(iii) 193
(iv) 259
(b) 274 as at 30 November 2004 and including the newly created Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination.

**Education, Science and Training: Australian Workplace Agreements**

(Question No. 205)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minsters department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004; and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

Part A

(i) The Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs on 30 June 2001 had 241 employees’ terms and conditions of employment set by an Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs).
(ii) The Department of Education, Science and Training on 30 June 2002 had 241 employees’ terms and conditions of employment set by an AWA.
(iii) The Department of Education, Science and Training on 30 June 2003 had 291 employees’ terms and conditions of employment set by an AWA.
(iv) The Department of Education, Science and Training (including Questacon which became part of the Department on 1 July 2003) on 30 June 2004 had 329 employees’ terms and conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Part B

The Department of Education, Science and Training (including Questacon) currently has 332 employees’ terms and conditions of employment set by an AWA (as at 12 October 2004).

**Environment and Heritage: Australian Workplace Agreements**

(Question No. 210)

Mr Bevis asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in writing, on 29 November 2004:

How many employees of the Minister’s department (a) had their conditions of employment set by an AWA at (i) 30 June 2001, (ii) 30 June 2002, (iii) 30 June 2003, and (iv) 30 June 2004, and (b) currently have their conditions of employment set by an AWA.

Mr Truss—The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
Corio Electorate: G-Force
(Question No. 213)

Mr Gavan O’Connor asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 29 November 2004:
What sum was paid to the training provider, G-Force, in the electoral division of Corio in (a) 1998, (b) 1999, (c) 2000, (d) 2001, (e) 2002, (f) 2003, and (g) 2004.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
G-Force is contracted to provide Job Placement services in Geelong ESA, which includes the location of Corio. The Job Placement licence covers the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006.
G-Force was not previously contracted to deliver employment services. The Job Placement licence provides for fees to be paid to the licence holder on delivery of specified services.
Information on payments to individual employment service providers is considered to be commercially sensitive and is not made publicly available.

Australian Secret Intelligence Service
(Question No. 215)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 30 November 2004:
(1) Can he confirm that it remains the Government’s policy that the capacity of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) to serve Australia’s national interest continues to depend on its activities being fully protected by secrecy.
(2) What exceptions are there to the general policy of non-disclosure concerning ASIS’ activities and operations.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:
(1) Yes.
(2) There are no specific exceptions to the general policy of non-disclosure concerning ASIS’ activities and operations. The Intelligence Services Act 2001 outlines the limitations on communication of information in relation to ASIS.

Australian Secret Intelligence Service
(Question No. 216)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 30 November 2004:
(1) Is it the case that in an interview reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15 November 2004, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS), Mr Ian Carnell, confirmed that, in a ‘major change’, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) has been authorised to disrupt the activities of people smugglers.
(2) Can he confirm Mr Carnell’s statement as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15 November 2004 that he has been devoting “two days each month to going over and looking through operational files, and on the last three visits we’ve focussed on people-smuggling disruption”.
(3) Can he confirm that so-called ‘disruption’ operations by ASIS, as disclosed by Mr Carnell, are only undertaken subject to a direction or directions by the Minister for Foreign Affairs under section 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001.
(4) Did the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security consult with and obtain the approval of either him or the Director-General of ASIS before making his statements about ASIS’ disruption of the activities of people smugglers.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) I am aware of Mr Carnell’s reported comments published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 15 November 2004. I can confirm that ASIS does work on people smuggling, but in accordance with the policy of successive governments I will not comment on the activities of the agency.

(2) Mr Carnell has full access to all ASIS operational files and it is his decision which files he looks at and for how long. Mr Carnell reports on his activities to the Prime Minister on a regular basis.

(3) All activities undertaken by ASIS are conducted in accordance with the Intelligence Services Act 2001 and in line with the policy of successive governments I will not comment on these activities.

(4) The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security is an independent statutory office holder. He is not required to consult with me or the Director-General of ASIS before making public comments.

Australian Secret Intelligence Service
(Question No. 217)

Mr Melham asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 30 November 2004:

(1) How many directions has he given under paragraph 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001.

(2) How many directions given under paragraph 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001 are currently in force.

(3) Can he confirm that, in respect of each direction he has given under paragraph 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001, he (a) consulted other Ministers who have related responsibilities, (b) was satisfied that there were satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that, in carrying out the direction, nothing would be done beyond what was necessary having regard to the purposes for which the direction is given, and (c) was satisfied that there were satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that the nature and consequences of acts done in carrying out the direction would be reasonable having regard to the purposes for which the direction is given.

(4) Can he confirm that any activities by the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) pursuant to any direction he has given under paragraph 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001 have not and do not involve ASIS personnel (a) carrying out, assisting or otherwise facilitating the destruction of, damage to, or sabotage of buildings, vessels or other property, and (b) conducting activities that might involve risk to the lives of persons other than ASIS personnel or persons assisting ASIS.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) and (2) Consistent with the policy of successive Australian Governments not to comment on ASIS’s activities, I am not going to comment on the number or currency of Ministerial Directives under section 6(1)(e) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001.

(3) It is a matter of law that a Minister must satisfy the elements set out in paragraphs (a) – (c) of section 6(2) of the Intelligence Services Act 2001 before giving any direction under section 6(1)(e) of that Act. Any direction to ASIS could only be given by a Minister in compliance with that section. The Act also stipulates that the Minister must advise the Parliamentary Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD (which is made up of Government and Opposition members), of the nature of the activity or activities to be undertaken pursuant to a direction given in accordance with section 6(1)(e) of the Act.

(4) In accordance with the Intelligence Services Act 2001, ASIS does not use violence in the conduct of its activities. Any activities carried out by ASIS under Directions issued under section 6(1)(e) of
the Act are carried out in accordance with limitations specified under sections 6(4), 6(5) and 6(6) of the Act.

**Defence: Interrogation Training**

(Question No. 218)

**Mr Melham** asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 30 November 2004:

1. Can the Minister confirm that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) conducts training to prepare ADF personnel to resist interrogation in the event they are captured by hostile forces.

2. Can the Minister confirm that resistance to interrogation training is conducted at the Defence Intelligence Training Centre at Canungra, Queensland.

3. Does resistance to interrogation training involve exposure of ADF personnel to interrogation techniques that would not be permitted by the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

4. Can the Minister confirm that in the course of resistance to interrogation training ADF personnel may be stripped naked, hooded, bound in severely restrictive positions, subjected to sleep deprivation, denied food and/or water, subjected to threats of physical and/or sexual abuse, possibly suffer actual assault, or be subjected to other inhumane practices.

5. Can the Minister confirm that participation in resistance to interrogation courses gives Australian interrogators experience in techniques that would be against ADF rules if practised in the course of actual hostilities.

6. Has the participation of ADF personnel in resistance to interrogation courses over the past five years given rise to any investigation or legal proceedings in relation to possible offences under the Defence Force Discipline Act 1992; if so, what was the outcome of any investigation and/or legal proceedings.

**Mrs De-Anne Kelly**—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

1. Yes.

2. Yes.

3. Yes. Techniques that would not be permitted by the 1949 Geneva Conventions include personal verbal attack to lower morale and weaken the will to resist, and the employment of ploys and tricks such as impersonation, fake documents, and threat (only) of dire punishment.

4. Participants are not hooded, but may wear blackened ski goggles or airline sleeping masks. They are not bound in severely restrictive positions but may be handcuffed and seated, cross-legged, but are made to stand and move at least every 20 minutes. Water is always available on demand and some food is provided. Participants will be threatened with physical and/or sexual abuse as a purely psychological ploy. There is no physical contact between interrogator and participant (except to lead a participant for safety reasons). A participant may be naked during advanced practical training to allow a search of clothing, and to weaken the will of the individual to resist interrogation. Sleep deprivation may be employed, but a Medical Officer will ensure sleep is taken if an adverse affect on the individual occurs.

5. The ADF strictly enforces the separation of ADF interrogators who conduct interrogation in the course of actual hostilities and ADF Resistance to Interrogation trainers. Individuals that are employed as ADF interrogators are not permitted to attend the Resistance Trainers Course or be employed in Resistance to Interrogation activities. In this way, the ADF ensures that ADF interroga-
tors are not exposed to methods, techniques and ploys that are not authorised under the Geneva Conventions.

(6) No.

Commonwealth: Asbestos Related Diseases
(Question No. 219)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 30 November 2004:

(1) What are the major findings of the actuarial studies of the Government’s financial exposure to asbestos-related disease personal injury claims undertaken by Trowbridge Consulting/Trowbridge Deloitte Ltd for his department.

(2) Which current and former Commonwealth Departments, agencies, enterprises or other entities have been identified as having exposed significant numbers of Commonwealth employees, contractors or other persons to the risk of asbestos related diseases, and over what periods did the exposure take place.

(3) What is the Government’s estimate of the number of persons (a) who have or may develop asbestos related diseases as a result of employment or other association with the Commonwealth Government, and (b) who have or may bring asbestos-related disease personal injury claims against the Commonwealth Government.

(4) Will the Minister table the studies undertaken by Trowbridge Consulting/Trowbridge Deloitte Ltd in the House and the Senate at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) As a result of the actuarial studies, the Australian Government’s potential liability for asbestos-related diseases was reported as $0.9 billion in the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Years Ended 30 June 2003 and 30 June 2004 and relevant Departmental Financial Statements. The Department of Defence and the Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee have continued to report their liabilities and, for the first time in 2004-05, the Departments of Finance and Administration (Finance) and Transport and Regional Services (Transport) separately reported on their departmental liabilities. Finance also reports on the residual liability that is unable to be directly attributed to a single agency. In 2004-05 gross liabilities for asbestos-related disease common law claims were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Agency</th>
<th>Liability ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance (Departmental)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance (Administered)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) As indicated above, this has been identified in the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Years Ended 30 June 2003 and 30 June 2004 and relevant Departmental Financial Statements. Periods of exposure date from the 1930’s.

(3) The Commonwealth’s overall ARD liability was published in the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2003 and 2004. I do not propose to release details of the number of cases underpinning these estimates, as they were supplied in confidence, and are subject to legal professional privilege.

(4) The Commonwealth’s overall ARD liability was published in the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2003 and 2004. I do not propose to release details of the number
of cases underpinning these estimates, as they were supplied in confidence, and are subject to legal professional privilege.

Commonwealth: Asbestos Related Diseases

(Question No. 220)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 30 November 2004:

(1) What were the terms of reference or objectives of the interdepartmental committee chaired by his department and dealing with the issue of asbestos-related disease personal injury claims against the Commonwealth Government.

(2) On what dates did the interdepartmental committee hold meetings and which departments/agencies/officers participated in those meetings.

(3) Did the interdepartmental committee or departments or agencies acting on the committee’s behalf consult with or seek advice from any organisations, companies or other bodies outside the Commonwealth Government; if so, which organisations, companies or other bodies were involved, and when did the consultation occur or was the advice provided.

(4) What are the main elements of the management strategy developed by the interdepartmental committee for addressing asbestos-related disease personal injury claims against the Commonwealth Government.

(5) What is the Government’s response to the findings of the IDC.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The Asbestos-Related Diseases Interdepartmental Committee (ARD IDC) was responsible for devising a management strategy for addressing asbestos-related disease personal injury claims made against the Australian Government and for commissioning an actuarial study to assist in quantifying the Australian Government’s asbestos-related disease liability. This was reported in the Department’s annual report for 2003-04, p49.

(2) Meetings of the IDC were held on:

- 18 July 2002 attended by the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance), the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS), the Attorney General’s Department (AG’s), the Department of Defence, Comcare and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) officers with Prime Minister and Cabinet (P&C) officers observing.
- 16 January 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Comcare and DVA officers with PM&C observing.
- 4 August 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and DVA officers with PM&C observing.
- 25 August 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence and Comcare officers.
- 15 September 2003 attended by Finance, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and DVA officers.
- 29 September 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and DVA officers with PM&C observing.
- 14 October 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence and Comcare officers.
- 27 October 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and DVA officers with Treasury officers observing.
• 24 November 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and
DVA officers with Treasury and PM&C officers observing.
• 8 December 2003 attended by Finance, DEWR, DOTARS, AG’s, Defence, Comcare and DVA
officers with Treasury and PM&C officers observing.

(3) There were a broad range of external organisations with which consultation occurred including
asbestos support groups, State jurisdictions, law firms and the asbestos industry. Consultation oc-
curred from March to November 2003.

(4) This is a matter under consideration by Government.

(5) This is a matter under consideration by Government.

Commonwealth: Asbestos Related Diseases

(Question No. 221)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration,
in writing, on 30 November 2004:

Is the Government satisfied that the estimate of the Commonwealth Government’s potential liability for
asbestos-related disease reported in the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June
2003 is based on comprehensive and reliable research and will not require any substantial revision.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following an-
swer to the honourable member’s question:

Yes. The estimate for the asbestos-related disease liability reported in the Consolidated Financial State-
ments for the Year Ended 30 June 2003 is based on the best information available at the time the esti-
mate was made. The Australian Government Actuary reported on 31 August 2004 that the estimates
prepared were not unreasonable for the purpose for which they were prepared, that is, as an estimate of
Australian Government potential liabilities for financial reporting purposes.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

(Question No. 222)

Mr Jenkins asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 30 November 2004:

Does the recent decision of the Government of the United States of America to recognise the former
Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as the Republic of Macedonia in any way alter Australia’s stance and
attitude to this matter or any ongoing discussions on this matter.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

No.
In line with UN practice, the Australian Government will continue to refer to the state as the “Former
Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, pending resolution of the nomenclature issue between Governments
in Athens and Skopje. Australia continues to encourage both countries to reach a mutually acceptable
solution at the earliest possible time.

Offshore: Surveillance Platforms

(Question No. 242)

Mr Beazley asked the Attorney-General, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

(1) Is the Minister aware that the offshore platform, ‘Buffalo’ is available for possible conversion to a
surveillance platform in the Timor Sea.

(2) Is the Minister aware of the Christmas/New Year deadline for the demolition of that platform.
(3) Is it the case that in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere the United States of America and other countries have developed offshore platforms for the surveillance of important assets and the defence of sea routes and, in particular, that Qatar is developing a number of platforms for the defence of its assets.

(4) Will the Government consider acquiring or leasing the Buffalo platform for a similar purpose; if not, why not.

Mr Ruddock—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes, I am aware of this matter.

(2) Yes, I am aware of this deadline.

(3) The Attorney-General’s Department has received information from the Department of Defence that there is no evidence that the United States of America and other countries have developed offshore platforms for surveillance in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere. The Department of Defence has also advised that there is no evidence that Qatar is planning to use offshore platforms for surveillance.

(4) The Attorney-General’s Department was briefed on a proposal for the Australian Government to lease the Buffalo platform in the Timor Sea for an initial period of five years as a platform for radar and electro-optical systems to contribute to the surveillance of the oil and gas platforms in the Timor Sea. The estimated lease cost was $2.2 million over five years with the expectation that the Australian Government would continue the lease for a further period. The disposal cost of the platform which was estimated at $2 million, was to be incorporated into the initial lease cost.

The platform is 560 kilometres from Darwin and 290 kilometres from Kupang and rests in approximately 30 metres of water. The platform is of limited size with no accommodation, power source, fuel supplies or tanks for aviation fuel or water. All of these facilities would have to be supplied to make the platform functional for proposed offshore maritime security tasks, at a conservative cost estimated at $250,000.00.

The proposed use of this platform was not considered to be cost-effective as radars could also be located on operating oil and gas platforms. The Australian Government would be most unlikely to enter into such a sole-sourced proposal without a full investigation of costs and other options to provide the same capability. The proposal was unattractive in terms of timing, correct Government acquisition processes and the utility of the platform as a value for money proposition.

Taxation: Conclusive Certificates

(Question No. 244)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Revenue and Assistant Treasurer, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

(1) How many conclusive certificates has the Minister issued under each of sections 33, 33A and 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 in each of the last six financial years.

(2) In each of the last six financial years, how many appeals against those certificates were (a) lodged with the AAT, (b) successful, and (c) unsuccessful.

(3) What are the case names of all the appeals lodged with the AAT in each of the last six financial years.

Mr Brough—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) No conclusive certificates have been issued by me in the financial years 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) Not applicable.
Saudi Arabia: Terrorism

(Question No. 246)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

(1) Further to the answer to question No. 3624 (Hansard, 23 June 2004, page 30552), what action has he taken to obtain further information about the death of Mr Magnus Johansson and what further information has he received.

(2) Has he made representations to the Saudi Arabian authorities on the apprehension of those responsible for Mr Johansson’s murder; if so, what are the details; if he has not, why not.

(3) What action has he taken to confirm the veracity of reports that (a) three of the four terrorists were deliberately released by Saudi security forces, and (b) there have been instances in which Saudi security forces have released suspected terrorists; if he has not taken action to verify these reports, why not.

(4) Is the Government satisfied with (a) the actions of the Saudi Arabian authorities in this matter, and (b) the policies and practices of the Saudi Arabian authorities in apprehending terrorists and bringing them to justice.

(5) Can he explain why the Australian Government has not made representations to the Saudi Arabian authorities on this issue.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Mr Johansson was a Swedish citizen and the Swedish Government had primary carriage of the case.

(2) No.

(3) The Saudi authorities have been active in pursuing and apprehending suspected terrorists, including those responsible for the attack at Al Khobar.

(4) Yes.

(5) See the answer to (1) above.

Foreign Affairs: China

(Question No. 247)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

(1) Is he able to say whether the Chinese government formally recognises the freedom of the press and can he describe the extent and intensity of censorship of the Chinese media.

(2) Has the Government expressed its concern about the lack of freedom of the press in China; if so, (a) when, (b) to whom, and (c) what was the response; if not, why not.

(3) Can he confirm that the Southern Metropolis Daily newspaper in Guangzhou, China, is one of the most free and outspoken papers in the country and is he aware of the article it published on 25 April 2003 about the death of Sun Zhigang in a Chinese detention camp.

(4) Can he say whether Chinese law still allows for indefinite detention of individuals; if so, has the Government expressed its concern about this; if so, (a) when, (b) to whom, and (c) what was the response; if not, why not.

(5) Can he confirm that Cheng Yizhong, an editor of the Southern Metropolis Daily, was recently arrested by the Chinese authorities; if so, (a) why, (b) when, (c) with what he charged, and (d) did his arrest coincide with the publishing of the article on Sun Zhigang.
(6) Can he say whether Mr Cheng has been tried; if so, in respect of the trial (a) was it free and fair, (b) was it conducted in open court, (c) were observers or members of the media admitted, and (d) was Mr Cheng convicted; if so, what was his sentence.

(7) Has the case of Mr Cheng been raised at the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue; if so, (a) when, and (b) what was the response; if not, why not.

(8) Can he confirm that Chen Feng, a journalist for the Southern Metropolis Daily, was recently arrested by the Chinese authorities; if so, (a) why, (b) when, (c) with what was he charged, and (d) did his arrest coincide with the publishing of the article on Sun Zhigang.

(9) Can he say whether Mr Chen has been tried; if so, in respect of the trial (a) was it free and fair, (b) was it conducted in open court, (c) were observers or members of the media admitted, and (d) was Mr Chen convicted; if so, what was his sentence.

(10) Has the case of Mr Chen been raised at the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue; if so, (a) when, and (b) what was the response; if not, why not.

(11) Can he confirm that Wang Lei, an editor for the Southern Metropolis Daily, was recently arrested by the Chinese authorities; if so, (a) why, (b) when, (c) with what was he charged, and (d) did his arrest coincide with the publishing of the article on Sun Zhigang.

(12) Can he say whether Mr Wang has been tried; if so, in respect of the trial (a) was it free and fair, (b) was it conducted in open court, (c) were observers or members of the media admitted, and (d) was Mr Wang convicted; if so, what was his sentence.

(13) Has the case of Mr Wang been raised at the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue; if so, (a) when, and (b) what was the response; if not, why not.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Article 35 of the Chinese constitution reads “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.” I am aware of reports that press freedom is sometimes curtailed in China.

(2) (a) (b) (c) Yes. During recent rounds of the annual Human Rights Dialogue, we made representations to Chinese delegates about constraints on press freedom in China. We did not receive a specific response.

(3) Yes, it is relatively outspoken. Yes, I am aware of this article.

(4) Yes, Chinese law allows for life sentencing. No, because Australian law also contains such provisions.

(5) (a) (b) (c) I am aware of reports that Cheng Yizhong was arrested on 19 March charged with suspicion of corruption. (d) No, it did not.

(6) According to press reporting, Cheng Yizhong was released on 27 August 2004.

(7) No. Cheng Yizhong had been released by the time the dialogue was held.

(8) No, I am not aware of any such reports.

(9) No.

(10) No. We are not aware of any reports that he has been detained.

(11) No.

(12) No.

(13) No. We are not aware of any reports that he has been detained.
Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

(1) Is he aware of Dr Jiang Yanyong who recently won the Ramon Magsaysay award.

(2) Can he say what the Ramon Magsaysay award is; if so, (a) who selects the recipient of the award, (b) why was Dr Jiang awarded it, and (c) who are the previous recipients.

(3) Is he able to say what action Dr Jiang has taken in relation to the alleged cover-up of the SARS health crisis in China.

(4) Has Australia expressed its support or congratulated Dr Jiang for winning the Ramon Magsaysay award.

(5) Can he say whether Dr Jiang has been arrested by the Chinese authorities; if so, (a) when, (b) why was he arrested, and (c) has he been released; if so, when and why.

(6) Can he say whether Dr Jiang has been placed under house arrest; if so, what are the conditions.

(7) Has he taken action to convey to the Government of the People’s Republic of China Australia’s condemnation of the arbitrary arrest and house arrest of Dr Jiang; if so, (a) when; (b) to whom, and (c) what was the response; if not, why not.

(8) Is he aware of any other country which has made official representations to China about the arrest or house arrest of Dr Jiang; if so, what are the details.

(9) Has the case of Dr Jiang been raised at the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue; if so, (a) when, and (b) what was the response of the Chinese government; if not, why not.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) I am aware of Dr Jiang Yanyong.

(2) According to the Ramon Magsaysay Award website, the award is awarded to people in Asia who are deemed to have performed outstanding service to the public or community, including in the creative arts, in promoting international understanding or in community leadership. (a) Awardees are selected by the Ramon Magsaysay Board of Trustees (b) The Ramon Magsaysay Award website states that Dr Jiang was given the award in recognition his stand for truth in taking measures to reveal and contain the SARS virus. (c) Since the award was established in 1957 several awardees have been selected each year. A full list can be found at http://www.rmaf.org.ph/

(3) Dr Jiang, a physician in a military hospital, reportedly revealed information to the press about the true extent of SARS in China.

(4) No.

(5) (a) (b) Dr Jiang was reportedly detained on 1 June on grounds of ‘violating military discipline’. (c) He was reportedly released on 19 July. I am not aware of the reasons for his release.

(6) I am aware of reports that Dr Jiang is at home but subject to restrictions on his activities.

(7) (a) (b) (c) Yes. On 16 July my department instructed the Australian Embassy in Beijing to make representations to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Embassy did not carry out the representations because Dr Jiang was released shortly afterwards.

(8) I am not aware of the details of other countries’ representations about Dr Jiang.

(9) Yes. (a) Dr Jiang’s case was raised at the October 2004 Human Rights Dialogue when we expressed concern about reports that he was under house arrest. (b) China did not respond to these representations.
**Foreign Affairs: China**

(Question No. 249)

Mr Danby asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 1 December 2004:

1. Can he confirm that Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the eleventh Panchen Lama, was kidnapped in 1995 at the age of six, along with his parents, by the Chinese authorities in Tibet and has not been seen since.

2. What efforts has the Government made to ascertain the whereabouts of the Panchen Lama and his family and what representations has the Government made on his behalf.

3. Was this matter raised (a) in the most recent Australia-China Human Rights dialogue, (b) at any of the previous dialogues, and (c) in any other representations on human rights that the Australian Government has made to the Chinese Government; if so, what was the response; if not, why not.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. I understand that the boy selected by the Dalai Lama as the eleventh Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, has not been seen by outside observers since 1995.

2. The Government is concerned about the welfare of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and has urged the Chinese Government to allow outside observers to visit him. The Government has raised concerns about Gedhun Choekyi Nyima with the Chinese authorities on many occasions including at each round of the annual Human Rights Dialogue with China, during high level visits and through the Embassy in Beijing.

3. (a) yes (b) yes (c) yes. The Chinese Government’s response to our representations has been that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima is just an ordinary boy and not the re-incarnation of the Panchen Lama; that he is living a normal life with his parents in Tibet; that he is receiving a normal education and doing well at school; that he is in good health; and that his parents have asked that he be left alone.

**AusAid: HIV-AIDS Programs**

(Question No. 260)

Ms Hoare asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

1. Can he confirm that church organisations have been engaged to facilitate the provision of AusAID HIV/AIDS programs in Papua New Guinea; if so, which churches and where will each program be undertaken.

2. Will secular non-government organisations continue to provide HIV/AIDS programs; if so, which organisations and where will each program be undertaken.

3. Can he guarantee that AusAID programs with an emphasis on prevention through contraception will continue to operate.

4. Where a church organisation opposes the use of contraception, in particular, condom use, can he guarantee that such views will not be permitted to interfere with the provision of programs.

5. Will he outline the safeguards in place to ensure the views of participating church organisations will not impact on HIV/AIDS programs in Papua New Guinea.

6. Is it AusAID’s intention to widen the scope of church participation in the provision of aid programs throughout the nations AusAID assists.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

1. Yes, church organisations have been engaged (along with other organisations) to facilitate the provision of AusAID HIV/AIDS programs in Papua New Guinea.
The majority of these HIV/AIDS programs have been funded directly through grant programs under the National HIV/AIDS Support Project (NHASP). The major churches supported through NHASP are the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, United, Seventh Day Adventist and Church of Christ, and the Salvation Army. These and other church groups work throughout the country where their respective congregations are located and where they are already delivering essential services such as health clinics and schools.

Other church HIV/AIDS programs are funded through AusAID’s Community Development Scheme (CDS) grant program. Major recipients include the Catholic Family Life Apostolate and the Nazarene Health Ministries in the Western Highlands Province and Gulf Christian Services in Gulf Province.

Two other AusAID Programs provide funds through Australian non-government organizations to PNG churches to facilitate the provision of HIV/AIDS programs, namely, the Church Partnership Program (CPP) and the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). The churches receiving funds for HIV/AIDS programs through these programs are the Catholic, the Anglican, the Seventh Day Adventist churches and the Salvation Army, and their organisations in PNG. Their programs are being undertaken throughout PNG.

(2) Yes, secular non-government organisations will continue to provide HIV/AIDS programs. Secular non-government organisations providing HIV/AIDS programs include Community Based Organisations (CBOs) such as the Association of Motukoita Villages and the Special Youth Program, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) such as Save the Children, Family Health International and Red Cross. Private sector organisations such as the Chamber of Mines and Petroleum and the Trade Union Congress have also been funded. These and other secular non-government organisations work primarily in Port Moresby but have associations and affiliations throughout the country.

(3) Yes, AusAID programs with an emphasis on prevention through contraception will continue to operate. Changing attitudes and behaviours is one of the five key priorities for Australian support, as identified in Australia’s international HIV/AIDS strategy, Meeting the Challenge (copy enclosed). Central to this objective are programs that provide accurate and relevant information on HIV/AIDS, including its modes of transmission and safer practices to prevent its transmission. Prevention strategies include an emphasis on providing people with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement behavioural change, and the promotion of condom use as a proven and effective means of preventing sexual transmission of HIV. Social marketing and distribution of condoms therefore remain an important component of AusAID’s programs.

Promotion of condoms is only one part of a comprehensive approach to combating HIV/AIDS. While prevention through safe sex practices is essential, other crucial factors include supporting treatment and care, minimising harm associated with injecting drug use, addressing stigma and discrimination, building capacity and strengthening leadership and advocacy.

(4) The partnership between AusAID and participating church organisations that deliver HIV/AIDS programs is based on a clear understanding and acceptance of the Australian Government’s policies and strategies, including the international HIV/AIDS strategy described in (3) above. Participating organisations are also required to observe the laws in host countries where they work. In PNG the PNG HIV/AIDS Management and Prevention Act 2003 states that it is “unlawful to deny a person access, without reasonable excuse, to a means of protection from infection....” The Act defines this to include condoms and information about them.

Education about HIV/AIDS and associated risk factors, as well as the supply and distribution of condoms, are important elements of AusAID’s HIV/AIDS programs. However, promotion of condom use is viewed as only one part of a comprehensive approach that recognises there is no one answer that will protect everyone from HIV transmission. The strategy recognises that there is also
an important role for encouraging people to delay the start of sexual activity and for reducing the
number of sexual partners. It is also often difficult for women to practice safer sex, as they may
have limited power to negotiate condom use with their partners. The status of women needs to be
improved as part of an effective response to HIV and AIDS.

Where a church organisation delivering HIV/AIDS services is unable to distribute condoms, they
are required to provide information to communities about prevention of infection, including the use
of condoms. Church agencies are involved in the areas of stigma reduction, care and counselling,
parent to child transmission intervention, voluntary counselling and testing and, in some instances,
hospice care. Their support of the broader strategy shows that there is still a united front in the fight
against HIV/AIDS.

(5) Safeguards are in place to ensure that Australian funds are spent in accordance with the policies of
both Australian and Papua New Guinean governments. Under the NHASP, all applications for
funding are screened carefully. NHASP funds are only granted to organisations whose proposals
outline positive outcomes in mitigating the epidemic and preventing new infections. It is a policy
of the NHASP Grants Committee that proposals for training or awareness activities must include
the promotion and use of condoms as a means of preventing the transmission of sexually transmit-
ted infections generally, and specifically of HIV. Applicant groups who cannot guarantee this are
not granted funds. Mechanisms are in place to monitor programs that are using NHASP grant
funds.

All Australian NGO recipients of Australian aid funds must undergo a rigorous accreditation proc-
cess, overseen by AusAID. AusAID will only fund Australian NGOs that have undergone this ac-
creditation process, which is the case with all church agencies supported through the CPP and the
ANCP (see Question 1). Accreditation aims to ensure the Government is funding professional, well
managed, community based organisations that are capable of delivering quality development out-
comes. It is the cornerstone of AusAID’s relationship with Australian NGOs and is considered in-
ternationally as best practice. Accredited agencies undertake to comply with AusAID policies, in-
cluding the HIV/AIDS strategy, and policies that the Australian Government does not fund welfare,
evangelical or political activities.

In addition, all Australian NGOs receiving Australian Government funding for development activi-
ties are required, under agreements with AusAID, to observe the laws in host countries where they
work (see Question 4).

(6) AusAID has no clear intention to widen the scope of church participation in the provision of aid
programs throughout the nations AusAID assists. The strategy adopted in each country will con-
tinue to be guided by past experience and to be directed by individual country circumstances and
country-led strategies. However, AusAID recognises the significant role that churches and other
faith-based agencies play in leadership and advocacy and in changing behaviours and attitudes, and
their contribution in terms of delivering essential services to the people, and will continue to en-
gage them where appropriate to achieve the objectives of the Australian Government’s aid pro-
gram.

Health: HIV-AIDS
(Question No. 261)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) How many people in Australia (a) are living with the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV), and
(b) have died as a result of HIV/AIDS.

(2) Can he confirm that the number of reported HIV infections has been increasing over recent years;
if so, what are the details.
(3) Will he ensure that screening for HIV/AIDS is freely available under Medicare; if so, when, if not, why not.

(4) What has the Government done to (a) put the fight against HIV/AIDS in Australia on the national agenda, (b) introduce new educative and preventive measures to combat HIV/AIDS, and (c) address the growing problem of HIV/AIDS within Australia’s Indigenous population.

(5) Can he confirm that an independent review commissioned by his predecessor in 2002 called for “a fifth National Strategy to revitalise Australia’s response and to re-energise our efforts”.

(6) What are the details of the proposed fifth National Strategy and when will it be implemented.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) An estimated 13,630 people were living with HIV/AIDS in Australia at the end of 2003.

(b) After adjustment for reporting delay 6,372 deaths following AIDS were notified in Australia, cumulative to 31 December 2003.

(2) The annual number of new HIV diagnoses, (all adjusted for multiple reporting), showed a 20% increase from 2001 to 2002, but this rise has now stabilised. There was a reduction in new HIV diagnoses in 2003, from 831 to 782.

(3) I am aware the issue of Medicare benefits funding of HIV antibody testing was raised in the draft fifth National HIV/AIDS Strategy and is being considered in the context of finalisation and implementation of that Strategy.

(4) (a) Australia is well known internationally for its response to HIV. A number of successes have been achieved under the Australian Government sponsored National HIV/AIDS Strategies since 1989, including reducing the number of new HIV infections, improving understanding of HIV in Australia as a result of national research, improved surveillance and targeted prevention programs. The Australian Government is currently developing a new National HIV/AIDS Strategy to refocus Australia’s response to HIV. This new Strategy will address the new challenges proposed by the changing HIV epidemic in Australia.

(b) The Australian Government works closely with community-based organisations to provide appropriate education to targeted priority groups. These community-based organisations receive funding to develop and implement education programs and resources.

(c) The Australian Government is currently developing a new National Indigenous Australians’ Sexual Health Strategy, which will build on the work of the first strategy in addressing HIV/AIDS within Australia’s Indigenous population. While specific funding for Indigenous sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention programs is in place, the broader HIV/AIDS education, prevention, health promotion and research funding also provides for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

(5) Yes.

(6) The fifth National Strategy is currently being developed in line with the Australian Government response to the 2002 Reviews and in consultation with key community stakeholders, other relevant Australian Government agencies and states and territories. The new Strategy is expected to be released in the first part of 2005. The new Strategy will provide a platform for specific action, refo-cusing Australia’s response to HIV.

Transport and Regional Services: Legal Services

(Question No. 263)

Ms Roxon asked the Minister for Transport and Regional Services, in writing, on 2 December 2004:
(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr Anderson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Department of Transport and Regional Services spent $2,269,510 on external legal services for the financial year 2003-04. We are unable to determine the break down by barristers and solicitors.

(2) The Department of Transport and Regional Services spent $894,483 on internal legal services.

(3) The Department of Transport and Regional Services estimates it will spend a total of $3,952,914 for the full 2004-05 financial year.

Foreign Affairs: Legal Services

(Question Nos 265 and 267)

Ms Roxon asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) All barristers’ costs are invoiced through the instructing solicitor’s firm. (b) The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade spent $2.70 million (GST exclusive) on outsourced solicitors’ fees (including barristers’ fees) in Australia and overseas in 2003-2004. This figure includes disbursements.

(2) The cost of internal legal services undertaken by legally qualified staff in the Legal Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2003-2004 was $1.64 million (salary costs only).

(3) As at December 2004, projected expenditure on outsourced legal services by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for 2004-2005 in Australia and overseas is $1.87 million. This figure includes estimated expenditure on legal services by overseas missions and this expenditure can vary significantly from year to year.

Finance and Administration: Legal Services

(Question No. 270)

Ms Roxon asked the Minister representing the Minister for Finance and Administration, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr Costello—The Minister for Finance and Administration has supplied the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) spent $5,931,867 on outsourced legal expenditure during the 2003-2004 financial year. As Finance does not directly engage members of the Bar, Barrister’s costs are a disbursement associated with the cost of engaging solicitors. Ac-
Accordingly, Finance records do not distinguish between ‘barristers’ and ‘solicitors’ outsourced spending. Obtaining this information would involve manually going through each invoice received which would be an unreasonable diversion of resources.

(2) The total amount spent on internal legal services in the 2003-2004 financial year was $1,216,000.

(3) Projected forecasted expenditure on legal services for the 2004-2005 financial year is as follows:

(a) Internal - $1,832,200
(b) External – Finance has spent $2,250,000 on external legal services as at November 2004. It is expected that the total figure for the 2004-2005 financial year will be $5,400,000. This figure does not take into account the impact of recent changes to the Administrative Arrangements Order which transferred the Australian Government Information Office to Finance.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Legal Services

(Question No. 271)

Ms Roxon asked the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor, and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for the 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr Truss—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $68,886.
    (b) $2,948,782.

(2) Nil.

(3) $2,927,000.

Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Legal Services

(Question No. 272)

Ms Roxon asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) (a) Barristers $5 million
    (b) Solicitors $23.8 million. A further $1.1 million was paid to outsourced providers to cover disbursements.

(2) $8.9 million

(3) $39.5 million
**Education, Science and Training: Legal Services**

*Question No. 273*

Ms Roxon asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor, and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services?

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for the 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department?

Dr Nelson—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $54,132 inclusive of GST. (b) Outsourced solicitors only - $2,255,232 inclusive of GST (includes professional fees and disbursements).

(2) Internal solicitors only in 2003/2004 - $1,843,425 (includes salary plus direct salary on-costs eg. superannuation).

(3) Projected outsourced - $1,595,000 inclusive of GST (includes professional and barristers fees, disbursements) Internal solicitors - $1,974,197 (includes salary plus direct salary on-costs eg. superannuation).

**Employment and Workplace Relations: Legal Services**

*Question No. 275*

Ms Roxon asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What sum did the Minister’s department spend during 2003-2004 on outsourced (a) barristers, and (b) solicitors (including private firms, the Australian Government Solicitor and any others).

(2) What sum did the Minister’s department spend on internal legal services.

(3) What is the projected expenditure on legal services for 2004-2005 for the Minister’s department.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $325,633.94  
(b) $3,216,055.71  
These amounts include disbursements.

(2) The costs of internal legal services is reflected in the relevant output prices and are not separately identified for budgetary purposes.

(3) No valid projection can be given as expenditure on legal services for the 2004-2005 financial year is subject to external factors not assessable at this time.

**Environment: Natural Heritage Trust**

*Question No. 285*

Mr Albanese asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What projects will be funded under the $1.94 million funding the Minister announced for the Moreton Bay Coastal Catchments Initiative (CCI) on 18 August 2004.

(2) What will be the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) contributions to each project, what will be the outcomes for each project and why were these projects selected.
(3) What is the Government’s priority for improving and protecting Moreton Bay water quality and how does it compare to other environmental issues in the Bay, its catchment or South East Queensland.

(4) What priority is Bay water quality in making Commonwealth investments through the regional component of the NHT.

(5) What sum has been spent through the NHT extension on Bay water quality improvement and what is each project’s title and its NHT contribution.

(6) In respect of the Minister’s announcement of $2.5 million towards implementation of the CCI in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port in September 2004, (a) which projects will be funded, (b) what will be the NHT contribution to each project, (c) what will be the outcomes for each project, and (d) why were these projects selected.

Mr Truss—The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) The following projects will be funded under the $1.94 million announced on 18 August 2004:

- Development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan for Moreton Bay;
- Development of a statutory decision-support system for protecting water quality in Moreton Bay;
- Targeted action in the Lockyer Catchment to improve Moreton Bay water quality;
- Targeted action in the Bremer River Catchment to improve Moreton Bay water quality;
- A Strategy for Water Sensitive Design in South East Queensland; and
- A Nutrient Trading program to improve water quality in Moreton Bay.

(2) (a) Water Quality Improvement Plan ($240,000). The WQIP will provide an informed basis on which to prioritise and fund management interventions to improve water quality and environmental flows and protect Moreton Bay.

(b) Statutory decision-support system (DSS) ($200,000). This project will enhance predictive modelling and decision-support tools to better guide catchment managers in making plans and taking decisions that affect Moreton Bay water quality.

(c) and (d) Lockyer Creek catchment project ($350,000) and Bremer River catchment project ($350,000). These projects will identify, characterise and support implementation of management practices to reduce agricultural and industrial sources of pollution to Moreton Bay. These projects will also identify the minimum management interventions required to achieve water quality objectives for the Lockyer and Bremer River catchments and pollutant load targets set for Moreton Bay.

(e) Water sensitive design project ($400,000). This project will support development of regional and local government policies for water sensitive design, as well as model planning provisions to be used by planning authorities in implementing water sensitive design. Guidelines and decision-support tools will also be developed.

(f) Nutrient trading program ($400,000). This project will scope the nature and feasibility of a nutrient trading or offsets program in the Moreton Bay catchment, and if feasible, will establish such a program.

(3) Water quality in Moreton Bay is a priority for the Government.

(4) Water quality is one of six priorities for the Australian Government regional Trust investment.

(5) See Attachment A.
Note: Some projects in Attachment A only partly support water quality outcomes or have other environmental benefits.

(6) Yet to be determined.

### Attachment A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>Funding from the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbartcho Environment Centre to Bunya Crossing Riparian Corridor</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian Management along the Lockyer Creek</td>
<td>9,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of a Water Quality Improvement Plan for Moreton Bay</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Statutory Decision Support System for protecting water quality in Moreton Bay</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Nutrient Trading Program to improve water quality in Moreton Bay</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted action in the Lockyer Catchment to improve Moreton Bay Water Quality</td>
<td>215,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted action in the Bremer Catchment to improve Moreton Bay Water Quality</td>
<td>215,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Sensitive Design Strategy for South East Queensland.</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Pine Catchment Pilot Riparian Management Incentive Scheme</td>
<td>27,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravensbourne and District Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management Project</td>
<td>25,081</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protect Against and Alleviate Erosion of Banks Along the Bremer River</td>
<td>19,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian Restoration on the North Pine River at Apex Park, Dayboro</td>
<td>22,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian and Instream Habitat Restoration of Norman Creek Demonstration Site</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing a Pilot Waterwatch Program on Farms, for Sustainable Horticultural Production</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building the Water Quality Monitoring Network in the Lockyer Catchment</td>
<td>19,282</td>
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<td>Valuing the Stockyard and Flagstone Creek Catchments in SEQ</td>
<td>26,573</td>
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<td>Pineapple Growers’ Best Practice Education Project</td>
<td>15,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation of Bushland Adjacent to Kurwongbah Spillway, Sideling Creek, Petrie</td>
<td>17,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarraman Creek Restoration Project</td>
<td>15,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity Building and On Ground Training in Measuring, Recording and Analysing On-Farm Water-Use for Primary Producers Preparing to Undertake EMS</td>
<td>17,483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishment of Eudlo Creek Rivercare Plan and Catchment Care Group</td>
<td>11,491</td>
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<td>Building Capacity for Environmental Management Systems in Horticultural Industry on Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>16,038</td>
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<td>Environment Care - Protecting a Gully Feeding the Caboolture River</td>
<td>4,932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Community Capacity through Monitoring and Education Programs - Cooyar Catchment</td>
<td>14,909</td>
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<td>Rehabilitation of Petrie Creek Project, Nambour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norman Creek Stage Two Riparian and Instream Habitat Restoration Project</td>
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<td>Moreton to Mountains - South Pine River Riparian Vegetation Rehabilitation Extension</td>
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<td>Community Monitoring Program for Biodiversity Conservation and Water Quality, Ravensbourne, Qld</td>
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<td>Pallara Willawong Community Bushland Regeneration Project</td>
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<td>“Aileach” Repair and Recovery Plan, Queensland</td>
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<td>Restoration and Enhancement of Aboriginal Heritage Trail at Ipswich State High School</td>
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<td>Landholders Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interim Facilitators and Coordinators Funding - Coastcare</td>
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<td>Foundation Funding - Coastcare</td>
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Mr Albanese asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in writing, on 2 December 2004:

(1) What is the Government’s priority for improving and protecting water quality in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port and how does this compare to other environmental issues in these waterways, catchments or the region.

(2) What priority is this water quality in making Commonwealth investments through the regional component of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT)?

(3) What sum has been spent through the NHT extension on water quality improvements in the Bay and Western Port and what is each project’s title and its NHT contribution.

Mr Truss—The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:
(1) The Australian Government’s priority for improving and protecting water quality in Port Phillip Bay and Western Port is very high. Both Port Phillip Bay and Western Port contain wetlands of international importance listed under the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, 1971): -Western Port and Port Phillip (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula.

(2) High.

(3) The relationships between many of our catchment assets and the activities that threaten them are complex. As such, many of the projects funded through the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust are designed to address more than one threatening process and will lead to an improvement in the condition of a number of assets. For example, a project designed to rehabilitate a wetland in the Western Port catchment will also reduce nitrogen loads and sediments entering the Port, and assist in providing habitat and improving biodiversity.

Through the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust in 2002, the Australian Government has approved funding in 2002/03 of $1,895,250, in 2003/04 of $1,475,00 and in 2004/05 of $3,270,000 to the Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority. Projects that relate particularly to improvements in water quality in the Bay and Western Port include:

- Doing our bit for the Bay - $100,000
- Hills to Ocean - $110,000
- Western Port Seagrass Restoration - $40,000
- Wetland Protection Rutherford Inlet - $55,000
- Western Port Wastewater Project - $53,000
- Western Port Coastal Action Plan - $20,000
- Western Port Erosion Trials - $35,000
- Coastal Facilitators - $400,000
- Williamstown-Altona sediment reduction $50,000
- Waterway Grants - $33,000
- Werribee Environmental Rescue - $50,000
- Effects of Nutrient Enrichment on Sea Grass Epiphytes in Western Port - $64,000
- Sediment Stabilisation in the Western Port Ramsar Area - $35,000
- Coaching coastal managers - $40,000
- Guides to the marine fauna $87,000

The following projects are being implemented on a multi-regional basis and parts of their activities will occur in the Port Phillip Bay and Western Port:

- Analysis of changes in Seagrass Health at a Multi-regional Level $240,000
- Ecological Health of Intertidal Rock Platforms $406,430

The following projects are being implemented through the adjacent Corangamite Catchment Management Authority whose boundaries include parts of Port Phillip Bay:

- Geelong Regional wetlands program $400,000
- Swan Bay and Northern Bellarine Peninsula Integrated Coastal and Catchment management $210,000
- Coastcare Regional on-ground works and education program $88,000
- Swan Bay integrated catchment management $55,705
Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) How many passports were issued by his department during 2003-2004.
(2) How many passports were posted to passport applicants during 2003-2004.
(3) Were all passports that were mailed to applicants sent by registered mail; if not, by what means were they sent.
(4) How many passports that were mailed to applicants were reported not to have arrived at the intended location.
(5) How many passports remain unaccounted for (a) in total, and (b) of those issued during 2003-2004.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) During 2003-04 my Department issued a total of 1,086,366 passports in Australia and overseas.
(2) During 2003-04 901,312 passports were posted to passport applicants in Australia.
(3) During 2003-04, all passports that were mailed to applicants in Australia were sent by registered post.
(4) During 2003-04, 1,302 passports were reported not to have arrived at the intended location.
(5) Since the introduction of registered post on 1 July 2002, 1,076 passports remain unaccounted for. (Prior to this date, figures for passports lost in the mail were not separated from the total number of passports reported lost or stolen). A total of 518 passports issued during 2003-04 remain unaccounted for.

Iraq: The Path Ahead
(Question No. 302)

Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) How many copies of “Iraq: The Path Ahead” did his department publish in 2004.
(2) How many copies were sent to (a) media outlets, and (b) Members of Parliament and how many copies was each Member of Parliament sent.
(3) To whom else were copies sent.
(4) What was the total cost of (a) producing, and (b) distributing this publication.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) 2,200
(2) (a) 41
   (b) At least one copy was delivered to each Member of the House of Representatives (150) and each Senator (76). Parliamentarians with a particular interest in Iraq may have received more copies.
(3) Foreign Affairs Council members, NGOs, think tanks, universities, libraries, Canberra-based foreign embassies, Iraqi/Arab community groups and Australian embassies abroad.
(4) (a) $13,803.90
   (b) $198.00

Foreign Affairs: Email Media Distribution List
(Question No. 303)

Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:
(1) Who is entitled to use his department’s email media distribution list.

(2) Is his office entitled to use his department’s email media distribution list.

(3) Did his office use his department’s email media distribution list during the ‘caretaker’ period of the 2004 federal election campaign; if so, (a) on how many occasions, (b) which emails were distributed, and (c) what involvement did his department have in facilitating its use.

(4) Is he aware that section 6.2.8 of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s Guidance on Caretaker Conventions states that electronic bulletin boards and e-mail systems provided by agencies should not be used to publish political material.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The department’s email distribution list, which includes two separate group email addresses for foreign policy and trade media contacts respectively, is used by the Media Liaison Section and the Ministers’ offices for distributing media material (press releases, transcripts etc).

(2) Yes

(3) The Minister’s office used the email distribution list during the ‘caretaker’ period of the 2004 federal election campaign. The department’s records show that the Minister’s office sent 21 messages to the group email address during the caretaker period. These included 10 transcripts from the Minister’s media interviews, one media alert advising of the Minister’s travel to Jakarta, three of the Minister’s speeches, and seven press releases from the Minister. The department and the Ministers’ offices share responsibility for keeping addressees on the list up to date, but the department had no involvement in facilitating the use of the email distribution list.

(4) Yes. Provision by the department to the Minister’s office of IT equipment and support, including email accounts, did not cease during the caretaker period, in the interests of enabling the government of the day to continue to function. During the caretaker period, the department recommended to the Minister’s office that they ensure that messages sent using the department-supplied email accounts identify the sender as staff of the Minister’s office, to ensure the origin of the emails was clear.

Human Rights

(Question No. 305)

Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) Is he aware of the Amnesty International report dated 27 October 2004 titled Human Dignity Denied: Torture and accountability in the ‘war on terror’; if so, has he read the report.

(2) Have any members of his staff read the report.

(3) Is he aware of that part of the report which states that the released Swedish detainee Mehdi Ghezali told Amnesty International that he was subjected to sleep deprivation in April 2004, three months before he was released; if so, (a) was it drawn to his attention by his department, (b) did he ask his department to investigate the claim and if he did not, why not, and (c) did his department investigate the claim; if not, (i) why not, and (ii) will he now instruct his department to investigate the claims.

(4) Does he still claim that Mr David Hicks and Mr Mamdouh Habib have been treated humanely during their detention at Guantanamo Bay.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

I am aware of the Amnesty Report and the main allegations contained in the report, including those relating to the treatment of Australian detainees Mr David Hicks and Mr Mamdouh Habib. The Government has asked the United States to conduct a comprehensive investigation into all allegations of mistreatment of Australian nationals in Guantanamo Bay, including allegations made by other detainees.
On 23 August 2004, the Government received the outcomes of the US Department of Defence investigation which stated that there was no information to support the allegations of abuse. The Government is awaiting the final outcome of a second investigation being conducted by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS). Preliminary advice received by the Government, however, suggests that the NCIS has thus far found no evidence to substantiate the allegations of mistreatment.

**Foreign Affairs: Kurdistan**

(Question No. 306)

Mr Rudd asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) Will he explain the current Government policy on Kurdistan and, in particular, is it Government policy to advocate independence for Kurdistan.

(2) Is he aware of Senator Lightfoot’s comments on 22 November 2004 in which he supported an independent state for Kurdistan and Senator Lightfoot’s media statement advocating his support for an independent Kurdish state.

(3) Is Senator Lightfoot’s support for an independent Kurdish state consistent with Government policy.

(4) Did Senator Lightfoot discuss the Senator’s position on Kurdistan with him or his office prior to issuing the Senator’s media release.

(5) Has he, his office or his department had contact with Turkish Government officials regarding Senator Lightfoot’s advocacy of an independent Kurdish state; if so, can he say what is the official position of the Turkish Government concerning an independent Kurdish state.

(6) Has he, his office or his department had contact with Iranian Government officials regarding Senator Lightfoot’s advocacy of an independent Kurdish state; if so, can he say what is the official position of the Iranian Government concerning an independent Kurdish state.

(7) Has he, his office or his department had contact with officials from the (a) Interim Iraqi Government, (b) United States of America’s Administration in Iraq, and (c) United Nations regarding Senator Lightfoot’s advocacy of an independent Kurdish state; if so, can he say what is the position of the (a) Interim Iraqi Government, (b) United States of America’s Administration in Iraq, and (c) United Nations concerning an independent Kurdish state.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Australian Government considers that Kurdish political aspirations should be met within existing territorial boundaries, where they should be entitled to the full protection and promotion of their human rights, including the enjoyment of their culture and language. The Australian Government supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, as reaffirmed by UN Security Council Resolutions, including 1546. It is not Australian Government policy to advocate independence for Kurdistan.

(2) I am aware of Senator Lightfoot’s comments broadcast by the ABC on 22 November and a statement issued earlier by him.

(3) Senator Lightfoot’s comments regarding Kurdish independence were conditional and hypothetical, and he supports the proposed federal, democratic, pluralist, and unified system for Iraq, as per UNSCR 1546.

(4) No.

(5) The Turkish Ambassador wrote to my department on 22 November 2004. The Turkish Ambassador’s letter did not convey the Turkish Government’s position on an independent state of Kurdistan. My Department replied to the Ambassador on 25 November informing him that the Australian Government does not support the creation of an independent Kurdish state.
Health and Ageing: Payments  
(Question No. 321)

Dr Lawrence asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

For each of the last five years, what are the details and amount of each grant and service payment by the Minister’s department and agencies within the Minister’s portfolio to (a) the Hillsong Foundation, and (b) its associated entities.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

An examination of Departmental and Portfolio agencies’ financial records, covering the past five years, has determined that no payments have been made to Hillsong Foundation [The Trustee for Hillsong Foundation, ABN: 98 060 671 646], or its associated entities.

Associated entities referred to above were determined to be: Hillsong Church Ltd [ABN: 37 002 745 879]; and Hillsong Emerge Ltd [ABN: 13 003 698 726].

Education, Science and Training: Payments  
(Question No. 323)

Dr Lawrence asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

For each of the last five years, what are the details and amount of each grant and service payment by the Minister’s department and agencies within the Minister’s portfolio to (a) the Hillsong Foundation, and (b) its associated entities.

Mr Hardgrave—On behalf of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

“A search of vendor records in the Department and portfolio agencies did not identify any grants or service payments made to the Hillsong Foundation or its associated entities in the past five years.”

Employment and Workplace Relations: Payments  
(Question No. 325)

Dr Lawrence asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

For each of the last five years, what are the details and amount of each grant and service payment by the Minister’s department and agencies within the Minister’s portfolio to (a) the Hillsong Foundation, and (b) its associated entities.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

I am advised my Department has made the following payments under the Business Development Programme. My portfolio assumed responsibility for this programme on 1 July 2004. Prior to 1 July 2004 the Business Development Programme was administered by ATSIC/ATSIS. Details of payments made by my Department are detailed below.

(a) no payments have been made to the Hillsong Foundation;

(b) the following payments have been made to Hillsong Emerge Ltd, an associated entity of the Hillsong Foundation:
Mr Quick asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Trade, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on (a) domestic, and (b) overseas air travel.

(2) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of domestic air travel by employees of the Minister’s department was provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.

(3) For the year 2003-2004, what was the actual expenditure by the Minister’s department on domestic air travel provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.

(4) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on business class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.

(5) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on economy class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.

(6) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of the expenditure on air travel by the Minister’s department was on the domestic routes (a) Sydney to Canberra, (b) Melbourne to Canberra, (c) Sydney to Melbourne, (d) Sydney to Brisbane, (e) Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston, and (f) Sydney to Perth.

(7) For the year 2003-2004, how many employees of the Minister’s department had membership of the (a) Qantas Chairman’s Lounge, (b) Qantas Club, (c) Regional Express Membership Lounge, and (e) Virgin Blue’s Blue Room paid for by the department.

Mr Downer—On behalf of the Minister for Trade and myself, the answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) $1,725,304
    (b) $10,478,674

(2) (a) 93.3%
    (b) 6.5%
    (c) 0.2%

(3) (a) $1,674,650
    (b) $49,158
    (c) $940

(4) (a) $498,095
    (b) 8,510,973

Foreign Affairs and Trade: Domestic and Overseas Air Travel
(Question Nos 329 and 331)
(5) (a) $1,227,209  
(b) $949,674  
(6) (a) 21.17%  
(b) 15.80%  
(c) 2.29%  
(d) 0.65%  
(e) 0.17%  
(f) 0.72%  
(7) (a) none  
(b) 43  
(c) none  
(e) none  

Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs: Domestic and Overseas Travel  
(Question No. 336)  

Mr Quick asked the Minister representing the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, in writing, on 6 December 2004:  

(1) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on (a) domestic, and (b) overseas air travel.  
(2) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of domestic air travel by employees of the Minister’s department was provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.  
(3) For the year 2003-2004, what was the actual expenditure by the Minister’s department on domestic air travel provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.  
(4) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on business class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.  
(5) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on economy class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.  
(6) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of the expenditure on air travel by the Minister’s department was on the domestic routes (a) Sydney to Canberra, (b) Melbourne to Canberra, (c) Sydney to Melbourne, (d) Sydney to Brisbane, (e) Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston, and (f) Sydney to Perth.  
(7) For the year 2003-2004, how many employees of the Minister’s department had membership of the (a) Qantas Chairman’s Lounge, (b) Qantas Club, (c) Regional Express Membership Lounge, and (e) Virgin Blue’s Blue Room paid for by the department.  

Mr McGauran—The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:  

(1) The total expenditure by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) on domestic and overseas air travel in 2003-04 was as follows.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>$4,829,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>$6,067,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$10,896,304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) The proportion of domestic air travel by DIMIA employees in 2003-04 that was provided by the various carriers was as follows.
Airline
(a) Qantas 93%
(b) Regional Express 5.5%
(c) Virgin Blue 6%

(3) The actual expenditure on domestic air travel by DIMIA in 2003-04 with the various carriers was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airline</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qantas</td>
<td>$4,491,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Express</td>
<td>$257,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Blue</td>
<td>$29,523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) Expenditure by DIMIA on business class travel in 2003-04 on domestic and overseas routes was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routes</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>$830,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>$2,519,489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(5) Expenditure by DIMIA on economy class travel in 2003-04 on domestic and overseas routes was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routes</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>$3,998,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>$3,547,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(6) Expenditure by DIMIA on air travel on the nominated domestic routes represented the following proportions of total expenditure on air travel in 2003-04.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routes</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney/Canberra</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne/Canberra</td>
<td>9.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney/Melbourne</td>
<td>4.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney/Brisbane</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne/Hobart or Launceston</td>
<td>.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney/Perth</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7) Airline records indicate that the number of airline lounge memberships for DIMIA employees in 2003-04 was as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airline</th>
<th>Memberships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qantas Chairman’s Lounge</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qantas Club</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Express Lounge</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Blue Lounge</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Privacy Act precludes provision of a breakdown of the number of these memberships paid for by DIMIA and the number paid for by individual DIMIA officers.

**Workplace Relations: Domestic and Overseas Air Travel**

(6) Expenditure by DIMIA on air travel on the nominated domestic routes represented the following proportions of total expenditure on air travel in 2003-04.

(7) Airline records indicate that the number of airline lounge memberships for DIMIA employees in 2003-04 was as follows.

<table>
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<td>nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Privacy Act precludes provision of a breakdown of the number of these memberships paid for by DIMIA and the number paid for by individual DIMIA officers.

**Workplace Relations: Domestic and Overseas Air Travel**

**Mr Quick** asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on (a) domestic, and (b) overseas air travel.

(2) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of domestic air travel by employees of the Minister’s department was provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.
(3) For the year 2003-2004, what was the actual expenditure by the Minister’s department on domestic air travel provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue.

(4) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on business class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.

(5) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on economy class travel on (a) domestic routes, and (b) overseas routes.

(6) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of the expenditure on air travel by the Minister’s department was on the domestic routes (a) Sydney to Canberra, (b) Melbourne to Canberra, (c) Sydney to Melbourne, (d) Sydney to Brisbane, (e) Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston, and (f) Sydney to Perth.

(7) For the year 2003-2004, how many employees of the Minister’s department had membership of the (a) Qantas Chairman’s Lounge, (b) Qantas Club, (c) Regional Express Membership Lounge, and (d) Virgin Blue’s Blue Room paid for by the department.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) For the financial year 2003-2004, the total spent on domestic air travel by the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies was $5,313,277.

(b) For the financial year 2003-2004, the total spent on overseas air travel by the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies was $422,411.

(2) For the financial year 2003-2004, the proportion of domestic air travel for the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies is as follows: (a) Qantas – 94.45%, (b) Regional Express – 0.64%, (c) Virgin Blue – 0.82%.

(3) For the financial year 2003-2004, the breakdown of actual expenditure on domestic air travel for the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies is as follows: (a) Qantas - $4,360,373, (b) Regional Express - $27,248, (c) Virgin Blue - $39,406.

(4) For the financial year 2003-2004, the sum spent on business class travel by the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies is as follows: (a) domestic routes - $1,830,569, (b) overseas routes – $371,383.

(5) For the financial year 2003-2004, the sum spent on economy class travel by the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies is as follows: (a) domestic routes - $3,482,708, (b) overseas routes - $51,028.

(6) For the financial year 2003-2004, the proportion of the expenditure on air travel on domestic routes by the Minister’s department and portfolio agencies is as follows: (a) Sydney to Canberra – 8.73%, (b) Melbourne to Canberra – 17.64%, (c) Sydney to Melbourne – 7.81%, (d) Sydney to Brisbane – 2.74%, (e) Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston – 2.34%, (f) Sydney to Perth – 2.54%.

(7) (a) (b) (c) (d) The information requested is unavailable in a readily retrievable form. It would involve a substantial and unreasonable diversion of resources from other activities to compile the information requested.

Environment and Heritage: Domestic and Overseas Air Travel
(Question No. 342)

Mr Quick asked the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, in writing, on 6 December 2004:

(1) For the Year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on (a) domestic, and (b) overseas air travel.
(2) For the Year 2003-2004, what proportion of domestic air travel by employees of the Minister’s department was provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express and (c) Virgin Blue.

(3) For the year 2003-2004, what was the actual expenditure by the Minister’s department on domestic air travel provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express and (c) Virgin Blue.

(4) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on business class travel on (a) domestic routes and (b) overseas routes.

(5) For the year 2003-2004, what sum was spent by the Minister’s department on economy class travel on (a) domestic routes and (b) overseas routes.

(6) For the year 2003-2004, what proportion of the expenditure on air travel by the Minister’s department was on the domestic routes (a) Sydney to Canberra, (b) Melbourne to Canberra, (c) Sydney to Melbourne, (d) Sydney to Brisbane, (e) Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston, and (f) Sydney to Perth.

(7) For the year 2003-2004, how many employees of the Minister’s department had memberships of the (a) Qantas Chairman’s Lounge, (b) Qantas Club, (c) Regional Express Membership Lounge, and (d) Virgin Blue’s Blue Room paid for by the department.

Mr Truss—The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qantas</td>
<td>78.24%</td>
<td>18.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Express</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Blue</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Domestic $4,770,119
International $1,654,983
(2) Qantas $3,732,343
Regional Express $86,296
Virgin Blue $47,577
Other $903,903
(3) Domestic $974,881
International $750,637
(4) Domestic $3,795,238
International $776,152
(5) Sydney to Canberra 9.34%
Melbourne to Canberra 23.60%
Sydney to Melbourne 5.16%
Sydney to Brisbane 1.82%
Melbourne to Hobart or Launceston 11.53%
Sydney to Perth 1.38%
Other 47.17%
(Note: In accordance with the airline industry practice of reporting, the above percentages reflect air travel between destinations eg Sydney to Canberra should also be read as Canberra to Sydney).
Mr Melham asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 7 December 2004:

(1) Is it the case that the Protocol Guidelines issued by his department and most recently amended in October 2004 state that: “Australia’s Head of State is The Queen of Australia, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Under the Australian Constitution, the executive power of the Commonwealth is vested in The Queen and is exercised by the Governor-General as the Queen’s representative.”

(2) Is it the case that the Protocol Guidelines further advise foreign embassies that Letters of Credence and Letters of Recall should be addressed to The Queen of Australia as Australia’s Head of State: “Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of Australia and Her Other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth”.

(3) Did he and/or the Secretary of his department approve the October 2004 Protocol Guidelines before they were provided to foreign embassies and released to the public on his department’s website.

(4) Is The Queen of Australia, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Australia’s Head of State.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The department’s Protocol Guidelines are approved by the Chief of Protocol.

(4) I am of the view that it is appropriate to regard The Queen as the formal head of state and the Governor-General as the effective head of state. While the Governor-General, as The Queen’s representative, performs certain duties traditionally associated with the functions of the head of state, The Queen remains the head of state in the conventional sense.

Defence: Special Purpose Flights

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 7 December 2004:

(1) On what basis did the Department of Defence calculate the flight costs listed in the Schedules of Special Purpose Flights for January-June 2003 and July-December 2003.

(2) What specific costs incurred by the (a) Department of Defence, and (b) Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) are included in the flight costs listed in the Schedules.

(3) What costs incurred by the (a) Department of Defence, and (b) RAAF arising from Special Purpose Flight operations are not included in the figures published in the Schedules.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) Flight costs are calculated on an additional cost basis, and exclude the fixed costs of ownership.

(2) (a) and (b) The specific flights costs listed in the Schedule (that is, the additional cost rate) include fuel, lubricants, catering, No 34 Squadron travel, port and ground handling charges, landing fees,
aerial aircraft guarding, navigation charges, Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and quarantine charges, mobile phones and satellite communications, and other minor equipment and stores costs.

(3) (a) and (b) Costs incurred include the lease, maintenance and support contracts, insurance, facilities/infrastructure, and personnel salaries, but are excluded from the published additional cost rate as these are fixed costs, and are not dependent on aircraft usage.

Defence: Special Purpose Flights

(Question No. 351)

Mr Melham asked the Minister representing the Minister for Defence, in writing, on 7 December 2004:

(1) For financial year (a) 2002-2003, and (b) 2003-2004, what was the total value of alcoholic beverages (i) purchased, and (ii) consumed by persons travelling on Special Purpose Flights.

(2) For financial year (a) 2002-2003, and (b) 2003-2004, what were the quantities and details of the wines, spirits and other alcoholic beverages (include details of brand, type and, where applicable, vintage) purchased for consumption by persons travelling on Special Purpose Flights, and what was the unit price paid for each item.

Mrs De-Anne Kelly—The Minister for Defence has provided the following answer to the honourable member’s question:

(1) Alcoholic beverages are not accounted for separately in the summary-level information available from the accounting system. The total catering cost for food and beverages was $602,236 in 2002-03; and $928,533 in 2003-04. The increased cost in 2003-04 was a result of an increased number of tasks.

(2) Defence is not able to devote the considerable time and resources required to provide a response.

Health: Autism

(Question No. 375)

Mr Murphy asked the Minister for Health and Ageing, in writing, on 8 December 2004:

(1) How many Australians are affected by (a) autism, and (b) Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs).

(2) How many children in Australia are affected by (a) autism, and (b) an ASD.

(3) What is the current level of Commonwealth Government funding for autism research.

(4) What assistance does the Government provide people affected by (a) autism, and (b) ASDs.

(5) What expertise on ASDs (a) exists within, and (b) is available to, his department and is this adequate.

(6) Can he confirm that (a) for most Australian children with ASDs, diagnosis is not followed by the essential treatment for their ASDs, and (b) education alone is not sufficient to meet the clinical needs of children with an ASD; if not, why not.

Mr Abbott—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) (a) and (b) and (2) (a) and (b) Information regarding the number of people with reported autism or Autism Spectrum Disorders is obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The latest report 2003 indicates there are 19,811 people with reported autism and related disorders. It should be noted that the data relies on self reporting by those aged 15 and over and parental/guardian reporting for children (under 15).

(3) The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is the Australian Government’s main health and medical research funding body. In 2004, the NHMRC provided $786,976 funding...
for autism research. In addition a number of other NHMRC research projects have the potential to benefit those suffering from a range of conditions, including autism.

(4) (a) and (b) While there are no specific Australian Government programs of assistance for people affected by autism and ASDs, many of the Government’s mainstream health, welfare and financial assistance programs may assist people affected by autism. For example, 7% of community support services and 8% of respite services funded under the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreements in 2002-03, were used by people with autism.

However, in general, it is not possible to identify the extent of this assistance or the number of people with autism who are recipients of such assistance. The provision of educational services to people with autism is the responsibility of state and territory governments.

(5) (a) and (b) The Department does not have an officer who specialises in the area of autism or ASDs. An external clinical adviser on contract to the Department is available to provide advice upon request.

(6) (a) and (b) The information sought is not available.

**United Nations International Volunteer Day**

**(Question No. 391)**

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in writing, on 9 December 2004:

(1) In respect of the e-mail sent on Friday, 3 December 2004 at 6.21 p.m. by his Parliamentary Secretary to advise of the United Nations International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on Sunday, 5 December, was this the only communication from the Parliamentary Secretary’s office, his department or his office to Members of Parliament about this function.

(2) Was any other communication provided to government members about this function or event.

(3) Can he explain why information was sent to Members of Parliament after 6 p.m. on Friday for an event occurring on the immediately following Sunday.

(4) What guarantee can he provide that all Members of Parliament will receive information in sufficient time for them to take appropriate follow-up action.

Mr Downer—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) Yes

(2) No

(3) As Mr Billson was travelling in rural Kenya and attending the international landmines conference in Nairobi on 3 December and preceding days it had been very difficult to communicate with him and obtain clearances for the information sent to Members.

(4) Mr Billson is glad that Mr Bevis found the information useful and while noting that United Nations International Days are commonly commemorated around designated dates, undertakes to endeavour to provide Members with such information with greater notice as appropriate.

**Employment and Workplace Relations: Enterprise Bargaining**

**(Question No. 393)**

Mr Bevis asked the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, in writing, on 9 December 2004:

(1) Can he confirm that his department’s trends in enterprise bargaining report confirms that average wage increases for workers on union agreements in the first two quarters of this year were more than one percentage point higher than those for workers on non-union agreements.
(2) Will he encourage more Australians to negotiate union agreements to increase their income; if not, why not.

Mr Andrews—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations’ Trends in Enterprise Bargaining report indicates the difference in average wage increases between agreements made under s.170LJ and s.170LL (with unions) and s.170LK (directly between employers and employees) has never moved more than 0.3 percentage points for agreements current both at 31 March 2004 and 30 June 2004.

(2) The Government provides a range of agreement making options for employers and employees through the Workplace Relations Act 1996 and does not promote one type of workplace agreement over another.

Cunningham Electorate: Apprenticeships
(Question No. 395)

Ms Bird asked the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, in writing, on 9 December 2004:

(1) How many first year apprentices, by trade, have been employed in the electoral division of Cunningham in (a) 2001, (b) 2002, (c) 2003, and (d) 2004.

(2) How many first year apprentices, by trade, were employed in 1996 in the electoral division of Cunningham.

(3) By what means and by which agency are these statistics collected.

(4) Will he provide (a) the dates and other details of the statistics, and (b) the calculations, on which he based his claim of a 202 percent increase in apprenticeships in the electoral division of Cunningham in his answer to the House on 6 December 2004.

Mr Hardgrave—The answer to the honourable member’s question is as follows:

(1) The number of New Apprentices undertaking a Trades and related occupation in the electorate of Cunningham is continuing to grow. Information on how many New Apprentices are still in their first year of training is not available. The table below illustrates the number New Apprentices commencing training in trades and related occupations in the electorate of Cunningham for years 2001-2004. Please note that figures may not sum due to rounding.

Commencements by ASCO Code in the electorate of Cunningham

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12 mths to June</th>
<th>Trades persons and Related Workers Total</th>
<th>Mechanical and Fabrication Engineering Trades persons</th>
<th>Auto-motive Trades persons</th>
<th>Electrical and Electronics Trades persons</th>
<th>Construction Trades persons</th>
<th>Food Trades persons</th>
<th>Skilled Agricultural and Horticultural Workers</th>
<th>Other Trades persons and Related Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) In 1996 180 New Apprentices undertaking a qualification in a Trades and related occupation commenced in the electorate of Cunningham. The table below details the breakdown by ASCO code. Please note that figures may not sum due to rounding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trades</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41 Mechanical and Fabrication Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42 Automotive Trades</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43 Electrical and Electronics</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 Construction Trades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Food and Horticultural Trades</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 Skilled Agricultural and Horticultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Other Trades and Related Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Numbers of New Apprentices under 10 are not separately listed as individuals may be able to be identified.

(3) Statistics and data have been collected in accordance with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) from State and Territory training authorities, by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

(4) The claim of a 202 percent increase in New Apprenticeships in the electoral division of Cunningham was based on the data which showed that as at March 1996 there were 848 New Apprentices in training compared to March 2004 where there were 2563 New Apprentices in-training.